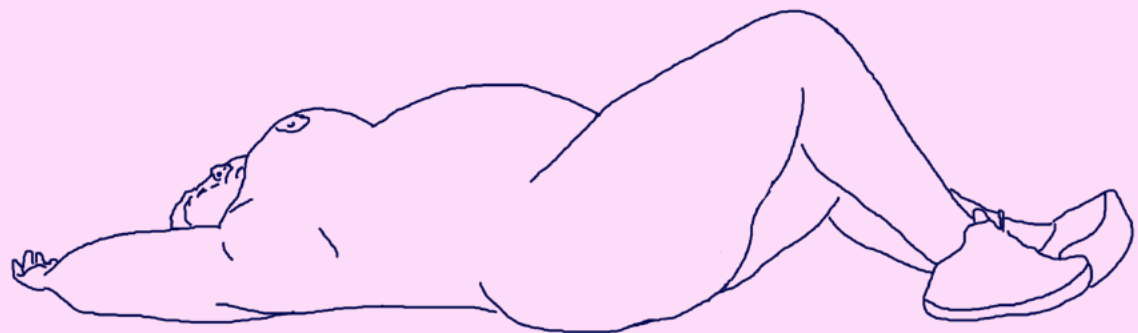


F A T

PERFORMANCE

D I Y

WORKSHOP



W O R K B O O K

Gifts of Fatness I

Showtime!

Some of the gifts, some of the gifts of being fat, some of my gifts, my fat:

5p every time someone borrows my stuff from a library

Aching knees sometimes

An artist's residency

Applause

Chronic exclusion

Commissions

Countless opportunities to work for free

A cover story on The Big Issue

Fan mail

A girl gang

The opportunity to be interviewed on Radio 4

Heartache, despair and loneliness

Internet traffic

Hate mail

Invitations I can't take up

Karaoke with Kate Moss whilst Sir Philip Green watched

Kinship across generations and borders

A Master's

Modelling and dancing gigs

A niche market

Opportunities to be stared at, misheard, misrepresented and shut down

People who feel entitled to something I have

A PhD

Publishing deals

A schooling in intersectional oppression

Second class citizenship

Something to blame when people harass and abuse me

Something to navigate in institutions

Trips to New Jersey, Sydney, Coventry, Toronto, everywhere

Vulnerability to medical fatphobia

A way of understanding

A way of understanding

A way of understanding

My fat has given me:

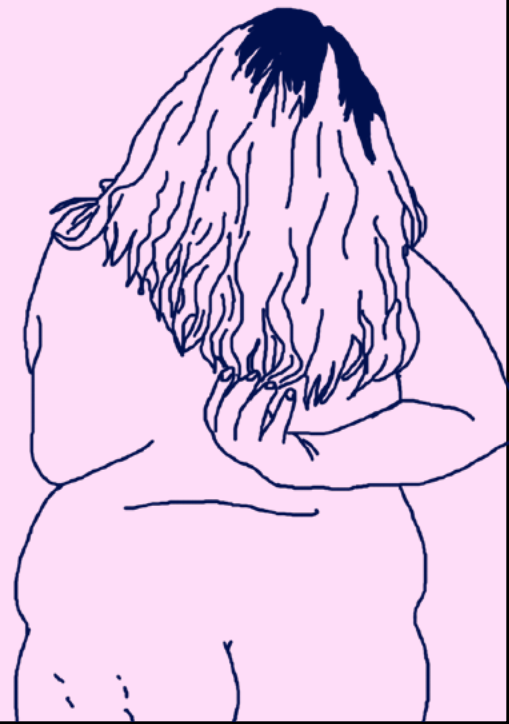
Warm hands

End end end

Charlotte Cooper

London 2020

charlottecooper.net



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INTRODUCTION

by Gillie Kleiman

I applied to the Live Art Development Agency's DIY programme feeling strongly that I wanted this workshop on Fat Performance to exist, but also feeling quite sure that I wasn't really the person to be leading it; I do performance and am fat, and have made one performance that is explicitly poking at the topic, but that was over a decade ago, and am not whatsoever an expert on fat performance. I thought that having a workshop on Fat Performance would bring together people with lots of expertise and less, and through that I could have some conversations I wanted to have, watch some work I wanted to watch, read some texts I wanted to read. I knew that there were Fat Performance people knocking about already; I had the sense that I wanted to join in with some stuff that was already happening, and maybe make it possible for some new people to get in on it, too.

