

Sands Murray-Wassink

*In Good Company (Horsepower):
Materials from the Gift Science Archive, 1993–present*

6 March–9 May 2021

Thursday to Saturday 12–17hr and by appointment. Visitors are kindly asked to register for one-hour archive visits.

A queer cult figure in the Amsterdam art scene for nearly two decades, Dutch American artist Sands Murray-Wassink (b. 1974, Topeka, Kansas) is a painter, body artist, writer and perfume collector indebted to various forms and permutations of intersectional feminist and queer art, with Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke and Adrian Piper serving as key coordinates. As Murray-Wassink has moved in and out of institutional visibility over the years, his archive of art and non-art 'studio objects' has continued to grow. For his current commission with If I Can't Dance, the artist has chosen to work with this massive collection of materials to create *Gift Science Archive*, a 'monumental' 18-month performance with different chapters, including archiving activities, process events, performances and exhibitions.

Developed with a collaborative team consisting of Megan Hoetger (curator, If I Can't Dance), Amalia Calderón (storyteller and artistic researcher) and Radna Rumping (independent curator and editor) at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten since October 2019, Murray-Wassink's *Gift Science Archive* has become a collective performance of archiving, an intergenerational process of remembering, and an experiment in re-thinking value production. In the project, emphasis is placed on the webs of social relations that hold objects together in affective fields, rather than on discrete artworks. It thus asks: where does the value of the (art) object reside? What is the value of the relations that (art) objects create? What is the connection between relational value and commodity value? How do we evaluate friendship? What is the value of feelings?

The exhibition *In Good Company* at mistral follows from these questions, and from the collecting and collective ethos of Murray-Wassink and the *Gift Science Archive*. It shares for the first time bodies of work and stacks of ephemera—including objects, documents, print materials, performance relics and more—dating back to 1993 when the artist began to develop his studio practice. In line with mistral's process-oriented focus, a traditional archival display has been shifted into an interactive workshop environment in which the working and archiving processes of *Gift Science Archive* are opened up to the public for haptic engagements (latex gloves included). Together with members of the *Gift Science Archive* and mistral teams, visitors are invited to peruse the database, which documents the over 2000 'studio objects' (and their narrative webs) unearthed through the performance, and to pull materials from the archive for a closer look and a story. The 'research experience' is thus set into relational motion, and storytelling is taken up as a primary, valid and valuable mode of knowledge production and transmission.

Sands Murray-Wassink (1974, Topeka, Kansas) is al meer dan twintig jaar een queer cultfiguur binnen de Amsterdamse kunstwereld. Hij is schilder, body artist, schrijver en parfum verzamelaar en verhoudt zich actief tot verschillende vormen van intersectioneel-feministische en queer kunstpraktijken. Constante daarbinnen is zijn diepgaande dialoog met kunstenaars Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke en Adrian Piper.

Terwijl hij zich binnen — maar voor perioden ook compleet buiten — institutioneel vizier bevond, bleef Murray-Wassink's oeuvre van kunst en niet-kunstobjecten groeien. Hij stelde daarom voor, toen If I Can't Dance hem in 2019 uitnodigde om een nieuw werk te ontwikkelen, met deze enorme verzameling materialen een *Gift Science Archive* te creëren: een 'monumentale' 18-maanden durende performance met vele facetten, waaronder archivering activiteiten, proces events, performances en tentoonstellingen.

Ontwikkeld in samenwerking met Megan Hoetger (curator, If I Can't Dance), Amalia Calderón (verhalenverteller en artistiek onderzoeker) en Radna Rumping (curator en redacteur) vanuit de Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten sinds oktober 2019, is Murray-Wassink's *Gift Science Archive* uitgegroeid tot een collectieve performance van archiveren, een intergenerationeel proces van herinneren en een experiment in het herdefiniëren van waardeproductie. De aandacht gaat niet zozeer uit naar geïsoleerde objecten, maar veel meer naar de manier waarop objecten netwerken van sociale relaties bij elkaar houden én hoe in dit proces van interactie affectieve velden ontstaan. De performance stelt ons dus de vraag: Waar is het dat de waarde van het (kunst)object 'zich ophoudt'? Wat is de waarde van de relaties die het (kunst)object in werking zet? Wat is het verband tussen de relationele waarde en de object-waarde van een kunstwerk? Hoe beschouwen en beoordelen we vriendschap? Wat is de waarde van emoties?

