

The Particle and The Wave (2015)



"We flash past signal-boxes; we make the earth rock slightly from side to side. The distance closes for ever in a point; and we for ever open the distance wide again."

-Virginia Woolf, The Waves

Music arising from an algorithmic measurement of the distance between the 1,265 semi-colons in Virginia Woolf's, *The Waves*; 11:42 min. An Indian writer and performance artist, Himali Singh Soin's speculative practice works within the expressive potential of abstractions, by running interferences in a conceptual realm where identities, ideas and ideologies are liminal, still awaiting articulation. Her

constructed cosmologies of the ‘unsayable’ evocatively translate into a ficto-critical exploration of the simply ‘not-yet-said’. Her cosmologies of meaning borrow metaphors from outer space, its situations of alienation, intimacy and ancient and contemporary literature, where books are spineless and philosophical problems become problems of justice.

Profoundly fluent in the textuality of colonial and post-colonial literature, Soin’s *The Particle and the Wave* is a visual, sonic and algorithmic experimentation of Virginia Woolf’s 1931-novel *The Waves*, in which she collaborates with algorithmist and friend Dario Villaneuva on calculating the number of semi-colons Woolf used in her writing of the novel – a total of 1,265, and then imposing the coded distance between them on a C-Dorian scale. In English grammar, the semi-colon encapsulates disruption as much as it does connection, resulting in a fluidity of meaning-making that is self-referential and repetitive. Woolf, whose stream-of-consciousness style interposes extreme interiority with a passed-around plurality, is synonymous with the semi-colon in the literary world for Soin. Soin’s impassioned attempt to anthropomorphize the semi-colon as a figure – a particle and a wave – rests it on the threshold between a microcosm and a macrocosm, framing the particulars of individual existence within the universality of human conditions. She extends the scaling of such dialectics to any defined aspects of a self formed in relation to a non-self entity, while still being informed by it, citing psychogeography and global dynamics as valid extrapolations of characters informing the fictional world into which they are constructed. In the performative life of this work, Soin illustrates these wave-like emotional frequencies as an evocation of marginalia, allowing the projection to dominate both the endangered text it presents as well as her corporeal spine. Soin’s accompanying book prints, which contemplate, among other things, the sound a semi-colon makes when it strikes, are diarist, choose-your-own-adventure renditions of thoughts floating in and out of cognition.