

and where we may move, associate, work, and speak.”<sup>9</sup> Hyphenation as identity thus implies an irresolvable undecidability on the part of the subject, since the terms, or states of being, that are being hyphenated are unclear and in flux, and since, more importantly, that the very decision of hyphenation, of inclusion and exclusion, of identification or annihilation, happens elsewhere. It is imposed and enforced from the outside. It is not the result of a willful subject production of funky cultural hybridity, as is so often clamored by the cultural industry and the art system.

Moreover, this notion of hyphenation strongly implies interpellation: how the designations of any identity are provided from outside the subject. You are born as a citizen of this or that nation, or not—this is not a matter of choice, creativity or will, but an interpellation from state power, and indeed, from supra-national power, which decides your status and belonging. It is, of course, possible to be a member of a nation that does not exist, that is virtual and trans-national, or, poignantly, to be a member of a nation-state with which one does not identify, and which one wants to revise, revolutionize, destroy or simply leave. Hyphenation in terms of designated and designating subjects thus implies linguistics, jurisdictions, identities, and not creativity and multicultural hybridity. Indeed, as the chosen example of identification, representation and interpellation, the international biennial confirms that we are not witnessing a proliferation of multi-culture in terms of difference and contestation, but rather what we could name *hybrid mono-culturalism*. The subjects represented (and which represent) may vary, and indeed, must constantly change, while the apparatus itself remains the same, and, in turn, solidifies and fortifies. As it spreads geographically, the biennial form becomes not only more repetitive and similar, but also more hegemonic as an exhibition form and a method of circulation. When talking about artistic identities and representations of the artist in the globalized artworld, we can thus also talk about the hyphen: the inter-national, indicating that there is something added to the national, and that much else can be added too, with widespread consequences in terms of recognition and misrecognition, funding and defunding, circulation and exodus, artistic survival, and social death.

As mentioned, the figure of the contemporary artist can here be viewed as a sign of political subjectivity

in general—not just in its optimistic forms, whether in terms of emancipation or commodification, depending on ideology, but also in terms of the indignity of interpellation, of being designated, even with the best of intentions. A wonderful illustration of this can be found in a drawing by Adrian Tomine, published in the *New Yorker* in 2007. Twelve frames are depicted, each one with an individual placed at a desk, filling out a piece of paper, presumably an administrative form of some sort. They seem to be of various ethnicities, but their facial expressions tell us nothing about how they are filling in the blanks, if it at all. Rather, the caption reads, beautifully, *None of the Above*. This indicates a multiplicity of choices, but that none of them apply, that the people in the image are hyphenated to such a degree that (self) designation in this form becomes impossible, if obviously not irrelevant. They are made to fill out the form, which is interpellated, and they may have to tick the box of that which does not fit: *the unrepresentable*. Might this, in the current global political situation, makes them truly democratic?

Should we reject hyphenation, and no longer let ourselves be identified as both this and that, and as inter-national? As attractive as this non-identitarian exodus might sound, it is hardly possible if interpellation already hails us from outside, and from the side of power. Rather, perhaps, we could try to embrace hyphenation, and do so through its additivity—adding so many possible and impossible designations that the whole endeavor becomes absurd and short-circuits the making of meaning. Hundreds of categories could be hyphenated. Or we could focus on the possible impossibility of joining the two words on each side of the hyphen. Instead of being inter-national, we would say: I am black-white, young-old, abled-disabled, man-woman, gay-straight, citizen-denizen, worker-employer, and the like. As hyphenated subjects, we are not only split subjects in a psychoanalytical sense, but also endlessly identified, named and categorized, expanded and compartmentalized. We are, in the words of Alexander Düttmann, *presupposed*, whether this presupposition in any way fits or not.<sup>10</sup> There is a category for everyone within the law, even if that category places us outside the law, or in some uncertain in-between state of exception.

