A physical book and an online collection of texts offer very different opportunities for interaction and interpretation. When we started publishing it seven years ago, Emergency INDEX—stubborn pulp pushed into paper, inked, bound and carried—was to be a platform for presence. It wanted to make a vast array of living performance work become durably present to a vast array of living performance makers, and it wanted this presence to emerge from a self-nominated collection of performance makers who wished to document their recent work, in their words, and in these pages. From its beginnings, we were dedicated to publishing INDEX as a paper volume, but we’d also imagined that the contents of each paper volume would eventually be freely available online. But how?

What could an online repository of these archives do that the book can’t? We dreamed that an online interface for Emergency INDEX would allow for keyword searches across the different volumes, proliferating alternative paths through which to explore years of performance documentation. We wanted an online platform that would allow authors and others to link directly to a published performance description and thus be able to circulate these texts in other ways. Finally, we wanted the online version of Emergency INDEX to allow its readers to propose interpretations of this material: a sort of digital zine to publish essays, diagrams, audio tours, and menageries that reflect on what performance is or does by considering the documents in previous volumes of Index. But sadly, these were dreams barely worth talking about; for the six preceding years we had barely enough funding and time to publish the paper volume, and none at all to attempt even a simple version of such a website.

As we were starting work on Vol. 6, the stars began to align. UDP collective member Michael Newton wrote a grant application to the New York State Council for the Arts, deftly arguing the ways that INDEX served performance makers and the field of performance. NYSCA responded by awarding us five years of support, making it possible to think seriously about what an online publication would look like. Brian McCorkle (PPL, Varispeed) and edward sharp (Future Death Toll), both performance makers and longtime contributors to INDEX, came forward to brainstorm, design and build the new site. Not only have they built a fully searchable repository of previous volumes, but also an embedded online journal—Index the Index—publishing responses to and interpretations of previous volumes. Brian and edward will continue in the forthcoming year as co-editors of Index the Index, in which they invite contributors to submit works that reconsider, reinterpret or re-index the online archives of Emergency INDEX. For their open call, and a more detailed description of the online archives, please visit www.emergencyindex.com.
Thus, as Vol. 7 goes to print, we find ourselves poised for change. The joy and excitement of working with Brian and edward to finally make previous volumes of INDEX available online are tempered by having to say goodbye to our beloved Katie Gaydos, who (alongside Sophia Cleary and myself) served as co-editor of Emergency INDEX from 2015 through 2017, when she resigned in order to pursue personal projects. Imagining a future without her has been difficult. It is no exaggeration to say that Katie’s precision and devotion shaped each of the volumes she worked on. We wish her success and are grateful for her indelible contribution to the documentation of performance.

Dear reader, as you prepare to dig into the pages and performances that follow, we leave you with this final reminder: Emergency INDEX is a living project that invites your vital participation, whether as a place to document your own performance work, as a platform for re-indexing and reinterpreting these collections of performance documents, or as a community of performance makers and performance acts becoming ever more present to each other.

— YELENA GLUZMAN
MY DINNER WITH ANDREA:
THE PIECE FORMERLY KNOWN AS TORTURE PLAYLIST
first performed on February 9, 2017
New York Live Arts, New York, NY
performed three times in 2017

ANDREA KLEINE
Alison Ingelstrom, Anya Liftig, Bobby Previte, Dan Dobson, Madeline Best, Michael Kammers, Neal Kirkwood

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MY DINNER WITH ANDREA:
THE PIECE FORMERLY KNOWN AS TORTURE PLAYLIST
ANDREA KLEINE

“My Dinner with Andrea: The Piece Formerly Known as Torture Playlist” was commissioned by New York Live Arts in 2017. My original idea was to make a dance about the music deployed in the CIA and US military torture programs. I was interested in the similarities between “enhanced interrogation techniques” and performance techniques, especially in terms of minimalism—repetition, endlessness, obsession, release—and how these strategies bend and inflate time. However, making a piece about torture is incredibly distressing. By creating this piece, was I somehow perpetuating torture? Was I benefiting from it? In despair, I abandoned the idea and channeled theater shaman André Gregory from his 1981 film My Dinner with André, creating a new version of the famed two-hour dinner conversation while seeking answers on how to make a dance about torture, examining what it could have been and my own fear of making it. The performance emerges as an amalgam of fragments: fractures of complicity, futility, and desire.

In this work, familiar narratives are subverted: structural, visual, emotional, and physical elements are stolen from iconic films, pop songs, and various forms of choreography. I cannibalize my source materials, turn them into choreographic tools, and claim them for myself. In “My Dinner with Andrea: The Piece Formerly Known as Torture Playlist,” repetition and circling and taffy-pulled timing infiltrate a conversation, a music-video-style dance, a trio dance, and the larger meta-structure of the piece. Two musicians play “Rawhide” on coconuts and saxophone in the theater lobby. A dancer performs a sexy, high-heels solo to an endless loop of “Call Me Maybe” until she finally collapses. The performance space is reset for a re-creation of the movie My Dinner with André—a dinner table for two, a pianist playing a loop of Satie and slowly eliminating notes until he is left with only two.

