The Italic I – Between Liveness and the Lens

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The Italic I – Between Liveness and the Lens

In this article, the concept of 'the alternative document' is addressed with reference to *The Italic I*, a practice-based artistic enquiry developed through collaboration between writer-artist Emma Cocker and interdisciplinary artist Clare Thornton, for exploring the performed event of repeatedly falling. However, within *The Italic I,* the *live* performance of falling is not shared with an audience: this enquiry explores specificity of experience communicable in the mediation of performance through its documents, both photographic and textual. Rather than view these technologies as somehow deficient or limiting – as incapable of reflecting the experiential, ephemeral nature of the live event – *The Italic I* reflects on the document itself as an ephemeral artwork, always evolving, always in transition. Less as an indexical record of 'being there', the performance document is approached as a malleable material that can be dislocated from its originary historical context, to be brought into new configurations through repeated staging and re-staging. The article explores how various 'alternative documents' operate within *The Italic I* through three interwoven questions: How to present the experiential nature of falling as a force rather than simply representing its form? How to develop a mode of linguistic expression – an alternative poetic textual document – that embodies rather than describes the live experience that it seeks to articulate? What alternative modalities of performance and performativity – what emergent temporalities and subjectivities – arise through the restaging or reactivation of different performance documents? By focusing on the evolution, functioning and performativity of the various 'documents' generated within *The Italic I*, the intent is to explore what is at stake at the threshold where live and lens meet, in the interval between live performance and lens-based mediation, between event and document.

Keywords: falling; conversation; collaboration; performance writing; performance documents; interval; slowness

In this article, the concept of 'the alternative document' is addressed with reference to *The Italic I*, a practice-based artistic enquiry developed through collaboration between writer-artist Emma Cocker and interdisciplinary artist Clare Thornton. Evolving gradually (since 2012) through a series of research residencies, exhibitions, publications and performance-lectures, *The Italic I* explores the event of repeatedly falling, apprehended consciously as an exercise of mind and muscle, tested out in both physical and cognitive terms.[i] The conceptual implications of falling itself (conceived within *The Italic I* as both a bodily-kinesthetic *and* verbal-linguistic act) have been elaborated within other research articles, where we have framed the purposeful action of surrendering to a repeated fall as a training practice or exercise for cultivating a willfully non-corrective tendency in thought, speech and action; for operating against expectation, against normative conditioning (Cocker and Thornton 2016, 2017). For this context, our research focus shifts to address the functioning and performativity of the various 'documents' generated within *The Italic I*, exploring what is at stake at the threshold where live and lens meet, in the gap or interval between live performance and lens-based mediation, between event and document.

Within *The Italic I,* the studio is approached as a gymnasium, a testing ground for the live investigation of performed falling, slowed and extended through the use of both language and the lens. However, within our enquiry the live performance of falling is willfully *not* shared with an audience; instead, we are interested in the specificity of experience communicable in the mediation of performance through its documents, both photographic and textual. Rather than view these technologies as somehow deficient — as incapable of reflecting the experiential, ephemeral nature of the live event — our desire has been one of reframing both performance document and writing as extensions

of the performance process. Indeed, less the documentation of an ephemeral event or performance, *The Italic I* reflects on the document itself *as* an ephemeral artwork, capable of being turned over and over, always evolving, always in transition. We conceive the performance document less as an indexical record of 'being there' – of what 'has been' or is now 'past' – but rather as a malleable material that can be dislocated from its originary historical context and brought into new configurations, to be worked with, re-worked and re-tested through repeated staging and re-staging. In this article, we reflect on the evolution of our 'alternative documents' of falling, and on the various versions and iterations through which they have been reconfigured – including as studio experiments, publication and exhibition – alongside addressing the questions and conceptual implications arising therein.

