Cally Spooner Deadtime, an anatomy study

Graham Foundation, Chicago Feb 17 - Jun 29, 2024

Curated by Sarah Herda and Hendrik Folkerts

Deadtime, an anatomy study begins somewhere deep and unfathomable between the kidneys and the hips, in a large muscle attached to the bottom of the thoracic spine, just along the lumbar. This muscle is called the psoas. Unlike surface muscles—a quad, a bicep, pecs—which pop out and publicize their presence, you cannot flex or release the psoas. It is buried deep inside. The psoas is regarded as an "emotional muscle," as it quietly supports gut feelings, and activates desires to handle and hold basic psychological and social needs. Yet, the psoas is widely understood to be the most abused muscle in the human anatomy. Only when it is weakened or stagnant, is the psoas easy to locate, via negative symptoms that present themselves elsewhere: stiff hips, reduced circulation in the legs, locking in the lower back, feelings of sadness, and unwillingness to move.

The doctrine of "performance" creates a society that becomes stratified by how we perform—economically, socially, digitally. We become ripe for consumption, caught in an economy of perpetual readiness. Performance begins in the individual body, leaks into the social body, and then—like a stagnated psoas—creates negative symptoms, elsewhere: measurement, imaged and tracked selves, divisive comparisons, the creation of human currency and capital, self-management, and exploitation. In this climate, ultimately governed by the chrononormative clock that is Western time, basic needs remain unmet and it is increasingly difficult to tell the difference between what is alive and what is dead. "How can one study the emotional development of society?" asked the pediatrician Donald Winnicott in 1956, adding that simultaneously "[s]uch a study must be closely related to the study of the individual." At the Graham Foundation, seventeen artworks—including sound, film, sculpture, painting, and installation—that make up *Deadtime* echo this question over the three floors of the historic building. Throughout the exhibition the independent works overlap and collide, synchronized to a duration of 43 minutes and 59 seconds. Each floor draws out the tension field between the destructiveness of performance, and the possibility of resistance and repair. The works are attached to an inflamed, red psoas muscle, staged as an anatomical, architectural intervention that sweeps through the building's internal walls and then, ostensibly, recedes. When a psoas is vibrant, it disappears. It vanishes into a dead time, a condition and temporality that presents no symptoms elsewhere, and, in doing so, restitutes life.

Deadtime was first composed by Cally Spooner in 2018 as a 63page performance score. The project was subsequently conceived as a performance and installation for the *Iterations* performance program at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2019, curated by Hendrik Folkerts. Parts of *Deadtime* have been shown at Swiss Institute, New York (2019); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem (2021); Parrhesiades, London (2021); gb agency, Paris (2021); ZERO..., Milan (2022); Pinacotecca Agnelli Foundation, Turin (2022); MOVE Festival, Centre Pompiodu, Paris (2022); O-Overgaden, Copenhagen (2023); and Cukrarna, Ljubljana (2023). *Deadtime* now returns to Chicago, half a decade later, as the most comprehensive presentation, cocurated by Graham Foundation director, Sarah Herda and Hendrik Folkerts, curator of international contemporary art and head of exhibitions, Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Credits

Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 Horizontal, vertical, and circular movement: Aske Thiberg

Still Life, 2018 Assistant: Cally Spooner

Melody's Warm Up, 2022 Cello tonilization: Melody Giron Scoring, timing: Cally Spooner Studio audio recording: Jesse Lewis at Immersive Music Project, Boston Audio gain staging: Tom Sedgwick with Cally Spooner Mastering: Stephan Mathieu Schwebung Produced by Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin

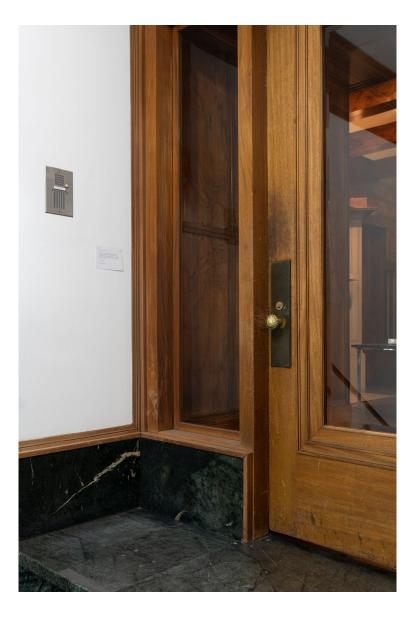
WHAT HAPPENED!? A Conversation With My Mother, 2024 Telephone conversation: Cally Spooner and Angela Spooner Audio recording: Cally Spooner Film recording of view from *Hotel du Parc*, Mont Pelerin: Cally Spooner Transcription: Ava Barrett and AI

