

Incline, Decline or The Non Upright Subject

STRATFORD, Helen

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Citation:

STRATFORD, Helen (2024). Incline, Decline or The Non Upright Subject. Platform. Journal of theatre and performing arts., 17 (1), 150-159. [Article]

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Incline, Decline or The Non Upright Subject

Helen Stratford

In architecture and urban design, disability is conventionally framed as a condition that generates 'problems' to be solved, usually by physical additive processes. Access is achieved via a ramp or an extended doorway, found in Part M of the Building Regulations, without addressing wider social discrimination (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). In contrast, in contemporary feminist and critical disability approaches, found across art practice, performance studies, sociology and geography studies, an expansive understanding of the 'bodymind' relationships that disabled people have with time and visibility, called 'crip time,' is emerging. Here, 'bodymind' refers to an understanding that the body and mind are not separate physical and mental entities but are felt together, particularly in the experience of disability (Sheppard). However, many of these critical art-based approaches focus less on specific socio-spatial contexts. My research addresses this disciplinary gap by bringing these approaches into connection with architecture and urban studies on disability (Boys, Gissen) to ask: how might feminist creative practice methodologies be developed to bring embodied experiences of crip time for disabled, sick and chronically ill people into normative assumptions of public space, in order to generate new spaces and theories that challenge existing socio-spatial models of disability?

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, public space epitomised restricted access and fear. Yet, for disabled, sick and chronically ill people, access was already highly contested (Boys "Disability Space Architecture"). 'Crip time' is an embodied understanding of how disabled 'bodyminds' move "in/through time" that critiques ableist timeframes and constructions of disability (Sheppard 39). Outside 'linear, progressive time,' this 'broken time'

brings grief and frustration, yet it generates new ways of thinking, feeling and being in the world (Samuels). Here, embodied performances not only enable 'sick' and 'horizontal' bodies to 'pass' as 'the upright subject' (Hedva; Careveno), but also critique this spatiality underpinning Western thought, by generating indeterminate zones between 'able' and 'disabled.' By extending these embodied concepts into critical encounters with the support structures and processes necessary to sustain public life, the following artist's pages seek to examine what spaces emerge from crip time, and how are new theories for non-normative spaces are generated through these reconceptualisations?

Located between live, visual art, architecture and writing, my practice is a social one; developing live events, video-works, speculative writing, performance and artists' books that search for modalities to expand architectural conventions. The following pages are informed by a personal re-calibration of daily approaches to my research practice due to enforced periods of 'unproductivity' experienced over the past three years because of a chronic pain condition. Chronic illness is not only the topic of study and in desperate need of scholarship but is also the limiting factor in scholarship for many people. Led by my lived experience, the following pages employ feminist autotheory (Fournier) and speculative diagramming methods (Fric-hot) to explore relationships between public space, productivity and self-care. Through reappropriating diagrammatic devices designed to increase productivity, including those prescribed for chronic conditions to manage exhaustion and pain – CBT diagrams, flow charts and pie charts – the diagrams critique those organisational devices that claim to "build a better, stronger you" (Way of Life). Informed by my everyday activities encountered in 'performing' the 'upright subject', the pages make visible the emotional and physical labour needed to sustain the public and working lives of this 'sick' body. At the same time, in their reappropriation of diagrammatic de-

vices prescribed to manage productivity and pain, the pages extend artist Joanna Hedva's much quoted reclamation of 'sick' as an embodied lens by which to critique normative and disabling societal structures (Hedva). Ultimately, the pages examine how the reappropriation of these devices exceed the reductive methods through which they disable bodies, thereby 'cripping' them (Boys "Crippling Spaces?") by generating prototypical and joyful spaces that challenge these ways of thinking which underpin much of normative design.