In Good Company ontvouwt zich vanuit zowel deze vragen als vanuit Murray-Wassink's ethos aangaande 'collectie' en 'collectief'. De tentoonstelling laat niet eerder getoonde ensembles en efemera (objecten, documenten, prints, performance-relikwieën) uit Murray-Wassink's oeuvre zien — materiaal dat teruggaat tot 1993 toen de kunstenaar begon zijn studio praktijk te ontwikkelen. In lijn met mistral's aandacht voor het proces, is in plaats van een traditionele archief presentatie gekozen voor een interactieve werkruimte. Bezoekers worden uitgenodigd om door de digitale database heen te gaan, maar kunnen ook materiaal uit de archiefdozen halen en bekijken (handschoenen zijn aanwezig). Belangrijk onderdeel is bovendien de aanwezigheid van leden van het *Gift Science Archive*-team en mistral die — elk hun eigen — verhalen meebrengen. De 'onderzoekservaring' wordt daarmee in relationele beweging gebracht waarbij het vertellen van verhalen wordt geëmancipeerd tot een valide en waardevolle vorm van kennisproductie en overdracht.

CREDITS

In Good Company is co-curated by Radna Rumping and Huib Hays van der Werf (mistral, Amsterdam) together with Megan Hoetger (If I Can't Dance, Amsterdam).

The exhibition is in keeping with mistral's focus on the making of constellations in its current programme, *Staying with Abundance*. The programme is inspired by the practice of collecting as an activated state of being.

IF I CAN'T DANCE,
I DON'T WANT TO BE PART
OF YOUR REVOLUTION

Gift Science Archive is a commission of If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, an Amsterdam-based arts organization dedicated to exploring performance and performativity in their expanded contemporary manifestations. *Gift Science Archive* is curated by Megan Hoetger as part of the If I Can't Dance Edition VIII—*Ritual and Display* programme, and is supported by the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam.

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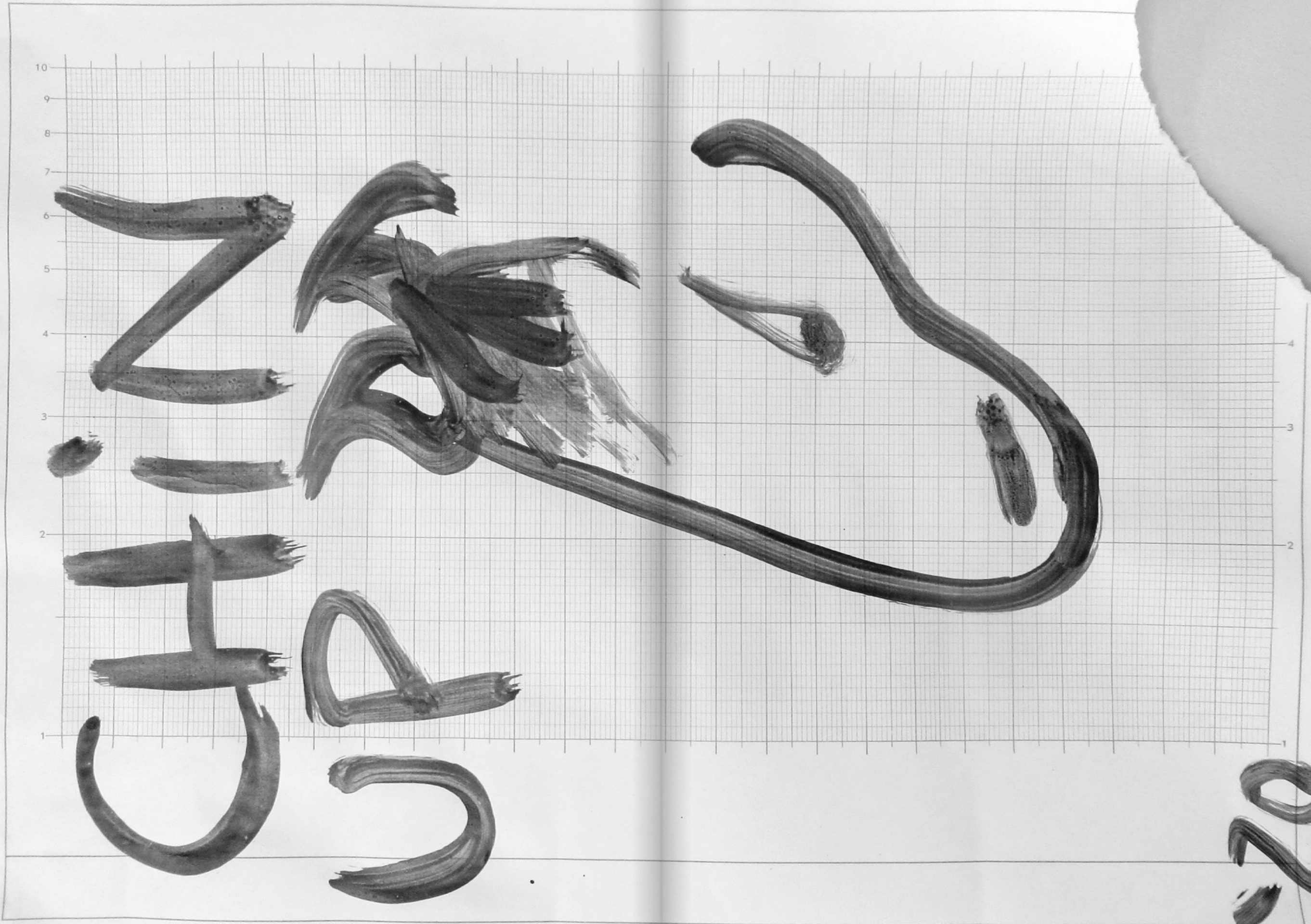
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WORKS & FLOOR MAP