Dancing Still Life on a Single Breath, 2023 Selfie Poses: Maggie Segale Scoring: Cally Spooner Sound recording with body and boom microphones: Simon Jørgensen Audio gain staging: Tom Sedgwick Produced by Cukrarna, Ljubljana, with the support of O-Overgaden, Copenhagen

Maggie's Solo (audio only), 2021 Audio interference: New York City's crowded electromagnetic spectrum Breathing: Maggie Segale dancing Scoring and cuing: Cally Spooner Postproduction audio mixing: Tom Sedgwick

DEAD TIME (Maggie's Solo), 2021 Choreography: Cally Spooner and Maggie Segale Dancing: Maggie Segale Steadycam: Charles Billot Breathing: Maggie Segale dancing Technical interfernce: New York City's crowded radio-wave spectrum Sound mix: Tom Sedgwick

Principles, 2023 Children counting: Rose Wiklund, Margot Haydon, Matilda Haydon and Ella Spooner Direction, encouragement: Cally Spooner Sound recording: Philip Spooner Childcare: Sarah Newey Editing: Cally Spooner Mixing and mastering: Stephan Mathieu Schwebung



Toni Smit, 2021



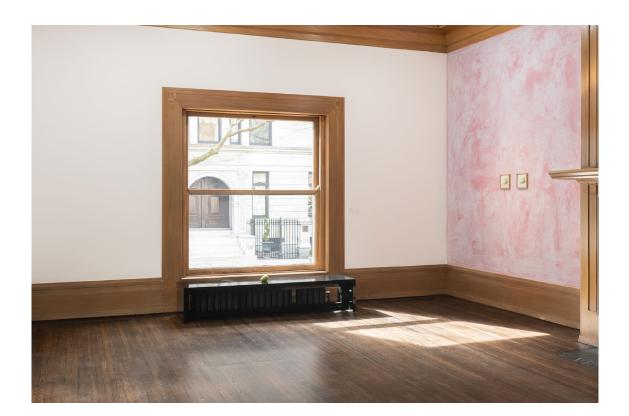
Toni Smit, 2021



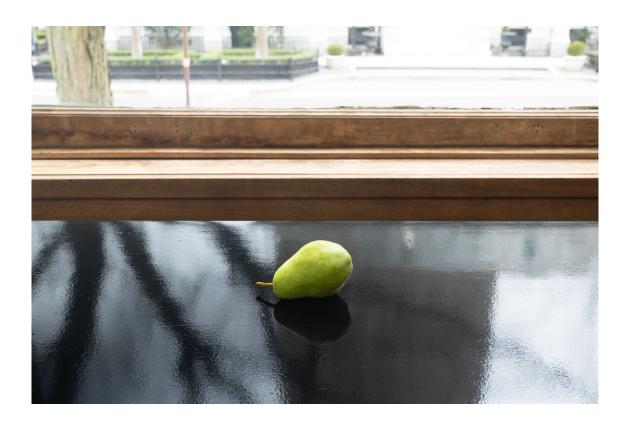
DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail)



DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail) —active because it leaks, 2022



Still Life, 2018 Fainted Pear, 2023 [3] Fainted Pear, 2022 [1] Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023



Still Life, 2018



Fainted Pear, 2023 [3] Fainted Pear, 2022 [1] Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 Fainted Pear, 2023 [3] Fainted Pear, 2022 [1]



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail) Still Life, 2018 Fainted Pear, 2023 [4]



Still Life, 2018



Fainted Pear, 2023 [4]



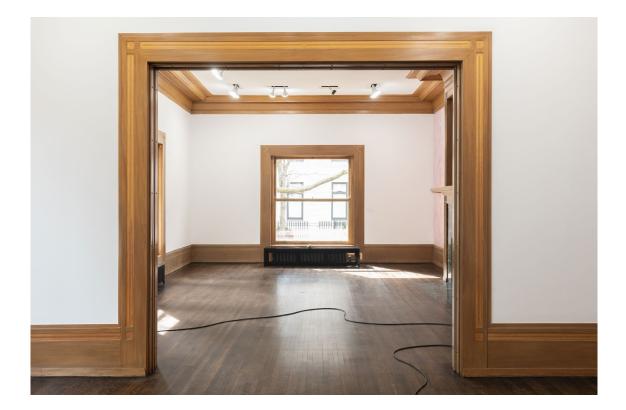
Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail) Still Life, 2018 Fainted Pear, 2023 [4]



