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Exhibition:

30 November 2022 – 15 April 2023

@ VU ART SCIENCE Gallery

Open Tuesday-Saturday 12-18.00h

Art Science Dialogues begin January 2023

12 Jan: 16.00-18.00h: Coralie Vogelaar & Mario Maas

9 Feb: 16.00-18.00h: Marijn Bax & Nadia Bij de Vaate

9 Mar: 16.00-18.00h: Simon Keizer & Hanneke van Laarhoven

13 Apr: 16.00-18.00h: Sissel Marie Tonn & Juan Garcia Vallejo + Heather Leslie

Art Science Dialogues are moderated by Henry de Vries (dermatologist and Professor of skin infections at Amsterdam UMC, Bio Art & Design (BAD) Award-laureate 2020/ 2022)

Information and registration: www.artsciencegallery.nl

Location: NU Building – De Boelelaan 1111



INTRODUCTION

Art and science have always been intertwined. It is a current phenomenon, however, that they seek one another out intentionally. The Amsterdam-based VU ART SCIENCE gallery was founded in 2021 for this very reason. Artists and scientists each research the world in their own way; bringing both perspectives together leads to a deeper understanding of human nature and the environment. Through the collaboration between artists and scientists, we can uncover new insights and innovations. Both **Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam** and the art department of **Amsterdam UMC** are dedicated to this interaction of art and science. As such, we join forces on *Some Body*; a collaborative project that researches the (re)connection with our body in the digital age from multiple perspectives.

Without our body we are nobody. Through our bodies we experience and present ourselves in the world around us. Due to digitalization and capitalist notions of value we tend to reduce our (ideated) body more to a tool for representation in the digital environment and neglect its power of experiencing itself. The COVID-19 pandemic has confronted us with the negative effects of neglecting our physicality, leading to physical and mental damage. By living mentally online we forgot how the body 'works,' as in how it feels, moves, and smells; we withdrew, alienated. Do we need to change the relationship with our body and how? How can we

redefine our body; what is the essence of the body, and how does it function in the digital age? In ***Some Body***, artists and scientists share their perspectives on this matter.

Around this exhibition concept, four artists have been invited to present their research at the VU ART SCIENCE gallery. Based on their works, scientists with a similar approach from both Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Amsterdam UMC will engage with the artworks and the artists in a series of **art science dialogues**. Collaborating scientists Juan Garcia Vallejo and Heather Leslie have already been developing a working relationship with artist Sissel Marie Tonn. Hanneke van Laarhoven's research is focused on artistic practice and its lessons for end of life care. The research fields of Mario Maas and Nadia Bij de Vaate focus on the medical understanding and social meaning of the body, respectively. Our aim is to bridge networks and bring new perspectives to how we can interact with our body.

Where does the body **begin** and **end**? The video *Becoming a Sentinel Species* (2020), displayed in the large cabinet, shows the fluidity between the body and its environment. In this fictional story, immune cells are infected with seaborne microplastics. This leads to hallucinations in which bodies become one with the primordial sea. The video is a co-production of artist Sissel Marie Tonn with microplastics expert Heather Leslie and immunologist Juan Garcia Vallejo, and the winner of the 2020 Bio Art Design Awards. The project was inspired by the role of a sentinel, a species that functions as a canary in a coalmine, used to measure environmental pollution.



The work of Marijn Bax focuses on the opposite: disconnection between bodies and their environment. Large printed scarves hung in the gallery space show anonymous digital bodies that have become detached from their personalities. Following on the invitation for this exhibition, Bax reshaped the 2019 work *#feelme*. In this work Bax observes how the body is displayed on social media like Instagram and reduced to a marketing tool that serves the mind. What does it mean to position a body on a digital platform and let go of its ownership? Her installation invites us to reconnect with our and other bodies and **experience ourselves again**. We connect the work of Bax to communication scientist Nadia Bij de Vaate, who aims to investigate questions on the relationship between adolescents' social media use and their well-being. She is part of the AWeSome Project, which is an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Universities of Amsterdam and Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

The kinetic man-machine works of Coralie Vogelaar also examine the effect of body language being reduced to data. They confront us with the discrepancy between the uncontrollability of our own bodies and the rigidity of hard data and AI. In *Infinite Posture Dataset* a person on a life-size screen performs a range of postures, while the screen moves back and forth at high speed. As the person lacks a face or identity, the gestures become abstract and unreadable. Communication is doomed to fail in this out of control gymnastic installation. In Vogelaars' interactive installation *Cardiac Biofeedback Measurement # 1* one's heartbeat is detected by a loud tick. The irregular, clinical sounds **expose our own uncontrollability** and the discomfort we experience when made aware of that. Focusing on more anatomical visualization of the

body, professor of radiology Mario Maas similarly makes visual the invisible processes of the body through modern medical means.

Simon Keizer approaches the body from the perspective of religion and the belief that the **body is separated from our spirit**. Delving into the history of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, he discovered that Abraham Kuyper, founding father of the VU and the reformist movement in the Netherlands, suffered from depressive episodes and burn-outs. Kuyper found a way to **rebalance** his troubled mind by an almost obsessive dedication to walking in nature. This inspired Keizer to create a new work: *The Man with Ten Faces and a Hundred Arms*, an installation with walking sticks, rituals and spells. Together with Keizer, professor of oncology Hanneke van Laarhoven will explore the boundaries of the healthy body. Van Laarhoven has integrated the Art-Based Learning technique in her Palliative Care research to explore how illness influences our perception of what makes life meaningful.

This booklet gives background information about the artists and scientist. It also contains a critical essay written by RMA student Sofija Podvisocka in which they approach the body and its boundaries from the perspective of gender. Sofija has developed, designed, and edited this booklet.

We are grateful that all participants have joined us in this adventure and thank them for their wonderful contributions!

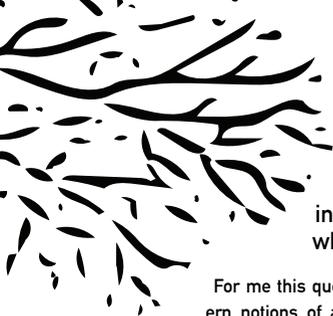


SISSEL MARIE TONN

SIMON KEIZER

CORALIE VOGELAAR

MARIJN BAX



What do you consider to encompass the body? As in, where does it start, where does it end?

