Setting Tables: The Hope of Communing Bodies in Theological Education

Ashley Vi Lynk

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Setting Tables

The Hope of Communing Bodies in Theological Education

Vi Lynk

STM Thesis

11 May 2023
CORPORAL - opening

 VEIL - performance piece proposal

 PALL - conversations

 HOST - narrative

 PATEN - source

 PURIFICATOR - liturgy

 CHALICE - art

 CORPORAL - benediction
CORPORAL

opening
Take, eat. These words, the visceral invitation, the liturgical symbolism, the eschatological mandate, resonate through each of the many elements of my time here at Yale Divinity School. As I work towards ordination in a religion where female bodies still read as other, as I read and listened and wrote in an academic structure built around a narrow understanding of belonging, as I watched these systems of exclusion reconfigured into countless deaths of names chanted at protests, as I navigated a pandemic that shook our global perception of physical existence, I returned again and again to the table – to the absence and presence, to the hunger and nourishment, to the body and the blood. And tables always point to other bodies joining, even when they are not there. The ritual of Eucharist held (holds) the tension of a faith centered on the incarnation, the divine enfleshed. And with these liminal undulations, it hopes for knowledge located in embodied community. So I returned to the table and I set the table and I sat at other tables.

I wanted to bring more to these tables. I wanted everyone and everything to embrace the sacred embodied, to take & eat in order to re-member our createdness, to return to the familiar vulnerability of visceralities and share a meal, a conversation, a truth from this common experience of contingency. But people and religions and institutions do not eat at tables much anymore, or if they do, these tables are carefully set and seated to avoid the indeterminate sensuality of desiring bodies. This confounds me. We claim to be a Christian institution who, in our temporal and spatial mappings, centers the worship experience. Yet we blatantly ignore the invitation of our liturgical practices. We speak of doing, we talk of creating, we envision gathering, and we perform a re-membering, but we continue to work in epistemes that ignore the body and in this ignorance perpetuate the violence of oppressive systems.
I sought to expand these epistemes by accepting the invitation of the Eucharist, to bring our bodies to these tables, to approach the knowing of the incarnation not merely through words but through shared physical actions. Working within the framework of performance art, a dialogic form that draws from many senses, I endeavored to bring the body into these academic, and religious conversations. I proposed a performance piece, rehearsed in a different form at the School of Art my first year of Divinity school, modified for this space, for Marquand Chapel.

Blurring the line between ritual and practice while underscoring the unacknowledged contributions of marginalized figures, I sought to loosen the rote rituals of these spaces. Perhaps, I thought, these visceral confrontations might finally impress a deeper awareness of the oppressive structures of these spaces into viewers’ bodies. Or perhaps these alternative shapes of gathering, of writing, of stitching, of being around a table might invite this community to gather more generously and generatively around tables of learning.

The process of imagining merely the performance piece proved challenging for many, in different ways. I chose to move through these conversations honestly and generously, recognizing that dialogue is an artform that can elicit change. Numerous emails exchanged marked the edges of hidden conversations, of quick assumptions, of unnamed fears, of tireless pursuit, of grace. They traced the difficulty of change and the ease of refusal. They also indicated a hierarchical isolation, of students, of administration, of faculty, and of professional schools. I recognize now that the table I wanted to set was not an easy one to approach, but I had hoped that other tables would be laid in the process.

The commitment to the table, my enacted eschatological hope, was born, in part, from the refusal of others to see me in my full createdness. I have bumped against things physically and theoretically over and over, constant reminders of the limits of these spaces. The visceral
experience of my body moving through this place and time meant that I could not negate the sensual components of knowledge and learning. Words on a page are never enough. The parts of me refused, pointed to the myriad of others refused, so I worked to set a larger table out of necessity and out of a sense of justice, recognizing the limits of my socially located imagination. Thus the work burgeoned out of my own artistic endeavor and into the larger project of communal transformation guided by expansive conversation. I cannot do this work in isolation. I will not do this work in isolation. Tables serve many. I continue to wonder what forms might draw other bodies in. There is not one way, but many. And there is not a complete knowing, but an ongoing becoming. In this way, the incompleteness, and perhaps failure of this piece, marks the need for the work to continue, for the presence of others. I continue to seek people and forms to set tables with.

Even as the inevitability of spatial restrictions ate away at my hope for a performance piece, I sought alternative methods to entwine bodies into the liturgical fiber of our community. Tending to the Eucharistic nourishment of the Marquand chapel community as Sacristan, offered bi-weekly opportunities to literally set the table for our shared ritual. Within this familiar framework, I was able to engage others and co-create alternative iterations of the communing form, drawing from the experience of othered bodies to expand the reach of our ritualized discourse. I am grateful to the community of ministers surrounding the chapel because with them I learned the transformative power of envisioning something different together. Even as the Maundy Thursday service worked within the constraints of the worshiping community, it drew many sources and modes into conversation with familiar narratives. With this, the Maundy Thursday liturgy reached towards some of the ideas I had hoped to encircle with my performance piece.
Over the four years of working to bring a piece of my art into the Divinity school, and to engage in deeper ways with the learnings taking place, many ideas for art pieces covered the surfaces of my notebooks and pressed outward from my churning intellect. One idea followed the precedent of other reformers and found space in the folds of easily distributed newspapers. What started simply as a desire to nestle some sensuality into the learning corridors germinated into both invitation and observation, wondering aloud at the rubrics used in academic and religious spaces to direct and grade participants of these, at times, exploitative performances. In the end it offers another body in the crucifix form, one determined to hold onto its humanity through stretch marks and freckles, even as it is pressed against the distorting eye of the flattened page. So, finally, as my academic journey here ends, I brought my body and my art into this space, around these tables, with hope that others will bring their own bodies as they join these conversations.

Each time I prepare for communion and anticipate the number of bodies that will approach the table, I prepare bread and wine for an estimated number of people to consume. Today, at our final chapel service, the wine ran out with the final person that approached the table, my calculations validated by what everyone viewed as a loaves and fishes moment. We set the table with hope, with expectation, but we never know who will gather, or how those who gather will choose to partake. I have found the miscalculations of a Sacristan easier to accept than the disappointed expectations of a student, but as this thesis project unfolded, I chose to follow the invitation of the liturgy. I am choosing to return again and again to the table, in this institution and others. We will set the table. We will hope for other bodies to approach, to gather, to take and eat, and to remember.
VEIL

performance piece proposal
Piece description:

In the center of Marquand, there is a communion table covered by a white tablecloth. Around the border of the cloth, there are the beginnings of cross-stitched phrases: “This is my body. This is my blood” - interrupted by needles marking where someone must continue. The table is strewn with sewing scissors and needle threaders; it is clear that there is a work in progress. Viewers stand waiting. The piece begins. Various womxn and non-binary individuals enter. Some are nude, some are wearing underwear and/or bras. They find a place around the table, a cross-stitched phrase they must finish. They pull the end of a piece of red thread from their vagina or a piece of white thread from the nipple area of their bra and thread the waiting needles. Each person sits and continues cross-stitching the phrases. A sewing circle forms, a gathering, a creating, a contributing, metaphorical fluids marking the communion table. As sentences are finished or as individuals are finished, they cut their threads and exit. The piece ends when the last sewer leaves.

Length:

I would aim for the piece to take 20-30 minutes, the length of a service. Ideally there would be an opportunity for a talk-back with the artist, participants, and viewers. However, to honor both the intent of the piece and the chapel space, I suggest that this talk take place over lunch in the common room.
conversations
Dear Friends, Mentors, Colleagues,

I wanted to follow up on the semester-long, (years-long), endeavor to perform an art piece on the Divinity campus. I have had conversations with each of you requesting space and support. Ultimately I have been told that there is no space on campus where I can do my art piece. However, many of you have supported me in certain, although limited, ways, and for that I am grateful. I am also grateful for the opportunity to engage in conversation with each of you.

My hope is that these conversations, as an invitation, will help create space for students and faculty members to engage meaningfully in art, art that may not fit into the current digestible criteria for easy visual consumption. Art, in many forms, is an important discursive mode, one that many faculty here uphold as theological and ethical models in their classes, books and academic conversations. Additionally, art drawn from a diverse set of practitioners with a breadth of processes works to create space for other voices and bodies to be present, potentially expanding the generative and inclusive potential of our learning and worshiping practices.

As I reflect on my time here and look to the next, I know that even though I was unable to gift this community a performance, that I have, at least, gifted this community my presence. I hope that the artifacts of my invitations combined with the undulations of other visceralities will gestate in the wombs of this community and birth an expanded acceptance of both art and bodies, one that moves closer to reflecting the incarnational Gospel that many of us proclaim.

With anticipation, expectation and hope,

Vi

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
Master of Sacred Theology (STM) 23
Institute of Sacred Music
Yale Divinity School

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
STM Candidate, 2023
Yale Divinity School
Vi,

It was great to meet you a few weeks ago. Thank you for coming to talk to me in-person. I am sorry I have to decline your request for use of library space for your performance. I understand how frustrating this process has been for you.

I have written to Dean and I also see him tomorrow. I am hoping we can get to a place where this kind of request is easier in the future.

Best of luck with finishing the semester and enjoy New York this summer.
Great thank you. Our offices are located in Sterling Memorial Library.

Thanks,

2-3 on Friday works for me.

Can you also let me know where we would be meeting?

