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# Learning to be affected: Matters of pedagogy in the artists' soup kitchen

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## ABSTRACT

Expanding on the robust contributions by feminist new materialist scholars this essay focuses on two concepts—*affect* and *rhythm*—in order to elaborate on matters of pedagogy and a politics of attunement. If one of the key challenges that arises from feminist new materialism is that the human can no longer be taken for granted, then this prompts us to open ourselves to other ways of thinking, knowing, and doing. Being attuned to the agency of all matter offers a way of looking at how pedagogy is constituted as material, affective, and in rhythm, and this attention to the mechanisms of pedagogy can in turn affect a politics of attunement. In order to problematize an affective pedagogy we turn to a socially engaged performance called *The Artists' Soup Kitchen*.

## KEYWORDS

Art; pedagogy; feminist new materialism; affect; rhythm

## Introduction

Across the social sciences and humanities, feminist new materialism is increasingly being used as a methodology that seeks to emphasize the materiality of matter in research. For feminist new materialism, the human no longer assumes priority as the knowing subject or the organizer of inquiry. Focus shifts towards *what* participates in knowledge production, not just *who*, emphasizing that the *what* is never fully containable or knowable beforehand. Drawing from discursive and materialist turns in cultural theory (Butler, 1993; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1986), feminist new materialism 'comes back to persistent troublings' (Hughes & Lury, 2013, p. 787) concerning feminist theory, and intra-acts with the recurring debates around representational thinking, causation, an understanding of time as non-linear, and theory as inventive (Coleman, 2014). In other words, feminist new materialism is not a paradigm shift, but rather, an exploration and *rethinking* of what is 'new' in feminist new materialism. As a methodology that grapples with and is constituted by the phenomenon it seeks to understand, it conceives of theories as performative (Barad, 2007) and thinking as immanent (Van der Tuin & Dolphijn, 2010). A feminist new materialist methodology thus aims to make room for generative matter that forces us to 'engage affirmatively with the present, accounting for some of its features in a manner that is empirically grounded without being reductive and remains critical while avoiding negativity' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 5). This radical relationality calls for a new politics of attunement and responsibility, one that contributes to 'the differential mattering of the world' where 'we are responsible for the cuts that we help enact not because we do the choosing, but because we are an agential part of the material becoming of the universe' (Barad in Coleman, 2014, p. 43). This inventive politics, we argue, is being increasingly taken up in

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the field of education, where feminist new materialists are reconsidering what these new engagements with matter do to educational practices and what pedagogical processes are opened up as a result.

For example, the 2013 special issue of *Gender and Education* on new material feminisms highlights the ways in which educational scholars are drawing on this new shift towards the material in order to think about education 'in terms of change, flows, mobilities, multiplicities, assemblages, materialities and processes', (Taylor & Ivinson, 2013, p. 665) while simultaneously theorizing the newness of this radical break with dualism. This requires a particular ethics from the researcher, one that takes seriously their messy involvement in knowledge production. This radical ontology, or what Barad (2007) calls ethico-onto-epistemology, is at the heart of the special issue, forcing educational scholars to pay attention to what matters (and consequently what does not matter) and to grapple with the uncertainty of their own position. Mazzei (2013) reflects on her own use of theory through Barad's methodology of diffraction, helping her to explore her embodied relationship with the data she is attempting to understand. In challenging conventional modes of analysis, Mazzei is able to theorize the ways in which the agential matter of data may rework the researcher's positionality. Hughes and Lury (2013) rework the feminist concept of situatedness in order to advance potential tools of analysis for understanding the entangled processes of co-invention. In re-thinking situatedness as more than strictly a position or an identity, Hughes and Lury (2013) rework the concept to understand it more ecologically, paying attention to the patterns of movement 'that constitute the moving surface or ground of figures of knowledge' (p. 792). Using the feminist materialist concepts of cuts, knots, contrasts, fractals and figures, the authors offer ways to map patterns of movement 'such that the multiple relations between figure and ground, object and subject become visible as matters of concern' (p. 795). What is captured in this particular special issue, and continues to proliferate in educational journals, is a feminist new materialist attention to analysis, highlighting this traditional category as matter of concern (Niccolini & Pindyck, 2015; Rotas & Springgay, 2013; Springgay & Zaliwska, 2015; St. Pierre, 2013).

