

Carpenter Center

IN  
CONVERSATION

RENÉE  
GREEN AND

GLORIA  
SUTTON

for the Visual Arts

IN CONVERSATION  
Renée Green and Gloria Sutton  
February 18, 2021

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts,  
Harvard University

This conversation took place over Zoom at 7:30 p.m. EST on Thursday, February 18, 2021. This publication is the sixth in a series of edited transcripts that record the Carpenter Center's public programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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DAN BYERS : Hi, everyone. I'm Dan Byers, the John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Director of the Carpenter Center. Thank you so much for joining us tonight.

The organization and presentation of our Carpenter Center Conversations series is a true team effort. I want to thank my colleagues, Sir Porte, Curatorial and Public Programs Assistant; Laura Preston, Administrative and Outreach Coordinator; and Gabby Banks, Gallery and Bookshop Attendant, for all of their important work on this series. While we're at it, I'd like to thank our other staff members, Katie Soule, Francesca Williams, and Keisha Knight, because their contributions are equally important.

I am so pleased and honored that we get to hear from Renée Green and Gloria Sutton to celebrate the publication of Renée's book *Pacing* (Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and Free Agent Media, 2021). Tonight, we will hear from Renée and Gloria, and that will be followed by a Q&A.

The 300-page publication that is *Renée Green: Pacing*<sup>1</sup> has been a long time coming, and I could not be more



*Renée Green: Pacing* (Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and Free Agent Media, 2021), book cover spread.

proud of how it turned out. The book is designed by Chad Kloepfer and Wkshps, features new texts by Gloria Sutton and Fred Moten, and brings together a series of three previously unpublished conversations between Renée, Yvonne Rainer, Nora M. Alter, and Mason Leaver-Yap, as well as additional contributions by Nicholas Korody, William S. Smith, and a very humble introduction by me.

Renée Green is an artist, writer, and filmmaker known for her highly layered and formally complex multimedia installations in which ideas, perceptions, and experiences are examined from myriad perspectives. Through films, essays, writings, installations, digital media, architecture, sound works, film series, and events, her work investigates circuits of relation and exchange over time, and the gaps and shifts in what survives in public and private memories, as well as what has been imagined and invented.

Renée has a long relationship with the Carpenter Center. In fact, she was one of the first people I met when I started as director in 2017, so my entire time at the Carpenter Center has been happily informed by Renée's presence. It's not often that an institution gets to work with such an artist for a four- or five-year span.

Renée spent two years engaged with the Carpenter Center, during which she presented a series of interlinked public programs and exhibitions that culminated in the exhibition *Within Living Memory* in 2018. This two-year engagement, the entirety of which Renée titled *Pacing*,

was a meditation spurred by inhabiting an architectural icon—Le Corbusier’s Carpenter Center building—while exploring the historical and institutional legacies of modernism’s other forms, including cinema, visual art, poetry, music, and literature. The publication that results from this engagement, also titled *Pacing*, illuminates Renée’s unfolding process with a sequence of exhibitions that took place from 2015 to the present day: *Facing* in Toronto; *Tracing* in Como, Italy; *Placing* in Berlin; *Spacing* in Lisbon; *Begin Again, Begin Again* in Los Angeles; and finally *Pacing* at the Carpenter Center.

The book has been three years in the making, and I’m really happy to share it with everyone now. I hope that you go to D.A.P.’s website [<https://www.artbook.com>] to purchase a copy or find it in a local book store. I know Harvard Book Store here in Cambridge is carrying it, so if you want to support local business, that would be the place to go.

I also want to thank Javier Anguera, Free Agent Media’s archivist, for his immense and thoughtful contributions to all aspects of this project. Thanks also to former Carpenter Center director James Voorhies for inviting Renée in the first place, former interim director Dina Deitsch for shepherding the project before my arrival, and former assistant director Daisy Nam for all of the work that she did on this project.

Gloria Sutton is also no stranger to the Carpenter Center, where she was a scholar-in-residence working

collaboratively with Renée and the Carpenter Center staff on the *Pacing* programs and exhibitions. There’s really no way we could have completed and presented these programs without her sensitive curatorial and art historical guidance. Gloria is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History at Northeastern University, where she also serves in the Program for Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Her scholarship examines the material history and theoretical frameworks of time-based media as it enters the circulatory networks of public life.

The Boston area is very lucky to have Renée and Gloria teaching and doing their work here. I’m grateful to them for their work at the Carpenter Center and for being with us tonight.

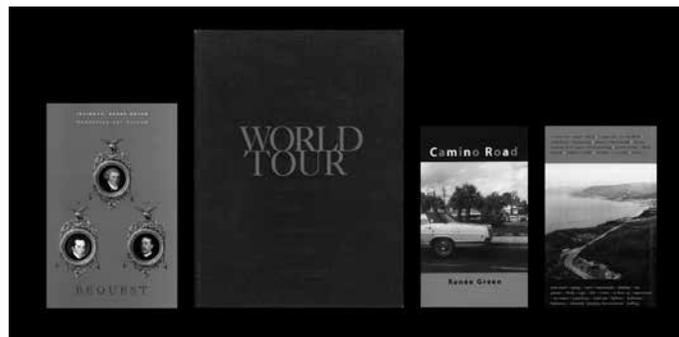
GLORIA SUTTON : Thank you, Dan, and great to see you, Renée. I want to follow up on that lovely introduction and offer my own as a preface to our conversation.

Renée is an artist, writer, and filmmaker whose works generate circuits of exchange that unfold over time. They evoke figures—living, historical, fictional—and are often composed within interstitial spaces that reveal the gaps between public and private memories, always asking what can be imagined. And this last point is not just mere speculation, nor is it anodyne. It’s material; it’s powerful and palpable in Green’s formidable body of work.

For me, one of the most indelible moments of having worked with Renée on various projects is when we

have faced a challenge or an obstacle. It's that moment when Renée turns to you and in a very calm way says, "Let's just see what can be possible." It's that phrase that helped me survive 2020—the inequity, the trauma, the frustration, the fatigue of that year, which continues to extend on. Renée's singular ability not only to ask what is possible but to enact it, and most importantly, to help others see the possibility of a different way of thinking—what she might call "ongoing becomings"—is the reason we are able to hoist up this book tonight. I want to say thank you to Renée and to congratulate her on this project.

