

Strategies for Survival (1986)

14: Position: suspended (11), Mona Hatoum (Beirut/London)

Strategies for Survival (1986) is an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness in 2023, funded by the BC History Digitization Program at the University of British Columbia.

Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists was organized by the Vancouver Artists' League, as a component part of *Vancouver: The Place, Vancouver: The People*, a City of Vancouver centennial project for 1986.

Find the rest of the project linked at unitpitt.ca



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edited transcript

textural transcript

14: Position: suspended (11), Mona Hatoum (Beirut/London)

EXCERPT

[From her later description of the performance in FUSE magazine (“An interview with Mona Hatoum, Sara Diamond,” April 1987, p. 46–52), we know that this sound is the amplified scrape of barbed wire tangled on the floor, as it is touched incidentally by Mona Hatoum crossing the room—she describes how, “the sound of the barbed wire was filling the entire conference hall, like thunder or bombing.”]



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00:00:00

Mona Hatoum, Beirut/London:

[A continuous high-pitched hum barely wavers, creating a background for another changing sound that amplifies the repeated sounds of something or someone impacting something else—touching—in a space that sounds large.]

[Tone.]



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edited transcript

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14: Position: suspended (11), Mona Hatoum (Beirut/London)

INTRODUCTION (2023)

Strategies for Survival (1986), is an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness, re-presenting the partial proceedings of *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, June 9, 10, and 11, 1986.



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00:00:21

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

Welcome to *Strategies for Survival (1986)*, an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness, re-presenting the partial proceedings of *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, June 9, 10, and 11, 1986.

[Tone.]



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DOCUMENTS AND ACCESS

For expanded access, this document presents textural and lightly edited transcripts of the presentation.

On the right is the timestamped textural transcript, with all the *ums*, *ahs*, pauses, and grammatical idiosyncrasies of the spoken word, meant to be read with the audio, linked [here](#).

This column on the left provides the lightly edited, easy-to-read transcript. This can be read with or without the audio, and subject headings from the original conference papers, or added for this project, are linked in the [TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) above; matching the timestamps at right.



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00:00:49

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

If you've already listened to the 2023 introduction (track 00, linked [here](#)), you may wish to skip ahead in this text [to [00:02:00](#)] and then skip ahead in the audio to match the timestamp.

[All the timestamps are linked in the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS](#) above.]

If you haven't listened to the introduction, or any of the other recordings, you'll want to know that this is a multi-part project, presenting archival audio recordings alongside textural and lightly edited transcripts, for expanded access.

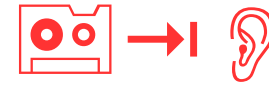
On the left of each transcript document is a lightly edited, easy-to-read transcript that, in some cases, directly excerpts the original conference papers; this can be read with or without the audio.

(By the way, if you're listening to the audio recording, and wondering, "where are the transcripts?" you can find links to those documents in the audio description!)

This column on the right presents the textural

transcript, with all the *ums*, *ahs*, pauses, and grammatical idiosyncrasies of the spoken word, to match the archival audio as close as possible—it may be difficult to read this side of the page without the relevant audio recording, [linked [here](#)].

[Tone.]



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14: Position: suspended (11), Mona Hatoum (Beirut/London)

DAY 3, PERFORMANCE

On the third day, starting after lunch and continuing through the end of the day, Mona Hatoum, an artist from London and Beirut, presented a performance, *Position: suspended (11)*. The cassette tapes found in the UNIT/PITT archives provide only the briefest record of some part of the sound of the many-hours-long performance.

A year later, Mona Hatoum described this performance, and its development for the conference, in an interview with Sara Diamond for *FUSE* magazine, published April 1987.

Mona Hatoum's biography and a description of her performance are inserted from the original conference papers; look for the article in further reading.

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00:02:00

On the third day, starting after lunch and continuing through the end of the day, Mona Hatoum, an artist from London and Beirut, presented a performance, *Position: suspended (11)*. The cassette tapes found in the UNIT/PITT archives provide only the briefest record of some part of the sound of the many-hours-long performance. A year later, Mona Hatoum described this performance, and its development for the conference, in an interview with Sara Diamond for *FUSE* magazine, published April 1987.

After the tone, I'll read Mona Hatoum's biography from the original conference papers, and a description of her performance, from the original conference papers, will be read by Fabiola Carranza, an artist from Costa Rica, living in San Diego, via Vancouver. The brief archival audio will follow these supplementary readings.