I thought we'd meet in person at a place, probably Colchester Arts Centre, and be a bunch of fat performance people getting on with stuff for a weekend, having a nice time, thinking, making, reading, talking. The pandemic prevented that. Happily, this meant that people from many more places around the world could brave timezone issues and join a series of two-hour workshops in late 2020. Everyone who applied was accepted.

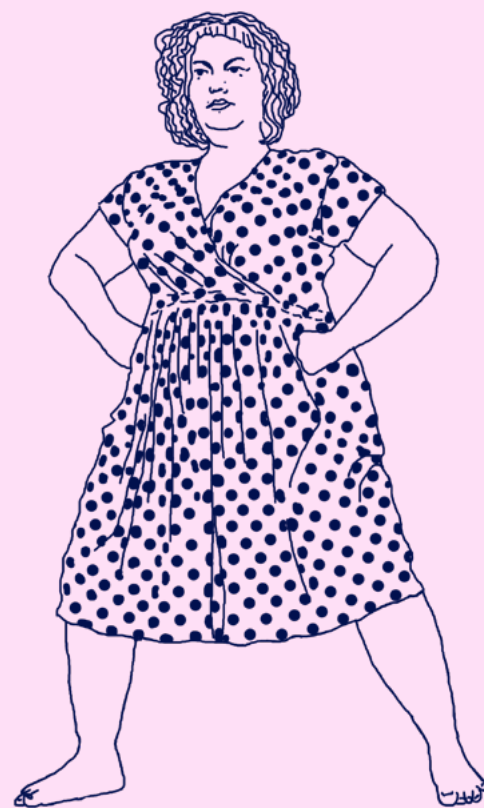
All of the participants are amazing. I have a crush on everyone in the workshop, a fact I realised was true the moment another participant wrote it to me. I am so grateful to have met everyone, including the people who could only come once or twice, the people with whom I emailed, the

people from whom I received applications who ended up not coming along, and the artists and writers whose work we thought about together.

In this publication, put together by a bunch of people from the workshop, you will find a list of resources that participants put forward to share with others, along with a version of some of the tasks and activities we undertook in our time together, and some other materials that might convey something of the experience. This isn't the same as having done the workshop, but we hope it will be an interesting and useful resource.

As well as this publication, this workshop has kicked off a series of related actions, which you can read about here. If you'd like to join the Fat Performance Network, and come along to a monthly session, you can sign up at fatperformancenetwork.com. You'd be very welcome.

Gillie Kleiman
March 2021



Approaching this Workbook

This workbook is partly documentation of what we got up to throughout the six weeks of our meetings and partly a do-it-yourself list of tasks that you can engage with. Each week holds a suggestion of a resource to engage with and a suggestion of a task to do.

You are encouraged to see the tasks just as suggestions that you can build upon in relation to how you want to work.

You may want to mix and match some of the tasks or questions with different resources and material from our extensive resource list. You may want to grab a friend or two and work on one together. You may want to turn a writing task into a movement task.

These are just starting points based on what we got up to during the Fat Performance DIY.

You can take them wherever you would like to go.



TASKS

Week 1: Introductions

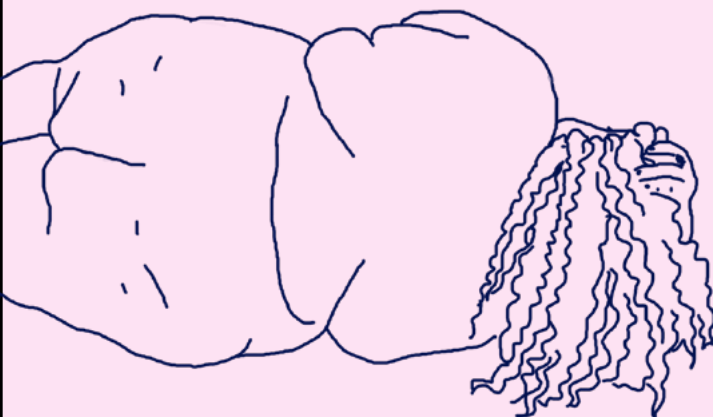
Our first session can be summarised as an introduction; we got to know each other within the Fat Performance DIY group, becoming familiar with how we were all thinking about performance and fatness. We looked at writing by Liz Rosenfeld and videos of Julischka Stengele and Divine as our points of departure. We discussed these texts as an avenue into talking about fat performance and beginning to devise ways to make it.