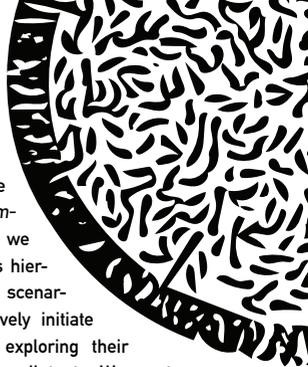
For me this question challenges the Western notions of a separation between body and mind, and body and environment. I'm interested in ways of thinking and evidencing our intimate entanglement with the world around us. This intimate entanglement has been made very clear to me in the research I've done for the work on show at *Some Body— Becoming A Sentinel Species*. I had the chance to work together with Juan Garcia Vallejo, an immunologist, and Heather Leslie, a microplastics expert, who are working together researching how our immune cells might react to microplastic particles inside our bodies. Working with them for the past year I've started to wonder whether the presence of microplastics in our immune cells might challenge us to reconsider where the boundaries of our bodily self end and the environment around us begins.

Microplastics, for decades, have been considered an issue of the oceans. Many marine organisms – from whales to mussels – are considered 'sentinel species' to the issue. Their sensitivity to pollution warns us about the state of their environment. The concept of sentinel species reinforces an implicit hierarchy pointing to the unequal distribution of toxicity: there are always some

bodies that are more exposed, more vulnerable, and more sensitive than others. In *Becoming a Sentinel Species*, we wanted to question this hierarchy by imagining a scenario where humans actively initiate becoming a sentinel, exploring their inherent sensitivities to pollutants. We created a science fiction film that follows two researchers who experimentally introduce microplastics collected from the sea into their own bodies. They isolate macrophages (immune cells) from their blood and contaminate them with microplastics particles. Through this process, they discover psychotropic effects that produce hallucinations of returning to the primordial sea.

What is the relationship between your work and the perception of the body?

The film that I talk about above weaves in documentary footage of the making of an actual human biomarker to microplastics, using macrophages grown from my own blood. I am horribly afraid of having my blood taken, but I think it's an important way to involve myself in the research process. I learned a lot about my own relationship to my body. The fear of being 'punctured' - having something foreign coming into my bloodstream - my



SISSEL MARIE TONN





whole system literally shuts down.

Learning more about immunology, both from a scientific and a societal point of view, I learned a lot about its ties with our sense of self and the tensions between our bodies and the environments around us. I also started noticing the kind of language we use to describe the complexity of immunity. I realized that it relies heavily on metaphors about war. We imagine a kind of battleground, where the immune system defends the body (or self) from outside intruders (or non-self). This was my basic understanding of immunity coming into the project. Juan then told me that this binary division is actually somewhat of an outdated way of looking at immunity. Pioneering immunologist Polly Matzinger, for instance, argues that the immune system might be more concerned with what's dangerous to the body than with what's foreign.

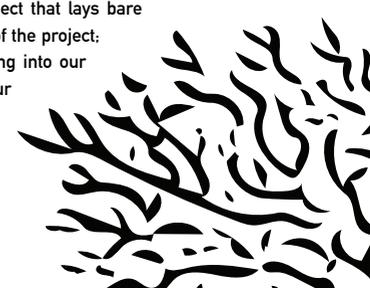
Is there a bodily interaction between you as the artist, creating, and the audience, perceiving?

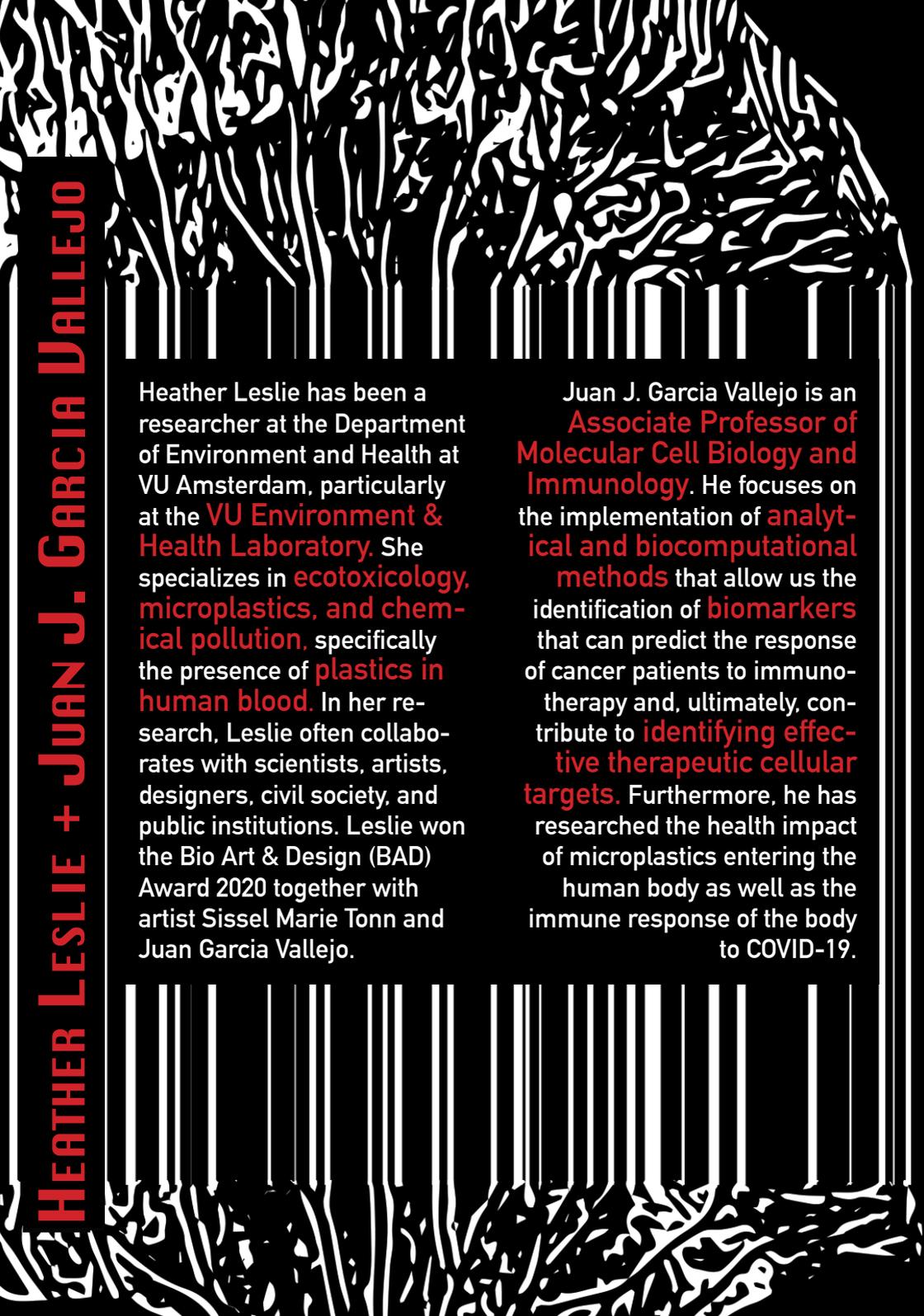
In much of my work there is an interactive component—often based on sensors, sound or touch. I try to engage the audience's body in the topic at hand by having their