## In the Fabric of the Voice: A Polyphonic Conversation



Stills from Katarina Zdjelar, *Stimme*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

Virginie Bobin with  
Bouchra Ouizguen,  
Blanca Calvo and Ion  
Munduate, Katarina  
Zdjelar, and Lawrence  
Abu Hamdan

The following interview was conducted via email in French, Spanish and English with choreographer and dancer Bouchra Ouizguen, artists and choreographers Blanca Calvo and Ion Munduate, artist Katarina Zdjelar and artist and researcher Lawrence Abu Hamdan. Numerous conversations in Aubervilliers, Stockholm, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, London, Berlin and Tangier have inspired and informed this discussion. It brings together a collection of voices and stories that emanate from diverse contexts and bodies, traveling through different mediums and spaces (such as the stage, the radio, the film, the exhibition, the book, the Internet), which compose a heterogeneous landscape for a common interest in the agency of the voice, and in turn, in the capacity of voice itself to act as an ongoing sort of laboratory.

The testimonies below more often than not expose a conflicted relation between voice, the utterer and the uttered, where voice is furred with eccentricities, interferences, leaps, and affects, thus voluntarily or involuntarily defusing attempts of control. They actively shed doubt on the alleged capacity of the voice to convey clear meanings and to assign defined identities, recalling that, in the words of cultural theorist Steven Connor, “the uploading of body into voice is never perfect.”<sup>1</sup> In that sense, they call for intensified attention, where sensing and critical hearing are brought to play in a process of subjectivation that bounds the speaker and the listener into a space that is both affective and political.

<sup>1</sup> Steven Connor, “The Dumb Devil of Stammering”, in *Resonant Bodies, Voices, Memories*, ed. Anke Bangma, Deirdre M. Donoghue, Lina Issa and Katarina Zdjelar (Rotterdam: Piet Zwart Institute, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Judith Butler, *op.cit.*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Garcia Düttmann, *op.cit.*

Virginie Bobin: Bouchra, your last dance piece, *Ha!*, composed in collaboration with three "Aitas",<sup>2</sup> begins in pitch darkness. Slowly, white moving shapes emerge from obscurity, accompanied by rhythmic breaths and vocal sounds that progressively turn into series of cries and shouts, while the lights go up and the bodies appear in a form of trance.<sup>3</sup> This first part seems to last for quite a long time, and produces a very strong effect on the spectator, who is caught into a sort of sonic hypnosis during which hearing overcomes other senses. The repetition of cries, and the alteration of the dancers' voices provokes a form of disidentification, as if the voices had detached themselves from the bodies and acquired their own life and volume, or rather, as if they were a pure product of movement instead of a thinking process aimed at generating language. How did you and the dancers think of the role of the voice in *Ha!*, first as regards choreography, and then as regards the representation of madness, or again, finally, as regards the inadequacy to social norms that you explore in the piece?

**Bouchra Ouizguen:** Voice is experienced, sensed as being, being there; in movement.

The balancing of our heads are the voices that inhabit ourselves, soothe us and overtake us. From this loss looms meaning, and movement.

Losing one's body; losing one's voice.

Abandon as madness. Ritual as support. Repetition, because everything has been done.

It doesn't matter. A form of depth emerges from lightness; a cry arises from a nod. We don't know who is who anymore, who directs who—we don't care! We are at heart.

They burn us.

**V.B.:** Later on in the play, the dancers start laughing inextinguishably, almost monstrously. Their laugh is foreign to any sense of joy; it has become a pure sound. Yet, as it is erupted by these women on stage, while they perform movements that they had primarily observed on men's bodies (alcoholics, lunatics, beggars) in the streets of Morocco, this laugh also carries provocation, insolence, or even forms of resistance. The fabric of this laugh manufactures a form of hybridity between an inside (the body, the stage) and an outside (the street); between madness and its representation, between norms and their construction, between genders. Your voices deceive conventions and the spectators's projections. Was this what you were seeking?

**B.O.:** YES.

We are multiple,

We are alcoholics,

We are the lunatic, the beggar.

Not a representation of them.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional cabaret dancers and singers in Morocco.

<sup>3</sup> A trailer announcing the piece at the 2013 Juli Dans Festival in Amsterdam is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7b2YEEg1HQ> (Accessed online November 2013).

We are always strange, estranged from something, from ourselves...

We identify ourselves in each one.

We are in the process of becoming others, for other lives to come.

Deceiving our own conventions, constructions.