Task suggestions:

- Read Rosenfeld's 'Luxurious Tissue, Silky Sweat: Moving In Unmeasurable Time' aloud.
- What do these words do? What do you think about them, feel about them, imagine about them?
- Based on this, spend some time devising a performance-making task. The task should take 30-60 minutes and be a practical making task that you might set yourself or a collaborator for part of a rehearsal. It may be something simple like 'be a boulder' or 'read the text into your phone and then listen to it back' and can be in any medium.
- Now you may either swap tasks with a friend or simply return to your task a few days later and give it a go. Try to dedicate 30-60 minutes doing this.
- What resonates for you from doing this task?

Suggested Resources:

- [Liz Rosenfeld - 'Luxurious Tissue, Silky Sweat: Moving In Unmeasurable Time'](#)
- [Charlotte Cooper for LADA - 'Tantalising Glimpses'](#)
- [Julischka Stengele performance at Sound Acts and at FNAF](#)
- [Divine in Pink Flamingos by John Waters](#)



TASKS

Week 2: Pretending

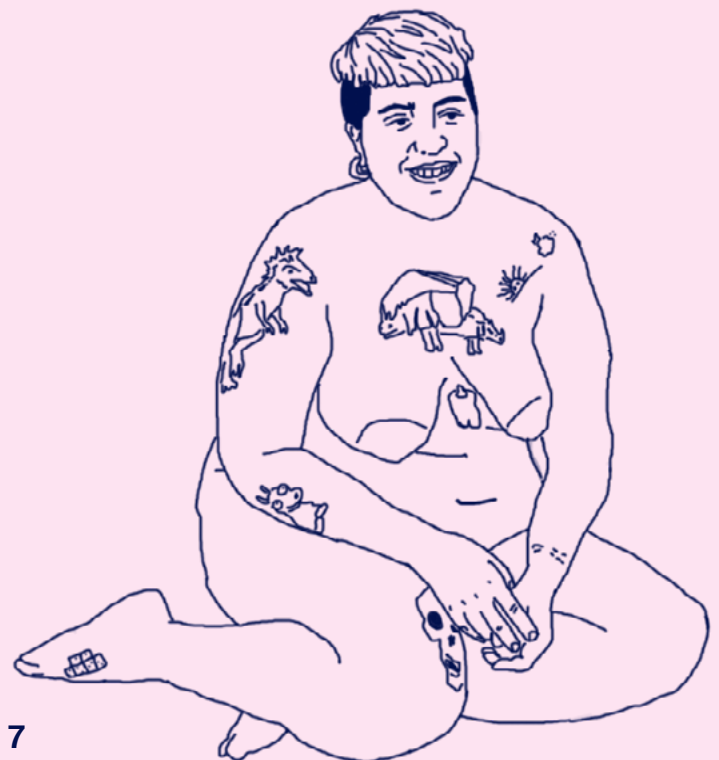
The second session was themed around pretending. We discussed *Fatty Fat Fat* by Katie Greenall and *Nothing to Lose* by Kelli Jean Drinkwater through an adaption of Générique, a fictional post-show discussion performance format. During this game, some of us pretended to have been on the creative and production teams for these shows, acting as panelists in a Q&A while fielding some fantastical questions from the rest of the group.

Task Suggestions:

- Select an example of fat performance that you have seen, such as *Fatty Fat Fat* or *Nothing to Lose*.
- If you are working with a group, play a version of Générique. Divide yourself into 'creatives' and 'audience members' and conduct a post-show discussion where the audience members interview the creatives about their experience working on the show. Have fun with it - lean into the fact that this is all speculation and imagination.
- If you are working alone, undertake the self interview. Write yourself some questions and answer them. You might ask yourself about the venue, the tone of the show, the materials, how it related to fatness. Allow yourself to be fanciful and silly.

