

BodySleuth:  
Queer(y)ing Social Somatics through Virtual Spaces

by

Ri Lindegren

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Approved October 2021 by the  
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Eileen Standley, Co-Chair  
Jessica Rajko, Co-Chair  
Jake Pinholster  
Grisha Coleman  
Lauren Hayes

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2021

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the creation of queer community and embodied connection through physical and digital spaces during Covid-19. The BodySleuth Project was an experiment in prototyping social somatic experiences - discovering the limitations and possibilities for technology to deepen social camaraderie and self awareness through movement. The BodySleuth Project was a transmedia dance theater game that incorporated live and pre-recorded performances and real time interactivity across a virtual world. Characters or “Guardians” acted as movement guides and story facilitators across the Gather.Town landscape of Rolyrbee Island. Players worked together across time zones and geographical space in their own homes to uncover tactile and digital clues and explore their own bodies. Participants occupied a completely queer universe that has been designed for and by an LGBTQIA+ community.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Marcus White, Armani Moten, and Leslie Smith who have moved beyond this plane of existence.

You have all inspired me in your brilliance, dedication to your craft, and uplifted my connection to queer community.

Thank you for sharing your gifts in this life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BodySleuth is not a solo project, although it is a product of my imagination. It has been crafted through the skills, dreams, and ideas of many artists, friends, and collaborators. Eternal thanks to Olivia Hernandez for taking the first step with me in designing Legend of Thule, and running alongside me for both iterations of media design for BodySleuth. Your endurance and magical brain shaped BodySleuth into a digital dream. Deep gratitude to Kelly Fielder who jumped into zoom playspace with me during the heat of Arizona summer to share creative tactile imagination, and masked up for hours of in-person crafting to design gorgeous BodySleuth boxes. Grand Canyon-sized shout out to Morgan, Lynn, Kortney, and Amina Camille for sharing queer dreamspace, true friendship, story performance research, and emotional support. Immense thanks to Rosemary Jones for her brilliant game design brain and strategic contributions. Huge gratitude to Sophia Grasso, Yanett Ramirez, Laura Park, Coley Curry, and Esther Almazan for helping to ignite the spark and keep it going.

To Hans, Jordan, Vladimir, Janine, Omar, Moonyeka, Leah, and Matt:

All the glitter, queer magic, and fairy godx blessings upon the BodySleuth performers, who gave their hearts, time, ideas, energy, and enthusiasm, and impressive writing skills to unravel their characters, tease out their queer identities, and dream up embodied theatrical digital adventures. Thank you so much for going on this experimental journey with me.

Thank you to my many mentors and advisors for your wisdom, guidance, laughter, willingness to play, and reminders to breathe:

Eileen Standley, Jessica Rajko, Grisha Coleman, Lauren Hayes, Jake Pinholster.

To my mom and late father for believing in education and the transformational power of the arts.

Neverending gratitude to Jen, Tremayne, Trent, Bianca, Liv, Matt, and My-Linh for being my on-the-ground support team.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
CHAPTER	
1 WELCOME .....	1
Culture of Gratitude.....	2
Cruise Rolyrbee Island.....	4
BodySleuth Summary .....	7
Discover the Realms .....	8
The Five Realms.....	10
The Gathering Posts .....	13
Meet the Guardians .....	17
Queer Plotting.....	21
Embodied Play .....	24
Origins .....	26
Landing.....	29
2 SOCIAL SOMATICS .....	30
Somatic Snackbite.....	33
3 QUEER(Y)ING .....	34
Somatic Snackbite.....	39
4 TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY .....	40
Somatic Snackbite.....	47

CHAPTER	Page
5 BODYSLEUTH BOXES .....	49
Somatic Snackbite .....	55
6 PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH .....	56
Somatic Snackbite .....	61
7 MOVING BODY CENTERED DESIGN FORWARD .....	64
WORKS CITED .....	69

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. BodySleuth Logo .....	1
2. Map of Rolyrbee Island .....	4
3. Flier for BodySleuth 1.0 .....	6
4. Mystic Mountains/Red Realm .....	10
5. Community Kitchen/Orange Realm .....	10
6. Underground Library Level 1/Yellow Realm .....	11
7. Underground Library Level 2/Yellow Realm .....	11
8. Botanical Garden/Green Realm .....	12
9. Volcano of Remembrance/Blue Realm .....	12
10. Inside the Main Cabin .....	13
11. The maze of the Petrified Forest .....	14
12. Screenshot of the Well of Wisery and one of Amaranth's videos .....	14
13. Screenshot of the Field of Flowers .....	15
14. Screenshot of the Grand Road of Keys .....	15
15. Screenshot of the Performance Plateau .....	16
16. BodySleuth 2.0 flier. From L to R: Zayne, Sienti, Drella, Malin, Remalia.....	17
17. Video still of Zayne guiding players through grounding movements .....	21
18. Video still of Sienti facilitating players through digestive track nourishment ..	21
19. Video still of Drella offering a gesture of creative communication.....	21



Figure	Page
20. Video still of Malin guiding players through plant care .....	22
21. Video still of Remalia moving players around the Volcano .....	22
22. Video still of Amaranth stuck in the Well of Wisery .....	22
23. Video still of Zayne leaving messages to players: Book of Ancestors.....	23
24. Video still of the Guardians revealing Rolyrbee's origins .....	23
25. Video still of "Death and the Moon" by Hans Rasch/Remalia .....	36
26. Screenshot of Altar of the Ancestors in Gather.Town by Hans/Remalia .....	37
27. Screenshot of Gather.Town: create an avatar .....	44
28. Screenshot of avatar moving around the main island map.....	44
29. Screenshot of an avatar moving through Malin's Botanical Garden.....	45

## CHAPTER 1

### WELCOME



*Figure 1. BodySleuth Logo*

#### **How to Experience this Thesis**

As I was writing this thesis, a quote that I cannot trace to a person appeared in my notes from a Performance as Research class with Professor Kristin Hunt. It lingered in my thoughts for days:

“We have an opportunity and obligation as artists to fill a void. Seek out spaces where there is opportunity for art to burgeon and flourish and take over a space.”

This project sought to fill a void in LGBTQIA+ digital space caused by individual and collective loss - of life, of community, of movement, and of joy.

## Culture of Gratitude

Dear Reader,

Welcome to a written reflection on my process and practice of combining dance and technology. Before you dive into this long academic read, please take a few deep breaths, move and stretch any parts of your body that need some attention, and hydrate and nourish yourself in any ways that feel good. If active movement (running, jumping, wall climbing, vigorous shimmies...) were plausible while reading that would be an ideal way to wake up the brain and focus, but I don't think the technology is quite there...yet. So, settle yourself in.

You will find quite a few recommendations like the one above. I am going to call them "somatic snackbites." Tiny moments to replenish your brain and body. If you go to <http://www.rilind.design/bodysleuth> you will find audiovisual supplements that offer moments of respite from (or enhancements to) the digital screen. I encourage you to pause your reading and try them on.

The first chapter is more of a welcome packet: many pages of information and background about the world, origins, materials, characters, and players of BodySleuth. From there you can choose your own pathway forward among the thematic content that shaped my practice and process in developing this work.

Themes include: social somatics, queer(y)ing, technologies of play, touch beyond a screen, and Performance as Research. These are not traditional chapters. They all contribute to how I frame the process of cultivating body-centered design. Each section

includes a personal introduction to the why, brief external context, how the theme weaves itself through BodySleuth, and a somatic snackbite. Then there is a conclusion to wrap everything up into a messy final bow.

There were two iterations of this project that occurred. The themes refer to the overarching connections between both versions, and I will highlight any differences by articulating if it was version one (v1.0) or version two (v2.0). An intentional use of they/them/theirs will appear as preferred pronouns for certain characters and performers.

I have created a padlet (post-able website) where you can post comments, thoughts, or feedback as or after you read: <https://padlet.com/elinddance/bodySleuth>. You can post anonymously or leave your name. I would love to continue the conversation into the future of your curiosities, questions, research, and practice.

Time capsule: this is a snapshot of where I'm at in 2021 ...if I ever read this again, what will have changed? I hope body-centered design is the standard and the culture has shifted into communicating via energy fields and multidimensional space travel. Or eco-friendly glitter fields. Or cloud-craft carriers. Dream on.

Thanks for reading!

In gratitude,

Ri

## You are Invited to Cruise Rolyrbee Island



Figure 2. Map of Rolyrbee Island

Ready to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime virtual cruise to the elusive Rolyrbee Island?

[pronounced Roll-uhr-bee]

For centuries, Rolyrbee has only opened its doors to those who seek it as a haven, a place of respite from the queer phobias of the cishet world, a convergence of remembrance of our blood & chosen ancestors. You will encounter five divinely queer Guardians to guide your adventures on Rolyrbee Island. This year with the pandemic rocketing in uncertain directions, the Guardians of Rolyrbee have decided to open up the island to virtual adventuring to restore the queer magic that they see is being depleted.

They may not admit this, but the island is in dire need of rejuvenation...and you and your friends might be the only way to keep the island afloat.

By signing up for this adventure (via [www.bodysleuth.org](http://www.bodysleuth.org)) you are opening up portals to a queerer world. You are encouraged to invite a friend or four to work with you in teams of five to solve clues, move in a queer gaggle across the virtual world, and support your mental and physical wellbeing. Each of you will receive a BodySleuth Box adventure kit in the mail at least one week prior to the start of your adventure. This box is essential to your ability to travel across the Five Realms of the island and should remain intact until you are instructed to use it.

The platform the divine Rolyr Guardians chose for your quest is Gather.Town (a virtual meeting space that feels like an 8-bit video game straight out of 1992). You can design your own queer hangout space for you and your friends in the Community Gallery, open 24-7 for interior design, virtual videochat, and karaoke.

Turning on your video and audio for a deepened experience of virtual presence is strongly encouraged, as are physical or digital outfits that represent yourself/your alter ego in this experience. Queer visibility is vital.