Feminist new materialism is concerned with ongoing affective and transcorporeal relations of becoming, emphasizing experimentation, process and novelty. For many new materialist scholars, the return to matter requires an attention to process and the unpredictability of research. As Tiainen, Kontturi, and Hongisto (2015) contend, new materialist researchers should 'let the concepts she or he works with re-singularise in connection with the vibrant, never fully containable processes that are being explored' (p. 6). They suggest that it is 'the co-affective relations of material, conceptual, historical and social elements that reconfigure spheres of knowledge by way of singularisation' (p. 6). For example, MacLure (2013) conceptualizes the unpredictable and creative process of research through the intensity of wonder. As a movement of desire and intensity, wonder can be located and produced in the entangled relationship of data-and-researcher. Suspended in a threshold between knowing and unknowing, wonder has the potential to relieve data from conventional inquiry so that it can grasp us in unanticipated ways. Wonder, according to MacLure, is not necessarily a positive affect. As a force that disrupts epistemic certainty, wonder 'shades into curiosity, horror, fascination, disgust, and monstrosity' (p. 229). The event of wonder is unannounced and cannot be found, but rather, is something that requires attunement and an ability to respond so that we can experiment with its invitation.

Expanding on the robust contributions by feminist new materialist scholars this article focuses on two concepts—*affect and rhythm*—in order to elaborate on matters of pedagogy and a politics of attunement. If one of the key challenges that arises from feminist new materialism is that the human can no longer be taken for granted, then this prompts us to open ourselves to other ways of thinking, knowing and doing. Being attuned to the agency of all matter offers a way of looking at how pedagogy is constituted as material, affective, and in rhythm, and this attention to the mechanisms of pedagogy can in turn affect a politics of attunement that captures 'the intensity of the in-bracing to remain correlated, to coordinate, to move inventively together in concerted action—crucially, without erasing the attuned differences' (Massumi, 2015, p. 117). Unlike more conventional politics of pedagogy, the aim of this article is to flesh out a politics of attunement that forces us to consider pedagogy as a 'live mapping of the process under transition' (Massumi, 2015, p. 118) and invites us to learn to be affected.

In order to problematize an affective pedagogy we turn to a socially engaged performance called *The Artists' Soup Kitchen*. We understand this event as a practice of research-creation, a propositional

and experimental mode of activity; a process of ‘speculative eventing’ (Manning, 2013). As opposed to representing the particular concepts we take up in this article, the soup kitchen, we contend instantiates them. This is not to suggest that art is Deleuzian or new materialist. Rather, the theorists we use provide concepts that are useful in understanding a particular dimensionality of art and pedagogy. Here we draw on the work of performance philosopher Laura Cull (2012) who argues that the performance practices she writes about do not illustrate the

concept of immanence in a representational fashion, so much as they try to perform immanence; it is less a matter of trying to show what immanence looks like and more a matter of figuring out how to be inside it and then seeing what comes out of that experience to immanence itself. (p. 13)

One of the challenges with thinking theory alongside the object of study is that we have a tendency to apply theory, as if one proceeds the other. Thinking immanently is what Erin Manning (2013) calls a question of composition. In thinking experience experimentally we want to consider the affective dimensions of the *Artists’ Soup Kitchen*. This requires a shift from asking questions about how bodies experienced the event, or how to interpret the art, to thinking about the doing of the performances; what kinds of territories, milieus, refrains and deterritorializations are produced and productive in the event? Understanding the work as an affective event, rather than a pre-formed object opens up the potential for a process of collective individuation. This potential resonates with a politics of attunement that thinks pedagogy differentially, as ‘an event snapping us to attention together, and correlating our diversity to the affective charge this brings, energizing the whole situation’ (Massumi, 2015, p. 115).

