







Park McArthur,
Polyurethane Foam,
2014, polyurethane
foam and plastic,
208 × 124 × 60cm.
Photograph: Evan La
Londe. Installation
view, Yale Union,
Portland, 2014

Park McArthur: Geometry, Material, Scale

– Andrew Blackley

Previous spread:
Park McArthur,
*How to get a
wheelchair over
sand*, 2013, digital
chromogenic colour
print, 19 × 25cm.
Both images courtesy
of the artist and
ESSEX STREET,
New York

Geometry

Some things refute beginning or end. Upon encounter, we come to know them only partially; either they or we are continually in the interim. One artwork of this kind is *Carried & Held*, which happens to be the first by Park McArthur that I became aware of, as part of the exhibition ‘Maintenance Required’ at The Kitchen in New York in 2013.¹ The work continues to change every time it is installed or otherwise presented, and as such has remained present as one subtext of McArthur’s practice in the years since, often acting as a lens through which to view concurrent works.

At The Kitchen, *Carried & Held* took the form of a vertical wall caption. The label listed the title of the work, the year of its realisation (2013), the medium (flatbed UV print on museum board) and the courtesy line. The courtesy line included the artist’s name followed by Margaret Herman, Alexandra McArthur, John McArthur, Walker Herman, Mary Herman, Gayle McArthur... and, by that

name is the accumulative threshold for the work, carrying with it each previous name and all names collectively. The names record individuals and their actions; they speak of requests voiced and responded to. *Carried & Held* describes the ongoing relationship amongst the artist, the individuals listed and – by implication – a physical (if not psychical) boundary over and through which Park has been held and carried. *Carried & Held* is the work itself and the documentation of the work; the work is its courtesy and the fallout, the remainders of courtesy. As with any courtesy line, it is to be reformatted, obliged (as in the pages of this journal) to the institutional conditions – kindly described as ‘house style’ or ‘museum policy’ – of the hosting body.

Carried & Held ‘tell[s] a story of bodies that change’;³ it provides the meshed system upon which other figural, representational arrangements and their social organisation take form. Like all endeavours of realism, its lyricism is at once evasive and forthcoming. In other words, it is significant for what it withdraws as much as for what it offers. The work presents people, but only hints at that which people do: relate. The relationship is a specific one but escapes description or explication. In fact, we do not even know from the work itself the length of time it represents, we know only the year of its most recent realisation. Yet, its interpersonal geometry is suggestive of a temporality not always congruent with what we assume as our present. We know the work precedes us and continues beyond us, just as the work exceeds any one individual experience as represented in a name on the list. Any gait, no matter how fluid or rhythmic, is a sequential

Andrew Blackley studies the relation between somatic and political bodies in Park McArthur’s sculptural practice.

point in 2013, some two hundred others who have carried or held the artist’s body. At the time of writing, the work lists over 250 individuals.²

The list of names reads sequentially: in each iteration of the work, the names do begin and the names do end. That said, the last name listed is not an – or the – end. The last name is a placeholder; it represents the work’s most recent state, at once its culmination and a promise for future names to follow. The last listed