For all of you out there who have worked with Renée in any capacity, you will undoubtedly know this already. But for the uninitiated, Renée is an indefatigable force who has produced a vital body of work since the 1980s that continues to circulate and feel present and pressing in the current moment. Since about 1997, I have been drawn in and have occupied a privileged spot in this constellation. Sometimes I have orbited at very close proximity, for example, learning from Renée at the Whitney Independent Study Program; sometimes I've been further afield but more deeply enmeshed in Renée's thinking and writing, for example, when she invited me to contribute to the catalogue accompanying her 2009 retrospective exhibition, *Ongoing Becomings*, at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne, or when she invited me to write the introduction to *Other Planes of There* (Duke University Press, 2014), her book of selected writings.



Book covers, left to right: Renée Green, *Bequest* (Worcester, MA: Worcester Art Museum, 1991); Renée Green, *World Tour* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1993); and Renée Green, *Camino Road* (New York: Free Agent Media; Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1994).



Book covers, left to right: Renée Green, *After the Ten Thousand Things* (The Hague: Stroem, 1994); Renée Green, *Certain Miscellanies: Some Documents* (Amsterdam: de Appel Foundation; Berlin: DAAD, 1996); and Renée Green, *Sombras y señales = Shadows and Signals* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2000).



Book covers, left to right: Renée Green, *Between and Including* (Vienna: Secession; Cologne: Dumont, 2001); Renée Green, *Negotiations in the Contact Zone* (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2003); and Renée Green, *Ongoing Becomings: Retrospective 1989–2009* (JRP|Ringier for Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, 2009).



Book covers, left to right: Renée Green, *Endless Dreams and Time-Based Streams* (San Francisco: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2011); Renée Green, *Other Planes of There: Selected Writings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); and Renée Green, *Hubert Fichte, Tour-isms, Negotiating in Contact Zones, and Contact* (Somerville, MA, and Berlin: Free Agent Media, 2019).

And, of course, we worked closely in that two-year window between 2016 and 2018, when Daisy Nam invited me to become scholar-in-residence for *Pacing*.

So we were in regular conversation at public events. Talking, pacing. Tonight, we will preview the modes of Renée’s work that the book *Pacing* traverses: some of the visual facets of the book’s contents, its makeup, and its process of becoming. We’ll share some visual spreads, and then close with one of my favorite moments in the book, the evocative *September Institute Preliminary Proposal*. Then we’ll look at a dispersion of other works planned for 2021 and beyond.

I wanted to start by thinking about something you reminded me of, which was via Jean Genet: that books are places to put things into, objects that permit us to move on. I thought we’d start tonight’s conversation, Renée, by looking at your publishing and book projects. Could you walk us through a few of these examples? We have covers here from *Bequest* in 1991, and *Camino Road*, which we’ll see again reappearing at the end of tonight’s conversation, among others.

RENÉE GREEN : Yes, we’re looking at a few of the different publications that I’ve done over the years, from the nineties through 2000. This sequence on the screen is *After the Ten Thousand Things*, which was also published in Dutch by Stroom, in the Hague; *Certain Miscellanies: Some Documents*, published in conjunction with de

Appel in Amsterdam and the daadgalerie in Berlin. Those were published in 1994 and 1996. And then in 2000, we have *Sombras y señales*, or *Shadows and Signals*, with the Tàpies Foundation in Barcelona. We're just running through these, right?

GS : Yes, because I want to set up the idea of *Pacing* as a singular volume, as distinct from the selection of books that we're seeing here: your exhibition catalogue *Between and Including, Negotiations in the Contact Zone*, compendium volumes of projects you've organized. . .

RG : *Between and Including*, which was published in 2001, was related to the exhibition I had at the Vienna Secession. *Negotiations in the Contact Zone* was originally related to a conference I organized at the Drawing Center in New York in 1994, but it was not published until 2003, in Lisbon, in Portuguese and English. That's a whole long story that I'm not going to go into now. It was a "negotiation in the contact zone." [Laughing] The last one is *Ongoing Becomings*, the catalogue that was published in conjunction with the exhibition in Lausanne, which you mentioned before.

GS : The images on the cover of that one are from a work called *Secret*, which we'll see later when we look at the *Pacing* exhibition, and *Within Living Memory* as well.

Now here we have *Endless Dreams and Time-Based Streams*.

RG : This publication was related to an exhibition at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco in 2010; next to that we have *Other Planes of There: Selected Writings* from 2014, published by Duke University Press. This last one, *Hubert Fichte*, *Tour-isms*, *Negotiating in Contact Zones*, and *Contact*, is actually from autumn 2019, and was published in Berlin in relation to an exhibition, but it was also part of a sculpture.

GS : And this doesn't even include the number of volumes you've contributed essays and conversations to, nor does it include the copious bibliographic record of all of the scholars who have written extensively around your work: Huey Copeland, Kobena Mercer, Elvan Zabunyan, and many others.

I also wanted to think about your array of publications because the other term that we've been in conversation around recently is "circulating circuits." I want to think about the materiality of books compared to what we have in the current moment, this fatigue of digital forms. But I also want to think about the way books have always been a continuation of your line of thinking and your working process as well.

Maybe you could say something about "circulating circuits" and how it relates to printed matter, forms of publishing, and books as a way to think about other possible forms of exchange.

RG : Thanks for asking that question. It's funny because I'm co-teaching a course called "Circulating Circuits" at MIT, and we had our first class yesterday. I'm co-teaching it with Jesal Kapadia. We just started to introduce the whole idea to people, also to get a sense of who might be interested in these ideas about matter and material and the certain kind of fatigue that might be felt now. There has been evidence of students being interested in wanting to investigate and examine things that they can touch and to move away from the screen. And even if many things are produced via the screen, it's interesting to have this other kind of tactile relationship.

One of the things that I have been thinking about in relation to this idea has to do with the way things circulate. All kinds of different things, but books in particular, especially in our current moment when we're not traveling very far. A book can distill things that can remind you of other moments when it was possible to gather, to see exhibitions in space, and to do things in other locations.

GS : You mentioned the delay in translation and publication for *Negotiations in the Contact Zone*, which is one way that books operate on a different time frame. There is also the bilingual nature of most of your publications, so that brings up ideas of translation and transposition.

Here on screen, we're looking at three brochures that were produced at the Carpenter Center for the *Pacing* residency. Since we always knew we were going



Top left: *Renée Green: Pacing*, exhibition brochure (Carpenter Center, 2016).  
Bottom left: Renée Green, *Pacing – Code: Survey*, exhibition brochure (Carpenter Center, 2017).  
Center: Renée Green, *Pacing: Within Living Memory*, exhibition brochure (Carpenter Center, 2018).  
Right: *Renée Green: Pacing*, book cover (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021).

to produce a book, we were thinking about timestamped conversations and essays that we produced at certain moments. These texts were published as brochures, which are also available as PDFs from the Carpenter Center's website where they are accessible to folks who could not physically come to the Carpenter Center in Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> Now we understand and think about that inverse of proximity via the internet in a different way.