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
Master of Sacred Theology (STM) 23
Institute of Sacred Music
Yale Divinity School
Hi Vi,

I'm writing to find a time for you to speak with [Redacted]. Does Tuesday, March 28 at 9:30am work for you?

Thank you,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 11:50 AM
To: Lynk, Vi <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Re: Performance Piece Request

Vi,

Thank you for your response and your questions. We would like the opportunity to meet with you and discuss your work and the library’s policies on performances. Are you available next week?

I have copied [Redacted], who can help us find a time.
Thank you for your quick response and explanation.

I understand and greatly appreciate that the library is an important shared space of interdisciplinary collaboration and research for students and faculty. In my experience the library regularly holds events (art performances, interviews, and exhibit openings) during study times.

As performance art that speaks directly to the liturgical rituals that inform our academic rhythms, the art is not just aligned with the library’s goal of “supporting teaching…in disciplines related to Christianity,” but is best suited for the library.

Could you clarify the library’s stance with respect to this performance being aligned with the library’s goals, how the use of the room (for at most an hour) is more of a disruption than the numerous prior events, and if this is a new rule/policy that prohibits use of these shared spaces that previously were allowed?

Thank you.

vi

Vi Lynk, DMin.
Master of Sacred Theology (STM) ’23
Institute of Sacred Music
Yale Divinity School

Am Fr., 24. März 2023 um 00:16 Uhr schrieb: [Redacted]

Good morning Vi,

Thanks for your message. I’ve consulted with the University Librarian to make sure I am providing a response that complies with general library policy. Bringing in any kind of performance into library spaces during regular hours of operation would be disruptive to those needing access to a particular study space. It is our responsibility to ensure students, faculty, and researchers are able to get their work done uninterrupted. To that end, we cannot provide a library space for this event.

[Redacted], our University Librarian, has said she would be glad to meet with you if you have any further questions.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

New Haven CT 06520-8240
I am a student at the Divinity School working on my STM project and my ISM presentation. A key component of the project is art, specifically community based art. One of the pieces is designed to be done in a shared space and would work well on Maundy Thursday. I had originally asked to do it in Marquand, but suggested the library instead.

I am wondering if the Day Missions Reading room might be available for an hour the afternoon of April 6th for me to do this communal art piece. It would require minor setup and does not include any elements that would damage the space.

I've attached a proposal. I'm happy to chat more about this.

Thanks for considering.

Vi

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
Master of Sacred Theology (STM) '23
Institute of Sacred Music
Yale Divinity School
Dear Vi,

I have just sent you an Outlook invitation to meet with Dean from 11:45-12:15. We will see you then.

Thanks for the quick response.

I'm available Monday March 13th 11:15-1:15. Does that work? If not, we could look at Thursday March 30th.

Thanks.

Vi

On Thu, Mar 2, 2023 at 9:36 AM wrote:

Dear Vi,

Thank you for your email. Will you be around the first week of spring break, the week of March 13th? The dean has a lot of flexibility on calendar that week. Otherwise, we would be looking at Thursday, March 30th at 9am. Let me know when you can.

Best,
Hi [redacted]

I am hoping to schedule a time to chat with Dean [redacted] about art at YDS, specifically getting a protocol in place to facilitate conversations around student art.

Please let me know how I can make this happen.

Yi

—

V̅i Lynk, M.Div.
STM Candidate, 2023
Yale Divinity School
Talk more on thesis

Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

To: [redacted]@yale.edu

Sat, Feb 18, 2023 at 10:57 AM

I went ahead and scheduled some time Wednesday after Marquand. Let me know if that doesn’t work for some reason.

Looking forward to connecting again.

Vi

On Fri, Feb 17, 2023 at 1:55 PM [redacted]@yale.edu> wrote:

Hi Vi!

I hope you are having a lovely reading period. I was wondering if we could have another chat about your thesis project? Let me know if you have time to drop by next week? Also thank you for the work you are doing for the Ash Wednesday service!!

Dear [redacted],

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
STM Candidate, 2023
Yale Divinity School
I look forward to meeting with you!

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Tell me a little about what we will chat about.: Thesis and bodies and art, oh my!

invite.ics

t 2K
Good Friday Art piece

To: Lynk VI <vi lynk@yale.edu>
Cc: [redacted]

Dear VI,

Thank you for including me in this conversation. Since this would be outside of Marquand Chapel morning services, it is a bit beyond my authority to make this decision. You may need to get approvals from other administrators. I am looping in Dean [redacted] as a starting point, since it relates to student use of facilities, and Dean [redacted] since this relates to an academic matter as part of your STM thesis.

I'm happy to stay in the loop and hope the process can be clarified in a timely manner.

Best wishes and blessings,

[redacted]

From: Vi Lynk <vi lynk@yale.edu>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 1:35 PM
To: Lynk VI <vi lynk@yale.edu>
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Good Friday Art piece

Dear [redacted],

This semester holds my STM project and my ISM presentation. A key component of the project is art, specifically community-based art. One of the pieces is designed with Marquand Chapel in mind and would work specifically well on Good Friday. I'm aware that Marquand Chapel does not officially hold services that day, so I am hoping it is available for me to do a performance piece as a part of my STM and ISM project. I'm including Professor [redacted] on this email as we've been in previous conversation about this.

I've attached a proposal.

Please let me know the next steps.

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk, M.Div.
Master of Sacred Theology (STM) 23
Institute of Sacred Music
Yale Divinity School
Hi Vi,

My apologies - I don't think I ever responded to this! I do have the meeting on Prof.'s calendar though and can send you an Outlook invitation. Office is

Best wishes,

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 6:24 PM
To: n@yale.edu>
Subject: Meeting

Professo,

I am wondering if you have time to meet in the next week. I have a few creative ideas for my STM thesis and ISM presentation that I would like to share with you and hear your thoughts/insight.

Looking forward to a conversation.

Vi
Dear Vi,

Thank you for your message! I reply in haste.

A few notes, from a purely logistical perspective:

YDS is, technically, closed on Good Friday. So there will be no staff on campus that day, including facilities, A/V, administrative, or chapel staff. I myself will be out of town.

Another consideration: YBS is planning a Good Friday service in Marquand Chapel that day, but they have made arrangements directly with the Office of Student Affairs, since this is not under the aegis of the Marquand Chapel staff. If you are interested in presenting a performance piece that same day, you'd need to speak with Dean [REDACTED] as soon as possible to find out if it is feasible, and coordinate any arrangements through the Office of Student Affairs.

Quick replies:
When I indicated the limited capacity "we" have, I was referring specifically to the staff of Marquand Chapel. I cannot speak for the YDS community at large.

It would be great to continue in conversation with you, and I'd be delighted if you were to accept the ISM's invitation to do an STM. I look forward to learning from your insights and perspectives.

Best wishes and blessings,

Vi Lynk

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
To: Lynk, Vi <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent: Fri, Mar 25, 2022 5:16 PM
Subject: Good Friday (& Art)

Dear [REDACTED],

I wanted to follow-up on the hope of doing my performance piece in Marquand Chapel. I know you said, in response to my previous proposal, that "we lack the capacity to provide adequate context, etc." I am wondering if this 'we' is specifically in the context of chapel services, or the larger YDS community.

Additionally, I realized that there are no classes on Good Friday, which would normally mean we do not have chapel that day. Might my performance piece be offered that day, outside the normal 'we' parameters of chapel?

Regardless I would welcome further conversation around performance art, our community, Marquand, etc. As I mentioned previously, I trust your awareness of the community. And, as someone committed to bodies, I want to understand these barriers more. If I choose to accept the ISM's offer of an STM next year, working to 'forge the depth and quality of community for such an experience to be effective and life-giving' (I love your words!) would be one of my projects. Your insight and knowledge around what this looks like and how it might happen, would be invaluable to my journey.

As always, so grateful for the conversation.
I hope the break brings some rest.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
following up re: senior sermon

To: Lynk <vilynk@yale.edu>

Dear Vi,

Thank you for your gracious reply. I'm so glad you will be able to give a senior sermon! I remember appreciating your senior sermon at a Berkeley Eucharist last fall, and I am sure you will have a rich message for the broader YDS community at Marquand. Now that you have accepted the invitation, will move forward and assign a chapel minister or staff member to work with you to plan the service.

Relatively soon, we will need to know the Scriptural passage you'd like to have read, and if you have an idea for a theme/title for the service. You are welcome to suggest an additional reading (Scriptural or otherwise). Members of the chapel team will plan the service, with your input, and the service plan will be due 4 February, so we can prepare a bulletin (to be posted electronically for the service) and confirm readers, cantors, etc.

I would be happy to speak with you further about questions of community, art, and spiritual reflection. Perhaps we can aim for a chat after your sermon date? I know that I will be fully occupied with teaching, chapel matters, and writing in the meantime, and I'd like to be able to think through this with you when things are not quite as frantic as they are now. I also look forward to hearing about your post-YDS trajectory, as your plans develop.

Best wishes and blessings,

[signature]

From: Vi Lynk <vilynk@yale.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 10:44 AM
To: [redacted]@yale.edu
Cc: [redacted]@yale.edu
Subject: Re: Planning re: Senior sermon

Thank you, so much, for this thoughtful response.

I am still interested in offering a sermon to the community on February 14th. Please let me know the next steps for that process.

