

Christof Migone is a multidisciplinary artist and writer. His work and research delves into language, voice, bodies, performance, intimacy, complicity, endurance. He co-edited the book and CD *Writing Aloud: The Sonics of Language* (Los Angeles: Errant Bodies Press, 2001) and his writings have been published in *Aural Cultures*, *S:ON*, *Experimental Sound & Radio*, *Musicworks*, *Radio Rethink*, *Semiotext(e)*, *Angelaki*, *Esse*, *Inter*, etc. He obtained an MFA from NSCAD in 1996 and a PhD from the Department of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts of New York University in 2007. He has released six solo audio cds on various labels (*Avatar*, *ND*, *Alien 8*, *Locust*, *Oral*). He has curated a number of events: *Touch that Dial* (1990), *Radio Contortions* (1991), *Rappel* (1994), *Double Site* (1998), *stuttermouthface* (2002), *Disquiet* (2005), *START* (2007) and *STOP*. (2008). He has performed at *Beyond Music Sound Festival* (Los Angeles), *kaaistudios* (Brussels), *Resonance FM* (London), *Nouvelles Scènes* (Dijon), *On the Air* (Innsbruck), *Ménagerie de Verre* (Paris), *Experimental Intermedia* (NYC), *Méduse* (Québec), *Victoriaville Festival*, and in Montreal at *Radio Canada*, *Quinzaine de la Voix*, *Musiques Fragiles*, *Galerie Oboro*, *Casa del Popolo*, *Théâtre La Chapelle*, etc. His installations have been exhibited at the *Banff Center*, *Rotterdam Film Festival*, *Gallery 101*, *Art Lab*, *eyelevelgallery*, *Forest City Gallery*, *Studio 5 Beekman*. He has collaborated with *Lynda Gaudreau*, *Martin Tétreault*, *Tammy Forsythe*, *Alexandre St-Onge*, *Michel F. Côté*, *Gregory Whitehead*, *Set Fire To Flames*, and *Fly Pan Am*. A monograph on his work, *Christof Migone - Sound Voice Perform*, was published in 2005. In 2006, the *Galerie de l'UQAM* presented a retrospective on his work accompanied by a catalog and a DVD entitled *Christof Migone - Trou*. He currently lives in Toronto and is a lecturer at the University of Toronto Mississauga and the Director/Curator of the *Blackwood Gallery*. For more information on Migone's artwork: www.christofmigone.com

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I am most of all thankful for the collaborative energy of artist Christof Migone throughout the curation of his solo exhibition *Fixation* as my CCS graduate thesis exhibition. This exhibition would not have been possible without open exchange, and many conversations delving into his practice.

A about add after ah ain't all an and arithmatic as B baby be before bit branches but C can come complete counting do down. E easy education everyday except 4 get girl gonna got gotta how I I'm is it it's just knew learn learning let like listen little love loves makes me melodies mi na. never. No. now of oh. on 1 ooh. out outcome plus re reading. repeat roots school seat. Shake she's show simple sing singing. Sit spell take teach teacher's tell that's the things think 3 to tree 2 up went what why without wowing writing. ya' yeah you your yourself.

A about am and another at back bang be beatin' been black bullet Cadillac catch cat's cause die don't every eyes flack forget from gang get gettin' glad gonna got gotta hang hanging hearse high hit I if I'll. I'm in it's just keep kept let lives long look looking loose luck makin' me my never nine nobody's noose now number of on one out outta pack play power push rap runnin' sack sight sky so that's the them they to too track try using want way well wild with yes your.

A aching again against ah. All and any anyone as aside at away. Baby, back because Beelzebub been begun, behind Bismillah blows. Body's born boy, but can can't carry caught come, cry, dead. Devil didn't die, do doesn't don't down easy escape ev'rybody eye. Eyes face family fandango. Fantasy? Figaro for fright'ning from Galileo. Get go. Gone goodbye, got gotta gun had has head here. He's high, him his I I'd if I'm in is it I've just killed landslide, late leave let life? Lightning, little look love loves low. Magnifico make Mama, man, matter matters. Me mean mia monstrosity. My need never no. Nobody not nothing now of oh on, ooh open out outta poor pulled put real reality. Really right scaramouche, see sends shivers silhouetto skies so sometimes spare spine, spit stone sympathy. The think this thrown thunderbolt time to tomorrow, too trigger truth. Up very want way we we will wind wish you your.