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail) Still Life, 2018



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail)



DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022 (detail) Still Life, 2018 Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023



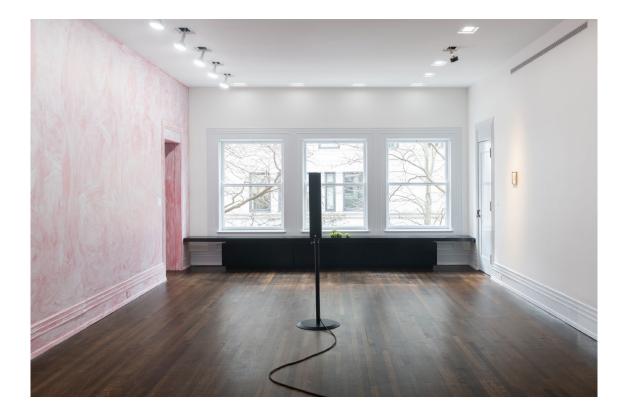
DEAD TIME (Melody's Warm Up), 2022



Principles, 2022 Dancing Still Life on a Single Breath, 2023



Principles, 2022 Dancing Still Life on a Single Breath, 2023



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Maggie's Solo), 2021 (detail) Still Life, 2018 Fainted Pear, 2022 [2]



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023

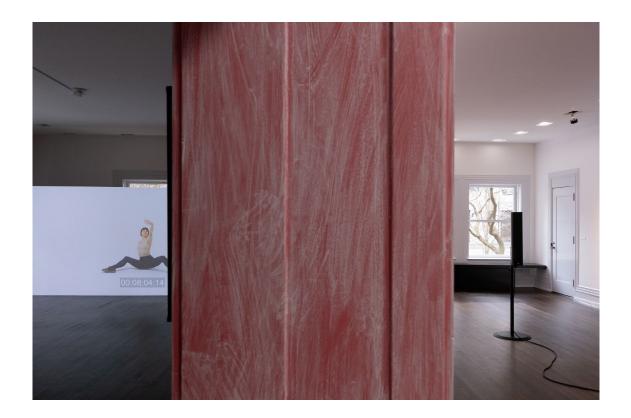


Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023





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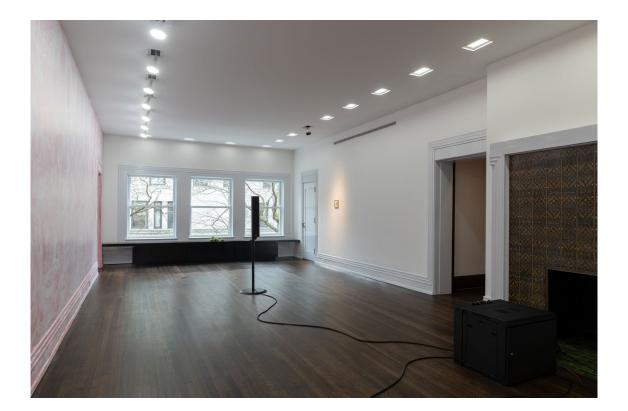








Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 DEAD TIME (Maggie's Solo), 2021 (detail)