Our research interest in and understanding of how various 'alternative documents' operate within *The Italic I* has developed through three interwoven threads of enquiry. Firstly, we ask: How do we attend to the experiential nature of falling rather than documenting it only as a visual event? How can we present the fall as a force rather than simply representing its form? How might we communicate the qualities of passage and the multi-, micro-temporal dimension of falling? Secondly, how can we develop a mode of linguistic expression – an alternative poetic textual document – that embodies rather than describes the live experience that it seeks to articulate? How can language document an alternative encounter with falling within our enquiry, the 'free-fall' experienced within our process of dialogic exchange? Thirdly, what alternative modalities of performance and performativity – what emergent temporalities and subjectivities – arise through the restaging or reactivation of our different performance documents? Indeed, how might the performing document acquire an alternative *liveness* of its own? These interrelated enquiries each seek to slow or prolong the lived

experience of falling, using different approaches for working with performance documents. However, our interest in slowing is not about documenting the event of falling in 'slow motion', a practice often motivated by the forensic examination or else fetishisation – even romanticisation – of the movement captured and slowed. Instead, we attend to the intervals and interstitial spaces emerging in-and-through the process of documenting itself, where by the repeated re-visitation and re-activation of our performance documents – like with the practice of reading and re-reading – a deeper, more complex, nuanced and intimate experiential understanding of the act of falling emerges slowly over time.

Figures 1 - 3. Documentation of *The Italic I* studio explorations during Summer Lodge (2012). Photographs: Christine Stevens.

Our collaborative research project, *The Italic I,* was initiated (Summer 2012) within the context of Summer Lodge, an annual artistic residency hosted by the Fine Art department, Nottingham Trent University. Our shared intent was to explore different tactics through which a sense of self might be pressured towards its limits, the boundary where self/other or self/world begins to fold — for example, through collaboration, through the act of falling. This first explorative residency comprised a series of speculative studio-based experiments involving performed falling (Thornton); performative drawing/diagramming (Cocker) for attempting to articulate the fall visually, alongside staged conversational exercises (Cocker and Thornton) for reflecting together on the experience (Figures 1 — 3). We set up the studio as a charged space poised ready for action: a diagonal support, some means of cushioning the blow. Letting go: a commitment is made to the event of repeated falling in and of itself. Sense of focus, a single purpose — the studio dislocates the fall from narrative cause and effect. A body falls, over and over, again and again. Thornton performed the repeated fall, with

Cocker operating as interlocutor, striving to find a language – using both drawing and text – for translating the observed event of falling through a visually communicable 'document'. During a second residency together (Summer 2013) we refined and further clarified a working methodology that more directly pressured our own specific (inter)disciplinary backgrounds: Thornton's physical falling (informed by her background in performance and choreography) apprehended through the mediation of the camera (Cocker's background in time- and lens-based media).

Over and over, a body falls, a lens acts as witness. Or rather, the lens amplifies the act of witnessing. The photographic document allowed the fall to be 'slowed down', lingered over: through the prism of the lens the arc of falling can be captured at the different degrees of vertical and horizontal slant, split-second records of each pivotal moment. During this first phase of our enquiry, we produced hundreds of photographic images using a range of exposure speeds, attempting to capture the fall in its different stages or scenes. These various documents alongside our recollection of the live experience – of falling, of attending with and without lens – were taken as starting points for daily studio conversations, based on our shared conviction in language and reflection as intrinsic to the artistic process. Recollecting the studio experiments through the prism of our documents, we became increasingly interested in the discrepancy between how falling *looked* compared to how it *felt.* As philosopher and critic Catherine Clément argues of the fainting subject: 'Suddenly time falters. First, the head spins, overcome with a slight vertigo … the earth gives way and disappears, one sinks back, goes away (but) *where* does one go?' (1994, 1). Likewise, we noticed a temporal, durational disjuncture between the visual appearance of falling (exterior perspective) and its felt experience (interior perspective): the brief 'time passing' of the witnessed fall captured through the lens failing to match with a more elastic experience of time

encountered from *within*. We recognised that our research quest was not to capture what the choreography of a fall looks like as such – the extensive moves of its movement – as much as trying to reflect on its interiority, the feeling-in-falling, the nature of its phases as lived experience.

Certainly, through the use of slower photographic exposures it becomes possible to communication the passage of falling as a blurred trace of movement. However, our photographs of falling – even those that show the blur of movement's passing – still fixed the fall's form, slice of falling rendered static, image as a representation of time-as-space. At this point in the enquiry we began to ask: How can we attend to the experiential, affective nature of falling rather than documenting it only as a visual event? Through what means might we make tangible falling's flows and forces, its speeds and durations, both visible and invisible, without rendering the lived experience of falling into any singular spatial form? The perceived failure of the photographic documents to capture the ephemeral, durational intensity of the lived experience of falling, alongside the question of what remains unsaid or unspeakable within – that which refuses to be reduced to – the performance document provided the very conditions for the generation of an alternative document: the emergence of a poetic, language-based lexicon for reflecting on the arc of falling. The quest to capture the embodied, experiential dimension of enquiry through language is a perennial problem for artistic research and live performance alike. '(W)hat is the relationship between the artistic and the discursive, between what is presented and displayed and what is described?' asks philosopher and music theorist Henk Borgdorff (2011, 58). He adds, 'Is it possible to achieve a linguistic-conceptual articulation of the embedded, enacted and embodied content of artistic research?' (Borgdorff 2011, 60). Our response to this dilemma was to explore how we might perform linguistic or even cognitive falls,

searching for a language adequate to the task of articulating the experience of falling *through* falling, produced simultaneously to the process that it strives to describe.