A and are as aware be but can't caught change. Changes children consultations days dead-end different don't. Every eyes face faker fascinating fast float for get glimpse going gonna got grow have how I I'd I'm immune impermeance in it. I've just know leave left little look made man may me million much must my myself 'n necks never not of oh, older on others our out pace. Pretty quite richer ripples rock rollers running said same see seem seemed shame size so soon spit still. Strange stranger stream streets sweet take taking taste tell test that the their them these they they're thought through time to too trace try. Turn turned up us waiting want warm was watch what. Where's wild worlds you your you're you've.

A ain't and anything article at Axel, B baby back beat bee, been begging best big blame. Bling body bony, boy, bring but buy call. Can can't care chain changed check chinchilla. Cloth, crazy, cut 'cuz dealing deep deranged, did different do doing don't dress, else even ever every explain, eyes, fall fat feeling figure flow fool foolish, for friends from funny fur, G game's genuine get girl, go, got handle he heart hey history homie, hoping Hov Hova? How I if I'm impress, in incredibly, insane is? It it's I've Jay just kiss knew, know label lately leave let's like loco, look lookin' looking, love, love's making, man, me more most my myself, name need new next no now, of oh of' on one! only, or out over, page part phoneys platinum playing pocket pride quietly, range, ready? Realer right Ringo, Roc, roll row, save sees, set, shake shoes, since sing sir skips sling smokers, so soprano, sprung star stare stick still such talk tennis texture that the them there they thing think this, though, thought three time, times to, Tony, touch try two uh, understand, van way what when who whoa! Whole with wrap, ya y'all yea yes! Yo, you, you'll young your you're Z.

A again am an angel around beautiful before belong body. But care control couldn't creep cry doing don't eye fucking feather float happy have hell here hurts I if I'm. In it just like look makes me not notice out perfect running runs she she's skin so soul special the to want was weirdo were what whatever when wish world you your you're.

Achieve always are back body but bye. Can't change cheap colder cost couplings damaged do down flesh. Give good goodbye, goods heated I. I'm in is it it's kiss kissing knew know love lust me much neck. Never night of only open or refund running said saw send simply sins so sometimes sour sun sweat. Sweat's sweet that the them thinking till too untrue? Will work would you your you're.