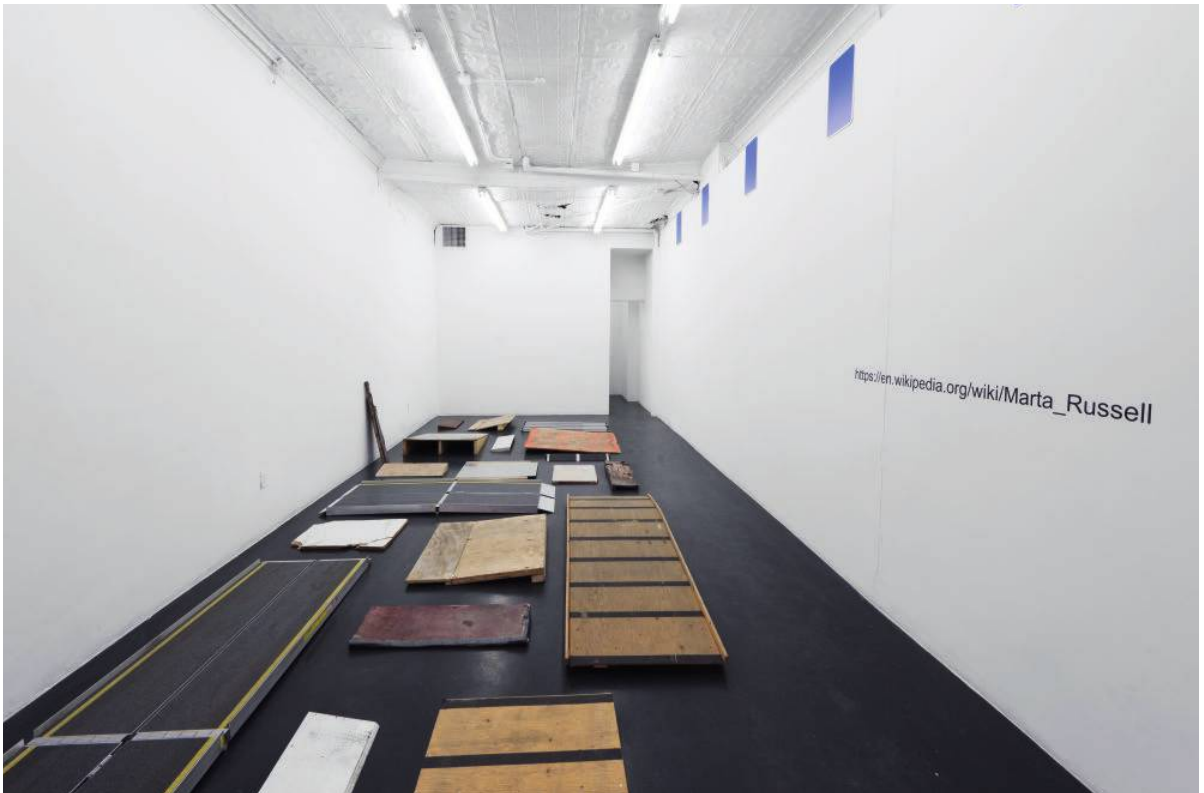
1 ‘Maintenance Required’, The Kitchen, New York, 10 May–22 June 2013, curated by Nina Horisaki-Christians, Andrea Neustein, Victoria Rogers and Jason Waite, and including works by Michael Bramwell, Goldin+Senneby, Ashley Hunt, Masaru Iwai, Yve Laris Cohen, Sam Lewitt, Park McArthur, Salvage Art Institute, Karin Sander, Taryn Simon, Pilvi Takala and Mierle Laderman Ukeles. In total, *Carried & Held* has been made public on five occasions.

positioning, a listing of single steps, one after the other.

If *Carried & Held* presents the viewer with an accruing record of actions, ‘Ramps’, McArthur’s 2014 exhibition at ESSEX STREET in New York,⁴ ordered a number of known conditions for decision-making in the form of a set of objects paradigmatic of both cathartic and pragmatic use. At the centre of the exhibition was an arrangement of twenty objects placed on the floor: *Recess* (2012); *(brown with tape)* (2011); *Denny Gallery* (2013); *(white)* (2013); *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (large)* (2012); *Whitney Independent Study Program* (2013); *ESSEX STREET (white)* (2013); *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (small)* (2012); *(blonde)* (2013); *AVA* (2012); *(metal)* (2013); *(light brown)* (2011); *ESSEX STREET (pink)* (2013); *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (medium)* (2012); *Team* (2013); *(warped)* (2011); *(white with scratches)* (2013); *(partially gone)* (2011); *Construction Site* (2013); and *Apexart* (2010).

While the objects became common when placed in proximity to one another, each of the sculptures — as would be the case for any sculpture — was neither exchangeable nor general in its language or its experience. Each object corresponded, per its title, with an affront to — and by — a particular place. As with the names listed in *Carried & Held*, each of the sculptural objects in ‘Ramps’ visualised an interpersonal geometry: in this instance, the relationship between the artist, specific architecture and the institution it houses. The objects were created upon McArthur’s request (or were provided for her) between 2010 and 2013. They serve as a tool of access for entering buildings without the use of stairs. One familiar with New York may note from their titles that the ramps were largely drawn from sites local to the exhibition and correspond, for the most part, to art establishments — galleries, residencies, studios, exhibition spaces, etc. In their use, they serve as extensions, prosthetic and natural(ised), linking spaces that occupy