bodies literally activate the work. However, I also believe in cinematic storytelling as a way to physically affect the viewer watching. I definitely know from myself that movie-watching has physically, chemically changed me in the past, so I guess I hope for a bit of that.

Is your work informed/influenced by scientific research, if so, how?

Evidently my answers above shows a close collaboration with two scientists. I call these two my special unicorn scientist-collaborators, however, I believe we all want a little bit of each other's work, which is why it's worked so well and why we're still collaborating! While I have perhaps not contributed in a very qualitative way to their scientific work they have worked in a very tangible way with my artistic concepts (and perhaps I've affected their scientific work in ways that I don't know!). So I think in this case the boundaries between disciplines have actually been broken down a little, into a true art-science collaboration. This is also what was beautiful about making a science-fiction project: they had the freedom to speculate outside scientific conventions (and possibly, constraints), and I got to weave in an actual scientific research project that lays bare the very core concern of the project: the microplastics entering into our innermost selves—our immune cells!





HEATHER LESLIE + JUAN J. GARCIA VALLEJO

Heather Leslie has been a researcher at the Department of Environment and Health at VU Amsterdam, particularly at the **VU Environment & Health Laboratory**. She specializes in **ecotoxicology, microplastics, and chemical pollution**, specifically the presence of **plastics in human blood**. In her research, Leslie often collaborates with scientists, artists, designers, civil society, and public institutions. Leslie won the Bio Art & Design (BAD) Award 2020 together with artist Sissel Marie Tonn and Juan Garcia Vallejo.

Juan J. Garcia Vallejo is an **Associate Professor of Molecular Cell Biology and Immunology**. He focuses on the implementation of **analytical and biocomputational methods** that allow us the identification of **biomarkers** that can predict the response of cancer patients to immunotherapy and, ultimately, contribute to **identifying effective therapeutic cellular targets**. Furthermore, he has researched the health impact of microplastics entering the human body as well as the immune response of the body to COVID-19.



HANNEKE VAN LAARHOVEN

Hanneke van Laarhoven is an **internist-oncologist** at Amsterdam UMC, and **Professor of Translational Medical Oncology** at the University of Amsterdam. Her research aims on translational research in oncology with a **special focus on gastrointestinal malignancies and psychosocial and supportive care.**

She also holds a PhD in **Theology** and is especially interested in the meaning of quality of life. She is focused on integrating a **multidisciplinary approach** and emphasizing its importance for the next generation of researchers. Van Laarhoven is also a member of the **Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science (KNAW).**

What do you consider to encompass the body? As in, where does it start, where does it end?

For me the body does not end on the skin or after the anus. It starts before the mouth and eyes and all other senses. The body is a collection of experiences, thoughts, trauma, oxygen, blood, food, and social interactions of energy. To have a happy life and body there needs to be a balance between all these things. I seek to approach the body in a holistic way, where the body and consciousness are as an organic whole— I think this is where all bodies are connected through their exchanges of energies. The body is also a total mystery. I myself grew up with the dichotomy of a Calvinist, medical household. That is what I like about working on this topic in my art. It is totally incomprehensible.

This tension between the body, religion, and medicine has always fascinated me and inspired different ways of approaching the topic. My father was an oncologist, so I was raised in a way thinking of the body as something that will always fail, not something that you can enjoy. He sometimes brought his patients home, and there would always be body parts of some sort lying around. And from there, three or four years ago, I got



into a quest for myself to start healing myself and then I started thinking about what I'm working on now— what constitutes a body? Looking beyond these more technical aspects of the physical leaves more room to play with religion, historical context, and humor, which I like to sustain in my work.

What is the relationship between your work and the perception of the body?

I think it's a search for myself. My shifting understanding of the body came to me through my research in the last couple of years, especially this last year where I made a series of projects on Humorism. Humorism was a medical system trying to deal with a supposed composition of the body by identifying imbalances in phlegm, blood, and black and yellow bile. These ideas grew from ancient Greek and Roman times (and likely Ayurveda before that), and in the Western world began to fall out of favor around 1850 with the advent of the germ theory. Humorism is about balance. I think through my process, I communicate a holistic standpoint of what the body is and what art can do for you.

Is there a bodily interaction between you as the artist, creating, and the audience, perceiving?

The body for me consists of interactions. Especially with my performances, such as in *Ten Heads and a Hundred Arms*, I hope to open up the possibility to interact or to let go. I use simple and cheap materials to let the audience use that to their benefit. To not let them be put off by the making process or the vulnerability of the object, but to let the audience use the objects to open up and show





their vulnerability and start from there. I use a lot of humor in my work, and I like to think that it opens the art up to the audience with less of a fear of misinterpretation.

Next to that I also use materials that have the appearance of being bodily.

Is your work informed or influenced by scientific research, if so how or why not?

Research is quite a hot topic for me at the moment. This collaboration with the VU came at the right moment.

My research was often internet based, but as I've wanted to go out into the world to meet and talk with likeminded people, this kind of research doesn't fit my practice anymore.