WORK DAY (sometime in September 2022)

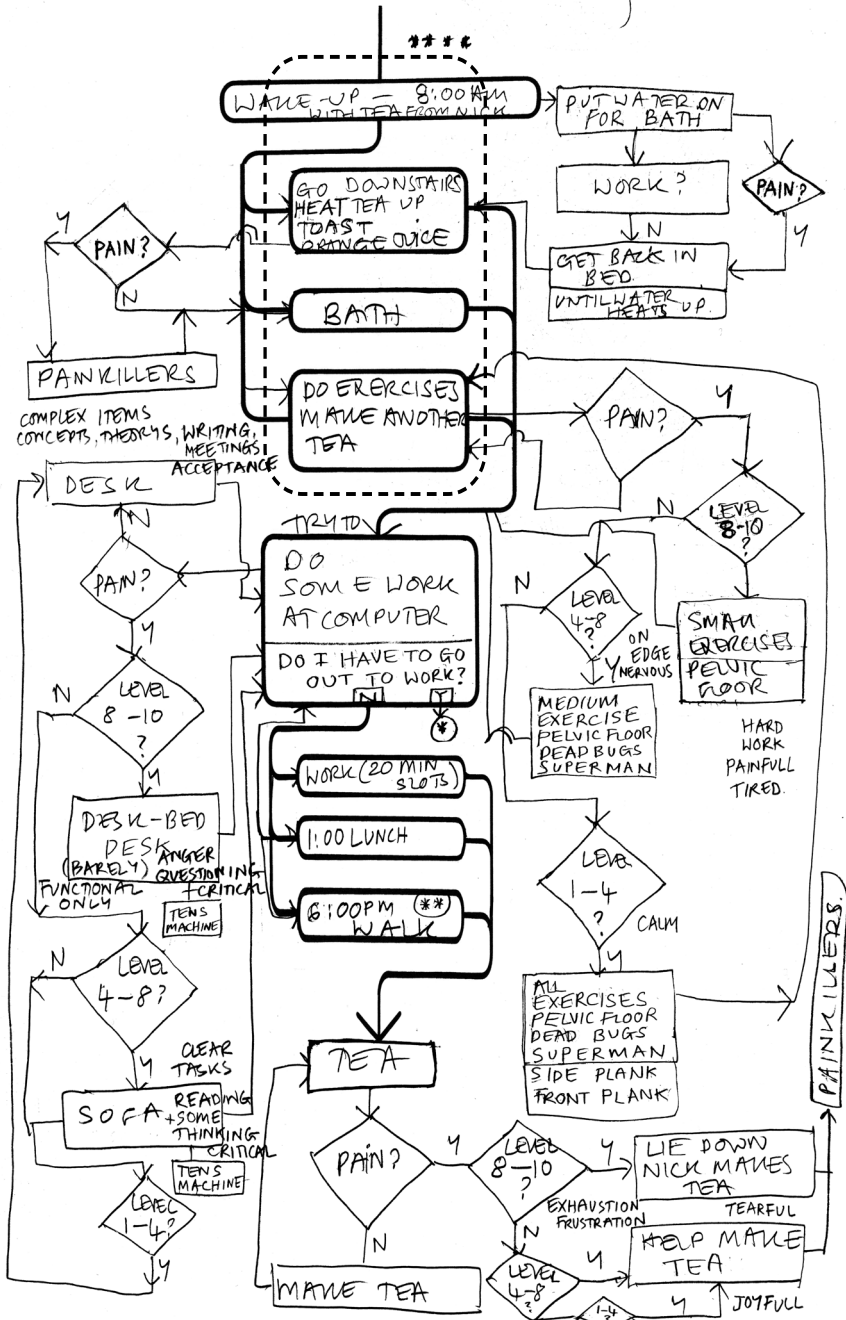
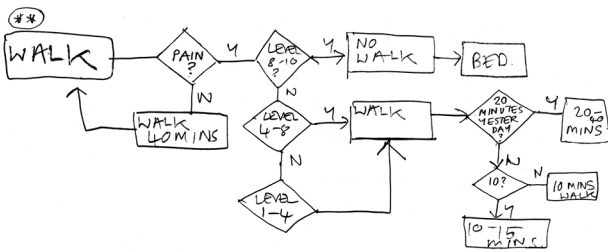
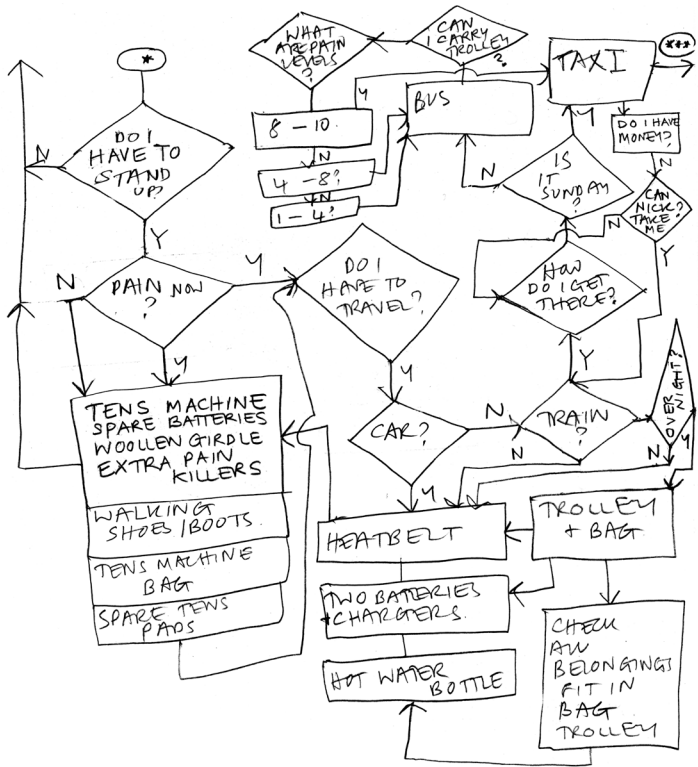