Granting ourselves time in order to loose it.

**V.B.: Blanca, Ion:** After two editorial, radio and performance projects exploring the productive dislocation between body and voice in performance, *When The Body Disappears* and *A Disembodied Voice, Towards Love*, you are currently working on a third chapter entitled *Being / Translation*. How do body and voice mutually resonate with this idea of "being translation", which I understand as a continuous movement from the inside to the outside and vice-versa? In this process, what happens to "the otherness of the voice" that you have previously explored?

**Blanca Calvo and Ion Munduate:** At the inception of this project, which has kept us occupied for the past two years, we probably didn't know where we would end up. We were however certain that the voice would be the vehicle to translate us throughout the journey. We use the term "translate" because it was indeed our intuition that in the course of translating the perception of performance to another medium, questions would arise, some of which would be answered and others would still be left unresolved. This is why we chose the radio—because, by means of the microphone, it allowed us to create a sense of being, in the air. The otherness of the voices explored has formed a tissue composed of different layers of sedimentation, where all these voices come to rest and are waiting to be reactivated possibly in a different way, or at least that is what we expect. They are implicit as well in the statements and essays by invited artists, as for example your text in *Workbook 2 Being/Translation*, which is about to be published.<sup>4</sup> You take us on an intense and exciting tour of the works of several artists, films, and links to webpages and thereby elicit a comprehensive means to understand the voice and the dislocation between voice and body. Which is yet another layer of sedimentation. Accordingly, for this *Workbook 2* we are publishing CDs with both radio emissions, which at the time were only broadcast by a pirate radio station with a radius of 1.5 kilometres. The CDs contain eighteen hours of live broadcast.

The choice to use both terms jointly *Being/Translation* is a logical consequence of the other two titles that frame this project. Also, as you mention in your question, it is not that we conceive voice and body as being separate, but rather that we wanted to get rid of the image. We needed to see the here and now from a point of "freedom" that we didn't have, so we thought of sidestepping the present. Execute a movement, go from A to B. In fact we rather need to "dodge" the present and become suspended in another time, another present.

We think of the term *Being* as linked to our interpretation of Gilles Deleuze's concept of "being and becoming"; in our case and from the experience of the programs we have produced, this means a

<sup>4</sup> A draft for this text is accessible here: <http://www.specialissue.eu/field-notes-from-disembodied-voice-travels> (Accessed online November 2013).

confirmation that we are not actually in the here and now, but that we move along, we translate, we transfer, and we transport ourselves continually. Deleuze begins his work *The Logic of Sense* by saying that, "The here and now lies in the simultaneity of becoming, whose characteristic it is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or distinction of before and after, of past and future."

Consequently, in regard to the intention of the term translation, the idea is to activate a strategy, which within its own movement would select the elements, in turn recomposing it, and thereby creating from its very substance the embryo or the future base for work. Hence the need to dislocate certain elements implicit in the development of any performance: sound, voice, image and representation. It is and has been the goal of this process to recognize and open up new workspaces in full continuity with the interval that exists in the process of translation. Indeed the development of the radio programs with performances, conferences, concerts and workshops is based on the articulation between inside and outside in the development of the Mugatxoan project. In this case it has more to do with an order of things, breaking with certain mechanisms and freeing the movements from their own substance.



Stills from Katarina Zdjelar, *Stimme*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

**V.B.: Katarina, your last video, *Stimme*, follows a voice coaching session between a middle-aged woman and her younger patient. Although breathing and vocal exercises inhabit the entire duration of the work, the camera mainly focuses on and draws attention to the choreography of the coach's hands, and the pressures, pokes, caresses they perform on fragments of the patient's body: her belly, her chest, her neck, her head. The video operates a troubling dismemberment of the younger woman's body, while these seemingly autonomous hands labor it into the delivery of a more performing voice. Can you talk about the specific gaze that the camera frame, the close-ups and the editing produce on these bodies at work, and can you tell us more about their relation to voice as construction?**

