

# Contact M

My name is Elaine Lillian Joseph and I'm a Black British writer, audio describer, and translator who creates aesthetic experiences through embodied description. I have a soft, flattened out Birmingham accent with the occasional West Indian inflection by way of Saint Kitts and Jamaica.

This audio guide is an artwork. This audio guide is an exhibition. It is titled Contact M and contains artworks made in the 2010s and 2020s by Park McArthur. Contact M was recorded in German and English.

Some artworks are only exhibited here, in this audio guide. Some artworks were on view from March to September, 2025 at the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, Germany and mumok in Vienna, Austria. Reading or listening to Contact M keeps it open as an exhibition.

Audio description is typically created through close, in-person experiences of a performance, film, artwork, or exhibition. Neither Park nor I visited the museums while making Contact M. I recorded it in London, UK and Park wrote it in New Jersey, USA with contributions from collaborators and translators living in New York City; Atlanta; Long Beach, California; and Berlin. Your visit describes the exhibition for us.

Where these descriptions err from your immediate surroundings, follow them. Stay after closing, take an elevator, use the stairs, stay home. Find an entrance. Welcome to Contact M.

# mumok Abteiberg

The floors are terrazzo.

The floors are marble, wood, and gray concrete.

The museums close then open.

Each description starts with mumok and ends with Museum Abteiberg. Everything is installed on Level 0 opposite a large glass wall and transparent security gate. Everything is on Floors 0 and 1: spread throughout the Temporary Exhibition Gallery by the building's entrance, the multi-story High Gallery, the Street Level Foyer Gallery leading back to the museum cafe, and the Skylight Room upstairs.

The museums open then close.

The gallery's benches are dark leather and stainless steel. The museum seating is cube-like and light brown.

The artworks are all by Park McArthur. Many artworks are not. There are artworks by Fiona Banner and Thomas Houseago that have been relocated to more accessible areas from the Pyramid Room, which can only be reached by stairs. Elsewhere, a piano stuffed with flowers that were once red but have long since dried to brown, is an artwork by Joseph Beuys. The large text artworks on the walls are by Lothar Baumgarten and Lawrence Weiner.

You can see everything all at once, nothing to hide. You have to search for artworks in vestibules and corners.

Near a large sculpture of grey soundproofing foam sits a slightly smaller block of blue cushioning foam. Both sculptures are taller than they are wide, with the blue one measuring 220 × 144 × 90 cm, a little over 86 × 56 × 35 inches.

A single block of blue cushioning foam sits in front of a large mirrored wall sculpture by Michelangelo Pistoletto while, in another gallery down the hall, two oversized blocks of soundproofing foam face off with a pair of highway sign sculptures.

A third sign hangs in an open alcove near a floor sculpture of 20 wheelchair ramps. A fourth unadorned silver highway sign reflects the day's light through windows facing the sculpture garden. Two wheelchair ramps – each a single plywood sculpture – rest on the gallery's stone floor.

Seen from far away, two rubber bumpers designed to absorb a truck's impact on a loading dock look like punctuation marks at the end of two unknown sentences. Seen from far away, five rubber loading dock bumpers look like an irregular, elongated ellipsis.

Dot, dot, dot, dot, dot. Polkadots.

Old pajama pants of various patterns and fabrics drape themselves across a group of four metal display stands. Used sweaters, sweatshirts, dresses, pants, and an old blue coat hang in a jumble from five metal stands with circular bases.

Stainless steel trays hold stacks of free pamphlets, postcards, pulmonary cannulas and mouthpieces, barrier creams, bandages, a pair of foam heel cushions, covid tests, and condoms.

Contact M

Contact P

Contact [sustained E note]

Contact [sustained F note]

Contact [sustained D note]

Contact S

Pro ie hur ... Pro ie hur

M art r ... M art r ... M art r ... M art r

A logo stretches along the museum's interior walls for 51 meters, 168 feet. It stretches along the museum's interior walls for 59 meters, 193 feet. The logo's words, "Projects 195 Park McArthur," cross the rooms' corners in black and gold lettering – dodging and getting cut off where floors meet ceilings meet doorways.

