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University of Sussex

SCORING OTHER:
THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF ART-MAKING

PhD Thesis submission in Musical Composition

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Glossary

Other:

Other (note capitalization), is used in the philosophical/phenomenological sense, as exemplified by Emmanuel Levinas (Levinas, 2006). It is invoked in a deliberately broad manner, incorporating not simply the human 'other', but equally the vast gamut of all that is 'not-self'. Whilst I appreciate that Levinas might not consider Other in quite such a broad fashion, extending the term to include externality-in-general sits more comfortably with the approaches to objectivity and subjectivity (as presented by Brian Massumi (Massumi, 2011)) that underpin my engagement with the art-event.

Resonance:

Resonance refers to the movement that occurs between self and its Other, as per the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy (Nancy, 2007). As such, resonance is assumed to be the means by which an object points towards its Otherness – the multiple layers of material, social, spiritual or contextual potentiality contained therein. The reference to acoustic resonance is less analogous than literal: like sound, being extends from a source (self) out into the world, and returns changed, based upon the materialistic qualities of that which it encounters. Just as sound ceases to exist without the presence of something to reverberate from or with – the air that vibrates to create sound waves – Self likewise exists only in the process of its relation to Other. Furthermore, for Nancy being and sounding amount to the same process, since both are concerned with the act of vibration – if it lives or if it sounds, it must vibrate. Being *is* sounding, the vibration of life in the process of living, whether it is the biological vibration of heartbeat, or the sensory, cognitive vibration of a sentience seeking Other.

Avant-garde:

Avant-garde is used in its etymological sense – to indicate a forward-guard of cultural exploration. For this reason, the word is somewhat synonymous with experimentalism, since it suggests a practice that operates beyond the 'common' sense of the culture in which it sits. Likewise, 'conceptual' and 'experimental' art forms are considered as those that have a focus upon concepts or experimentation, rather than ways to temporally delineate specific artistic movements.

Art:

Art is considered here as synonymous with 'deliberate creative practice'. Thus, painting, sculpture, music, video-art, etc., are considered as mediums within the same fundamental creative enterprise, albeit one that is characterised by its distance from general social activity (even if that general activity is itself creative). Whilst this thesis ultimately argues that any everyday activity (fixing the sink, walking the dog, arguing with your spouse) is potentially a creative endeavor, this is not to suggest that there is no distinction to be made between acts undertaken as a form of art, and acts undertaken creatively for another purpose. Indeed, I would argue in light of this, that the role of the artist is not simply to undertake creativity,

but rather to make resonant the creativity *already present* in the communities more general machinations.

Artist:

A practitioner working within any creative medium, and more specifically, the primary researcher/practitioner undertaking this project. Assumes the undertaking of any discipline that might broadly fit within the existing art-world's remit, including sound, music, painting, sculpture, walking, video, etc. The social function of the artist within their community is the primary subject of this thesis.

Drone:

Drone serves as both a description of a musical style that borders both minimalist and Indian musical traditions (as popularised by La Monte Young), and a connotation-rich framing of a specific type of activity. Drone, as a multi-layered term, indicates boredom or a lack of progress (as in 'droning on'), the pedestrian or a lack of individuality (as in a worker drone), and autonomy or mediated control (as in a drone missile). There is also the spiritual connotation - drone points to the concept of Om and Shunyakasha – the Vedic notion of a field of latent energy-potential (Shunyakasha) from which creativity arises (Om). Om, manifest as a literal drone in its vocal utterance, emerges from a field that is at once everything and nothing, a base sound that, like Nancy's notion of resonance, "penetrates the imperishable", and for which "the mystic symbol Om is the bow. The arrow is the Self" (Radhakrishnan and Moore, p.53, 1989).

Interpretation:

Used to describe the transmutation of one creative form into another by a performer as a way of providing (some of) the art-event's content. In the case of this thesis, it is primarily used to describe my own interpretation of the score's text.

Intervention:

Akin to a term such as social sculpture (Beuys, 2007), or the happenings of the Fluxus movement, used to describe an approach to live performance that seeks to disrupt, in some manner, the existing flow of social activity within a public space. Usually this takes place outside of a designated art setting, such as on the street.

Collaboration:

Used to describe the creation of artistic content that involves more than one interlocutor. Furthermore, it assumes that all those involved have a degree of autonomy beyond that of the typically hierarchized performer/composer dynamic.

Sense:

Sense refers to the act of making sense, as opposed to the idea of any existing sensible construct defined by the community prior to the individual's presence. Sense, as an action, is considered to be the function of the body's senses (as in sensory perception), an action that takes place prior to comprehension (as in 'made' sense).

Sensible:

The sensible is considered to be akin to apperception – the ordering of what is perceived by the senses into some pre-existing narrative (often referred to as ‘common sense’).

Abstract:

Abstract is used as per Brian Massumi (Massumi, 2011), to indicate an isolated moment in time. In contrast to its popular usage as something that lacks any concrete, objective reality, or something abstruse, the abstract is instead here used to denote a moment in an object’s life-cycle that has been made available to perception. Thus, the abstract assumes potentiality – that what is perceived is only one of numerous possible iterations that might be drawn from an object.

Abstract

To what degree is it possible to score an artistic event for which the impetus is a social, rather than aesthetic, effect - and indeed, to what degree are these effects separable? How, in short, can the composer or artist create a blueprint for a relational practice that is fundamentally concerned more with actions *within* the community than it is with any outcomes or objects presented *to* the community?

This thesis seeks to explore the role of the Other through the composition of a set of participatory scores for social activity. Devised from the perspective of a composer and sound-artist, this practice-led research investigates three strands of social engagement: collaboration, interpretation, and intervention. These strands each revolve around the problems inherent to performing and scoring socially-engaged, site-specific sound works, as well as the reality of their dissemination in the public domain. Each of the methods employed not only feeds back into the score-making process, but also serves to critique existing methods and hierarchies within artistic participation, ultimately arguing for an open-ended and non-linear relationship between the act of sensing, and the (community-influenced) construction of the sensible.

Exploring post-structural, ethical, and ontological notions of what it means to share and construct community with Other, this research examines the role of art as a creative movement between self-constructs that are at once individual and *indivisible* from the community. This work argues that such creativity extends not only to the realisation of artworks, but across the whole gamut of activity within the social event.

By undertaking practice-based research into the role of Other within the event of an artwork, this thesis interrogates the socio-political hierarchies inherent to both the specific art-event, and the pre-existing community in which such events unfold. As such, the art-event points not only to the specific creative act of its making, but equally the latent creativity within the community in which the art is disseminated. The spectator, no less than the artist, defines the terms of the community by which such acts are made available to perception as an ontological reading that is not only sensed, but sensible.

List of recorded works (2014-2016)

The works contained within the creative portfolio are comprised of three areas of creative exploration – interpretation, intervention and collaboration. The exact nature of these areas will be explained in more detail throughout this thesis, but their audio/visual outcomes are as follows:

1. Interpretation: Modular Synthesis as a Process of Line-making¹

The sonic outcome of the interpretations, based primarily around live manipulation of a modular synthesiser. All of sounds and movements are drawn from my interpretation of the Line-making score².

1.1 Fleck and crackle

Comprised largely of one long drone, with the score providing the movement for various manipulations (changes to LFO speeds and destinations, open and closing of filters, etc.). The second half incorporates a repetitious three note melody, followed by the introduction of the recurring bell sound, reminiscent of the most prevalent participatory tool of my live performances of the score.

1.2 Stabance

A simple, randomly-generated melody evolves across several voices, comprised of sine waves, noise, and the bell-like timbre that evolves slowly into a plucked-string sound. In the second half, a field recording of a Turkish Imam is introduced, which is rerecorded multiple times onto worn reel-to-reel tape so as to accentuate the natural reverberation of the site, now present as an undulating wave of noise.

1.3 A shamanic verse in fire or chalk

Several related rhythms distributed across drum machines and synthesisers build up into a wall of noise that recapitulates many of the previous elements of the composition (bells, Imam, choir). The focus here is on the multiplicity of the sound's meanings rather than the piece's compositional sense, with any musical structure almost entirely drowned out by the conflicting timbres. The second section incorporates subtle manipulations of quiet bursts of noise/crackle, followed by another lengthy drone – this time interrupted by recordings of various walks conducted in the undertaking of this project. The work ends with a short arpeggiated melody across both bells and more complex, but less frequent, tones.

¹ Appendix C: Interpretations, “Modular synthesis as a process of line-making” usb.

² Appendix A: As a process of line-making, printed score-book.

2. Collaboration: New Communion³

The sonic outcome of the collaborations, composed, performed and recorded over a 12-month period at St. Mary's church, Brighton. All of sounds and movements are drawn from collaborative interpretation and discussion of the Line-making score. Collaborators: Kev Nickells, John Guzek, and James Mather.

2.1 Strum in the fist

Based a series of solo, duo, trio and quartet formations, these recordings comprise both whole non-manipulated takes of our performances/processes, and sections of processed and layered audio. In particular, this first movement explores the use of natural and artificial delay – interchanging between the delay's addition as a post-production effect, and its creation via changing the distance between microphones and the subsequent effect on the recorded resonance.

2.2 Dinner time at the monastery

Largely comprised of duos and trios, this section focuses on the unique resonance of the church site. Working with the limits of possible dynamic range, these recordings explore the use of physical space to create timbral variation, such as by recording an instrument at intervals across the length of the church.

2.3 Castle, cicada, scrub, hub-bub

A series of extracts from durational performances, these recordings demonstrate the community of performers at their most involved, with many of these extracts drawn from 20-50 minute long improvisations around the score.

2.4 Drawn in yards upon the sea defence

Comprised of both the collaborators' more experimental, extra-musical movements through the site (as directed by the score), and examples of more composed, rehearsed works. Some of these recordings were the result of sustained exploration of a single passage of the score over numerous weeks, whilst others document more improvised approaches, with a line or word serving as a springboard for new thematic material.

³ Appendix D: Collaborations, "New Communion" usb.

3. Intervention: I Don't Know Where We Are Going But it Sure Sounds Nice⁴

The audio/visual documentation of the public interventions. Each intervention served as a new way of interpreting the line-making score. These extracts amount to either documentation of the event of performance, or the actual audio presented during the interventions.

3.1 Missionary

Video and early draft of the score documenting intervention (synthesised audio added for effect, not present during actual performance).

3.2 30 gold coins

Actual audio presented during the intervention, consisting of three long held tones.

3.3 How to explain opera as a dead hare

Full recording of the manipulated opera – Schoenberg's Moses und Aaron (Wagner, 1974) – that was played throughout this intervention.

3.4 5 Nights beneath the pier

Video of my recorded beach walk that was projected beneath the pier.

3.5 Brighton community choir does... without you

Video documenting the performance (audio added for effect, not present during actual performance).

3.6 Santa Vitae

Video documenting the Christmas day duration performance, with the live accompanying composition.

3.7 The rights room

Video documenting the event. Audio is the actual loops/recordings created by the participants over the course of the week.

3.8 Chalk walk

Photograph series taken as part of the intervention.

⁴ Appendix B: Interventions, "I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice", box and accompanying usb.

4. Precursory works⁵

Early experiments created in the first 18 months of this project that, though not feeding directly into the final outcome, served as my initial artistic starting point for many of the ideas later explored in further detail.

4.1 30 gold coins

Early recording of the soundtrack to the intervention and the initial accompanying score (see accompanying book “Semblances”).

4.2 First Dysjunction

Recording of the audio for intervention (predated the main body of interventions) and its score (see accompanying book “Semblances”).

4.3 Semblances

Audio created in tangent with 30 gold coins / first dysjunction, and exploring some of the compositional ideas that would later be used in the main modular synth work.

4.4 I hope they let us hunt like men in the next life

Early example of using alternative scoring / site-specificity in order to foster collaborative composition. Based upon a series of drawing undertaken on an artist residency at Ozu, Italy, and later interpreted and performed at the Fort Process festival. Composition for synthesiser and 2x violin, features Kev Nickells and John Guzek.

4.5 Percussive piano as a process of linemaking

Example of using the Line-making score in order to create a work for solo piano.

4.6 Music for living sculptures

Video series created at the start of the research process, exploring themes of the object, sense, and abstraction.

4.7 Triptychs

Pdf of earlier graphic/text score (previously submitted as the outcome of my Master degree, included for reference only).