I originally intended to use the Vrolijk Museum as a starting point for this project, but my emphasis on humor and body horror seemed rather displaced with the heaviness of their collection. I tried going into their cutting

room as well, but I realized I wanted to stay away from that pretty quickly. So I turned more to archival research. The VU has a very large collection of reformist writing and scholarship— that's where I started reading *De Zeven Levens van Abraham Kuyper*, a biography by Johan Snel, which these pieces were so influenced by. From there, I was inspired by the mountain myths surrounding him and his involvement with the Church. So I ended up collaborating with the archivists— for me, art is about connection, so the opportunity to meet with scholars and cultivate that in-person connection was incredibly important.



ENGENDERING THE SOCIAL BODY

Beyond Binaries

Some Body focuses on the question: how can we re-define our body, what is its essence, and how does it function in the digital age? In the exhibition, a selection of artists and scientists offer their perspectives on the contemporary role of the body. This essay takes the works of the artists exhibited in *Some Body* as a starting point to delve deeper into the technological construction of the queer body, aiming to display the social biases involved in the constitution of the body.

The body alone cannot sustain all functions necessary for the experience of what we call life. While in Western Europe, the Rationalist assumption of a 'mind/body' binary is still widely accepted, several Eastern philosophies take opposing views. Chinese philosophies are largely unconcerned with a necessity to specify the boundaries of the body.¹ Buddhists are largely concerned with escaping the self as an indivisible whole,² and Hindu cosmology positions mind and body as a "psychophysical continuum"³ that functions concurrently rather than in opposition. Instead of focusing on the dichotomy of body and mind, I would like to examine the interrelations of body and non-body and question the assumption of clear boundaries between the physical and the alternative elements of the human condition that determine consciousness.

These variables are further complicated by our entrance into the digital age. The anonymity of online identity and the ability of the individual to forgo physicality in their online interactions complicate our prior notions of where the body ends. In addition to exploring the blurred boundaries that virtual platforms bring to our construction of self, we must also note the social contexts from which platform participants join - or are unable to join. The internet is not a platform of ubiquitous accessibility. It is often obstructed by paywalls, content management rules, and the social repercussions of visibility.

Scholar and art critic Sally O'Reilly argues that "the lines that demarcate the individual must be established with reference to social circumstance as well as to non-human factors"⁴. On the other hand, the internet's penchant towards separating the body from the mind, soul, spirit, etc., creates at times a refuge for marginalized identities, particularly queer and gender non-conforming (GNC) individuals.

Hand-in-hand with the binary thinking that determined the Rationalist split between the body and mind came the reinforcement of the gender binary and its reinforcement of gender roles. Gender, prior to colonization, held an abundance of manifestations in non-Western cultures, all of which were relegated to a simplistic, binary view that made it easy to separate and control distinct workforces—the domestic and the public sphere.⁵ It is even incorrect to simply call these alternative genders, given that gender as we talk about it is still largely a colonial construct, much like that of the body—there exists no trans/gender if the relationship between man/woman is not seen as dichotomous from the start. Any given example of culturally significant alternatives, such as Navajo *nadleehee*⁶ and Indian *hijras*,⁶ exist in a spiritual or cultural context that creates novel possibilities of constructing gender.

In *Ten Heads and a Hundred Arms*, Simon Keizer deconstructs the body as simply an anatomical phenomenon, focusing also on how corporeality is socially constructed. By inviting the audience to participate in the myth-making around Abraham Kuyper, he encourages a more collaborative approach towards defining the boundaries of the body. By focusing on the ritual aspects of what defines the body boundary, he echoes the ways that communities construct categories for the individuals residing among them—the process is dynamic, interpretable in multiple ways, as opposed to being a static and omnipresent categorization.

Body Data

We oftentimes see our bodies as vessels—malleable and subject to the whims of the mind. Often, we operate under the assumption that ideas (mind) precede actions (body). As explored in Coralie Vogelaar's work *Cardiac Biofeedback Measurement #1*, which produces sound based on fluctuations in a participant's heart rate, machines scramble the data between input and output; human fluctuations within the body, inexplicable in terms of the mind, foreground an origin of volition that comes from the physical. The inability, as Vogelaar puts it, to "retrace the meaning of its fluctuations," creates a blackbox space that functions as an almost mystical, transformative entity.

If we can hardly trace back the cause of fluctuations in bodies in general, how can the queered body, or the non-mainstream body in general, be listened to and

understood by medical professionals.? And how can the information gathered during medical treatment be processed within normative categories of data?

Perhaps it's easy to say that data is data, untouched by subjective perception, but the categories through which the data is read are constructed socially. To receive a questionnaire that immediately labels a patient as either a man or a woman is a significant barrier to entry for trans- and genderqueer individuals.⁸ These discrepancies bleed over into health-adjacent issues, compromising GNC individuals' housing, employment, and insurance. Science, too, is biased and influenced by social norms, and the further from the norm you become, the more obfuscated your data, your agency, your fluctuations.

Platform Culture

When the internet was still in its early phases in the 1980s, acting more as an archive than the contemporary network of interactive platforms, users developed somewhat modifiable repositories of information. One of these early repositories was TG-Net, an independent international transgender digital communication network.⁹ These networks were composed of geographically-bound bulletin board systems (BBSeS), a precursor to the modern forum. Those who had an independent server available to dial in would be able to connect anonymously via a screen name to local queer communities.¹⁰

From Imogen Binnie's Nevada blogger-protagonist Maria to Twitter and Twitch phenomenon Clara Sorrenti (@keffals), trans individuals have often used social media platforms as a way to cultivate safe havens and pass along generational knowledge that would otherwise be geographically scattered. In contrast to Marijn Bax's work on display, *#feelme*, which investigates the prevalence of the naked body on social media and questions our relationship to privacy and the perception of ourselves, gender-queer communities have cultivated a history of using social media as cultural memorandum. This is not to say that marginalized communities don't also have a tendency to experience increases in dysphoria in the competitive landscape of contemporary social media structures—just to indicate that the digital space, before it shifted to focus on the body as a measure for success, created the exact kind of anonymous haven necessary for the emergence of solidary queer culture.