We asked: How might the act of conversation itself — especially within the frame of collaborative practice — echo the arc of falling? In conversation together, we explored the 'becoming' of falling (to fall: a verb, a process-oriented operation) not the *being* of the fall (as noun), reflecting on the interior complexity of falling — capacities, temporalities and affective dimension therein — which visual expression can only hint towards. However, beyond the level of conversational content, our aim was to explore how the act of conversation itself could also *enact* the experience of a fall, how it might operate in performative terms. Our process of conversation is undertaken for reflecting *on* falling, but also operates as a generative or productive practice in and of itself, for practising *falling* within the process of conversation itself. Akin to the body repeatedly falling, language can be generated from within fall-like circumstances, produced from the dialogic 'free-fall' of collaborative exchange. Our intent is to push conversation beyond what we *already* know (what we *want* to say) into an unknown territory. We aim towards a condition of exhaustion and elasticity in word and thought, requiring a parallel stepping off or away from the stability of fixed subjectivities and positions towards the fluid process of co-production, intermingling of one another's word and thought. Sentences form tentatively in the gaps as one voice falls or falters into another … as one thought collapses, another starts to rise. Over and over, terms can be turned up and inside out, words can be pressured until they begin to arc and fold, language rolled around in the mouth until it starts to yield or give. Significantly, the cadence or rhythmic pacing — the pitch and intonation pattern, the speech tempo — of conversation is often one of rising and falling, dipping and peaking, heightened inflection and excited acceleration, pauses and hesitation.

Like our staging of the fall, our conversations are framed, undertaken as a specific exercise within a time-bound period — usually between one and three hours — allocated only for this purpose. Whilst dialogue has taken place directly following the live performance of falling itself, we have also met some time after the event using the performance documents as *spurs* for provoking dialogue, visual lubricants for facilitating reflection. At key moments within our project, conversation has been recorded and transcribed, then edited and organised into an emergent textual poetics — a research approach described as *conversation-as-material* (Cocker, 2018). Over a period of years, thousands of transcribed words from hours of recorded conversation have been gradually distilled into a working lexicon, an alternative textual document for articulating the different phases of the fall. By extracting phrases as well as singular words, our intent has been to retain something of our conversation's original cadence, alongside the potential for a slip or switch in tense, inflection, imperative or mood. The act of concentrating the extended conversational transcripts towards dense segments of prose-poetry has allowed us to linger in and extend the phases of falling in ways that the photographs did not fully allow, facilitating a return to certain states not possible to articulate at the time of the event of falling itself. Our lexicon comprises sixteen overlapping categories for identifying different phases or stages within the arc of falling, including *Testing (the) ground* — setting up the conditions; *Entering the arc* — trust, twist, torque; *A commitment made* — working against impulse; *Voluntary vertigo* — *ilinx*, inclination; *Becoming diagonal* — the italic *i*; *Formless* — horizontality; *Letting go* — a liquid state; *Ecstatic impotency* — the *jouissance* of *impuissance*; *Gravity/levity* — striking the right balances; *Breathless* — ventilating the idea; *Voluptuous recovery* — return, yet charged; *Recalibrate ... loop* — desire to repeat.

