

Sandrine Schaefer

Pace Investigations No. 14

Performance

Duration: 2 hours, 6 minutes, 30 seconds

Created for the 14th {Re}HAPPENING, Black Mountain College campus at Lake Eden, organized by the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (2026).

Overview

Pace Investigations No. 14 was a durational performance structured around the continual compression and expansion of time. Over the course of 2 hours, 6 minutes, and 30 seconds, the same performance was repeated thirteen times. Beginning at thirty-two minutes, each successive iteration became progressively shorter until it reached a duration of only thirty seconds. The performance then expanded through the same sequence in reverse, returning to its original thirty-two-minute duration.

Cycle 1 = 32 minutes

Cycle 2 = 16 minutes

Cycle 3 = 8 minutes

Cycle 4 = 4 minutes

Cycle 5 = 2 minutes

Cycle 6 = 1 minute

Cycle 7 = 30 seconds

Cycle 8 = 1 minute

Cycle 9 = 2 minutes

Cycle 10 = 4 minutes

Cycle 11 = 8 minutes

Cycle 12 = 16 minutes

Cycle 13 = 32 minutes

As time contracted and expanded, the performance itself transformed. Individual actions accelerated or slowed. Some actions became unrecognizable from previous cycles. Some disappeared while others became more significant. Some actions merged to become different actions all together. Rather than reproducing a fixed score, each cycle required continual negotiation between temporal constraint and embodied experience. Throughout the work, the tension between measured time and affective time was palpable.

Created specifically for the *14th {Re}HAPPENING* on the historic Black Mountain College campus at Lake Eden, the performance responded to the history and experimental ethos of Black Mountain College by embracing indeterminacy, simultaneity, interdisciplinarity, and the continual evolution of form.

Performance Actions + Materials

Suspending Time



Wall clocks suspended from surrounding trees and a flip clock positioned within the performance site established a visible framework of measured time. The suspended clocks were encased in ice and slowly thawed throughout the performance, allowing water to accumulate behind their faces as rain, temperature, and duration became active collaborators in the work.

John Cage Shoes



Ray Johnson, *A Shoe (John Cage Shoes)*, 1977 | Sandrine Schaefer *John Cage Shoes*, 2026

During the performance the artist wore a recreation of Ray Johnson's *A Shoe (John Cage Shoes)* found in Johnson's apartment after his death. The shoes acknowledge the relationship between Johnson and John Cage, who met at Black Mountain College in 1948. These artists profoundly shaped interdisciplinary, experimental and experiential art practices. Wearing the shoes became an embodied gesture of carrying artistic legacy, connection, and influence.

Weathering



The artist held a closed umbrella above their head while standing in the rain. Only after becoming thoroughly wet was the umbrella opened, transforming it from an object of protection into an acknowledgment of exposure.

Sweeping



Using a handmade Appalachian-style broom, the artist swept the ground in a repetitive act of maintenance and care. The tool connected the performance to regional craft traditions while referencing Black Mountain College's legacy of collective labor. The gesture revealed the ongoing negotiation between human stewardship and the uncontrollable rhythms of the outdoor environment.

Sight Lines



Using only their eyes, the artist repeatedly directed attention toward the surrounding mountains. The gesture functioned as a subtle form of pointing, extending the performance beyond the artist's body and into the landscape that shaped both the work and the history of Black Mountain College.

Reflecting



Holding a mirror toward viewers who approached the performance redirected attention away from the performer and back toward the audience and surrounding landscape, making witnesses to the work aware of their part in the work.

"Repeat to Amplify"

Audience members were invited to participate using the "people's microphone," in which each spoken phrase is repeated collectively to amplify a single voice.

The text shared was the following excerpt from the artist's manifesto, *The Body*:

*We all navigate the world
through the vehicle of a body.
The body is
the most readily available material.
It is a political material.
It is a familiar material.
It is a sensational material.
It is a reliably unreliable material.
It is a fragile material.
It is a durable material.
It is a material that interrupts.
It is an urgent material.*

Balancing History



Balancing a heavy book on their head, the artist alternated between the posture of being weighed down by history and moments of leisurely reading. The action shifted between burden, contemplation, and care as its duration changed across repetitions.

Cycling



A slate recorded the duration of each performance cycle, beginning at thirty-two minutes and progressively halving to thirty seconds before expanding again in reverse order. At the conclusion of each cycle, its corresponding duration and number were crossed out with chalk. The accumulating marks transformed the slate from a schedule into a record of elapsed time, making the passage of the performance visible.