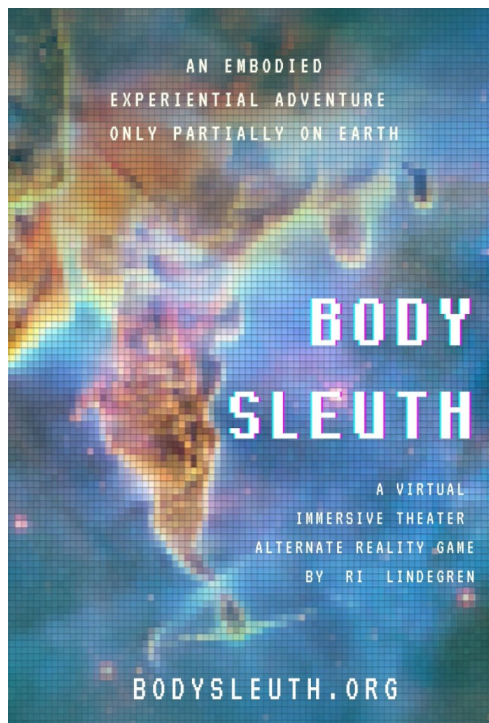
Time expectations for game play are 1-3 hours a day for each day of game play. You can invest as much or as little time as you have available, but a minimum of one hour nightly for portal quests/team challenges is expected, and one hour of virtual cruise ship time for human connection and self care time is recommended per day.

The world of Rolyrbee is a magical evolution in progress. As the first virtual visitors to this island, we ask for your patience with any technological malfunctions or Rolyr Guardian guidance fumbles. The translation between embodied magic and

electronic wifi signals is often contradictory. We welcome and encourage communication and feedback on your experience throughout your visit and will provide a direct channel for questions and concerns. This project of translation between Rolyrbee and earth is a graduate thesis dance and technology endeavor supported by a team of people invested in providing quality virtual multidimensional world building for the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

### READY TO PLAY?

Go to [www.rilind.design/bodysleuth](http://www.rilind.design/bodysleuth) and click on the “PLAY!” Link.



*Figure 3. Flier for BodySleuth 1.0*

## **BodySleuth Summary**

This performance sought to cultivate the creation of queer community through a digital transmedia game. Rolyrbee Island is symbolic of a queer safe haven that exists in another dimension and appears only to those who seek it here on Earth. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, players can only access this world through their digital screens, as the people who live in Rolyrbee are very concerned about the interplanetary spread of the virus. Players encounter opportunities to explore the digital world, solve creative puzzles, engage in embodied somatic exploration, and uncover a mystery that could save the island of Rolyrbee from disappearing entirely. Players themselves control the story of Rolyrbee through screen-based interactions and the queer mythos they collectively create.

The overarching goals of my thesis process were to build virtual queer community (social) using online platforms (technology) and movement experiences (somatics and dance). What I discovered were some essential foundations for innovating shared movement experiences in an online environment that could be replicated across other mediums, in-person and in digital spaces. In my initial technological research and post-reflection process, I drew heavily on aspects of play, game design, immersive theater, alternate reality games, narrative choice games, video games, and networked environments. I use the terms “participants” and “players” interchangeably and to engage the action of both play and participation that is necessary to engage with a social somatic experience (being both in and aware of one’s body, as well as in relationship to the people and places around oneself).



## Discover the Realms

The realms that players moved through matched the sequential processing of movement through the body. The awareness or transference of energy began with grounding through the heels into the earth, reverberating up through the buoyancy of the knees, circulating around the pelvis, spiraling into the torso, perambulating out through the limbs, diving back into an internal sensing of the body, and finally radiating energy out to connect with the world beyond the body. These five main levels of connection (grounding, centering, creating, healing, and connecting) formed the levels (or realms) of travel through Rolyrbee Island. As a choreographer, I have learned to value physical objects as creative partners in movement, enjoying both the tactile sensation of touch and the constraints and limitations of physical connection with an object. Tactile experiencing became an important throughline of both creative constraint and physical touch during periods of extreme isolation. As a dancer who finds deep connection through partner work and physical contact, the lack of physical touch was particularly challenging during Covid-19. I wondered how I could engage touch, smell, and taste beyond the audiovisual offerings afforded in the online platforms. I love dancing with random objects and movement challenge prompts that offer creative constraints and spark my imagination. In working with the BodySleuth Box co-designer, Kelly Fielder, we explored a large range of tactile and sensory- engaging objects and experiences that involved food, plants, textures, smells, and visual props.

Part of the initial experience was focused on creative assembly (loosely linked to Deleuze and Guatarri's concept of *assemblage*). The overarching goal was to create quests that were guided and imagined for an online audience (engaging a sense of

fantasy) while recognizing the physical reality of spatial and embodied experience of remaining in a domestic space. A curiosity that lingered in my imagination was how the experience of playing BodySleuth could change or transform the lived experience of connecting to the space around the players, or to their connections to their bodies. This is “data” that I did not explicitly ask about (a retroactively realization of inquiry) but I was able to glean some information from video observation and post-performance feedback from performers and players. Spatial embodied connection will be discussed throughout this thesis.

## The Five Realms

The images below are screenshots of the digital spaces on the Gather.Town platform with brief descriptions of the movement actions players were guided through by each guardian. Each of the Five Realms represents a different color of the rainbow, connected to a different part of the physical, emotional, and social body.

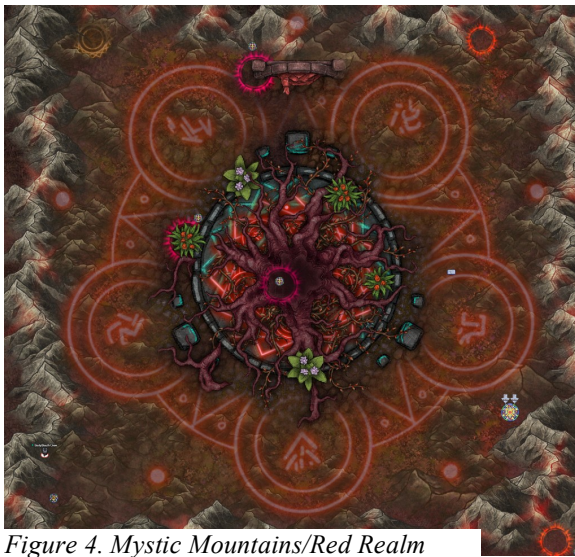


Figure 4. Mystic Mountains/Red Realm

### ***Red Realm: Mystic Mountains with Zayne***

Creative grounding actions through the pelvis that introduce players to the virtual world.

### ***Orange Realm: Community***

#### ***Kitchen with Sienti***

Organ and spine-focused centering through shared meals and movement-based storytelling.



Figure 5. Community Kitchen/Orange Realm

***Yellow Realm: Underground Library with Drella***

Creative gesture spellcasting and embodied language creation through limb and whole body connection.



Figure 6. Underground Library Level 1/Yellow Realm



Figure 7. Underground Library Level 2/Yellow Realm

***Green Realm: Botanical Garden with Malin***

Taking up space and connecting to the environment through the healing power of plants and self-nurturance.



Figure 8. Botanical Garden/Green Realm

***Blue-Violet Realm: Volcano of Remembrance with Remalia***

Community connection through sharing stories of queer ancestors and piecing together

information between teams.

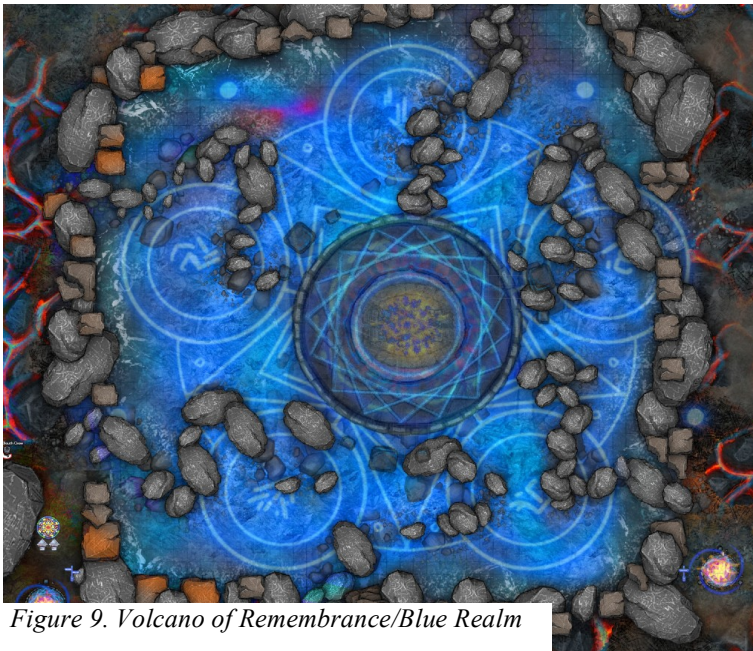


Figure 9. Volcano of Remembrance/Blue Realm

## Gathering Posts

Scattered around Rolyrbee Island were a queer variety pack of fun spaces to encourage virtual social gatherings and new places to explore.

### *Main Cabin*

Landing spot for players to arrive in. Included digital tetris and card games, a shared keyboard to play, and access to the island map and community gallery.



Figure 10. Inside the Main Cabin

## *Petrified Forest*

Deadwood forest players navigate through to face their fears.



*Figure 11. The maze of the Petrified Forest*

## *Well of Wisery*

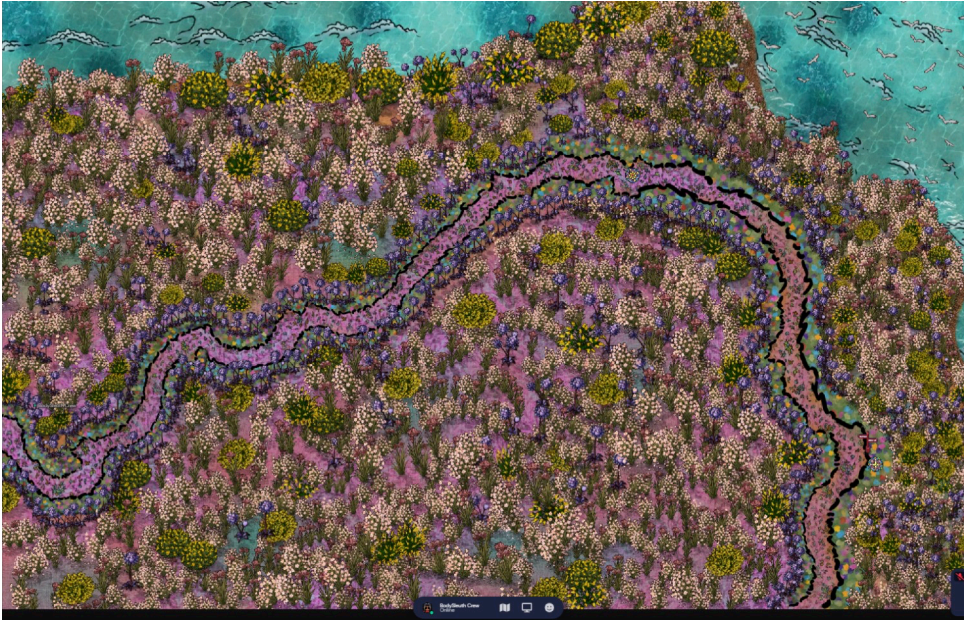
A well of wisdom and wisecracks where many hidden secrets of Rolyrbee Island are hidden, currently through the character Amaranth who is stuck in the well.