[Tone.]

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BIOGRAPHY (1986)

MONA HATOUM Beirut/London

“Mona Hatoum’s actions and videos over the past two years have combined a great physical intensity with metaphors concise and general enough to evoke conditions of oppression and resistance anywhere in the world.”

—Guy Brett, ARTSCRIBE, London, number 53, July/August 1985

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, artist Mona Hatoum has lived and worked in London, England for the past eleven years. She has studied at the Beirut University College (1970–2), the Byam Shaw School of Art, London (1975–9) and the Slade School of Art (1979–81). Her work, which has consisted of performances, exhibitions, installations and video presentations, has been seen throughout Europe and North America. She has produced two videos in Vancouver; “So Much I Want To Say”, a black and white video performed for the Wiencover IV event (Western Front,

00:03:04

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

“Mona Hatoum’s actions and videos over the past two years have combined a great physical intensity with metaphors concise and general enough to evoke conditions of oppression and resistance anywhere in the world.”

—Guy Brett, ARTSCRIBE, London, number 53, July/August 1985

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, artist Mona Hatoum has lived and worked in London, England for the past eleven years. She has studied at the Beirut University College (1970–1972), the Byam Shaw School of Art, London (1975–1979) and the Slade School of Art (1979–81). Her work, which has consisted of performances, exhibitions, installations and video presentations, has been seen throughout Europe and North America. She has produced two videos in Vancouver; “So Much I Want To Say”, a black and white video performed for the Wiencover IV event (Western Front, 1983), a live sound and image exchange between Vancouver and Vienna, and “Changing

1983), a live sound and image exchange between Vancouver and Vienna, and “Changing Parts”, a black and white video produced during a residence at the Western Front in December 1984. In her performances and videos, Hatoum expresses her intense and active awareness of and concern about current social issues.



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Parts”, a black and white video produced during a residence at the Western Front in December 1984. In her performances and videos, Hatoum expresses her intense and active awareness of and concern about social issues.

[\[Tone.\]](#)



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INSERT

Position: suspended (11)—

“

The performance takes place in a corner which has been blocked off with a chicken wire screen creating a cage like structure. The performer who is trapped within the structure moves slowly and cautiously amongst a variety of old and rusty hand tools or similar artefacts, hanging inside the structure.

The space surrounding the performer is in darkness except for the light from a television screen showing local T.V. programmes of adverts concerning Expo 86 etc... The material shown on the monitor will be in complete contrast to the surroundings.



It is a long duration piece that is designed

00:04:47

Fabiola Carranza (San Diego):

Position: suspended (11)—

“

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It is a long duration piece that is designed to

to be viewed by people for short periods of time.

”

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”

[Tone.]

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[PERFORMANCE]

00:05:39

[From her later description of the performance in FUSE magazine (“An interview with Mona Hatoum, Sara Diamond,” April 1987, p. 46–52), we know that this sound is the amplified scrape of barbed wire tangled on the floor, as it is touched incidentally by Mona Hatoum crossing the room—she describes how, “the sound of the barbed wire was filling the entire conference hall, like thunder or bombing.”]

The audio recording on cassette tape in the UNIT/PITT archives is less than a minute long, and presented in its entirety here—the performance lasted all afternoon.]



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Mona Hatoum, Beirut/London:

[For almost a full minute, a continuous high-pitched hum barely wavers, creating a background for another changing sound that amplifies the repeated sounds of something or someone impacting something else—touching—in a space that sounds large.]

[Tone.]



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CLOSING REMARKS (2023)

Thanks for reading. This was just one part of a multi-part project documenting *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League in 1986—if you're following along, all of the transcripts and audio recordings are linked directly [here](#), or can be found at unitpitt.ca

You may have noticed that, like most archives projects, this one is in progress. If you have any recollections or information that you'd like to share about the 1986 conference, or new thoughts in 2023, send us a message at info@unitpitt.ca



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00:06:23

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

Thanks for listening. This was just one part of a multi-part project documenting *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League in 1986—if you'd like to follow along, all of the transcripts and audio recordings are linked at unitpitt.ca, [directly [here](#).]

And, you may have noticed that, like most archives projects, this one is in progress. If you have any recollections or information that you'd like to share about the 1986 conference, or new thoughts in 2023, send us a message at info@unitpitt.ca



[Tone.]

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