

NEVER ENDING STORIES

CANDICE BREITZ IN CONVERSATION WITH NORA V. SCOURI

Nora V. Scouri You're showing *Digest* in its full scale for the first time in the context of the Akademie der Künste's exhibition, 'Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives'. Has the work been made under the cover of the pandemic?

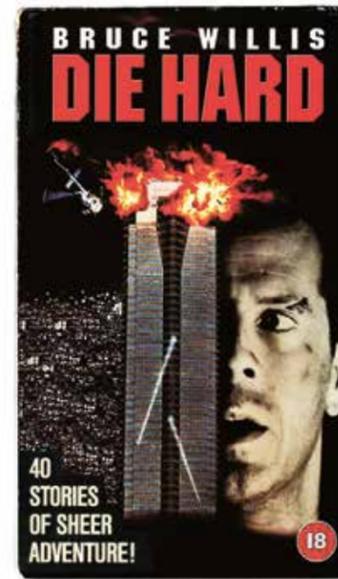
Candice Breitz We had already been working on *Digest* for over a year when the virus hit Berlin. A team of fifteen people was involved in making the installation, something I'd like to mention upfront, since the piece really is a repository for so much collective labour. We began production in late December 2018, and eventually wrapped the project in December 2020. The dates are very distinct in my head because the process was bracketed by two bouts of surgery, which dramatically upped my sense of mortality! While it would be inaccurate to say that *Digest* was made in response to Covid-19, pandemic conditions inevitably impacted on how the piece evolved and found its final shape.

NVS You insist on referring to *Digest* as a "1,001-channel video installation". Many will be surprised to see that painting has such a strong presence in the work: We tend to think of you as a moving image artist.

CB During the early days of recovery following my first round of surgery, it became clear that it would be a while before I could get away with grinding my body back into video production again. Long hours of shooting and editing were out of the question. That said, I knew I would go crazy if I stopped being active in the studio entirely. Setting up a painting studio for the duration of *Digest*, allowed me to override a temporary loss of mobility. The piece offered me a way to stay active as an artist at a moment when I was grappling with a lot of pain, which may account for its slightly morbid character! The frustration of finding myself physically unable to do what I usually enjoy doing as an artist, left me thinking about what it means to insist on being creative under adverse conditions, or within restricted parameters. Human beings are, as we know, capable of being creatively generative under significant duress, even with the most reduced of tools and materials at hand: Our ability to remain creative in the face of adversity is a form of resistance. I had no idea, of course, as I set out to make *Digest*, that our collective ability to sustain creative work was about to be so dramatically challenged by the corona-

virus. The pandemic has sorely tested our physical, economic, emotional, and creative resilience. Those of us who – as a result of our social privilege – have not previously had to endure proximity to sickness and death, have become more starkly aware of our physical fragility, our connectedness to (and dependence on) other bodies. We've been brutally reminded that creativity and culture are not regarded as essential, or even necessary, in the eyes of most governments. At the time of this interview, communal cultural spaces such as museums and theatres and university campuses have been inaccessible for months in many countries. Our governments have done very little to support those who make a living in the creative fields. I've already mentioned that I was mulling over the vulnerability of the physical body when the pandemic struck. So, the questions of mortality which Covid-19 has so grotesquely magnified, certainly started to seep into the work.

NVS On a formal level, too, *Digest* might be described as an exploration of what is possible when options are dramatically narrowed or curtailed. Despite its scale when it is installed, the work has a rather austere, reduced



quality – at least at first glance. Each of the 1,001 abstract paintings in the installation has the same modest size. Each was made with the same two basic ingredients: white acrylic paint and black acrylic paint. Given these formal limitations, the astounding diversity of the 1,001 paintings is suggestive of an almost dogged resilience. On the one hand – in relation to your larger oeuvre, and given the proportions of the paintings – it's possible to read the individual units in *Digest* as small screens or monitors; you've often used grids of vertically-hung monitors for the display of your video installations. On the other – in keeping with the slightly funereal tone of the work – it's tempting to read the paintings as memorial plaques or tombstones, or even to associate them with the impromptu grids of mass graves that have become a prominent visual feature of the pandemic, particularly given your tendency to refer to the hidden contents buried in each painting as "small bodies". For those who have not yet encountered the work in physical space, it may not be obvious that these are not two-dimensional paintings. Can you comment on their objecthood?