- 2 *Carried & Held*, 2015, courtesy of the artist and Margaret Herman, Alexandra McArthur, John McArthur, Walker Herman, Mary Herman, Gayle McArthur, Rob Wilusz, Mary Doster Whitaker, Bill and Judy Whitaker, Clarence McArthur, Ann Gayle Rankin, Nancy Herman, Tom Herman, Emily Simon, Cherry Simon, Clem Herman, Johanna Herman, Cesar Maldonado, Emery Herman Jr, Amy Mathys, Peter Freehafer, Verde Barringer, Rosie Molinary, Betsy Kelleher, Dr. Shen, Emily Mangone, Sally Otvos, Jenny Otvos, Christine Byun, Gal Nyska, Catherine Walker, Jeremy Freifeld, Jane Dalton, Duna Norton, Meredith Steele, Janine Hoffmann, Jesse Sharp-Williams, Amanda Matles, Laurie Dunn, Laura Case, Crawford Crenshaw, L.C., Bob Giduz, Mona, Loretta Shaia, Nancy McMillian, Melissa Berry, Bob Lees, Bonnie Wright, Kathleen Cour, Laura Gerhardt, Stanley in China, Angie Wright, Jim McArthur, Ming an Lee, Murphy, Jeffie Change, Lauren Lopez, Henry Weil, Middleton Chang, Pete, Unknown Taiwanese Businessman, Melissa Bandy, Derek Lundberg, Wendy McArthur, Leigh, Bradford McArthur, Chip Schantz, Brent McCormick, David Prince, Ben Fain, Cybele Lyle, Darren Price, Madelyn Moyer, Owen Fitzpatrick, Becca Fitzpatrick, Audrey Hynes, Tom McArthur, Kathleen Hudspeth, Carrie Saxton, Adler Guerrier, David Saxton, Willy Hoffmann, Tara Thananetapon, Li Lu, Laura Schulenburg, Becky Nolin, Jen Pike, Michael Just, Jessica Sanders, Kavin Tedamrongwanish, Bethany Pelle, Hannah Heckner, Nicol Mader, Nicole Mader’s boyfriend fiancée, Ceaphas Stubbs, Ann Rath, Fred Rath, W Mae Singerman, all the young men who felt obligated but unsure in volunteering, Lorretta Fahrenholz, her dad, Bill Rath, David Rath, Inka Meißner, Tyler Bonnen, Tori Cole, Rebecca Wood, Maxwell Graham, Tom Ackers, Trista Mallory, Michelle Levin, Jason Loebs, Theresa Smith, Tina Zavitsanos, Amalle Dublon, s.o.’brien, Sky Hall, Yve Laris Cohen, Kristina Bramwell, Krista Heiner, David Crane, Joe Madura, Nate Harrison, Allan Chang, Kiwan Bigelow, Benedicte Henschien, Lisa Fulenwider, Carey McArthur, Jeannine Tang, the guy from Chinese class at Chihung’s apartment in Miami, Diana Valbuena, Emily Case, Eryn, Greta in Cooperstown, Hadley Smith, Oscar Tillman, Padraig O’Donoghue, Karl Jiang, Kendall Patterson, Lucy Marcil, Mitch Blessing, Kurt from Hudson Mobility, Bradford’s friend from Norway, Akemi Nishida, Kristy Hayden, all the airline staff, attendants, and occasional captain, Ben Tiven, Peter Daniel, Tim Saltarelli, Amber Hawk Swanson, Pam and Gary Shinn, Kim McArthur, Sandy McArthur, Naomi Safran-Hon, Cindy McArthur, Cassie McArthur, Terry and Dan, Whitney’s parents, Alice Garland and Rodney Swink, the midwife, Mary Lov of the sandwich shop, Denise Notch, Apex Middle School Janitor, Noelle Nemick, Ash Ferlito, Peter Freehafer, Lisa Freehafer, Cherry Grove Fire Island Captain, Ashley Griffith now different last name, Chris Aque, Lindsay Caplan, Sonya Dyer, Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen, 2 people living across the apartment at UM, Cyrus Atkins, David Johnson, Nigel Wallace, Boots and Bill, Miss Jean, Em Rooney, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Logan Beitman, Keith at In Touch NYCPT, Jessica Kain, Adam Vollrath, Pat Nemick, Mr. Snively, Monica Cook, Mila Holy, Sarah Anderson, Domingo Castillo, Maria Rapicavoli, Christina Evans, Oliver Cano, Cammis Bauerhaus, Aaron @ cage, Susie Frasier, Jack, Tara Hart, Daniel de la Rosa, Hope Svenson, Meredith James, Alex Fleming, Ben Tiven’s friend with recording studio from June, Cameron Rowland, Robert Snowden, Scott Ponick, Emmy Levitas, J @ Reena Spaulings, James w/ Nu Motion, Jennifer Dasal, Adelita Husni-Bey, Alex Jung, Caroline Key, Raymonda Rastegar, Sanjay Shah, Soyoun Yoon, Caitlyn Culbertson, Andrew Blackley, Sadia Shirazi, Kin Choi, Jason Hirata, Dr. Wilson, Nurse with Dr. Wilson, Nurses at Beth Israel ER 1/25/15- 1/26/15, Kelley Mathys, Tom Blood, Ron, Rich of Nu Motion, Dorris, Ted Christensen, Jennifer Burris
- 3 Ovid, quoted in Terrance Hayes, *Wind in a Box*, New York: Penguin Books, 2006, p.xi.
- 4 ‘Ramps’, ESSEX STREET, New York, 12 January—23 February 2014.