Regarding the performance piece, I would love to hear more about your sense of the community lacking capacity to receive such an experience. I trust your awareness of the community, of the space, and, as someone committed to bodies, I want to understand this difficulty more, in part to work towards that needed depth and quality of community. Indeed, I see my work here at YDS and in the larger church, as the work of opening space for bodies to be life-giving. These are the conversations I want to be having, which is why I am so grateful that you named the difficulty, started the dialogue, instead of merely avoiding it. I know you have a lot on your plate currently, but please let me know if/when you have space to share more about this. Again, this is the learning I want to do.

I am holding y'all in my prayers as we pivot our worshiping space yet again. Blessings on those next few weeks of transitions and adjustments.

vi

[signature]

Am Di., 18. Jan. 2022 um 13:48 Uhr schrieb [redacted]@yale.edu:

Dear Vi,

Thank you for your reply to Marquand Chapel's invitation to preach a senior sermon this semester, and for sending [redacted], a proposal for a performance art piece for that day. Mike forwarded your reply to me. As per current guidelines from our Health and Safety Leaders, that service is expected to be online, not in person. Thus, as you noted in your message, your proposal is not applicable to our situation.

As for the senior sermon, specifically—it is intended to provide students with an opportunity to prepare a spoken sermon. While students may incorporate various art forms in creative ways, it is fundamentally a targeted educational opportunity for homiletics. As with other senior preachers, you would be most welcome to prepare a sermon of up to 8 minutes, within a service that is planned by the chapel team, with input from you.

I so enjoyed hearing about your work as a performance artist when we spoke last fall, and I am sure that the previous version of your "Table" piece was thought-provoking and made a powerful impact at the School of Art. Now that I have a clearer sense of Marquand's current strengths and limitations, it is clear to me that a live performance art piece along the lines you've suggested, even in an adapted form, would not be viable for the chapel this semester. In addition to our being truly virtual at least until Reading Period, we lack the capacity to provide adequate context, and have not been able to forge the depth and quality of community, for such an experience to be effective and life-giving for the community as a whole.

Please let me know if you have any questions, if you are still interested in preaching that day, and if you have further ideas about possible sermon themes and Scriptural texts.

Best wishes and blessings,
Dear Dean,

Thank you for this clarification. This makes sense. Apologies for not thinking about the licensing component earlier. I really appreciate the time digging into the logistics of this.

For future reference, is there a place where EHS guidelines for performances are listed? Or is this a case by case basis? In this time of covid, I want to be careful but also creative.

As always, I’m very grateful for your work to create space for student art and for journeying with me through this.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Dear [Name],

Thank you so much for your ongoing work regarding this proposal. My hope is that this work will help bring additional clarity to the overall process for students working with art.

The tattoo artist is not licensed. They are another student who is self-taught merely for this project. I own the tattoo machine. However, we would follow general safety requirements such as a clean needle, gloves, and cleansing of the skin prior to the tattoo.

I would really appreciate a meeting with EHS and School of Art to get clarification around this project, but also other general requirements for use of body in art. I am available Thursday 12/9 at 3:00.

Thanks again.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Good morning [Name],

I have heard back from Yale Environmental Health and Safety and the School of Art. They have a number of questions about the tattooing before the proposal is approved. They would like to schedule a 30-minute Zoom meeting with you and the licensed tattoo artist to discuss. In our exchange on November 23rd you indicated that the tattoo artist was a current YDS Student, but I did not ask if that person was a licensed tattoo artist. Is this person licensed?

Would you both be available Thursday, December 9th at 3:00pm or Friday, December 10th at 9:00am for a 30-minute Zoom meeting?

In the meantime they are working on developing safety procedures to be utilized. They will share these at the meeting.

The Zoom meeting will include:

[Details]

[Name]
Hello Vi,

I’ve received your request and will be back in touch with you after the holiday weekend. Happy Thanksgiving,

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 4:40 PM
To: @yale.edu
Cc: @yale.edu
Subject: Student Art Proposal

Dear [Institutional Name],

Last fall I participated in a reading course with [Professor Name], facilitated by Professo [Institutional Name]. As a part of the course we each created various art pieces in response to the ongoing and ancestral somatic trauma of COVID 19 and endemic racism. Due to covid restrictions, I was unable to perform my piece in the Day Missions Room as originally intended. Given that we are now back on campus, I am submitting my proposal for consideration. Please see the attached event request as well as a more detailed description of the piece entitled Exegesis.

I welcome any questions or a further conversation around the piece as needed/wanted. Just let me know.

Thank you for your consideration.

Vi Lynk

MDiv Candidate, 2022

Yale Divinity School
Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

To: [redacted]@yale.edu
Cc: [redacted]@yale.edu

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for these clear steps! I'm grateful for your work to make art more of a possibility at YDS. It is really exciting to have these guidelines in place.

I will cc you on the proposal to Dean Mercer.

Regarding your two questions:
1. Thank you for checking on that. Please let me know if EHS has any questions about the very minimal blood from a tattoo.
2. The tattoo artist would be a YDS student with current access to the building.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks.

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Am Mo., 22. Nov. 2021 um 16:21 Uhr schrieb [redacted]@yale.edu:

Hi Vi,

Attached is the event proposal for an event as part of an academic course. Please fill this out and return to [redacted].

A couple of questions based on the event that was scheduled for last year:

1. I will confer with Yale Environmental Health and Safety and Yale Art School because of the presence of bodily fluids (blood). This was brought up by the Art School when I consulted them after this event was postponed last year. Last year I was told that the Art School would not allow this performance because of the blood/bodily fluid, per University guidelines.

2. If allowed by Yale EHS and the Art School, is the tattoo artist a Yale faculty, staff or student? In addition to students being invited to the performance last year, the YDS Health and Safety Leader was concerned about a guest being invited into the building at a time when no guests are allowed.

I will work on question #1 above.

Have a good night.

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 10:39 AM
To: [redacted]@yale.edu
Cc: [redacted]@yale.edu
Subject: Student Art Proposal

Dean [redacted].

As you may recall I had hoped to do several art pieces last year at the divinity school as a part of the reading course that I took with [redacted]. Sadly the pieces could not be fully considered because of Covid restrictions. I am resubmitting my proposal for one of the pieces in hopes that it can be considered.
Given that the approval process for student activities and performances was in development last year, can you please remind me of the various steps, forms, processes that I will need to take to properly submit this piece for approval?

I've attached a brief description, but I can include more logistics if needed. It requires very little set-up or clean-up. Just a power outlet. The length of the performance is around 20 minutes. The piece would only draw from members of the Yale community. I would like to do the piece in the Day Missions Room as originally approved by [last year]. I am flexible around timing.

Thanks for your consideration.

Vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Meeting?

To: Lynk, Vi <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Great! I sent a Zoom. Attached is a draft that we’d like to start with.

Have a good evening,

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 4:13 PM
To: @yale.edu>
Subject: Re: Meeting?

Dean

Thank you for reaching out. I welcome an opportunity to chat with you and Dean

Next Friday, March 12th, at 12:30, works best for me.

I recall in December you were working on a guide for individual student events. Do you have a draft I can look at prior to the meeting? If not, no worries.

Always grateful for the conversation,

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Am Mi., 3. März 2021 um 15:02 Uhr schrieb @yale.edu>: 

Good afternoon Vi,

I hope this finds you doing Well!

Dean and I would like to meet with you to discuss student event planning for Spring 2021 courses. We both have these times free – I think we need 30 minutes? Would any of these times work for you?

Wednesday, March 10th: 10:30 – 11:00am
Friday, March 12th: 12:30pm – 2:00pm

If not, I can suggest more times for the following week.
Thank you,
Hi Vi,

Thanks for your email. I’ve wondered how you were doing after all that. As you know, I wasn’t in too deep and I don’t really know the background. I always attribute good motives to people unless I have a serious reason not to. All that being said, I enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your project.

Best wishes,

---

From Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent Saturday, February 20, 2021 4:34 PM
To @yale.edu
Subject Re: Day Missions Room

I’ve been meaning to follow up with you regarding this canceled performance. Honestly, I was a bit traumatized by the administrative response that assumed I was disregarding or subverting protocol. I’ve been so transparent and careful in my pursuit of art and display. I did not intend to deceive anyone. That isn’t who I am, in any way. Regardless, I should’ve followed up sooner. Apologies.

I just wanted to clarify that I did not intend to bypass protocol. Rather I completely misunderstood or was unaware of certain requirements. I didn’t realize my performance would be categorized as an event since it wasn’t public. (The invitation to students to attend was to view the live stream over zoom). Thus I didn’t consider in-person event protocols. It was also my understanding, in part because of conversations with Dean [Name], that you were the authority in regards to use of the library, which is why I didn’t bother [Name] with details. Clearly I misunderstood several key components. I apologize.

I am also really sorry for the inconvenience it might have caused you and your staff, or any strain it might have put on the library’s relationship with YDS administration.

I hope this doesn’t hurt our relationship. I am so grateful for your support. I still remember meeting you for the first time just before the pandemic hit. I was very touched by our engaged conversation and your willingness to support my learning process in art.

Please let me know if you need additional clarification around this specific incident. At this point, I do not have the energy to engage the administration, but if I find space in the future to pursue art again at YDS, I will reach out.

Thank you for your time and support.

vi
Am Do., 19. Nov. 2020 um 12:43 Uhr schrieb Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>:

Thanks!
I will be at the library at 9 00 Nov. 24th, Tuesday morning.
I will make sure to wipe down any surface we touch.