CB The 1,001 units that constitute *Digest* are in fact videocassettes that have been sealed in polypropylene video sleeves. Once each VHS cassette has been permanently buried in its plastic sleeve, the front surface of the sleeve is garnished with a single verb, which is then animated using white acrylic paint. After receiving their verbs, the sleeves are painstakingly coated in black abstraction on all sides. Each painting is a small coffin of sorts, in the sense that each becomes the final resting place for the analogue tape that is interred within it. When the work is exhibited, the box-like paintings are arranged on shallow wooden racks, evoking the display aesthetics of video rental stores. After the installation is complete, I like to embellish *Digest* with a few Kentia palms, which I associate with the video stores of my youth. It's important to say that the content carried on the concealed videocassettes remains unrevealed.

NVS This act of burial is reminiscent of earlier artistic gestures. One can't help thinking of Piero Manzoni's *Merda d'artista* (1961) or Marcel Broodthaers' *Pense-*

Bête (1964) – Broodthaers was fond of Kentia palms too, of course! Like each of these works, *Digest* refuses its audience access to its inner contents. In order to retrieve the hours and hours of video footage that are embedded in the work, one would literally have to destroy the paintings. As such, we're left speculating as to what exactly is being preserved within this extensive archive. Could it be the films that are referenced by the 1,001 verbs that the installation brandishes? Or might you be using *Digest* as a depository for the hundreds of hours of footage that you've shot for other works over the last 25 years of your career? Are the tapes serving as storage for fresh material that you've shot especially for *Digest*, or – more in keeping with Manzoni's tongue-in-cheek gesture – might it be the case that the videotapes are blank and carry no footage at all?

Marcel Broodthaers, *Pense-Bête*, 1964

CB I've been sworn to secrecy, so I'm going to have to leave that question unanswered! I will say that both Manzoni and Broodthaers were points of reference for me as I was cooking up *Digest*. Other artistic ancestors played into my thinking too: On Kawara's *Date Paintings* (1966, onwards) and Allan McCollum's *Surrogate Paintings* (1978, ongoing) were on my mind as the work found its form, for instance. Both bodies of work refuse narrative content and straddle a fine line between mechanical rep-

etition and crafted gesture. At the same time, I've always been intrigued by works of art that seek to retrospectively encapsulate or distil an artist's larger body of work, such as Marcel Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* (1935–41) or Andy Warhol's late paintings (I'm thinking of the *Rever-sal Series* and the *Retrospective Series*, both dated 1979). As I was trying to figure out what exactly *Digest* might be – an archive, a repository, a mass grave, a time capsule, a catalogue, a compendium, a survey, a library, a memorial – I found myself chewing through all of these precedents. Finally, and perhaps most obviously, *Digest* channels my long-term fascination with Richard Serra's *Verb List* (1967–68).

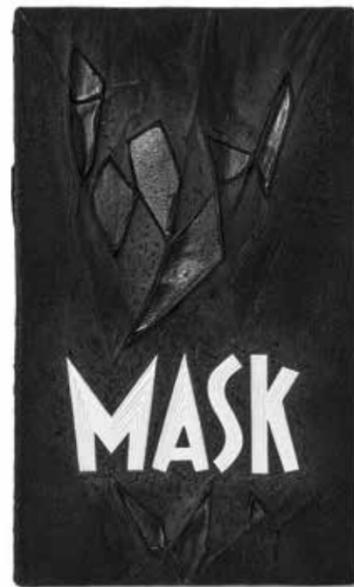
NVS For an artist who is known to operate from an intensely feminist position, it's surprising to hear you list the names of all these Big Boys as your artistic interlocutors.

CB It's probably a good moment to tell you, then, that although I found myself in mental dialogue with all these existing works of art as *Digest* was in progress, the specific mode of seriality that is at work in the installation is *not* in fact derived from the art historical canon, but rather from a literary source. At the time I was conceptualising *Digest*, I knew that the work's first outing



Princess Latifa claims she is being held captive in a villa in Dubai. The video was aired by the BBC on 16 February 2021.