Having established this initial working list of titles, we began to flesh out our emergent lexicon through further dialogue alongside testing the veracity of our poetic descriptions through additional performance-based experiments. We returned to the studio once again, this time with focused attention on the *different* phases of the fall as identified through our lexicon, seeking to develop deeper understanding of specific moments within the arc of falling. For example, during one studio experiment we worked with medium format analogue photography, trying to capture photographically the same point during the event of repeated falling, again and again. The consecutive images on the resulting 'contact sheet' appeared as sequential in time through their visual similarity as if separated merely by micro-second frames, though actually came from different falls separated by many seconds, even minutes. Here, the document itself opened up a new line of enquiry, generating alternative directions of exploration to the originary event. What was the nature of the temporal interval opened up between one image and the next? What kinds of performativity operate therein? What emerges through the combination of visual proximity with temporal separation, in the *infrathin* difference/similarity between two seemingly identical images that had been generated through *different* falls? (Figure 4). Our production of documents began to operate less in fidelity to the originary performance event, but increasingly as an alternative site for the active development of our enquiry. Peggy Phelan's oft-cited cautionary against the attempt to capture the experiential, ephemeral nature of performance, suggests documentation is a flawed project: 'Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance' (1993, 146). Indeed, our documents were becoming *something other*. We asked: how we might actively inhabit the gap between live and lens-based

approaches as a generative site of action, a productive interval within which to work? Departing from ideas of performance to camera and real-time capture, we began to question when and where the time-space is that exists between liveness and the lens, and what is at stake for those practices occupying this interstice?

Figure 4. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I: Infrathin*, studio experiments during Summer Lodge, Nottingham Trent University (2013). Photograph: Cocker and Thornton.

We situate our own enquiry in relation to a wider context of practices that as curator and writer Bridget Crone asserts, 'have already radically disrupted these neat separations between the live-ness of the body and the not-live status of the image' where, 'staging becomes a means for re-thinking and re-configuring the relationship between body and image, between immediate experience and mediated information, between projected image and performed body' (2012, 6). Crone argues that many contemporary artists are now 'interested in articulating a sense of separation … between

the "live" unfolding performance and the quoted or re-enacted material' (2012, 6). She further outlines how the 'instability of the feedback loop – of performance into image, image into performance and so on – also acts to undermine the fixities of time, reminding us of the relational nature of time itself' (Crone 2012, 10). Our own documents are not concerned with capturing the unfolding temporality of performance through chronological representation, but instead seek to reflect the temporal collapse and elasticity felt within the lived experience of falling. During Summer Lodge (2013), we began to further explore the feedback loop between performance and its documents through a series of studio experiments focused on *recursive repetition*, for investigating whether an action repeated over and over in time could be documented within a single still frame. Our experiment unfolded thus: a performed fall is documented at a specific point in its arc. The photographic image of the fall is immediately printed and displayed back in the studio, adjacent to the original 'stage' of falling. The event of falling is repeated: an attempt is made to capture the fall again at the same point in its arc, whilst including the photographic document of the previous fall within the same frame. This process is repeated, potentially *ad infinitum*. For example, Figure 4 can be seen on the wall in Figure 5; Figure 5 can be seen on the wall in Figure 6. We conceived a proposal for a performance of an infinite number of repeated falls condensed into single image as an investigation into repetition as feedback loop or even as *droste-effect*, an event unfolding in time compressed into a spatial form. We asked: What is the temporal duration articulated in this alternative document of falling?

Figures 5 – 6. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I: Recursive Loop*, studio experiments during Summer Lodge, Nottingham Trent University (2013). Photographs: Cocker and Thornton.

