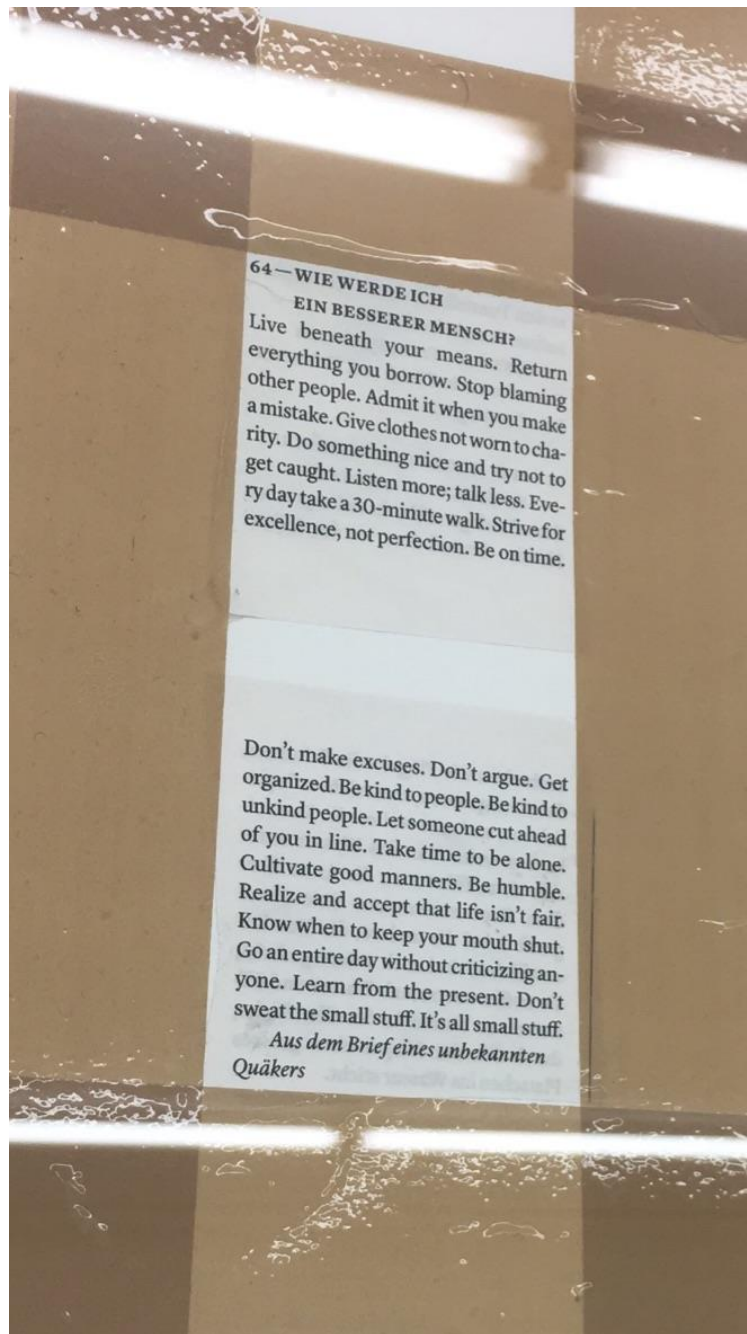


## indoor surfing/virtual strolls and the improvisation with boredom

by Xu Moru and Leon Billerbeck (2020-ongoing)

The initial idea derives from an advice of “How to be a better person” from *Aus dem Brief eines unbekannten Quäkers* (engl.: From a letter of an unknown Quaker) which Xu Moru read in a collage work in a random exhibition she encountered in Zurich in 2017 (She changed her flights in Zurich that day, which left her with an extra 10 hours in the city to stumble across the work by chance). The advice said: “Every day take a 30-minute walk.”



(The collage work Xu Moru encountered in Zurich)

In the last week of January 2020, Xu Moru decided to follow the advice to take daily walks

of 30 minutes, always starting from De Liceiras 18 in Porto (DL18, art association and residency in Porto, Portugal). To assess these strolls in reality, in the physical world so to speak, she also began to surf on the internet everyday for 30 minutes, always using the word “Coprolite” as a starting point. She recorded the sound of her walks and screen recorded her everyday internet surfing. On the 31st of January 2020, which was the Open Studio “*Gone Fishing*” at De Liceiras 18, she exhibited the audiovisual work consisting of 6 videos with sound for the first time, where she also introduced the work to Leon Billerbeck, who was also at that time a resident at De Liceiras 18. The same evening, equipped with a wetsuit and a computer, Xu Moru performed live 30-minutes of Internet surfing sitting in the bathtub of DL18, immersed in blue light. Instead of playing the sound of the stroll of that same day, the blue light really made her feel like surfing in the sea somehow, so she decided to play the album “*Pacific*” by Haruomi Hosono, Shigeru Suzuki and Tatsuro Yamashita.



