PRE-SHOW AUDIO DESCRIPTION: This two-and-a-half minute dance film explores contralateral movement, movement with opposite sides of the body. Contralateral: stretching an arm or leg along a diagonal across the body, or taking a step with the left foot, swinging the right arm. The film interweaves and collages different sources or viewpoints. The first viewpoint is video filmed on a cellphone held by the filmmaker, Margaret, where she is not shown or only her limbs come into view. The second is video footage of Margaret doing physiotherapy exercises. These two viewpoints sometimes fill the screen, sometimes are shown playing on Margaret’s big screen TV or on the laptop of her collaborator, Justine. Margaret has short grey hair. Only Justine’s limbs, moving contralaterally in front of her, appear onscreen.

A red curtain opens: a city street, a crane on a construction site. An articulated red city bus passes. [city bus hisses] Title in pink: “New Normal: an embodied novel, chapter 4.”

MAKIKO: Hundred-thirty-nine, Hundred-forty. Hyaku-yonju-san, hyaku-yonju-yon.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Title continues: “re-learning contralateral.”

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: One-seventy-nine, One-eighty.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Cars turn through an intersection in a commercial area. A sunny day, pale grass and leafy trees on all corners.

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Ciento-ochenta-y-uno, ciento-ochenta-y-dos, ciento-ochenta-y-tres.

MAKIKO: Hyaku-yonju-ichi, hyaku-yonju-ni.

[traffic rushes]

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: In pink text: “from the intersection of Kingsway & Earles.” The view spins 360 degrees, lands on the sidewalk. The camera shakes for a moment.

Cut to indoors. Justine’s laptop shows a video of a car parked in an alley beside tall, green bushes. On the laptop screen, pink text, “Counting.” Justine’s left hand dips contralaterally, her hand a ripe pear dripping off the branch of her arm.

MARGARET: Two-hundred, two-hundred-and-one, two-hundred-and-two, two-hundred-and-three.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Right knee raises up into her touch. Her arm retracts, passing slowly in front of the laptop screen. Flexes her hand.

MARGARET: Two-hundred-and-four, two-hundred-and-five, two-hundred-and-six, two-hundred-and-seven, two-hundred-and-eight.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: The laptop video morphs to Margaret exercising in a long, fluorescent-lit hallway using two canes. The hallway fills our view. She practices walking slowly with high knee raises, her back to the camera, careful steps. An orb of light shines from beneath the exit door at the far end. The hallway dissolves to the street, the car by the high bushes.

MARGARET: Two-hundred-and-nine, two-hundred-and-ten, two-hundred-and-eleven, two-hundred-and-twelve.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: We pass the parked car, taking slow steps down the alley. Margaret, in profile: She completes physiotherapy exercises with the two canes, midway down the lonely hallway of a seniors’ building.

MARGARET: Two-hundred-and-thirteen.

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Tres-cientos-treinta-y-cinco, tres-cientos-treinta-y-seis, tres-cientos-treinta-y-siete.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: A collage of images: parked cars on the street, Justine’s left hand passes in front of her laptop, a sidewalk, trees, homes, the laptop’s video of Margaret exercising in the hallway. The collage dissolves to a residential street flanked by bushes and trees. The camera moves slowly, tilting with the asymmetry of Margaret’s gait.

MAKIKO: Hyaku-yonju-ni, hyaku-yonju-san.

MARGARET: ...sixty, three-sixty-one.

MAKIKO: Hyaku-yonju-yon.

MARGARET: Three-sixty-two, three-sixty-three, three-sixty-four, three-sixty-five, three-sixty-six, three-sixty-seven.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Patches of bare lawn. A for sale sign waits at one home.

Back in the hallway, Margaret, with her two canes, walks backward toward the camera, lifts and lowers each leg, precise, measured.

MARGARET: Eight-hundred-and-seven, eight-hundred-and-eight.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: The hallway dissolves. A stretch of sidewalk at the senior housing courtyard. Melts to the indoors, Margaret’s big-screen TV, displaying the view down the residential sidewalk with the house for sale.

MARGARET: Eight-hundred-and-nine. [on TV] Three-fifty-nine, three-sixty, three-sixty-one, three-sixty-two, three-sixty-three.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Margaret’s palm up, fingers open like a candelabra, a contralateral reach. Her right hand contralateral, beckoning. Arms repeat as the TV now shows Margaret in the hallway doing mobility exercises, her back to the camera. A glimpse of the courtyard on the TV, dissolving into Margaret lying in a narrow bed, a grey sheet with white chevrons. One leg bent, the other straight. Loose, green capri pants. She presses her left hand down on her left hip flexor, right leg extends into the air.