**Katarina Zdjelar:** The piece considers when our voice becomes our personal property. Where does the voice begin and where does it end? Who is speaking when we speak, and who is entitled to speak? For that I have followed the sessions of voice modulation, during which the client is promised to gain her natural voice, that is, a voice which is released of its existing socio-cultural markers and constraints. The piece circles in the time and space of the vocal attribution. Oscillating between voices and never arriving at the desired destination, *Stimme* focuses on a liminal voice; a voice between culture and nature, something in between the material and corporeal act of producing voice, and the social process of receiving voice. Camera and editing work capture this process by cutting through the reality that enfolds in front of the camera, and by localizing the field of vision and sonic experience. They focus on visualizing the crafting of voice, thus mainly committing to the hand the work of the coach who manipulates the body of her client as if it were a musical instrument. I use filming and editing as a writing device and not as a representation.

The coaching hands firstly locate the voice in the body of her client, than instruct it, lead it, hold it. The hand work of the coach is akin to that of a conductor. They lead to as yet uninhibited zones of clients's bodies, they unblock pathways, they give push, then guide and bring the voice out. Hands make the contact with the clients's voices and give an access to the unreachable interior. We follow the way voice inhabits the body, the way it moves, awakens, twists parts of the body, and we hear the way the same body lies in the voice. On instances, the coach's hands do the work of her clients's bodies and therefore appear as an extension; a prosthesis. Each body part has its own sound, which needs to be tuned. Thus hands become, in certain instances, a hearing aid of the coach, like an extra pair of ears that examine and adjust the sound of the voice. The camera is complicit to this act of processing the voice, as it is predicated precisely through an interplay between the client, the coach, the gaze of the camera and the sound. Yet, the camera lens, the sound, and the editing are not simply there to produce knowledge, nor are they there to serve as a commentary to an ideological apparatus. They co-produce a form of thinking, which is both guided by and which guides this tuning operation; it is both passive and active. Sometimes I would like to think of the role of the camera as a sort of intern in a physician's practice—partly assisting and contributing to the activities, partly observing and internalizing the skills, and yet always running the risk of messing things up and therefore making apparent the prescribed relation between the physician and the patient.

**V.B. The coaching session that we are witnessing in *Stimme* aims at helping women to recover their "natural", "inner" voices, to tune into them. According to some studies, women socially acquire a higher-pitched voice than the one they originally have, thus inducing positions of weakness and dependency towards men, who in contrast are doted with a lower-pitched voice, whose registers are associated with power and authority, notably in a professional context. "You don't speak with your voice", says the coach several times. Does a voice belong to us? Is there such thing as an original, natural voice, hidden under the layers of culture and social construct?**

**K.Z.:** What we witness in *Stimme* is the manufacturing of natural voice, the hard labour of producing natural sound. A contradiction in terms. We are situated in the middle of the power struggle fought on the battleground of language and voice, with all of its entrenched and enfolding history. Prior to the triumph of metaphysics, voice was in direct relation with thought, while thought was a corporeal affair, situated in the respiratory organs and connected with alimentation. Thinking was done with the lungs and not the brain. Therefore it was not surprising that the thinness of the voice was related to the lack of lungs and consequently lack of contemplative competence. Aristotle used to use voice pitch as a tool to differentiate men from the elderly, castrato, children and women. He related authority with low-pitched voices and therefore (functional) testicles and removed the power from all other members of society, justifying it with the high pitch of their voice, which served as an evidence of their inferiority. Is it then safe to assume that here, thinking happens in the testicles and that by lowering the pitch of one's voice, one may also develop a degree of virility? The first publicly known example of voice modulation is Margaret Thatcher, who recognized the need to lower the pitch of her voice to gain authority and to sustain political power. The current application of this method is mainly reserved for women who aim at leading (business) positions, promising them social and economic mobility. It has been said that once one begins to speak with one's own voice, the entire body resonates. A particular kind of presence is roused through the voice, and a sense of totality and completion is achieved. It is difficult to tell if there is a voice without all its historical, cultural and social underpinnings, mostly because its destination is speech. But if there is such a voice, can we actually do things with it? Is that voice operational? And what remains when all markers are removed? Is there voice beyond representation and can voice be heard without its markers?