Please let me know if there is anything else I need to do to eliminate work for staff.

I'm so grateful for this opportunity.

Vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Am Mi., 18. Nov. 2020 um 08:54 Uhr schrieb Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>:

Yes, either one. Someone could let you in around 9.

From  Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent  Wednesday, November 18, 2020 8:53 AM
To    @yale.edu>
Subject  Re: Day Missions Room

Just wanted to follow up and see if next Monday or Tuesday work for the performance?

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk
Am Mi., 11. Nov. 2020 um 07:51 Uhr schrieb Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>:

Yes, the morning would work great for me. I am looking at doing it Monday or Tuesday Nov. 23 or 24. Would either of those days work for you?

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Mon, Nov 9, 2020 at 11:14 AM Lynk 37@yale.edu wrote:

Hi Vi,

The consensus here is that the best time for you to do your shoot in the DMR would be in the morning. Does that work for you? You can get in any time after 8:30. Please let me know when you want to come and I'll alert everyone.

Regards,

Lynk 37
Here is a recording of the piece. https://vimeo.com/483141575 I wish I had also recorded the conversation afterwards, it was so rich! It makes me excited about ongoing dialogues and potential collaborations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to debrief, clarify a few things, and hopefully move forward in clearer ways. This could be after Thanksgiving, or even in January, as I'm aware you have a lot going on right now. I also reached out to [Redacted], who, as my advisor, has a working relationship with me. I'm hoping we can include her in the conversation to hopefully avoid what seems to be difficult misunderstandings.

As we wrap up the semester and head into a time of rest, I want to say, again, that I am so very grateful for all that you do on behalf of us students. I am sure that we have each had days where your newsletter was the only thing that kept us connected to the community that day. Also, with a mom who has worked in school administrations for years, I'm aware that your family is behind the scenes (and sometimes reading in Marquand) cheering you on. So I'm grateful to them as well. I imagine there is so much you do that we don't see, and even what we see is a lot, especially with this pandemic. You deserve gratitude and a great deal of rest. I pray both of these find you in the coming weeks.

Thank you.

vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Let’s find a time to connect to debrief after Thanksgiving. I would love to see a recording of the performance if you have one, I was at a meeting downtown during the performance.

Thank you,

vi

Dean,

Thank you for clarifying the source of the misunderstanding. Unfortunately [Redacted] misunderstood the event and invited people in person. I've clarified that with her and hopefully [Redacted] will be notified.

Given the confusion, I will hold off on doing the piece in the reading room tomorrow. It is not, nor has it ever been my intent to break rules or subvert authority or deceive. That is simply not who I am.

I am hopeful that we can find a way to host this piece in the reading room in the future.

Until then, I'm grateful for the conversations.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Good evening,

Here is the information I received from a student asking for early entrance to the building:

"One of our very own, Vi Lynk, will be livestreaming a performance from inside the Yale Divinity Library. If you would like to tune in, please see the below for more details and the Zoom link. If you are around campus and can make it in-person, do drop by!"

Vi, there are so many questions here, needed to be addressed by different offices, that cannot be answered at 10 30pm.

We are in the middle of a pandemic. The University is currently operating at Orange: Moderate Risk. There are clear guidelines about what that entails here: https://covid19.yale.edu

Here are my questions and concerns:

1. Is this an event with YDS students invited as mentioned above? No form has been submitted.
2. You mention there will be 3 people accompanying you --- are all 3 people YDS students who have been cleared to enter our buildings?
3. Have you received permission from the Business Office to enter the building before 10 00am? If so, they do not have a record of that permission.
4. What is the performance that will be streamed? Please give a detailed account of what you will be performing from a YDS space.
5. As we discussed all Performance Art will need to be vetted by the Art School, and our Facilities Team. This also has not been done.

We met a couple of weeks ago, and you met this morning, this event was not mentioned to either of us.

These are challenging times, and there are many questions above that have not been answered. At this point the event needs to be postponed.

I appreciate your understanding,


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From: [email]@yale.edu
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 at 8:56 PM
To: "Lynk, Vi" <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Subject: Re: Postpone: Event Scheduled for Library Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Dear Vi,

Until I receive permission from the YDS [redacted], I will not be able to admit you to the library. Please clear this with the proper authorities first.

Thank you,


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From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 8:39:21 PM
To: [email]@yale.edu>
Cc: [email]@yale.edu

Subject: Re: Postpone: Event Scheduled for Library Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Apologies for this late response. I was taking a much needed break from email. I have received approval from [redacted] to stream a performance from the Reading Room tomorrow morning. I will forward the email chain shortly. There will only be 3 people present including myself. There is NOT an audience present, thus I did not see it as an event that needed approval.

I will still be present at the library tomorrow morning as agreed with hopes that I can still do the piece as agreed.
Apologies for any confusion.

vi

vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Am Mo., 23. Nov. 2020 um 18:00 Uhr schrieb: [redacted]@yale.edu>
Thank you. This is very helpful. I will not admit anyone to the library before 10:00 am.

Best,


From: [redacted]@yale.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:44 PM
To: [redacted]@yale.edu>, Lynk, vi@lynk@yale.edu>
Cc: [redacted]@yale.edu>
Subject: Postpone Event Scheduled for Library Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Good Evening,

It is now 6:45pm and I no response from vi. We will have to postpone the event at this time.

I have received requests from students to enter the building at 9:00am for a "performance". Without the School of Event Approval Form below, vi will be in violation of the Community Compact if an event occurs. This would require vi to meet with the Compact Review Committee (CRC).

Please do not allow any students in the building before the 10:00am opening.

Thank you,


From: [redacted]@yale.edu>
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 at 5:55 PM
To: [redacted]@yale.edu>, "Lynk, vi"@lynk@yale.edu>
Cc: [redacted]@yale.edu>
Subject: Re: Event Scheduled for Library Tuesday, November 24, 2020

I will be the administrator in charge at the library tomorrow. Am I to let vi in or not? It was our understanding that vi was doing a video performance and that there would not be an audience. If this is not the case, please let me know.

Best,


Good afternoon All,

Please excuse the late afternoon email concerning an event planned for the library for Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

I wanted to have us all on the same email for ease of communication.

Vi Lynk has planned an event for 9:15am on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 in the library. As Vi is well aware from her earlier proposal to me, there are a number of steps that need to be cleared before any in-person events are held on campus Fall 2020.

1. Did Vi complete the Application for Event Approval form required by the University? I checked with our Health and Safety Leader,  and  has not received an Event request:

2. The event begins at 9:15am and YDS students were invited to attend the event. Please note that students are not allowed to enter the YDS building before 10:00am. I have checked with  and the Business Office has not received a request for students to be able to enter the building earlier than 10:00am. Was a request submitted for the 9:15am start time for the Event?

3. In addition to the COVID requirements for Event Planning, Vi and I also discussed the need to complete an Performance Request form for the Divinity School. Since we do not have our own, we use the ISM form:
   https://ism.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Event%20Grant.pdf
   Did Vi submit this form for approval? I have not received one.

4. Vi and I have discussed that the Divinity School will be following the requirements established by the Art School for Performance Art. Please see attached handbook. My agreement with the Art School is that I will run each proposal by them so that we remain consistent with their policy.

Vi, can you please update the group on the steps that you have completed in order to hold your event tomorrow? I must say I was disappointed to hear about the event without any communication to myself or Dean  

Thank you,
Event Scheduled for Library Tuesday, November 24, 2020

I will be the administrator in charge at the library tomorrow. Am I to let Vi in or not? It was our understanding that Vi was doing a video performance and that there would not be an audience. If this is not the case, please let me know.

Best,

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Please excuse the late afternoon email concerning an event planned for the library for Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

I wanted to have us all on the same email for ease of communication.

Vi Lynk has planned an event for 9:15am on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 in the library. As Vi is well aware from her earlier proposal to me, there are a number of steps that need to be cleared before any in-person events are held on campus Fall 2020.

1. Did Vi complete the Application for Event Approval form required by the University? I checked with our Health and Safety Leader, and has not received an Event request:


2. The event begins at 9:15am and YDS students were invited to attend the event. Please note that students are not allowed to enter the YDS building before 10:00am. I have checked with and the Business Office has not received a request for students to be able to enter the building earlier than 10:00am. Was a request submitted for the 9:15am start time for the Event?

3. In addition to the COVID requirements for Event Planning, Vi and I also discussed the need to complete an Performance Request form for the Divinity School. Since we do not have our own, we use the ISM form:

   https://ism.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Event%20Grant.pdf
4. Vi and I have discussed that the Divinity School will be following the requirements established by the Art School for Performance Art. Please see attached handbook. My agreement with the Art School is that I will run each proposal by them so that we remain consistent with their policy.

Vi, can you please update the group on the steps that you have completed in order to hold your event tomorrow? I must say I was disappointed to hear about the event without any communication to myself or Dean [redacted].

Thank you,
Hi Vi,

Thanks for your note. Last March seems like a distant age ago.

I’ll bring up your request at our staff meeting on Monday.

Regards,

vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 2:41 PM Vi Lynk <vi.l Lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

Thank you for chatting last week. It was wonderful to meet you.