MARGARET: Three-sixty-four, three-sixty-five, three-sixty-six, three-sixty-seven. Eight-hundred-and-ten, eight-hundred-eleven, eight-twelve, eight-thirteen, eight-fourteen, eight-fifteen, eight-sixteen, eight-seventeen, eight-eighteen, eight-nineteen.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Layered collage of images as Justine’s left knee, in salmon-coloured pants, and her right arm stretch contralaterally, retract.

Flash to the courtyard. Cut to an elevator door opening. [door slides open]

The world bends. Margaret stretches. A shot of Justine’s laptop floats into view over the image of Margaret. On the floating laptop screen, the same view of her stretching, stabilizing on the bed, the tension of a bow and arrow being drawn.

MAKIKO: San-byaku-san, san-byaku-yon.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Dissolve to Justine’s laptop on a long black table. Beyond the table, a large painting: white space with a red, blue, black, eyeballs, fishlike-birdlike-airplanelike image. Beyond the table, an 1880s filing cabinet and the kitchen, a red brick wall.

Justine’s left hand reaches contralaterally. A black sweater sleeve, a silver band on the traffic finger, her arm obscures the laptop. Her right knee, contralateral. Fingers drape over it like wet fabric. The laptop shows Margaret doing bridge exercises on her bed, raising and lowering her pelvis as her feet sink into the mattress, creating small depressions in the memory foam.

Cut to the elevator doors closing for the blink of an eye. Margaret doing bridge exercises.

MAKIKO: San-byaku-go.

MARGARET: Nine-forty-six, nine-forty-seven, nine-forty-eight, nine-forty-nine, nine-fifty.

MAKIKO: Kyu-hyaku, kyu-hyaku-ichi, kyu-hyaku-ni, kyu-hyaku-san.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Margaret, now in a snazzy red printed dress and purple yoga pants lying on her back in bed. Hands are raised, framing our frame. Feet planted, knees raised, she holds an iPad between her knees, legs and hips still. Her thighs frame the device. Showing on the iPad screen, Margaret doing the bridge exercises from a moment before. Through the window to her left, thick green foliage. To her right, a warped sliver of light from the kitchen. Reaches contralaterally, left, right, as the iPad shows elevator buttons and the elevator door opening into the long, empty senior housing hallway.

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Ocho-cientos-ochenta-y-ocho.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Margaret doing bridge exercises on her bed. [elevator door opens]

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Ocho-cientos-ochenta-y-neuve.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: As her hips settle, the scene dissolves to the inside of the elevator, the array of buttons. The door opens on the 2nd floor, view turns out of the elevator and to the right. [door slides]

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Ocho-cientos-noventa.

MARGARET: ...fifty-one, nine-fifty-two.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, Margaret’s living room. On a big screen TV, a replay of exiting the elevator. Margaret stands, facing the TV, holding a wooden dowel in her right hand like a cane. Kicks her left leg contralaterally. On the TV, a fire extinguisher mounted on the wall of the lonely hallway.

MARGARET: [on TV] Nine-fifty-two, nine-fifty-three, nine-fifty-four.

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO: Ocho-cientos-noventa-y-uno.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Cut to the hallway, turning past the fire extinguisher, moving toward Margaret’s spare apartment door.

MARGARET: Nine-fifty-three, nine-fifty-four, nine-fifty-five, nine-fifty-six, nine-fifty-seven, nine-fifty-eight, nine-fifty-nine.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: A composite onscreen: Margaret on her stomach on the bed, lifts her flexed right foot, knee bent, as a smaller view of her big screen TV shows the same scene. Left ankle hooks the edge of the bed, an anchor. A lush potted plant extends its leaves out beyond the TV. Back in the living room, Margaret’s arms reach contralaterally as the image of her onscreen continues exercising on the grey and white chevron sheets. She reaches right knee, left arm as the screen shows vibrant, lush green trees just outside the lonely hallway window by her door.

MARGARET: Nine-sixty, nine-sixty-one, nine-sixty-two, nine-sixty-three, nine-sixty-four, nine-sixty-five, nine-sixty-six. Nine-sixty-four, nine-sixty-five.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: TV cuts to a blue background with pink text: “966 steps from Kingsway & Earles to my place.” She gives the screen two thumbs up.

MARGARET: Nine-sixty-six. Nine-sixty-six, nine-sixty-six.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Credits. Novel: Margaret Dragu, Choreography: Justine A. Chambers, Performers: Justine A. Chambers, Margaret Dragu, Vocalists: Makiko Hara, Francisco-Fernando Granados, Margaret Dragu, Logo for Dragu Worker International.