Next to the images of these brochures is the cover of the book *Renée Green: Pacing*.

RG : *Pacing* really started in 2016 when I was invited to come to CCVA by James Voorhies. The idea of *Pacing* as an umbrella has really worked for thinking about this project over a period of time. We're going to talk about that more.

GS : Here is the inside cover of the book. I find it to be a really interesting snapshot.

Renée, you reminded me, thank goodness, that there are three pages of acknowledgments in the book, because tonight we cannot really do justice to all of the collaborators. This is a moment to recognize that books are a manifestation of their labors. Those born out of necessity, those born out of collaboration, and those born out of love.

I like looking at this spread because it's a reminder that history is material. We see a snapshot of different projects indicated by their fonts. They're like timestamps.

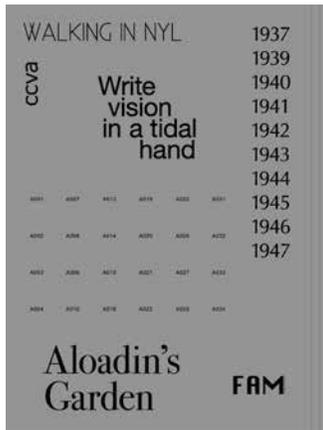
We see an index of *Code: Survey*. It's an index of an index in certain ways.

RG : I could say something about the design process with Chad Kloepper and Wkshps, which was really enjoyable. This inside cover is almost like a secret inner cover. You have to peel away the exterior one to find this one inside, and it's printed on a different material. One of the things that I liked when I first saw the spread was that Chad had gone through a lot of my works and had taken the typography that I'd used and did a mashup version for this cover. I really liked his selections.

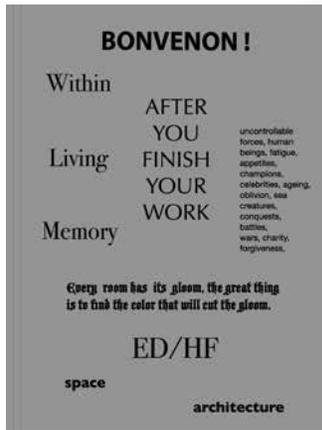
GS : What it telegraphs for me is the way that cultural history is reanimated in the present. Each of these markers refers back to a different kind of typology of organization as well. And when I look at this spread, I always think about the way that "pastness" is authenticated. It's ratified and organized into fields of knowledge.

And looking at the book's table of contents, we could think about the organization of *Pacing* as a book and talk about its own history, especially in terms of how history is always material. It begins with bodies, artifacts, agents, actors, and subjects. I think the table of contents is a record of that.

Dan mentioned the other projects included in this book, projects in Los Angeles, Lisbon, Berlin, Como, and Toronto. The book itself is not just culminating in the



Inside cover of *Renée Green: Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), design by Chad Kloepper.



Carpenter Center, it begins even earlier. Could you talk about some of the circuits of those bodies, histories, actors, and places?

RG : I'll try. I'll start by mentioning my introductory essay, "Pacing Arcs." As I was saying before, *Pacing* provided an umbrella for thinking about different projects that took place between 2015 and the exhibition I presented at the Carpenter Center in 2018, *Within Living Memory*. James Voorhies extended a two-year invitation, and when I received the invitation to do something that would take place over more than a year, I was interested in the various linkages that could be possible. It was still an amorphous idea. I just had the sense that I wanted to focus on *pacing*, its multiple resonances, and the ways it could be defined, and also think about these other projects leading up to it.

It was 2016 when I was invited. I was preparing for exhibitions during that year. I decided to focus on the gerund, the verb form for each exhibition title, so that's what you see in the table of contents.

I started with *Begin Again, Begin Again* in 2015, which was a project that was presented at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House in Los Angeles. Then there was *Spacing* at Lumiar Cité in Lisbon; *Placing*, which was presented in Berlin at Galerie Nagel Draxler; and *Tracing* in Como at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti. *Pacing* was the last one of 2016. That was at Prefix

5	Foreword — Dan Byers	148	FAM Case (2001–2016)
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17	Begin Again, Begin Again MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles	154	Public Program #2: Conversation with Nora M. Alter
18	Ghosts of Schindler's Past — Nicholas Korody	163	Code: Survey, 2006/2017
23	Begin Again, Begin Again, 2015	166	Media Bichos / Wavelinks
35	Notes on <i>Begin Again</i> , <i>Begin Again</i>	174	ED/HF
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118	FAM Case (1994–2000)	271	Acts of Dispersion — Gloria Sutton
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		287	Exhibition Checklists
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		297	Acknowledgments
			• Renée Green notebook pages throughout

Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), table of contents.

Institute of Contemporary Art in Toronto. Even this linking between different verbs worked well in terms of presenting certain basic ideas that I wanted to return to.

GS : This table of contents reminds me that there are many sites in which history is produced—the academy, popular media—and many sites where the participants of those histories mobilize. Unlike with an exhibition catalogue, where the writers are brought in at different moments, the *Pacing* contributors have all had conversations with you in the past. They're animating the present and opening up future discussions. So it's a different circuit of exchange. Each section represents a relationship.

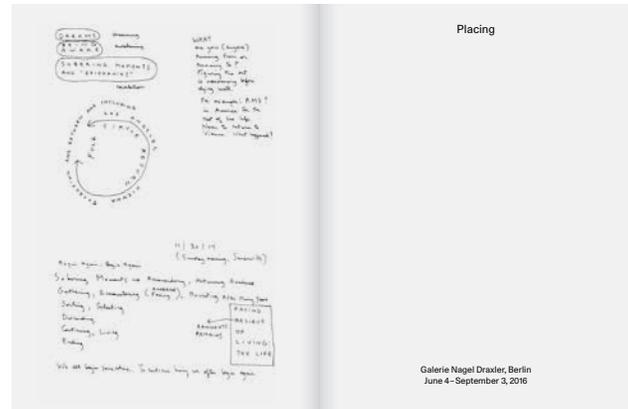
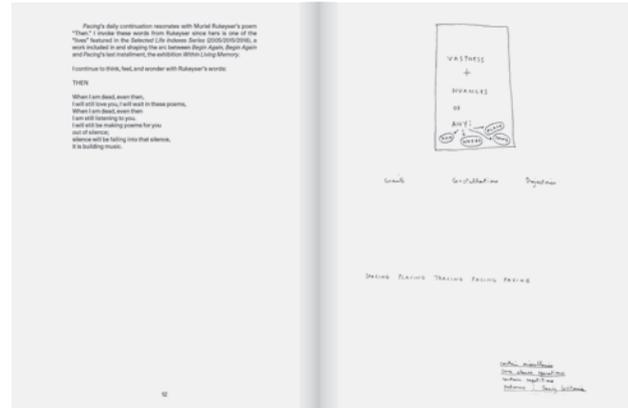
RG : Each section is a project, and various people were engaged in asking questions or being in conversation in relation to those projects. For *Begin Again, Begin Again*, Nicholas Korody did an interview with me. It was published elsewhere, at *Archinect*.<sup>3</sup> Then Fred Moten and I had a conversation after he'd spent some time visiting *Begin Again, Begin Again* at the Schindler House. He developed some notes that grew out of that conversation, and he also wrote a poem. I like this combination of what could be possible without actually knowing what it's going to be before starting it. As the contact takes place and people become familiar with things or curious about whatever it is, something can grow out of that. So that's been an interesting aspect of this project.