Park McArthur,
Ramps, 2014.
Installation view,
ESSEX STREET,
New York.
Photograph:
Adam Reich.
Courtesy the artist
and ESSEX STREET

both sides of — and thereby constitute — a given threshold.

When exhibited, however, they were removed from the institutions for which they were created; as a result, the two representative levels — the sidewalk and the lobby of a building, for example — on each side of a ramp existed even further apart than previously. The ramps described an impasse as much as they implied a correction to one, binding space as much as describing a division of it. If, at an earlier moment, the relation between the two was unrecognisable to most, at the point when the ramp was removed their relationship became pragmatically ambivalent: by complying with McArthur's request to withdraw the ramp, the hosting institution chose to reinforce its denial of access. For the duration of the exhibition, each site from which a ramp was removed agreed to post a sign announcing: 'Ramp Access Located at Essex Street.'⁵ What 'Ramps' demonstrated is that solutions have the ability to be problems, if we are to believe that solutions and problems are, in fact,

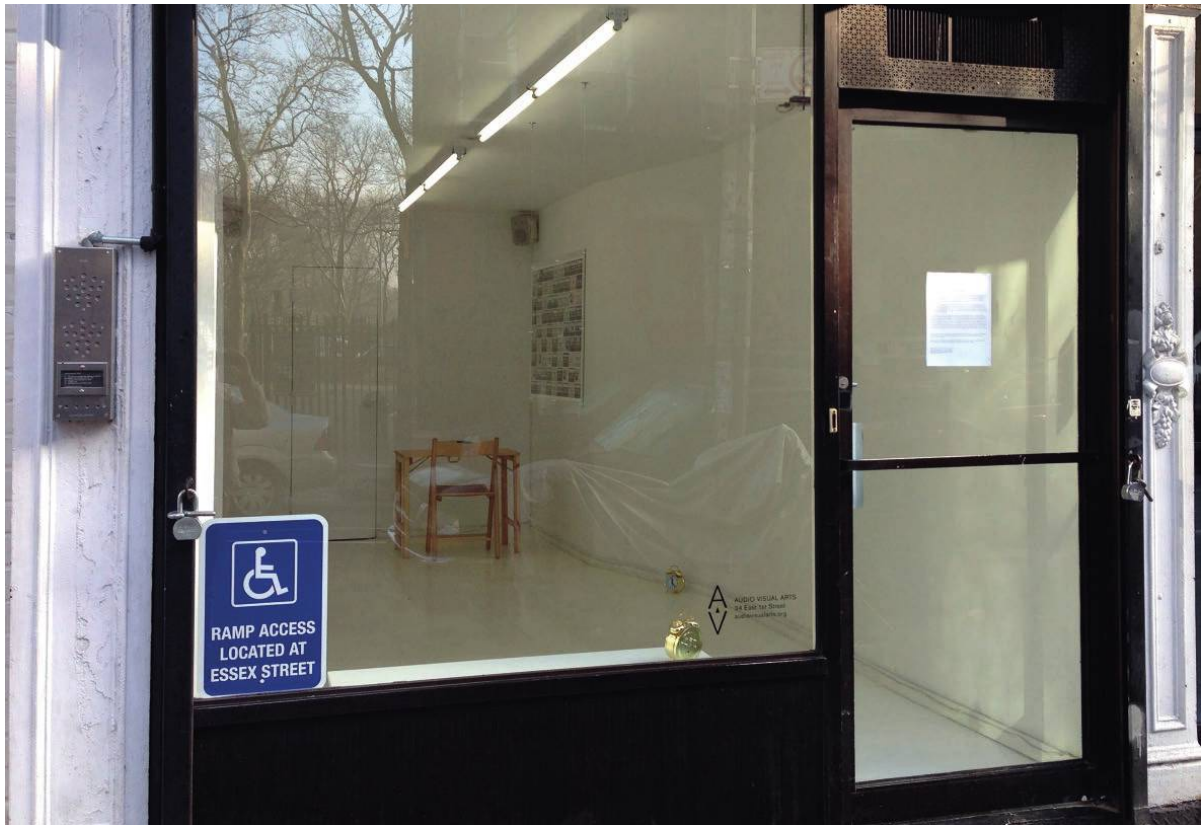
categorically, or essentially, different. Devices such as ramps serve as wedges and links; they enforce and replace the threshold inasmuch as they supersede it; they collapse what it is to share and to separate.