The bulk of the piece is a conversation between the artists Andrea Kleine and Anya Liftig examining how torture has infected their lives, how it exists in everything from pop tune refrains to what they are eating to their personal histories and to the very art they are making. The piece disintegrates into to dance. It resurrects itself. It refuses to go away. It has no choice but to begin again.
THE PIÑATA DANCE: THE HUMOR IN BREAKING APART THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK
first performed on February 25, 2017
Experimental Action Performance Festival at The Secret Group, Houston, TX
performed three times in 2017

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THE PIÑATA DANCE: THE HUMOR IN BREAKING APART THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK

CHRISTIAN CRUZ

This fifteen-minute performance occurs within an installation that includes contemporary dance and storytelling elements, and it reclaims the piñata as a—lest we forget—Mexican custom. It is a performance that unpacks trauma in light of celebration and humor. Didactic and powerful, informative and thoughtful, kinda funny, intense and interactive, the only way to remind you the piñata is Mexican is by showing you how it dances. For the first five to six minutes, I personify a piñata by wrapping rope around my waist. Then, I throw my body without care, as if I’m being beaten by a bat. I call this the “Piñata Dance.” I do the “Piñata Dance” all while I sing, “Dale, Dale, Dale,” a Mexican traditional song, sung during piñata breaking rituals. The song is sung on and off for 30 seconds, mimicking the taking of turns during a piñata-breaking ritual. Even when my body falls to the floor from the impact, I still dance the “Piñata Dance” until the song ends causing a viscerally intense image. I finally get tired and say, “I am a piñata. Beaten and ripped apart but expected to pour sweets out of me... onto you.” I then proceed to compliment each and every person individually around the room. Metaphorically, I am giving them my sweetness, again personifying a piñata. Afterwards, I give improvisational directions, humorously, on how to participate in a piñata breaking. Then I invite audience members one by one to hit a piñata that I have hidden away from the gaze of judgment. While a one person hits the piñata, I sing “Dale, Dale, Dale” on the main stage in between ad-libbing about my mother’s assimilation to US customs and how I learned this traditional Mexican song on the internet and not from Mexican relatives. I also diss Justin Bieber’s cover of a Spanish song, and say other semi-political funny things in defense of preserving Mexican identity. When the piñata broke, I picked it up and poured out the candy for the whole audience. There was nothing but joy, and laughter. The audience picked up the candy and engaged in lots of conversation about the Mexican piñata breaking, in particular the song “Dale, Dale, Dale” and how it is often omitted from their personal experience.
REFLEX
first performed on April 28, 2017
Volume Gallery, Berlin, Germany
performed twice in 2017

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REFLEX
YIANNIS PAPPAS

I visualized the archiving and ordering of a system in which we are all embedded and trapped. During a performance at the Volume Gallery in Berlin, I removed all books from the gallery’s bookshelf and cut holes in the shelves for my own body. I stayed there for over four hours as a living archive of knowledge during the opening and the following days.

What kind of knowledge archive would that be? In this piece, I am dealing with the systematically acquired knowledge that everyone automatically absorbs as a child and then takes on as an adult—like a reflex, given and unquestioned. There is an infinite amount of knowledge in books that everyone, at least in certain situations, should better examine to determine if it suits their own life and their own view of the world.

As life’s perception is not a given but a learned practice, involving an active construction of the world, any resemblance to reality is an effect generated by the interplay between the expected and the unexpected. Analogies, metaphors, and symbols are the strings that keep one’s mind connected to the world, Hannah Arendt said. With the performance of “Reflex,” I investigate these strings not only as connections of human experiences but also as strategies for stabilization.

The title of the work refers to the English and German word “Reflex”—a spontaneous and instinctive response to a stimulus which is firmly established in our human awareness and our body. “Reflex” then no longer means a given practice, but an action where human impulses can offer a new constellation of power relations. The work questions the complex triangle of public space, individual, and society, and completely unfolds this triangle into a straight and open line where things can be arranged in a new way.
MELTING BORDERS
first performed on July 20, 2017
in the street, Yerevan, Armenia
performed twice in 2017

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"Melting Borders" is a live performance which is shown as a durational piece or a walking street action.

In "Melting Borders" I created a head-structure which holds five ice creams.

Each ice cream is colored with natural flavorings, which is determined by the color of the country I perform in. The intention with "Melting Borders" is to melt the political symbols and nationalistic components of countries and rather let the beauty of culture shine. The point of "Melting Borders" is to melt, with the witty presence of an ice cream, every border, to let us discover the essence of culture, the sweetness of it.

What remains on my white shirt are the colors of the flag, and the shirt itself becomes like a painting, witnessing the melting process of the flag in question.

So far I've created an Armenian shirt/flag and a British shirt/flag. In 2017 I was invited to Miami to perform this work and melt the American borders, but my entry was rejected due to my visit to Iran in the same year. I was detained for 24 hours and sent back to the UK.

I have chosen to use ice cream for various reasons. It is internationally known in so-called "developed societies." It is also internationally renowned and loved by so many people (although I don’t consider it edible). Due to its popularity, it can potentially become an advocate and connector of global cultures.