

Drawing Connections

By

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May 2025

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This project initially was about softness, intimacy, bodies, and interconnectivity. It began with Thich Nhat Hanh's concept of *Interbeing*, which considers the causal inseparability of phenomena from every other phenomena (e.g., one is unable to be separated from all of the things—resources, advice, physical touches, etc—that have resulted in the person that exists currently, and thus can be thought of as a matrix that is constantly expanding as time goes on). Over the course of the semester, I found that the work I was producing did not invoke the softness and intimacy I desired. In fact, it tended to invoke quite the opposite: for example, a sewn cast of a hug made from clothes that was intended to highlight the specificity of the shape of two embracing bodies, instead invoked sutures, suffocation, and an inability to escape.

Additional obstacles were found in producing the intended centerpiece of my installation, a plaster cast of two bodies embracing. This piece would have required two people to stand embracing each other for several hours while I plaster-cast their silhouettes. I struggled to find two people who were willing to hug each other for so long. The sticking point for many people was in the selection of their hugging partner. Many only felt comfortable participating with specific people, but sometimes those people would not feel comfortable being cast in plaster. The longer this went on, the more interested I became in people's reluctance to be in prolonged, vulnerable contact with another person. This obstacle became my material and co-author; I found that I loved the unpredictability that audience incorporation introduced to my work.

Why are people so reluctant to be physically connected in this way? What does it take for somebody to be "close enough" to another for such an act to feel comfortable, rather than awkward? How does this look different for different people with different backgrounds?

These questions led to the creation of the series *Prescription Contacts*, which require the audience members to don clothing that has been altered to fit multiple bodies rather than just one: shirts that have been buttoned together and now sport four arms and two breast pockets, long sleeved shirts with connected sleeves, and pants that share a pant leg. These pieces ask people not only to engage with another person's body in a potentially awkward or uncomfortable manner, but they also force them to learn to adapt to the unfamiliar act of occupying, moving through, and interacting with a space as multiple bodies.

This experience serves as a departure from one's experience as a physical individual and forces them to become physically multiple, effectively obscuring a lifelong proficiency in the ways in which they interact with the world. *This is a Map* exemplifies this act by asking audience members to "pin where they are from" while connected in their elected *Prescription Contact*. This process is physically difficult and

requires adaptation, as many of the *Prescription Contacts* trap one's hands inside of the sleeves, and the body is forced to assume new forms to complete the action. Additionally, the map is composed of handmade paper made of maps, and thus does not physically appear to be what a 'map' traditionally looks like. Another lifelong proficiency, that of knowing and identifying one's home, is obscured, forcing the audience to think about what 'place' on the map resonates with them in the absence of familiar place-shapes and place-names.

Few instructions were provided for the space aside from a sign indicating that a *Prescription Contact* must be worn before being permitted to enter the space and a sign requesting audience members to pin where they are from on *This is a Map*. This intentional lack of instruction promotes the audience's feeling of awkwardness and the installation's departure from the typical white-walled space. In art galleries, audience members are frequently stripped of their individualism and reduced to a pair of eyes that quietly experience the work. The physical incorporation of audience members in the installation of *Drawing Connections* demands that individualism be on display: awkward connections and body shapes imposed by the *Prescription Contacts* require constant communication of thoughts, desires, and needs of connected persons, forcing them to invoke their individuality within the gallery space and connect more fully with those to which they are connected.

In *Drawing Connections*, I ask audience members for trust and vulnerability. I ask them to allow themselves to be connected and uncomfortable in body and identity. In response to these awkward and unexpected requests, I received displays of connected individualism within the traditional gallery space in the form of laughter and a reversion to child-ness that allowed for excitement, wonder, and human connection.



1. *Prescription Contacts, 1*

White long-sleeved shirt, orange long-sleeved shirt, green shorts, multicolored patterned elastic pants,
thread
36 x 40 in
2025



2. *Prescription Contacts, 2*

Brown striped button-down dress shirt, gray checkered button-down dress shirt

12 x 30 x 18 in

2025



3. *Prescription Contacts, 3*

Teal long-sleeved shirt, brown long-sleeved shirt, green and white striped dress, cream t-shirt, blue tunic, purple and gold tunic, thread

38 x 58 in

2025



4. *Prescription Contacts*, 4

Two white button-down dress shirts

18 x 30 x 18 in

2025



5. *Prescription Contacts*, 5

Pale green long-sleeved shirt, white long-sleeved shirt, dark green long-sleeved shirt, brown capri pants, purple and gold tunic, white nightgown with blue flowers, thread

50 x 36 in

2025



6. *Prescription Contacts, 6*

Olive capri pants, dark blue drawstring pants, multicolored patterned elastic pants, green and white striped dress, blue tunic, thread

30 x 60 in

2025



7. Prescription Contacts, 7

Blue button-down dress shirt, blue-gray checkered button-down dress shirt

12 x 30 x 18 in

2025



8. *Prescription Contacts*, full series



9. *Arms*

Human arms, premium luster photo paper

240 x 13 in

2025



10. *Exoskeletons ii*, full

Half body dress form, brown paper, plastic wrap, canvas drop cloth, glue, copper wire