McCormack (2013) notes that ‘affects of site-specific encounters have the potential to return again and again, simultaneously interrupting and supplementing thought at odd moments, taking place, repeatedly, through sometimes novel configurations of bodies, concepts, and objects’ (p. 7). It is this rhythm, or repeatability of difference, that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) map out in their plateau on the refrain. Traversing through their writing, and contemporary thinkers who similarly write about affect and the refrain, our goal is to address how the soup kitchen as a queer feminist art practice offers new ways of conceptualizing pedagogy, art, and politics, or to put in another way, helps us to reimagine the politicality of art and pedagogy. We imagine what it would mean to gain attunement within the affective terrains of feminist new materialist practice, or what Elizabeth Grosz (2008) would call blocs of sensation—art’s politicality. Art, she notes, is political not because of its interpretive frameworks, but

in the sense that it elaborates the possibilities of new, more different sensations than those we know. Art is there the becomings of the earth couple with the becomings of life to produce intensities and sensations that in themselves summon up a new kind of life. (p. 79)

These site-specific encounters, we hope to show, summon matters of pedagogy that depend on a politics of attunement.

The article begins with a brief contextualization of cooking and art in order to situate the *Artists’ Soup Kitchen* within a broader art historical field. From there, we move into a discussion around affect theory and the apparent challenges in defining affect as an intensity. In this section, we turn to various performances from the soup kitchen to illustrate the capacity for a body to be affected and to affect, charting a politics of attunement. The following section explores the materiality of eating through Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of rhythm and the refrain in order to map out how intensities come together and habits come to matter. Finally, we move towards conceptualizing what art’s politicality could do to approaching pedagogy as an event of becoming affected that requires a particular expression of attunement. Here, we flesh out a politics of pedagogy as an event that pays attention to the material forces and entanglements in bodies and matter.

## Food as art

The concept of a kitchen—of preparing, cooking and serving food—as art is not new. Kitchen type projects include: *Conflict kitchen*, Rirkrit Tiravanija’s *Untitled (Free)*, Michael Rachowitz’s *Enemy Kitchen* and *The American Reputation Aid Society* (ARAS) Aid Wagon and mobile kitchen. These examples use

food to disturb the ocularcentrism inherent in visual art, as a way of gathering people together, as an invitation to dialogue, as a form of trade or exchange and as a political gesture. The *Artists' Soup Kitchen*, which prepared lunchtime meals over six Mondays in the winter of 2011, is embedded within this robust history of social practice and performance art [[www.artistsoupkitchen.com](http://www.artistsoupkitchen.com)]. The project, curated by Jess Dobkin and Stephanie Springgay, in the former Raging Spoon café in Toronto's Queen West neighborhood, served more than 100 community members each week including local artists, academics, students, queer activists and people who resided in the Queen West area who simply arrived off the street. With the help of more than 25 volunteers and café staff, food was prepared and planned in conjunction with the featured weekly artist's performative project.

Some examples of the various live performances included: Helen Reed and Hannah Jickling's *Mystic Pizza*. Guests were invited to choose one of four specialty pizzas, prepared with ingredients that corresponded to an aspect of life as an artist. After their meal, guests could have their crusts and crumbs 'read' by a divination specialist. Helen and Hannah hand-printed paper placemats that introduced and guided guests through 'crust divination' techniques. Annie Cheung's *I Want More*, a scaled-small installation and collective performance action, served quarter-sized portions with scaled down dishes and utensils. Guests were required to ask for second or third servings of food using a wooden cut-out hand, which they had to raise in order to signal a server who would then come around with a megaphone. The diner had to request 'more food' through the megaphone, which signalled another server to come and provide additional helpings of food and drink. This sequence of actions encouraged lunching participants to consider the labor and risk involved when demanding satisfaction during unsatisfactory circumstances. The final week brought Swintak's<sup>1</sup> broth to the Soup Kitchen. Swintak boiled herself into a broth for two days in a large metal vat over a fire with a nice selection of winter vegetables, reducing the body broth to about 48 litres, the approximate amount of her body water. Inspired by a passage from Leonora's Carrington's surrealist work, 'The Hearing Trumpet,' where an old woman finds herself helplessly in a soup, Swintak instead created a situation where she was simultaneously both the chef and the food being served. Guests had the option of eating either 'Swintak Broth' or a vegetarian version that was offered alongside a range of toppings reminiscent of body parts, such as toenails or loose skin. The banquet included a two channel-video documenting the making of her broth.