This logo is an artwork and its presence in the museum asks a question: given everything that's accumulated here over time, is this place an investment, pied-à-terre, or primary residence?

Depending on who's asking, a question like that can really suck the air out of a room. A question like that can suck the air out of disposable ventilator filters and hang a whole year's worth of them – 12 or 22 or 14 filters – on a wall end-to-end. It can suck the air out of used pulmonary filters and scatter them across the floor.

A question like that can arrive by email and await an answer most patiently. It can ask: 4. Which patient lift better alleviates the fear of being moved

Was it a raincoat or a life vest that I was reminded of while putting it on

Did you choose the music

Which height is most comfortable for thinking about what's on the pages

8. And what does it have to do with care?

When, would you say, did it start

And what does it have to do with care? What does it have to do with confinement? Typically, a museum wall label lists an artwork's title, material or materials, year or years it was made, and by whom. Sometimes a courtesy line – which collector or what collection is allowing an artwork to remain on view – is listed, too. Whoever paid for it, gave it, or let it be used. Some artworks belong to more than one person: taxpayers, two or more museums entering co-ownership, investors. Some artworks belong to no one. And an artwork's effect: whose is that? Sometimes an artwork remains imperceptible despite expectations of evidence. Sometimes an artwork spreads itself out as memory among those who have carried you and those who have held you. Sometimes an artwork fills a room that way.

# Elevator

Start again. Drag the playhead backwards.

An elevator is located in the corner of a large outdoor square.

An elevator is tucked into a corner across from the museum's cafe.

The museum's floors are speckled terrazzo.

The floors are marble, wood, and gray concrete.

The museum is surrounded by other museums in the city center.

Facing a school and a cathedral, the museum sits high on a hill.

# Everywhere

with Constantina Zavitsanos

## SCORE FOR CROSSING AN OPEN FIELD

Notice your partner's lap has been the same shape for some time and ask if she'd like it tight or open.

Wait for her response.

Bend over and pick up her leg from the mid calf.  
Place her ankle over her opposite thigh.

Adjust as directed.

## SCORE FOR YEAH NO

Plan two days in advance for one hour behind.  
Get three hours behind and  
Keep planning.

## SCORE FOR DISTRIBUTION DINNER

Caption every little thing.  
Let us tell you something good  
Mombaça brings.  
Eggs.  
Salt.  
Butter.  
Tell them you want your eggs scrambled anyway  
Just not that way.

## GRATITUDE COMMA SCORE

Our love is my friend.

## SHIRT SCORE

Bow your head forward.

Look at your lap.

If the person doesn't notice your position as a gesture of what you want to do next, say "hey, can we take my shirt off please."

Once you are positioned facing one another, put your head very close to your partner's stomach, placing your hands on your thighs to keep yourself upright.

Feel your stomach tighten as you continue to work to keep yourself stable against the motion and pull of fabric over your head.

Give yourself a challenge; wear a turtleneck.

With the opening of the shirt over your head and resting as a droop at your neck, have your partner pull the bottom of the shirt resting at your shoulder past your left arm.

Your left arm leaves the sleeve.

This helps the right sleeve to pull down, too.

Your right arm is free.

Your shirt is now in your lap.

## SCORE FOR DOUBLING DOWN

Find yourself.

Lose yourself.

# Elsewhere

Color photographs fill book pages.

They navigate around us without moving. They are somewhere in this text.

Photographs find sculptures before they are removed from public view.

Photographs point North and South, East and West. They hear Audrey say let's go to the sand and see what everyone's doing. They watch Ben unroll a large, used mat while David sifts through plywood scraps, explaining how putting the boards' ends together keeps an even surface.

Like this?, photographs ask.

Is this how to get a wheelchair over sand?

Photographs flip book pages, jumping backwards and forwards in time.

Or how to get anywhere?

A portrait of a former nurses' residence is now an elder apartment complex.

A banner reads MAKE IT HERE LONG ISLAND CITY MAKE IT YOURS.