*Figure 12. Screenshot of the Well of Wisery and one of Amaranth's videos*

### ***Field of Flowers***

Playful field to explore. Missing things frequently appear here.



*Figure 13. Screenshot of the Field of Flowers*

### ***Grand Road of Keys***

A musical road of literal keyboard keys and sometimes clues to other mysteries. Favorite karaoke spot of the Guardians and Amaranth.



*Figure 14. Screenshot of the Grand Road of Keys*



## *Performance Plateau*

A bejeweled platform stage for dance battles, drag shows, musicals, and all things performative.



*Figure 15. Screenshot of the Performance Plateau*

## Meet the Guardians



Figure 16. BodySleuth 2.0 flier. From L to R: Zayne, Sienti, Drella, Malin, Remalia

### **ZAYNE: RED REALM - GROUNDING**

*Archetype:* The spiritual, the samaritan and the mystic, protector of the mountains

A sage and visionary. They often seem to shapeshift forms and frames of mind, appearing to always be here, or there, or somewhere else entirely. They radiate a delicate strength, a clear calm insightful mind, and a luminous presence. They prefer the company of birds and books and bread to people, and spend the majority of their time in a remote cabin high in the mountains. Zayne always welcomes visitors who make the long trek to visit them with hot cocoa and warm soup, regardless of the time of day or night.

*Movement tasks:* Finding sense of connection to the earth and floor through a digital screen. Guide us through an imaginary place. What is our sensory experience?

How do we notice our bodies in this place? Connection to the earth. Provoke us to want to be here and explore. A grounding exercise that unveiled a virtual puzzle through physical puzzles to unlock aspects of the world.

***SIENTI: ORANGE REALM - CENTERING***

*Archetype:* the creative, chef & storyteller

A creative storyteller and chef. People come to see Sienti because they are hungry, but they stay for hours to hear their/her/his stories. They/she/he seemed to know a tale for every broken heart, mischievous child, anxious loved one, stalwart fighter, and exhausted parent to lift their spirits and get lost for a little while. Their/Her/His food is simple, wholesome, and well-spiced, not unlike the chef herself. They/She/He wears earth tones in thoughtfully contrasting patterns, well-fitted pants and shirts of flexible fabric.

*Movement tasks:* A soup making party that teaches us how to cook something using our bodies. Connection to center/spine - enliven/nourish. How do we nourish our bodies?

***DRELLA: YELLOW REALM - CREATING***

*Archetype:* the intellectual, keeper of facts, knowledge, and books

An intellectual, dandy, elegant, well-spoken, direct, and frank. They are well-respected, well-read, and finely dressed in dapper suits and gowns, always with a book or bit of technology in hand. They wear burgundy, emerald greens, mahogany browns, and deep purples. They have an essence of blood orange and fresh geranium. They are both fiery

and patient, slow to anger but you never want to cross them. They have an encyclopedic knowledge of a select few topics - flowers, rocks, social history, and volcanoes. You will never catch them/her/him without a futuristic writing tool behind their/her/his ear and bit of light in their/her/his hand.

*Movement tasks:* Spellcasting charades - how do we use our limbs/gestures to communicate? Leads us through a series of Guardian gestures to unlock the door to the library.

### ***MALIN: GREEN REALM - HEALING***

*Archetype:* the caregiver, healer of bones & plants

A healer and caretaker. They/she/he is quiet, short-tempered, and kind. They/she/he is generous in action but knows their/her/his words tend to get him/her/them in trouble. They/she/he has a knack for mending broken bones, surface wounds, near-death illnesses, as well as tending plants and animals. Their/her/his arboretum is legendary. They/she/he wears bright colors that match a ring of many colors that they/she/he wears on the fourth finger, and prefers to wear skirts for “ventilation,” strongly worn sandals, and a huge woven hat that holds herbs and flowers (the medicine kit). They/she/he wears most of the healing props as a tool belt around the waist and chest. They/she/he is thorough, calm, and efficient, but not particularly fast. They/she/he loves fresh mint, lemon, and basil, and is usually snacking on some kind of fruit or vegetable.

*Movement tasks:* Guide us through different ways we can heal with plants and travel through space. What obstacles do we encounter? Connection to nature/space.

***REMALIA: BLUE REALM - CONNECTION***

*Archetype:* the rebel, the elder, the pleasure keeper

A rebel and adventurer. They/she/he push the envelope, find the porous edges of all things and encourage the overflow. They/she/he are brave, charming, curious, inquisitive, and a master of controlled chaos while fighting for the underdog. They/she/he usually take carefully calculated risks, but occasionally plunge head first into the fray. They/she/he wear colorful patterns of all stripes and shades and hard soled red and black boots and gloves that protect them when they get too close to playing with fire (or run-ins with lava). They/she/he smell like smoke and figs and cedar and are known to break out into spontaneous dancing. They/she/he knows the layout of the island like the back of their hand, as they are prone to frequent wandering in this galaxy and beyond.

*Movement tasks:* Tell us a story of one of the ancestors. Inspire us to call on our own ancestors. How do we nourish our hearts & minds? Connection to whole body and to community/social. Make s'mores together while telling stories of our queer ancestors. Who has walked behind, beside, and before us?

## Queer Plotting (v2.0)



*Figure 17: Video still of Zayne guiding players through grounding movements*

Zayne is trying to find stable ground and needs help collecting enough root energy to carve out a safe space...they have disappeared from the Mystic Mountains and no one knows where they have gone.

Sienti is searching for a recipe that was lost long long ago that heals the digestive track and thinks Remalia might know some of the ingredients if only they could remember what they were.



*Figure 18: Video still of Sienti facilitating players through digestive track nourishment*



*Figure 19: Video still of Drella offering a gesture of creative communication*

Drella is trying to appease the Vila spirits that protect the library after one of their precious books has gone missing. They need a specific plant that Malin grows that makes the Vila calm down.

Malin's garden keeps having terrible cases of root rot. The negative energy from the Petrified Forest is seeping into his sacred space and he needs the help of Drella and Sienti to find a cure.



Figure 20: Video still of Malin guiding players through plant care in the Botanical Garden



Figure 21. Video still of Remalia moving players around the Volcano of Remembrance

Remalia has noticed that the small fire at the volcano that is the heart of the island is starting to fizzle out. The ancestors have to be remembered to rekindle the flame. They are in a relationship with Drella and learning how to open their heart.

Amaranth is seemingly permanently stuck in the Well of Wisery. He is an earthling who established permanent residence on Rolyrbee Island. He holds clues of wisdom and wisecracks,

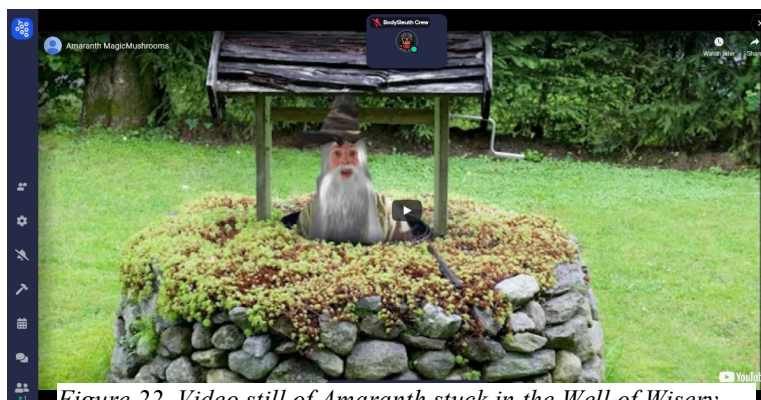


Figure 22. Video still of Amaranth stuck in the Well of Wisery

chaos and calm. Some are worth following, and some are total rubbish.



Figure 23: Video still of Zayne leaving messages to players about the Book of Ancestors

Zayne received the book of the queer ancestors from the library after a hint from the Well of Wisery that a page or two was missing from the book. Zayne is on their own quest to find out what should be in the missing pages.

Players work in small and large groups to help each Guardian find what has been lost, and they receive in return key gestures of grounding, nourishment, creativity, healing, and community that help stabilize each realm on the island.

Rewards in embodied experiences and quests were used as incentives to engage players in preventing the island from sinking...or falling out of the multiverse (depending on the version).



Figure 24. Video still of the Guardians revealing Rolyrbee's origins



## **Embodied Play**

I wanted to create an online experience that could happen in real time and forge deeper connections between participants and individual connections to their bodies. In my own experience of LGBTQ+ community, I know so many people who disassociate from their bodies for a myriad of reasons...disconnection through media-driven culture, sexist and gendered body image expectations, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, etc. I decided to turn into the world of fantasy and movement through storytelling specifically for the LGBTQ+ community as an outlet for community building and mind/body healing. I wondered not only what kinds of technology would be helpful in enhancing somatic experience, but specifically how the role of play and games in an online community could benefit the LGBTQ+ community. I initially imagined an Alternate Reality Game-type experience where participants received clues to help solve a mystery of embodied exploration. I wanted the event to be as tactile and sensorial as possible, for the experience to translate from screen to physical space.

The somatic foundation of the BodySleuth Project is rooted in the interconnectivity between body, mind, and spirit, the emotions and memories stored in our bodies, and agency in repatterning our nervous systems. In creating the skeleton for this thesis project, I assembled a framework of somatic origins that can be applied to a multitude of different embodied applications. The seven levels were inspired by yogic philosophy and the seven chakras, expanded in embodied knowledge through somatic postmodern contemporary dance classes, and reimagined in queer living room dance parties during Covid-19. Exploring how pranayamas (yogic breathing exercises) could

balance and focus my mind and relax or energize my body influenced how I understood the importance of breath and mind/body connection.