Food related performances have often been theorized for their sensory contributions to an otherwise overly visual field, examined in relation to the kinds of 'lived experiences' generated, or framed through relational aesthetics and the value of conviviality (Banes & Lepecki, 2007; Bourriaud, 2002; Fischer, 1999). Often classified as socially engaged art, food performances are rooted in multi-disciplinary inquiry, gathering insight from a combination of disciplines including ethnography, anthropology, communication and pedagogy. Turning to educational practices as a framework for understanding socially engaged art, Helguera (2011) outlines the ways in which educational practices such as engagement with audiences, inquiry-based methods, collaborative dialogues and hands-on activities are being taken up by artists who are compelled to break away from and to challenge the discipline(ing) of art, and to instead inhabit more ambiguous positions. Furthermore, he discusses the ways in which socially engaged art practices are pushing the field of education to reconsider or perhaps to remember the sociality and politicality of pedagogy. In what follows, we hope to build on this turn towards the pedagogical, taking the focus away from the conflation of art and pedagogy towards a feminist new materialist understanding of the matters at stake within the disciplinary fusion.

## Learning to be affected

In the opening passages of the *Affect Theory Reader*, the challenges and tensions of defining affect become apparent. While Seigworth and Gregg (2010) contend that 'affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness; in the capacities to act and be acted upon' (p. 1) they unfold 'an inventory' of various theoretical frameworks by which affect has come to be known. One of many understandings of affect is by Deleuze and Guattari who posit a distinction between affect and emotion. Affect for Deleuze and Guattari is not personal and thus is not the same as feeling. Affect is the becoming sensation, a

force or intensity manifested at the surface of the body. Feeling or emotion occurs once that intensity becomes personal and is perceived as a particular quality—such as happy, sad or fear. Massumi (2002) contends that ‘an emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity’ (p. 28). For example, an affective understanding of Cheung’s *I Want More* performance would differ from a phenomenological understanding. Phenomenologically we might understand her project eliciting feelings of guilt, anxiety and discomfort when a guest had to ask for more food publicly using the megaphone. These feelings are personal; they are attached to a subject, and they already pre-exist the event itself. The affective moment of sensation occurs outside of this personal or cognitive mapping. Massumi notes that ‘emotion is the way the depth of that ongoing experience registers personally at a given moment’ (as cited in Zournazi, 2002, p. 213). Thus, Cheung’s performance understood affectively isn’t about how it makes us feel (emotionally), or the kinds of experiences it elicits, but the capacity it enlivens in the body to be affected and to affect. The art exists in a moment of resonate intensity. In this way, Cheung’s performance affects the body not from the outside as what we know to be guilt or shame, but enables heterogeneous intensities to ‘come together, move each other, and transform and translate *under or beyond* meaning, semantics, fixed systems, cognitions’ (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 147; italics in original). Thinking about affect as sensation is important because it considers ‘feelings’ from an anti-essentialist, anti-hierarchical place that associates sensory knowledge with racial others, women, children, animals and the feral. Feminist scholar Elspeth Probyn (1995) draws on Deleuze’s work to think about the body not as lack or latent, but as a surface; a surface of intensities. If, according to Deleuze affects are not ‘things’ but created through encounters, which force us to thought, then in performance there is a difference between the audience feeling emotions that are already recognizable for example guilt, and an unfamiliar affect that unsettles and forces us to resist identification (Cull, 2014).

Colebrook (2002) notes that ‘once something appears to us we have already organized it into a certain perspective’ (p. 18). On the contrary, encounters between bodies—sounds, food, artist’s bodies, chairs, cups, projections, candles, guests, cooks etc.—activate affective intensities of singular relations. For example, art can present the affect of fear without feeling scared ourselves. Colebrook (2002) provides the example of a poem in which the rhythms and pauses, the halting and hesitation creates an affect of fear; a fear that is not located in a character nor directed to an object’ (p. 22). It is not that affectively we cannot sense fear, but that fear is not known or pre-supposed beforehand. Affect is ‘the virtual co-presence of potentials’ (Massumi cited in Zournazi, 2002, p. 213). While philosophy creates concepts, art, Deleuze and Guattari contend, also thinks through the creation of affects and percepts. Art’s thinking is not in the creation of meaning but in the particular intensity of sensation that it brings about.