(long before it was complete) would be at the Sharjah Biennial in March 2019. Ahead of an exploratory visit to the United Arab Emirates, I started to follow news from the region more closely. I became obsessed with the plight of Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum (better known as 'Princess Latifa'), the daughter of the UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. In early 2018, Latifa had attempted, for the second time, to flee Dubai in order to seek political asylum abroad. She was on a small yacht headed for India when she was seized by an armed commando, tranquilised, and returned to solitary confinement under her father's jurisdiction, which is where she allegedly remains today, under lock and key. Latifa is the second of the Sheikh's daughters to try to flee a life of caged luxury. These news stories about progressive princesses struggling to escape the confines of an absolute monarchy, prompted me to return to the legend of Scheherazade, the celebrated storyteller who – according to *The Arabian Nights* (sometimes referred to as *One Thousand and One Nights*) – was the 1,001st wife of the powerful sultan, Shahrayar. Scheherazade's story was a primary source of inspiration for *Digest*, in particular, her ability to weaponize narrative in order to stay alive in a society governed by patriarchal violence.





Digest, 2020. 1,001-Channel Video Installation: 200 wooden shelves, 1,001 videotapes in polypropylene sleeves, paper, acrylic paint. Unique Installation. Installation View: Sharjah Biennial 14 March 2019. Produced with support from the Sharjah Art Foundation + Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

After his first wife had betrayed him, Sultan Shahrayar decided – in a fit of misogynist loathing – that he would marry a fresh virgin on a daily basis. With each new dawn, he would systematically decapitate the wife from the day before, so as to deny her the possibility of committing adultery. Prior to taking Scheherazade as his wife, Shahrayar had already casually beheaded a thousand wives. Scheherazade avoids the fate of her predecessors by putting her exceptional storytelling skills to work. On her first night with Shahrayar, she enthralls the sultan with a tantalising tale that is far too long to be completed by

dawn. Desperate to hear the end of the story, Shahrayar allows his wife to live for another night. On the thousand nights that follow, Scheherazade spins cliffhanger after cliffhanger. Her ability to generate narrative suspense literally becomes her means of survival. Eventually, after 1,001 nights, Shahrayar decides to spare Scheherazade's life and crown her his queen.

NVS While I was reading about Scheherazade to prepare for this interview, I discovered that women and children were traditionally not permitted to read *The Arabian Nights*. The stories were originally reserved for a male

readership. I can see how Scheherazade might be regarded as a proto-feminist in retrospect, a woman who survives an abusive (and potentially deadly) relationship, thanks to her extraordinary command of language. Her story is evocative of so many stories in which women contend with domestic confinement and abuse at the hands of male 'guardians', including the stories of Sheikha Latifa and her sister, of course. I suppose one can read Scheherazade's escape from death as a feminist triumph, achieved via the leveraging of intellect and wit against brute power. One has to wonder, though, if

it really is a happy ending for Scheherazade. She manages to keep her head on her shoulders (both literally and metaphorically), only to then have to live her life at the side of her former captor. There is something sinister, even violent, in the fact that she survives the absolute power of a monarch, only to be immediately subsumed into the monarchy's oppressive structures. Like Scheherazade herself, the videocassettes that you've embedded in *Digest* hold the potential to carry and channel narrative, but ultimately, these tapes (and their contents) are condemned to isolation and darkness. Each is held

captive in a restrictive space, not unlike Scheherazade. At this point, I no longer need to ask why you chose to include 1,001 paintings in the installation, but perhaps you could speak about how you decided on which verb would be singled out for the 1,001st painting. When *Digest* is installed, the 1,001st verb stands alone; it is displayed at a physical remove from the archive-at-large.



Scene from the 367th night of *The Arabian Nights*, Tübingen 1,001 Nights manuscript (Egypt c. 1640).