While the ultimate goal for this project was to explore how I could engage people in somatic understanding through a virtual screen, I also wanted to share the joy moving and connecting to the body with a group of people who I thought could benefit from it. When thinking of moving from an internal sense of being in my body, I struggle to translate the experience into verbal language. There is a loss of data in the interpretation, just as there is a loss of data in imprinting my experience into neatly defined categories. When I am in the dance world, I am “dancing” or “moving” or “sensing my body” or engaging in “somatic experiencing.” When I am in the non dance world I am “dancing” or it may appear as though I am standing still or moving fast, or getting lost in discussions of embodiment. I struggled frequently with how to describe and market the interdisciplinary nature of the BodySleuth Project. I settled on social somatic to describe embodied consciousness, virtual or digital to describe the online technology used, and queer as an umbrella term for the LGBTQIA+ community. No matter what terminology I stick to, the sparkle of BodySleuth Project is in how it shimmies and shakes and leaves little pockets of glitter somewhere in its midst.

## Origins

I have been slowly piecing together research on technologically inclined somatic experiences over the past three years of my graduate MFA program. My original intention was the design of a live wearable technology experience that offered multimedia biofeedback for spinal movement exploration. The Covid-19 pandemic hit in the middle of my research process in March 2020 and I had to switch gears abruptly to a digital, touchless, socially isolated world, which is in opposition to the movement experience I desired to create. My thesis advisor, Marcus White, passed away suddenly in May 2020, and I decided to focus on building a virtual LGBTQIA+ space in remembrance of and dedication to queer community that we both shared (as well as a love for Vogue and House cultures). The result was a hybrid digital/physical space that offered both tactile and sensory engagement through dance and imaginative play for and by a queer community.

Connecting humans together, bridging across artistic disciplines, moving bodies in space, and deepening into possibilities for joy through play has been a thematic focus of my work. Queerness, gender fluidity, questioning and decentering whiteness, spirituality through social justice and anti-oppression work, and centering embodied knowledge are inherent in my process via my upbringing and identities. BodySleuth Project is a mashup of many pieces of myself, collaged together with gifts from each of my collaborators and mentors in this creative endeavor.

My research drew on my background as a multi-genre dance and media artist, student of anthropology and somatic practices, and my professional survival skills as an event organizer, creative practice cultivator, movement aficionado, and educator. I also identify as white presenting (American with English, Swedish, Scottish, Irish, Chickasaw, and German ancestors), queer (fluid in both gender expression and sexual orientation), working-to-middle class, able-bodied, and highly educated, to name a few labels that both situate my authorship and go against my desire to be placed in a category. The focus of my research before and during my graduate dance and technology MFA program has been on the relationship between movement, human connection, and audiovisual and interactive technologies.

Prior works that have informed the BodySleuth Project include:

- *DanceTheRoof* - an informal, collaborative playspace and skillshare exchange between dancers and videographers that took place on a rooftop in NYC for one day every summer for three years. <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/221903531>
- *Vogue or Vague* – a tangible and archival media installation that samples 50 popular Vogue dance videos on YouTube and asks audience members to show their understanding of Vogue culture by deciding if what they are seeing is “Vogue” or not (“vague”). <https://vimeo.com/335219755>
- *Spine Sensing* - a wearable spine with microcontroller sensors that supported exploration of spinal range of motion and patterning through social gameplay.
- *Legend of Thule* - a narrative text-based somatic alternate reality game via the Twine platform. <https://thuleisland.itch.io/islandlore>

- *Dear Spine* - a virtual environment of an experiential somatic museum through the memories embedded in my spine and connected organs.  
<https://www.artsteps.com/view/5eaa4278fea5c26fac2d3722>
- *Club Chairuntine* – a virtual queer club space with projections and live dancers in a queer club, and audience participation online.  
<https://vimeo.com/539426193/60093f80bb>
- *DiaSpectra* – a somatic breathing meditation and immersive media experience that was part of a National Science Foundation Grant called the “Workplace Wellness Project.” <https://vimeo.com/499357966>
- *BodySleuth Project* - a queer community building hybridization of online world building, game play, immersive theater, dance performance, and somatic exploration. <https://rilind.design/bodysleuth>

## Landing

If you have made it this far, your eyeballs must be tired. Please close your eyes for a minute (or more!), take a few deep breaths into your diaphragm, and look away from the screen. Stretch, grab a drink, give someone a hug...whatever you need.

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the thematic content. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i>	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i>	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i>	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i>	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i>	56

## CHAPTER 2

### SOCIAL SOMATICS

Ready to take it to the club? I'm going to time travel to pre-pandemic times....

I am in a club dancing with a group of friends and a song that makes my feet just itch to dance comes on (always and forever Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" or some deep house). I am aware of how my body responds to the music and to the movements of the people around me. The bass rumbles down into my pelvis and feet, the high hat accents tap out through my fingertips and head, while the melody undulates into my spine and out through my limbs. Then I take it a level deeper and notice how my muscles feel warm and limber and ready for action. I'm ready to dip or jump or sashay or sway. Direct eye contact and smiles exchanged with friends or a cute person on the dance floor feed my energy levels and emotional highs, amping up my own awareness of movement through "being seen." It is a social somatic performance of diving deeper into my own embodied awareness of my possibilities for movement, how dancing feels in my body, in response to the people and spaces around me. I am aware of who I am and how I move in relationship to the world around me. This, for me, is pure unadulterated joy.

Somatics is not a universal monolithic experience, but a personal and transformational one. For some, somatics is a sacred practice, a healing practice, a connection to ancestors practice. For some somatics is a check-in practice, a re-alignment practice, a present pause practice, a reminder to breathe practice, a practice to name

emotions. For some it is a stretching of ligaments, muscle, fascia, loosening the connective tissue, shaking off stress, tuning into joy, anger, calm, sadness, fear, love. Somatics, at its core meaning, soma, or of the body, centers us in our physicality. We remind ourselves that we have to take care of our whole selves, that body and mind are connected, integrated, inseparable from the experience of being alive in a human body. Generative Somatics views the relationships between personal, community, and social transformation as interdependent. Somatics is a “practice-able theory of change that can move us toward individual, community, and collective liberation through working to embody transformation” (Generative Somatics). Although both “somatics” and “social somatics” have been defined in different ways by practitioners coming primarily out of Western postmodern and contemporary dance fields (Eddy, Green). I use the term social somatics as an intentional reminder of the relationships between internal and external. I think of social somatics as happening in three layers of awareness. I notice the sensations of my physical body, I am conscious of thinking about what is happening between my emotions and movement, and I am aware of the social influence of people and place in relationship to the other two layers of mind/body connection. I deeply felt the absence of the third social layer during periods of extreme isolation in my body during the pandemic. The social and spatial patterns that had helped me thrive previously were on pause for an indefinite amount of time. I needed the joy of social dance and playful interactions with other people to feel fulfilled in a social somatic way.

Where is the social and the somatic in computing? How could the joy of a social somatic experience be translated onto and through a digital screen? What are the possibilities and limitations of the social and the somatic for play?



Zayne was the character who initiated a sense of grounding in the BodySleuth Project, guiding players through the sensual experience of pelvic motion via a Mystic Mountain dance party. Two different performers played Zayne in v1.0 (Janine) and v2.0 (Moonyeka) and each brought their own lived social somatic practices into the experience in ways that I felt were both sensual and spiritual. In the words of Moonyeka they were gifting us with “glamor magic,” which feels so lovingly queer. Their dance parties were intended to be spaces of internal somatic exploration as well as joy. Through the cameras that were left on during the Gather.Town performances, I was able to witness how players were initiating and playing with movement from their pelvis, and I felt joy in moving my pelvis along side everyone at the party. On the other side of the computer screen, players and performers were smiling, shaking their hips fast or circling them really slow, swaying gently with their eyes closed. I could sense some uncertainty from a few players as to what they were supposed to do (anxious glances back at the camera screen to see what they were supposed to be doing), but eventually everyone was in their own body in their own space. What I missed most in this experience was the sensation of surround sound – feet stepping, fabric swishing, laughter, chatter, and music that filled the air. Where were the hugs, high-fives, hands clasping, bodies touching, the smell of sweat and deodorant? These are all social somatic elements that could not be translated across the digital screen.

## Somatic Snackbite

It is time to dance with somebody. Ask a person you love to dance with if they will dance with you right now. At least one song. In-person, over the phone, on Whatsapp or Zoom – whatever your medium of connection is. Move your hips in as many directions as you can find. Smooth, choppy, fluid, soft, sharp, slow, fast. Open a random book or look at a picture and let it inspire the way you move. Find your own groove. Breathe. Let the stress go.

Let's go!

## Landing

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the thematic content. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i>	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i>	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i>	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i>	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i>	56

## CHAPTER 3

### QUEER(Y)ING

I explore queer delineations in dance through thomas f. defrantz's concepts of queer being, doing, and making (169). How I define queer, how I am queer, how I am seen as queer, and how I make something queer is....complex. There is no singular simple way that I know of to make queerness into an elevator pitch. And that is why I like the word queer. Queer is one of the few labels that has a variety pack of definitions to choose from. Am I queer based on the gender of the person I am attracted to? (everyone is beautiful, and then after that let's talk about it). How I express my own gender presentation? (professional gender neutral pajamas please, or shirt dresses, or rompers, or anything with a vest). All the ways my relationships do not fit the mold of mainstream heterosexual culture? (my list is too long to insert here). A reclamation of a derogatory slur? (we're here! we're queer!). A resistance to a specific sexuality or gender being taboo? (be your most authentic labeled or unlabeled self). For me the label queer is political, expansive, and specific. I use queer as an umbrella term that encompasses evolving communities of people who do not adhere to the binary genders and sexual identities of mainstream Western culture. I recognize that the term queer comes out of a history of resistance to oppression. The history of gender and sexuality has taught me that labels are fluid, and at this moment in time queer is the most expansive term in my vocabulary for describing a vast range of gender and sexual identities that resist or embrace categorization as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual, questioning, pansexual, two-spirit, and beyond.