GS : I just want to turn to that text that you wrote, “Pacing Arcs,” in which you really enumerate that embrace of possibility. Here we can also think about the material history of language, which returns as a grounding force in the book and the work, and the personal, poetic way you’ve closed with Muriel Rukeyser’s words. You close your opening with a poem that we’ll see threaded throughout. And then, in this spread, we see this drawing here, *Vastness and Nuances*. What I appreciate is the way “circuits,” “constellations,” and “trajectories” are laid out in the balance between your drawings and your notebooks.

Could you talk about the notebooks, because although these journals have been reproduced at various moments in different types of publications, maybe you could talk about the decision to include them here?

RG : Sure, I can say a little bit about them. I usually don’t like to focus on them too much, mostly because they’re kind of a private thing. They are something that I’ve always done daily. They help me think about how to make something, or what my ideas are. They are traces of thinking, as well as feeling. They’re drawings! [Laughing] They keep a record of what it is I’ve been doing or thinking about during the time period.

I decided to include some in this instance. I had used them in a very minimal way in the *Endless Dreams and Time-Based Streams* book, because I was asked to do that,



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 12–13; bottom: 76–77.

but this time I thought it might be interesting to mix up the texture of the book, and also because it was kind of a transitional moment for me in terms of thinking about these projects. I was reflecting on several deaths that had taken place in 2014, and when I made the *Begin Again*, *Begin Again* project in 2015, I was trying to think about that and feel those things. Drawing is really connected to trying to get closer to something that might be difficult to articulate just by a gesture and the mark that's made.

GS : Throughout the book there's a contrast between the different ways of organizing information. The drawings and the notes here are a nice marker to remind ourselves of these moments of trying to represent the past or translate feelings of the present moment. They also remind us that books are not just vehicles for the transmission of knowledge, they also have to establish some type of relationship to that knowledge. What I love about the notes and the journal drawings that you've included is that they are schematically pointing to those relationships, and then they are contrasted with different typologies of note-taking and writing that come throughout the book.

It is a nice contrast to also see this in the next spread, where we set up *Begin Again*, *Begin Again*.

RG : Right. I included an example of a page from the script, which is a kind of collage, just to give an indication of what the thinking and the processes were.

GS : I felt that transition was really important to think about—the personal memories, as you mentioned, and also public memories, the alignment of dates and archives, narratives, and experiences, but also the silences and the gaps, and therefore the omissions.

Having worked with you on a variety of projects as an art historian, and being wed to certain types of methodologies of history writing, one of the other resounding points that I walk away with is the way in which we want to lay claim to an idea about history. As historians, we want to debate what history is. Looking through this book, we see how history can be shaped by your hands. And I see that happening here.

RG : Yes. I always want to take it apart.

GS : And that's why these scripts do a nice job. The drawings and the scripts begin to help us think through what that means, to literally put it back together again.

You talked about Fred Moten, who wrote a piece back in 2015 after experiencing your exhibition *Begin Again*, *Begin Again* at the Schindler House in West Hollywood. He describes the exhibition as a “phonic animateriality,” animated by voices, by sounds, by histories and stories.

RG : I'd like to just say something about the exhibition, and also about the challenge of trying to make a book in relation to things that were physical, with different kinds

of modes in them, like sound, or spatial circulation: In the Schindler House project, the sound was on many channels, and it was programmed to keep changing all the time. Even the vitrines were made into speakers. And so that exhibition had a visceral dimension to it in the sense that as soon as you entered into the house, you were surrounded by these different sounds. You can't tell that from a still photograph. Fred was responding to the sensation of the exhibition, a kind of ghostly animation of the space.

GS : I should say as a caveat for tonight that we can't fully unpack these works during our time together, but Renée has been in dialogue about these projects in the past. She did an amazing conversation with Fred Moten in 2015 at Ooga Booga.<sup>4</sup> She was in conversation with X Zhu-Nowell in the fall, on the auspices of her exhibition at Bortolami Gallery.<sup>5</sup> Renée also had a conversation with Howie Chen and Alex Ito in Chen's [Remote] this summer on her 2018 work *Americas : Veritas*.<sup>6</sup> And most recently, just about two weeks ago, she had a conversation with Nora Alter through the Whitney Independent Study Program. Nora is also a contributor to this book. These recordings exist online; they're accessible. So again, I'm thinking about those circulations and circuits of exchange, and also a blurb you wrote for Fred Moten's book *Black and Blur*, the first book of his trilogy *Consent Not to Be a Single Being*. You write, "Poetry and philosophy can't convincingly be condensed or speeded up. To feel each fully, they must be

read and sounded in time." For me, this is also relevant to your work.

This is just to remind ourselves that your works exist, they are out there, they're in circulation. I invite the audience to spend more time with Renée's projects than we can afford in this conversation tonight.

RG : Well, the book is a start. Portable, easy.

GS : I want to pause on this spread, because this was a design decision that speaks to the translation of your Space Poems from a spatial mode to a printed mode.

RG : Yeah, the full bleed. I liked that. I liked the use of the Space Poems to accentuate the color and the text. In this case they don't have the border that usually is around them. But for the page, I like it.

Every time I see these various book spreads on our computer screens it makes me want to flip the pages, though. I'm torn when I see the still image of the spreads, which I have seen quite a bit in the process of making the book. Now that they actually exist, we can flip through them, because that's a whole other aspect of how something is animated, when you can actually move it around.

GS : I'm also thinking about the way you wrote about the Space Poems for *Experience: Culture, Cognition, and the Common Sense* edited by Caroline Jones, which

encourages us to look further along. We're always pointing outward to look at these terms and places.