**V.B.:** Lawrence, last May at the Whitechapel in London, you talked about a new policy established in 2001 in the United Kingdom to test the accent of undocumented asylum seekers in order to verify that they actually come from that places that they affirm they do. You then told the story of a man who was born in Jenin, Palestine, before being displaced through several countries and ending in London where he acquired a strong local accent. How do these two stories relate to your exploration of voice as a bearer of national identity, legal borders and the politics of mobility? Furthermore, can this inscription be undermined by what Mladen Dolar calls "the spectral autonomy of the voice, this zone of indeterminacy... a principle of division... at the intersection between the inner and the outer,"<sup>5</sup> the body of the speaker and the world around him?

5 Mladen Dolar, "What's In a Voice?" in *Resonant Bodies, Voices, Memories*, ed. Anke Bangma, Deirdre M. Donoghue, Lina Issa and Katarina Zdjelar (Rotterdam: Piet Zwart Institute, 2008).

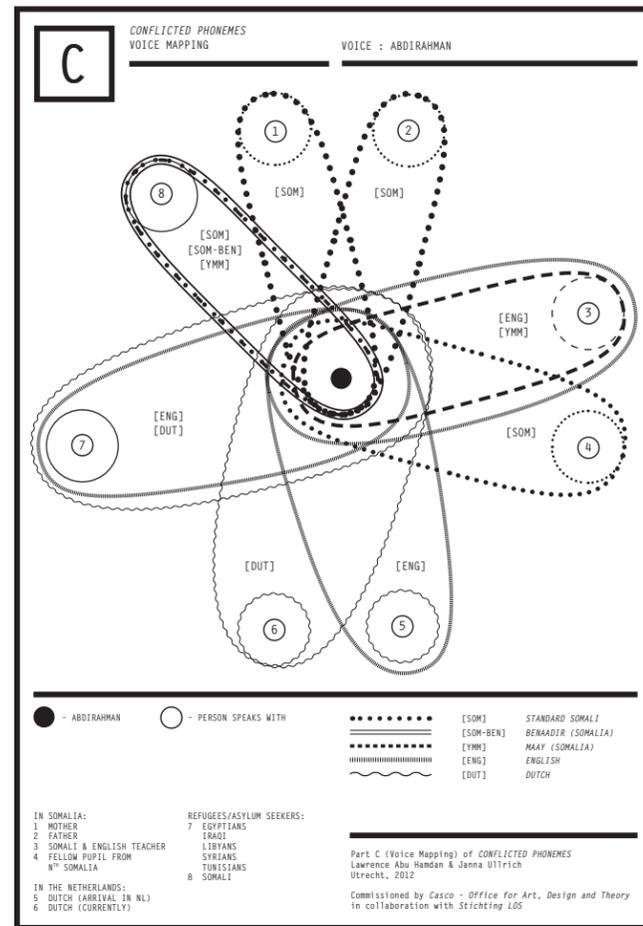
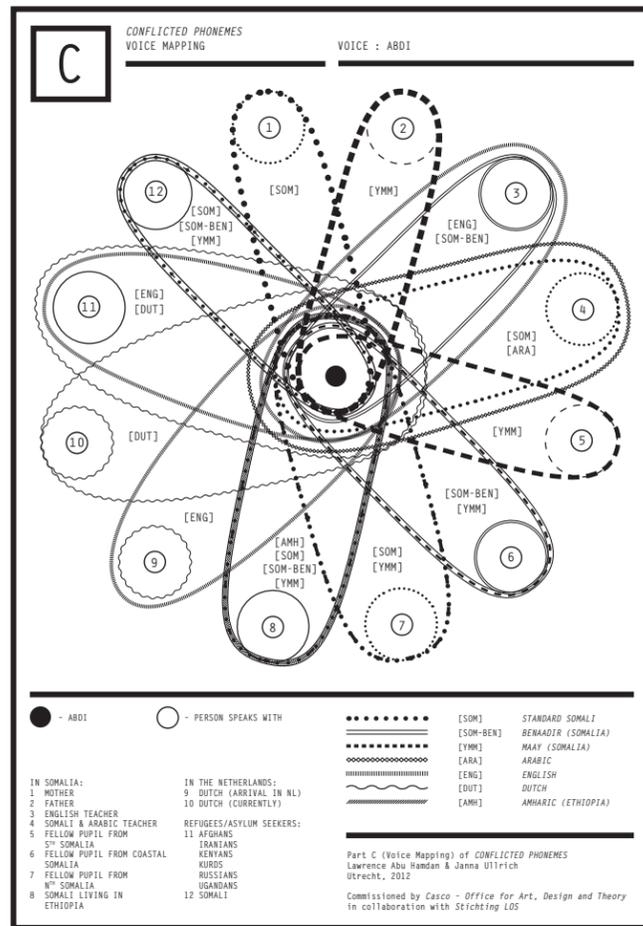
**Lawrence Abu Hamdan:** The story of the accent analysis of asylum seekers can be seen very much as a technical and legal instantiation of the Dolar's psychoanalytical reading of the division of the voice. Forensic linguist Helen Fraser says that we "need to clearly separate linguistic data from potentially biasing background [information] on the applicant's 'story.'"<sup>6</sup> Clearly in this expression of objectivity we see how linguists want to auscultate the accent and go beyond the potentially traumatic and pathetic "story" of a person's flight; preferring to find in their speech another type of testimony. However, my argument is that for adept forensic listeners, this accent object (linguistic data) should also be heard as a 'story' in itself, one that could reveal an account that is just as traumatic. In other words—for listeners who are not content with drawing a border around a single phonetic article, the accent should be understood as a biography of migration; as an irregular and itinerant concoction of contagiously accumulated voices, rather than an immediately distinguishable sound that avows its unshakable roots neatly within the confines of a nation state. In the clear distinction between biographical data and linguistic data, we see how this policy is used as a practice that does not seek to excavate the life of an accent, but merely revives the virtual impossibility of locating its place of birth. Finally, the amplification of these paralinguistic elements of testimony produces a division of the voice, which in turn establishes two witnesses within one voice. One witness speaks on behalf of language and the other witness speaks on behalf of what Dolar would call *phone* (speech-sound). Often the testimony provided by each of these two witnesses is corroborated by the other, but the two can also betray themselves in the same gesture. An internal betrayal between language and body; between subject and object; fiction and fact; truth and lie. This betrayal exists in a single human utterance in which the self gives itself away. This splitting of the voice into two selves, or into two witnesses, can also be seen as an extension of the well-established legal principle of *Testis unus, testis nullus*, which translates to "one witness, no witness", and which means that the testimony provided by any one person in court is to be disregarded unless corroborated by the testimony of at least one other individual. The law, it seems, requires a certain doubling of testimony,