CB It took me the longest time to resolve the relationship of the 1,001st verb to the work as a whole. Funnily enough, what you've just said hints at the solution I eventually settled on. I had been fretting over the awkward last verb for well over a year when Covid-19 abruptly brought life to a standstill. All of a sudden, the public sphere was out of bounds. Although the lockdown we experienced in Berlin was milder than elsewhere, from one day to the next, those of us who could afford the luxury were asked to withdraw our bodies from public circulation. Many of us sought refuge in narrative: In the absence of Scheherazade's tales, we've binged on Netflix and similar offerings. Like Scheherazade, we found ourselves at a remove from the world, scrambling to devise strategies for coping with social isolation. In the days leading up to the first lockdown, Carlos – one of the painters who worked on *Digest* – would pun on the word 'corona', which means 'crown' in Spanish. It got me thinking. On the day after we first closed the studio in observance of pandemic regulations, I woke up knowing that the last verb had to be, 'to crown'. In an earlier work titled *Him* (1968–2008), I'd worked with fragments of found footage from Martin Scorsese's film, *The Departed*. At a point in the plot where things are unravelling for him, Jack Nicholson's character (an Irish mob boss named Frank Costello), reflects on the burden of power: "Heavy lies the crown", he says. I later learned that this line was first uttered by Shakespeare's *Henry IV*: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." You've already pointed out Scheherazade's ambivalent relationship to power, her subjugation to the crown. As I was trying to pin down the final verb, it occurred to me that we too were being collectively subjected to the tyranny of a 'crown' – the coronavirus, to be precise. As the pandemic deepened, I found myself identifying with the videocassettes cooped up in *Digest*. I started to think of the suspended condition

of these little plastic bodies – their frustrated potential – as analogous to our own condition. The socially-distanced relationship of the final tape to the larger body of work, suddenly made sense.

NVS Maybe this is a good moment to ask how you chose the verbs for the paintings in the first place. Basic verbs are abundant in *Digest* (to be, to do, to have, to say), but then there are verbs which are still in their infancy, or which have recently acquired new meaning (to troll, to like, to gaslight, to friend, to trigger, to scroll), profane verbs (to fuck, to shit, to piss, to suck), dark verbs (to slaughter, to hit, to strangle, to bruise), political verbs (to riot, to protest, to survive, to matter), pandemic verbs (to mask, to quarantine, to cocoon, to spread), verbs of mourning (to bury, to cry), verbs of memory (to recall, to remember, to redeem), recreational verbs (to boogie, to smoke, to flirt, to surf), transactional verbs (to buy, to sell, to traffic), verbs of manipulation (to brainwash, to bedazzle, to daze), verbs of abuse (to violate, to force, to batter, to rape), religious verbs (to sin, to bless, to confess), verbs of passion (to long, to lust, to tempt), and even reproductive verbs (to brood, to bring up, to protect, to shelter). Apart from the astonishing variety of verbs in the *Digest* inventory, a huge amount of labour has been poured into minutely crafting each.

CB A verb's job is to convey an action or a state of being. In that sense, verbs are tied to our bodies as well as to our minds – they express our subjectivity. Each of the verbs featured in *Digest* is excerpted from the title of a film that was in circulation during the era of home video. The verb, 'to crown', for instance, is sourced from the VHS cover for *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968). In each case, the *Digest* verb faithfully appropriates and reproduces the font that was used on the original VHS cover. The verb's position in the painting is determined by where it was located on the same cover. The earliest film referenced in *Digest* is *The Cheat* (1915), a silent film by Cecil B. DeMille. The most recent is a trashy horror flick that was shot in the dying days of videotape (*Drag Me to Hell*, 2009). These two films provided me with the verbs, 'to cheat' and 'to drag', just as *Boogie Nights* was the source for 'boogie' and David Cronenberg's cult body horror, *The Brood*, was the source for 'brood'. Some verbs – such as 'to have' and 'to do' – are derived from real



classics, such as Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) or *Do the Right Thing* (1989). Others are borrowed from the covers of less memorable movies. A significant number of the verbs come from films I've cut up in the past for other works, or referred to within my practice in one way or another. My work *Treatment* (2011), for example, draws heavily on *The Brood*. *The Deer Hunter* (1978)

– from which the verb ‘to hunt’ is harvested – is heavily sampled in my multichannel installation, *Her* (1978–2008). In other words, I’ve had long-term relationships with many of the movies that *Digest* gobbles up. While I was busy with the piece, I was also working towards a catalogue raisonné documenting the last ten years of my practice. I was in a retrospective mood, so perhaps it’s no coincidence that *Digest* turns a self-reflexive eye on the medium that first got me started as an artist.

NVS It’s not unusual for artists to be interested in preserving or working with formats that are obsolescent or obsolete. One thinks of Tacita Dean’s relationship with 16mm film, or James Coleman’s use of slide projectors. That said, it’s quite unusual to hear an artist rhapsodising about analogue video. The format tends to be dismissed as tacky and compromised – a transient blip within the history of the moving image. It’s hard to imagine videotape ever enjoying the nostalgic revival that vinyl or polaroid film have experienced.