External Bodies

Sissel Marie Tonn's *Becoming a Sentinel Species* asks, at what level the materials our bodies interact with start to modify the nature of our physicality. At what point does a microplastic that our immune system responds to become an integrated part of our physical ecosystem? When is the boundary-line between what we consume and what we are blurred?

This same question appears in the contemporary debate around gender-affirming treatments, in particular hormone replacement therapy (HRT). HRT involves the injection of either testosterone or estrogen to stimulate biological processes that result in one's physical self being altered to better fit the traditional conception of either masculinity or femininity. Unlike the microplastics in *Becoming a Sentinel Species*, however, hormones are more transient; they do not "cause specific biological or behavioral effects,"¹¹ rather mediating interactions between bodily mechanisms. When used for gender-affirming purposes, this muddles the boundary of in/externality. When the hormone mediates body processes and steers the physical body in a certain direction, perhaps it is more of a force than an object; the boundary of the body is left unbreached. Oftentimes trans- and GNC individuals necessitate HRT to decrease the very real complications of dysphoria and social perception, but gender-affirming treatments are notoriously difficult to obtain.¹²

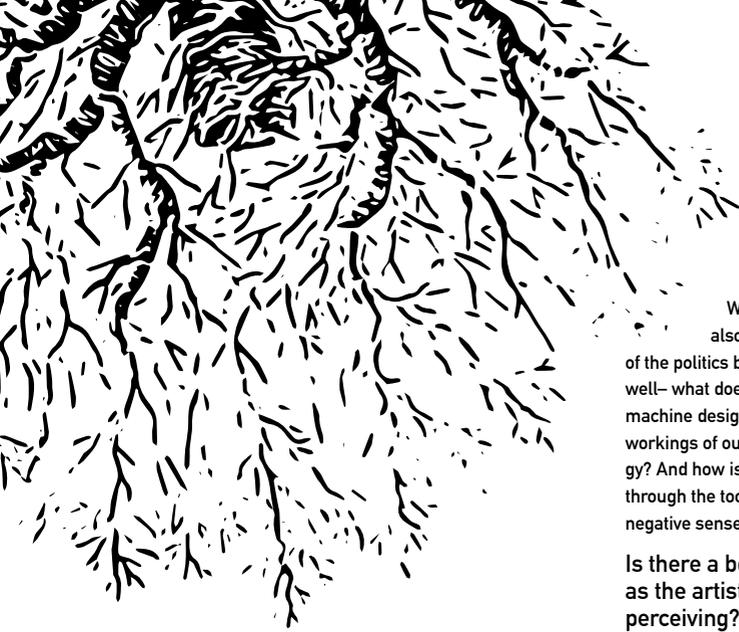
Final Thoughts

Of course, the social dimension of our bodies is not limited to its gender identity and expression—we must remain aware of the intersectional factors that determine the way our physical bodies set and interpret boundaries. Race, class, gender and sexuality, neurodivergence and (dis)ability—all of these factors alter the perception of our bodies and the way they interact with both the physical world and its varied virtual counterparts.

The body does not exist in a vacuum; it is never perceived directly by itself, only through reflected images—mirrors, as they exist in the eyes of others. There are layers not only to the ways the body interacts with setting (nature, virtuality, metaphysics), but also to the social construction of identity. The boundaries of the body are thus created rather than self-evident, both informed and interpreted by social precedent.

**Sofija
Podvisocka**





how is the gesture perceived by the audience? Working with uncertainty as an inherent component in our body's creation and processing of knowledge has helped me come to understand it better.

Working with technical components has also helped me cultivate an understanding of the politics behind technological developments as well— what does the machine recognize? Who is the machine designed for? What can we learn about the workings of our bodies through the use of technology? And how is our thought and behavior influenced through the tools we use? In both a positive and negative sense.

Is there a bodily interaction between you as the artist, creating, and the audience, perceiving?

Good question! I'm not entirely sure. I work with other performers, so I never perform myself. This is for a couple of reasons: they are much more in control with their bodies and can do so much more than I could do. It also helps me to perceive my work and reflect on it while I'm in the process of creating, since I would find that too difficult to do with my own body. Hereby I am always very much interested in how the performers perceive the tasks that are given to them, and I learn a lot from that. In the work *Infinite Posture Dataset*.

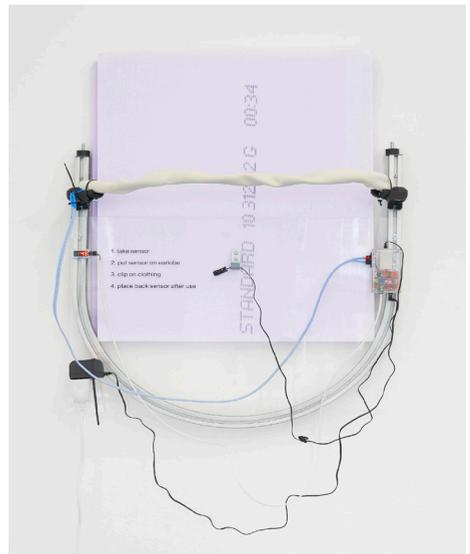
What do you consider to encompass the body? As in, where does it start, where does it end?

I think the physical structure called the body has no clearly defined border; in the end we are made of floating molecules whereby everything is interconnected and the mind, body and world work together for us to be able to exist. I am hereby very much interested in the embodied mind— so how the body is helping us process information. To give you a nice example: did you know people with botox treatment find it more difficult to remember texts that have an emotional focus?

There's a knowledge of the body that's missing from our explicit thoughts— it has its own way of processing and digesting information that remains difficult to comprehend in cognitive terms. While certain elements of that knowledge bleed into what we call the mind, the relationship is still more collaborative than it is singular; the boundaries of the body fluctuate depending on the circumstances the body is in.

What is the relationship between your work and the perception of the body?

In some of my works I enforce randomness in the expressive behavior of the body to not only learn new information on the working of the body but also on our perception. So if the face or the body is making a randomized gesture: what kind of 'feeling' is coming up by the performer's muscle memory, but also





for example, the performer Courtney May Robertson is mentioning all the feelings the body is communicating to her while doing the movements.