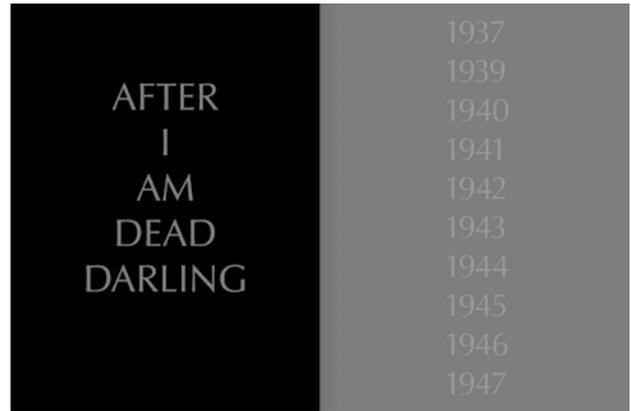
I'm going to move a little bit quicker here to get back to the Carpenter Center. This is the first presentation that we did in your *Pacing* residency. We called it *FAM* Case. Could you talk us through the auspices of *FAM*, the term itself, and maybe talk about the "circulating circuits" idea of ephemera, and the different temporal registers that books travel in, the channels that invitations come through?

RG : I'm going to try to talk about those things, but I'm going to go back a little bit to think about the structure. I also want to talk about this in relationship to the project at the Carpenter Center, because we haven't really touched on that too much. I do think it's important in terms of understanding how the *Pacing* book evolved and its relationship to the building.

The idea was that any available space in the Carpenter Center might be possible to use during this two-year period. It really depended on what was available. As scholar-in-residence, Gloria, you pointed out that these vitrines were available. That sparked the idea of using them for ephemera.

Ephemera is not usually focused upon, and you don't usually see it presented as a work itself. But I've liked to present ephemera that way in different instances.

Free Agent Media, which is what *FAM* stands for, is a



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 52–53; bottom: 150–51.

tool for production. I've been using FAM as an umbrella for a number of operations since 1994. The first one was the book we saw earlier, *Camino Road*, which is a novel. I've also used it in relationship to making films and all kinds of different productions. And it's a variable term, meaning that the people who participated in FAM have varied over the years.

These vitrines were presented as the very beginning of the exhibition. They presented collections of different material media produced in relationship to different projects over the years. The first iteration presented ephemera from 1994 to 2000. There was another iteration that covered 2001 to 2016.

I wanted to include material that's not usually focused on—flyers, posters, brochures, and all kinds of things that are designed and still part of the whole project. In the *Pacing* book, it's possible to look at them more carefully. That's one of the things I like about the book. These items are transmuted into pages, so you can actually pay attention to something you might have just thrown away.

GS : You get to read the details of who exhibited with whom and when. This is what we're "tracing" with exhibition cards, openings, catalogues, posters, and ephemera that document the panels, exhibitions, symposia, screenings, gathering spaces, Q&As, and moments of exchange that form the discourse of contemporary art in this moment.

RG : As I'm looking at the image on screen, I'm looking to see what's there. Even billboards!

GS : Absolutely, billboards! That was in Los Angeles, back in 2010, from a public project organized by Kimberli Meyer for the Schindler House.

What became apparent for me is that when we go back and actually identify those markers, those actors, those agents, and we compare timestamps and notes very closely, what appears to be consensus actually masks a history of conflict. And we learn that silences appear in those interstices, and in the conflicts between narrators, past and present.

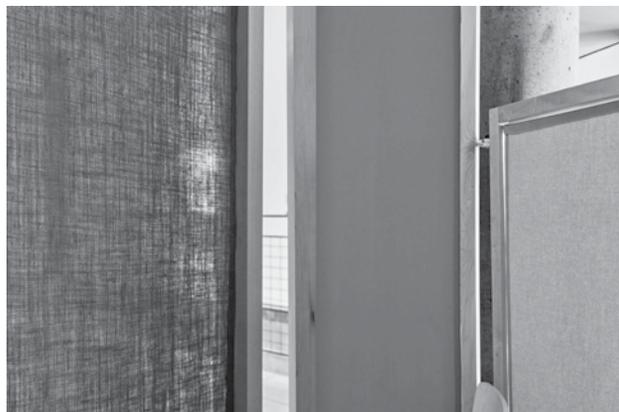
I thought this was an extraordinary piece. It looks at how contemporary art gets codified as history. Art historians spend a lot of time trying to work on what history *is*; what you show us is how history *works*, and more importantly, how it works on *us*. It makes categories, it makes those slippages and erasures.

Here we're looking at some of the programming that we did during the *Pacing* residency. We transcribed these programs knowing that we would be presenting them not only for a primary audience of people who gathered in the moment in the CCVA's Lecture Hall or in the Harvard Art Museums' auditorium, where they took place, but also for a secondary audience who would be experiencing this conversation as a distilled transcription.

The kind of exhibition-making that you engaged with here involved a combination of materials and installations. For my curatorial colleagues, your work has also offered up a generative methodology, and curatorial praxis itself has drawn on a lot of the methodologies you've put on the table. In particular, to quote curator Ute Meta Bauer in a recent issue of *Afterall*, "increasingly artists and writers from different parts of the world have been examining their own local histories, cultural and artistic as well as personal and political, by employing subjective testimonies, expanding the possibilities of an aesthetics of evidence to question hegemonic narratives that have been historically one-sided and exclusionary."<sup>7</sup>

For the last twenty-five years, this has been your methodology. We got to see it in action with your installation *Media Bichos*. The book gives us an opportunity to look at the material choices that are at play, and the activation of spaces in the Carpenter Center that hadn't been used as conventional exhibition spaces. For example, here we have your series of letterpress works, *Selected Life Indexes*, installed under glass on the Carpenter Center's concrete ledge in the lobby.