Through these studio experiments, we realised that our enquiry was not concerned with slowing or stilling a given movement in order to make it more visible, nor giving it more gravitas. Whilst the singular photograph or even a chronological series of frames might appear insufficient for reflecting the lived nature of movement, least of all the passage of a fall, could an *alternative* organisation, sequencing or succession of images articulate a quality of experience not even visible in the live performance itself? We asked: What new insights into falling could be gleaned through an encounter with our photographic documents out of sequence? Could the re-sequencing of our *infrathin* images of repeating-difference come close to articulating the lived experience of the fall? What virtual performances unfold through the presentation of non-consecutive images, or even images generated from within different falls? We tested these propositions further through the production of an artists' publication (Figures 7 – 8), where we presented a non-chronological arrangement of the images of falling as an extended grid, resisting or troubling the normative chronology often used for presenting the body in movement. Willful disruption of the unfolding logic of a step-by-step guide, our sequences of falling refuse to be comprehended in strictly linear terms, instead aspiring towards multi-directional reading. The unsettled – even syncopated – configuration invites the viewer's attention to become scattered or distracted in its search for connections between one frame and another, where – as with the live experience of a repeated fall – the sense of sequential narrative becomes difficult to discern.
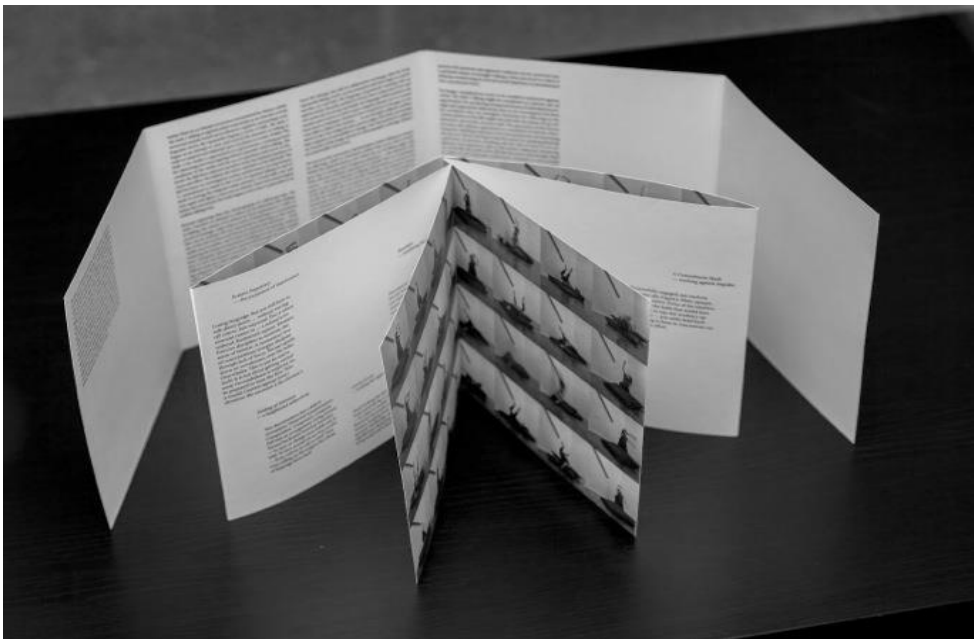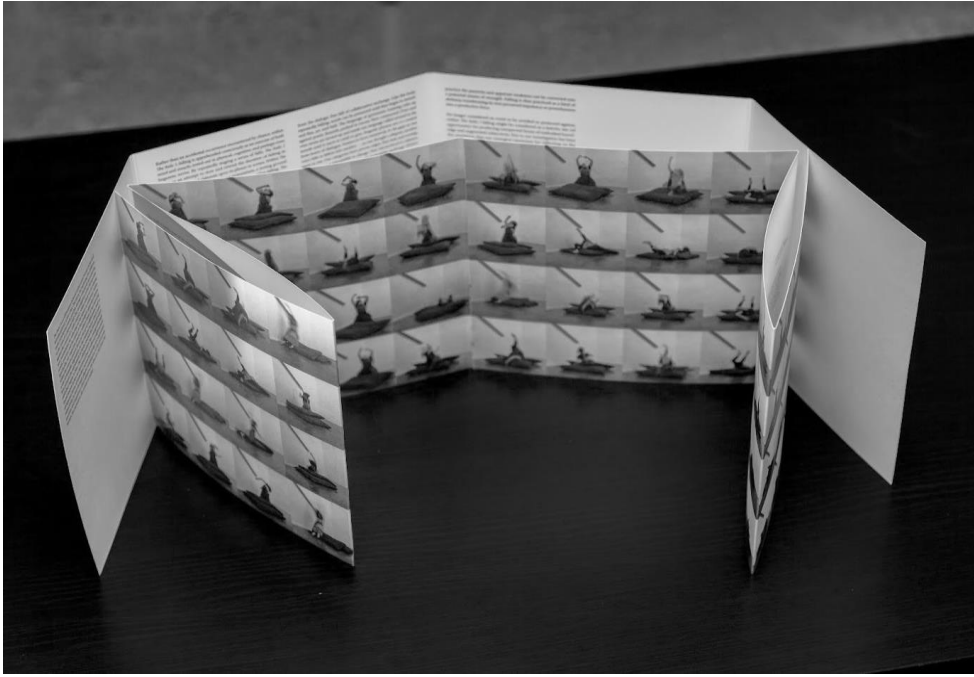
Figures 7 — 8. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I*, artists' publication (2014). Photographs: Tom Hemming.

