Realms, an Archive of the Sensible
Let’s step back for a moment and think about images and where they come from, both personal and collective. Think about your iPhone, Google, and other search engines and think about all this electronic data, everywhere, including your credit card transactions, your train pass swipes, all those cameras, all the data and images you take and are taken of you all on a daily basis. Where do they all go?

Once perhaps they went into an archive, well certain images and records.

The word “archive” derived from the Greek *Arkheion*, a house, or the residence of the superior magistrates. Images and documents were kept in the houses of the powerful. As such the archive more often preserves the history of the victors, while presenting such history as reality or scientific truth. The archive is a realist machine, a body of power and knowledge, and it sustains itself by repetition. More precisely, the authority of traditional archives controls and regulates the reproduction of their items.

(Hito Steyerl, “Politics in the Archive: Translations in Film,” on Jacques Derrida)

As much as certain governments try to contain image and information circulation, we are all well aware that this control of circulation has gone and access to the world’s images is pervasive. With digital technologies and network culture, images are always already in a constant state of copying, degradation and remixing. As Eduardo Navasse argues in *Remix Theory*:

The reason for this is that the possibilities of cultural production, both popular and elitist have reached an efficiency based on increasing compression of material, that has superseded the postmodern period. And it is the compression of content, the obsession of condensing material for faster consumption and assimilation that gives Remix public legitimation.

In other words, the remix, the representation and pervasive circulation of images gives them no grounding, no context, no meaning outside the event of their presentation.

So what to do with all these images? What do we want with them? Perhaps it is to see ourselves, to see what we cannot see, to see beyond human perception. Perhaps we want to see how we see. I will say it again, to see how we see. That would be my usual turn, to see the seeing of seeing.

Here I want to enact the image of the sensible. First as a slide show interpenetrating each other, leaking into one another. So first the collection and where and how it starts. (from To Create Images is to Create Thought or Why I am so Afraid to Think)

The concept moves between a four-screen video installation, a series of slide projections, a film, the production of photographs.
Realm 1: Bodies as blocks of sensations, marks and recording, touched by hand, to be touched, palpitations

Struck by the portraits of Lucien Freud wearing his painter’s apron, looking more like a butcher’s apron, with his models I wanted to look at the body depicted, the body made available for depiction. The elderly painter and this bodies, the various models and the site of these bodies. These bodies one at a time, one by one. With this is the photographer, each positioning posing bodies, behind the 4 x 5 large format cameras. In this room, in this realm, a great variety of models, all ages, all types, a variety of photographers, bodies and tableaux of bodies.

notes:

the intimacy of the painter and the body
the sensuality of paint
the distance of the lens
the painter possessed by his model
the photographer posing his subject
guy bourdin yves klein
the paint blood paint saturated messy apron of the painter
the clean hands on the tripod of the large format camera
the cat in the room
the painter inspects eyes the model poses the model
Realm 2: The machine that sees, atomized nodes

In the next room is the data scientist, she looks at the aggregate of images, where individuals become statistics, where images, text messages, likes, stand in place of hordes, swarms, mobs, catastrophe and violence. All disorder here becomes formalized, indexed, classified, codified, ordered and made into extraordinarily attractive cascading graphs or set into neat little boxes and parsed by even neater models and algorithms.

The best an algorithm can do is amalgamate. It takes discrete things, assumes certain relationships between them, then streams them together to look for ‘like’ things. But you, a person, is a continuous state of becoming. Your taste, your metabolism, is not made of discrete things or moments. It is a becoming. An algorithm is premised on arithmetic: this + this + that. You are a calculus, a trajectory, a duration.

notes:
the archivist     the information architect / professor
student girl friend
5 essays – each an organization of images, an arrangement, an inflection, an autopsy, data, clinical
she arranges the photographs prints of photographs everywhere
photos collected
photos on walls
projected
computer screens
occasionally she looks out the window
sees real trees
sky
we see the photos that have informed the other realms in arrays like hockney wall
warburg
raad
sebald
search
Soli dehisce Arno Christ 1544. Die 24. Januar
Luvanij
In this realm, all that is, is instinct, emotion, madness, bodily fear, violence. But to what end and for what reason and in what manner. In a scenographic way, this would be performance, otherwise it is on the street. It must be wanton, the crowd, madness, delirium, panic. This would be an eruption of violence and this would suggest another violence, a systematic violence, a keeping the lid on, so the riot breaks out. This systematic or institutional violence, this army of police, law, capital that keeps in check, that is their constantly, it’s only this eruption that shows this violence. This is not a violence of ritual or sacrament, this is a violence of control. This is the uniform, the border.

notes:
mad murder cultist murder spree
mostly off screen
participants coming on the screen all bloodied up
richard lester style
some what religious, messianic
there becomes a rift in the group
a faction believes in the body the here and the now and the decay
the other believes in a way to somewhere else
sort of goyaesque meets la noir meets mike kelley
Realm 4: The body that hurts, that’s gone on too long, without vitality, the body that rots, smells, is dragged about

notes:
this is the realm of the aged, the mortuary, hospice, autopsy, accident
writing on the body
files on the bodies
images and bodies, an analysis in fragments, pixels and genes, a dissection, a mapping
Realms (at the meta level)

sacrament killing prayer community
dying decay death community
representation sex eroticism intimacy
analysis logos instrumentality

Realms (across screens)

the teenage girl possessed by a certain hysteria
the analyst possessed by a certain hysteria
the painter looking at the couch
the analyst on the couch looking at the painter looking at the
photographer looking at the girl looking out the window looking
in a mirror

Note 1

performance

-how do i put myself in the performance?
why am i collecting all the these photographs. for reference,
to actually use, to imitate, to re-enact, to rotoscope, draw in
projection, make animation out of.
-taylor mac, how does he construct his narratives

performance piece

-realms
-triste tropiques (passages on the new world)
-james baldwin clip on the white man
-black panthers
-cross pollinate that with kobo daishi
-to hell with humanity
-fabric pieces
-performance (actors)
ideas

-is my body in this piece
-am i drawing myself
-read through original script
-write performance script, pull together pictures,
-screen|scrim architecture
-a work on mis-reading images, the realms archive or and
-performance work of material culture and voyage, pilgrimage or
conquest
-work towards performance piece / script

Note 2

Artist, psychoanalyst, and feminist theorist Bracha Ettinger presents an original theoretical exploration of shared affect and emergent expression, across the thresholds of identity and memory. Ettinger works through Lacan's late works, the anti-Oedipal perspectives of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as object-relations theory to critique the phallocentrism of mainstream Lacanian theory and to rethink the masculine-feminine opposition. She replaces the phallic structure with a dimension of emergence, where objects, images, and meanings are glimpsed in their incipiency, before they are differentiated. This is the matrixial realm, a shareable, psychic dimension that underlies the individual unconscious and experience.

Concerned with collective trauma and memory, Ettinger's own experience as an Israeli living with the memory of the Holocaust is a deep source of inspiration for her paintings, several of which are reproduced in the book. The paintings, like the essays, replay the relation between the visible and invisible, the sayable and ineffable; the gaze, the subject, and the other.