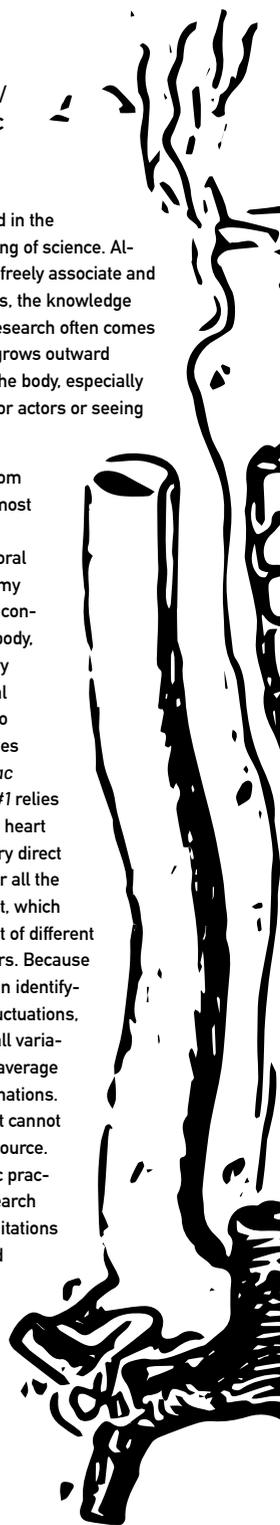
With *Cardiac Biofeedback Measurement #1*, I suppose there is some sort of connection between the construction of the machine and its interactive nature. Because the sensors pick up every change of the heartbeat, the audience is very much looking at their own bodies in a different way. At the same time the sensor also receives a lot of environmental noise because it is so sensitive, there is a dynamic between the choices I make in its physical construction and the ways that the audience then perceives it.

But beyond technics and performance, I guess my work also comes out of my own logic, ideas, and intuition, which comes also from being in contact with the world, new emerging technologies and other bodies. I guess that puts me in contact with the audience. It could be a good note to strive for, while I'm thinking about it.

Is your work informed/ influenced by scientific research, if so how or why not?

Yes, I'm very much interested in the methodological way of working of science. Although I take the freedom to freely associate and combine my different sources, the knowledge that I gain from my artistic research often comes on unexpected moments. It grows outward from free associations with the body, especially while working with dancers or actors or seeing how the audience reacts.

When I talk with scientists from the physiological field I feel most connected to the behavioral sciences— I find that behavioral science resonates well with my fundamental inquiry into the control and intentionality of the body, and seeks to define the blurry boundary between behavioral and cognition. However, I also try to push past the boundaries of scientific research— *Cardiac Biofeedback Measurement #1* relies on sensors that translate the heart rate of the participant in a very direct manner. The sensors register all the irregularities of the heartbeat, which fluctuates in response to a lot of different physical and emotional factors. Because of the complexities involved in identifying the cause of individual fluctuations, science often dismisses small variations as irrelevant, and only average readings are used for examinations. They contain fluctuations that cannot be traced back to a specific source. I believe this is where artistic practice allows collaborative research projects to go beyond the limitations of scientific methodology and to experiment with data from the body we can not explain yet.