Stills from Katarina Zdjelar, *Stimme*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.



and this doubling extends even as far as the singular witness. In the eyes of the law, the testimony of the single witness—be it that of the suspect, or of the survivor—has to be split into language and its bodily conduit, for it to be considered testimony at all.

6 Helen Fraser. 2011. "The role of linguistics and native speakers in language analysis for the determination of speaker origin. A response to Tina Cambier-Langeveld," *The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law* 18 (1), 121–130.



**V.B.:** Indeed it does. Yet on the other hand, one could argue that the intrinsic unreliability of the voice opens up a space of resistance. In a society of control where movement is monitored by standardized protocols and technological tools with questionable scientific value, one's voice can turn into a deadly enemy. One could be prevented from obtaining asylum, for instance. This is partly due to our growing reliance on prosthesis to listen: computers, recorders, and lie detectors, which perform a process of hearing whereby human interpretation cedes its power to the oppressive infallibility of machines. Might we close this discussion on the political agency of voice by reclaiming the political agency of listening?

**L.A.H.:** My project is titled *Aural Contract*, for exactly the reasons you suggest. The project intends to produce a body of material that allows us to move away from the predominant political rhetoric of "giving voice" and "speaking out" in favor of listening and the political agency of audition. To shift from the oral contract to an aural one, which is to take more seriously our political participation and the relationships between listening subjects—as opposed to speaking subjects. My work tries to amplify the proclamation that we now live in an era in which the conditions of testimony have insidiously shifted; one in which the diminishing agency of words is being drowned out by the law's amplification of accents, inflections, reflections, impediments and prosody. This shift in listening shows an emerging phrenology of the

Lawrence  
 Abu Hamdan,  
*Conflicted  
 Phonemes*, 2012.  
 Graphic design:  
 Janna Ulrich,  
 courtesy of the  
 Lawrence Abu  
 Hamdan and  
 Galeri Non.