Some saw 'Ramps' through the precedent of a 1998 project by John Knight at American Fine Arts, an exhibition of floral arrangements loaned by restaurants around Manhattan with corresponding 'on loan' signage placed in each participating restaurant. But it would be negligent to construct a lineage that did not also include Adrian Piper's calling cards of the 1980s⁶ and her video *Cornered* (1988). In the latter work, after examining what it is to assume for others and yourself any certain category of race, Piper addresses the civil reluctance to recognise and then reject the rewards and privileges offered for identifying as white:

You may find it virtually impossible to reject those rewards and privileges. If you feel this way, you may be reacting to what I'm saying here as nothing

5 This could be read as a gesture of courtesy, although it is also a legal requirement: since 12 October 2012, New York City Law Number 2012/047 requires inaccessible building entrances, public toilets and elevators to give directions, phone numbers or other instructions as to the nearest available accessible entrance or facility.

6 See Daniel S. Palmer's interview with Park McArthur, 'Against Accommodation', *Mousse*, no.47, February 2015, pp.174–82 and 190–92.



*but an empty academic exercise that has nothing to do with you. But let's at least be clear about one thing: this is not an empty, academic exercise. This is real. And it has everything to do with you.*⁷

Just as Knight's project could be seen as having little to do with flowers, 'Ramps' may have been seen by some as having little to do with themselves, their rewards, their privileges. It's worth considering how 'Ramps', on the contrary, addressed your access as much as hers. The works were clear about one thing: they were real, and had everything to do with you.

The ramps posed real questions drawn from the intertwined discourses of architectural grading (how to introduce or alter a planar form to diagonally link existent levels) and social policy, as together they suggested (in practice) that physical access created at the doorstep of any institution seems at once primary to certain individuals and supplementary to others. Ramps are civic objects, combining – with pressured

use – the social and the architectural. One may assume that such objects are solutions to problematic situations; instead, at ESSEX STREET, we were challenged to recognise these objects as having been offered (upon McArthur's request) so that gallery visitors and implied, unlisted others could use the tooled evidence of the ways institutions (found as buildings and ideologies) exclude, on a fundamental level, the very notion of personhood. While the objects on display resulted from discrete access requests, the installation as a whole didn't address immediate causes and effects (access denied and then some version of access gained) but insisted instead on the dynamic relationship between effect and cause as represented in the standard state of affairs (that is, *access denied*). Borrowing an expression by disability rights activist Marta Russell, whose Wikipedia entry McArthur created and maintained for 'Ramps', we could say that the exhibition used ramps]to point to everything that is 'beyond ramps'.⁸

Park McArthur, *Ramps*, 2014. Installation view of the off-site intervention at Audio Visual Arts, New York. Photograph: Justin Luke. Courtesy the artist and ESSEX STREET, New York

7 See Adrian Piper, 'Cornered: A Video Installation Project', in Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (ed.), *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, Malden: Blackwell, 2005, pp.182–86.

8 Marta Russell is best known for *Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract: A Warning from an Uppity Crip* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1998). The URL of the Wikipedia entry was affixed to the wall of the gallery using vinyl letters.