Our artists' publication presents one iteration of our findings where two inter-related forms of document — word (our poetic-textual lexicon distilled from the process of conversation) and image (the photographic record of performed falling) — are brought together in sharable form, a concertina structure where the physical process of

its unfolding by the reader hints towards a potential for both expansion and contraction. The production of this publication provided one means for us to publicly share our enquiry with others, affording physicality to our findings. However, we conceived it less as an ending in itself, but rather as a new impetus for pushing our documents further. Through the making of the publication, we recognised that our interest lies less in the articulation of discrete postures or positions, but in the intervals and ambiguities between. A fall is a period of passage, rather than a series of steps or postures that can be isolated, observed. Falling is experienced as both temporal flux but also as discontinuity, where what we encounter — to draw on theorist Erin Manning's writing — 'is a composition of holes (intervals) and wholes (pure experience, duration) that together create a field of forces around which perception takes form' (2009, 85). Rather than communicating the *form* that falling takes as a sequence of readable moves or postures, our intent was to reflect on the lived feeling-of-falling that remains somehow irreducible to discontinuous instants. How far could we extend or expand the sequence of micro-movements between one frame and another? Extend the duration. Elaborate the moves between. Activate the intervals.

Folding of Attention
— a heightened subjectivity

Not disorientation but a shift in orientation.
Elemental transformation. Composition.
Composure. Compose. Fall into an
arrangement. Going inward. Turned
backward. Inverted. Inversion — to turn
or change; turn inside out, to fold. To turn
around on an axis; revolve — from *volvere*,
to roll or wind. Turn over, rolling on the
tongue; the release of language from itself.

Gravity/Levity
— striking the right balances

Hand striking the floor, marking time.
Push and pull; lag or drag. Tempering —
to calm, to modify its properties. Restraint
has positive force, a necessary tension.
Keeping form, one foot on the ground.
Anchoring, maintaining the equilibrium.
Retaining the lightness, bring to ground
without weight.

Breathless
— ventilating the idea

Decompress. Distill. Cooling down but
not towards resolution. Maybe it is useful
to bring in fermata, the inverted arc …
extended beyond normal duration. Beyond
sustaining a note. Considered pause, return
or realignment.

*To tune, to make tones available to
different keys. Temper. Temperate.
Temporal. Repeat the heating and cooling,
softening and solidifying of language.
Molten flex. Changes in temperature –
plunge to cool, desire to distill, regroup.
Melt it down again. Avoid the snap back
into brittle form.*

*Binaries mark out the pitch within
which to play, enables the curves
to happen, something to work
against. Goading us. Hot/cold.
Liquid/solid. Soft/hard. Doing/
thinking. Attending to the interval
– as an active space, against the
desires of habit.*

Figure 9. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I,* page-based 'version' of artists' publication.