The piece I am hoping to do in the reading room would be an exploration of text, reading, erasure and how we experience text in/through our bodies. It would be me erasing or marking up something while someone tattoos on my back. Although, I’m not sure if I can find a tattoo artist, we’ll see. If not, I will most likely have someone write on my back in some way. It should take 30-45 minutes including setup.
and cleanup. I would need access to an outlet and a table. The piece would be silent except for the tattoo device. Since the tattoo will be without ink, it shouldn’t require any cleanup. I would put plastic over the chair and floor around me just to be safe.

As for context, I’m hoping to do the piece alongside a paper for New Testament exploring how we read scripture, write meaning onto text, onto bodies, through bodies.

Of course, I’m writing this aware that we don’t know how the ever evolving covid-19 situation will impact classes and public spaces, but I’m hopeful. And if not this semester, perhaps next year.

Thank you again for your consideration and ongoing conversation. It means a lot when individuals at YDS are willing to support art.

Let me know if you need any additional information.

Vi

On Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 10:52 AM yale.edu wrote:

Dear Vi,

My apologies for dropping the ball on this. I did talk to the staff about it. They had questions—no surprise there—about what you proposed and how long it would take. I’m back on this now, and will respond promptly.

Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
On Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 10:52 AM yale.edu wrote:

On Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 10:52 AM yale.edu wrote:

Dear Vi,

My apologies for dropping the ball on this. I did talk to the staff about it. They had questions—no surprise there—about what you proposed and how long it would take. I’m back on this now, and will respond promptly.

Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
On Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 10:52 AM yale.edu wrote:

Good morning
I just wanted to follow up on this inquiry and see if you have any additional thoughts or questions.

Thank you for your time.

Vi Lynk
On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 2 36 PM Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

Thank you so much! I am very grateful for your time and consideration.

Vi
Hi Vi,

We have a staff meeting tomorrow morning at 9. I’ll run it by folks and get back to you promptly.

Regards,

Vi Lynk

From  Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent  Monday, February 24, 2020 2:11 PM
To    @yale.edu>
Subject Use of Day Missions room

Thanks for the quick response! I would prefer doing it during normal hours so the community, potentially including my professor, could experience the piece, ideally around noon on a weekday, but I’m open to exploring other options as well.

Vi

On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 2:25 PM @yale.edu> wrote:

Hi Vi,

We have a staff meeting tomorrow morning at 9. I’ll run it by folks and get back to you promptly.

Regards,

From  Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent  Monday, February 24, 2020 2:23 PM
To    @yale.edu>
Subject Re: Use of Day Missions room

Any idea when you’d want to do this performance? Do you require or prefer the room to yourself? Are you able to do it before hours? During spring break?

Regards,

Vi Lynk

From  Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Sent  Monday, February 24, 2020 2:18 PM
To    @yale.edu>
Subject Use of Day Missions room

Hi Vi,

Any idea when you’d want to do this performance? Do you require or prefer the room to yourself? Are you able to do it before hours? During spring break?

Regards,

Vi Lynk
Dr. [name],

I am a current student at the Divinity school exploring the intersection of art and theology. I am interested in doing a short (approx 20 minutes) performance piece, for a class assignment, in the Day Missions room. Is this a possibility? If so, are you the person I should coordinate scheduling with?

I’m happy to discuss this further with you either in person or over email.

Thank you for your time.

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Hi Vi,

I remain hopeful for Spring.

We had an update yesterday --- New Haven now in red - here is Governor: https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus

Infection rates and hospital rates in New Haven are both rising - goal is now to keep YDS building open.

Unfortunately, it looks like we are back on that Normal Curve. Three proposals I submitted for in person “events” were all returned.

Have a good day,

---

Thanks for the update. I am already working on a revision of this idea, but since it won't be held on campus, I won't need to bother you with details. But thank you for the offer.

Hopefully someday I can do a quad wrapping/weaving, but perhaps around a different idea. It's such a wonderful space and I think it would be interesting to see it in a new light. I'll keep an eye on the campus color levels and check back if/when we get to green again. Does that sound reasonable? Did HSL group give any feedback/guidance on what might make the exhibit acceptable?

I'm also grateful for a system to imagine student art on the YDS campus. Thinking about where we were 9 months ago with little to no precedence on student installations, it's exciting that there is now a process!

Again, so thankful for your time.

Be well,

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
I have heard back from the Health & Safety Leaders. As I expected, based on my meeting last Friday, our Event Proposal has been rejected, “we cannot support open events at this time.”

Can you work to revision the piece? Let me know if you want to meet to discuss.

Thank you,

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7:55 AM
To: @yale.edu>
Subject: Re:

Thank you for this very helpful timeline. I feel much better. Grateful for your organization, your J, this in these moments.

Holding you in prayer as you hold so much for this community this week and ongoing.

Take care,

Vi

On Tue, Nov 3, 2020 at 12 06 PM instructional will wrote:

Hi Vi,

Bear with me as today and tomorrow are packed but a quick timeline for now - We can Zoom later this week:

1. Wednesday, October 28, 2020: Vi and Meet
   a. Vi indicated she would like to do an exhibit on the Quad with photos from YDS Students Learning Environments

2. October 30, 2020: 11:33am receives email from DivMail request review
   a. I receive a DivMail to review where Vi requests “I invite you to take a moment to photograph all or parts of your uncovered/nude body. Photographs can be up close of your hand or feet or belly, or they can be full nudes.” This different from YDS Students Learning Environments.
   b. This requires a different approval process, including the Walls Committee.
   c. responds to Vi indicating that process and that she will forward a form.

3. October 30, 2020: 2 00 - 3:00pm attends a meeting to brief Student Affairs about upcoming Event Form restrictions based on increasing COVID numbers in CT and Yale.
   a. Information reveals that State of CT will move back to Stage 2 on Monday, November 2nd
   b. If numbers continue to rise, possible that State of CT would move back to “lockdown” before November 20th.
   c. All Events should be moved online November 2 - November 20th
   d. Pilot Event Forms will no longer be approved
   e. Any Event that gathers more than 2 students in person requires an Event Form, approved by HSL
   f. No Event approval with food
   g. No Event approval without supervision

4 emails Vi and explains there are 2 processes to obtain Event Approval
   a. One form for Event Approval to be submitted to Health Safety Leader (HSL)
   b. One form for Exhibit Approval to be submitted to Dean Leon and Walls Committee.

To date: Event Approval form submitted, waiting for approval.

If Event is Approved, second Exhibit Form will be submitted.
I am still waiting on A. However, hearing that most of my colleagues around the University are cancelling any in-person Events and moving them online.

This is where we are at 12:00pm on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Thank you

Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Date: Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 8:53 AM
To:                 @yale.edu>
Subject: Re:

Dear           ,

Thank you for the update and clarification. Things are even more confusing in these times of pandemic and ever-changing protocols.

Honestly, it does feel as if the administration put up roadblocks as soon as I mentioned nudity and bodies. For some reason I experienced our conversation last Wednesday as an approval. We talked about logistics and we were going to connect with the facilities team. I moved forward with planning and have reached out to a few faculty members who are working to find some funding to support the project. I've also shared excitement with classmates around this opportunity. But then, all of a sudden, there were more forms, and an outside art installation became a potentially dangerous event.

I will, however, trust your words that these forms and requirements are things that came up. I do trust your commitment to the learning I am here to do. But I wanted you to know how it feels on my end. And, if for some reason, there are other things about the exhibit that have caused concern, I hope we could have a conversation around those specific concerns. I can't learn if difficult conversations are avoided.

At this point I am hoping for the best and planning accordingly. I will hold off on getting anything printed until I've heard from you.

Please let me know if there are points where I can join the various conversations taking place regarding this exhibit. I really do want to learn if and how it is possible to invite the community to be in conversation through art.

Thank you, again, for your support.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Sat, Oct 31, 2020 at 6:18 AM     wrote:

Honestly Vi,

After my 2:00pm meeting yesterday, I do not hold out hope that this "event" will be approved --- not based on anything below but based on CV D.

With increasing numbers in New Haven, any event that might bring people together in groups is going to be hard to obtain approval. Short of you sitting out on the Quad all day supervising people visiting the exhibit in socially distancing ways, I don't think it will be approved. If I were to guess, I think the HSL group will ask the event to move to Virtual.
I submitted our request to HSL and hope to hear Monday or Tuesday. So fingers crossed!

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Friday, October 30, 2020 at 3:12 PM
To: @yale.edu>
Subject: Re:

Dear [Dean],

Thank you for your email and your clarification. Not being present for the exhibit you mentioned I cannot fully know the pain it caused the community, but I can imagine it was difficult and something to avoid repeating. I am truly grateful for your concern for the community in this way. You care deeply for us, as students, and that is a gift.

Just a few thoughts, if you’ll allow me the space:
Interestingly my decision to change the content of the piece came out of conversations with students who wanted more opportunities on campus for bodies to be talked about in a positive way instead of in a context of violence or shame. I agree. Bodies, as reflections of the divine, are an important part of doing theology. They are also a part of the learning process. As I mention in my Divmail blurb, during these times where we are reminded of mortality by a pandemic, of the fragility of rights to our bodies by a volatile political landscape, and of the visceral and deadly reality of white supremacy, there is learning happening in and around the body. I think we must create space to mark the learning taking place in the body, in black and brown bodies, in female bodies, in misgendered bodies, in illegal bodies.

I don’t claim to know the right way to enter into these conversations. I don’t think difficult conversations are straightforward. Grasping towards the divine comes with inevitable bits of failure, of not quite getting it. But I see this piece as an ongoing conversation. It might be difficult and there might be unintended pain, but I will be here to listen, to learn and I hope the community has the courage to join me in dialogue.