I think about queer as a verb and a noun. What makes an object or an action “queer”? As I struggle to find my own words to define queer-ness, I know my perceptions of the term have been influenced by reading Audre Lorde, Judith Butler, Jack Halberstam, Eve Sedgwick, Gloria Anzaldua, Michel Foucault, thomas defrantz, Clare Croft, Darnell L. Moore, Adrienne Marie Brown, Alok Vaid-Menon, Vivek Shraya, and more. The spaces where I came into my queer identity were in underground punk rock shows, gay and lesbian bars, college dance parties, drag shows, house parties and potlucks, queer clubs, brunches, bookstores, nightclubs, and gender studies classrooms. The queer dancers who inspired me include Willi Ninja, Raja Feather Kelly, Deborah Lohse, Katy Pyle, Switch n’ Play drag collective, Nick Cave, Kyle Abraham, and Mei Yamaka. I knew how powerful it was to my young queer heart to see people who were openly queer onstage. If they were queer, did that make their dancing queer? Were they performing queer choreography or queer work? What was the difference between being a queer dancer and dancing queer?

When I read thomas f. defrantz’s article “Queer Dance in Three Acts” mental confetti erupted from my brain. The division of queer dance into being, doing, and making felt right in my own lived experience of being a queer dancer, dancing queerly, and making queer work. These three acts shaped how queerness felt to me both intrinsic and inseparable from the creation of the BodySleuth Project.

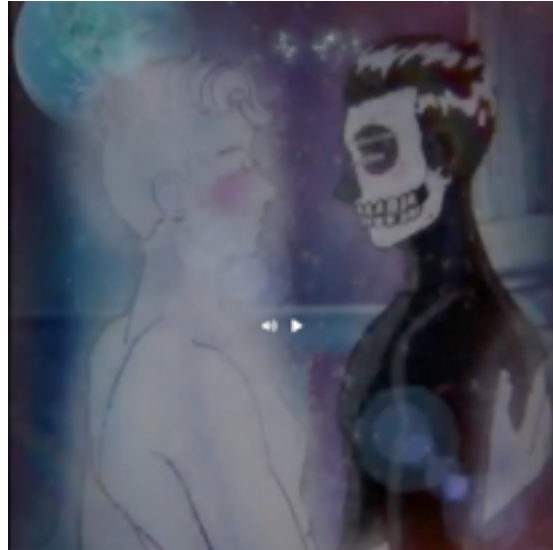
being, doing, making. this works for me as a three- part exercise worth revisiting again and again. there is something called queer, and it can be done and made as dance. reading emerging theories, participating in dancemaking differently, and navigating queer desires (defrantz 178).

BodySleuth Project was queerly danced and danced by queers in defrantz's delineations of being, doing, and making (169). As a queer dance artist, all the ways I dance are queer through how I express my gender or sexuality on a given day. As a queer person, I feel like it is incredibly hard to escape from the social expectations of gender expression, orientation, heterosexual normativity in movement spaces, so finding a place where myself and my queerness feel welcomed is difficult and frustrating. When I lived in NYC, I found a few places that were expressly "queer" dance spaces that felt affirming and welcoming - Ballez (queer ballet) classes, Yoga classes with Jacoby Ballard, Vogue and House class/club spaces, and occasionally a queer or feminist contemporary dance teacher. Feeling seen to be my most authentic self in queer dance spaces has also been an important part of building confidence to be myself and in my body as a queer person. How could I cultivate spaces for more queer people to be authentically themselves? To listen to their body? To find moments of joy? I wanted to make a virtual dance space for queer being, because online dance and gaming spaces still need to be made explicitly safe for LGBTQIA+ people.

The BodySleuth Project was marketed as a queer virtual adventure and all of the people involved identified with queer being in some way, shape, or form. The importance of the collaborative and collective efforts of doing and making queer dance were solidified for me in both the players' and performers' responses to the project. My collaborators were excited about queer dance making/making the project queer and they brought their full queer being, doing, and making forward. In the post-performance feedback form (v1.0), one player wrote "I enjoyed engaging with a space that was expressly queer from the get go" and a performer wrote "Other than the fact that

everyone creatively involved was queer, I did find it hard to tap into that aspect of the work. Why or how is it a queer utopia specifically?”. The dialogue and dance, I would like to call it queerying, around being, doing, and making Rolyrbee Island queer was in constant evolution between myself, the performers, designers, and players.

The Guardian that had the most explicitly queer section was Remalia in the Volcano of Remembrance. They were the oldest guardian on the island and were the divide between life and death, and responsible for the rites of remembering queer ancestors (queer being). Hans, as



*Figure 25. Video still of "Death and the Moon" by Hans Rasch/Remalia*

Remalia, brought in their passion for Flamenco to the project and taught the players soft and spiraling hand gestures and strong foot patterns to call forth their ancestors. They crafted an entire backstory of Remalia’s queer ancestors, Death and the Moon, that they screen shared over Gather.Town (v1.0)/embedded in the volcano (v2.0) (queer doing). In version 1.0, players roasted miniature s’mores by tealight or in version 2.0 brought their own dessert and a drink, and named queer ancestor who walked behind them, beside them (present-day), and before them (future dreams)(queer making). Players told me that making s’mores over the screen was nostalgic and meaningful, and contributed to their desire to be in community. Performers, players, and design team all contributed their queer ancestors to a digital altar space via a post-able website called Padlet.com. As of October 2021 you can still access and add to it here:

<https://padlet.com/danceswithtech/altar>. The second iteration happened all on one platform, so Hans built their own Altar of Queer Ancestors on Gather.Town for v2.0 so that players could leave messages, embed objects, etc in honor of their queer ancestors. Queer being, doing, and making were imbued in every corner of the BodySleuth process. Recognition of queer history and stories is vital and still necessary, and players wanted more of an imagined queer past inside of the world to share their personal queer past, present, and future.



*Figure 26: Screenshot of Altar of the Ancestors in Gather.Town, by Hans/Remalia*

## Somatic Snackbite

It's time for a rhythm section! Grab one or more random objects that you think would be fun to make sounds with. Explore a beat that feels good in your body with one object. Where does the sound land in your body? A certain area of the body? Does it move through layers of muscle or bone? Move the music through your body. Send your movement out to a loved one, ancestor, or person who needs some body music in their lives.

## Landing

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the thematic content. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i>	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i>	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i>	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i>	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i>	56



## CHAPTER 4

### TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY

I have found mobile and computer games to be an outlet for stress release and much needed distraction for my brain, but not satisfactory for connecting to my body or to other people. Somatic disconnection is extraordinarily apparent in the ubiquitous computing devices I engage with on a daily basis. When I open a game on a phone or computer I become so absorbed in the digital content I forget everything around me. My eyeballs laser in on the task at hand (collect five rocks to move forward, plant two flowers to feed the baby dragons...) and suddenly 30 minutes have passed and I have not moved from whatever static position I started in. What happened in my body during that time? Where is my somatic awareness in these moments? It is startling. When I play a board game or social game I am completely aware of my body the entire time. I shift in my seat, lean forward, move objects on the table, stand up, sit down, shout out an answer, wave my hand, try to act out a movie name, etc.

Games help teach us how to communicate, collaborate, skill-build, problem-solve, complete challenging activities, and learn about ourselves. Games teach us how to live in the world - they reflect our individual, social, and cultural values, goals, dreams, desires, and ambitions. In an informal Zoom conversation with TableTale Games founder Alejandro Tey, I remember him telling me that “games are a way to practice for life.” My favorite games have taught me strategy and spatial organization (visual and/or physical), as well as how to be considerate, cooperative, and competitive. I am a Casual gamer who enjoys all kinds of play--casual in both the sense of frequency and kinds of games I tend

to play. “Casual games” in the video game world often refer to games that are easily accessible and playable for a general audience on a computer or smartphone (starting with Pac-Man, Tetris, and Solitaire up to Pokemon Go!, Farmville, and Candy Crush). My favorite games to play are charades, Woodoku (a combination of Tetris and Sudoku), Dragonscapes (raise dragons on your phone, go on quests, and explore a cute world), and 7 Wonders Duel (a board game about constructing empires and wonders of the world). Sometimes these games are labeled “social games” when they ask you to sign up to play with friends, or you form teams with other players during gameplay. Growing up I played tons of card games, Pokemon on a handheld Gameboy, Monopoly, theater games (act-it-out, react, or tell a story), Scattergories (alphabetical listing game), and video games on friends’ consoles (Super Mario Brothers, Mario Kart, Sonic the Hedgehog, Street Fighter, Cruis’n USA). For me, all of these games involved social interactions with at least one other person physically present in the room. The social somatic experience of gaming was pervasive in my early experiences with games, and missing from my adult experiences with online games.

As I grew older, I noticed that queer representation was also absent or underrepresented in the gaming world. Online spaces are not utopias - the very places that LGBTQIA+ and marginalized groups seek as havens from oppression, harassment, and bullying and can happen online as well as offline (Giardana). That is why it is important to have queer-centric, inclusive, and welcoming virtual spaces. Online gathering and gaming platforms like BodySleuth Project offer potential safe spaces to express and explore queer identity. In spaces where LGBTQIA+ people feel safe to be their authentic selves, they can also feel safe to process their emotions and tune into their

body instead of shutting down or covering up emotions, which can lead to numbing or harming behaviors. If games offer both an escape from and a re-immersion into reality, how could a queer-centric game offer tools for everyday life through somatic experiences?

In *SuperBetter: The Power of Living Gamefully* by Jane McGonigal, she discusses the possibilities for improving mental and physical health by turning challenges into daily games. Positive psychological reinforcement meets game design in accomplishing challenging tasks through power-ups, building allies, devising strategies, defeating bad guys, and naming wins. McGonigal's work provided some of the initial inspiration for BodySleuth in thinking through how players might engage in embodied tasks in their physical space. The level up was imagining how to translate or "gamify" somatic understanding through an online platform. As a kid of the 1990's, the 8-bit rectangular avatars of the Gather.Town platform I used for BodySleuth transported me back to childhood, with the perks of an upgraded resolution for backgrounds and live audiovisuals. The Gather.Town platform was set up for video conferencing, not for an interactive video game that straddled live performance practices of immersive theater, role playing games, and alternate reality games. Throughout the BodySleuth Project, there was a tension between the online platform(s) I used and the intentions of cultivating a queer social somatic experience.