RG: One of the things that I have been enjoying about the book now that it's actually physical is being able to look at all of these different page spreads and think about what was involved in getting all of the different

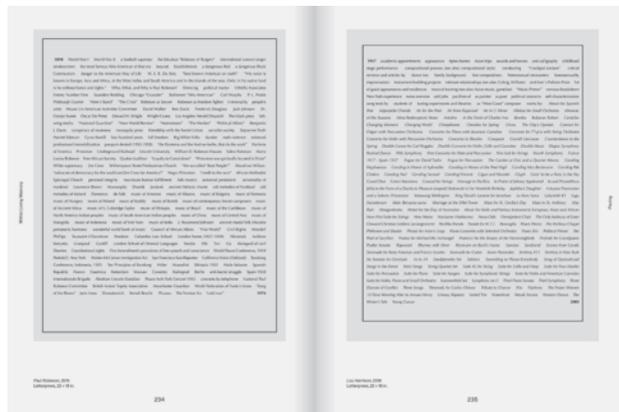
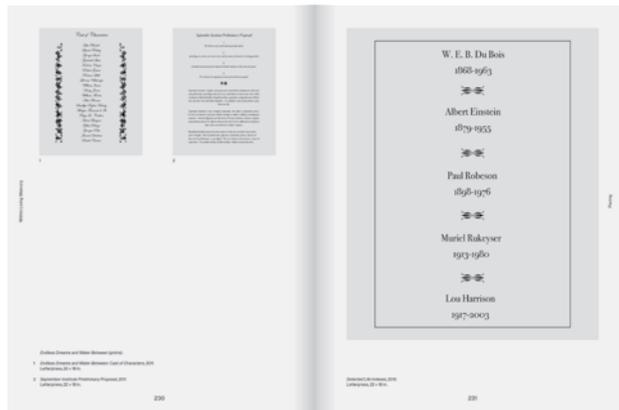


Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 166–67; bottom: 168–69.

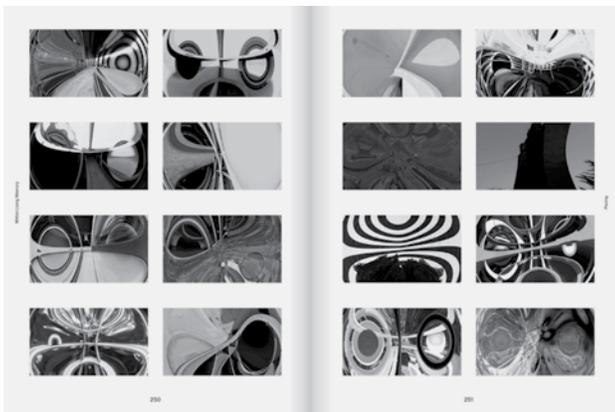
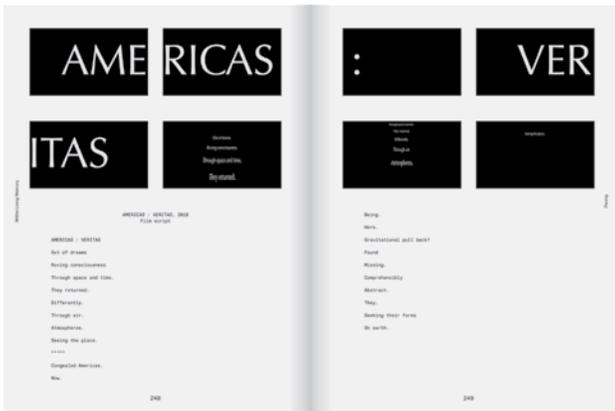
parts together. I love that you can look on a page and see it there. It's a completely different experience from physically being in the space, but at the same time you can actually go deeper into some of the works, particularly the *Selected Life Indexes*. One can really look at them; one can read and consider them differently.

GS : One can pore over them. So again, *Selected Life Indexes* offers a methodology of display, and a typology of objects and information to think about history, not in terms of going back to try to reclaim a lost moment or object, or to seek fidelity to it, but to put together figures who have historically been kept apart, yet whose lives overlap, and to do a close analysis of the connections, the convergences—socially, historically, and by place. That not only opens up a different kind of present-ness based on these two people who shared a history, it provides an anticipatory future. For me as an art historian, that's a deep kind of methodology for history writing that's not conscripted to an idea of reclaiming the past.

RG : And once you go into the book, you can flip back and forth between the pages and see the way the years appear. Then it's possible for you to calculate the span of time. For example, from the first image that you showed from *Selected Life Indexes*, the people are W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Muriel Rukeyser, Albert Einstein, and Lou Harrison, and the span is from 1868 to 2003. That alters



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 230–31; bottom: 234–35.



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 248–49; bottom: 250–51.

the way it's possible to think about things if you think about them in terms of other arcs, or relations and overlaps.

GS : I want to go to the image of the exterior of the Carpenter Center and go back to Fred Moten's notion of animated voices. We see through the crepuscular moments of the building, the moments of dusk, when these films were made visible in darkness. One of the things that I kept thinking about when we were looking at these interstitial spaces of activation was the way in which your works are interested in harnessing the scopic energies of the camera. Not as a set of scanning eyes but as a pair of hands reaching out to get a closer feel for your object of study. These interior-exterior projections were moments where the work revealed itself in these unexpected ways.

And where it really comes into play for me is with your digital film *Americas : Veritas*. Here we are looking at a series of stills from that work. In "Pacing Arcs," you write about how the time you spent in Cambridge was a central part of the research you were doing. But at the same time, in an important gesture, you take a building in isolation and you put it in dialogue with its counterpart, and that's Casa Curutchet in La Plata, Argentina.

In *Americas : Veritas*, formally, we see these amoeboid forms in which interior becomes exterior and what look like geological forces or geographic overlays become almost cellular in their composition. Both buildings were

designed by Le Corbusier but have two different histories coming into the fore.

RG : I could say a lot about it, but I won't. This was one of my early ideas when I accepted the Carpenter Center's invitation. I wanted to think about the fact that there were only two Le Corbusier buildings in the Americas: the Carpenter Center, which is in North America, in Cambridge, and the Casa Curutchet, which is in La Plata. This was pretty interesting as a place to begin. It was an ongoing prompt to think about what could be made between these two buildings, how it might be possible to think about them together, and how that might be formed in terms of the relation that's made in a moving image.

These are some of the images from the film. I still think of it as a preliminary film—*Americas*, colon, *Veritas*. There is lots to say about it, but that's a kind of intro.

GS : In our last few moments together, I'm going to transition to think about those ideas of introductions and preliminary thinking, in particular the *September Institute Preliminary Proposal*, which was included in the Sert Gallery. I think about how Le Corbusier never returned to see either the Casa Curutchet or the Carpenter Center completed; he left it up to his Catalan colleague, Josep Lluís Sert, to finish the building in Cambridge. The *September Institute Preliminary Proposal* is also reproduced in the book, where it

### *September Institute Preliminary Proposal*

1.

*We still own our words and can produce them.*

2.

*Anything you create you want to exist, and its means of existence is in being printed.*

3.

*Sending transmissions from dispersed islands, linking worlds, time and space.*

4.

*We continue the ongoing movement of combination people.*



September Institute compiles and regenerates material from abandoned collections and publications, providing indexical access and linked research tools, that enable circulation within the depths of significant ideas, operations, and productions of those who may have been forcefully forgotten. S.I. publishes out-of-print books to give them new life.