1. *Coordinates, Pre-Robin* (1995). Pencil on paper; overall: 68 × 68 cm (framed: 73.5 × 75 cm).
2. *Big Pumpkin Series* (2009). Performalist self-portraits. Installation of 91 photoprints from digital color images; 15 × 20 cm and 20 × 15 cm each / overall: 248 × 201 cm. Photos: Robin Wassink-Murray.
3. *Gift Science Archive Catalog* (2020–in progress). Custom-built database created for the cataloging of ‘studio objects’ and their stories, which transitions into a public website to be launched in June 2021, on giftsciencearchive.net. Design and web development by Kommerz.
4. *Meta-archive Transcripts* (2021). Printed transcripts of five conversations initiated and recorded by Radna Rumping between October 2019 and August 2020 as part of the *Gift Science Archive* ‘meta-archive’; transcribed and translated by Martha Jager; design Karoline Świeżyński. Laser print on paper; 29.7 × 21 × 2 cm.
5. *Wassingue Inc* (2021). Carrier for *Signature Collage*. Copper metallic paint on wall; approximately 152 × 371 cm.
6. *Signature Collage* (1993–1995). Installation of 82 signed ephemeral objects unearthed from *Carrier Bag #9*. Oil crayon and mixed media on various paper materials (xeroxes, A4 paper, handprinted black and white photographs, color photo prints and agnès b. bag); individual dimensions variable / overall: 285 × 475 cm.
7. *Identity Shots or Before Robin, After Hannah Wilke* (1995). Edition of 60 performalist self-portraits self-shot by the artist and archivally stored with floral silk textile. Black and white photoprints; 30.5 × 20 cm each.
8. *Identity Shots or Before Robin, After Hannah Wilke* (1995). Photograph from edition of 60 performalist self-portraits self-shot by the artist. Framed black and white photoprint; 45 × 31 cm.
9. *Archive Unit* (2021). Interactive installation of *Gift Science Archive* archival boxes #1–6 and assortment of *Carrier Bags*. Reclaimed hardwood (4x), poplar plywood and lashing straps; 117 × 73 × 88.5 cm. Cabinet design and realization by Kaleb de Groot.
10. *Istory Will Vindicate Us (Ana, Hannah, Carolee, Orlan)* (2000 / 2021). Color slide / Color print of digitized slide with liquid gloss; 55 × 82 cm. Photo: Robin Wassink-Murray.
11. *Carrier Bags #1–9* (c. 1993–2003). Bags of materials collected together by the artist from around 2001 to 2003 and brought together under the typology “carrier bags” in 2020 by the Gift Science Archive after Ursula K. Le Guin’s “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” (1986). Mixed media; dimensions variable.
12. *Slides from the second studio period* (c. 1999). Assortment of color slides unearthed from *Carrier Bag #3*; 5 × 5 cm each.
13. *I Want A Constant Orgasm In A Beautiful Body* (c. 2010). Textile painting. Acrylic metallic paint on textured synthetic fabric; 133 × 103 cm.
14. *STAGGERING* (2000). Thought work, heart drawing. Poster marker, pen and coffee on paper; 59 × 42 cm (framed: 66 × 48.5 cm).
15. *Jim Dine Octopus* (2001). Thought work, heart drawing. Poster marker and pen on paper; 59 × 42 cm (framed: 66 × 48.5 cm).
16. *Chin Up Horse* (2020). Horse drawing from on-going series. Acrylic metallic paint on paper; 41 × 30 cm.