CB Video was how I found my way into the world of moving images, long before I left South Africa. In a country that was subject to stringent cultural boycott, well-stocked video rental stores were something of an oasis in the ‘80s and ‘90s. This may explain my love affair with the format. In the early days of my career, I often worked with found footage. Videotapes were my source for that footage, and the resulting installations were shown using VHS players. Because analogue video has since grown obsolete, it’s easy to forget the democratising potential that was associated with the format when it first became affordable and readily accessible to consumers (this moment occurred much later in South Africa than elsewhere, by the way). The very fact of being able to easily rewind, fast forward, or pause a film as one watched it, felt new and exciting, opening onto a less passive relationship with the moving image. For the first time, it was possible to tamper with – to actively intervene in – the experience of watching a movie; and, even more significantly, to manipulate footage without needing access to specialised and costly editing facilities. For those of us who were interested in working with moving images, but did not have the resources to work at the lofty level of film, analogue video revolutionised the moving image field. On a more sober note, the birth of videotape pointed towards the imminent and inevitable erosion of the collective viewing experience that had been characteristic of cinema, anticipating the gradual withdrawal of the body from public space under the pressure of digitalization. In setting the moving image on a path to a virtual future, video predicted the profound disembodiment that the digital era would bring to the public sphere. Collective experience would soon no longer be a priority or a necessity. I don’t think it’s inaccurate to describe *Digest* as a

gesture of preservation. But the gesture is less one seeking to reanimate analogue video, than one wanting to consider the impact that the format has had on our relationship with the moving image and with each other. I’m fairly sure this is the last time I’ll work with tape-based video as an artist. I guess I needed to formally bury video, in order to reflect on what it was that we lost when it died.