Fixation

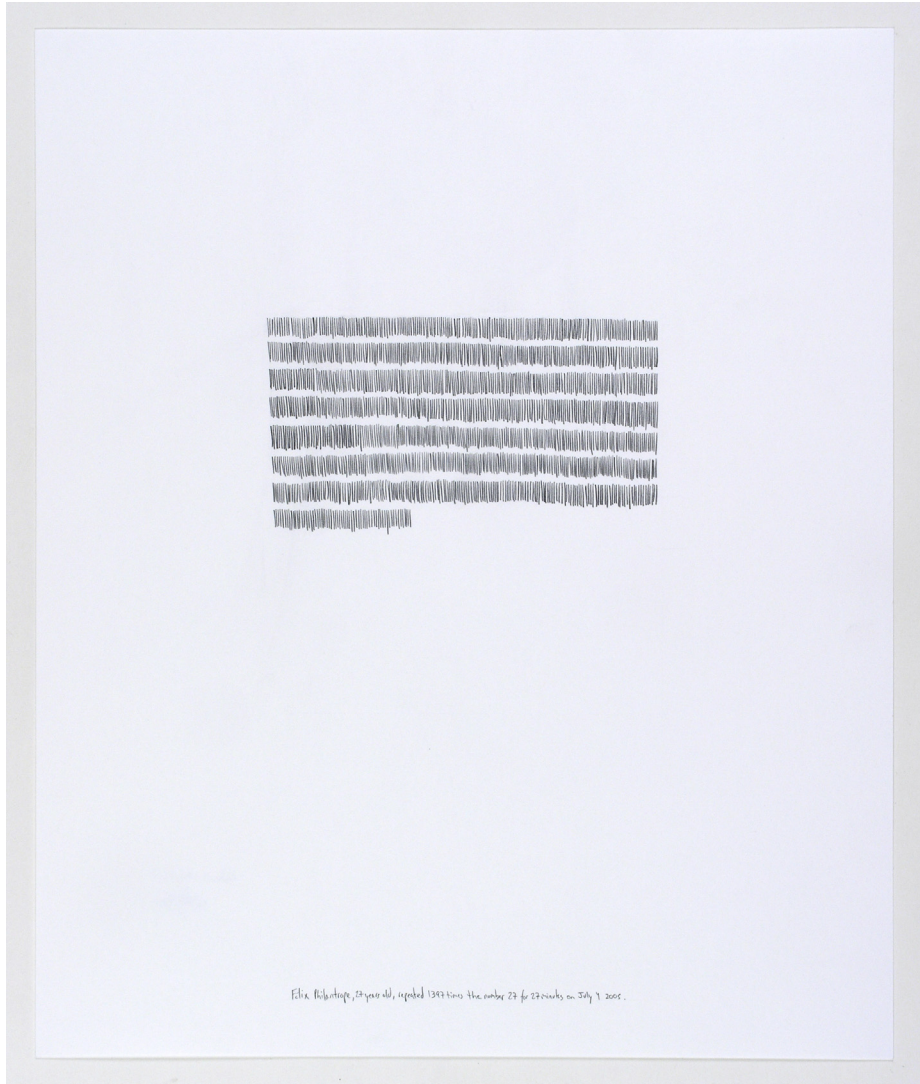
The artwork of Christof Migone

April 19 - May 24, 2009

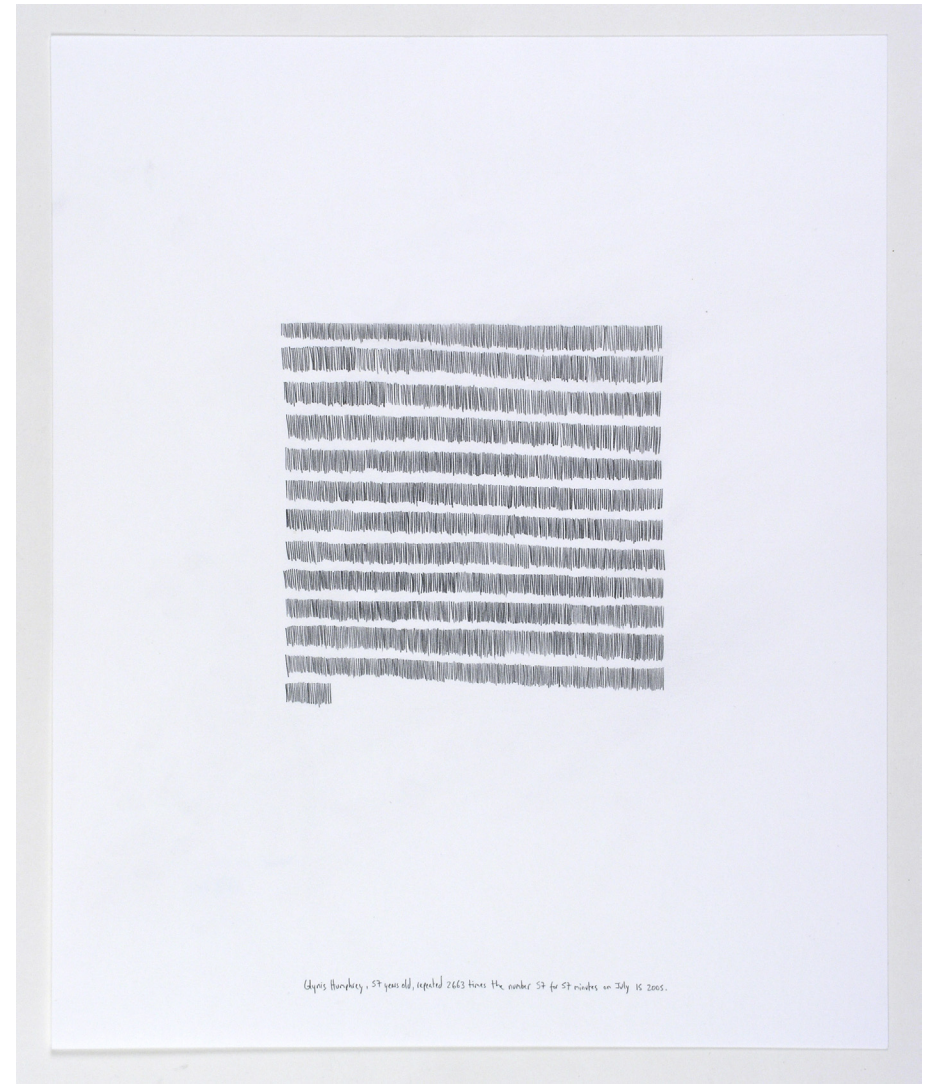
Christof Migone, *Single 1-7*, 2008

Curated by Mireille Bourgeois

Master's thesis exhibition, Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College



Christof Migone, *Interval*, "Félix Philantrop, 27 years old, repeated 1397 times the number 27 for 27 minutes on July 4 2005."



Christof Migone, *Interval*, "Glynis Humphrey, 57 years old, repeated 2663 times the number 57 for 57 minutes on July 15 2005."

In the visual component of the videos the youngest participants are slowed-down to the length of the older participants' age (i.e. twenty seven years old to 57 minutes), and the reverse for the other participant (i.e. fifty-seven years old to 27 minutes), while the audio is played back in real-time causing the two to be off-synched.

In the same room is *P* (2006) a white animated letter jumping and bobbing on a black background. This study lasted 149 days as the artist recorded his voice at various pitches and tones stating "p" every time he urinated, which we hear to the appearance of the letter "p" in the video. The passing p's seems like memories passing as quickly in our minds as the actual occurrences of the action. The pairing of *Pastime* and *P* observes the mundane within the everyday, and also steps back to look at the banality of passing years made up of such accumulated banalities: from microscopic events meaning nothing in the grand scheme, to the redundancy of life itself.

The two line-drawings printed in this catalogue are logs made for the participants of *Pastime; 27-57* each line representing every year of their life as they repeated it in the recording. Migone often creates secondary documentation of his artwork that reappears in other projects, like in *Pastime* with these drawings, in *Microhole* where the microphones that have caused the holes in the wall stand as documentation of the action, or with the band wrapping this brochure extracted from his *P* log adapted for this exhibition text. This secondary material also exists as a kind of specimen, gathered after a study.

How do we come to terms with knowing what these banal representations of our everyday mean to us, if anything? Perhaps there is an unknown, a new, or a different to be found in our quotidian rituals. But how many studies will it take to bring resolution (revolution?) to the everyday? We might not understand what makes every day gestures in art so radical, but we know that it somehow involves all of us, which can be a little unsettling when encountered in the gallery space. The slightest piece of hope is left behind that by looking at the quotidian in art, some artists may have recoiled so deeply into the everyday, so as to be on the verge of some kind of great reveal.

Mireille Bourgeois
2009

Revealing the everyday Revealing the everyday Revealing the everyday

The quotidian can seem to encapsulate everything that is experienced in a day, when in fact it is the particular redundancies of life, which make up the every day. Things like sweating, salivating, identical words that exist in multiple books in our library, sticking out a tongue, telling our age out loud, and so on and so forth. The everyday in art is not so because it has touched on a subject that is regularly mediated in our day to day. It is more precisely art that has taken a very pointed consideration of the occurrences of life, which happen on such a small scale as to not even attract attention. Why bring awareness to the small gestures of our everyday? This can be seen as non-art, not only turning away from the aesthetics of art objects, but to "indicate", "intervene", "document" what is closest to the artist, in hopes of understanding the most basic foundations of life.

Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist Christof Migone has been making artwork since the late 80's, originally focusing on poetry and radio. He gradually crossed the boundaries of various mediums using electronics, video, audio, performance and text as tools of investigation. Migone's practice can be difficult to navigate; he is an artist, a curator (at the Blackwood Gallery in Mississauga, Ontario), and an academic (holds a PhD in performance art). What is specific in his work is the concentration on the banal habits of a daily routine — only experienced in the somewhat *undocumentable* of the individual. The artist's practice can be broken down into potential concerns with *the body, language, and the mundane*. However these sensibilities are not mutually exclusive. Each repeats its overarching examination of the obsessive, trying to achieve an understanding of how each artwork gesture *endures* physically or mentally, *translates* from one sense to the other, or is *reordered* through circling in place. Migone challenges the process of translation, and how it can be applied to other forms of communication such as bodily senses or linguistics (for example). He uses microphones and video cameras to document the workings of the body, reformulates language through dissecting text and reordering the words in new configurations, and spends days, weeks, and sometimes months on a single obsession.

A disco ball has lost all its mirrors. It revolves fixed in the CCS Bard gallery space as a marker for the obsession of circling ideas. Piece by piece Migone picked the mirrors from what he calls a "death star" — a Star Wars reference that does make you wonder whether its suspicious silent motion will eventually devastate everything in the space — and after 12 hours (spread over 3 days) of picking at the mirrors the ball was bare. It still has all the parts accessible to register it as a disco ball; its information has simply been reordered.

Here fixation is also connected to the slight shifts between ideas; disco ball turns into *Disco Fall* (2008). The object is in motion and constant transformation as it turns, building a slow momentum. Is the exhibition revolving around this *Disco Fall* or is it the other way around? A similar process of deconstruction is used in Migone's 2008 *Single* text piece, where he's gathered the lyrics of 45 "classic" songs in alphabetical order. Repeated words are not allowed and the lyrics are then printed seamlessly on 7"x7" white record sleeves and hung in a row on the gallery wall. The resulting text is more like a collection than a serenade: gathering words that may constitute the essence of each song.

In *Foursome*, a 2007 audio piece originally conceived for a Tate Modern Resonance FM radio broadcast, Migone engaged four dance choreographers to view Samuel Beckett's *Quad* teleplay. In the teleplay, four hooded individuals enter a mat shape on the ground resembling a boxing ring without its ropes. Each character engaged in a kind of wordless, private dialogue, is assigned a metronome-like tempo, and the choreography advances with the build-up of a drum-circle type beat. The *Foursome* participants were to recall the teleplay from memory and describe it in their own way, whether it was through the vocal description of emotions, imagery or interpretations of the piece. Will the individuals revert to a descriptive analysis of the video? Will they point out colors or sounds as the foregrounding element? Or will they resort to a complete emotional reading of what they see? Perhaps it is the viewer who will describe *Quad* through their reading of *Foursome*.

Migone abstracts the final stages of his artwork sometimes making it impossible to identify the source material. The work can be read as a kind of *trompe l'oreille* disguising itself as white noise or a sensical narrative. For example in Migone's 1998 *Crackers* the artist placed an ad in the newspaper asking volunteers to participate in a series of tapings where their cracking joints would be recorded. Most of the 7 tracks on *Crackers* record the in-between space using its own materials as the medium of documentation (sound, muscle, fluid, flesh). The final tracks are manipulated, pulled, cut, and only subtly recall documentation of such a personal space, creating a disturbing voyeuristic closeness.

Migone's interest in the body often leans towards or results in shame or embarrassment. The body presents many opportunities for this: flatulence, secretion, contortion, aggression, immodesty are among a few scenarios that Christof plays with in the exhibition space. He also uses the body as a vehicle to bring the ordinary outside of its comfortable surroundings. Experiencing and marking the progressive effect of this discomfort is part of Migone's use of endurance in his performances. In *Evasion or how to perform a tongue escape in public* (2000) the artist has video-taped a close shot of his mouth where he sticks out his tongue "as far as he can, for as long as he can".

The tongue in *Evasion* is a visual allegory representing language, communication, sensuality, and is simultaneously a limb of aggression, of necessity, and repulsion. The tongue is also in the process of attempting a kind of impossible rupture – dividing the fleshy muscle from the idea of language – all the while knowing it cannot succeed. At 9:02 minutes, the artist is fixated on enduring the physical exhaustion from forcing a cluster of body parts to pull together and produce a simple action. Migone's originally strong and straight tongue in *Evasion* eventually quivers, drips saliva and loses (face) control trying to fight the need to recoil.