Returning to the soup kitchen, the affect of the performances underscores our capacity for action, our body’s immersion in the world; a worlding (Manning, 2013). Affect approaches everyday life—like a kitchen—through force. For example, take Swintak’s broth. Presented in canning jars and offered in shot glasses to guests, the brown, murky liquid assaulted participant’s palate as ‘not being food.’ However, affectively the feeling of disgust is not attached to the broth, ‘to a form already taken’ (Manning, 2013, p. 21), but rather in the eating of the broth, the refrains or affective modulations that reorganize territories, allows us to break with old habits and perhaps form new ones. If we think of affect as intensity and the capacity for movement and change, then there is an affect associated with everything a body does, from sitting in a chair, to moving your lips as you chew food. ‘Affect’, writes Massumi ‘is simply a body movement looked at from the point of view of its potential—its capacity to come to be, or better, to come to do’ (cited in Zournazi 2002, p. 215).

This ‘coming to do’, is of utmost importance to Deleuze and Guattari, who draw on the work of Spinoza. As Grosz (1994) contends,

the body is regarded as neither a locus for a consciousness nor an organically determined entity; it is understood more in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, the transformations and becoming it undergoes, and the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, how it can proliferate its capacities. (p. 165)

Her emphasis on *doing* is reverberated in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) writing when they state that we can’t know anything about the body

until we know what a body can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257)

In the *Soup Kitchen*, the work of the artists was not to represent an experience of emotion through food but ‘to devise a procedure to extract the affects of bodies, to somehow reconstruct in performance the power of another body to pierce us like an arrow, to force us to think, and enable us to act in new ways’ (Cull 2014, p. 193). Learning to be affected disables stasis, compartmentalisms and habit gives way to the excess of an ongoing process. The various foods on offer in the soup kitchen, the performances, props, volunteers and the café space provide conditions, platforms for potential actions. For example, a chair creates anticipation of a habitual action, sitting, and in this way works to order the space. Likewise, a sandwich can condition a habitual action. Conditions can enable as much as they can restrain, and in enabling they propose new actions. Eating as art, devouring a slice of pizza and having your crusts read, green eggs and ham, a meal of only red food, tiny sandwiches, opens bodies to a wider field of sensitivities which might then produce a suspension in-process, a cut, or a dephasing out of habitual relations, evoking a sensation of being, as Manning (2013) contends ‘always more than’ a subject. Braidotti (2000) uses terms like figuration or fabulation to describe this politics of non-representation, the anomalous and the monstrous. Feminist theories, particularly those that focus on affect, or think about the body outside of essentialist and biological determinates, are crucial in thinking about power relations and the repositioning of the subject.

Entering into the café space, diners were met at the door by a volunteer greeter, often in a costume in concert with the performance of the week. For example, for Cheung’s performance volunteers wore tall chefs hats and aprons. Once in the café space, participants were given a wooden hand, lead to the seating area and provided instructions on how to ask for food using the megaphone. On the Mystic Pizza, week diners entered a candle lit space, where everyone spoke in hushed tones, diviners lined the outer walls talking quietly to those they were reading, and the entire space felt as if it was cloaked in heavy velvet. For Naty Tremblay’s performance, narrating stories of land, settlerism, transbeing and Franco-Canadian language, the café was strewn with hay and farming equipment. Naty periodically jumped onto the tables and ‘planted’ seeds. This jolt from our typical eating habits shifts us out of habitual inattention and forces a new concentration on what is going on in the moment rather than preformed assumptions of relation. This sensation of disorientation might be experienced in the everyday when there is an unexpected loss or distortion of sense perception. According to Grosz, ‘habit is change contracted, compressed, contained’ (Grosz, 2013, p. 221). Considering that eating has become part of our everyday habits of carrying on in a world that has no time to wait, how we eat—its affect—is rarely addressed. However, as a habit where change is contracted, eating can ‘outstrip the change it is to address’ (p. 221). In other words, the everyday act of eating has the potential to reveal, to decompress, its material forces. Broth made with an artist’s body, barely bite sized servings that force the consumer to demand more, or a divined crust, have the potential to actualize the material forces of eating. If we are to understand eating as an orderly process where matter settles into objects, processes and fields, then the disruption of these processes can reveal a virtual mode of addressing a future change. The habit of eating can ‘provide the ability to change one’s tendencies, to reorient one’s actions to address the new, and to be able to experience the unexpected’ (Grosz 2013, p. 221). Affect propels. It activates thresholds that disperse and differentiate into something new. This involves what Deleuze and Guattari call refrains.