Park McArthur,
Ramps, 2014.
Installation view,
ESSEX STREET,
New York.
Photograph:
Adam Reich. Courtesy
the artist and ESSEX
STREET, New York

'Ramps' was incongruent. It didn't all add up. And how could one expect it to? The exhibition displayed the means by which institutions both produce and deny access. Each ramp challenged reappraisal and reinforced a set of past and future foreclosures. 'Ramps' enlisted generative,

The work 'tells a story of bodies that change'; it provides the meshed system upon which other figural, representational arrangements and their social organisation take form.

generous responses to the negativity of the institution, to the point of engendering the reproduction of those very negative characteristics (by removing the objects' previously assumed 'function'). By extension, at stake and always under threat are the threaded relationships between queerness and disability, the breakdown of their concomitant binaries and the temporality of care.

Material

Certain textures and tenors produce contexts for investigative experiences and

environments. One such texture, *Files* (2014), was produced with artist Alex Fleming as a multichannel sound piece in McArthur's exhibition at Yale Union in Portland, Oregon. Per the artist's description, *Files* filled

*the space with spoken fragments of text that recombine material pulled from a range of online sources, including robotics videos, instructions for the mounting and installation of rubber bumpers and fixtures, descriptions of different kinds of care work and sex work, as well as recent reports investigating the living conditions and abuse of people with disabilities in state residential institutions and people with mental illness incarcerated in state prisons.*⁹

It was a maze of indexed files — sound files, personnel files, content files — and the individuals, or groups of individuals, they represented. The artwork used the voices of Tom Blood and Vanessa Place, the sound engineering of Matt Carlson, the sound design of Momo Ishiguro and the algorithmic concept of Anthony Tran.

⁹ 'Park McArthur' (press release), Yale Union, Portland, Oregon, 5 September—19 October 2014, <http://yaleunion.org/mcarthur/> (last accessed on 4 August 2015). (The text has been revised by the artist on the occasion of this publication.)



(Rarely for McArthur do works or projects pretend to exist under the presumption of autonomy.)

The algorithmic concept utilised for *Files* is based on what is called a Markov chain: a system involving a serried, recurring process of dependency. Often characterised as ‘memoryless’, a Markov chain designates an exchange whereby any next state (experiment, item, version) exclusively depends on the current state, not on any states prior. Markov chains represent movement that bypasses progress; *Files* presented, instead, numbers of durative and progressive bi-couplings. When listening to the sound work for any amount of time, each sentence presented itself as singular, and suggested only itself as precedent.

McArthur describes *Files* as having ‘aggressively’ filled the exhibition space.¹⁰ The bass filled your body and the overlapping, competing language(s) in the work filled the exhibition. In the deep bass of *Files*, you could take comfort in knowing that for the duration of your stay you would be taking a pounding. As poet Nathaniel Mackey has written:

‘The low note or bass note is a discrepant note, a complicating play of endowment and disavowal, annunciative noise in deep league with silence.’¹¹ We challenge ourselves amidst masses of tonality — of a particular tenor — to locate notes *or* silence much as we seek within the weight of language the locations of knowledge and sensation.

Whereas sound manipulates the substance of space, a foam mass will not intrude upon, or seek out to fill, its surroundings: its texture allows for it to absorb. At Yale Union, two works titled *Polyurethane Foam* (both 2014) — one pale blue, the other peach — stoically accepted and ‘trapped’ *Files*, offering visitors a particular version of reprieve should they have positioned themselves between the foam blocks and the speakers. The foam blocks stood in the middle of the gallery, surrounded by speakers and a series of laminated rubber loading-dock bumpers, *Black Molded Bumpers* (2014). While the material (industrial foam) will likely at some point discolour and become stiff, the foam existed, for the moment, selflessly alongside and in spite of circumstances.

Installation view, ‘Park McArthur’, Yale Union, Portland, 2014. Photograph: Evan La Londe. Courtesy the artist and ESSEX STREET, New York

¹⁰ Conversation with the artist, summer 2015.

¹¹ Nathaniel Mackey, *Paracritical Hinge: Essays, Talks, Notes, Interviews*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, p.4.