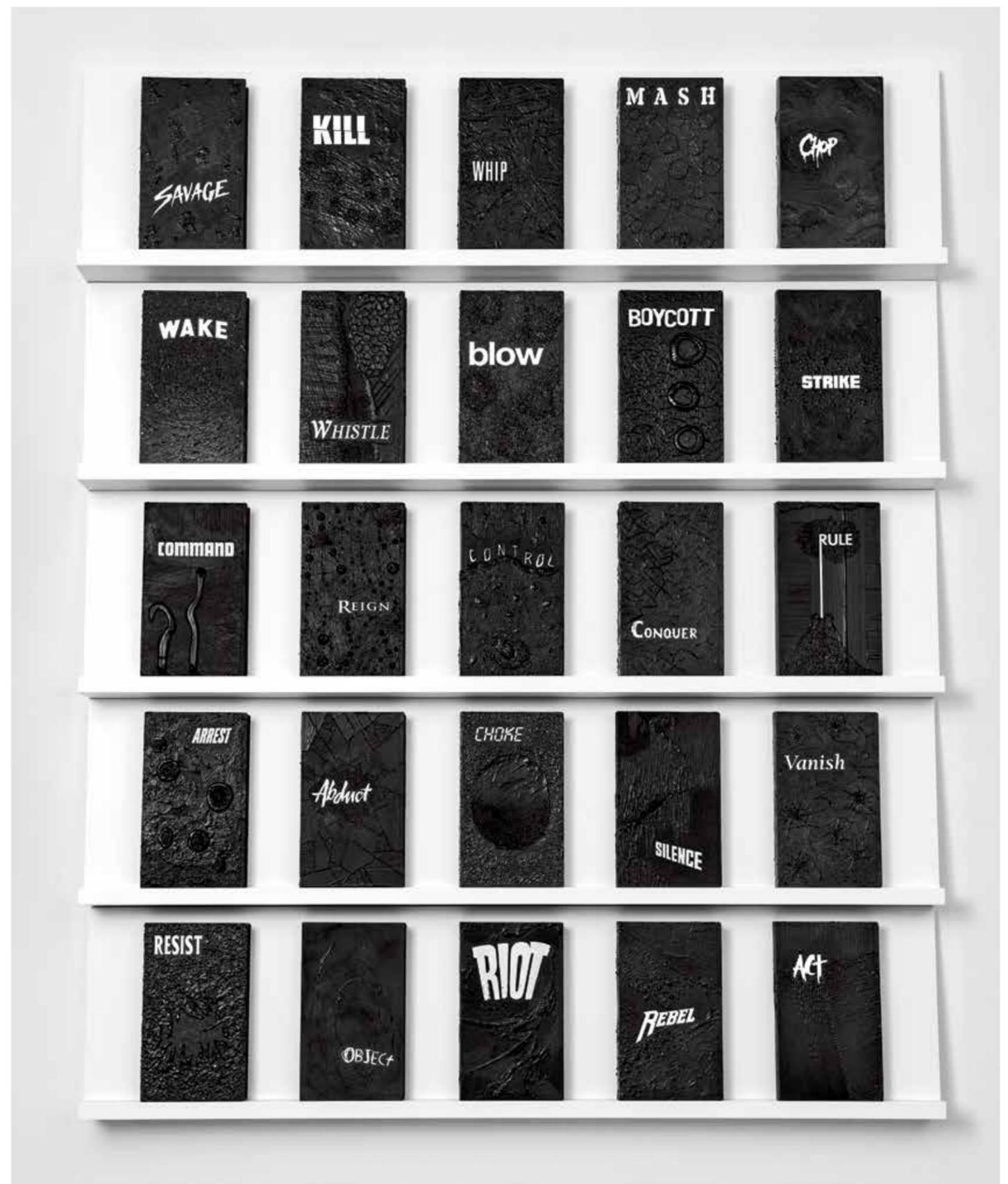
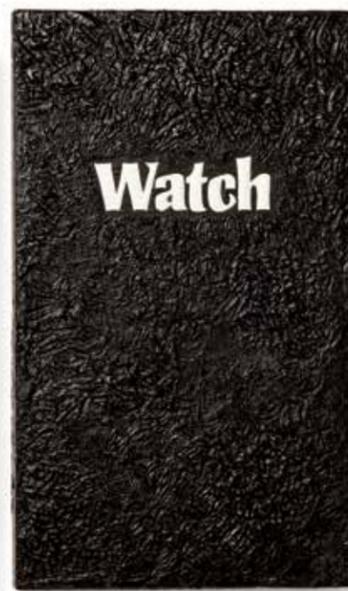
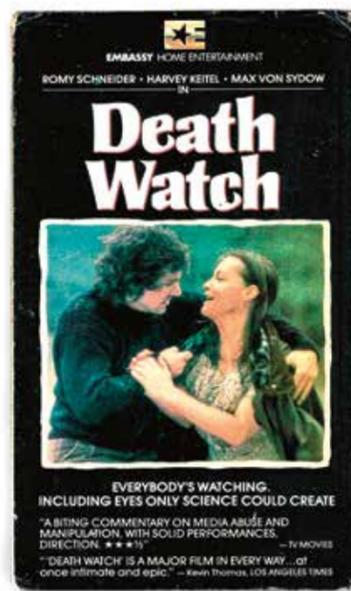
NVS That brings us back to the body – the body of the viewer, but also the body of the moving image. For all the radical shifts that video predicted in its early days, the medium remained stubbornly trapped in a clunky analogue objecthood that demanded physical negotiation. A videotape needed to be actively picked up from, and returned to, the video store. It was often ‘out’ when one wanted it most. At times, it hid coyly behind a curtain in the adult section. There was a fee to be paid for its company, and a penalty to face if one brought it home late. The tape whirred and clacked as you pushed it into the VHS player. It was prone to returning to the world with stretched or unspooled intestines when one hit ‘eject’. Its anatomical vulnerabilities were endless: A videotape could get stuck. It could refuse to rewind. Its plastic body cracked loudly when dropped. It released toxic fumes in protest when left in the sun on the backseat of a car. In other words, videocassettes marked the last moment in which the moving image still had substance, materiality, a physical body; the moment before the moving image went digital and migrated to DVD.