### **Eating as refrain: the becoming expressive of art**

The expressive is primary in relation to the possessive; expressive qualities, or matters of expression, are necessarily appropriative and constitute a having more profound than being. Not in the sense that these qualities belong to a subject, but in the sense that they delineate a territory that will belong to the subject that carries or produces them. These qualities are like signatures, but the signature, the proper name, is not the constituted mark of a subject, but the constituting mark of a domain, an abode. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 316)

'One ventures from home on the thread of a tune, along sonorous, gestural, motor lines' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 311). Bodies spilling into the space, warm candles flickering and shadows dancing on the walls. Smells curling and mingling with bodies, mouths eating, the sounds of performances and the steady swell of murmuring voices, milieus of indeterminable relational fields. Milieus are not spatial; they are not yet territories, but affective vibratory blocks of space-time. A territory becomes into being through the force of a rhythm, which is the transcoded passage between milieus. Rhythm, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), however, is not denoted by a regular measure, but rather is 'always in a process of transcoding' (p. 326). Rhythm as such is difference or relation 'the in-between whereby milieus communicate with one another' (Bogue, 1991, p. 88). Territories are created when assemblages of different and multiple milieus come together. As Grosz (2008) states

it is only when a rhythm and a milieu cohere, form internal relations with each other, induce each other to come together, the rhythm functioning now as that particular temporal form of a region, that a territory can emerge, that the raw materials of art can erupt and the processes of deterritorialization, which are the conditions of art, can begin. (pp. 47–48)

Refrains emerge as the differential patterning through the relations between milieu, rhythm and territory. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the notion of the refrain to describe any type of pattern or code that creates a territory. The refrain territorializes in three ways: first the refrain creates stability in a field of chaos; second it marks a stable habitat around that point of stability; and third the refrain opens out into cosmic uncertainty, or as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write 'the bird [that] sings to mark its territory ... a little tune, a melodic formula that seeks recognition' (p. 312). The refrain of eating functions to territorialize chaos into rhythmic, coded patterns. Refrains are how assemblages of heterogeneous elements come together as matters of expression. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write 'what holds an assemblage together is not the play of framing forms or linear causalities but, actually or potentially, its most deterritorialised component, a cutting edge of deterritorialisation. An example is the refrain' (p. 336). The refrain becomes an assemblage of 'different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures and sonorities' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 312) connecting different milieus and rhythms. As a kind of repeating process of differentiation, eating as art 'is how rhythm stakes out a territory from chaos that resonates with and intensifies the body' (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 145). These territories open up onto new spaces that the refrain itself has created with just enough stability to resist chaos, without succumbing to rigidity. Thus, a refrain clearly involves an element of recurrence. But recurrence is neither mimesis nor simulacra. It is not a repetition of the same, or a copy, but a production that is singular—a repetition with a difference'. Rather, its significance is what it *does*; its expressive qualities. Even art, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1994) is territorializing. Art creates affects and percepts and thus involves the selection of a milieu (color, form and rhythm), which is then made expressive.

The refrain of mindless eating, then, includes rhythm, patterns, 'that shape the vibrations of milieus into the harmonics of territories, the organization of a wall or barrier' (Grosz, 2008, p. 54). Eating as art is the reverse movement, the freeing of such patterns to become that which is not-yet-conceivable on the plane of composition. It is art that uproots the refrain from its territory. The plane of composition through which articulation emerges is populated by the thought of the work, its inner rhythm (Manning, 2009). Deleuze and Guattari call this inner rhythm a 'block of sensation; we paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations' (1994, p. 166). Blocks of sensation are forces that compose the work's durational attitude. 'By means of the material, the aim of art is [...] to extract a block of sensations, a pure being of sensation' (1994, p. 167).