Installation view, 'Park McArthur: Passive Vibration Isolation', Lars Friedrich, Berlin, 2014. Photograph: Timo Ohler. Courtesy the artist and Lars Friedrich

Like foam, rubber doesn't compete with its surroundings: it, too, absorbs. At Lars Friedrich in Berlin, McArthur exhibited more loading-dock bumpers (similar to those at Yale Union), titled *Passive Vibration Isolation* (2014) and all numbered, alongside sculptures titled *commodes*, which displayed the artist's old pyjama bottoms suspended from and draped over custom-fabricated stainless-steel armatures. A visitor navigating the space with checklist in hand might have been tempted to arrange the titles in suggestive narrative: *Passive Vibration Isolation 1* was in close proximity to *Blue Snowflake Commode*, whereas *Black & White Plaid Commode*, *Breakfast Commode*, *Pink Love Commode* and *Calvin Klein Commode* were shown alongside *Passive Vibration Isolation 4* and *5*.

Cloth stains, wears, pills, rips, tears. Cloth evidences. Rubber won't; it will, though, protect your walls from your bed, your dock from your truck. And yet, both cloth and rubber, like foam, are material receivers and witnesses of the processes of physical care and maintenance, registering

'what passes over and through bodies of maximum convenience'.¹² As with cloth and rubber, foam and sound each evidence bare (or bared) lived experience — they

Each we-position is one marked with proximity, adjacency: items resting on other items, people resting on other people.

enflesh thresholds, describe sensory impasses. They represent bodies as receivers and materials; bodies and stories in an ongoing sequence of stated change. In McArthur's sculptural grammar, these materials suggest the bodies that precede bodies. 'Before the "body"', critic Hortense Spillers writes, 'there is the "flesh", that zero degree of social conceptualisation that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography.'¹³

Scale

In 2014, McArthur published 'Sort of Like a Hug: Notes on Collectivity, Conviviality,

12 'Passive Vibration Isolation' (press release), Lars Friedrich, Berlin, 20 September—1 November 2014, <http://www.larsfriedrich.net/rosa-luxemburg.html> (last accessed on 4 August 2015).

13 Hortense J. Spillers, 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book', *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p.206.



and Care’, an essay that reflects upon certain social ecologies of care:

*Unevenly descriptive, this incomplete narrative seeks to frame questions I have concerning care’s obligations and desires. In an effort to think about interpersonal care on a social scale, I map my specific experiences of physical dependency onto queer theorist Jasbir Puar’s outline of ‘convivial’ relations. Convivial relations consider categories such as race, gender, and sexuality as events — as encounters — rather than as entities or attributes of the subject. Without forgoing what identity categories and processes of identification offer, this essay focusses on types of relations coded as ‘dependent’, and the experiences, feelings, and knowledge such encounters with dependency engender.*¹⁴

‘Sort of Like A Hug’ describes the founding of care collective (cc), of which Park is a member as well as the primary subject. Composed of mostly non-disabled adults who are the artist’s friends and

peers, the care collective is a versatile and resilient solution to what McArthur identifies in the United States as ‘part-answers ... historically situated and bound to private family life and/or the State’s administering jurisdiction — two spheres of social activity maintained as repositions for the excess leftovers of capitalist accumulation’.¹⁵ The care collective offers a directed independent-via-interdependent response to services bound by rigid economic relations (provided by government or hired from healthcare contractors) or by the duty of care offered by family members — also very much economised. While *Carried & Held* is an artwork documenting a recurrent action, a care collective serves as a social methodology — a bounded experience — for those members of the collective. This relationship seems not to seek out an eradication of private/public, but instead operates within the fricative, scaled space between the *perspectives* of private and public. Versatility and resilience are attributes of scale as much as they are counter-institutions of practice.

Park McArthur, *Passive Vibration Isolation 2*, 2014, laminated rubber loading-dock bumper, 25 × 30 × 10cm. Photograph: Timo Ohler. Courtesy the artist and Collection Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann, Herzogenrath

14 Park McArthur, ‘Sort of Like a Hug: Notes on Collectivity, Conviviality, and Care’, in Isla Leaver-Yap (ed.), *The Happy Hypocrite — Heat Island*, issue 7, London: Book Works, 2014, p.49.

15 *Ibid.*, p.51.

Park McArthur,
*During the month
of August ESSEX
STREET will be
closed.*, 2013,
260 × 140 × 40cm.
Courtesy the artist
and ESSEX STREET



For McArthur, scale operates in and beyond comparisons of size or the ways objects tracked on a graph are defined as a set of ascending/descending points. Scale can be more weightiness and less weight. Scale is political insofar as it relates individuals to collectives and back to themselves. Scale is systemic supply chains, as we supply ourselves with thought and materials, writ large in dependency and within discrepancy.