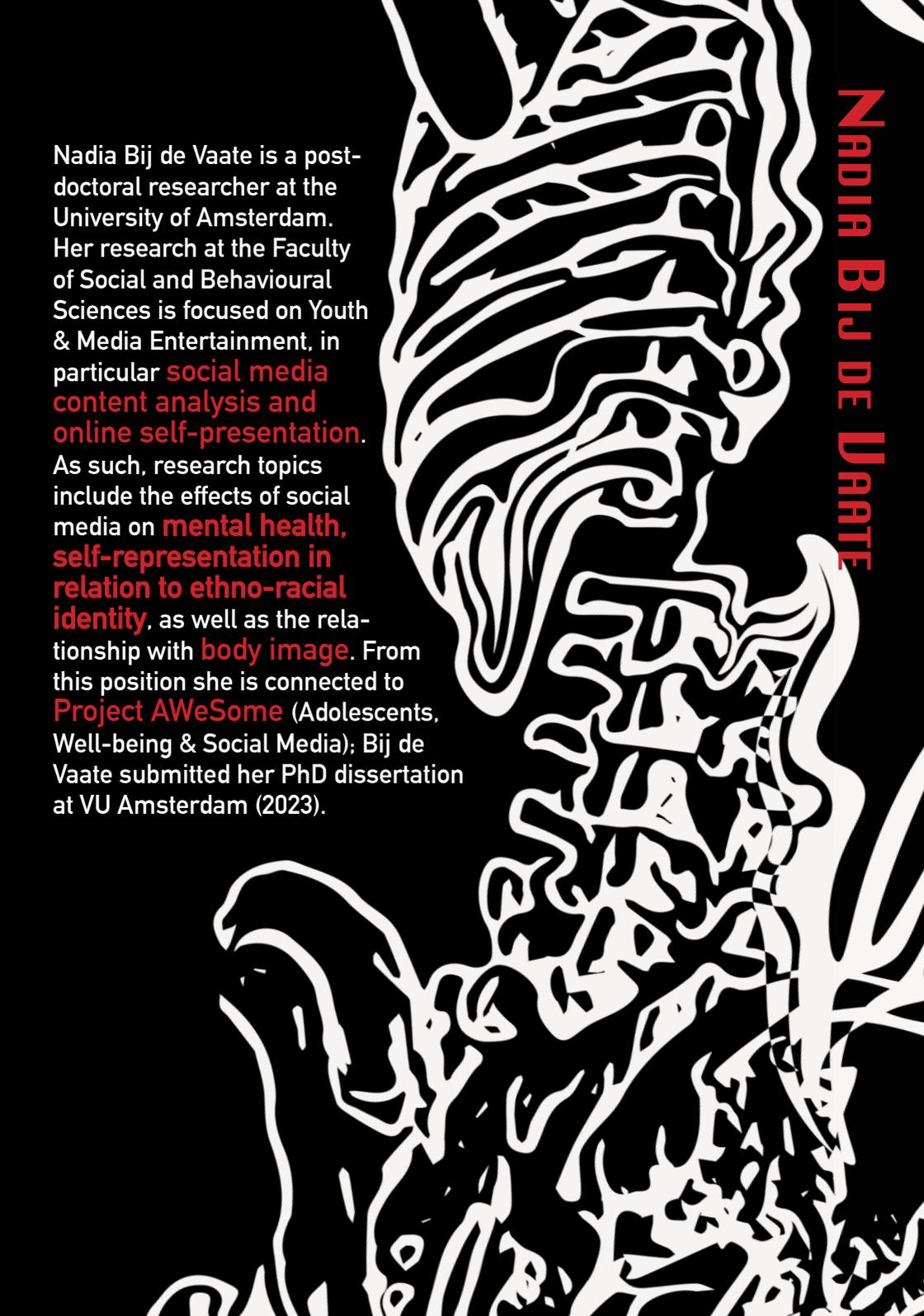


MARIO MAAS

Mario Maas has been a **Professor of Radiology** at the University of Amsterdam since 2013, working with Amsterdam UMC to research **musculoskeletal** radiology. He works in a multidisciplinary practice involving **joint and tendon disorders, sports trauma and imaging, and metabolic development**. Next to his research and position at Amsterdam UMC, he is acutely committed to education innovation and stimulating **multi-disciplinary collaboration**.

He is also **Chair of the Board of Examiners at the Medical Faculty University of Amsterdam** as well as **President Elect of the European Society of MusculoSkeletal Radiology**. Maas is medical supervisor of high performing athletes, and in this role connected to Ajax and the National Olympic Committee. He is **director of Amsterdam Movement Sciences (AMS)**, a research cooperation between both universities of Amsterdam for all movement research.





NADIA BIJ DE VAATE

Nadia Bij de Vaate is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam. Her research at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences is focused on Youth & Media Entertainment, in particular **social media content analysis and online self-presentation**. As such, research topics include the effects of social media on **mental health, self-representation in relation to ethno-racial identity**, as well as the relationship with **body image**. From this position she is connected to **Project AWeSome** (Adolescents, Well-being & Social Media); Bij de Vaate submitted her PhD dissertation at VU Amsterdam (2023).

What do you consider to encompass the body? As in, where does it start, where does it end?

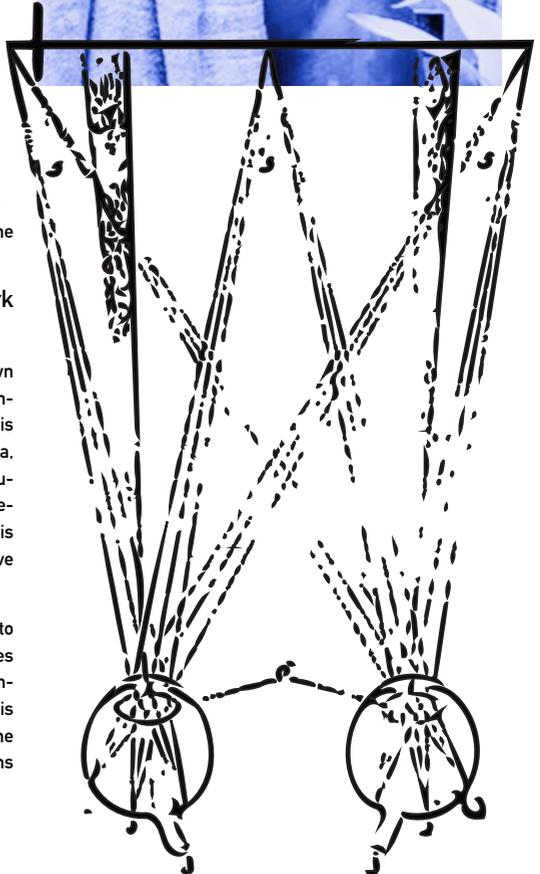
In my opinion this is a shifting process, not fixed at all. It depends on many influences: time, place, culture, religion... The body is a strong tool that communicates intricately with nature, with the other, with our mind. We just seem to find it difficult to hear it. In our Western society we happen to forget that there is neither a beginning nor an end. We are part of everything around us. Not an individual species. The acceptance of our differences is what makes us human.

There is a gap in our society— we've lost contact with non-human spaces. Many people are trying to find their way back to this connection, rethink the split we believe remains between body and mind. Perhaps they're still the same, so it's hard to say that it starts or ends anywhere in particular. No, I think in the end it's all one, just in different shapes.

What is the relationship between your work and the perception of the body?

The body is so much more than the object that is shown in the mirror or on a screen. In my work, #feelme, I consider the body as a tool that serves the mind. This is how I observe the body being displayed on social media, like Instagram. I'm also questioning this idea in my audio work. Whenever you upload anything on social media, your rights to it are revoked— I'm interested in this idea that once you display your body on an alternative platform, you let go of your ownership of it.

I also have a tendency to start projects grounded to a physical space— most of my work starts in spaces made by humans, so this work was my attempt to instead work in a digital space. The digital space and this issue of ownership has also encouraged me to examine the line between private and public— our definitions





Is your work informed/influenced by scientific research, if so how or why not?

It's highly influenced by psychology, philosophy and also sociology— mostly by reading and in conversations with scientists that I meet, often because I have to photograph them for an assignment. I often use science but never just as a fact, always in questions or in dialogue with fiction. Much of my research comes also from the space my work is designed to inhabit. My past project, *Another Kind of Need*, focused largely on the garden, so I took my time to get intimately acquainted with one (specifically the garden of Ank van Peski), drawing my research from the time I spent speaking with the owner and traveling the paths myself. For *#feelme*, as well, I immersed myself in the digital space in order to induce that sense of familiarity.

I haven't worked in collaboration with a specific institute or university yet; this is my first of those experiences.

are evolving, changing our perception of the body as it comes out of the private sphere and into the public eye. We want the public to see our private lives; we end up hiding in the physical world and compensating for that online.

Is there a bodily interaction between you as the artist, creating, and the audience, perceiving?

In my work I always look for a physical intervention or interaction between the work and the audience. I want it to be touched, and let that touch confront the mind. I believe the mind works differently if it is touching something at the same time. Or when the mind is in another way stimulated with a physical experience. I want the body included.