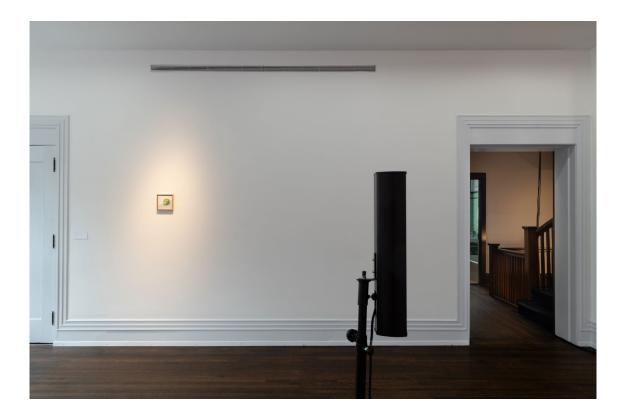
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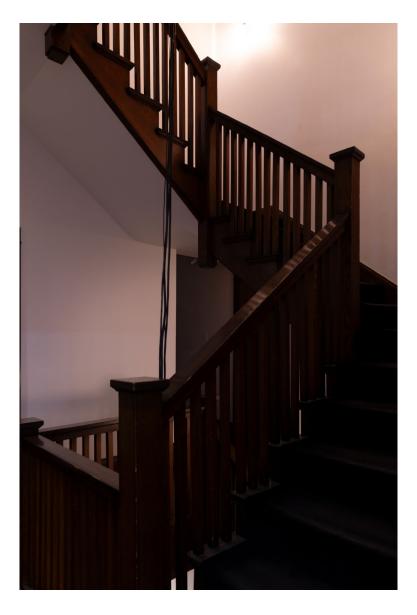
Still Life, 2018



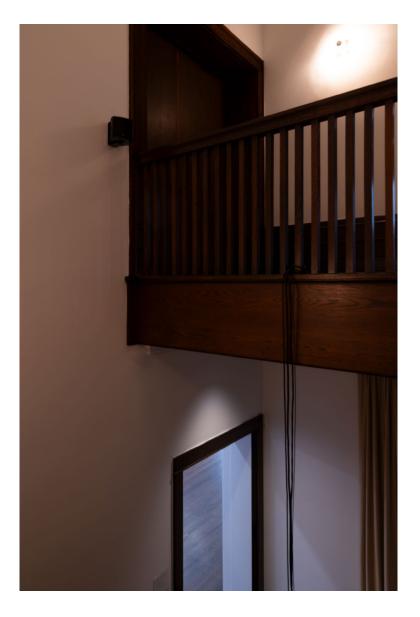
Still Life, 2018



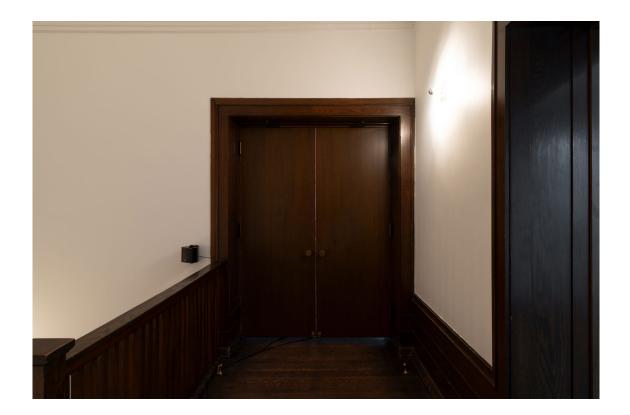
Fainted Pear, 2022 [2] DEAD TIME (Maggie's Solo), 2021 (detail) Principles, 2022



Principles, 2022



Principles, 2022



Principles, 2022



AS30D (Mother), 2023

Fontaine Publique Meurtrière (Murderous Public Drinking Fountain, Continental Edition), 2018



Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023

Fontaine Publique Meurtrière (Murderous Public Drinking Fountain, Continental Edition), 2018



AS30D (Mother), 2023

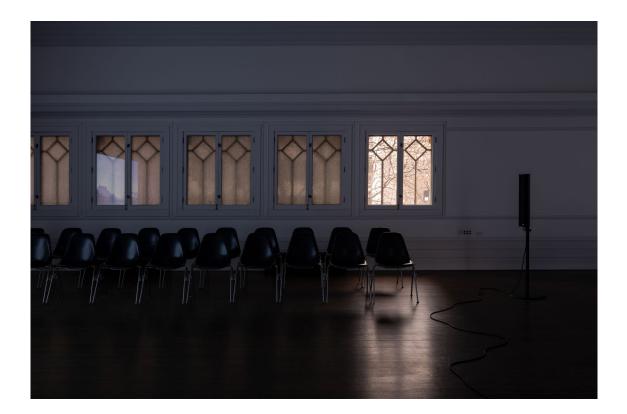


Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023

AS30D (Mother), 2023

Fontaine Publique Meurtrière (Murderous Public Drinking Fountain, Continental Edition), 2018

WHAT HAPPENED ?? A Conversation with my Mother, 2024 (detail)



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Screen Test for the Psoas Muscle, 2023 WHAT HAPPENED!? A Conversation with my Mother, 2024



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