We are each here because of a calling. My hope, with this piece, is to embrace my calling so I can be held accountable for the way I step into it. Isn’t that what divinity school is about, learning how we facilitate these difficult conversations around being in relationship with the divine?

I guess what I’m asking for is to continue the conversation of learning. We must, as a community, find a way to hold space for artistic voices as they do ministry, as they learn the responsibility of doing theology. We must, as a community, talk about the body and find a way to acknowledge and embrace the learning (and trauma and worship and living) that takes place deep within. We must, as a community, work towards having difficult conversations and sitting with each other even when, especially when, we are uncomfortable.

We must continue the conversation.

Thank you for the ongoing gifts you bring to us.

With deep care and hope for this community,
vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Fri, Oct 30, 2020 at 12:33 PM [Name]@yale.edu> wrote:

Hi Vi,

Just to quickly explain. I mentioned to you last year that in March 2018 we had an art exhibit that was very triggering for so many in our community.
I need to have Dean and the Walls Committee approve an exhibit that might be triggering for some in our community, especially in these times. Students are barely hanging in right now.

Thank you,

---

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Friday, October 30, 2020 at 11:26 AM
To: [email]
Subject: Re: FW:

Right, Apologies. The piece has changed as I’ve had conversations with different community members. For some reason I thought I heard you say it was alright to include people.

The upload form does say "Before submitting, please be sure you trust this site, have the rights to the data, and want to share this content to the owner of this file request."

No worries on the form, I know you’re busy. Next week is fine.

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Fri, Oct 30, 2020 at 11:08 AM [email] wrote:

Hi Vi,

My misunderstanding. I thought you were asking students to send their study environments.

I am going to send you a form this weekend that needs to get approved before we can continue. I will try to get to you today, but have a packed day of meetings.

We can regroup on Zoom after that form is completed.

Thank you,

---

From: YDS Div Mail <divmail@yale.edu>
Date: Friday, October 30, 2020 at 11:04 AM
To: [email]
Subject: FW:

I am not comfortable posting this!
Hello friends,

I am working on an art piece that will be installed in the YDS quad the end of November. This piece invites the community to remember our bodies and their relationship to learning. During these times where we are reminded of mortality by a pandemic, of the fragility of rights to our bodies by a volatile political landscape, and of the visceral and deadly reality of white supremacy, there is learning happening in and around the body.

I invite you to take a moment to photograph all or parts of your uncovered/nude body. Photographs can be up close of your hand or feet or belly, or they can be full nudes. **Upload anonymously** before November 6th. These will then be edited and assembled into 3 banners (9 x 1000 inches) that will be interwoven across the center of the quad, bringing our bodies back to the quad into our space of learning and community.

If you have questions or concerns or thoughts or feedback, please reach out. Art is about conversation, and so is this community. That's why I'm still showing up, to be in conversation with you.

Vi Lynk, MDiv 22
vi.lynk@yale.edu

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Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Yes! Wednesday 10/28 at 7:30am works great for me. Thanks for checking in.

Vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 4:52 PM Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

Hi Vi,

Do you have time to Zoom to discuss? Here are some times I am free:

Wednesday, October 28, 2020:  7 30am - 9 00am; 10 00am - 10:30am; 10:30am - 11 00am; 3 30pm - 4:00pm
Thursday, October 29, 2020:  3:00pm - 3:30pm; 3:30pm - 4 00pm
Friday, October 30, 2020:  8:00am - 8:30am; 8 30am - 9 00am;

Do any of these work for you ?

Thank you,

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

Phew! t has been a while and still it feels like just a few weeks ago we were sitting together in your office imagining ways to create more space for visual art at YDS. I have clung to that moment and others that held those last in-person exchanges, I've clung to the gift of presence. And now we are here.

I am thrilled to send you a proposal for a piece. I know you mentioned in your follow-up to me that space usage this fall would be limited. However, this piece responds to our current learning situation and invites the community to come together by marking this loss. I hope you'll consider.

Please reach out with any questions. I would enjoy any excuse to connect.

Vi
This is great news—thanks!

Thank you for this feedback. It is very helpful! I've submitted the proposal to Dean [Name Redacted] and they are putting it through the channels of approval.

I will keep you updated.

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Or Telephone 203-432-9666 (2-ZOOM if on-campus) or 646 568 7788

For H.323 and SIP information for video conferencing units please click here: https://yale.service-now.com/it?id=support_article&sys_id=434b72d3db9e8fc83514b1c0ef961924

Have questions about how to use Zoom? Check out the Zoom Help Center at https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us

Need immediate assistance? Contact your local IT Support Provider or the IT Help Desk at 203-432-9000.

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 6 30 PM vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:
I think it works fine (and it at least gets the conversation started soon)——phone or zoom?

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From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 6:19 PM vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:
I think half an hour will be enough, but if that is too much to squeeze into your day, I'm open to other suggestions.

Thanks.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 5:54 PM vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:
I have half an hour on the 6th at 3:30. Does that work—or shall we find a day with more time open?

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From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

On Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 5:30 PM vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:
Professor Can we find a time to meet over zoom? I just have a few clarifying questions around hopes/expectations for the reading course and want to make sure we're on the same page. It's mostly because I'm new to reading courses.

I'm not sure what days work for you, but Tuesdays I'm free except for 10:30-11:30.

Thank you.

vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

To [Redacted]<@yale.edu>

Sat, Mar 14, 2020 at 3:30 PM

Checking in....

Dear [Redacted],

Apologies for not emailing sooner. Please don’t worry about this right now. I had already assumed nothing would happen this semester. I am trusting that this just isn’t the time to pursue art on campus, but hopefully next fall will bring space for this conversation to continue.

You are holding so much right now and working so hard for all of us. Please just focus on the things you need to and let this one go until at least next fall.

Also, please let me know if I can support in any creative ways. I am working on some small projects to try and help keep people connected. I was also a tech for 14 years before YDS, so if for some reason anyone needs support with zoom or vpn, I am happy to help with that too.

Take care of you and your family during this time.

Thank you for what you bring to this community.

Vi

On Sat, Mar 14, 2020 at 3:23 PM [Redacted]<@yale.edu> wrote:

Good afternoon Vi,

I didn’t want you to think I forgot about you. In all the craziness of this week I was able to talk with [Redacted] from the Art School. The only time we both had was commuting in to Yale - but it worked!

We are going to follow the policies at the Art School. If you can bear with me I will get those all typed up, looked at by the Facilies at the Art School, approved by our Academic Affairs office and then we can discuss.

This is going to take a bit because of all the disruption we have currently. However, you can’t do either of those projects until we emerge from the virus time. The space on the Quad is very limited and our facilities staff is just too overworked as it is.

Thank you for your patience,

—

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Hey Vi,

Speaking now just as the person accepting abstracts for the symposium, I unfortunately can’t let you have any more space than I’m giving the other students. So, you’re welcome to have a poster sized presentation and put whatever images you want to showcase (nude, censored, etc) but it has to fit that size requirement.

Thanks

On Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 1:15 PM Vi Lynk <vi lynk@yale.edu > wrote:

Thank you, again, for being willing to consider this proposal and bring it to the admin/deans I want to start by acknowledging that this is not necessarily your conversation While you are more than welcome to offer insight and experience to it, it seems that I’ve inadvertently put you as an intermediary between me and the administration, not something I intended I would welcome an opportunity to have this conversation with them directly I would like to understand their experience of the created body as something that needs to be kept out of the community experience I would also like for them to know my experience of this refusal Conversations are such important tools for learning and I am here to learn

I was, honestly, upset and surprised when I initially received your email, not because my initial idea was rejected, I can take rejection Rather, I am sad at the admins’ refusal of the female body

I don’t see how the presence of families or children warrants the removal of nude photographs I don’t intend for the photographs to be pornographic or overtly sexual I see many families and children visiting art galleries and the Sistine chapel where there are numerous displays of nudity Not to mention that this is a campus; there is a framing of learning and conversation and when one steps into this setting, one should expect to be confronted with various components of theology, the body as one of them Also, the administration allowed quite disturbing pieces in the exhibit Complicit last year, many that explored violence done to the female body in ways that I am not sure I would want children to see And yet, these simple posters, celebrations of the God created female form, are not allowed?

I am also considering this in the context of this week’s ethics reading around the categorization of theological education, particularly Schleiermacher Consider the ways in which both the female and the body have been excluded from theological study/institutions and the detrimental effect this exclusion has had on religious institutions To deny the body, to perpetuate the fear of the physical leads to fragmentation, isolation, disconnect and ultimately violence towards ‘the other ’ Without a space for the experience of body, and/or of the female, are we just a ‘fragmented theological education that ignore[s] contextual realities?” (De La Torre/Aponte 109)

Aside from the educational and institutional implications this refusal has, I wonder about the theological/spiritual implications I believe that we are created in the image of God, our bodies speak of their creator Can we embrace the divine if we do not embrace that which they have created? It seems by refusing to allow images of the body to be present in a theological conversation the administration is denying an essential element of the divine These are questions I would like to bring to the administration

I do appreciate your alternative suggestion However, one poster of bodies minimized to fit seems a reinforcing of this exclusion and reduction rather than an invitation to move beyond it In terms of alternatives, empty posters marking the absence of body seem a better representation of the current role of body (particularly female body) in our communal theological discussions, or perhaps covered images or censored images? I’m not sure if you or the administration is open to any of these options If so, let me know and I will work on an official proposal for that

Regardless I hope we can continue the conversation Faith is hard I’m learning I am grateful for individuals like you and for the admin that are willing to do this work My hope is that the conversation can continue so we can learn from each other and grow in our faith And perhaps out of these conversations a piece will emerge that articulates and allows for a breadth of experiences of the body

Thank you

Vi

On Wed, Feb 26, 2020 at 6:38 PM vi lynk@yale.edu wrote:

Hi Vi,

Thanks for your patience. And thanks for checking with me on this innovative idea.