Art is an escape from the refrain even as it engenders the refrain simultaneously. Eating as art, thus 'breaks and dislocates; it breaks down the refrain, it dislocates it from its home and from the safety zone it marks around itself' (Grosz, 2008, p. 58). Art intensifies, it enables chaos to appear as sensation. Deleuze and Guattari write: 'The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else' (1994, p. 164). This is not the phenomenology of perception that Dewey speaks of, a sensation located in the perceiving subject, but a movement-sensation of the event of art itself. As Grosz notes, 'sensation lives, not in the body of perceivers, subjects, but in the body of the artwork' (2008, p.73). Sensation is not a color or a taste of food. Rather through the artwork are coloring, flavoring and sounding forces. Deleuze and



Guattari write, art ‘confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event’ (1994, p. 174).

Movement, in this instance, is not understood as a displacement, but as sensation where rhythm is the emergent quality of felt intensity, affect, a moving-toward of duration itself (Manning, 2009). For Massumi (2002) affect is how intensities come together. Affect is the pre-personal transition from one state to another. Affectivity, then, does not belong to the order of the individual or of the human as such, but emerges precisely as the change or variation that occurs when bodies—both human and non-human—enter into new relations. Writing about Bacon, Deleuze states ‘there are no feelings ... there are nothing but affects; that is sensations and instincts’ (Deleuze cited in Massumi, 2002, p. 39). In other words, we don’t have to feel a particular emotion about the soup kitchen, but that refrains as affective modulation ‘bring us forces or take them away, acting via reorganization of sensations and instincts’ (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 149). Refrains are expressive; they are ethico-aesthetic, in and of affect. In contrast to relational aesthetics that focuses on convivial moments of affiliation, the refrain’s power resides in the continual variations in the culminating points that can either lead us ‘back to the opinion from which we wanted to escape’ or precipitate us ‘into the chaos that we wanted to confront’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 199). As a queer feminist art practice, the soup kitchen asks that increased affectual capacity be experimented with; new assemblages emerging between the milieus of food, performances, bodies; a new collectivity that expands their potential and expression. But more than this, eating as art engages with not only what is perceptible, but also what is felt by all the components of the event, those feelings not immediately perceptible to us but nevertheless part of the becoming of the event (Manning, 2013). As a queer feminist art practice, its politics does not arrive as the representation of an ‘issue’, but rather emerges in the dynamic exchange of force that unfolds the larger shared potentiality of the event. It is political in that it ‘connects up different aspects of life’ (O’Sullivan, 2006, p. 74), multiplying refrains through which differential patterns emerge. This, according to Deleuze, (1994) is art’s ethics in that it is a practice of expression and composition, rather than representation.

### **Matters of pedagogy: towards a politics of attunement**

Learning to be affected, we contend, is an anticipatory experience, where we learn to maintain ourselves in the differential entanglements between past and future, hope and despair (Zaliwska, 2013) and non-relational relations (Massumi, 2011). Learning *to be in* this way—to remain in movement—is simultaneously an invitation to becoming something else—something unexpected. Learning to be affected, to reside and co-invent on the refrain, necessitates a particular politicality, a differentiated ethics that demands a particular attunement to the matters at play. Writing about art’s rhythmic, irreducibility, Grosz (2008) reminds us that the ethico-political in learning to be affected is that ‘we cannot live these forces, although they act through and on us; what we can do is extract something of these forces, nothing that resembles them, for they cannot present themselves, but something that partakes of them’ (p. 86). A feminist new materialist understanding of affect as a pre-personal movement of relation complicates the traditional standards of learning as a process of transmitting knowledge. Learning to be affected cannot be predicted nor can it be qualified in the traditional empirical sense. This is why we turn to the inventive language of Deleuze and Guattari, Massumi and Manning and feminist scholars of matter, to think about pedagogy in terms of response-ability to matters of expression, to the ‘melodic formula that seeks recognition’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 312). A different understanding and approach to attunement is at the heart of accepting the invitation from the vibrant matters, one that we can no longer risk ignoring. We turn to Massumi’s (2011) notions of activist philosophy to help articulate an experience of movement where action-thinking-feeling create platforms from which we can (re)act. Specifically, we turn to his concept of *middling* to tease out what this ‘somewhere in the middle’ could do for a feminist new materialist understanding of attunement. According to Massumi (2011), middling is an affective entanglement that signals an event coming into its newness. This is an event that is simultaneously felt and perceived: ‘they are dual immediacies of process’ (p. 3). In other words, middling is both a moment of feeling, something coming into being and reflection. Middling