Since making the publication (2014), our performance documents have once again been unfixed and reactivated through different modalities of time-based staging and restaging: we have attempted to address the 'movement-passing' of falling through the reintroduction of a temporal beat. As part of our exhibition *The Italic I* at Project Space Plus, Lincoln (3 — 13 November 2014), we reanimated the photographic performance documents using slide projector technology (Figure 10). We wanted to explore how lens technologies might have the capacity to evoke a quality of liveness not simply the visual document of life. Four slide projectors were used to produce two visual fields of crossfading images of the fall. Yet, our concern was not towards the reanimation of the fall in slow motion, as a chronological representation to give the illusion of actual movement. The images were organised non-consecutively: one carousel was filled with the images following the same arrangement as our artists' publication proceeding in a forward direction; the second carousel was filled with the images in reverse order. One pair of projectors was programmed to change the slide every eight seconds; the other pair changed more frequently. The resulting asynchronicity gave rise to the possibility of an infinitely permutational logic, where the same material was able to loop and repeat without ever strictly repeating: the document was experienced as having an alternative liveness of its own. Our re-animation of the fall unfolded through a succession of transitions and intervals, rather than dwelling on discrete, isolable moments within the fall. Over and over a body falls, each movement begins before the movement has truly begun: every move is preceded in an endless falling loop.
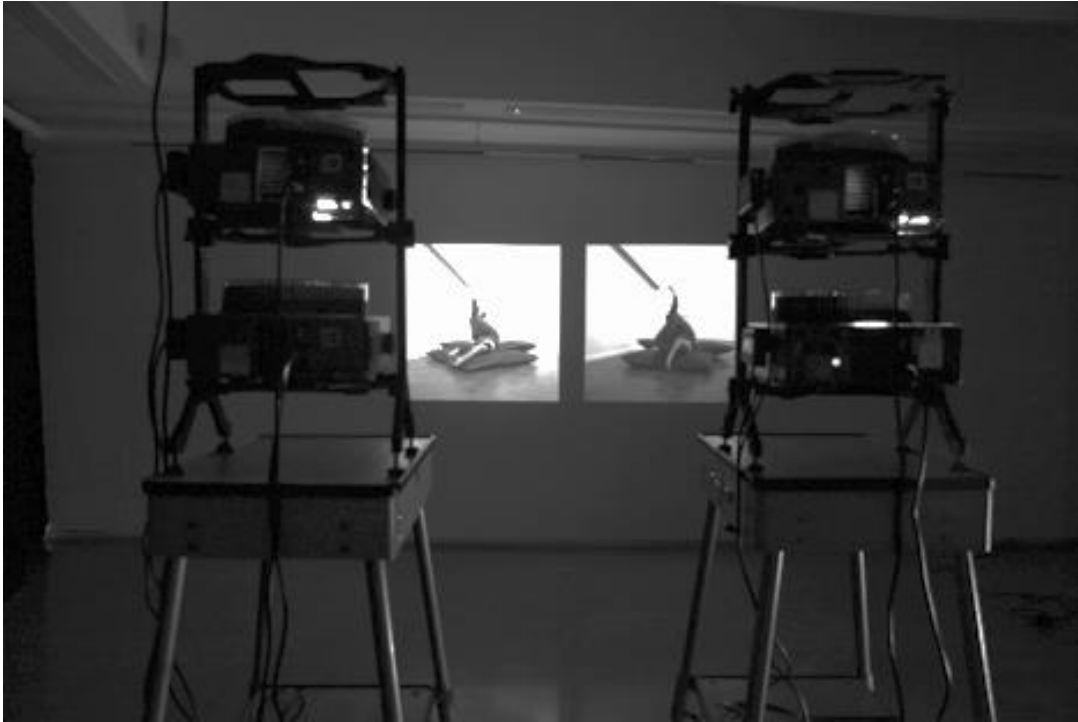
Figure 10. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I*, Project Space Plus (2014).
Photograph: Cocker and Thornton.

Staged as an ever-changing permutational flow, the sense of liveness created by re-animating the images is not a *re*presentation of a live performance (now passed) for the movement emerging in the interval between one image and another never existed in actual terms. The cross-fading of *non-consecutive* images generates an *alternative* choreography of falling, a 'phantom' or even fictional document paradoxically attesting to an action (a fall) that did not or maybe even *could not* exist in reality, but which perhaps comes closer to articulating the feeling-of-falling. A document for articulating *more than* what was recordable: whilst the arc of falling proposed through the cross-fading of images was often physically inconceivable, the performative affect came close to the felt experience of the fall. At times, the falling figure appears to rise; a body flung, takes flight: fluid, liquescent. Disappears. Then, reappears. A levitating figure now, hovering, suspended. Formless. Indeterminate. Softened edges of self: in the blur

of shifting slow shutter speeds — a body surges, smeared, stretched. Pulled back into the air; then, grounded. A shuddering sequence of similar yet not-same frames: the body judders, vibrates, unstable. However, the unfolding movement exists only in the time-space of the interval itself, a virtual space opened up between one frame and another. For theorist and philosopher Byung-Chul Han, 'The temporal interval stretches between two conditions or events … a transitional time in which the one occupying it is in no definite condition' (2017, 37.) He further argues that, 'When intervals become shorter, the rate of succession of events accelerates … images only fleetingly touch the retina … Quickly they eject their visual stimulus and fade away' (Han 2017, 40). Rather than minimising the length of duration between frames to give the illusion of movement, our intent has been to stretch the interval, render it elastic. Or else to follow Manning, 'Elastic, we feel the becoming-form of movement's shape. In the amodal tactility of elasticity, force is stored and then released … The release liberates the figure, not a figure that was there all along but a figure that is virtually creating itself in the interval, almost-virtual' (2009, 34).

Figure 11 – 12. Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, *The Italic I,* in *The Alternative Document,* installation documentation and detail, Project Space Plus, Lincoln (2016). Photograph: Cocker and Thornton.

