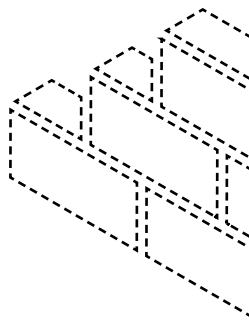
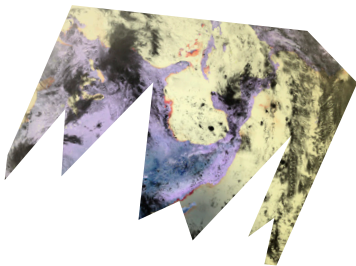


# CAPACITIES TO



**Affect Up Against Fascism**



**Edited by**  
**Gregory J. Seigworth**  
**Mathew Arthur**  
**Wendy J. Truran**  
**Chad Shomura**



# **Capacities To: Affect Up Against Fascism**

## **IMBRICATE!**

Series Editors: Gregory J. Seigworth, Mathew Arthur, and Wendy J. Truran

As an open access publisher, Imbricate! will always foster and promote rambunctious bloom-spaces for those who study affect over the dulling hum of any specific orthodoxy. All Imbricate! releases are available freely online and for purchase in print. The principal aim of Imbricate! is to create a place in and around affect studies for the generative ‘overlap’ of voices, practices, methods, matters, modes and more. Imbricate! publishes work that gauges how critical/creative practices can bring together discourses, worlds, sensations, sensibilities, and atmospheres that raise questions and perhaps unsettle what counts as ‘fit’ (and ‘unfit’) within and across shifting disciplinary contours. Imbricate! Press seeks to be a place of publication that lifts up and nestles in amongst those folks (and ideas) that pursue imaginative and expansive configurations of pre-existing patterns of academic exploration.

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**Edited by  
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Brian Massumi, “Capacities to Reaccess Potentials for Anti-Fascist Life?” From his forthcoming *Toward a Theory of Fascism for Anti-Fascist Life: A Process Vocabulary* (Minor Compositions, 2025). Thanks to Brian and to Minor Composition’s Stephen Shukaitus for permitting our use of the book’s opening ‘presentation.’

Jason Read, “Capacities to, or What Taylor Swift Taught Me About Fascism.” First posted to his *Unemployed Negativity* blog then, later, published online at *e-flux*. Thanks to Jason for allowing us to reprint here.

Cassie Thornton, “The Incapacity to Stay in Your Lane: On Gaza, on Emergency, on Extinction, Murder, Erasure, Loss.” First shared in her “News from The FED (The Feminist Economics Department)” November 2024. Our thanks to Cassie for granting us permission to use this text.

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but Otherwise



### 3

Katalin Halász

## Capacities to be a Body out of Bounds



I am standing in a crowd.

I am tense.

And I think that if every muscle in my body  
wouldn't protest against unwanted physical contact,  
if everyone didn't try  
not to strain their limbs into the bodies of strangers,  
if everyone would accept the momentary situation  
the tension wouldn't be so great,  
neither my own  
nor that of others.





Screencapture of The Bell Rings,  
a short film by Katalin Halász  
and Andreas Landeck, 2023 (17:34)

I am submerged in the crowd at the 2023 Tuszványos Festival, a week-long politics and music event organized annually by the Hungarian government in Transylvania, Romania, home to a large ethnic Hungarian minority. We are waiting for Viktor Orbán, Hungary's Prime Minister, who is about to arrive any minute now. Since coming to power in 2010, he has made it a tradition to address the nation on Tuszványos' final day. The nation that is 'Great Hungary,' symbolic and historic, including territories like Transylvania, ceded to Romania after the 1920 Treaty of Trianon. It was here, at Tuszványos in 2022, when Orbán spoke out against race-mixing: "There is a world in which European peoples are mixed together with those arriving from outside Europe. Now that is a mixed-race world. And there is our world, where people from within Europe mix with one another, move around, work, and relocate. ... This is why we have always fought: we are willing to mix with one another, but we do not want to become peoples of mixed-race." His words from last year, along with the sound of his voice and the jubilant cheers of the crowd, churn inside me like a billiard ball relentlessly trying to sink into a pocket, while my body tightens and releases in a nervous attempt to prevent it from making contact with the edges.