⁵ Appendix E: Precursory works, usb.

5. Abandoned trails⁶

Interventions and interpretations that informed a skeletal outline of the project but should not be considered fully part of the project, for one reason or another.

5.1 Threnody for an apple market

Audio example of an abandoned intervention creating compositions inspired by, and played back from within, empty architectural sites around Brighton.

5.2 Strangers on a bridge

Audio examples of an abandoned series of compositions based on field-recordings taken during walks directed by the line-making score. These recordings are an example of a three-week recorded hike across Scotland.

5.3 Soundwalk for a lonely city

Audio from the intervention of the same name. This intervention successfully took place on multiple occasions, and has been consigned to the appendix in favour of other works that showcase its theoretical underpinning with greater clarity.

5.4 Six

Video from the intervention of the same name. Part of an intervention based around visiting 6 pre-determined sites and making six recordings, to be turned into six packages and delivered to 6 charity shops. I abandoned the work after the first instance was complete, as I felt it fell outside the remit of the project as a whole.

5.5 Mall choreography

Score from the intervention of the same name. This intervention successfully took place on multiple occasions, and has been consigned to the appendix only due to its lack of musical / compositional content.

All audio/visual files, as well as the full score, are included as part of the physical submission. This content is also available on the project website – www.distantanimals.com

⁶ Appendix I: Abandoned Trails, usb.

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1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

1.1 Introduction

Several years ago I visited a museum dedicated to a particularly famous, long-dead artist. After several hours of queueing, visitors were separated into groups of ten or so, and led past poorly lit paintings set behind thick Perspex. The museum staff ushered the gathered crowds past these great works at such a speed that making out any detail of the paintings was near-impossible. Given that none of us could really see any of the artists' work, I was initially baffled to hear the constant proclamations about how wonderful it all was - but an hour later, sat in the park outside, I finally began to understand what my fellow visitors had subconsciously felt. Seeing art wasn't entirely the point of our trip. The point, it turned out, was to be able to tell people we had been there, to participate in the ongoing cultural dialogue of this great, dead painter. It feels, on occasion, easy to suggest that conceptual art is the domain of the avant-garde - that the 'general' public are still more interested in paintings on walls, actors on stages, albums on CD. And yet, as my trip to the gallery made clear, social context is fundamental to not only our experience of art, but our experience of communality as a whole. We define ourselves by the context under which we come together.

This research project begins from three related propositions. The first, is that the creative act is experienced as an event - that is, to watch a play, listen to a song, or view a painting, is not to engage with its specific content in isolation, but to participate in the immersive totality of that content's form, site, and relative cultural position. Creative acts are therefore inextricable from general social activity - there is no point in our experience where the artwork ends and its context begins. The second proposition is that since the creative act is inextricable from the everyday acts

of the community of which it is but a part, *that community is itself perpetually engaged in the act of creativity*. Finally, the third proposition concerns the nature of the self, and its relationship to the community. If the self relies on a creative co-construction with Other as a fundamental requirement of being – an idea that will be explored throughout this thesis – then such co-construction is *the basis of community*. Put simply, finding creative solutions to the challenges of shared space is the means by which we define the terms of our self-construct – the boundary of Other is the limit of self. Other is, by definition, always beyond our comprehension, and the distance that prevents us from ever comprehending Other is the very thing that implores us to celebrate its difference. This celebration is in turn the basis of communication. To speak is not only to make creative decisions regarding the best series of words by which to convey your message, but to acknowledge the difference that makes us at once individual and indivisible from our community. The role of the artist, far from being the creator of artefacts, is to make resonant the latent potentiality present – but not necessarily enacted – in the myriad of relationships-to-Other that comprise the everyday. As a piece of practice-based research, this project served two functions: first, to examine what it means to suggest that everyone is already participating in the creative dialogue of the everyday. Second, to question how the artist might be able to score – that is, to document with a view to reprising at a later date - the complex arrangement of relationships present in a community-focused, relevant art-event that relies upon the autonomous participation of its Other. These functions were explored through the staging of a number of events employing, and documenting, specific modes of participation. I was keen to interrogate the validity of a range of participatory models – which throughout these experiments I have come to define as *open (minimal direction or mediation)*, *observational (witnessing and responding)*, *referential (reliant on shared cultural*

knowledge), *constructive-instructive* (*participant-generated rule sets or methods*), *contextual-instructive* (*structured responses elicited by the requirements of the site or social context*), and *object-centric* (*responses to resonant objects*). These differing methods were used to highlight and critique the relationship between participation, autonomy, and the formation/facilitation of community.

Broadly speaking, the first half of this thesis critiques and re-frames the nature of social obligation, using specific resonant objects in specific sites and contexts to do so. In the second half, I will turn my focus to works that more explicitly address the duality of sensorial and critical modes of perception, and how this distinction, in turn, affects the stability of the self and its relationship to Other within the socially-bound construct of the art event. In chapter one, I will examine some of the theorists, philosophers, and artists whose work engages with these questions – in particular, the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Nancy, the systems theory of Niklas Luhmann, and the arts theory of Joseph Beuys and Jacques Rancière. Chapter two explores my existing practice – the nature of my electro-acoustic / site-specific work, and the development of more socially-orientated elements within it. Citing clear, if broad musical reference points – including the avant-garde work of Mauricio Kagel and La Monte Young, as well as the politically-charged punk music of NoFX - I discuss my changing conception of both the participatory event and the musical score, in light of Brian Massumi's theory of semblance and Tim Ingold's notion of non-linearity respectively. Chapter 3 documents a series of interpretations and developments of the event-based score in a variety of live and recorded forms, focusing on my attempts to reach beyond expected meanings and sensible outcomes via the utility of drone and pseudo-random rhythmic elements. Chapters 4 and 5 likewise explore the application of the score as a series of public interven-

tions, focusing on the utility of extra-musical elements (objects, concepts, locations, associations) as a means of fostering open-ended and autonomous participation. Chapter 6 documents the *New Communion*s project, a collaboration in a fixed site, with fixed participants, that took place over a 12-month period. Finally, chapter 7 draws a series of conclusions regarding both the feasibility of the score as a means of documenting the art-event, and the most successful modes of participation uncovered throughout my research. I explore the idea that art must extend beyond common sensible constructs to maintain a social function, highlighting the correlation between expected outcomes and a lack of creative, autonomous exploration on the part of my participants.

The project has resulted in a portfolio of work based around the primary text score. This includes video, sound clips, photography, and objects (taken from, or inspired by, the various interventions), as well as over 200 minutes of composition that comprises the interpretations and collaborations. These include recordings taken at St. Mary's church, Brighton, with three collaborators performing on a variety of acoustic instruments, and my solo performances on a modular synth. Accompanying each recording is an example of the sections of score that inspired them.

1.2: Distant Animals in a Forest of Signs

The art-event exists as a means of foregrounding the potentially obfuscated lines of experience – lines that connect communities to individuals, individuals to their sensuality, sensuality to objects, objects to environments, and environments to their histories. These lines do not lead *linearly* from the subject, via the senses, to the objects of exteriority. Rather, they overlap, double-back, merge and meander - conjoining multiple elements, conceptual, physical, and spiritual, in a single, yet polysemous stroke. There is no one correct meaning to be wrought from what is sensed. A subject's experience of the world does not lead to any culminating, final sense of the ways things are, but to an ever-expanding web of potential, and it is this polysemy that defines the creation of art. The *work* of art is not a matter of production – the creation of objects or even concepts – but rather of relation, a way of connecting with externality, with an Other that is fundamentally beyond the limit of self. The tools of art - perception, (re)presentation, critique, signification, communication – are all geared to this very task, a means of extending beyond the individual, isolated sense of the world as it is presented to us by the nervous system. As such, I believe art can be considered as a means of underscoring the fundamental dichotomy that is community – which is to say, the creative and emergent relation that is neither Self nor Other, but togetherness. My isolated sense of the world might differ from your own, but this does not imply that it is a solitary sense, with little recourse to externality. Isolation *demands* Other – it is formed neither by homogeneity nor by solitude, but by distance. Isolation is not a continent,⁷ a solitary

⁷ Continent, from the Latin *terra continens*, meaning “continuous land”, itself from *continere*, “holding together” (www.etymonline.com, 2016).

mass, but an island,⁸ fundamentally defined by an Other that is beyond reach. This presupposes both unknowability – that whatever comprises Other does not fit into the existing epistemological framework available to the self that perceives it; and knowledge – that the self is aware of the limitations this unknown Other provides (in short, that there is both a perceivable boundary and an unperceivable essence beyond that boundary).

The post-structuralist notion of Other championed by Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Nancy harbours a fruitful position in this regard, forgoing generalised⁹ concepts of an exterior ‘other’ in favour of a specific, contingent, concurrent and, most importantly, active Other. For both Nancy and Levinas, Other is not so much an object as it is an absence,¹⁰ the experience of total difference by a perceiving agent in advance of any concept or character. It is this distinction that underpins my artistic position, and its relationship to the community that is explored in this research. As a practising artist and researcher, it is my belief that art-making is no more concerned with the creation of aesthetic objects than community is concerned with self-contained, pre-emptive relationships to a fixed membership. Rather, art-making and community are mutually concerned with difference and failure: the writing of difference within a shared space, and the failure of communion - a community experiencing the same thing in the same way - that allows its membership to per-

⁸ Isolated, from the latin *insulatus*, meaning “to be made into an island” (www.etyonline.com, 2016).

⁹ If a general Other presupposes or conflates certain attributes, a specific Other implies tangible qualities, unique to this particular Other. And yet, Other, as it is presented by Nancy and Levinas, is akin to the revealing of a photograph of a perfectly captured face we have never seen before - its specificity reveals only the unknown, a clarity that allows us to completely reject recognition.

¹⁰ From the Latin *absentia*, “to be away from” (www.etyonline.com, 2016).

ceive and celebrate such difference as Other. Given this mutual concern, an art-form that explicitly places itself at the intersection of the community and its environment cannot help but consider its position as, if not communication, then at least a resonant material that allows for some form of cognitive transference between peoples.

It is in this grey area between sense, expression, and communality, that I aim to position my work – an area that Niklas Luhmann specifically defines as being the domain of creativity. As a systems theorist, Luhmann suggests that systems, lacking sense apparatus, cannot perceive; conversely, elements can perceive, but cannot communicate. The community, as a social system, can only feign perception by relying on the senses of its membership. To further complicate matters, this membership consists of operatively closed individuals, and as such is unable to communicate percepts directly. An intermediary agent is required for a community's isolated members to feed their percepts back to the community of which they are a part. For this reason, the community will often rely on concepts rendered in advance of perception - unified language, 'common' sense, ethics, and so forth - utilised to overcome the inherent operative closure that otherwise thwarts direct relation to Other.¹¹ The ease of comprehension that these concepts offer, however, comes at a cost – it requires reducing our perceptions to a manageable, easily transferable repertoire of signs. This inevitably compromises the freedom of perception, reducing the vast potential of what is perceived into a finite number of standardised forms. To counter this, Luhmann suggests that it is the role of art to

¹¹ "Consciousness corrects, as it were, the operative closure of the nervous system by means of a distinction between inside and outside, or self-reference and hetero-reference, which remains internal" (Luhmann, p.9, 2000).

return complexity, and thus freedom, to the communicative process - art seizes “consciousness at the level of its own externalising activity” (Luhmann, p.141, 2000) a function achieved by “integrating what is in principle incommunicable - namely, perception - into the communication network of society” (Luhmann, p.141, 2000). In short, art prioritises difference, as revealed by perception, above sense, as constructed by experience. Rather than assuming a hierarchical relationship between sense and comprehension, in which the former holds “a lower position in comparison to higher, reflective functions of reason and understanding” (Luhmann, p.5, 2000), Luhmann instead suggests that it is the distance between what is perceived and what is understood that allows us access to alterity, in all its rich, unknowable potential – it is in the failure of communication that art finds “a yet unoccupied field of possibilities in which it can unfold” (Luhmann, p.18, 2000).