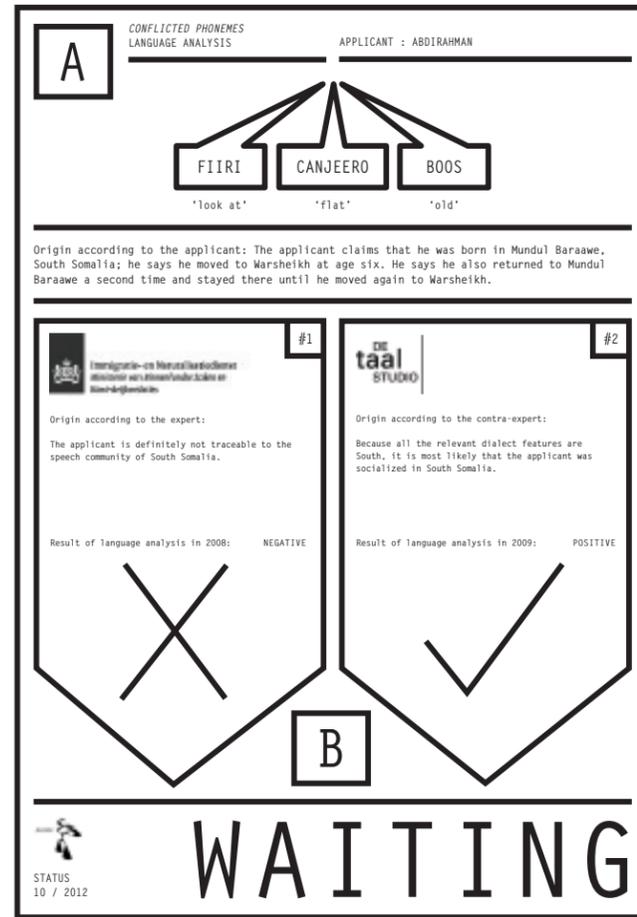
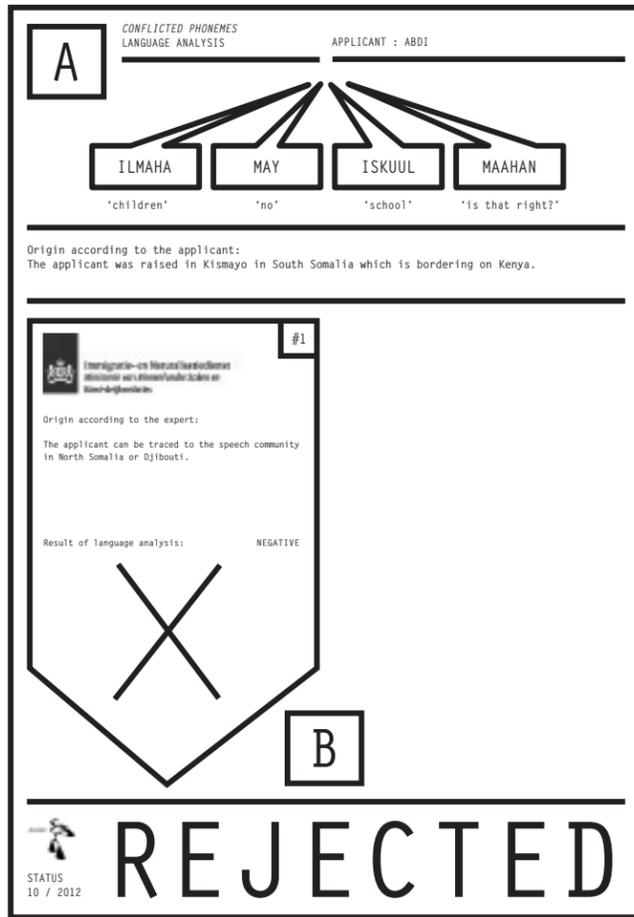
voice—yet we must shift with it by extending the idea of "free speech" to encompass the sonic quality of speech itself. Now it seems that the battle for free speech is no longer about fighting to speak freely but about fighting for the control over the very conditions through which we are being heard.