Asking how to reach a canal out back through a building's front entrance is answered by images of thresholds and doorways. Posting pictures of staff lunches is a reply to inviting artists to use a museum's Instagram account.

Black, green, yellow, red: directional signs navigate around us without moving. They are compasses carved into wooden picnic tables. Orange, brown, white outlined in black, and various shades of blue: signs lead nowhere. A ride is easy on a steep incline. Past checkpoints and breadlines, hardware stores and ticket counters, signs take us where we've been before, coming all this way on a decline. For what? To try again tomorrow?

Home on a bad day. Home on a good one. Signs crowd the outdoors.

160 Main Street.

22 Mill Street.

Home if we make it.



Decommissioned and disassembled, signs depart from this text. Temporary and preserved, stolen, covered, and carried away, they are ignored and avoided – cursed, consequential, and inferred.

They are anywhere. They are nowhere to be found.

# Space

with domingo castillo flores

I'm gonna turn one last time, which will be the left side of the corner that faces the entrance of the museum. And here you can see some like manufacturing dates.

V E 25 1-3-0 No. 97

2-2 12 2015 10-24 19

2.3 × 2.5 151.7 kg No. 97 stock.

The other strange thing is that there are two spotlights on this artwork. And it just, it just barely makes a difference. The light is also being sucked out of the space by the object. It kind of like, it gives it a slight shine. But really what it does is that it makes the material sparkle once you get close to it. These kinds of like shimmering lights, the shimmer in the material, just kind of like ...

Yeah ...

The foam just shimmers.

# Like You

Contact M is made possible by disabled artists like you. Citations and influences abound, in particular: SoundScribe's practice of embodied audio description and their collaborative work on Sarah Hayden's audio description research project of Black Audio Film Collective's 1986 documentary film Handsworth Songs titled "Slow emergency siren, ongoing;" Kinetic Light's multimodal, multiply-authored performance guides; Alt-Text as Poetry's everyday captioning practices; Carolyn Lazard's dance film Long Take; Constantina Zavitsanos's interference projections All the Time and Ms. Pac-Man; Cameron Rowland's exhibition texts and artwork captions; Free jazz band DMD: Dream Music Directory, whose members Makoto Takehashi, Kazuhiro Kawakami, Asami Kumamoto, and Hiroki Yamasaki have or had DMD: duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Gratitude to disabled artists, artists not yet disabled, and everyone already an artist.

Performance: Elaine Lillian Joseph

Music: E, F, and D notes at 320 Hz, 341.3 Hz, and 288 Hz  
by Constantina Zavitsanos  
"Foam vision" by domingo castillo flores  
"Waiting It Out" by 7038634357

Artworks in order of appearance:

Contact M, 2025  
by Park McArthur

Arsewoman in Wonderland, 2001  
by Fiona Banner

Kinski I, 2010 and Electric Mask I, 2010  
by Thomas Houseago

Revolutionsklavier, 1969  
by Joseph Beuys

Land of the Spotted Eagle, 1983  
by Lothar Baumgarten

Down a hatch (Eine Hecke entlang); Up a tree (Einen Baum hinauf) Around a town (Um eine Stadt herum), 1973  
by Lawrence Weiner

Polyurethane Foam, 2016 and 2025  
by Park McArthur

Attori e spettatori / Ragazzo che porta una chitarra, 1983–84  
by Michelangelo Pistoletto

Softly, effectively, 2017; Missions, 2025; Ramps, and Untitled, 2014;  
B. Beamesderfer Ramp, 2024; Passive Vibration Isolation 4, 2014; Passive  
Vibration Durometer Facts 10, 2019; Black & White Plaid Commode, Breakfast  
Commode, Pink Love Commode, Calvin Klein Commode, 2014; Cashmere  
Commode, Grouch Commode, Periwinkle Commode, Days' Ends Commode,  
Curatorial Commode, 2024; Contact P, Contact E, Contact D, 2025; Contact F,  
Contact S, 2016; Is this an investment, pied-à-terre, or primary residence?,  
2018; Fantasies, 2020; Unassailable Fantasies, 2025; Extended Fantasy, and  
Fantasies Scatter, 2023; These are the questions I would ask, 2013; Some  
follow up questions, 2017; ... synthetic questions ..., 2019; Involuntary  
Questions, 2020; Asked simultaneously, 2023; Daily Questions, 2025;  
Carried and Held, 2012–  
by Park McArthur