For Luhmann, this field is the condition of artistic activity, and it is from this position that I undertake my research. Within the arts, the nature of this space, and the degree to which it is traversed by its community, is the basis of many of the participatory practices that pre-date my own work. Some traditional models of participation reduce the resonant complexity of this space, insisting upon a cultural plateau populated by two distinct camps – those who participate and those who do not – a position that arguably risks enforcing a false dichotomy concerning the nature of activity or passivity in the creative domain. Such models – exemplified by Guy Debord’s notion of the spectacle (Debord, 1984) – have emboldened a desire to redistribute the agency and hierarchy of artistic form, through the creation of artworks that would elevate their audience from the position of a passive spectator to that of an actor, participating fully within their environment. For Debord, participation is the treatment to the sickness of capitalism, a means of enlivening the disenfranchised

and the powerless. The Artist is not merely a creator of aesthetically pleasing content, but a modern-day shaman, capable of drawing out the life, the resistance, buried within an otherwise listless and apathetic audience. Art is celebrated because it can restore to the people their agency. However, as theorists such as Jacques Rancière (Rancière, 2009) have noted, such a restoration must first presume agency to be both missing and unable to be restored by the spectator without the help of the artist. A focus on the redistribution of control among predefined players - 'actors' and 'spectators', replete with certain defining traits - risks pre-emptively defining the capacity of Other, creating a "distribution of the sensible" (Rancière, p.12, 2009) that simply enforces the very hierarchy it seeks to dispel. Rather than providing agency, Debordian participation risks transforming those considered passive into a *fetishised image of activity*. By defining and categorising Other in strict opposition to the self - *their* passive to *my* active - this approach polarizes difference, negating the very thing that allows for potentiality in the first place – distance.

Being apart is not a problem that art should seek to resolve. Rather, it is the *a priori* values and conditions that would allow anyone to be considered a 'spectator' in the first place that should be challenged. By assuming *true* participants will share a pre-determined position, art trades the potentiality of *communitas* for the exclusivity of communion. Its togetherness lacks distance – it is not a community of islands but a continuous mass. Fixed, objectified positions of 'active' or 'passive', 'spectator' or 'actor', disallow the existence of the beyond, of a characteristic that cannot be defined in advance: the chasm between a known Self and an unknowable Other that is the raw material of creativity. It is the perception of the world as a series of fixed, pre-defined objects that is problematic, not the reality of the space between them - "distance is not an evil to be abolished, but the normal condition of any

communication. Human animals are distant animals who communicate through the forest of signs” (Rancière, p.10, 2009).

1.3: A Lovely Madness

By choosing to celebrate the unknowable distance between its interlocutors, participatory art can embody a fundamental principle of Nancy's philosophy – that of resonance. Just as an island is defined by the existence and separation of its neighbour, Nancy suggests that the self is equally reliant on Other for its own definition, even to the extent that “a self is nothing other than a form or function of referral: a self is made of a relationship to self, or of a presence to self, which is nothing other than the mutual referral between a perceptible individuation and an intelligible identity” (Nancy, p.8, 2007). Self only exists in the reflection, the re-sound of its own movement towards exteriority – the limits of self are determined by the boundaries of Other, even while that Other remains unknowable to the self.

This position, rather than undermining Debordian participation, engages with the same political outcome, albeit by different means. The art-event doesn't politicise the transformation of spectator to actor, or of passive agent to active agent, but instead mirrors the existing social tension between its interlocutors. The relations inherent to an artwork underscore the relations present in society in general, and are at their most exciting when they point to relations obfuscated by the social system's reliance on imposed communality, 'common' sense, and so forth. If participatory art seeks to interrogate the hierarchy of creativity, it does so because, like Nancy, it considers that both actors and spectators are already engaged in a co-constructive relationship. Debord assumes that the passive can be made active - and that this can be achieved through the power of art. In doing so, he not only presupposes the contour of what should be an *unknowable* Other but suggests that their relationship is that of utility. In whatever fashion the spectator co-constructs

their shared reality with an actor, it is done as a means of bettering the self, of achieving an 'active' status. However, if self is contingent on the existence and proximity of Other (as the notion of resonance would suggest), it seems logical that the self would harbour an innate, primordial responsibility towards that Other, *prior to any individual agency* capable of assigning use value. This is a point explicitly made by both Nancy and Levinas. Our relationship to Other is that of neither philanthropic nor tactical responsibility. Though the existence of Other is vital for the emergence of self, it is a vitality that arises before such an emergence takes place. This responsibility, what Levinas calls the "pre-original challenge" (Levinas, p.64, 2006), exists not only pre-sense, but as a condition of sense. It is only by straining towards exteriority and resounding from the Other we encounter there, that we can begin to ascertain our own limits - in short, the boundary of Other defines the contour of Self. It is not a choice made by a sentient agent, but "a responsibility that I did not assume in any moment, in any present" (Levinas, p.64, 2006).

Responsibility is born of the creative difference between self and Other, and as such the ensuing interaction should not be considered a dialogue between independent, fully-formed agents, but a process of mutual becoming undertaken by operatively-closed, but nonetheless mutually irritable,¹² collaborators within a shared space. This becoming - in so far as it involves not just a single self and Other but the endless gamut of all potential selves and others that is the social system - amounts to the creation of community. And if this theoretical underpinning can seem, from a practical perspective at any rate, quite far from the remit of the musi-

¹² Irritable is a term used by Luhmann to indicate the ability of operatively-closed agents to on some level interact, but not to directly influence one another's being. We can return again to our island metaphor - though geographically dislocated, and unable to affect one another directly, islands are nonetheless shaped by the irritation of the sea that exists between them, a resonant body that is fundamental to their definition.

cian or artist, it is here that such terms as responsibility and resonance are drawn directly into my practice. The creative act, in so far as (through the testing of resonances and amplifying of responsibilities) it interrogates the governance of community – how it responds, individually and collectively, to percepts – is fundamentally related to the political. It is the means by which we share and construct ontology as it is provided by the raw material of the senses – to express and interpret sense, to make sense of sense, is the same fundamental movement by which self and Other and co-construct their shared horizon.

Rather than pointing to an external structure of governance, politics is - as Rancière points out - the administration of an evolving way of *being-together* in contrast to the conservation of an existing ontological order. Politics is the means by which a community enacts its own self-interrogation – it tears “bodies from their assigned places and free speech and expression from all reduction to functionality” (Corcoran, in Rancière, p.1, 2013). This leaves us with a dichotomy. Lacking sense apparatus, the community must rely on a consensus based on its operatively-closed memberships’ conflicting world-views. Conversely, since its membership is always in flux, it simultaneously requires a perpetual reappraisal of how its membership ought to share the space of community. If politics is the means by which its membership can reconfigure this space, what is required for the community to be able to self-interrogate – and what I believe art provides – is a means of preventing consensus *at the point of sensation*, to reclaim percepts from their later abstraction into concepts. Art prioritises the act of sensing above its subsequent assimilation into made sense, and as such, it is a task undertaken, by necessity, outside of any existing sensible order. Just as Nancy suggests that “to listen is to be straining towards a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately available”

(Nancy, p.6, 2007), so it is with all creative gestures - their remit is always beyond, or in advance, of pre-existing concepts.¹³ The coming together of community - what the anthropologist Victor Turner calls *Communitas* (Turner, 1986) - indicates not only a straining beyond any current sense of the way things are, but equally that such straining, in so far as it extends a multitude of selves beyond their existing limits, is itself a creative act, in which the articulation and celebration of difference “becomes meaningful from the opposition to what is proper” (Esposito, p.3, 2009). Rather than thematically¹⁴ politicising participation as Debord would suggest, art instead demonstrates that participation in the creative social narrative is *already* a political act. Indeed, Nancy directly collapses politics with community, describing the former as “a community ordering itself to the unworking of its communication, or destined to this unworking; a community consciously undergoing the experience of its sharing” (Nancy, p.xxvii, 1991).

When undertaking the participatory aspects of this research, it was the notion of a community’s sharing that served as the foundation of my work. From the artist’s perspective, the unworking of community amounts to the unworking of the collective meaning applied to an individual’s sense data – rather than relying upon the

¹³ “Perhaps we never listen to anything but the non-coded, which is not yet framed in a system of signifying references, and we never hear [entend] anything but the already coded, which we decode” (Nancy, p.36, 2007). This concept – in essence to equate listening with a sounding of the unknown – is fundamental to my practice, manifesting in a lack of instruction for my participants, and a reliance on their own interrogative capacities to engage with the work. In *Listen!* (chapter 5.1), the artist provides a context for the innate ability to listen precisely by failing to define what should be listened to. The audience are put in a position where, lacking a specific sensible object at which to direct their senses, they must extend beyond the sensible – they must, as Nancy prescribes, “listen” rather than “hear”.

¹⁴ The space between the political thematic and the political active was something I explored within my interventions, notable with “The Rights Room” installation, which asked its audience to communally re-write the human rights act (chapter 5.2).

existing relationship between the objects of the world and the meaning we apply to them, art seeks to interrogate, circumnavigate, or invert such relationships. Nancy suggests, therefore, that politics amounts to a community's perpetual unworking of its own achievement, a deconstruction of the proper that serves to destabilise the objects of experience, to *return the sensible to the senses*. The unworking of art – the decoupling of literary structure and syntax, or the compromise of an audience's presumed ethical universality – points away from pre-emptive, generalised concepts, and directly towards Other: it highlights the reality of a shared space that is nothing but the limits of selfhood. Luhmann might consider art a kind of “bridge between perception and communication” (Luhmann, p.18, 2000), but perhaps we can go one step further – art acts as a form of noise,¹⁵ a disturbance between perception and communication, deliberately co-opting and expanding our failure to engage directly with Other as a requirement of the ever-expanding self-construct. Throughout this project, I have attempted to demonstrate the ability of art to co-opt the senses – in essence, to prioritize participation within the (unworking of) community over consensus. Interventions such as 30 Gold Coins (chapter 4.3) revolve around an unworking of ethics by inviting its community to directly participate in the distribution of a shared currency, invoking a tension between the best interests of the individual, the group, and the artist. Likewise, the score that underpins the practical elements of this project is presented in a similarly multi-faceted manner. Its text is

¹⁵ Noise is not so much divisive, as it is emblematic of the relationship between the individual and their community. As Garret Keizer points out, “noise brings a heightened awareness of your connection to other people. Your happiness and well-being are seemingly at odds with their happiness and well-being, but only because, on the deepest social level, your happiness and well-being are connected to theirs” (Keizer, p.20, 2012). The noise of art – as I have explored via the public, even mundane nature of the events I have created – is the noise of the community as it engages in its own unworking. As such, the creativity of noise is not the remit of painters, sculptors, and musicians alone, but of everyone involved in the creative process of the everyday.

written so that each word, phrase, or section may be encountered in relation to the overall structure – that is, it allows for a focus on the aesthetic or poetic integrity of its sentences and typography – while simultaneously allowing for a fragmented progression due to its short, non-sequential pages. The focus is upon a mode of participation wherein to participate is not simply to complete what has been begun, but to perpetually renegotiate the space between the participant and their Other (whether that is a score, an instrument, a person, or a situation).¹⁶



Figure 1 (photo: Layla Tully): Participants retrieve pound coins in 30 Gold Coins

By setting up interventions and collaborations at the cusp of general social activity – in shared spaces, with shared tools – this research project amounts to a functional disturbance, destabilizing the routine of the everyday and seeking to compel its audience/collaborator to rethink their relationship to the world. The project is as

¹⁶ Works such as *Brighton Community Choir Does...* (chapter 5.4) rely upon a conflict between its participants' existing cultural knowledge and the context of the work's dissemination in order to seed creative power from the artist to the spectator/collaborator. Similarly, the site-specific collaboration of *New Communion* (Chapter 6) utilises the gravitas of its resonant location, along with the shared duress born of its durational and physical elements, to blur the distinction between composer and performer.

such not comprised of *works of art*, but of the *art of work* - the ongoing enlivening of potential, innately explored by the community as its participants navigate minor disturbances within their everyday lives. By assuming that my key philosophical terms – resonance and responsibility – are already within the grasp of the spectator, this research seeks to demonstrate that community is not a union, but an isolation, a navigation of the distance between the distinct islands of operatively-closed individuals. It is by enlivening the resonance between such individuals that art makes present the epistemological importance of difference; it is by enlivening the responsibility we hold towards Other that art pronounces the community, of which the individual is *indivisible*. This project seeks to demonstrate that all art is fundamentally concerned with its relation to Other, that all art is participatory art. Rather than being a subset within the art world – such as that documented in Nicolas Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics* (Bourriaud, 1998) – relation, participation, and dialogue are the primary condition of all creative activity. Ultimately, art is not, as Levinas makes clear, the “lovely madness of the man who takes it in his head to make beauty. Culture and artistic creation are part of the ontological order itself. They are ontological par excellence; they make it possible to comprehend being” (Levinas, p.15, 2006).