Suggested Resources:

- While we watched *Fatty Fat Fat* and *Nothing to Lose*, we suggest searching through the 'performance' and 'film' section of the resource list to find a fat performance resource you wish to watch.



TASKS

Week 3: Moving

In this session we focussed on moving, the materiality of fat bodies and gifts of fatness. We engaged with Jules Pashall's chapter 'thank god I'm fat: gifts from the underbelly' and spent time both moving through a Keith Hennessy exercise, and making images together.

Task Suggestions:

- Clear some space, get yourself in the mood to move around and open up this playlist. As the music plays, try to move through the following stages, trying different ways with each to seek pleasure and keep finding your own interest in it:
- With the first track, shake – in all ways.
- With the second, move in slow motion, shifting your centre of gravity, stepping through and changing levels.
- With the third, start 'f*cking the space', having some sensuality or erotics with the environment you are in, as literally or obviously as you wish.
- With the final track, try rocking, in any way you please.
- With reference to 'thank god I'm fat: gifts from the underbelly', take some time to consider the gifts fatness offers you as a performer and performance maker, writing these down.
- Select one of these and spend ten or fifteen minutes devising an image you could perform of this gift.

Suggested Resources:

- 'thank god I'm fat: gifts from the underbelly' by Jules Pashall



TASKS

Week 4: Strategies

This week was dedicated to thinking about what strategies are involved in fat performance and fat performance making. We spent time thinking about what these strategies are and broadly discussing their politics, not seeking to arrive at an answer about the 'best way' to create fat performance, but to stay curious and open to all the possibilities. We created studies of some of these strategies, exploring them through our own micro-performances.

Task Suggestions:

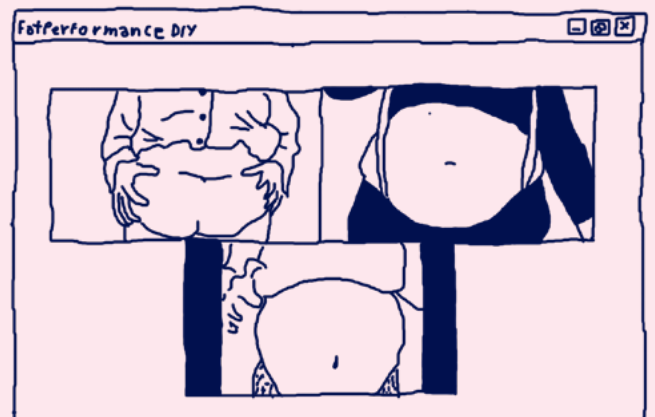
- You may wish to start by considering the question of what it is to think about fatness in performance as an object/image as opposed to as sensation/experience?
- Think about what other questions this may lead to? Must these things be in opposition? Where might this take you?
- How have you seen these questions addressed/referenced/avoided in fat performance you've seen or in your own practice?
- From this, you may wish to begin to extrapolate what strategies and tactics fat performance uses. These may be the things that keep coming up for you in fat performance or something you've only seen once.
- Having generated a list of fat performance strategies, choose one that you would like to work with further.
- Spend 20 minutes working on this strategy to create a 30 second micro-performance study of it. This may involve copying something you have

seen in somebody else's work or something you have done before or combining elements. Within our group, micro-performances included songs and eating and nudity.

- You might consider what reflections you have gained from working closely with this strategy.

Suggested Resources:

- [Fat Activists' Strategies on Stage](#) by Camille Ronti
- [Big Judy: Fatness, Shame, and the Hybrid Autobiography](#) by Allyson Mitchell