CB I’m glad you mentioned the intestines of the videocassettes, their innards. *Digest*’s title relies on exactly that bodily metaphor. The installation cannibalises a century’s worth of films (via the selection of verbs that it features). There’s something visceral about a depository that has managed to swallow up kilometres and kilometres of videotape, as *Digest* does. And I’d be the first to confess a certain nostalgia in relation to analogue video – I still have hundreds of videotapes that I can’t seem to throw away! But what I miss far more than the physical experience of watching and working with videotape, is the mode of embodied subjectivity that we enjoyed during the analogue era, prior to the digitaliza-

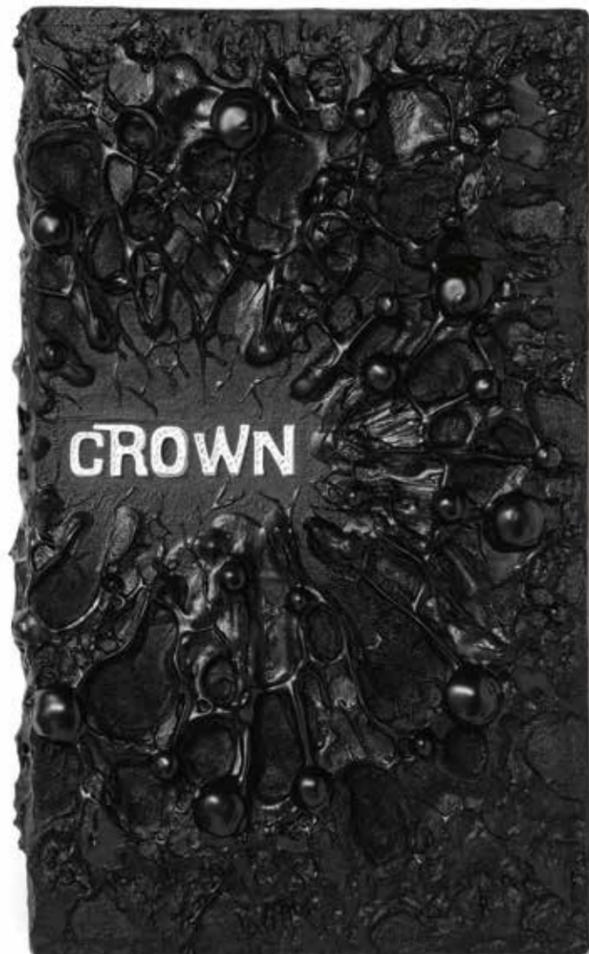
tion and hyper-technologization of our lives. Digital technology has estranged us from our bodies and made us far less likely to engage with other bodies in the non-virtual public sphere.

NVS In that regard, the installation does resonate as a eulogy of sorts. *Digest* creates a space in which to mourn the loss of shared social experience, through which to grieve the withering of the collective body. Your comments on the eroding public sphere loop us back to an earlier moment in this conversation, when we spoke about how the pandemic has accelerated our withdrawal into digital being. The unprecedented restrictions of movement that have been imposed across the globe in response to Covid-19, have served as a violent reminder of the fragility of the social body. The virus is a grim reaper.

CB The current pandemic is the consequence of cynical human behaviour. If we remain oblivious to the ecological destruction that we’re wreaking in pursuit of endless urban expansion, we can expect ongoing natural havoc, be it in the form of floods or droughts or plagues like Covid-19. In light of the detrimental role that single-use plastics have played in the ongoing ecological crisis (a crisis that the pandemic has rendered excruciatingly undeniable), perhaps I should mention that *Digest* is composed entirely out of plastic: from the Mylar tape protected within each videocassette, to the acrylic videocassettes themselves; from the polypropylene sleeves in which the tapes are buried, to the acrylic paint in which they are embalmed. The fragile analogue bodies that *Digest* holds in quarantine – each isolated in its own confined space, each flaunting a verb celebrating corporeal freedoms that can no longer be taken for granted – might be read as hinting, fairly ominously, towards existential threats that are yet to come, as extractive capitalism continues to deplete and destroy the natural environments in which bodies were previously able to flourish. If we know what’s good for us as a species, we’ll have to wean ourselves off single-use plastics very soon. Maybe in the future, *Digest* will be thought of as a work that commemorates an obsolete format (analogue video) in an obsolete medium (plastic).



I know you think I'm crazy, but I'm not, I'm not!, 1938–2019. Unique Installation. One of ten smaller works that was produced parallel to the *Digest* archive.