2.

PROCEDURES

2.1: Precursory Works

Many of the ideas that underpin this research have long been, on some level, an integral part of my practice. Even within my earliest artistic experiments – shouting political manifestos as part of obnoxious punk bands – the point was never solely the creation of music, but instead an almost preposterous, extra-sensory outcome: to change the world. Over time, this goal has become more nuanced, and yet, the notion that aesthetic appreciation may somehow have a social function that extends beyond our immediate sense of the art-object remains. In this research project I wanted to explore that beyond-sense more fully, to attempt to elucidate the specific ability that art holds to both bring people together and to stretch them *beyond* the limits of any individual selfhood – in short, to foster communities. Before examining its social function in this way, it seems pertinent to ask a further question concerning the nature of the beyond that art offers. The beyond is not merely a linear addition, amounting to the artistic construct plus its resulting social effect. Rather, the beyond of what is sensed – insofar as the sharing of art points to an unknowable Other - must actually be *beyond sense*. Simply extending an artistic object into the domain of the social does little to challenge the contours of a community, or to unwork the ‘common’ sense that it has accrued. To be truly socially functional, art must elucidate the unexplored, *yet to become-sensible* aspects of its community.

Three works in particular pre-empted the path this research would take. The earliest, *Triptychs*,¹⁷ involved the creation of a large multi-media score, incorporating musical notation, photographs, shopping lists, spam emails, drawings, text, blue-

¹⁷ Appendix E: Precursory works, *Triptychs* score, usb.

prints, adverts, objects, and the documentation of specific social interactions. The score's premise was that it would attempt to be self-constructing – that its thematic and material trajectory would evolve over time, determined by what I, the author, was exposed to during the process of its creation. Seemingly unrelated and everyday elements – already liable to impact upon the creation of the work in some small way – were foregrounded to the same extent as any specifically artistic material. Much like the notion of an ear-worm – a song that gets inexplicably stuck in your head, regardless of your feelings towards it – *Triptychs* allowed any and all resonant objects to take precedence, with each being researched in order to uncover more related material. Tangents, coincidences, and fortuitous mistakes were incorporated directly into the work. For instance, conversations held in supermarkets, and the themes or forms of omnipresent pop music were allowed to seep into the score-making process, allowing seemingly inconsequential elements and insights to be prioritised above 'proper' artistic concerns. In this way, themes would appear to spontaneously emerge from the research as multiple dislocated areas of exploration would lead to the same place with unexpected synchronicity. As it developed, sections were sent to musicians, artists, videomakers and choreographers, with their responses being reintroduced back into the score, to be sent on to further collaborators, replete with any extraneous, extra-musical lines of enquiry raised by the process. As such, any artistic outcome was produced concurrently with its own becoming – the score did not *make* sense - where *make* is understood as the generation or fulfillment of an existing sensible construct - but was instead always in the process of *making* sense.

*Music for living sculptures*¹⁸ explored the idea of microcosms – the unseen aspects of materiality that exist beyond our normal perceptive capacity. The work utilised culturally commonplace stimuli (seeds, the female body), and subjected them to microscopic scrutiny, using a zoom lens and contact microphone to visualise and sonify aspects of these materials usually unavailable to perception. Though the forms themselves were highly recognisable within existing art-narratives, the process of subjecting them to such scrutiny created a dynamic where the more detail I attempted to capture, the less clarity was available to the final artefact. Rather than perceiving bodies and seeds, skin and husk, what remained was nothing more than abstract lines and sounds, obfuscated by the limitations of the technology that captured them. Two films were produced, in which the captured audio was transposed onto a synthesiser, bell, harmonium, saxophone and electric guitar, in an attempt to foreground the subtle nuances and technological artefacts (flare, grain, feedback, electrical hum) revealed by the process.

Though aesthetically pleasing, I was ultimately unhappy with these films, feeling them to be too insular – though they explored the beyond-sense of perception, they did so without ever really interrogating their relation to the community in which they were produced and disseminated. With this in mind, *First Dysjunction*¹⁹ advanced upon the video format, exploring instead the physical presence of objects within their environment. The work consisted of a text score that detailed specific objects to be sounded/interpreted and their social or cultural signification (such as “the cutlery my mother bought us”), alongside a blueprint documenting how these ob-

¹⁸ Appendix E: Precursory works, *music for living sculptures videos*, usb.

¹⁹ Appendix E: Precursory works, *First Dysjunction audio/score*, usb.

jects, and accompanying speakers, should be distributed throughout an environment. The open-ended nature of the text – often describing abstract, relational details rather than named objects (“plundered Nordic” or “Yellow #3”) – sought to cede the performer a degree of autonomy in amassing and sounding such objects. This same autonomy was extended to the work’s audience. The objects/sounds were placed at the threshold of perception – submerged in the ever-present stimuli of their public/everyday environment, half-hidden in piles of leaves, barely audible above the existing hubbub - leaving the audience, stumbling upon the work, free to engage with it as an artistic incursion or to dismiss it simply as litter/noise.

**Mocking us from
atop the dresser**

**An expensive
instrument we
never learnt to play**

Figure 2: Page from the First Dysjunction score

Throughout the creation of these works, I began to conceive of a direct link between the social aspects of my work, and the musical form with which I was working – drone. My practice had long been exploring the notion of aesthetic liminality - creating works that, through their focus on timbral evolution, repetition, and duration, prioritised the emerging musical landscape between fully recognisable phrases or

sources. More often than not, this would take the form of a mixture of field recordings and synthesisers, with any obvious associations – such as frequency or source – obscured by processing and layering. Within these works, pitch and structure were largely irrelevant, with many pieces designed to be played as long simultaneous loops, with no set synchronicity, across multiple tracks or speakers. Lacking a clear source or narrative, the listener could autonomously dip in and out of the work at will, forcing them to rely on their own innate critical, rather than associative abilities. Whilst these works engaged with a certain level of interaction, I found I was both drawn to the potential of a participatory dynamic, and deeply sceptical of the sorts of participatory projects I had come across in the past – wherein an audience's involvement amounted to being given the option to contribute the most obvious addition to the work as it stood, or to respond in some manner entirely pre-determined by the artist. The very notion of participation reminded me of the kind of sketch-shows where audience members call out topics and comedians duly enact them, or worse, of the big red buttons attached to the didactic displays of science museums – hit the button and a beach ball rises into the air, a participatory demonstration of gravity. In order to invoke less obvious modes of participation, I had previously settled for so-called immersive works, wherein my audience were literally surrounded by sonic stimuli, or shocked, via caustic sounds and images, in order to force a reaction. These three works however, encouraged me to explore an avenue of participation that I had not previously considered. What if, as with the transitory, obfuscated nature of the evolving drones of my musical practice, participation could be a liminal, autonomous experience? A movement conducted not towards a specific end, but as a means of introspective reflection upon the community and the participants' position within it?

2.2: Score-making

The project was comprised of three distinct, but related strands – collaboration, interpretation, and intervention (see Glossary, 0.3). In the first instance, I was keen to explore what it means to participate in an artistic collaboration, and how such involvement affects or enhances a participant's relationship to their community. In the second, I wanted to explore the degree to which a performer participates in the creation of the art event, and how performance might better be considered a collaboration with its community than a rendition of an already finished, fully-contoured work. Lastly, I wanted to explore the role of participation in interrogating its community – how the event of art serves not to entertain, but to bilaterally inform the existing social system.

In addition to the primary question of social function, there comes – within a practice indebted to the long history of scored musical works - a more pragmatic concern regarding the repeatability of contextual works in general. When exploring context as much as sonic outcome, it is not immediately obvious which elements of a work would need, or even could, be successfully documented for a future rendition. Furthermore, since my work prioritises the act of *making sense* above the invocation of a pre-determined *made sense*, it would seem somewhat counterproductive to construct a document that already makes complete sense in advance of its engagement by the community. In attempting to resolve this, I decided to tie all three research areas together by means of a common score, equally applicable to solo performance, collaboration, or social intervention. Rather than something only of use to other musicians, I wanted to create a document that could facilitate general social creativity, and as such might initiate a painting, a new waying of doing the

washing up, or a political debate, as much as it might a piece of music. I began by documenting a series of physical movements upon an instrument that could then be later applied to a wider variety of situations - be they musical, performative, or mundane. Given the requirement that the score must be applicable to as yet unknown contexts, I chose an instrument that allowed for a vast degree of expression, but that lacked much in the way of a specific interface or operative rigidity – the modular synthesiser. Whereas a violin (for instance) requires you to bow strings upon a bridge, and across a uniform sounding body, the modular synthesiser can be re-arranged for each specific instance of performance. Its signal path is determined entirely by the operator, and its interface can differ even between similarly purposed modules – its analogue circuitry and propensity to be affected by room temperature and variances in the electricity supply of its site often lead to significant variations between ostensibly identical modules. Lacking both a uniform interface and many of the constraints inherent to more traditional instruments (tuning, timbre, range, size of body), the modular synthesiser is somewhat unique in so far it is incredibly difficult to score - even a scientific description of a module's settings and inter-relation is unlikely to result in the sonic outcome intended. Many existing modular 'scores' amount to technical drawings revealing the signal path, or the arrangement of modules, rather than any expressive or musical qualities of the work produced - which feels a little like scoring for the violin by providing instructions pertaining to felling a tree.²⁰ A further advantage of the modular synth is that in its lack of definition it actively courts the notion of Other. If we can hold certain expectations as to what an instrument is capable of - the sound-world that it can create - a synthesizer by definition eschews this. Theoretically, a modular synthesiser can

²⁰ As exemplified by the modular diagrams of Allen Strange (Strange, 1972).

produce any sound imaginable, by recreating electronically the process that produced such a sound in the first place. Furthermore, the modular synth is comprised of distinct elements whose behaviour can be influenced only by external voltages, carried by the addition of patch cables. The modules of a synthesiser, as with any community, presuppose both operative closure and a productive distance between its members – individual modules are brought into a mutual becoming through a governance orchestrated by the addition of an external stimuli.

I began to develop a technique of scoring based on poetic, abstract phrases - designed to point towards, but not reify, physical movements across the instrument. Rather than referencing any explicit quality of the instrument, these movements referenced their position within a wider composition (*“suggest a largely ascendant arc or exponential progression, perhaps gaining or shedding definition as it moves forth, return to any point at will”*), and yet crucially, attempted to avoid defining any specific, immutable qualities of their compositional context (such as *“from a quiet section, move to a loud section over x seconds”*). With the nature of the material that prepends/appends each section thus undefined, the performer is able to move from one fundamentally malleable station to another as the work progresses. In this way, the potentiality of any section of the score is not bound by specific qualities within the syntax upon which it is based, but is instead shaped by the culmination of decisions the performer has made up to that point. By focusing on text that, though descriptive, always refers to some undefined quality of its temporal, conceptual, or physical location, a narrative began to develop wherein the score existed in a state of perpetual collapse, its form always pointing to some unknown aspect just out of sight. In this way, I began to consider the work as a type of what Brian Massumi calls “Semblance” – a document more concerned with what isn’t written than

what is, the *between of its lines*. For Massumi, “semblance is a form of inclusion of what exceeds the artefact’s reality” (Massumi, p.58, 2011), and my score sought to exemplify this – to focus on language that allowed my interlocutors only enough of a framework to encourage exploration of the potential beyond both prior experience and the limits of the text. As with my general concerns regarding participation, the score was created to celebrate, rather than transgress, the distance between my original intent and the creative potential invoked by its performers. As Massumi suggests –

You don’t want to just let them stay in their prickly skins. Simply maximising interaction, even maximising self-expression, is not necessarily the way. I think you have to leave creative outs. You have to build in escapes. Drop sinkholes. And I mean *build them in* - make them imminent to the experience. If the inside folds interactively come out, then fold the whole inside outside interaction in again. Make a vanishing point appear, when the interaction turns back in on its own Potential, and where that potential appears for itself (Massumi, p.49, 2011).