TASKS

Week 5: Histories

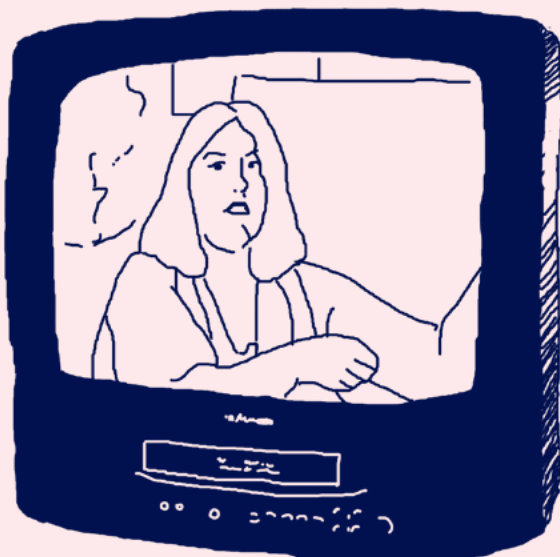
In this session, we discussed the histories of fat performance. Largely drawing on the Queer and Trans Fat Activist Timeline project facilitated by Charlotte Cooper, we collaboratively created a timeline of fat performance on padlet and discussed questions of history, autobiography and archiving.

Task Suggestions:

- Create a timeline of your own personal history of fat performance.
- This may include performances that had an impact on you or instances of creating your own work.
- If you were to add a layer of autobiography, what personal experiences might feel relevant to add in between or alongside these public instances of fat performance?
- Have a look through the timeline of fat performance we co-created on padlet. Is there anything on here that you might want to add to your own personal timeline?

Suggested Resources:

- A Queer and Trans Fat Activist Timeline facilitated by Charlotte Cooper



TASKS

Week 6: Closing

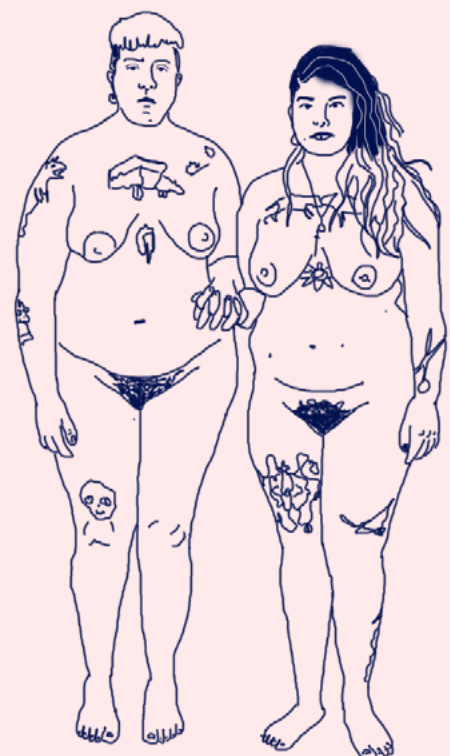
In the final session of the Fat Performance DIY we identified our unanswered questions, organising ourselves into groups based on topics of interest that we had not quite got round to so far. We discussed the future of the Fat Performance DIY group, deciding we wished to go on to create this workbook, a Wikipedia edit-a-thon session and a Fat Performance Network that could continue to meet and share resources.

Suggested Resources:

- Have a browse through the list we created on pages 12-14.

Task Suggestions:

- Compile a list or create a mind map of your unanswered questions or topics that you feel you could explore further.
- You might wish to grab a friend to discuss some of these or simply write your thoughts out.
- Looking over the previous tasks, how could you use them to create future fat performance?
- Looking at the timeline, what might be the title of a future fat performance work? Which fat performer would you want to seek mentorship from and why?
- Could you stitch together micro-performance studies of fat performance strategies to create new work?
- You may wish to reflect on the tasks you have chosen to undertake as you've worked through this workbook. What have you done? What could you do? Where could they take you?
- You may wish to check out the [Fat Performance Network website](#) and [join our mailing list](#) to find out about future meetings and the Wikipedia edit-a-thon sessions.



RESOURCES

About

This list is not exhaustive and not even really curated - it's more a snapshot of our collective consciousness during the Fat Performance DIY. We're not responsible for the content of the sites linked and we also can't guarantee that the links will still work by the time you read this.