Score for Crossing an Open Field, 2013; Score for Yeah No, 2017; Score for  
Distribution Dinner from Scores for Carolyn, 2018; Gratitude Comma Score,  
2025; Shirt Score, 2013; Score for Doubling Down, 2017  
by Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos

Summer 2014, 2024; How to get a wheelchair over sand, 2013; 1918 1st Ave,  
2018; Welcome to PS1, 2015; Leads, 2016; Liabilities, 2015; Overlook Park,  
2017; Another word for memory is life, and Single study, 2017; and Gate, 2015  
by Park McArthur

Museum, 2002  
by Thomas Rentmeister

Blanks, Private Signs, and Ramp Access Located at Essex Street, 2014; Untitled,  
2015; Promised Signs, 2023; and Ramp Scheme 160 Main Street, 2013  
by Park McArthur.

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[Like You ends. "Waiting It Out" begins fading in through room noise, faint rustling and footsteps. Gradually a distant music filters into perception. The music recedes and a voice approaches reciting an alphanumeric code. Eventually the voice fades away, accompanied by a trace of the earlier music.]

mumok

Contact E, 2025

Contact M, 2025

Contact P, 2025

Daily Questions, 2025

Missions, 2025

Missions, 2025

Polyurethane Foam, 2025

Unassailable Fantasies, 2025

Asked simultaneously, 2023

Involuntary Questions, 2020

... synthetic questions ..., 2019

Is this an investment, pied-à-terre, or primary residence?, 2018

Softly, effectively, 2017

Some follow up questions, 2017

Contact F, 2016

Polyurethane Foam, 2016

Black & White Plaid Commode, Breakfast Commode, Pink Love Commode,  
Calvin Klein Commode, 2014

Passive Vibration Isolation 4, 2014

Ramps, 2014

These are the questions I would ask, 2013

Carried and Held, 2012-

Museum Abteiberg

Contact D, 2025

Contact M, 2025

Contact P, 2025

Daily Questions, 2025

Missions, 2025

Missions, 2025

Polyurethane Foam, 2025

B. Beamesderfer Ramp, 2024

Cashmere Commode, Grouch Commode, Periwinkle Commode, Days' Ends  
Commode, Curatorial Commode, 2024

Asked simultaneously, 2023

Extended Fantasy, 2023

Fantasies Scatter, 2023

Involuntary Questions, 2020

Passive Vibration Durometer Facts 10, 2019

... synthetic questions ..., 2019

Is this an investment, pied-à-terre, or primary residence?, 2018

Softly, effectively, 2017

Some follow up questions, 2017

Contact S, 2016

Polyurethane Foam, 2016

Polyurethane Foam, 2016

Untitled, 2014

These are the questions I would ask, 2013

Carried and Held, 2012-

**Park McArthur**  
**Contact M**

March 15–September 7, 2025

EN: [www.mumok.at/en/exhibitions/park-mcarthur](http://www.mumok.at/en/exhibitions/park-mcarthur)  
DE: [www.mumok.at/ausstellungen/park-mcarthur](http://www.mumok.at/ausstellungen/park-mcarthur)

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**Park McArthur**  
**Contact M**

March 15–September 28, 2025

EN: [www.museum-abteiberg.de/exhibitions/park-mcarthur-contact-m/?lang=en](http://www.museum-abteiberg.de/exhibitions/park-mcarthur-contact-m/?lang=en)  
DE: [www.museum-abteiberg.de/ausstellungen/park-mcarthur-contact-m/](http://www.museum-abteiberg.de/ausstellungen/park-mcarthur-contact-m/)

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