Within the exhibition, *The Alternative Document,* Project Space Plus, Lincoln (12 February – 13 March 2016), we further tested the crossfading of our performance documents through digital means which we presented on two monitors (Figure 11 – 12), alongside the slow unfolding of our textual lexicon on a third monitor.[ii] Whilst, this digital presentation lacked the combinational possibilities of our earlier slide projector iteration, it did allow for longer intervals and thresholds between image emergence and dissipation, focusing attention on the between-states existing at the interstice. Each crossfading image contains the residue of the previous image in the sequence (the *no longer*) as well as the emergent promise of the next (the *not yet*). Manning uses the term *preacceleration* to refer to the 'virtual pre-movement that accompanies all actual movement' (2013, 134). She argues that *preacceleration* describes the 'immanence of movement moving: how movement can be felt before it actualizes […] the virtual force of a movement's taking form' (Manning 2009, 6). In her chapter 'Grace Taking Form', Manning differentiates between the work of photographer Eadweard Muybridge, whose 'rapid movement' photographs sought to freeze or even pose movement almost like a series of cinematic stills, and the 'movement-images' of his contemporary Étienne-Jules Marey, whose work was more concerned with the interval, the in-between, the duration of 'movement's moving'. She argues that whilst Muybridge focused on capturing the visible 'moves' of 'bodies in motion', Marey's practice involved the production of 'photographic images of experiential flows, elastic forces, quasi-virtual perceptions not of the movement as content but of the incorporeal surfacing of the microperceptual' (Manning 2009, 84). For Manning, Marey was engaged in an 'exploration of incipiency, graphing not only curves *of* movement but curves *in* movement' (2009, 84 – 85). Likewise, we strive to get closer to the incipient 'virtual force of a movement's taking form' (Manning 2009, 6), focusing through the reanimation of non-chronological

documents on 'the idea of overlapping states of transition … the animation of space-time where different layers of bodies in transition interweave' (Manning 2009, 102).

Parallel to these visual explorations, we have developed a digital online version of our textual lexicon in collaboration with creative technologist Dane Watkins, designed to unfold slowly across the screen in willful disruption of the habitual tendencies of web-based reading.[iii] Indeed, this principle of slowness is a conceptual thread that runs throughout our enquiry: the generation and reconfiguration of our various performance documents attempts to slow down an encounter with the event of falling in order to get to know it more deeply. However, this is not a practice of capture and control, of containing the unruly excesses of falling within a less transitory, more stable image. Our intent is not one of fixing the fleeting event of falling within a finite visual form, but rather an attempt to unfix the document itself, allowing it to be encountered anew. In this sense, we consider our repeated, returning engagement with performance documents akin to the slow practice of reading and re-reading. Drawing on the writing of various thinkers including Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Simone Weil, theorist Michelle Boulous Walker advocates a method of 'slow reading' that requires the sustained act of returning to, reassessing, reconsidering and re-engaging with a text in order to cultivate a relational attentiveness based on intensity, intimacy, and proximity rather than the 'desire to know', for generating a receptive capacity in the reader for openness to otherness (2017, xxi). For Walker, 'Reading slowly and rereading, returning time and time again to read anew, we return, similarly to the things in the world anew […] slow reading would not simply mean always reading slowly, but would, rather, involve a preparedness to return time and time again to what we read' (2017, xv). She argues that slow reading is an ethical and political practice through which to engage with complexity, difficulty and even *strangeness* against the demands

of an institutional and cultural context that privileges instrumentalised forms of reading underpinned by speed, efficiency and productivity. Whilst Walker is reflecting on the reading of philosophy, we conceive our approach to the document akin to her method of slow reading and re-reading, allowing us to return over and over again to the event of falling. Yet our practice of reading and re-reading the live event through its documents is not intended to render the fall familiar, but rather to increase the sense of strangeness or even alterity emerging in the interval where live and lens meet, between live performance and lens-based mediation, between event and document.

Funding

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i   Exhibitions include a solo/collaborative presentation of *The Italic I,* Project Space Plus Lincoln (3 – 13 November 2014); alongside different iterations of the work in group exhibitions including *Alternative Document* curated by Ang Bartram*,* Project Space Plus Lincoln (12 February – 13 March 2016); *Documents, Alternatives* curated by Ang Bartram, Airspace Gallery, Stoke on Trent (17 November – 16 December 2017); Verge Gallery, Sydney (18 January – 24 February 2018); B-Side Gallery, Bath Spa University (20 April – 11 May 2018); ONCA Gallery, Brighton as part of Brighton Digital Festival (21 September – 8 October 2018).

ii   A 'version' of this three-screen iteration of *The Italic I* can be viewed online – https://vimeo.com/155856270

iii   See the-italic-i.com/