The purpose of creating the score is thus twofold – to document a process and to inspire new potential iterations. Rather than serving merely as a blueprint for an ideal, finished work, this form of open-ended scoring is more what Lawrence Halprin might consider a methodology for collaboration, acting as “a means of revealing alternatives, of disclosing latent possibilities and the potential for releasing total human resources. They are a way of inviting the unexpected; of expanding consciousness, encouraging spontaneity and interaction; in short the score is a way of allowing the creative process to be ‘natural’” (Halprin, in Lely and Saunder, p.206, 2012). To naturalise creativity in this manner, the score should allow its reader a level of control over the nature of their journey through its text. As with the notion of Otherness that underpins this research, the text itself was framed so as to allow its reader – via the use of grammatical devices such as polysemy, morphisms and

homonyms – to construct meaning on a word by word or sentence by sentence basis, rather than attempting to point to any overarching sense. Combinations of words were chosen that might provoke multiple significations, depending on the context. Furthermore, context, drawn from the preceding text, is itself rendered fluid by inviting its reader to move non-linearly through its pages – affording an autonomy emblematic of an epistemological process that deals with a passage through exteriority, rather than the perception of external objects in isolation. Any sense inherent to the text is made available to the reader only as they move through the conceptual space the words create. Since the interpretation is open-ended, and the direction of movement autonomous, the sense the text offers is not implicit in the words themselves, but co-constructed by the reader.

The notion of non-linear text is hardly new, and the work was inspired by three key existing writers. The Fluxus artists, Richard Long's land-art texts, and Lawrence Weiner's site-specific text-installations each invoke multiple grammatical devices that allow them to explore physical and conceptual processes,²¹ with each utilising what Douglas Barrett calls "meta-text" – a habit of providing "both more and less than a blueprint of what to do" (Barrett, in Lely and Saunder, p.95, 2012). Although not all strictly scores – Long's work in particular, though invoking particular movements across a landscape, is not intended to prompt a performance - the use of grammatical devices such as register, process, tense, modality, mood, voice, and circumstance, allows for a level of indeterminacy that locates its reader not simply as a carrier of another's creative output, but as a responsible, autonomous creative agent themselves. Likewise, the use of declarations and imperatives, a focus on

²¹ Appendix F: Uses of text within the works of Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, and the Fluxus Movement.

non-specific but descriptively rich objects, and the invocation of mental processes, serves to locate the performer in relation to both their cultural, conceptual and physical environment.

Whether scoring movements across an instrument, or interventions through shared space, it was important to avoid language that would exhaust, rather than expand potential. Words and phrases were chosen that pointed to a multitude of interpretations, allowing equal weight for literal, metaphorical, emotional or allegorical readings.²² The score was constantly re-written throughout its performances, with not only the musical outcomes – which particular combination of words inspired the most effective sound-world – but also the social outcomes being folded back into the text.²³ In this way I hoped to create a cyclical relationship between performance and reflection, in which the line between outcome and inspiration was never clear. Rather than pointing only to movements upon an instrument, or ways of manipulating objects contained within the environment, the text could equally be used to define the overarching terms under which an intervention was to take place.

Passages might point to the mood or structure of the work (*“each step more*

²² By way of example – “And lifted child from crib / And wrestled sense from sense / And fired into space / Drawn in yards upon the sea defence” – points to historic, cultural or social narratives (babes in cribs, rockets in space), and the underlying emotive sense that such images contains (love, success, pride). Equally, they point to physical actions and objects (lifting, firing, cribs) that can actually be enacted by a performer within the context of their work. To allow movement between conceptual and physical modalities, the score as a whole thus relies heavily on *if* and *or* statements, oscillatory language (such as *perhaps*), and the use of lists to denote choice (rather than series).

²³ A section such as – “forgo the tired and redundant gestures / perpetually geared towards a specific brilliance / and attempt instead to deploy that same energy into the far more achievable act of simply being nice to other people for a while” – was developed both as an initial performed undertaking (redundancy, gesture, brilliance) and a cyclical reflection upon the intervention it spawned (in this instance, the collapse of *5 Nights Beneath the Pier* (chapter 5.3)).

fearful/stringent/weary/hostile than the last") or expectation of its audience ("for the duration of the performance it would be better if you did not move around too much, or cough"). Likewise, more abstract sections could be interpreted in a manner that directly informed the space or materiality of the intervention.²⁴ In this manner, the score developed not as piece of linear writing but as a form of what Tim Ingold calls "line-making". Ingold equates line-making to wayfaring – the unique experience of moving through the world at any specific moment – and sets it in contrast to contemporary ways of reading more readily equated with travelling, which forgo the experience of a journey in favour of a series of destinations. Scores, like maps, are traditionally objects that have less to do with the conceptual or physical landscape to be traversed, than with arriving at set points²⁵ – and though the presence of the performer has been addressed by many contemporary composers, I was keen to produce a score for which physical and conceptual engagement are not so much a path to a successful rendition, as an end unto themselves. From a political perspective, scores (and maps) are all too often concerned with lines drawn upon things or through things from above, not lines traced along things with the body, and as such signify "occupation, not habitation" (Ingold, p.85, 2007). Rather than encouraging a community to explore their shared environment, such documents are ways of appropriating space irrespective of those that dwell there. Line-making, in contrast, presumes a symbiotic relationship with its environment, in which both subject and object, self and Other, performer and score, are

²⁴ Such as "*a slip between forms that fails to maintain either side's integrity*," used in *The Rights Room* (chapter 5.2) to divide the exhibition into two contrasting texts whose validity could be challenged by the participants residing between them.

²⁵ The wayfarer may rest at a particular spot before moving on, but for the traveller "every port [is] a point of re-entry into a world from which he has been temporarily exiled whilst in transit" (Ingold, p.77, 2007).

changed not from above but from within, offering in their mutual, co-constructive movements new ways of perceiving and responding to the objects of externality. The line left by the body as it moves through its community, its performative horizon, is not drawn upon a location but, like the mark of paint upon a canvas, serves to mutually redefine this space in which it operates.

3.

INTERPRETATION

The lines of the kinship chart join up, they connect, but they are not lifelines or even storylines. It seems that what modern thought has done to place - fixing it to spatial locations - it has also done to people, wrapping their lives into temporal moments. If we were but to reverse this procedure, and to imagine life itself not as a fan of dotted lines - as in Darwin's diagram - but as a manifold woven from the countless threads spun by beings of all sorts, both human and non-human, as they find their ways through the tangle of relationships, in which they are enmeshed, then our entire understanding of evolution would be irrevocably altered. It would lead us to an open-ended view of the evolutionary process, and of our own history within that process, as one in which inhabitants, through their own activities, continually forge the conditions for their own and each other's lives.

(Ingold, p.3, 2007)

3.1: Introduction to the Interpretations

Throughout this research project, performances of the score upon its formative instrument – the modular synthesiser – were held approximately every four to six weeks. Each of the 15 or so performances²⁶ sought to engage with the themes of this research: site, temporality, shared space, responsibility, expectancy, emergence, resonance and community. A practice initially based upon scoring abstract movements across a synthesiser evolved into a more holistic approach to space in general, involving not just playing music but exploring, sounding, or highlighting the resonant qualities – stonework, audience members, found materials – of its site of performance. Passages were introduced that pertained directly to elements of the physical environment (*“the curvature of the ceiling, the number of steps from the street to the door”*) and its community (*“a private note for the lady at the back”*), designed to be explored either physically (as instructions) or emotionally (as themes). In practice, this involved incorporating objects and actions into the event of performance, often with a view to critiquing the emotional, cognitive and physical participation that already takes place within the ritual of a musical performance.

Ingold’s concept of line-making was fundamental to my practice, synonymous with a practice concerned with the movement of a performer through their community. To consider performance as a form of line-making in this way, not only prioritises the movement – and by proxy the distance – between the participants in the art-event, but equally reifies the act of cognition rather than knowledge itself. As with wayfaring, the objects of the world – be they people or artworks – are only discovered in the instant of their resound, the mediated act of their communication. Rather than

²⁶ Appendix C: Modular synthesis as a process of line-making, *photographs* (usb).

dealing with pre-ordained, generalised knowns, line-making demands that destinations, outcomes, and ideals are given over in favour of a lived reality, in which “for the inhabitants, the line of his walking is a way of knowing. Likewise the line of writing is, for him, a way of remembering. In both cases, knowledge is integrated along the path of movement” (Ingold, p.91, 2007). This knowing-as-movement is reflected equally by both the performer and the audience within my work. In the first instance, the musician is required to physically move through and draw lines between otherwise distinct parts of the synthesiser, only producing sound²⁷ (sense) by doing so.



Figure 3 (photo: Agata Urbaniak): The artist navigates a mass of patch cables within a Line-making performance

²⁷ The modular synthesizer makes no sound until its distinct elements are physically patched together by the operator – lines are drawn via cables to link section to section, with the outcome – particularly in the use of pseudo-random modules (comparators, sample & hold, noise) – being unknown until the moment of its sounding. While there exist sensible/traditional ways to patch a modular synthesizer, these pathways are by no means the only, nor most intuitive paths to follow. Outputs can often double up as inputs, and paths can be split or influenced by additional voltages at will, offering new potentiality to any point within the audio chain. Due to the complex nature of its module’s interactions – at once autonomous and co-dependent - it is rarely possible to return to a prior state with any precision.

The score relies on a similar movement, with comprehension (sense) only occurring by the autonomous joining of numerous strands of thought in order to create new resonant potentials. In the second instance, I sought to circumvent my audiences' expectations, so as to avoid a critical engagement that amounts to no more than judging how successfully a work adheres to the terms of its genre. Subtle, barely perceivable changes between musical materials (rhythms, timbres, frequency) were favoured over more clearly defined structural changes, scored physical movements were buried in non-descript acts (such as drinking from a glass or laughing), and associations raised but not followed through (via the incorporation of culturally significant pre-recorded material, texts, images, objects and so forth), with the conceptual links between the elements presented often wilfully obfuscated. A tension was wrought between the manner of the work's staging – a performance with a significant theatrical element, not least in its reliance on a physicality that existed beyond the requirements of its instrument – and the reality of a practice that seeks to obscure the significance of the acts of which it is comprised.

3.2: Interpretation: The Performances

As with my interest in immersion that pre-dated this research, I was keen to explore the idea that the site of performance is not a blank canvas to be filled by the work of the “performer”, but a sensory-rich horizon in which the event is provided as much by the audience, the site, and the cultural context, as it is by the actions of a designated artist. I have always been uncomfortable with the notion of the virtuosic, a position that sees the utility by which a performer handles an instrument as the measure of a work’s success – often overlooking the social conditions that might equally dictate the proficiency of a performance²⁸. As such, the performance of my score revolved around making explicit its extra-musical context – highlighting the rituals and responsibilities undertaken by both performer and audience as they engage in the art-event. This was undertaken in numerous ways. In some performances, photographs of other forms of ritual – Pagan ceremonies, African witch-doctors – were provided to the audience, alongside descriptions of their processes. In others, the audience were handed ceremonial objects, such as singing bowls or masks, and invited to join in with the performance. The degree to which audience members could autonomously engage was also explored - in some instances a careful explanation of how and when to interact with the objects was provided, whilst in others the objects were merely handed out, or audience members sat next to bowls and masks, with a silent expectation that they might use them. In many of the performances the audience were provided with copies of the score, either indi-

²⁸ This is not to suggest embracing a lack of skill, but rather ennobling the extra-musical aspect that contextualises such skill –Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time* (1941), for instance, is no less technically proficient, for all of the social context that ultimately defines its conception.

vidually or collectively, receiving a word or sentence each.²⁹ Likewise, they might be supplied with chalk and blackboards, and invited to contribute new text to the score.