*Surfing*, Xu Moru, 2020, performance, 30'

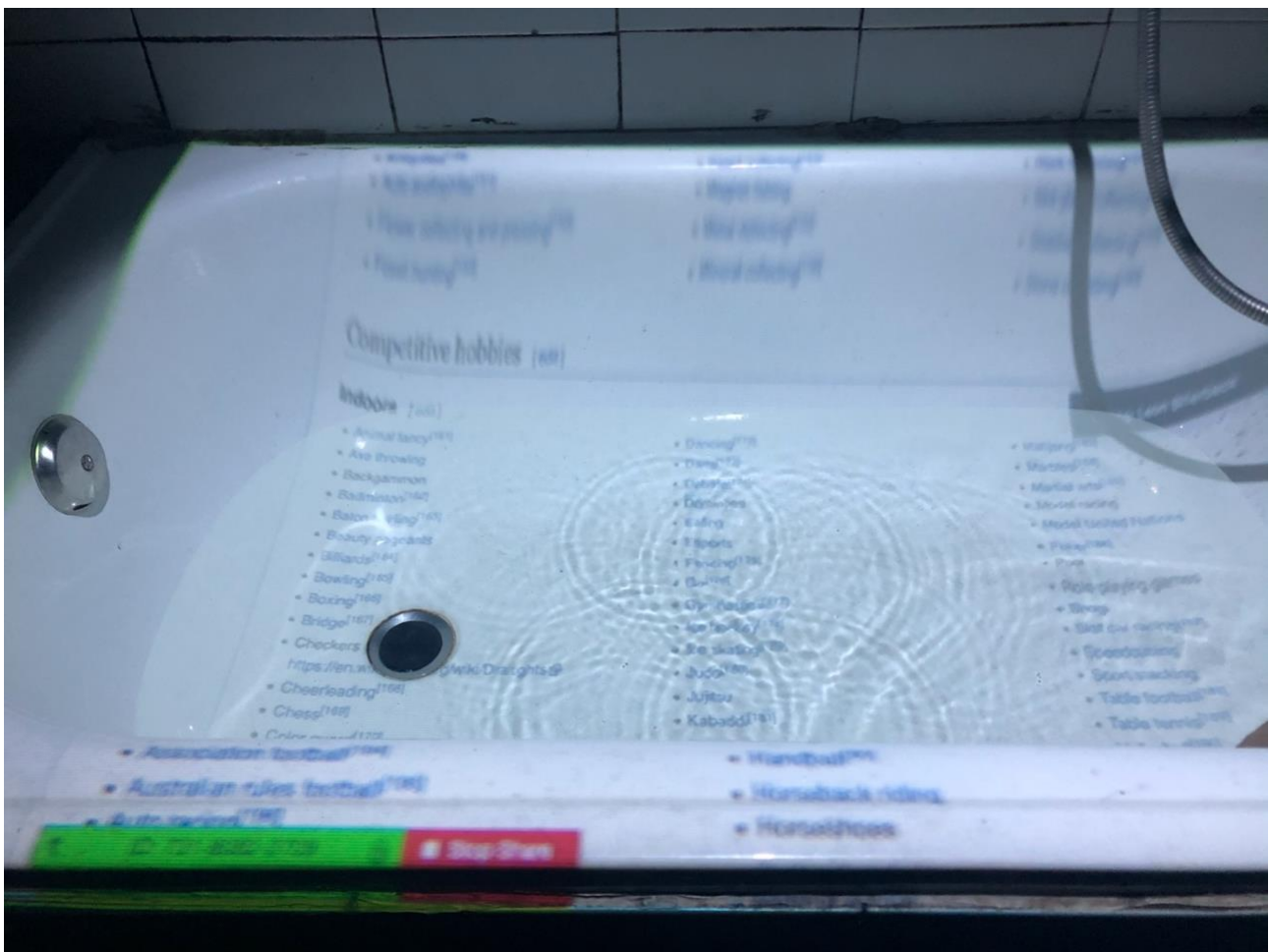
Leon Billerbeck joined the project after this performance in January to further disclose the depth and immediacy of the content that we have access to and how it actually forms our response as human beings. Our routine, the boredom, the random. They chose the starting point for each other – Xu Moru let Leon Billerbeck start with “Strawberry fields forever”; Leon Billerbeck let Xu Moru start with “Spatula”. The performance developed into a kind of audio-visual research improvisation in midst of vast landscapes of archived information - known and unknown, searched for and coincidentally found. A collective ritual. Something like a Sampler, taken on a hike, linking the unlinked paths we might or might

not choose.

By surfing through the web together in a zoom meeting, the essence of efficient result-based research is being transformed into something that isn't looking for anything but is actually becoming something itself. It might develop into something like an essay on our society, the digital culture that is dazed by seemingly infinite content that we feel obliged to digest. The superficiality of our relationship with what we perceive and the pressure to know it all. Maybe we need a relief, maybe we need to float without orientation through the waves and see what we find along the way, a research without a topic, a DJ set back to back with web algorithms, digging out what nobody knew and maybe finding what is "irrelevant". But who determines what is relevant?

As a live performance the work also reassesses what audio-visual can mean in an artistic context and how a lecture performance can function without a specific topic by allowing the content being used to transcend to rather symbolic meanings.

In December 2020 at the Open Studio of DL18 "*Entre*", the piece was presented in the same bathtub. This time, the surfers were not present, but their paths, seemingly invisible internet surfers browsing through somehow random webpages - diving deep, while exploring music and sound on YouTube, Bandcamp and Soundcloud. An ephemeral touch of the overwhelming data deserts that promise freedom (not fresh air).







#1 12May20 *Spatula/Strawberry Fields Forever – Busologia/Fancy*, Xu Moru and Leon Billerbeck, 2020, Audiovisual Installation, 31'52"