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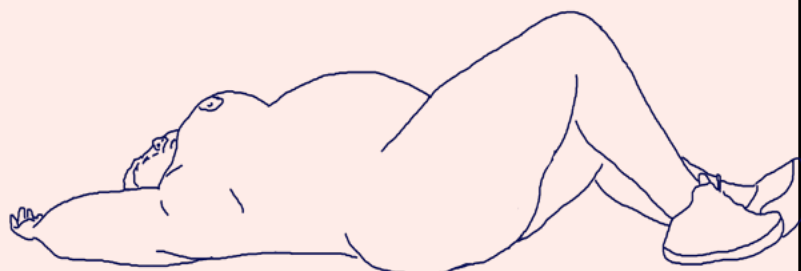
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Social Media Accounts

Anshuman ([@boar.Lord](#))

Aubrey Gordon, *Your Fat Friend* ([@yrfatfriend](#))

Big Dipper's ([@bigdipperjelly](#))

Caleb Luna ([@chairbreaker](#))

Coletivo MANADA ([@manadatreme](#))

Elisa Valenti ([@elisavalentistudio](#))

Fat Art/History/Culture ([@thebeautyinobesity](#))

Fat Art History ([@fatarthistory](#))

Historical Fat People ([@historicalfatpeople](#))

Perfil do Instagram de Noam Scapin ([@noamscapin](#))

Plant Daddy ([@KivanBay](#)) / Twitter.

Rosey Blair ([@roseybeeme](#))

Scottee ([@scotteeisfat](#))

Sonalee (She/They) LCSW MEd ([@thefatsextherapist](#))

Sugar McD ([@shooglet](#))

Zona AGBARA ([@zonaagbara](#))

Artists

Baker, Cindy.

Divine.

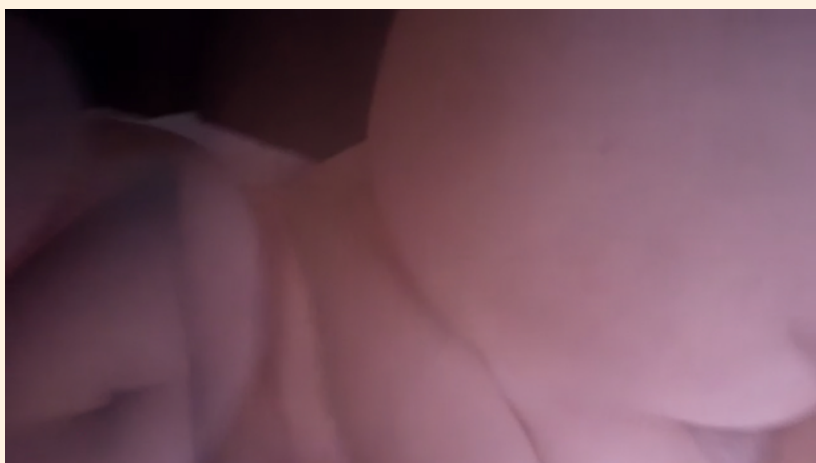
Herrick, Rachel.

Mitchell, Allyson.

Kiciak, Jagoda.

Unsworth, James.

Gifts of Fatness II



Layered Zoom Image 1-3, Magdalena Hutter

List of Contributors

The Fat Performance DIY workshops were facilitated by Gillie Kleiman. The following is a list of contributors. Each of these people had a different relation to the workshop - some attended all sessions, others contributed material, and some expressed an interest, which we still consider an offering.

With thanks to:

- Áine O'Hara
- Alistair Wilkinson
- Ally Poole
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- Helen Davison
- Iona McTaggart
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- Jules Pashall
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- Katy Baird
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- Rebecca Sangs
- Roz Whiteley
- Sarah Gaafar
- Tilly Branson
- Veronika Merklein
- zvikomborero mutyambizi

All illustrations by Jael Caiero based on photographs by Inmensidades Fotografia except:

Page 1: Photograph by Elenize Dezgeniski of 'Peso Bruto' (2017) by Jussara Belchior

Page 4: Photograph by Zsuzsanna Brzozowska of 'Ophelia is not Dead' (2010) by Gillie Kleiman

Page 9: Screenshot of a performance made during the Fat Performance DIY Workshop (2020) by Jussara Belchior, Tilly Branson and Sofia Apostolidou

Page 10: Photograph provided by Charlotte Cooper of Lynn Mabel Lois in the Fat Underground documentary (1979) shared during the workshop.