would not hold together without the dynamic unity of feeling and reflection. This dynamic unity is constantly on the move, 'gathering the prior phase's momentum into its own unfolding' (p. 3). Middling spawns, it creates an event that comes back through itself, creatively leaving behind a place of rest in order to move onto the next.

This looping movement helps us to understand attunement as being tied to the temporality of the event. This form of attention does not happen before or after the event, but constitutes the dimensionality of the event. According to Massumi (2015), attunement in relation to middling is pragmatically predisposed. In other words, our everyday mode of attention, of looping through the world, is performed intuitively and perceived directly without having to think about it. We take this future anterior movement for granted—we have not yet actualized the full potential of our attunement, the very thing that motivates our ways of being in the world. The potential to radicalize or politicize our attunement resonates in a collective field of relations where there are correlated but differential middlings. In other words, an awareness of our middling—a politicized attunement—crystallizes when different attunements occur across individual differences. A radical politicization of attunement is not simply an awareness or consciousness, but rather, a technique of immanence that 'wells up from within that more-than of ourselves' (Massumi, 2015, p. 124). A radical attunement is always partial, there's no position of mastery as there is no way to comprehend a field that you are being changed by. It is thus experimental and ethical, and requires a deliberate re-chunking of our habitual ways of being in a field of relations.

Learning to be affected and a politicized attunement are co-dependent. This is something that the soup kitchen is provoking in terms of its proposition of eating as art, not only as an expression that interrupts forces of habit, but also as a platform for creating a new concept of matter that involves the untangible and the incorporeal, 'a spark of virtuality that enables life to emerge' (Grosz, 2011, p. 17). In other words, in revealing the taken-for-granted labour of eating, eating as habit opened up the 'the charge of being-otherwise' (p. 19), an extra-materiality that offers potential for realignment and reorganization. This extra-materiality of eating, the more than compressed material forces, 'entails not only a politics of the force of encounters that yields events but also an ethics of bearing this burden of indeterminacy, its pointing to singularities whose alignment could be otherwise' (p. 21). To bear the recognition of the hidden forces of our everyday habits requires us to become affected. To become affected, we argue, is a pedagogical moment where pedagogy is not about a particular form, but comes into being through compositions of expression.

The soup kitchen 'carries subjectivities elsewhere, to new territories and a dismantling of the old, ever toward the infinite possibilities and power contained within our bodies, our friends (and our foes), and their ecological contexts' (Guattari quoted in Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 153). If 'affective intensity is literally the life of territorial processes' (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 152) then the becoming-art of eating carries with it the potential for things to turn out differently—affect's virtuality of the future potential.

Affect, writes, Shukin (2000) is one of Deleuze's most valuable contributions to feminist figurations. Similarly, Åsberg, Thiele, and Van der Tuin (2015) argue that feminist new materialism must be invested in 'becoming-with-context, situated knowledges and speculative alter-worlding' (p. 164) This, we contend, necessitates a thinking about pedagogy as attunement and responsibility. This responsibility, however, is never determined prior to the event of pedagogy. As Manning writes:

Working collectively from this vantage point asks us not to put ourselves in a pre-planned position of benevolence or generosity or accommodation as though there were an outside of the event. Rather, it pushes us to develop ways of conceiving of event-generosity—where it is the event that creates conditions for its own potential openings. (Manning in Massumi, 2015, p. 137)

Eating as art, as a pedagogy and politics of attunement, enters into compositions in unprecedented ways, not through some external reference but through affective and rhythmic actions and modulations that unfold in novelty. Art, in creating aesthetic figurations, in challenging the coherence of commonsense experience, compose sensations, which defy the necessity of a coherent self, where flesh is never separate from the world.

## Note

1. Artist uses only last name.

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