In considering the performer as a holistic contributor to an existing social dynamic – rather than simply as the enactor of a specific, witnessed task – my work was inspired by that of Joseph Beuys. In *“I Like America and America Likes Me”* (1974), Beuys undertakes a series of actions of which some, but not all, are made visible to the audience. Objects – felt, gloves, a walking stick, a large stack of the Wall Street Journals – are used in a clearly deliberate manner, but with no direct explanation. Locking himself in a gallery with a live Coyote, the audience watching from afar, Beuys’s work presents a performance dynamic that is explicitly meaningful but neglects to explain its meaning to those that witness it. The relationship between man and beast – in which man has “brought a repertoire of movements with him, and a notion of time... [that is] subject to the coyote’s responses, and were modulated and conditioned by them” (Tisdall, p.20, 1976) – mirrors the relationship between performer and audience. Beuys’s ritual relies on the audience participating in a narrative they do not fully understand. The success of the work lies not in the communication and comprehension of sense (the sensible) – but in making clear that *sense is not enough*. The audience is both the coyote and less than the coyote, excluded from the internal logic of the work yet still tied to a linguistic tradition that

²⁹ The handing out of the score serves as a good demonstration of the kind of cyclical processes with which I was engaging. Having distributed the score during an early musical performance, some members of the audience decided to sing the text as I worked upon the modular, attempted to match their pitch and rhythm to my own. This act fed directly into both the use of singing and spontaneity within the interventions (see chapter 9.4 and 5.4) and methods to encourage embodied collaboration (see chapter 7.2).

demands a linear narrative – whilst we might fail to ‘get’ the work, the presence of the coyote reminds us that “beyond language as verbalisation lies a world of sound and form impulses, a language of primary sound without semantic content, but laden with completely different levels of information” (Tisdall, p.23, 1976).



Figure 4: (photo: Layla Tully) Ritualistic chanting during a modular performance in a historic Leper chapel

I was keen to foster a similar break between sense and sense in my own work, and as such used the score to devise a number of actions to be undertaken both during, and prior, to the musical performance. Often the nature of the site would dictate my preparation – when performing in a renovated Leper’s Chapel, for instance, I arrived five hours early and used the score to instruct me to commune with the ancient site, taking notes on the degradation of its walls and doorframes, the patterns of its stain-glass windows, and then folding these descriptions back into the score. Such actions contained an internal logic that was never explained to the audience – walking the perimeter of the building so as to engage with the quality of the stonework (“the curvature of the ceiling, the number of steps from the street to the door”); touching every wall in turn (“stand for a moment in every corner, touch every

wall or edge”); plotting a graph across the space and moving between set points throughout the evening (“celebrate distance such as it is, an oscillation at different intervals, between different objects, ordered so as to recollect a singular event”); raising a drink to my lips at set intervals (“indicated without clarity a motion to be undertaken, and perhaps a frequency”); or using the score to define the content of otherwise casual conversation (“take up a position by which to clearly invoke a specific indifference towards a general notion”). As with Beuys’s work, these performances relied on the utility of specific objects, the score dictating not only my movements across the synthesiser, but the manner in which items were located and incorporated into the event. The aforementioned singing bowls, masks, and chalk boards were hidden among and distributed to the audience, portable speakers were moved around the space, tape players containing audio books or news reports were handed out, and related images were projected on screens. Likewise, the body was used as an extension of the instrument, with action drawn from the score informing how I held patch cables, extended my limbs, moved to and from the synthesiser, or vocalised words and guttural howls into a microphone. These actions seemed most successful when they developed into overlapping routines that slowly evolved throughout the event, making it increasingly unclear whether they were a part of the creative act, or the everyday. By way of example, one performance saw me engaging the audience in a discussion upon the nature of community and responsibility, whilst simultaneously handing out the patch cables required for the synthesiser to produce sound. As the work progressed, I was forced to return to each audience member individually to continue patching the synthesiser, with the rhythmic and evolutionary cycles of the work adapting to their willingness or refusal to participate. At the same time, a projector displayed a highly repetitive cycle of films portraying newsreaders breaking down whilst commentating upon

upsetting stories. Throughout the performance I paused at intervals to sip a drink, sit in a chair facing the audience, or photograph them with a polaroid camera, before cutting up the images and carefully arranging them upon the floor.



Figure 5: (photo: Agata Urbaniak) The artist examines a photograph taken of his audience during a Line-making performance.

This routine, combined with a musical structure that embraced prolonged silence and slow, emergent changes, resulted in an event for which there seemed to be no clear ending, no sensible overarching point. Just as the beginning emerged from a discussion about the community in which it took place, the end of the performance folded back into the community, with no clear disjunction between the end of the creative event and its return to the everyday. Upon the work's completion there was a prolonged silence, broken by the audience returning to its discussion upon the nature of the event and its community, critiquing not only my role as the performer, but their own role as participants.

3.3: Interpretation: The Recordings

From a musical perspective, the work began with patching a simple, single wave-form drone, and then using the score to initiate subtle changes over an extended duration – frequency modulation, the addition of a secondary oscillator, frequency beating/phasing, waveshaping, and filtering. Although the use of drone has played a significant role in my practice to date, its function here was initially more pragmatic – it offered me the simplest possible sonic base, from which the text of the score could coerce the most potential. Contextually speaking however, the musical genre of drone is synonymous with Other - in so far as it relies upon the perception of tones so long that they preclude any totalistic sense of their being - and exists as a form of noise. If noise is not so much unwanted sound as it is the perception of something beyond our control,³⁰ the incomprehensible length of the drone is noisy by definition. For the noise-art theorist Joseph Nechvatal, noise “negates artistic representations (and all they imply), thereby reaffirming a consciously divergent way of perceiving and existing” (Nechvatal, p.23, 2011) – a description equally applicable to the drone-work of La Monte Young. Noise, like drone, exemplifies the break between sense (sensible) and sense (sensation) that my research relies upon, an effect Nechvatal calls “the mind/body problem, the metaphysical problem of how the mind and body (and I would stress the body’s eyes and ears) are related to one another, and of how consciousness relates to conjectural substantiality” (Nechvatal, p.29, 2011). This lack of a cohesive sense inherent to the form means drones are perceived not in terms of distinct changes but of evolution, the near unperceivable

³⁰ As the noise theorist Paul Hegarty suggests, “noise happens to ‘me’, is beyond my control, and somehow exceeds my level of comfort with the soundworld I or we inhabit. In some way, noise threatens me, is part of the other I define myself against” (Hegarty, p.4, 2010).

differences that cause them to mutate over time. To listen to noise or drone, is to be listening for a sense that is not immediately accessible. It is, as with Beuys's Coyote (arguably a work of noise since it inherently problematises ideas of comprehension and control) to present a form that reminds us of the limits of reason and understanding.

Although drone music was my starting point, I was as much interested in exploring the slow evolution of timbre and frequency as I was similar approaches to rhythm. If drone serves to obfuscate structure by relying on the emergent properties of long held tones rather than distinct changes – as in the work of Young³¹ - that same obfuscation can be applied to rhythm through the use of repetition and pseudo-random elements. What duration affords Young in his emergent drone, is equally present in the emergent rhythm and melody of, say, Morton Feldman. By allowing the space between notes or beats to extend beyond the mind's ability to recognise them as a melody or pattern, or altering the placement or pitch of individual notes/beats within a sequence over an extended time, I could place these elements beyond sense in the same manner that drone affords. Practically, the implementation of rhythmic and melodic elements was based upon the use of shift registers, phase-locked loops and other variants of pseudo-random voltage modules. Starting with a series of generative patterns or pitches, the score was applied to the fre-

³¹ “By about the thirty-minute mark, however, my observational modes of thought having exhausted themselves as they circled above – without ever actually breaking the surface of – the continual (and, I should add, characteristically quite loud) sound, I found myself listening to the perfect fifth itself. Immersed in the vibration of the sustained interval, I eventually could not help but notice the brief moments of faint beating brought on by the slightest change in intonation... the upper harmonics and difference tones that came in and out of focus as the instruments resonated with one another and the space surrounding them” (Young, in Grimshaw, pp.49-50, 2011).

quency and routing of gates, triggers, and slewed-voltages, altering the amount and shape of modulation applied to its rhythmic and melodic structures. In this way, what might only be a few seconds of core material could last indefinitely, with the inter-linked modulations (usually based upon a single, imperfect/jittered clock source) adding augmentation to three or four otherwise syncopated voices. The abstract nature of the text inspired a slow evolution of the sonic material - shifting the relationship between beats or frequency (“rent featureless or carved into one of several rotating rhythms”); defining or altering the timbre of the voices (“cleanliness, artificiality, mechanisation”); determining the density or polyphony (“and with three or four lines being drawn at once, three of four tongues”); amending the structure (“an almost unperceivable deviance from an otherwise _____ line”); and making dynamic changes (“everything channelled through one weak limb”). In this way, each new word, line or page of text served to subtly shift otherwise repetitive sequences, or static drones, in a new direction, often based not on some quality of an imagined over-arching structure, but on the nature of the minor, emergent changes that preceded it. The music, as with the abstract text that was its source, never leads to a sensible, totalitarian outcome but to the constant unearthing of new potentials. Rather than focussing on defined structures – verses, choruses, crescendos or cadences – the composition works instead with seemingly organic movements across time.³²

³² Although I am hesitant to suggest my practice is directly inspired by (or even, on a surface level, similar to) Feldman in the same way it has been by Young, the application of the score has enabled me to develop an approach to repetition, variation, and symmetry that seems to overlap with many of Feldman’s concerns. This is no doubt due to our related starting points – whilst I work with abstract text, Feldman’s work with abstract painting led him to develop what he called the *auditory plane* – “a plane of attention, seeded with sound posing between silences, extending in space – that is, time – as a sensitised continuum, both the work’s substance and medium” (O’Doherty, p.64, 2010). Just as the abstract text of my score can be

As much as a drone or noise-based practice might wish to adopt an approach entirely beyond the realms of semiotic apperception – the ‘pure resonance’ (Duckworth, 2012) or ‘super-sensible’ (Zumdick, 2013) of Young and Beuys respectively – I feel it is churlish to deny that the materiality of electronic music might conjure up certain images for its audience.³³ Indeed, part of the participatory aspect of my practice is to deliberately play upon such associations – to harness them as a means of engaging those embroiled in the musical event autonomously. That is, to ensure such associations will spur a creative rather than simplistically reactive response. With this in mind, my work utilised a number of more recognisable elements, in the form of field recordings, synthesised bowls/bells, and the human voice, each chosen precisely because they might invoke certain existing cognitive and perceptual frameworks. Singing bowls, as with their use in the live performances, reference religious and spiritual rituals, pointing to both the coming together of a community and personal well-being (in yoga and sound healing). The use of a non-linguistic human voice reflects the disjunction between sense and comprehension, whilst being a literal interpretation of the text (“attempt not to overthink it, allow unmetered sensuality, a shamanic verse with fire or stick”).

Likewise, the implementation of field recordings of structured walks, car alarms, a

used to transcend many of the more narrative or linear aspects of musical language in favour of a more sensory, experiential approach, what Feldman borrowed from visual art ‘was not content, or style, or historical connection, but form and what he called ‘amounts’ — ‘touch, frequency, intensity, density, ratio, colour’” (O’Doherty, p64, 2010).

³³ As the semiotician Roland Barthes makes clear, the idea of a pure, culturally untethered stimuli is fundamentally problematic, since we never encounter “a literal image in a pure state. Even if a totally ‘naïve’ image were to be achieved, it would immediately join the sign of naivety and be completed by a third – symbolic – message” (Barthes, p.42, 1977). Though he is primarily discussing advertising images, I would suggest his position is equally applicable to all aesthetic forms.

Turkish Imam and a mimetic chorus of stray dogs, reflected social and temporal concerns regarding movement and Otherness.

By placing these recognisable elements within an otherwise abstract composition, the goal was to disrupt their typical connotations – rather than offering a linear path from the object to its closest cultural reference point, their inclusion compromises their associative rigidity, highlighting both their abstraction - that they have been momentarily divorced from their cultural context - and the unrealised potential already present in, but circumvented by, an over-reliance on the limited existing associative narratives. As with my approach to temporality in general, associations serve to tie the activity of consciousness to the auditory plane of the composition. According to Luhmann, consciousness is a temporally bound operation, reliant upon “fast, unconsciously performed consistency checks, and above all on its ability to use its capacity for awareness economically by omitting things from view. Seeing is overlooking” (Luhmann, p.22, 2000). By breaking down the coupling between recognition and habit, seeing and doing, art can undermine the conditioned responses that a community binds to the objects of experience – it is an autonomous, participatory tool reliant upon the existing, active, cognitive processes of the perceiver. Art brings objects into resonance by “using perceptions contrary to their primary purpose” (Luhmann, p.23, 2000). Since this happens in tandem with any existing associations – consciousness doesn’t forget, but advances upon what is present – it is an operation of time. Art³⁴ “does not seek automatically to repeat

³⁴ It is worth noting that Luhmann is speaking specifically of text-art here, but given that my work is based upon a text-score, and that he uses text-art in comparison to the structural coupling of formal language, I believe it can be applied to any work that seeks to dissolve the relationship between communication and comprehension.

familiar meanings; although it must draw on such meanings, it instead aims at disrupting automatization and delaying understanding” (Luhmann, p.25, 2000).