McArthur's 2013 exhibition 'During the month of August ESSEX STREET will be closed.' made visible the mediations between the exception and the

norm as seen through scale. The exhibition provided two thematics: one, the vectors of use and non-use, and two, the scope of a domestic/governmental presence of neglect. The exhibition's multiple elements – sculptural, performative, textural, speculative (hopeful, even) – were arranged dramaturgically. The artist introduced what might be considered the opening 'scene':

The gallery is closed. The gate is lowered and locked. I have hung some chains and from those chains hang hangers and from those hangers hang clothes. Some of the clothes are mine, some are new, some are



used. Every day these clothes will be hosed with water. The clothes have been pinned in place to help secure them.

On the awning of ESSEX STREET, in New York's Chinatown, McArthur superimposed on the gallery's Eldridge Street address another one: 1918 First Avenue, a site a hundred blocks uptown, in East Harlem. The exhibition notes explained:

I've changed the address of the gallery to 1918 1st Ave. 1918 1st Ave is the address of a building I came across on the way to the Frieze Art Fair, en route to crossing the 103rd Street Footbridge to Randall's

Island. This building opened in 1962 as the Nurses' Residence and Training School of the Metropolitan Hospital system. The building is now closed and abandoned. I recommend you go and look at it.

An article by Danny Hakim in the New York Times alerted me to a report about the abuse and protection of disabled people living in residential facilities in New York State. This Report is called 'The Measure of a Society'. In 2010 there were 119.68 Abuse Allegations Per 100 Occupied Beds. What is the difference between a person and an occupied bed? Here is a link to this Report.¹⁶

Park McArthur, *During the month of August ESSEX STREET will be closed.*, 2013. Installation view, ESSEX STREET, New York. Courtesy the artist and ESSEX STREET

¹⁶ See Clarence J. Sundram, 'The Measure of a Society: Protection of Vulnerable Persons in Residential Facilities Against Abuse and Neglect', December 2011, available at <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/327142/ny-abuse-report.pdf> (last accessed on 26 July 2015). It was announced earlier this year that the site will be expanded and developed into a senior housing project (currently under construction); before this development was made public, McArthur had actively and publicly entertained the idea of developing the site into a subsidised apartment building for care providers and receivers.



1918 First Avenue,
New York, 2013.
Photograph:
Park McArthur

The slender, vacant fourteen-story white-glazed brick tower at 1918 First Avenue and the chains/hangers/clothes watered daily are structurally more similar than their sizes and handling make immediately apparent. Incompatible as they may seem, their sculptural grammars and geometries become intertwined and interdependent. This exhibition and the care collective track scale; they recondition the ways we use (or un-use) and abuse things; together they express the socially virile exchange of mimesis and debt.



The *we* invoked in these works necessarily implies a *they*.¹⁷ *We* and *they* have a scaled relationship — both are designed experiences of self-preservation, both demand an audience. *We* became a collective in the proximity of *they*; *we* is the solidarity of strangers. It is ‘to stay in

the hold of the ship, despite my fantasies of flight’.¹⁸ Each *we*-position is one marked with proximity, adjacency: items resting on other items, people resting on other people, carriers carrying, holders holding. A number urge us to recognise that verticality is dependent upon the horizontal plane, and both are conceived alongside gravity. Any identification or critique of hierarchies (a traditionally ‘vertical’ topic), or power ‘generally’, must take into consideration more than that which is you and that which is under you, as gravity (vertical ascent — or, for that matter, descent) requires the negotiation of the lateral. Steps anticipate ramps, a temporary plane that joins and makes void the exclusivity of horizontal and vertical logics. Perhaps it is those structures that one finds when looking laterally, horizontally, that most need attention at present.

17 ‘The most profound expression of solidarity, it seems to me, is the recognition that the social and political conditions under which *you* live have an impact on the social and political conditions under which *they* live. And that strikes me as an absolute imperative if you happen to live in the United States.’ Fred Moten, ‘Duke Students for Justice in Palestine’s (DSJP) second annual Israeli Apartheid Week’, Duke University, Durham, NC, 6 March 2013, available online at <https://soundcloud.com/prshnth/fred-moten-on-the-academic> (last accessed on 4 August 2015).

18 Frank B. Wilderson III quoted in Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, Wivenhoe, NY: Minor Compositions, 2013, p.94.