Because we will be doing a community lunch in the Old Refectory that day to coincide with the poster symposium, I can’t give the green light on large scale photos interspersed with other posters. We often have families and kids come to community lunches and the admin isn’t comfortable merging these two things.

HOWEVER, I would love, love, love for you to assemble these photos into a poster display. You are more than welcome to have a display the same way the other students who are presenting have displays. I would just need an abstract of ~200 words or so explaining the project. For the purposes of this poster symposium, if you could connect this loosely with religion (i.e. purity culture, subjugation of women’s bodies, imago dei, literally anything, etc. etc. etc.) that would be most helpful for me with the Deans.
Please let me know if you want to talk in person! I want to find a way to make this work.

Warmly

On Wed, Feb 26, 2020 at 10:30 AM Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

Thanks for the update. I completely understand. Please let me know if I can support those conversations in any way. I'm grateful for your openness to and support of this alternative idea.

Vi

On Wed, Feb 26, 2020 at 10:11:40 AM <email @yale.edu> wrote:

Hey Vi --

Sorry for the delay here. I am inclined to say yes to this but I want to cover my bases with the administration. I hope to be in touch by the end of the week!

Thanks,

On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 4:03 PM Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

I am wondering if you would consider a more alternative entry into the poster symposium. In an attempt to connect my work as a performance artist and as a divinity student, I would like to take nude photographs of various female and non-binary members of our community, making sure to not include any identifying features. With these, I would create several unique posters to intersperse with the other posters in the symposium. This is a sort of follow up to an undergrad project where I drew and displayed nudes of the Baptist Campus Ministry women. With both these pieces, meaning is found in both the creation and the final project. Posing nude is often an empowering act.

The overall idea is to illuminate, with presence, that the restriction of female bodies, both through exclusion, isolation, and regulation, is a part of the institutional silencing of women. In other words, it is not just our voices that have been ignored and repressed, but also our physicality, sensuality and sexuality. With this project, I hope to move towards a more empowering experience of the body.

Let me know if you have any questions. I'd be happy to discuss further.

Vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Your insight into the community impact of the previous piece was very helpful and I have thought a lot about it. In considering pieces and various spaces on campus, I’ve been mindful to only consider doing potentially triggering pieces in spaces where viewers can choose to enter and/or exit. But, again, your insight is so helpful. You, and I, know this community in a deeper way than I, so it would be helpful to hear your thoughts.

Thank you, again, for being willing to engage with these ideas. I am grateful.

Vi

On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 2:41 PM @yale.edu> wrote:

Hi Vi,

I have talked with Dean and would like to meet with you to discuss. As I mentioned in our meeting, we had a challenging time with an art exhibit here last Spring 2019 that was very difficult for many of our students. I would like to discuss venues for your performance in a public place here that would not be challenging for our students.

Let’s meet to discuss options for your class assignment that would allow for students to opt into a viewing. Here is a link to my office hours:

Thank you,

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Monday, February 24, 2020 at 2:14 PM
To: @yale.edu>
Subject: Use of quad

Dean,

First, thank you for taking the time to meet with me last week. I felt supported and energized after our time together.

I am wondering who I should talk to about potentially doing a short performance piece in the quad. I understand that it’s technically public space, but I want to check in with whoever tends the grounds and make sure that I don’t interrupt or complicate the work they are doing.

Thank you again for your support.

Vi

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Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School

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Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Performance piece feedback

To: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>

Vi,

Sorry for the delay - I just got to this.

I could say a lot about your performance piece. But I think what was most meaningful to me was the way the piece recaptured the bodiliness and intimacy of the events that initiated the sacrament of Eucharist. I don't think we as Christians (across denominations) do a good job of remembering that the humanity of Jesus, that he was an actual living breathing person with a human body who said and did things in an attempt to connect with those around him. Your piece reminded me of that and of the fact that sacraments are supposed to be distancing. They are supposed to draw us into a space where we are able to come into contact with the divine. As such this performance piece was definitely sacramental: I felt as or more connected to God in it than I have in any of the dozens and dozens of church services I've attended since coming to divinity school.

Thanks again for inviting us!

On Mon, Dec 9, 2019 at 9:39 AM Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu> wrote:

Hi all,

I have a small favor to ask. I am writing an essay evaluating my performance piece. It would be helpful to have a few quotations from the audience around the experience of the piece. If you have time or just want to take a quick break from studying, please send a few sentences about the piece to me. Or you can send a few adjectives or perhaps themes/imagery/symbols that the piece promoted in you. The feedback can also include things you wish were present.

I would love to have these by Wednesday evening. I also know that y'all have a lot going on right now and this request is pretty last minute, so I completely understand if you don’t have time.

Thanks for considering and thank you again for coming to see the piece. Your presence was perhaps the most meaningful part of this semester for me.

Vi
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Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
For me, the performance piece invoked themes of Christianity and maternity. The act of cross-stitching felt very maternal to me, like watching a maternal figure stitching or mending something for her household. And the stitching yarn representing a woman's period felt maternal in some ways as well, representing how mothers often will bleed (symbolically) for their family. The piece obviously had strong Christian themes such as the phrase that was being stitched and the prayer before and after the stitching. In my interpretation, the nudity of the performing artist was very maternal and Christ-like. Mothers often will sacrifice anything for her family and will metaphorically give the clothes off her back for her family. And Christ was stripped of everything when he was sacrificed. I think it also represented sacrifice for the performing artist as well, since the artist had to sacrifice bearing her body to a public audience.
Dear Vi,

I’m sorry I had to leave before the discussion of your work. Your piece was brilliant: intimate, vulnerable, incarnational. I’m still spinning with reflections. I am very glad that you invited me.

Perhaps we can find a time to talk.

Again, thanks
Peace,

Bishop Suffragan (retired)
The Episcopal Church
That text comes from a part of an longer application and policy document that I send every individual who inquiries about renting chapel space.

For Marquand, reservation constraints have less to do with a divide between ISM vs. everybody else, and more to do with the fact that Marquand Chapel is one of the only rooms on Yale campus with organ instruments. Organ students (both within and outside of the ISM) need to practice on their instrument regularly. Our daily worship services already constrain organ rehearsals and recitals to P.M. hours. Between daily chapel services, weekly services hosted by ANS and BDS, divinity and music courses that take place in Marquand, organ education, and other YDS and ISM special events, the room gets a lot of use by the broader community. Therefore, we do not have the capacity to rent the space to individual students or artists at this time.

I’d encourage you to reach out to [redacted] in the Dean of Students’ office to find another appropriate space for your project.

Thanks for this information. Is there a place online that explains the limitations of the space (and other spaces)? I was unaware of the policy you sent me, but it seems like I should have been aware.

Also, I’m wondering if/where there’s space on the quad for artists who fall outside the ISM to offer their expressions of faith to the community. I know this isn’t necessarily your responsibility, but you seem like a good person to ask.

Thanks for your help with this.

Vi
Good morning Vi,

Unfortunately, this class presentation falls beyond the parameters of Marquand Chapel's current rental policy. See below:

Eligible parties in renting out chapel space include: Yale Divinity School, the Institute of Sacred Music, Berkeley Divinity School, Andover Newton Seminary, and Yale organ scholars. Faculty and staff requests are accommodated on a case-by-case basis. Individual students are not permitted to reserve the chapel for any reason.

pronouns:

From: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Date: Sunday, October 20, 2019 at 10:38 AM
To: Vi Lynk <vi.lynk@yale.edu>
Subject: Performance piece in Marquand

During my time at YDS I am hoping to explore the intersection of religion and art, particularly how performance art can inform our liturgical practices. As a part of this exploration I am taking a class at the School of Art in performance. I am hoping I can do my final performance piece in Marquand at the end of the semester, not as a part of a service, but when the space is not in use. What are the logistics of using the space?

I am happy to meet and chat more. Just let me know.

Thanks.

Vi

Vi Lynk
MDiv Candidate, 2022
Yale Divinity School
Menstruation cramps punctuated my first day at Yale Divinity School, my body reminding me of both the incongruity and the potential of my female sex moving within these coveted walls. Spasms in my abdomen pointed to my genetic inheritance. It was, after all, my mother who guided the congregation my father pastored by title. It was more her legacy I carried with me, her internal scars, the womb that made an exception for me, the womb in a woman the evangelical church refused to accept or except – this inherited persistence pulsed in my core. So, somewhere between the feast days of Mary’s Assumption and Mary’s Nativity, my reflection moved across white male physiognomies and threaded through paths of expectation to begin a Masters of Divinity, my formal theological education.