We need this reminder— the body needs physical contact, which is why I always aim to include it in some way. That's why, for *#feelme*, I printed the images on really soft fabrics, because I want them to be touched. We often forget that touch is how we stay alive. We think we're touched because of the likes and the hearts, but in the end if we don't experience it literally, we become very lonely.

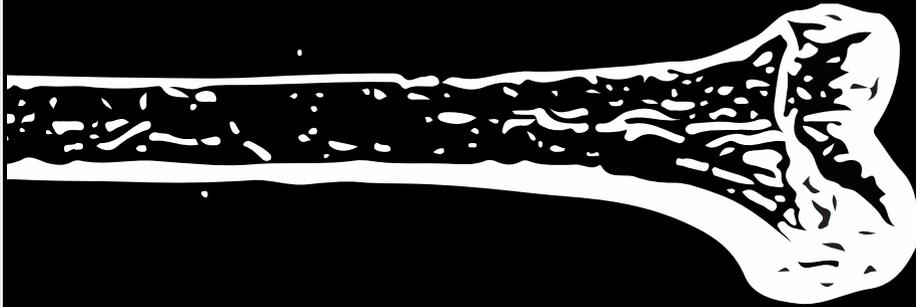


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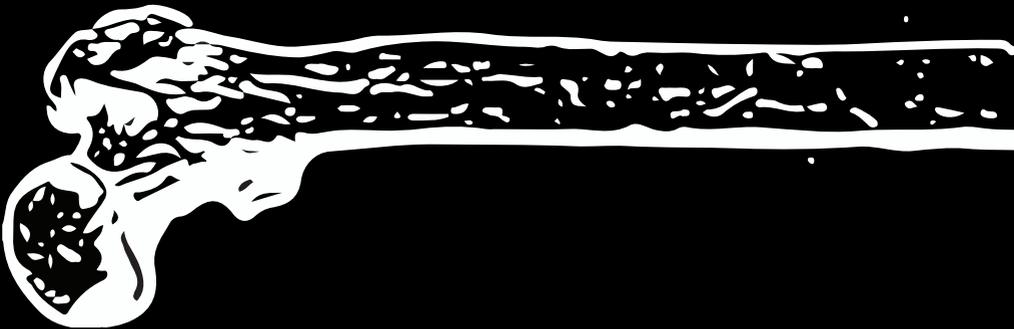
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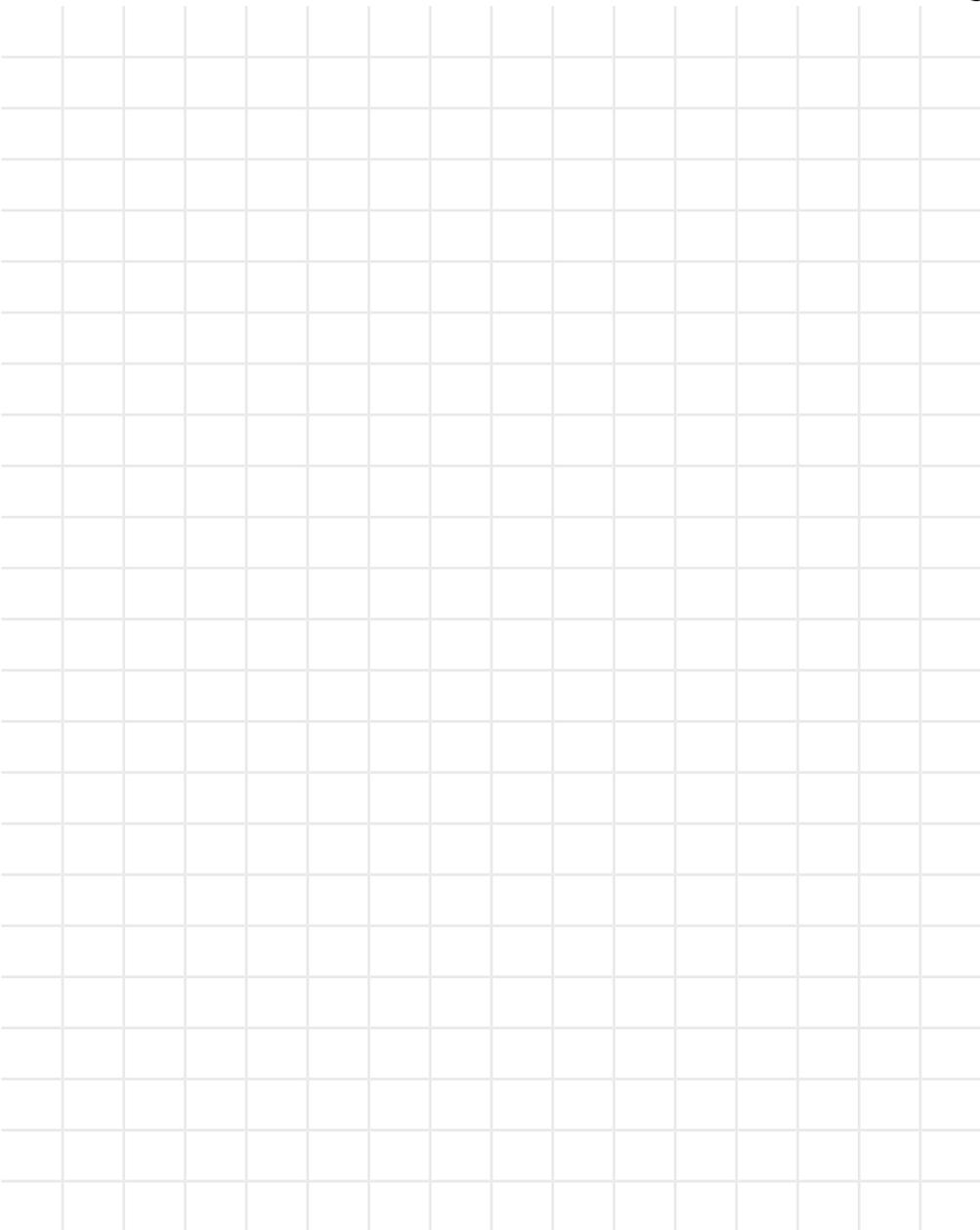
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