I came here to understand something  
but now I am so unsettled  
in my own feelings and purpose,  
I don't know what I am doing here anymore.

With headphones pressing tightly on my ears and a microphone raised in my hand, I try to follow the filmmaker's instructions. I can only hope I pressed the right buttons on the small device strapped around my neck and that it's recording properly, while I stretch my arms in every direction to capture the sounds engulfing me. Stationed at the side of the main stage with his camera, he films faces, bodies, and reactions. He is German, and I am Hungarian. We came here together to ingest, subsume, and create a film. It is the last day of a week that was segmented not by alternating political agitation and alcohol-fuelled night concerts, but by the tiresome effort of allowing opposing ideas and feelings to run parallel while holding onto the capacity of my body to function.

You show your protest by tensing your body.

Your body protests.

You think that people are letting themselves  
be led blindly

by a knowledge of uncertain origin  
that has been handed down to them,

which they can never fully possess,  
and which their personal experience cannot  
fully verify either.

You look at the faces around you.

You think you see their confusion and boredom.

But you cannot fully grasp them  
or your own feelings.

While the echo of Orbán's voice bounces off the surrounding mountains, enveloping us in a thick soundscape,  
I wait for the filmmaker to call it a cut and release me from





Screencapture of The Bell Rings,  
a short film by Katalin Halász  
and Andreas Landeck, 2023 (17:34)

my spot wedged between a middle-aged woman in a hat adorned with a withered blue flower, eager to catch a popular joke about migrants or gender madness, and a foul-smelling older man in a sweat-stained shirt, swearing relentlessly about the evils of anything he can grasp from the torrent of words. It must be challenging for them this year, I suppose. Several minutes into the speech, the well-rehearsed, formulaic hatred directed at contained groups of people has still not appeared. I don't really listen, don't even try to follow or glean anything from what is being discharged. By now, my sweat has merged with the man's, and my sole focus is on avoiding his saliva droplets from landing on my bare arms, which are tired from holding the microphone up. I hear words of war, China, Western values, US weapons, redistribution of power, European Union, Christian heritage. The puppet master, holding the strings in his hands, fails to lift everyone to the heights of the storm he is orchestrating. People are dropping off his battleships. I close my eyes, and I think of the others I spoke with over the past few days. The linguist professor, the first person I could engage with, saved me not only from the total despair of the abyssal corruption into which Hungary is sinking deeper with every collective breath of this fascist camp, but also from my own failure to see beyond and above what is presented on the surface around me. His questioning pauses, uncertain silences, and warmth—along with the openness of others who spoke with me, including his students, the two young female politicians, the local family man holding his child, and the teenage girls excited to attend their first music festival with parental permission—helped to crack open the darkness. Even if only for moments, those moments were real.

We have connected and disconnected  
images and concepts,  
discourses and representations,  
emotions and sensations.  
I want to know why I am inclined to do things.  
Why I am doing things.  
Why I trace my emotions.  
I don't consider my emotions a reality,  
but I want to reach my reality through my emotions.  
My reality, where the emotions that guide me  
to reach it  
originate from.

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*Capacities To: Affect Up Against Fascism* is a collection of more than forty essays, poems, and visual works that convey myriad approaches for understanding, surviving, and creating counter-movements in our increasingly fascist and authoritarian age. From numerous angles and different international locales, the contributors offer insights grounded in their distinctive feeling-encounters across a multitude of everyday contexts, along with critical perspectives informed by affect as a way of registering the energies or intensities of living and their gathering potentials for making a world otherwise than it is now. Fascism is an affective phenomena that works as a large scale ideological form and, also, by insinuating itself into the micro-movements and moments of daily life. Affect studies operates upon this same terrain but, rather than the abject fear of contamination, otherness, and difference that animates fascist imaginings and rouse its violence toward particular elements of the body-politic, affect [up against fascism] can be moved in other ways: open and inclusive and joyful in its embrace of difference as abundance, as messiness, as enlarged capacities for living together.

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