I recall grids, lines upon lines of separation, of distinction, as if every body, particularly curvy, moving, breathing, dancing, swaying, undulating bodies, brought with it the threat of disorderly potential. I had to choose my classes carefully, negotiating the numerous requirements of the degree, the certificate, the institution, each claiming an unquestionable pathway to mastery. And so my instinctive inklings found themselves off the grid, an extraneous dabbling in the (un)necessary, an overload that required permission. I needed permission to learn in spaces at the foot of the idyllic knoll that reached up to the chapel, (or the library), along deliberately indirect pathways rumored to conduct otherwise isolated bodies to interact with one another, a connection choreographed in the midst of rampant perpendicular disconnect. Even in that first week there were hints of desire lines running through the manicured lawn, lines matched by imprints of narrow seats on my fertile hips, another visceral argument between the ideals of gridded learning spaces and fecund curvatures. We were told where to sit and how to sit and which direction to face, the order of bodies an apt indication of that class’s formative approach. So bodies filed in, acquiesced to generic patterns of interaction. And once located squarely in their seats, the bodies operated merely as lines on a paper, faded contours for frantic embossings of information that would be ignored, with only the occasional emptied lead or aberrant ink blot drawing the mind back to generative epistemes of an ejaculating or menstruating body, an ectopic (or utopic?) blot in the midst of signifiers like uterine blood that occasionally seeps beyond the careful barriers separating body and world. I found myself checking for this leakage, pressing the back of my pure white alb to check for dampness or discoloration on my fingertips as I work to mold my silhouette to these white male contours, flattening my swells so they don’t interrupt the seamed lines measuring my body as not quite fit to lead.
In these moments of externally edged cuttings, I nestle, metaphorically into the pulsing of my womb. I am still here. I can still weave sinews around these castrated columns. I find other wombs of resonance: a circle of fem and gender expansive voices leaning in towards one-another across a well-intentional Bishop whose spiritualized political clout might buy our bodies more space, the reminder of embryonic potential in artists learning by moving our bodies in around across, the obstetric tending of shared meals, nourishing our bodies around tables of unchecked conversation, the fetal comfort of a library carrel suspended in the amniotic fluid of paginated knowledge – imperfect but present, rounded spines marking the witness of past and present with the signs of wear and accumulated dust pointing to the future. I am encircled and can continue.

The encircle is broken. As WHO declared COVID a pandemic, our communal lungs tightened. And with our lives threatened we were opened up to the persistent threat to black lives, to black bodies, watching with horror as a set of black lungs were pressed to the ground until silence. To which many responded with shouts of names to march to. These organic sinews of protest reworked latticed cities until various forms of police forces mandated them back into orderly grids, grids that mirrored the fences of detainment centers. Flesh cannot voluntarily come together to demand life, but marginalized flesh can be forced together to protect a national life. And so, while the viral pandemic made me aware of my privileged breath, this pandemic of racism infused each step with an awareness of my privileged body. Two pandemics tied by the visceral significance of breath, by the universal experience of contingent physicality drew us together to reckon with the shared but distinct threats to lives.

This confronted body must continue, in learning, logging on each day to confront its own face, flattened, its own flesh lost in the void of rectangles. Click the link. Show video preview, always. Join. Smile. Raise hand. Unmute. Mute. Negotiate the chat and the speaker and the nods and the backgrounds and the blank faces staring back. And, finally, tap the red button, Leave? Leave. The abrupt prick of a needle into my flesh marked the beginning of the end, but the foreignness of feeling made me wonder if my visceral being had become too comfortable in the deadening structures of insulated existence.

So we forgot our lungs when they were no longer threatened. We forgot the ache of desire when we returned to our habituated performances. And without bodies there was no grief. And without grief there was no —
Take, eat, do this to remember. But not yet. You can eat, but not there and not in that way. And still masks to hide behind as we teach our bodies the old ways of sitting and nodding and smiling. I remember the lines. Lines. Indentations along my cheeks from the mask, bodies queued to be tested and absolved. Black and white letters beneath my finger as I recited scripture. A different Advent. We were all waiting for things to be changed in a moment yet again. We were all waiting to be bodies. But the baby was born again, the flesh to dwell among us. Was I hopeful or desperate to expect that my body and all that it is holding will find a space to dwell. My lines - the wrinkles the grays the rolls the cracks the hairs. But also the others that retrace redraw these lines - the rhythms and the pulsing, the scars and the breaths, the burrows and the voids. Among us.

Not among us. We were ushered outside into the cold the moment the Advent reflection ended. But we found space. We danced into the night determined to be born into the incarnation.

As the institutions returned to in-person, they hesitated again. As they returned to in-person, I was refused again, my speaking body tucked safely away on the other side of a Zoom screen as I attempted to proclaim, as I pointed to the missing table.

By then, I was no longer bleeding, due to a device inserted – a final clinging to my uterl rights as Roe v. Wade became a memory. But even without the blood, ovulation cramps continued, the pulsing assurance of reproduction, a random insistence that I could create, if I wanted to. And I did. I continued to create, to set, to host gatherings. But as I continued to move through these spaces, life continued pressing in, brushing against me, until I could no longer move without, without life. I could no longer write without the residues of visceralities dripping from my words. I could no longer sit around desks without dancing. I could no longer approach tables without eating. But still, these spaces refuse the remains of sensual encounters, the cohesion of persistent rhythms, the nourishment of tendings.

Yet, my body vibrates with uncertainty in the smells of the familiar hallways. It knows that belonging remains a question, exclusion a threat.

Nevertheless, the laundry still needs to be done, the clean sheets laid back upon the bed to hold the rest, to hold the pleasure. And the linens needs to be folded, the cross centered, the fingers pressing the creases back into existence, only to be unfolded again, to meet the edges of cup wine lips.

This is my body.
PATEN

sources
Bibliography


PURIFICATOR
liturgy
WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

Clifford Chambliss
Adapted from Joy Harjo’s Perhaps the World Ends Here

Intercessor: The world begins at a kitchen table.
Congregants: No matter what, we must eat to live.

Intercessor: The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table.
Congregants: So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

Intercessor: It is here that we learn what it means to be human. We pray at it, we dream with it, we make on it,
Congregants: We gather around the table.

Intercessor: Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves…
Congregants: …as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

Intercessor: This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun. Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.
Congregants: A place to hold hope.

Intercessor: We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.
Congregants: At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Intercessor: Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table,
Congregants: while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.

HYMN* My God, My Table is Now Spread

READING

poem in praise of menstruation, Lucille Clifton

Exodus 12:1-14

Brooklyne Oliveira and Prof. Jennifer Herdt
Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics
PRAYER & POURING OF WINE AND BREAD

ANTIPHONAL READING
Psalm 116:1, 10-17

NORTH: I love the Lord, because She has heard the voice of my supplication,
SOUTH: because the Lord has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

NORTH: How shall I repay the Lord
SOUTH: for all the good things she has done for me?

NORTH: I will lift up the cup of salvation
SOUTH: and call upon the Name of the Lord.

NORTH: I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
SOUTH: in the presence of all his people.

NORTH: Precious in the sight of the Lord
SOUTH: is the death of her servants.

NORTH: O Lord, I am your servant;
SOUTH: I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

NORTH: I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
SOUTH: and call upon the Name of the Lord.

NORTH: I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
SOUTH: in the presence of all the Lord’s people,

NORTH: In the courts of the Lord’s house,
SOUTH: in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

READINGS
Luke 22:14-20
All Bread, Margaret Atwood

HYMN
Ubi Cartias
TAIZE
(Latin only)

ANTHEM
Geistliches Lied
Marquand Chapel Choir

THE LORD’S PRAYER said together

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

STRIPPING OF TABLE

TIME OF REFLECTION
You are invited to reflect at this time throughout the chapel if you so wish. Please depart in silence.
V

CHALICE

art
Rubric

A body (finally) brought into this space, flattened, fragmented. Printed in a way that is disposable, vulnerable, to the readers and the institution. Pink newsprint a hinted reference to the Financial Times. The body sits before the viewer in an excised form, scanned with brutally honest precision only to be blurred again by the limits of the visual mechanisms of translation. One can piece it together into the form of a crucifix following the rubrical markings of this space: grading scales of the Divinity School, gestural instructions from the altar book. The piece lies on surfaces like many other discarded printed forms. This one will run through the hands of the readers and tear and crinkle. One reads it. One relates to it. One holds it. All of these engagements in piecemaled forms.

This piece was distributed across the Divinity and School of Art campus on the last day of classes. The response at the School of Art by faculty, administration and students was one of delight and support. Many offered to pay for this piece of Art. At the Divinity School the piece was received with mixed reactions. Some students felt seen and invited to bring their bodies into conversation during the final push of academic work. Other students felt triggered by the nudity, a surprising reaction given that the piece shows no more nudity than a breast-feeding mother. Within days the administration asked facilities to locate all copies of the artwork and discard it, throwing out labeled boxes without contacting me, the student/artist whose name was on the boxes of artwork. A trip through the recycle bins located approximately half of the discarded artwork nestled amongst other artifacts of discarded life. These disparate reactions indicate a larger view towards bodies and other epistemic markers that function outside traditional models. The Divinity School relegates embodied discourse to the square confines of the dumpsters.
High Pass plus
Honors

High Pass minus

Honors
CORPORAL

benediction
May we continue to set the table with hope and anticipation.

May we hunger for a shared meal, and crowd around tables, and be filled with the presence of each other…

…so that we may look at one another, that we may hear one another, that we may touch one another, that we may be known by one another, to proclaim the incarnate, together.

Amen