Fig. 1a



PAIN TO POGRAPHY

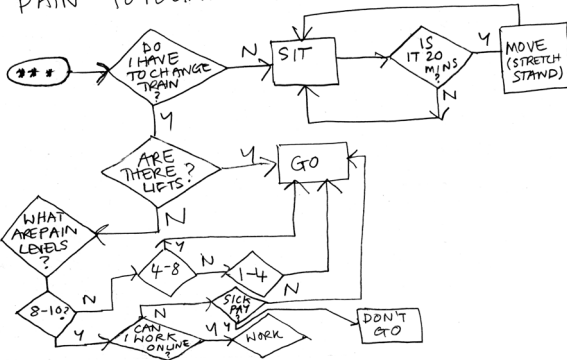
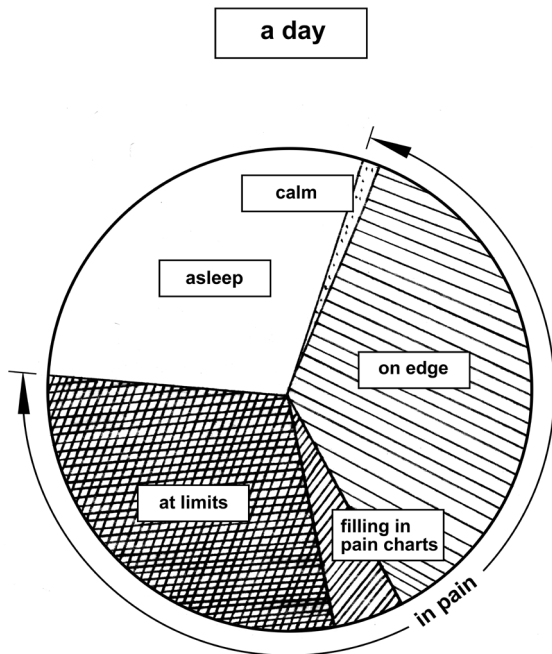


Fig. 1b

GETTING UP



Fig. 1c

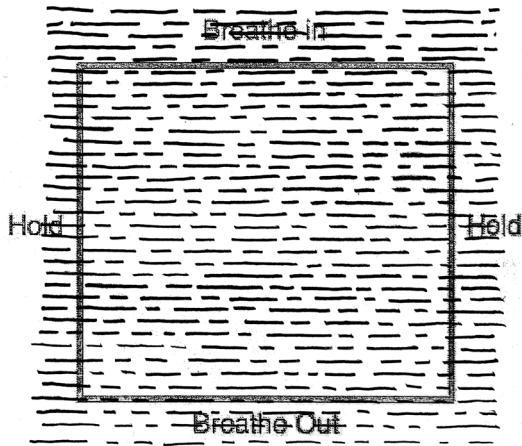


Pain Management Checklist

3	Sleep diary / checklists
7	Pain cycle circles
1	Self care cycle
2	Stress bucket template
1	Upward spiral
2	Square box breathing instructions
6	Set of self care questions
1	Pacing chart
1	Persistent pain priority list
1	Emotional regulation system