4. INTERVENTION PART 1

We're seeing, in the form of the object, the *potential* our body holds to walk around, take another look, extend a hand and touch. The form of the object is the way a whole set of active, embodied potentials appear in present experience: how vision can relay into kinaesthesia or the sense of movement, how kinaesthesia can relay into touch. The potential we see in the object is a way our body has of being able to relate to the part of the world it happens to find itself in at this particular life's moment. What we abstractly see when we directly and immediately see an object is *lived relation* – a life dynamic.

(Massumi, p.42, 2011)

4.1 Introduction to the interventions

Given both the open-ended and abstract nature of the score and its socio-political underpinning, it seemed both possible – and pertinent – to apply the movements it invoked to the social structures of its dissemination. By using the score to elicit interventions *within* rather than performances *to* its community, I was able to create artistic constructs that could interrogate, inform, and critique that community. The first intervention, what would later become *30 Gold Coins*,³⁵ involved calculating the total cost of putting on a performance - rehearsal spaces, transport, promotion, equipment - and then handing out that amount, in single pound coins, to an audience, while an extended drone played over speakers. Given that the idea was to critique time, (art) work, and its perceived value to the community, this soon evolved into a more defined action, in which 30 pound coins - the largest amount of money I could personally afford to lose in a single performance – was theatrically laid upon the floor of a public space, again framed by a unifying tone. With the actual musical output consisting of no more than a short list of frequencies and waveshapes, the work's score instead prioritised the more resonant qualities of shape (timbre, the circle of coins, the layout of speakers) and theme (work, value, autonomy). In the latter instance, I opted to avoid merely describing my own socio-political position as 'the artist', in favour of texts plundered from the security manuals of warehouses and associated newspaper reports, so as to allow the director of any new iteration to explore their own thoughts and reflections as a means of fleshing out the skeleton of my original composition.

³⁵ Appendix E : Precursory works, *30 Gold Coins early incarnation* (usb).

In this, as with all the interventions, my goal was not to foster a perfectly accurate recreation of a performance, but to provide creative impetus for new work around a common theme. Similarly, the sounds, materials, and actions invoked are not presented as free-standing objects to be passively spectated by their audience – assuming such a thing were even possible – but to demonstrate the fallacy of the active/passive distinction. By focusing on the resonant overlaps between such objects, as well as the context under which they are perceived and the unique social, temporal or cognitive position of those who perceive them, the hope is that the interventions will provide a means for the individual to self-reflect upon their standing in the community they inhabit. In devising such works, I sought not to present ‘my’ artistry to an external or delineated community of Other, but to use the art-object as a medium for engaging the unknown and unpredictable Other that is community on the level of their own innate creativity. As with my movements across the synthesiser, or through the collaborative space of the church, the artistic act is a means by which the community can explore its own expression, morality, and contour.

Indeed, this is a point I was keen to make within all of the project’s iterations – art, as an event, captivates rather than creates the objects of experience, serving as a way of highlighting our multi-layered and concurrent relation to both the *thing-itself*, our own being, and our expression of that which is perceived. Rather than operating in a linear fashion, art demonstrates the sender’s habit of not only pointing towards a message/object, but also a broad relational socio-historic context, bridging perception and communication by instigating feedback within the system of comprehension.

4.2: Missionary (or ‘he who witnesses across cultures’).

It looks lighter than it is, but it still looks heavy. To this effect, ‘quite heavy’ has been taped to its top and side, lest there should be some doubt. I drag it down to the sea-front bike-path that is my stage, and the performance proper begins. Though it may function as a prop, it is not possible to perform the act of carrying it in any traditional sense - my face contorts into expressions of amplified distress on its own accord, displaying actual discomfort - I cannot pretend to be any more exhausted than the reality of my task compels me to be. A few people watch as I struggle in vain with my strange cargo, pulling up on their bikes to gawk, or staring over the tips of their ice-creams, tapping on their friends' shoulders and whispering, repeating the mantra I have given them in their own voice - ‘quite heavy. That looks... quite heavy’. Children invariably stop and point, only to be ushered on by their parents who, like many of the adults, are studiously pretending not to see me. An impressively muscular weight-trainer pops out from behind a beach-hut, suggests I invest in some wheels. A family of four gaze intently upon me for almost twenty minutes, devouring their packed lunch from a bench. Train passengers giggle loudly as they steam past, amused by my signage. Eventually, someone stops to help me carry it across the zebra crossing, then lugs it with me past the chip shop. Later, a man riding some form of giant tricycle advertising a local pub, insists we hoist the harmonium aboard, and rides the three of us up the hill.

*Missionary*³⁶ may be based around a large wooden harmonium, but it deals less with music than it does with the social impact of sonic practices - the comings and

³⁶ Appendix B: I Don’t Know Where We are Going but It Sure Sounds Nice, *Missionary*, photographs (usb).

goings of a community of sound-makers and sound-receivers within a shared space. As befits the concept of line-making, a large part of this portfolio is concerned with the intersection between sound practices and walking practices³⁷ and *Missionary* is no exception. The pump organ - or missionary's harmonium - was designed as a portable variant of the church organ, used predominantly by British missionaries setting up new congregations in India. The instrument historically serves two purposes: as a vehicle for one conceptual order to overawe another, and as a means of physically bringing a specific cultural sound-practice out into the community. From a performance perspective, the practical and aesthetic reality of single-handedly moving such a heavy object presents an intriguing problem, wherein the public nature of even attempting the act turns into a performed feat of pragmatism. With this in mind, the most prescient concern was not so much *what* I might do with the instrument, but *how* I might do it. For both myself and the travel-weary Christians for whom the harmonium was named, what is at stake is not the virtuosity of any individual act upon the instrument, but how - pragmatically as well as conceptually - the object might enter into the community. Thus, the harmonium, carried through shared space, is not so much a musical instrument as a carrier of potential - a resonant object.

Carrying such an unwieldy object through the city centre not only foregrounds the *work* of its artistic undertaking but points to the underlying responsibility born of undertaking such an act within the community. If our society recognises a moral code that implores us to assist those in need - to help old ladies cross roads, or to give up our seat on the bus - it is a code compromised by the inclusion of certain

³⁷ See Appendix G: *Walking Is Still Honest / Small works for shared space*.

impositions. Objects often seem to amplify certain characteristics, abstracting and reducing the complexities of exteriority into a handful of defining traits. Though the objects that populate shared space point to difference – the broad spectrum of needs inherent to a diverse community – they do so as signifiers that simultaneously draw perception away from primordially and towards pre-existing culturally constructed knowns. The blankets, bicycles, and baggage of our fellow travelers are props that allow us both to conceptualise the validity of their need, and to subsume Other within our existing epistemological framework. The harmonium reflects this duality. While large enough to clearly require assistance, its function – either as part of a performance or as a vehicle for sound-making – points towards a lack of social necessity: it is *only* entertainment. The instrument, in both its size and volume, signifies additional and unnecessary noise.



Figure 6: (photo: Layla Tully): A jogger slows to observe the artist struggling with his harmonium

For the individual, noise - the sound of an absence of necessity - is relative. My wife blending fruit at 6.30 in the morning is unnecessary, because I do not want a smoothie. The sound of my neighbour's dog is unnecessary because it needlessly

interrupts my piano practice. It would be simplistic to suggest, however, that either dogs or smoothies are unnecessary to those who pet or drink them - to the individual concerned, their point and purpose is indelibly clear. As a community these lines of necessity are less distinct, since they must cater for the conflicting, and evolving, needs and wants of a multitude of people. Keizer points out that much of what is considered noise is simply the sound of external processes from which we are estranged - the (usually) audible manifestation of unknown or, perhaps more concisely, generalised concepts of Other. Citing instances of excited children's footsteps welcoming their father's return from work aggravating neighbours' sleep, or of wind turbines that cause complaint up until the point where they provide cheap electricity for locals, Keizer suggest that noise is itself a relational concept, indicating not any specific quality, but rather "some kind of breakdown of community. The sound of people we know and like seldom strike our ears as 'unwanted'" (Kiezer, p.45, 2012).

If noise is relational and dependent on our familiarity with its source, anything that is unfamiliar is by definition a type of noise, since it has yet to become known to the community. As Keizer points out, foreign voices are more likely to appear noisy, loud or threatening, and while this can be put down to inherent cultural differences between communities regarding volume and personal space, it arguably has as much to do with the incomprehension - the newness - of foreign languages themselves. Within the art world, new works are often classed as noisy simply because they fail to adhere to the easily recognisable attributes of those which precede them - as exemplified by the atonal music of Arnold Schoenberg.³⁸ In *Missionary*, the antiqui-

³⁸ See Alex Ross's *The rest is noise* (Ross, 2009).

ty of the wooden harmonium, steeped in a history concerned with bringing a new religion to a foreign land, served as a means of being noisy in several senses: occupying volume upon a shared street, performing experimental/new music, and generally making a racket. I was interested in the idea that new art is often considered to oppose a general relation to its community, that – as with Schoenberg’s coveted *Society for Private Musical Performance* – avant-garde music demands avant-garde audiences, a select few intellectuals who might be enlightened enough to ‘get’ it. Although I sought to compose contemporary, challenging music, I was interested in discovering ways of making that challenge accessible to those who were not already aficionados of the style. To facilitate this, I accompanied the act of carrying the instrument with a text-based score detailing both its journey and a musical work to be undertaken when the exhausted performer can no longer physically continue. Rather than assume the performer capable of interpreting the symbols and tropes of contemporary music notation/graphic scores, the work instead relied upon the mental and physical incapacitation caused by carrying the instrument as far as they have. A series of simple text instructions ask the performer to reflect upon their physical state, using weighted language (“fail,” “unavoidable,” “gasping”) and dualisms (“lose or gain,” “fragility or force”) to engage with actual physical conditions. This is countered by abstract, poetic language that points to cultural or site-specific conditions (“*The air between us*,” “*Library Eureka*”), interspersed with physical instruction (“*Play flesh as much as wood*”, “*puff out your chest and holler*”). By focusing on embodiment in this way, I sought to prioritise the presence of the performer within their community above fidelity to any idealised or final version of the piece.

Though musically falling within the contemporary/avant-garde tradition, *Missionary* does not rely on either its audience's or performer's knowledge of such forms - Indeed, the very idea of somehow teaching an uninitiated audience to correctly interpret and perform in an experimental fashion arrives replete with any number of uncomfortable assumptions concerning not only the superiority of one cultural form over another, but also the ignorance of a 'general' public. As such, *Missionary* might be seen as coming from the same lineage as Mauricio Kagel. Despite being firmly part of the avant-garde music world, Kagel's work - whether in its instrumentation, performance, or mode of dissemination - reaches beyond the often insular and academic self-reference of his peers. Works such as *Music for Renaissance Instruments* (1969) and *Ludwig Van* (1969) engage with reference points that deliberately interrogate, either temporally or culturally, the very notion of an avant-garde. Likewise, Kagel's *Atem für einen Bläser* (1970), instructs the performer to, among other things, clean, dismantle, and entirely replace their instrument as they search for the correct tone. Similarly, *Ornithologica multiplicata* (1968) is a performance reliant on 'exotic' birds, and as such inherently relates to the geo-specific qualities of its site of performance. As with many of Kagel's compositions, *Missionary* is reliant more on the general cultural context of its event than any specific musical knowledge held by its audience, operating within a shared space to which the artistic act holds no primacy, but instead serves as an interruption to the pre-existing narrative of the community. The harmonium object does not point towards an ideal musical outcome to be critiqued by its community, but towards a breakdown of comprehension - it is an instrument that makes little sound but that of its own failure, an act that never resolves into sense. A successful performance relies upon just such a breakdown, both conceptually and actually - a breakdown of comprehension between the audience and their percepts, and the literal breakdown of

the performer as a prerequisite of the piece. The audience's failure to know what is happening meets the performer's failure to do it – to carry, to play – and as such they are equally complicit, equally active, in a mutually shared dialogue. This mutuality invokes Nancy and Levinas's philosophical position – that subjectivity is not a free-standing given but born of the becoming of Self from the horizon of Other.