September Institute is not a utopian community, but rather a momentary nexus. It exists in contrast to previous idealist attempts to address shifting contemporary moments. Acknowledging the predilections of the past (idealist, romantic, utopian, and modernist aims), S.I. embraces the present, however it is calibrated, in relation to time, with a consciousness of time's expanse.

Beautiful and odd remnants from the expanse of time are excavated, represented and re-thought. These include books, ephemera, notebooks, photos, and out-of-date time-based formats, i.e. pre-digital. They are evidence of encounters, a trace of experience. S.I. produces books of collected data. Online versions also exist.

reminds us through the mottoes of its fictional characters that “We still own our words and can produce them” and “Anything you create you want to exist, and its means of existence is in being printed.” It’s a good ending point for tonight—thinking about the constant motion of putting something into print, or what you said about books becoming places to put things. I want to use this moment as an act of dispersion and cast our eye towards the future. In particular, here we have images of earlier works of yours, but we are looking at them in the year 2021, restaged at Bortolami Gallery in New York for an exhibition in 2020. These are paintings. Provocatively and interestingly, painting was at the beginning and it’s going to come in at the end.

And among the animated paintings that you made, here are the Space Poems and then *Camino Road*, which we talked about at the very beginning and which was prompted by an invitation from the Museo Reina Sofía, in Madrid. A facsimile edition of this book will be published by Primary Information in April 2021; *Camino Road* is a travel novel.

RG : Something we wish we could do now!

GS : Also upcoming is *Inevitable Distances*, a retrospective at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin curated by Mason Leaver-Yap, who also contributed to *Renée Green: Pacing*.

RG : It’s going to be a combination exhibition at KW and the daadgalerie in Berlin.

GS : And that will be from October 2021 to January 2022. One last image, which to me sums up 2020: a picture of you holding the *Artforum* spread of *Americas : Veritas*.

SIR PORTE : Thank you so much, Gloria and Renée, for that incredibly engaging conversation. As someone who came to the Carpenter Center after your residency, it’s great to hear you talk about the creation of this book and your collaboration.

Renée, Gloria, I’m going to read off a couple of questions from the Q&A. Our first question begins, “Thank you for this great conversation. I love how the book gives a window into Renée’s process.” This audience member is interested in having you talk more about the experience of translating spatial and sculptural installations onto the page.

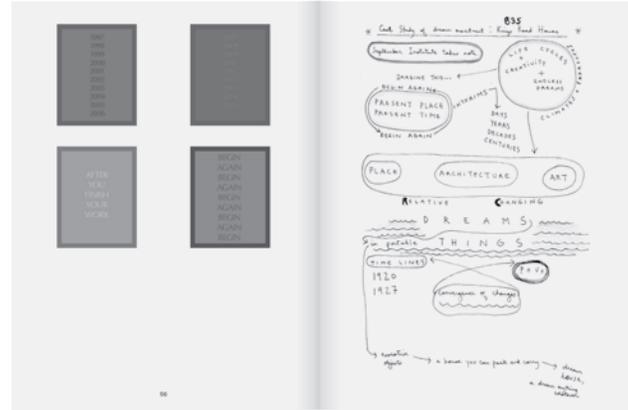
RG : It was a complicated process. It is always a complicated process to translate something that is in space, in three dimensions, into something that would be flattened in some way and is not a moving image like a film. It’s a different kind of relationship, and a different sort of configuration that’s possible. Some of the exciting aspects are the kind of paper that can be used, whether something is matte, or shiny, or in color. There were many

different decisions that went into thinking about the rhythm of the book. A book has a rhythm as a film has a rhythm, as music has a rhythm.

Finding that rhythm is about collating all of the different parts and then configuring them in forms that also circulate within the book. I think of the book itself as a circuit that will circulate. It would take ages to describe what we did, but it involved thinking about flipping between the pages as well. Somehow, even the choices we made for the images were related to what came before and what came after. How do you go back and forth? What kind of space is in between?

One of the things that I enjoyed a lot in the whole process of making this book was having all of these various elements from different aspects of the projects and trying to think about them in relation to what I remembered the space being like. I wanted the book to be something that would let me get a feeling about the space as well. That determined which images and details would be chosen. For example, for the show in Como, at the Fondazione Ratti, we used a dramatic shot. I wanted to make sure that certain angles would be visible. These are things that are done in cinema, but also in books, because a book is an object and it's a precursor to a moving image. That's how I think of the moving pages.

GS : Having worked alongside Renée, I would add that one thing that I constantly learned from her was



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 56–57; bottom: 78–79.

restraint. Especially in installation. Renée, you've produced a formidable body of work—an exhibition or a book project every single year since 1989, if not earlier. And at every turn with the book projects, there has never been an arbitrary layout. There has never been a piece included superfluously. There's a logic that feels very embodied in the word *pacing*, both in terms of the rhythmic way of moving through the book, but also in the sense of how much information one can absorb. The thing I learn from you constantly is this idea of restraint, and how choices about volume and scale become absolutely conditioned by the content of the work.

RG : Composing is a complex process. Are there any other questions?

SP : Yes. The next question is also related to production. This attendee is hoping to hear more about the distinction that Gloria previously raised between the sketches, notes, and typesetting. The moods are very different, and both are now fixed in print. Renée, could you speak more to that?

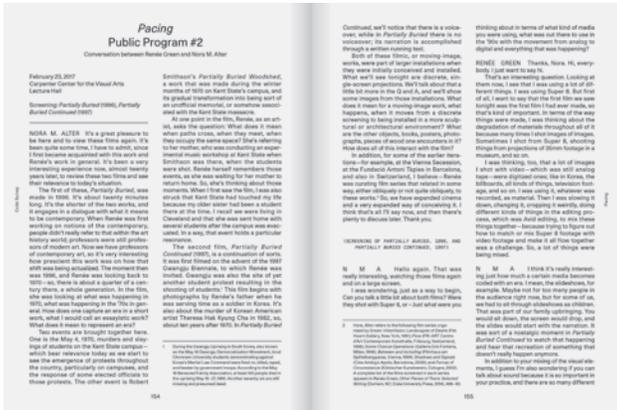
RG : Yes, I wanted to say something about that. One thing that took place was an enlargement of the notebook pages. They are not to size; they're somewhat enlarged from the actual notebook pages. They were meant as a kind of punctuation in relation to the other parts, to give some kind of breathing space. Most of them are primarily

lines, and on a different kind of paper. You see a mark of a line, letters, words, and they disrupt the other pages, which have stills from films along with the scripts, or views of spaces, or details of parts of the objects, or the Space Poems.