NVS Can we talk about the surface quality of the paintings, the black coats specifically? Though it would be hard to say that these paintings are of something or about something in particular, many of the black surfaces conjure up the natural realm. At times, the sleeves are almost obscenely organic in their detail. Some are reminiscent of the kind of biological or anatomical detail that you might see under a microscope. Others are embellished with what look like bodily orifices. The surface texture can evoke wrinkled skin, or tatty fur or rotting flesh. Some tapes get one thinking about disease or bodily ejaculation. All these invocations of the natural world are, however, rendered uncanny by the plasticity of the black coats. Although the abstraction that plays across each tape is the product of a human hand – and although one realises almost immediately that each and every tape is unique – the shiny artificiality of the black acrylic paint cheekily undermines the gesturality of the paintings, so that the works ultimately have a rather alien quality to them. This is a rather nature-less nature.

CB A friend who visited the studio in the early days of *Digest*, decided that the tapes look like props from a low-budget science fiction film. The description stayed with me, because it nicely encapsulates the tension between the slick seriality of the paintings and their handworked quality. Seen individually, some of the more obsessively laboured tapes look like they could have come straight

out of a 3D printer, but then the sheer diversity of the abstract coats, along with their intricate detail, speaks to their artisanal production. As the work evolved, the team grew an increasingly elaborate painterly vocabulary, one that I could never have anticipated or planned. In that sense, *Digest* celebrates the idiosyncrasy of human gesture at a moment when both idiosyncrasy and human gesture are at risk of digitally-inflicted extinction.

NVS How closely were you involved in the creative decision-making when it came to the application of the black abstraction?

CB Each tape was worked on by several members of the team along the way. We had painters who were particularly good at interpreting typefaces that were classical and graphic, and others who knew exactly how to tackle a sinuous, organic font. We had verb experts and black coat specialists, and some who enjoyed both challenges. Every *Digest* tape must have passed through my hands a good dozen times during the production. This installation is as much a product of intense conversation as it is of human labour. At first, I was directly involved in the painting process, but I soon realised that my role was really to hold it all together. Overseeing *Digest*, which turned out to be an immensely complex project, started to feel very much like directing a shoot. When you bring a crew onto a set as a director, you're effectively steering a team of skilled experts towards a desired outcome.

Over many years of directing, I've learnt that embracing the creative suggestions and impulses of your crew, as well as honouring their experience and their ability, always results in a denser and more compelling piece of work. So, our working model was premised on the relative autonomy of everybody on the team. As we came to understand who was good at what, we settled into a hive-like rhythm, an interdependence that allowed everybody to contribute to the creative process, without anybody having to strictly control it or be territorial about it. This is the way that I generally enjoy working. Every creative endeavour has to contend with limiting parameters: I'm interested in what happens when a group of people come together to respond to – and collectively push against – a set of predetermined conditions.

NVS These could have been illustrative or figurative paintings, of course. Why did you decide for abstraction?

CB I blame the decision partially on Scheherazade, whose ability to generate narrative suspense allowed her to escape certain death. The *Digest* paintings exist in an exaggerated state of narrative suspense. First, the video-cassettes disappear irretrievably into their sleeves, rendering their narrative innards inaccessible. Then each sleeve is endowed with a verb, a fragment of appropriated language that has been severed from the figurative imagery it would have appeared alongside on the original VHS cover. This double negation of narrative frees the paintings from the realm of illustration, so that each can provide a modest space for projection; first for the team members working on it in the studio, and then eventually for the viewer encountering the installation. Sometimes we need to escape the stories that we've heard over and over again, in order to come up with fresh new stories and innovative ways of telling those stories. This is perhaps the most important lesson we can learn from Scheherazade.

NVS My last question is about how the paintings are installed. Do they have a fixed relationship to each other within the installation? Is their order alphabetical or chronological? Or are they arranged according to genre, as they might be in a video rental store?

CB I plan to avoid fixing the order of the tapes within the installation. There's an infinite range of possibilities when it comes to how the verbs can be arranged across the grid. If the verb 'labour' is positioned next to the verb 'sweat', it points in a particular direction. If 'labour' is instead placed in proximity to verbs like 'mother' and 'raise', a different set of associations comes to the fore. I'd like to preserve this open-endedness. I want the act of installing the work to be a writerly experience, so that each new iteration of the piece has the potential to open onto new readings. That way, the installation becomes a reader's *Digest*.

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