To find ways in which we can fight for these conditions and thereby reclaim the political agency of listening, we need not look further than forensic listening itself. The political agency of forensic listening is at the moment occupied by regimes of control. Yet if we occupy these techniques and learn from them we can possibly reclaim their radicality. During my 2010 interview with the forensic linguist Peter French, he admitted that "Last week, a colleague and I spent three working days listening to one word from a police interview tape." Statements like this were exemplary of French's radical approach to both listening and the theoretical paradigms that surround sound production. Unlike many sound theorists who focus on sound's ephemeral and immaterial qualities, French's approach was markedly material.

The dominant contemporary school of audio culture is heavily influenced by Don Ihde's 1976 text, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound*, which puts forward the impossibility of fundamentally grasping sound. The continuing prevalence of this school of thought is further demonstrated in Frances Dyson's 2009 book, *Sounding New Media*, who states in her introduction: "As Don Ihde and Christian Metz pointed out decades ago, 'a' sound is always multiple, always heterogeneous, being neither visible or tangible; sound is never quite an object, never a full guarantor of knowledge." Yet French's formulation renders sound dissectible, replicable, physical and corporeal in its object quality. The intensity at which French listens is actually the basis that enables his radical approach to sound. The audio object reveals a large amount of information about its production and its form: the space in which it was recorded, the machine that recorded it, and the ability to pinpoint an accent to a specific location—as well as the ability to glean the age, health and ethnicity of a voice.

Occupying a radical and affective means of listening would be, for me, a step towards reclaiming the political agency of listening. Yet as with all cases of legal, social and ethnic profiling, French walks a thin ethical line. Ironically what allows him to maintain his credibility in a time where law enforcement increasingly reaches out to forensic linguistics in odious forms of surveillance and profiling that target huge swathes of the population, is his ability to listen thoroughly. French understands the limits of what can be detected through the voice, and in doing so does not exploit the law's increasing demands for the empty promises of forensic science, which are so often accompanied by ignorance of its practical capacities. Today, forensic listening is applied on such a scale that law enforcement agencies and the security services cannot often afford the expert listening services of people like Dr. French. Hence, frighteningly, we are entering a time where there is both an excessive demand for the governance of the voice, and yet our means of producing the model of governance necessary is often either

7 Frances Dyson, *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 4–5.



Lawrence Abu Hamdan, *Conflicted Phonemes*, 2012. Graphic design: Janna Ulrich, courtesy of the Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Galeri Non.

“Since 2001, immigration authorities around the world have been using accent and language tests to determine the validity of asylum claims made by thousands of people without identity documents in Australia, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In most circumstances a private Swedish company is contracted and during a phone interview between the company and the asylum seeker the claimant’s voice is analyzed to assess whether the voice and accent correlate with the claim of national origin. On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>st</sup> of September 2012, a group consisting of linguists, graphic designer Janna Ullrich, researchers, activists, refugee and art organizations and a core group of Somali asylum seekers, who had each been rejected by the Dutch immigration authorities because of the analysis of their language/dialect or accent, met to discuss the controversial use of language analysis to determine the origin of asylum seekers.”

The project was commissioned by Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory in collaboration with Stichting LOS.

inadequate, or bogus, or both. In other words, we have now entered a sorry phase where bad listening (and therefore bad evidence) floods the forum.

The lie detector you mention in your question, which is based on measuring the tensions of the vocal chords as made audible by the subjects’s voices, is an example of this poor-quality mechanical listening style at work today. In an interview situation, the lie detector’s visual interface flashes its verdicts as the interviewee speaks. This machine then promises to listen on behalf of its operator as it reduces or forces into question their interpretative capacities / intuitions. In this sense, the technology does not only mute the words of the speaker, but also deafens the listener. By assuming an increasing proliferation of these emergent and mutated strands of forensic listening, we are forced to ask more general questions about the role of the voice as a central legal infrastructure. Will our hearings still be fair and just when nobody is listening?

Translation from French: Virginie Bobin

Translation from Spanish: Anke van Wijck