Prototypes are a quick technological build of something. They offer room for experimentation, and thus expand the possibilities for "success" and "failure." They symbolize quickly assembled products or rapid ideation of a concept for feasibility. I wanted to apply the idea of prototyping to embodied game design because I wanted to

interrupt extreme social isolation through an escape into a virtual world that brought participants back into their bodies. I wondered, how much could players physically and socially play when the experience was mediated through a digital screen?

Prototyping embodied games into a written form first occurred for me via the project Legend of Thule. I collaborated with Olivia Hernandez to design a somatic experience inspired by alternate reality games. Participants were able to explore seven levels of movement through the allegory of traveling through seven islands of varying geographies in rainbow order. I wrote a choose-your-own-adventure story on Twine.org that moved participants through their spines (this project became the foundation of the BodySleuth narrative). Olivia embedded video and audio to accompany the story and built a fake neocities.org website of real Greek mythology. We crafted a handwritten coded poem sent to participants via USPS mail. The performance culminated in a co-created live Zoom movement ritual and animated video ending. This piece taught me that audience members are open to text-driven and video-guided movement exploration, and respond positively to well-written narratives and receiving mail. The participants also appreciated being able to choose their own pace and meditative quality through the narrative. Legend of Thule became the first social somatic prototype for BodySleuth.

In most of the “gaming cultures” physical sensation is typically task-oriented with very specific and limited bodily engagement. Movement is centered around actions of efficiency - pushing buttons and perambulating joysticks, moving tokens around on a board, flipping cards, or perhaps engaging with basic motor functions like walking or picking up an object. Movement is not about pleasure or play or curiosity or how it feels inside of the body. The technology used to play games online - keyboard, mouse,

joystick, et cetera may be extensions of the body to activate movement inside of the game, but the body also has to adapt to the technology and shift awareness to external sensations outside of the body. I wanted to design BodySleuth as an open digital playground where people (as avatars and live video humans) activated the space to reflect their own queer experience and as a medium to find meaningful social connections.

### *BodySleuth Walkthrough*

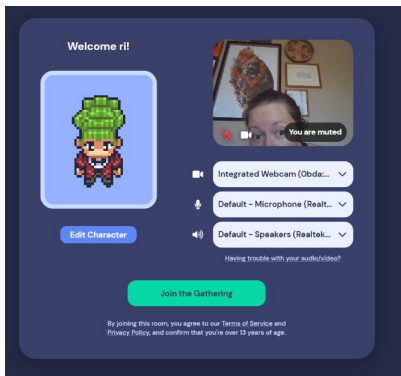


Figure 27. Screenshot of Gather.Town: create an avatar



Figure 28. Screenshot of avatar moving around the main island map towards Malin's Garden

Let me offer you a window into an evening with Malin on the Gather.Town platform. I open the link to the BodySleuth space (v2.0) and I am immediately greeted by a welcome message to choose my avatar (currently a highly pixelated outline of a mound of green hair piled on top of light skin, ruddy cheeks, no visible nose or mouth, and very large black pupils. I think my avatar is wearing a red jacket of some short, gray pants, and maybe white shirt with a black bowtie. The details are not clear). I can choose to enter the space with my video camera and microphone off or on. My avatar lands in the main cabin of Rolyrbee Island (the last place my avatar was visiting). I use the WASD or arrow keys on my computer to navigate my avatar to the main map of the island. Then I move my avatar again to the lung-shaped patch of trees on the map and fall through the portal into Malin's Botanical Garden. I encounter a couple of other avatars in the Botanical Garden

and move my avatar closer to them so I can say hello. I can either turn on my video or audio to greet them, or type a message in the chat to them privately or to the whole garden. If I move my avatar further away, they will not be able to see or hear my video. I choose the video option and say “Hi! Have you found Malin yet?” and they say “Hello! Yes, he appeared in the video by the colorful circle thing. We think we are supposed to go to another circle but we aren’t sure which one.” Meanwhile, our avatars have remained motionless parked beside each other on the digital screen. Only my fingers and face have to make a conscious effort to move, and I am only aware of what is happening in my body when I turn on my video and start talking.



*Figure 29. Screenshot of an avatar moving through Malin's Botanical Garden*

Live visibility and human interaction (social somatics) reminds me that there are parts of myself that have the potential to be engaged more fully in this interaction. I tell my new acquaintances to follow me and guide them to the next video where Malin leads us through movement inspired by the swaying of trees and reminds us all to breathe (because all plant- beings need fresh oxygen). He offers visual imagery and invites us to

massage our hands, touch our own skin, to feel our feet rooted into the earth. In another video performance we hold a plant in our hands and meditate on all the tiny sensory details of the plant's texture, smell, intricate lines, etc. The specific focus helps me be completely present in my own body while sitting quietly in my living room. When people have their Gather.Town cameras are on, I feel a sense of connection to the other people sharing virtual space with me, and more incentive to participate in the performance of play. And then I return to a deep focus on the digital screen when the video performance ends and the other players move their avatars to another part of the garden. I experience dissonance between the social somatic moments I just shared in order to reroute my attention to navigating around the Gather.Town platform. What other tools or technologies could I have used to at least ease the social somatic dissonance between screen and body? As a reader of this experience, what would you have wanted to experience in a social somatic way in your body?

Returning to the SuperBetter ideas of game(ful) living tactics (power-ups, building allies, devising strategies, defeating bad guys, and naming wins), the Gather.Town platform was not built for tracking asynchronous gamified social somatic experiences. Players needed a ready made game structure with clear goals and ways to accomplish those goals that were easily accessible, preferably through their mobile devices. I experimented using online audiovisual and interactive platforms such as Zoom, Discord, Gather.Town, Roll20, Mozilla Hubs, and Padlet in various iterations of the project development. None of them were built for a live interactive somatically engaged game. The gamification of all of the moving parts did not work in unison, but did have segments of somatic moments and virtual game play that could exist in parallel. If I had

the time, money, and expertise to do another iteration of this project, I would design a mobile phone application with Augmented Reality (AR) capabilities that could be paired with in- person or remote social somatic events.

### **Somatic Snackbite**

Everything starts from breath. I invite you to move away from this screen for a couple of minutes and turn towards a new place in your space, changing levels to a new position if you can. Close your eyes or soften your gaze and gently focus on something in front of you. Take a deep breath in through your nose and fill up the lower half of your torso. Give new air to your lower intestines and diaphragm. Exhale slowly like you are blowing a delicate bubble into existence. Pause your breathing for just a brief moment and visualize the bubble floating away. Inhale through your nose into your diaphragm again and fill up your lower torso with the same slow attention and length of breath as you gave that imaginary bubble. Now exhale even more slowly, imagining a bigger more beautiful bubble bouncing around with your favorite colors inside its fragile transparency. Pause your breathing and notice the texture and movement of this bubble. Take two more deep slow inhales into your low belly and even slower breaths out, imagining new vibrant bubbles taking shape. Pause and watch them dance across the sky each time. What does your breath help you see? Where do you feel emotions connecting to breath in your body?



## Landing

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the thematic content. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i> .....	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i> .....	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i> .....	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i> .....	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i> .....	56

## CHAPTER 5

### BODYSLEUTH BOXES

“Snail mail” is one of my favorite things to send and to receive. I appreciate the thought and consideration that goes into a well-crafted care package, a hand-written letter, or an en-route postcard. My friends still hopefully inquire for another hand-ground chai mix that I sent them two years ago (the smell and taste were intoxicating), and I will never forget the homemade chocolate cinnamon birthday cake my mom sent in the mail my first year of undergrad (it survived the mailing mostly intact and surprisingly fresh). During a period of extreme pandemic isolation, one of my collaborators regifted items around her apartment that she knew I would like - a unicorn coloring book, kinetic sand, candy, a queer young adult novel, and a “you can do it!” handwritten note to show support for my thesis process. I was so incredibly moved in the feeling of being seen and the sensation of being able to touch and interact with all of the objects. In the height of the Covid-19 pandemic (summer 2020) when I started dreaming up the BodySleuth Project, touchless-ness was a major concern. I was afraid to both give and receive touch to anyone outside of my small bubble of contacts (and even that felt risky).

I had never even used Zoom before March 2020, but it became my main platform for social interaction between classes and teaching online, and the safest way to hang out with friends. Being touchless meant hugs were rare, handshakes were eliminated, and all strangers received a wide berth when walking down the street. Partner and social dancing disappeared from view overnight. Queer bars and clubs were closed. Dating was the equivalent of a setting off a zombie apocalypse. Every sneeze held the potential for the

questionable. I knew that if my thesis project were to be hosted in an online space, physical objects to interact with would be essential to offering an entry point to embodied connection. The BodySleuth Boxes came into existence as a method for engaging the sensory perceptions that a digital screen could not: smell, taste, touch, and grounding the body to the earth. Every aspect of the BodySleuth Box was rooted in Body-Centered Design, in imagining how physical objects could be engaged with sensorially and activate movement in the body.

I worked with Kelly Fielder, the visual performance designer, over the summer to put embodied play into practice. We tried on many different activities using snail mail and Zoom to see what made us feel good in our bodies, and then created an outline (the physical game play) of all the tasks and items we wanted to use. I worked simultaneously with the performers to understand how they moved and what felt good in their bodies. What stories wanted to emerge from the character they were developing? I combined the embodied experience of the performer with tactile objects that connected to the stories that were emerging to create the content of the BodySleuth Boxes (v1.0).

Some of these tasks included:

- Finger skateboarding across their physical space to move through the virtual relay race
- Spinning a tiny jar of crystal candy and moving in the direction of the spine
- Holding a small toy turtle and imagining the story of how players would return the turtle to a pond
- Feeling a bundle of soft green knitting (“moss”) and having players place it on their heads to move through an imaginary waterfall

- Shining a flashlight through a cardboard cutout (“light stencil”) of different landscapes and moving through the shadow world projected on a wall
- Assembling a blank puzzle with the outline of Rolyrbee Island and filling/drawing in the world as players explored it
- Creating five gestures and remixing them together to unlock the virtual library door
- Making instant soup together and having players add in their own spices
- Singing karaoke together from a Spotify playlist

Every task was initiated and imagined through action - putting it into our bodies, trying it on, and noticing how it felt. Here are a few player and performer reviews from post-performance feedback:

“There was an overall openness and creative spirit and thoughtfulness though that was super strong through it all and with the BodySleuth Box.”