It is evident that the artist contributes time and energy that is consuming and at times physically demanding, often using his own body as the measuring tool for the duration of his performances. *Microhole* are examples of this. *Microhole* has been reproduced on-site and for the first time in stereo for this exhibition. Holding a microphone and recording the sounds Migone has repetitively hit a wall until a hole broke the surface in two locations at stereo distance. The recording is then attached to two speakers affixed behind the holes and the microphones left impotently on the ground. The repeated gesture of hitting until the wall and microphone both are damaged challenges the endurance of the materials he uses, but also measures the impact between the mic and wall through sound. The duplication of the "performance" extends the damage to the artist's body, the audio recording the artist's exhaustion into the track.

As part of an ongoing project titled *Pastime* that will eventually involve fifty participants, Migone enlisted the help of 14 volunteers between the ages of 10 and 60 to repeat their age out loud in front of a video camera. The participants are then paired in two-channel video projections; *Pastime: 27-57* (2008) and *Pastime: 20-50* (2008) are shown together in this exhibition.



Christof Migone, *Microhole*, 2006

Christof Migone, *Single*, 2008

- 01 ABC (Jackson 5)
- 02 Back in Black (AC/DC)
- 03 Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen)
- 04 Changes (David Bowie)
- 05 Crazy In Love (Beyonce)
- 06 Creep (Radiohead)
- 07 Damaged Goods (Gang of Four)
- 08 Fight The Power (Public Enemy)
- 09 Gloria (Patti Smith)
- 10 Good Vibrations (Beach Boys)
- 11 Heart of Glass (Blondie)
- 12 Holiday in Cambodia (Dead Kennedys)
- 13 Hound Dog (Elvis Presley)
- 14 I Wanna Be Sedated (Ramones)
- 15 I Want You To Want Me (Cheap Trick)
- 16 I Zimbra (Talking Heads)
- 17 Louie Louie (The Kingsmen)
- 18 My Generation (The Who)
- 19 My Way (Paul Anka)
- 20 No, No, No (Yoko Ono)
- 21 Nuclear War (Sun Ra)
- 22 Orgasm Addict (Buzzcocks)
- 23 Out of Step (Minor Threat)
- 24 Persuasion (Throbbing Gristle)
- 25 Pocket Calculator (Kraftwerk)
- 26 Rapper's Delight (Sugarhill Gang)
- 27 Rebel Girl (Bikini Kill)
- 28 Rid Of Me (PJ Harvey)
- 29 Ring Of Fire (Johnny Cash)
- 30 Sex Machine (James Brown)
- 31 Shaft (Issac Hayes)
- 32 Sound of Silence (Simon & Garfunkel)
- 33 Stairway To Heaven (Led Zeppelin)
- 34 Tainted Love (Soft Cell)
- 35 Take A Chance On Me (ABBA)
- 36 The Joker (Steve Miller Band)
- 37 The Message (Grandmaster Flash)
- 38 The Passenger (Iggy Pop)
- 39 There Is A War (Leonard Cohen)
- 40 Totally Wired (The Fall)
- 41 Walk On The Wild Side (Lou Reed)
- 42 White Christmas (Irving Berlin)
- 43 What's Going On (Marvin Gaye)
- 44 Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd)
- 45 Work It (Missy Elliott)



Christof Migone, *vex*, 1995

The 840 razorblades are the remains of a 14-hour (840 minutes) long performance the artist undertook in 1995. The piece was based on Erik Satie's "Vexations" in which the composer added a note to the score stating "To play this motif 840 times in succession, one would do well to prepare oneself beforehand, in the deepest silence, with serious immobilities." During his version of the performance, Migone made 840 edits with 840 razor blades of a prior recording of him counting to 840 while a vinyl record with a closed end groove repeated the last note of Satie's composition 840 times. Two copies of the recordings were put on reel-to-reel tape and the edits were done from one into the other. The resulting 27-minute audio combines both tapes and records a meditative passing of time, even the body's exhaustion over the 14-hour period, and irritation engraved on tape.

