

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Rana Hamadeh <hamadeh.rana@gmail.com>

**Subject: Request regarding Zong!**

**Date:** July 31, 2017 at 4:24:15 PM EDT

**To:** "M.NourbeSe Philip" <nourbese@nourbese.com>

**Cc:** Omar Berrada <omarbrd@gmail.com>

Dear NourbeSe Philip,

I hope this email finds you very well. (And thank you so much, dear Omar, for all the generosity and for establishing the contact!).

I'd like to introduce myself to you; to tell you what I am working on; my relationship with your (very important) project, **Zong!**, and the reasons for hoping to be in touch with you. I apologize in advance for the length of the email.

My name is Rana Hamadeh – an artist currently living in Rotterdam. I have been since 2011 working under the umbrella of my ongoing project, 'Alien Encounters', which has been operating as an incubator to a growing series of works (mainly performance & sound-based works), addressing (colonial) / corporate and state-sponsored forms of violence and their enabling legal apparatuses. The infrastructures of justice and legality are a focal concern that recurs throughout the project's evolving chapters, alongside terms such as *immunity, hygiene, sanitation, resistance, exodus, infection, contagion, militant and militarized forms of theatre, spectacle, the testimonial, witnessing, property, gravity and validity.*

I am writing you this email regarding a sound-based work that I am working towards, and in the context of which I find it important and would love to refer/point to your project/book, **Zong!**. Thus I am writing you this email, hoping that you grant me your kind permission to do so. Below I'd like to explain to you how I would like to refer to **Zong!**: I can surely explain more via a skype conversation or any other means that you prefer; hoping also that this first 'excuse' would open up the possibility for further conversation.

**The project's Premise:**

The work is titled *The Ten Murders of Josephine*, and will be presented at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, a non-commercial art center in Rotterdam. The work's premise is the following question: what would it mean to constitute oneself (or to emerge) as a '**testimonial subject**' – (subject here is very much under erasure and is crossed out) – not only outside the bounds of the court of law, but further, in place of the **legal subject**. I propose a distinction between the workings of 'testimony' and the constitution of 'testimonial space'. In the work, I'm giving myself the task of constructing what I mean by this distinction: Fred Moten's 'In The Break' and his work with the notion of 'phonic substance' has been of major help in my thinking process (I discussed my project with Fred when I met him in Amsterdam some months ago and have been in contact with him); so has Saidiyya Hartman's 'Scenes of Subjection'; And, your project, **Zong!** – which Omar had pointed out to me a while ago – became a major influence and reference; in fact a daily ritual that grew slowly throughout my working process into becoming an important theoretical and affective scaffolding within the work.

Below I'd like to explain to you how I would like to refer to **Zong!**:

I am in the process of working on building the scores and the sonic themes of my work. I've been working on my composition using the logics of text and the parameters that certain phonological and prosodic structures offer (I have been working with different texts). The composition is immersive and experienced in some parts as a trance. For part of the rhythm, I am hoping that you do not mind me using *Zong!*'s typography as a logic: I am constructing part of the sound's rhythmic/percussive structure, taking *Zong!*'s pages' layout and the way the layout builds its intensity throughout the book, as my reference. (please click the link below for an example of how one of the pages looks like when I translated it into a sonic percussive score):

 [Zong\\_Page\\_1\\_Example\\_of\\_Rhythmic\\_Score.pdf](#)

I would love to materialize what I am trying to digitally do in the sound, within the exhibition space itself: i.e. I am turning these sonic scores (still that will be playing under the rest of the composition as a structural

rhythmic/percussive score) into 'live sound' played by a digital reader that will be connected to a sampler and a synthesizer etc... Part of this process is the production of punctured pages that form what looks like an 'organ book' (please see image by clicking on the link below).

 **Organ\_Book\_Reader\_Loop.png**

I would love to materialize the score in the space as, for the content, I find it important that listeners understand what kind of project the sonic score is referencing and why.

I'd be very honored if you give me your blessings and permission to mention *Zong!* and point towards it. And furthermore, I would love it if this work starts a conversation between us.

I am very ready to explain more about the work through skype or any other way you prefer. And I very much look forward to your response!

Many many thanks and Best Regards,

Rana Hamadeh

On Tue, Jul 25, 2017 at 7:41 PM, Omar Berrada <[omarbrd@gmail.com](mailto:omarbrd@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear NourbeSe, dear Rana,

This is simply to put you in touch with each other, as promised.

Rana, I very much look forward to seeing how your project comes together!

Fondly  
Omar

--

Rana Hamadeh

Visual and Performance Artist

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