“The flowers popper was my absolute favorite!! I loved the teeny tiny marshmallow roast (though, not vegetarian, but I ate them anyway).”

“[I enjoyed] the puzzle, the soup, the flower popper, and the light stencil.”

“I really liked the tea, the food, and the booklet. I would have liked to use the booklet a bit more. It was very nice quality and it would have been interesting to develop something privately over the course of the week, maybe with an offering to share later.”

“I like my skateboard :) the more items that you have that tie in with two or more sensory experiences coupled with an emotional response are empirically tied to retention and memory. There is an entire TED talk about this.”

“I loved my little turtle. I would've liked to have access to each of the performer's sacred objects.”

The BodySleuth Box offered a queer variety pack of sensory experiences that players and performers could engage with as they needed or wanted to. The players and performers could feel the care and attention to detail that was given to the objects, and they wanted to engage with the boxes on a deeper level of tactility and story. The players and performers were generous and honest in their feedback, and the reciprocal openness for game design growth immensely contributed to the social somatic knowledge (and queer(y)ing) of the experience. If I were to do a future version of the BodySleuth Boxes, I would simplify and streamline the objects, offer a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) version or a paid version of the boxes, and ship them out at least three weeks in advance.

For the second iteration, I experimented with having players use objects around their homes for movement inspiration instead of receiving mail. This was in part due to a genuine curiosity to see what creative inspiration would come from their immediate

space, as well as the fact that some of the carefully crafted BodySleuth Boxes did not make it to the players in time to play with during the game (this was at the height of the mail service being overwhelmed during the pandemic). Many players only participated for one to three nights, which meant that all of the carefully crafted objects in the BodySleuth Box were not utilized. In v2.0 during the live Guardian interactions over Gather.Town the players seemed excited to share personal objects from their physical space through the virtual screen (plants, books, pantry items, chocolate, and their homes). Making and eating food together provided a ritual of comfort that was socially somatic and offered a launching point for conversation.

I chose soup as Sienti's movement task after researching possibilities for easy-to-make comfort food that could go in the mail with Kelly. For the BodySleuth Boxes in 1.0 players received small silver ziplock sealed food bags with instant rice and dried vegetable soup mix that players could make quickly by adding hot water. Their task would then be to add spices to it that felt comforting and nourishing. In v1.0 there was a Kiki Kitchen for Omar, who Vogued. For the live performance over video on Gather.Town, we developed a movement sequence that moved through the spine to mimic the act of making soup as a warm up, and then had a choreography of soup making to a Vogue beat for the main event. The players opened the soup packet (in eight counts), sprinkled it to the bowl, gave us their best walk to heat up hot water, and stirred their hips as they poured hot water into the bowl. The dialogue around the soup making was on what spices players had added, to encourage storytelling and deeper sharing. There were also tea leaf reading videos embedded in the Gather.Town Space where Omar "spilled the tea" about what players might be going through based on the kind of tea they selected.

In v2.0, there was a Community Kitchen with Leah, who focused her experience on a stretch quest of nourishment. Players were sent on mission to of nourishment to meet Amaranth for a bellylaugh, the Grand Road of Keys for some vocal nurturance (karaoke), and the Performance Plateau where they could share any kind of recipe (food, artmaking, hairwashing, etc) that offered them nourishment. She offered five stretches that connected to the other Guardians: a soul stretch, stomach stretch, brain stretch, lungs stretch, and heart stretch, that also connected everything back to the torso. In her live interaction with players, she ate her favorite homemade Ramen and encouraged players to grab soup (or another comfort food) and talk about foods that were nourishing. As the action, she asked players to gather a little used item from the back of their pantry and exchange ideas on how it could be used, and to tell stories about favorite foods and foods that feel good in the body. Body-Centered Design trickled down (and up) through all of the items the Guardians engaged movement with the players

## Somatic Snackbite

You have made it through another section! A casual shimmy, low kick, head roll, or other movement that is in your practice is highly recommended here. Perform your practice for yourself (or an audience if you prefer).

## Landing

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the next three sections. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i> .....	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i> .....	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i> .....	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i> .....	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i> .....	56



## CHAPTER 6

### PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH

Welcome to the largest somatic snackbite of them all. This could perhaps be considered the “methodology” or “practice” section, but they are all interconnected. I feel like I need to offer a way for you to experience my creative process in your own body to make the parts that lose “data” via transcribing movement through language more whole. The somatic snackbite I share later in this section is only one of many ways I practice, or perform, or create through my body. Sometimes I karaoke and do high kicks around my living room to Gloria Gaynor, or dip gracefully to the earth on the 8-count of a Vogue beat, or hold a tiny plant still in the palm of my hands and encourage it to grow. BodySleuth is a reflection of all the ways I do research through embodied practices. It is also a creative compilation and reflection of the embodied practices and performances of my collaborators (performers, designers, and players). Although this document is my written solo, the BodySleuth Project was a massive ensemble piece. It could not have been possible without the artistic community that were willing to take risks and try on movements through virtual and physical spaces that did not always synchronize. In the introduction to *Intellectual Birdhouse: Artistic Practice as Research*, the editors summarize how disciplines of artistic research, such as Performance as Research, clarify the meaning and intent of the practice. “In experiencing artistic research-practice, one may not arrive at an improved definition, but at an understanding of what is at stake when

practice shifts into research” (Bauer et al). For me the stakes of Performance as Research are in illuminating the value of embodied knowledge.

I first began prototyping embodied games through a Performance as Research class with Professor Kristin Hunt. I explored what it would be like to send people on a quest to understand the four main directions their spine could rotate (front, back, lateral, and twist) initiated through each of the three mobile subdivisions of the spine (cervical, thoracic, lumbar). I relabeled two different card games and had goals for people to acquire a certain number of colors or numbers by sharing different ways their spine could move with at least one other person in the space. The energy in the room was that of a scavenger hunt meets charades - lively, filled with movement, chatter, and laughter. I saw people rolling on the floor, crawling through space, shimmying, rolling through their spines, stopping and starting rotation, and more. The goal was in the exploration of the spine and deeper awareness and attention to the spine. The performance of the game, embodied in play, brought my attention to the holistic integration of body movement. Even when players tried to isolate one part of their spine, everything else moved because the skeletal system is holistic and inseparable. They could initiate movement from a part of the spine, and that brought attention and awareness to how they understood their body in motion. The players imagined more ways to move their bodies in conversation with each other, and within the constraints of the game, than I could ever have imagined on my own. This was Performance as Research (PAR) in action.

Performance as Research is one of many scholarly categorizations recognizing the knowledge inherent in artistic practice. It wriggles away from a straightforward definition or an easily delineated singular discipline, which feels appropriately queer to me,

especially for this project. I appreciate that it shares tendencies with the label “queer” in its refusal to be easily defined by a specific practice. Is it theater? Dance? Dance theater? Visual art? Performance art? Digital scenography? Practice? Performance? Kevin Quarmby contextualized his own Performance as Research work online and used this definition that I found most useful and also the most comprehensive: “[t]he embodied processes and procedures performance practice can be a means of research in and of themselves that offer insight equal to more traditional modes of research such as cultural theory and textual analysis. Given this premise, in PAR work, a performance itself is the research product and makes a valuable contribution to academic knowledge-building” (Kevin Quarmby). The making of *BodySleuth* is both practice, and performance. It is research that contributes to academic and artistic knowledge economies. My research could be considered qualitative: reflexive, narrative, and artistically centered. My guiding principles were rooted in action: practice (rehearsal, experimentation, embodied knowledge) and performance (audience participation and interactive design). Barbara Bolt describes Performance as Research as tending towards collaboration with common themes of “space and identity; spectatorship and participation; and bodies and technology” (67). She outlines five aspects that are foundations of Performance as Research:

- Starting points may include questions, problems, and hunches or intuitions.
- Aesthetically, PAR is inherently interdisciplinary. It is beholden to other practices and artistic genealogies and different aesthetic transitions. PAR demands research innovation and originality in scholarly institutions.
- Locations: performance is bound by location in space and time.

- Transmission: how ideas are communicate through performance.
- Key Issues: diversity is its overall quality.

When I started imagining the BodySleuth Project with an online platform in mind, I already knew there would be a disconnect in designing a social somatic experience. I had been in enough virtual spaces and Zoom meetings to understand the limitations of the technology. What I discovered through Performance as Research were that live social interaction holds embodied value whether it is in person or mediated through technology. I am not saying they hold the same kind of somatic experience, but that they both contribute to embodied knowledge.

Vladimir, as Drella, and I designed what we thought was a streamlined virtual gesture gathering game in the maze of the Underground Library for v1.0. Players needed to find the embedded gesture video for each guardian and put it in sequential movement order. They were supposed to show the sequence to Drella who guarded the entrance to the Underground Library after they had made it through the maze and assembled the five gestures. We believed there was an efficient way to transition from one body shape to the next, and that it was obvious. For example, we assumed that since the elbow can only bend in certain directions, if the movement phrase ends with the elbow up at a right angle, and another movement phrase starts with the elbow up at a right angle, that people would know that they had to connect. Some players understood what we were trying to do right away, while others we had to coach through the process which revealed to me that sequential movement patterning is a complex skill. This was valuable information for the research. Not everyone sees movement the same way. It also took players almost the entire hour to wander around the top of the maze and find the videos and connect them

together in teams. The way we had digitally organized the space for the adventure was too complex for the time frame we had planned for the task. The players need one small space with clear instructions so the time could be focused on the embodied practice of putting the movement into their bodies, instead of wandering around the digital space. For the second layer of the Underground Library, Vladimir had made beautiful digital book pages of random facts and images associated with Rolyrbee Island that had movement recommendations for players to explore. They were supposed to gather the information from the books and put it into their bodies and then play a modified version of charades in teams. The idea was originally to create a team activity for the players who had signed up together, but I ended up pairing or grouping people instead. There was not enough time to complete the second performance piece as planned. Over a digital screen, embodied learning takes more time than an in-person experience would have. I realized we needed to guide the players to think kinesthetically. For the second iteration, I asked Olivia, the media designer, to embed an object with each video to a corresponding color of a realm (red, orange, yellow, green, blue), and gave clear written instructions to connect the gestures together in rainbow order. From there the gestural sequencing became clearer in the second iteration. Performance as Research was necessary to understand how what we had created would work in performance mode. With the information from the performance, I was able to make modifications for future iterations. Every performance offered new insights and knowledge in developing the BodySleuth Project.