As for the typography, one of the things I really liked about Chad Kloepper's approach was his sensitivity to the typography that I use in my work. I was ecstatic that he was able to understand the nuance involved, and that when he mixed things together, he found a way to bring that out rather than overshadow it. That was a relief for me. Type itself is a language. It has so many different variations, its own history, what it brings, what your associations are, what your feelings are when you see certain kinds of type. Chad was able to take these things into account, and I was happy about that.

Another design decision I liked was to use a large enough point size on the page, and to also give a lot of reading room with the margins. When you read the book, you don't have to strain at all. I'm very aware of my vision these days, but I don't have to wear glasses to read this book. That's refreshing to me.

GS : I'll just add that both the FAM Cases we installed and the *Pacing* book are media archaeologies. Renée's work traverses so much material history—I could teach my entire contemporary art history course on her work alone. One of the first things that I did with



Renée Green: *Pacing* (Carpenter Center and Free Agent Media, 2021), top: 210–11; bottom: 154–55.

Renée in 1997 was to look at Betamax tapes together. So, I'm thinking about the specific typologies of fonts but also the susceptibility to erasure, the vulnerability to loss, that certain materials have over time. This has been so sensitively laid out in your choice of materials and the way that drawing or note-taking moves into filming. Like I mentioned, you're not just kind of capturing something with the lens, but your films have a more scopoc feeling of reaching out with your hands. So there's a constant toggling.

RG : I'm glad you raised that because it's something that I was also thinking about in terms of the ephemera. In some cases, I've made new work out of ephemera, like a print on acid-free paper. When something is aging, you can retrieve it and print it again. One of the prints presented in a FAM Case was made this way. So yes, it's a continual engagement with what happens to matter, and depends on when it emerged as media and how it will disintegrate. It's a constant process in terms of repair or trying to understand the format. How do you work with old things that aren't popular any longer, that are obsolete? What happens to those things?

GS : It makes me think about the way in which the work moves from documentation to commemoration; the way it moves from imaging something to memorializing something.

RG : I hope it also has some poetry as well.

GS : Absolutely. And that was one of the things that came out through this process. Your term, *ars poetica*, became a way to bring together the multisensory forms your work takes without collapsing them. So, for example, somebody tracing the music references would have a completely different navigational pathway through all of the codes, markers, figures, and references you make. So the work is not only poetic but also draws on the different syn-copations of various forms of architecture, literature, music, and definitely poetry.

This is the *jouissance* of the moment. One of the things I'm deeply grateful to Renée for is that these methods are not just cursory. They are enacted. You make these choices, and you extend those invitations outwards. This is how those omissions and gaps fill in. It's a way to see what is possible.

RG : I can't say anything more. [*Laughing*]

GS : Yes, just a reminder that books are labor. Some are born out of necessity, some out of collaboration, and some definitely out of love.

RG : A lot of love. A lot of labor.

GS : Total respect and thanks to Javier Anguera, and thanks to Daisy Nam, Jim Voorhies, Dan Byers, and Liv Porte for this

conversation. Thanks to Dina Deitsch. Thank goodness we have three pages of acknowledgments. And thank you to the people that you've been in conversation with, too.

These collaborators are part of the constellations, circuits, and trajectories we see on the first page. They continually open up and come back in again. That's what's been nice to see in 2021, how we've been able to cast a wider dispersion of these works. There are very few times that we get to come together like this and show gratitude, which I have in immense abundance for everyone on this Zoom call tonight, far and wide. Thank you everyone. Very quickly, I should thank Henry Rath, and our children Avery and Arden, who through those four years also became enmeshed in Renée's work.

RG : Thank you. And I hope we'll be able to celebrate at some point in person. I'd love to have a book launch in person. Thank you everybody who is here, and thank you Liv, Dan, and the Carpenter Center. And thank you, especially, Gloria.

DB : Thank you, Renée and Gloria. It's been almost a four-year process of us working together, so immense gratitude to everyone. Take care, everyone, and join us for our next program in March, a conversation with Candice Lin, C. Riley Snorton, and Hentyle Yapp around the book *Saturation: Race, Art, and the Circulation of Value* (MIT Press, 2020).

## ENDNOTES

- 1 *Renée Green: Pacing*. Foreword by Dan Byers. Texts by Renée Green, Nicholas Korody, Fred Moten, Nora M. Alter, Mason Leaver-Yap, William S. Smith, Yvonne Rainer, and Gloria Sutton. Cambridge, MA: Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University; and Free Agent Media, 2021.
- 2 See *Renée Green: Pacing*, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, <https://carpenter.center/program/renee-green-pacing>.
- 3 See "Ghosts of Schindler's Past Haunt Renée Green's MAK Center Exhibition," *Architect* (March 24, 2015), <https://architect.com/features/article/123300660/ghosts-of-schindler-s-past-haunt-renee-green-s-mak-center-exhibition>.
- 4 See "Renée Green and Fred Moten at 356 Mission," videotaped discussion, YouTube (uploaded April 2, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5mm441Pf6g>.
- 5 See "Independent x Guggenheim: Tribeca Gallery Walk Closing Event," Zoom conversation between Renée Green and X Zhu-Nowell, Independent Art Fair, Vimeo (uploaded October 22, 2020), <https://vimeo.com/471023848>.
- 6 See Chen's [Remote] 9, *Americas: Veritas*, screening and Zoom conversation between Renée Green, Howie Chen, and Alex Ito, Vimeo (uploaded August 20, 2020), <https://vimeo.com/449923493>.

- 7 Ute Meta Bauer, "Foreword," *Afterall* 47 (Spring/Summer 2019): 2–3.

## RENÉE GREEN

Renée Green is an artist, writer, and filmmaker known for her highly layered and formally complex multimedia installations in which ideas, perception, and experience are examined from myriad perspectives. Via films, essays and writings, installations, digital media, architecture, sound-related works, film series, and events, her work engages with investigations into circuits of relation and exchange over time, the gaps and shifts in what survives in public and private memories, as well as what has been imagined and invented.

## GLORIA SUTTON

Gloria Sutton is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and serves on the program for Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Northeastern University in Boston. Her scholarship examines the material history and theoretical frameworks of time-based art as it enters the circulatory networks of public life. She is currently working on a monograph on Shigeko Kubota and a critique of immersive space entitled *Pattern Recognition: Contemporary Art in the Age of Digitality*.

## COLOPHON

In Conversation:

Renée Green and Gloria Sutton

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Renée Green, *After I Am Dead  
Darling*, from *Space Poem #5  
(Years & Afters)*, 2015. Double-  
sided banner, 17 ½ × 22 in.

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