Dress form: 18 x 36 x 12 in

Chain: 186 x 3 x 10 in

2025



11. *Exoskeletons*, chain detail

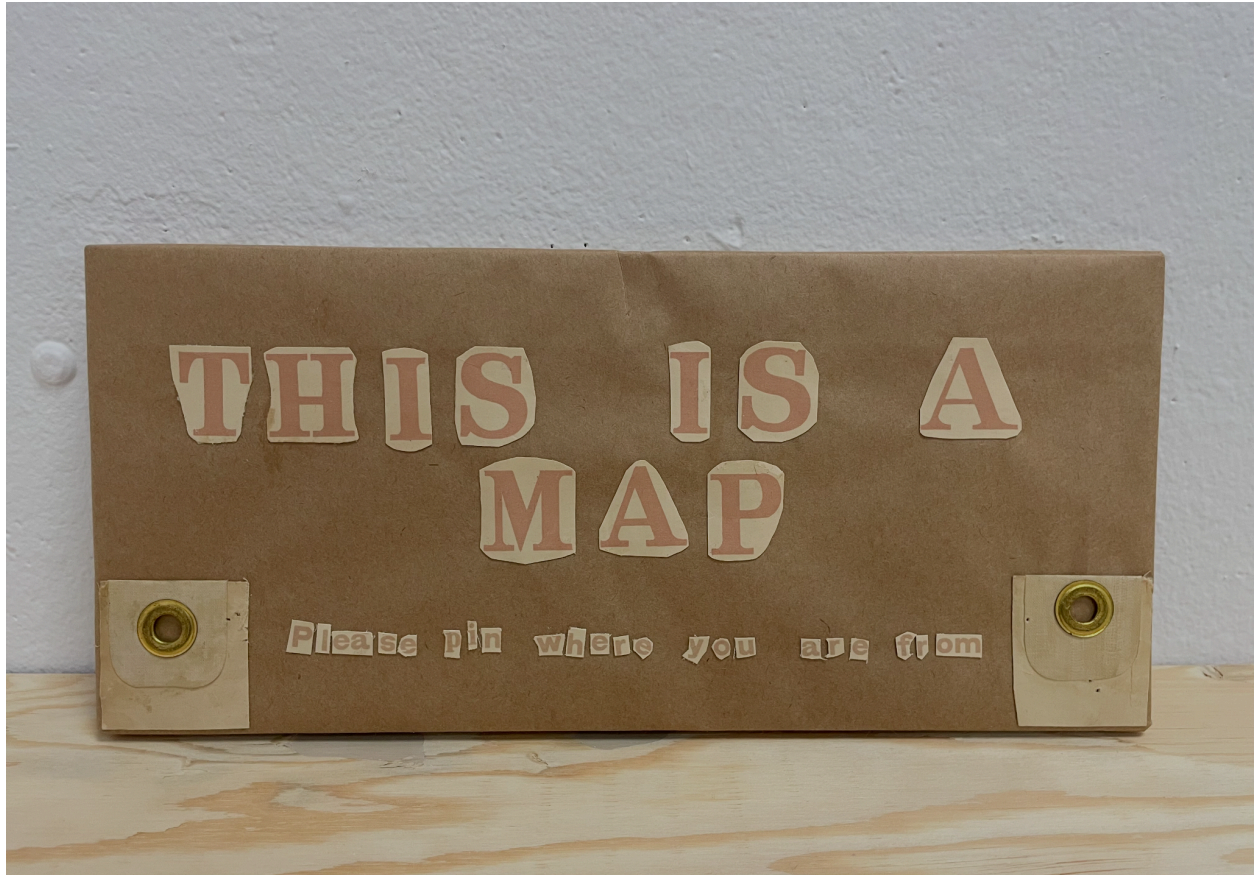


12. *This is a Map, map*

Handmade paper made of USGS topographic and quadrangle maps (world) and clovers, homasote, thumb tacks, glue

36 x 48 x 1 in

2025



13. *This is a Map*, plaque
Cloth topographic map, brown paper, wood
12 x 6 x 1 in
2025



14. *This is a Map*, pins detail



15. *This is a Map*, full installation



16. *Interactions, 1*

Bodies, connections, confusion, *Prescription Contacts 1*, *Prescription Contacts 2*, *Drawing Connections*
Installation

N/A

2025



17. *Interactions, 2*

Bodies, connections, problem-solving, *Prescription Contacts 1*, *Prescription Contacts 2*, *This is a Map*, red sewing pins, *Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025

[18. *Interactions, 3* \(video\)](#)

Bodies, connections, curiosity, wonder, *Prescription Contacts 1*, *Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025



19. *Interactions*, 4

Bodies, connections, experimentation, laughter, *Prescription Contacts 1*, *Prescription Contacts 2*, *Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025



20. *Interactions, 5*

Bodies, connections, stretching, *Prescription Contacts 3*, blue couch, blue chair, *Drawing Connections*
Installation

N/A

2025



21. *Interactions*, 6

Bodies, connections, confusion, awkwardness, laughter, *Prescription Contacts* 7, *Drawing Connections*
Installation

N/A

2025



22. *Interactions, 7*

Bodies, connections, words, vision, *Prescription Contacts 1, Prescription Contacts 3, Prescription Contacts 7, Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025

[23. *Interactions, 8* \(video\)](#)

Bodies, connections, laughter, conversation, movement, spinning, *Prescription Contacts 1, Prescription Contacts 3, Prescription Contacts 5, Prescription Contacts 7, Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025



24. *Interactions, 8 (still)*

Bodies, connections, laughter, conversation, movement, spinning, *Prescription Contacts 1, Prescription Contacts 3, Prescription Contacts 5, Prescription Contacts 7, Drawing Connections Installation*

N/A

2025



25. *Interactions*, 9

Bodies, connections, confusion, experimentation, adaptation, *Prescription contacts 4*, *Prescription Contacts 3*, *Drawing Connections* Installation

N/A

2025

[26. Interactions, 10 \(video\)](#)

Bodies, connections, laughter, jump roping, on-looking, excitement, *Prescription Contacts 1*, New Hackensack hallway

N/A

2025