## **Somatic Snackbite**

### *Plant Roots*

I invite you to stand or sit or lay down - whatever your body needs. Imagine that your feet are two solid tree trunks, connected together through a network of intertwined roots. The root systems extend hundreds of feet below you, stable in their deep grasp around heavy rocks and solidly stacked chunks of earth. The root systems' stable flexibility radiates upward through to the bottoms of your feet. Each foot has a magnetic, energetic pull towards the earth. Try lifting one foot and feel the magnetism circulating from the foot that is lifted to the foot that is rooted. Put that foot down and feel both feet rooting down through the earth.

Press the left side of your left foot into the ground and then shift your foot to press into the right side of your left foot. Shift the sensation into the heel of your foot. Roll from the heel of the foot forward to the ball of your foot. Spread your toes as wide as eagle wings and then curl your toes into a long arc that pushes from the center of your foot into the ground. Release and relax the whole left foot into the earth. Notice the difference between your left and right foot. Repeat everything on your right side.

Press the right side of your right foot into the ground and then shift your foot to press into the left side of your right foot. Shift the sensation into the heel of your foot. Roll from the heel of the foot forward to the ball of your foot. Spread your toes as wide as eagle wings and then curl your toes into a long arc that pushes the center of your foot from the ground. Release and relax the whole right foot into the earth. Notice how both your feet feel now.

How stable can you make the connection between your feet and the ground below them?

#### REFLECTION:

- How would you describe the sensation of pressing your feet into the earth? Where did you feel the earth reverberate in your body?
- What did noticing your feet do to the way you moved the rest of your body?
- How did you move? Did you sway side to side? Back and forth? In a circle? In a spiral?
- How does observing how one part of your body moves make your whole body want to move? For example, if you shift into your left hip, how does the rest of your body want to follow? If you initiate moving your body to the right using your right shoulder, what directions or shapes does your body move in? A straight line? A squiggle? A spiral?
- What does this experience of grounding through the feet feel like for you?

#### GET CREATIVE:

Write, draw, dance, sing, organize, cook, clean, sew, run, walk, meditate, or whatever you need to do to release/embrace/retain/transfer this sensation in your body.

#### META REFLECTION (PAR)

- What is your first response to this walkthrough snippet in written or audio form?
- What would you like to experience?
- What felt like it was missing from experience?

- Were you able to notice any internal sensations of movement, physicality, or emotion through written word or audio soundtrack?
- If you tried the experience with the audiotrack, how did that change the sensation of grounding?
- Imagine you are a player on Gather.Town. How would that change your experience of movement? Is your focus on the screen, or awareness of your body moving internally or externally, or to other avatars moving around the screen? What is the most that you can move your body in your physical space, inspired by the movement happening on the screen?

### **Landing**

When you are ready to return, here is some helpful information on navigating the thematic content. Choose any section you would like to start with:

<i>SOCIAL SOMATICS</i> .....	30
<i>QUEER(Y)ING</i> .....	34
<i>TECHNOLOGIES OF PLAY</i> .....	40
<i>BODYSLEUTH BOXES</i> .....	49
<i>PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH</i> .....	56



## CHAPTER 7

### MOVING BODY CENTERED DESIGN FORWARD

(Neverendings)

Dear Reader,

If you have made it this far, I am impressed. I encourage you to exhale a sigh of relief along with me. Thank you for taking the time to read all the way through my reflections on the BodySleuth Project. It makes all the tears, fears, and middle-of-the-night wide-awake-ness worth it to know that another pair of eyes took the time to wander through and witness a part of my MFA artistic journey.

I invite you to move through a gesture (or dance) of joy as we celebrating endings and new beginnings together. Gather all the soft and sparkly objects in your space (now or later) and give them some life.

If you have any final thoughts to share (impressions, takeaways, parallel conversations, points of resonance or dissonance, or curiosities) from reading this document please send them my way via <https://padlet.com/elinddance/bodysleuth>. You can be as visible (or anonymous) as you would like.

I suppose in true ending fashion a quick recap would be helpful. See below.

Thank you for playing!

Ri

This thesis document began with a thorough overview of the world, characters, and gameplay inside of Rolyrbee Island. The five guardians were Zayne (Red Realm/grounding/pelvis), Sienti (Orange Realm/nourishing/spine), Drella (Yellow Realm/creating/limbs), Malin (Green Realm/healing/internal), and Remalia (Blue Realm/connecting/external). Then there was Amaranth, a wise-cracking human and permanent island resident who got stuck in the Well of Wisery just for levity. Players had to accomplish a variety of embodied tasks that moved sequentially through their bodies as they moved through each realm. The tasks usually involved a physical object and awareness of the players' surrounding environment to root them in a sense of space and body in relationship to the digital screen.

Technologies of play, such as online meeting and gaming spaces, as well as video games and alternate reality and role playing games, need body-centered design in their prototyping process and a wider variety of queer representation. I encountered embodied dissonance in switching from screen to social somatic practice. I had to choose between the experience of being “in the game” or “in my body.” I am curious how the “or” could be changed to an “and.” One idea would be to develop a social somatic-based platform, preferably a phone application so it is able to move physically with players' bodies. To gamify movement, the social somatic experiences need to be broken down into a clear set of options, goals, and strategies, and wins to accomplish a certain task. However, there should also be future exploration done for ways to play games that offer open-ended discoveries and engage story and community connection as incentives for participation.

I found Performance as Research to be an incredibly valuable practice/method/tool for understanding points of disconnect between what I was trying to accomplish in each realm of BodySleuth, and what would actually happen. My starting points began in my own body, moved through somatic practices in the bodies of the performers, and into the bodies of the players. The translation of practice into movement had to be modified to move through a virtual screen in ways that I could not anticipate or predict without seeing how the performers and players tried them on.

Queer(y)ing was an inherent part of the BodySleuth process, and the work was infused by all of the queer beings who came behind me, beside me, and before me. I could not have made this work without the emotional, physical, and creative labor of my queer ancestors, the queer colleagues and participants who played along side me, and I hope the work offers future launching points for the queer artists who will come after me. We are queer, we did it queer, and we made it queer.

Social somatics is a term to describe a deeper way of diving in to the many ways that we experience the world in and through our bodies in response to the people and places around us. It encompasses as many kinds of practices as there are pathways to move through the world. At the core of what I hoped to pass on through the BodySleuth Project was increased embodied awareness and capacity for joy in queer resilience. Social somatics in virtual space holds many possibilities for human and embodied connection, especially when physical presence is not an option

BodySleuth Boxes offered a way for players to engage in a fuller sensory experience while the action of physical play was mediated through a digital screen. Participants were more engaged in the performance and movement experience when they

had creative constraints and something tactile to try on movement with. Care and attention trickled down through the details of the design and the players felt when the body-centered design was present. The variety of options within the boxes offered players a way to tune in to their needs and desires, as well as offer entry points for conversation and deeper sharing.

BodySleuth Project started off as an intuition in my own body: a desire for human connection, a need for physical movement, and a loss of queer community. A highly contagious global pandemic caused new problems to work around with preexisting technological tools that accentuated the lack of physical touch and full sensory experience. My questions and aesthetics are centered at the junctures of dance and technology. I am trying to think about the knowledge inherent in both practices differently and trying to find ways to combine them into a “new” or “remixed” form of knowledge that subverts technology under the practice of dance. As the choreographer/director/producer/interactive designer, I placed the highest priority on experiential body-centered design. I wanted primary value to be placed on the skills enhanced through somatic and movement-related activities, such as spatial awareness and kinesthetic intelligence. Recognizing the intelligence of a thinking/physical body is the crux of what is missing for me in game-centric design, especially in online and virtual spaces, and the only way to strengthen this kind of intelligence is by experiencing it in the body through experiencing it, in the modes of social somatics, Performance as Research, queer being, doing, and making, technologies of play and tactile interactions. Moving forward, I want to continue to explore alternatives and futures for technology through design centered on/in/through bodies. I hope more virtual space is created for

queer and marginalized communities to tell their stories and see themselves represented in all kinds of games. We all need embodied play.

## WORKS CITED

defrantz, thomas f. "Queer Dance in Three Acts." *Queer Dance*, Oxford University Press, 2017. *University Press Scholarship*, Print.

Dombois, Florian et al. *Intellectual Birdhouse: Artistic Practice as Research*. Koenig Books, 2012.

Eddy, Martha. "Somatic Practices and Dance: Global Influences." *Dance Research Journal*, 2002.

Eddy, Martha. "Access to Somatic Theory and Applications: Socio-Political Concerns." 2000. <http://wellnesske.net/downloadables/Access-to-Somatics.pdf>. Accessed 4, Nov. 2021.

Generative Somatics. "Our Strategy." [https://generativesomatics.org/our-strategy/#\\_why-\\_somatics-for-\\_organizing\\_\\_002c-\\_movement-\\_building\\_\\_002c\\_\\_0026-\\_action\\_\\_003f](https://generativesomatics.org/our-strategy/#_why-_somatics-for-_organizing__002c-_movement-_building__002c__0026-_action__003f). Accessed 4 Nov. 2021.

Green, Jill. "Social Somatic Theory, Practice, and Research: An Inclusive Approach in Higher Education Dance." *Proceedings of the International Conference: Dancing in the Millennium*, 2001.

McGonigal, Jane. *SuperBetter: The Power of Living Gamefully*. Reprint edition, Penguin Books, 2016.

Nast, Condé. "LGBTQ+ Gamers Are Facing an Epidemic of Online Harassment." *TheM*, 6 Mar. 2021, <https://www.them.us/story/lgbtq-gamers-facing-epidemic-of-online-harassment>. Accessed 4, Nov. 2021.

Quarmby, Kevin. "Performance as Research." *Queen's Men Editions*. <https://qme.uvic.ca/Foyer/par/index.html>. Accessed 12 Oct. 2021.

Tey, Alejandro. *Tabletale Games*. <https://www.tabletalegames.com/>. Accessed 13 Oct. 2021.