Fig. 2

~~Square Box~~ Breathing:



~~Persistent Pain~~ Cycle

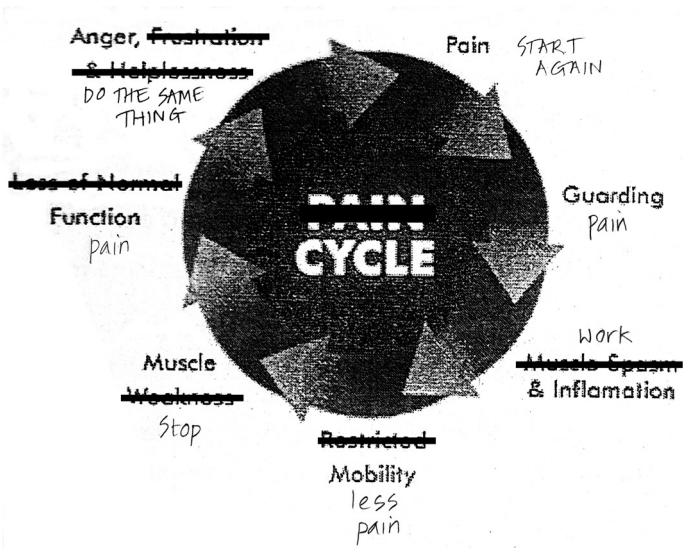


Fig. 3

Acknowledgements

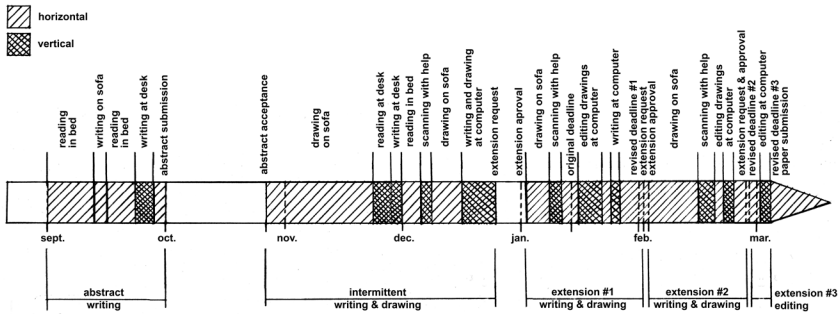
Thank you to artists, curators, scholars and students who have supported the current direction of this research, including Jos Boys, Emma Cheatle, Terri-Louise Doyle, Michiel Teeuw, Kaiya Waerea and Sunshine Wong.

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Coda

Paper Timeline



Pain Levels



Fig. 4

Figures

Figure 1: *Unproductive Spatialisations #1* - flow charts documenting the decisions made in attempting to get to make work (a), including travel and walk additions (b) and a close-up of getting up (c). Modified flowchart: 'Site inspection' (Green 129) from Ronald Green, *The Architect's Guide to Running a Job*. Butterworth Architecture Management Guides. Butterworth Architecture, 1986.

Figure 1b: *A Day*

Figure 1c: *Pain Management Checklist*. Compendium of rehabilitation measures prescribed to the author between Spring 2020 and Summer 2023. Modified '10 Rules for Improved Sleep Hygiene' table. Kevin Morgan, Beverley David and Claire Gascoigne. *Clinical Sleep Research Unit Loughborough University UK*. (Issued to author September 2022).

Figure 2: *Square Box Breathing*. Modified 'Square Box Breathing' diagram (NHS 16) from 'Helping you to Manage your Persistent Pain' Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Issued to author September 2022).

Figure 3: *Persistent Pain Cycle*. Modified 'Pain Cycle' diagram (NHS 4) from 'Helping you to Manage your Persistent Pain' Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Issued to author September 2022)

Figure 4: *Paper Timeline*. Timeline for paper production including pain levels taken from the *How Are You?*. Mobile App. Google Play. Vers 1.1.1. Målbar Trivsel. Jan 03, 2022