Figure 7: (photo: Layla Tully): The artist struggles with his cargo

The goal is for a shift in the existing relationships that might otherwise define strict subject/object categorisations, rendered in performative terms as a problematisation of the Actor/Spectator division. My intention is not to make Spec-

tators act, or to destabilise the power of the Actor, but rather to open up the terms of both. The terms of the actor are obfuscated by virtue of the fact that I am, though an object of spectacle, not acting. The contorted expressions I pull while dragging the harmonium are not acted, but acute renderings of the chore at hand. The terms of the spectator are obfuscated because there is no actor by which to orientate spectatorship. I am not delineating what a 'spectator' can or can't be because it is unclear whether what is spectated is a performance or merely a facet of general social activity. There are no fixed modes of participation being invoked. I do not intend to lead anyone to any pre-given point. I am not asking for help with the harmonium - though the act does presuppose recourse to an unspoken moral obligation, and some are inclined to offer it. I am not asking for sympathy, since it is unclear whether I am an unfortunate soul struggling with a massive wooden block, or a performer, undertaking an action exactly as he wishes it to be. The contours are muddy. My audience, such as they are, are not compelled to participate in any specific way. And yet they do participate, because, by virtue of our proximity,³⁹ our shared space, *they already are participating*.

The practice of publicly struggling with a weight beyond one's capacity places terms such as responsibility, gesture and resonance directly into practical relation with the tangible Other of my fellow pedestrians. My own experiences of sharing the street with those in need - of feeling that I should have helped someone struggling with a wheelchair or pram but for whatever reason did not - is a hugely self-reflective

³⁹ Proximity is a key aspect of Emmanuel Levinas's concept of Other: "between the one that I am and the other for whom I answer gapes a bottomless difference, which is also the non-indifference of responsibility, significance of signification, irreducible to any system whatsoever. Non-in-difference, which is the very proximity of one's fellow, by which is profiled a base of community between one and the other, unity of the human genre, owing to the fraternity of men" (Levinas, p.6, 2006).

process and one in which I define myself based upon the morality of my actions. On a personal level then, Levinas's assertion as to the responsibility born of proximity rings true - I do feel responsible for those around me, and a failure to act upon that responsibility fundamentally affects my sense of self-worth. Responsibility is, as Levinas suggests, an entirely autonomous endeavor - I feel a tangible responsibility to help those around me prior to any critical reflection as to the limits of my self-hood. Perhaps then, that is what captivates the audience as they watch me struggle - a tension born of an innate desire to help that wrestles with their shyness, their confusion, their busy schedules. Perhaps that is what causes the jogger to slow and stare at me and my box, despite my not doing anything particularly spectacular, despite my not being in his way - the responsibility of my proximity, the inescapable desire to help.

By problematising the intersection between morality, ethics, physical work, and the artistic act, *Missionary* poses a political question, if not a distinct political agenda. If the work is perceived as an artwork at all - as opposed to an act of labour - then it is seen that way precisely because it embodies, rather than represents, a schism within the acceptable or expected. The reality of the effort required to move the harmonium exists beyond any performed carrying: it is a movement that literally requires every inch of my body, and a constant, unwavering concentration, to achieve successfully. I am not *representing* the reality of carrying, nor opposing an existing order - such as by carrying a harmonium while everyone else carries a violin, or wielding a timber box during a crisis of wood - but explicitly *presenting* a

lived reality.⁴⁰ The sensible is not the other side of the absurd, just as the abstract is not the other side of the object.⁴¹



Figure 8: (photo: Layla Tully) The artist drags the harmonium along the seafront
Carrying a heavy box along the seafront is not absurd, per se - certainly not in the same way that carrying a giraffe along the seafront might be. But it is nonetheless beyond the logical or expected order of things. The beyond of sense is not an act of resistance because it defines itself beyond the order of what is expected, not in opposition to it. Resistance ultimately requires that which it opposes as a requisite of its being – it must have something to resist – and as such only offers the limited

⁴⁰ This resonates with much performance studies research, notably with respect to the status ascribed to task-oriented actions, such as in Micheál O’Connell’s *Less* – in which the artist uses supermarket self-checkout machines to produce zero-transaction receipts (2014) – or Michael Kirby’s text *On Acting and Not-Acting* (1972).

⁴¹ To perceive an object is to perceive it as abstract - a moment abstracted, made momentary concrete, from the perpetually evolution of a things lifecycle. As Massumi suggests, “what we call objects, considered in the ontological fullness of process, are lived relations between the subjective forms of occasions abstractly nesting themselves in each other as passed-on potentials. They are the inter-given: the systematic form in which potential is relayed from one experience to another” (Massumi, p.15, 2011).

potential of a fixed alternative. And while there is clearly some element of resistance in carrying an instrument until your hands are so raw you can no longer play, the work avoids opposing any specific facet of its community in favor of elucidating difference in general. By pointing beyond the limits of the sensible, *Missionary* is not reliant on any existing relationship between cause and effect – a relationship that ultimately turns self back towards self, as events serve only to confirm or invert expected outcomes. Rather, the material of the work is what Jacques Rancière calls “a third term”,⁴² born of the fertile distance between sense (what is sensed) and what is expected (the sensible). By dragging a large and inscrutable box to the sea, I am not relating a known fact, or engaging in some abstract code to be solved, ingested or resisted by a spectator, but rather creating a shared event “whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect” (Rancière, p.15, 2009).

⁴² “what remains vivid, both in [artists’] practice and in the criticism they experience, is precisely the ‘critique of the spectacle’ - the idea that art has to provide us with more than a spectacle, more than something devoted to the delight of passive spectators, because it has to work for a society where everybody should be active. The ‘critique of the spectacle’ often remains the alpha and omega of the ‘politics of art’. What this identification dispenses with is any investigation of a third term of efficacy that escapes the dilemma of representational mediation and ethical immediacy. I assume that this “third term” is aesthetic efficacy itself. ‘Aesthetic efficacy’ means a paradoxical kind of efficacy that is produced by the very rupturing of any determinate link between cause and effect” (Rancière, p.63, 2009).

4.3: 30 Gold Coins (for three synthesisers)

Both Nancy and Levinas operate from a similar ontological position: 'being' is multi-faceted and relational, comprising not only the distinction that severs one thing from another, but also the verb, *to be* - the act of existence (or sentience) itself. Being is not so much an act that is done, as an act that is *doing* - an innate, primordial function explicitly bound up in the unfolding of its own process, inextricable from the abstraction that is later perceived as a being. The relationships that bind the matter of the world are defined by instability - there is no concrete 'I' relating to a similarly concrete 'You', but rather a process of movement between an inchoate and amorphic Self and Other. This inherent flux problematises the idea that one could in any way successfully articulate Other (as in traditional forms of representation), or communicate with Other directly, since to do so would require certain existent and concrete knowns - fixtures that would turn being into a *being*. If the sort of primordial co-construction that Levinas and Nancy espouse suggests that we lack the autochthonic position from which a Self begins and reaches, consciously, towards an already fully-formed and readily perceived not-self, our relationship to Other must then consist of failure - the failure of communion made visible in difference, the failure of communication made visible by the vacuity of 'common' sense, and the failure of any free-standing individual identity as a result of such amorphic co-construction.

Elaborating upon Levinas's and Nancy's position regarding Other, I would argue that to participate in the event of art requires being open to the foreign: it is to perform a coming together, and in doing so, to celebrate the distance that makes such a movement possible. This is not the same as a performed communion, such as in

the ritualistic aspects of Christopher Small's *Musicking* (Small, 1998), in which the event serves to celebrate the unity of its membership at the expense of those external to it. Rather, celebration of difference is required to expose the resonant potential inherent to being *with* Other, as exemplified by Fat Mike's *Cokie the Clown* (2010) performance. 'Fat' Mike Burkett interrogated the complexities and contradictions of the punk community in which he enjoys the status of one of its longest serving and most revered players, being both owner of one of the genres largest record labels, and singer in one of its most popular bands. Acknowledging the recent spate of front-men re-inventing themselves as singer-songwriters, Burkett created a semi-autobiographical character who, upon turning up to a show dressed as a clown, regaled his audience with uncomfortable stories from the singer's past. Discussing smothering his terminally ill mother, contributing to his flatmate's suicide, and being too afraid to intervene when witnessing a rape, Burkett deliberately antagonised the duality of a scene that on the one hand relies on an intimate, near incestuous community (in which those who break its numerous rules are excised as 'sell outs') and on the other perceives itself as a violent resistance to existing social norms. Throughout his monologue, Burkett handed out shots of tequila while his audience – expecting the communion of hero-worship but faced with the reality of a nuanced, weak, and narcissistic man – loudly heckled him. Upon leaving the stage after 40 minutes, a video revealed that the Tequila was laced with Burkett's urine – he had literally allowed his audience to consume their hero. The work's success lay in making present the tension between a specific community and the terms of its resistance from mainstream society. With his band, *NoFX*, Burkett had addressed many of these stories already – documenting his mother's death, the toxic, macho nature of the 80s punk scene, and his own addiction and subsequent immorality. However, by reframing these stories from the accepted

punk-song dynamic (in which shocking things are often said for artistic effect) to a more localised, intimate setting, Burkett's achievement was to demonstrate that the punk community had been tolerating, and even buying into this behaviour for nearly 30 years. Rather than fetishising the punk community, Burkett succeeded in drawing it into crisis, thus allowing his audience to redress, rather than reaffirm, what inclusion in that community should, and does, amount to. The event of art allows for potentiality to arise precisely because it corrupts the thingness of the object; Burkett's Other - the objectified character of the punk frontman that has been shaping the community for 30 years - is made visible from a new, contradictory angle, and thus made foreign once more. Other loses its thematic nature, and can no longer be reduced to certain generalised qualities, being instead brought into direct relation with its community.⁴³

The ability for an artistic construct to reflect the underlying social and moral positions of its community was something I was keen to explore in *30 Gold Coins*.⁴⁴ The piece revolves around an actor undertaking a performed *giving* - painstakingly laying out pound coins on the pavement outside the bank, and proceeding to write beside them '*there have been xx seconds since our last theft*'. Throughout this, static tones are played back from three speakers. The first two speakers play back a single tone each (separated microtonally), with the third speaker providing a rising tone that, over the course of 15 minutes, begins at the frequency of speaker A and

⁴³ It is this same direct positioning of Other that Levinas explores. For Levinas, "being in direct relation with the other is not to thematize the other and consider him in the same manner one considers a known object, nor to communicate a knowledge to him. Existence is the sole thing I cannot communicate; I can tell about it, but I cannot share my existence." (Levinas, pp.57-58, 1985).

⁴⁴ Appendix B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, *30 Gold Coins audio/video/score* (box/usb).

linearly travels to the frequency of speaker B. The effect is such that, as a participant moves through the horizon, they can perceive not only a slight change in pitch but also an evolving rhythmic ‘beating’ pattern whose speed is determined by their proximity to each speaker (and thus the distance between frequencies)⁴⁵. Once the laying of coins has been performed, the actor leaves the space, and the sound stops, leaving only the spectators, the coins, and the text. It is here, in the absence of the performer, that the artwork proper begins. By utilising a material that is both recognised by, and useful to, its entire membership, the work points towards an existing tension within the community. Any participation that happens occurs in spite of the artist who, by abandoning the coins to the audience, creates the conditions for interaction while simultaneously dismantling the hierarchy inherent to the performative structure.



Figure 9: (Photo: Layla Tully): The artist lays out coins in a 30 Gold Coins performance

Lacking a central actor – having given myself up to the community and then abandoned it – spectators are free to participate in ways unexplored by the work's crea-

⁴⁵ A similar approach to sonic materiality was used by La Monte Young, particularly in *Drift Study* (1969).

tor. Since the work takes place on a public street, I am initially in a position of power, having commanded a significant portion of the shared visual and sonic landscape. However, by giving up ownership of a shared currency without directly ceding it to another, and instead laying it down in upon the street, I lack any control regarding what happens to either the object (coin) or the concept (giving). It is not a *gift* (a directed transference that still maintains a power dynamic between me and my Other) but a *giving up*. The accompanying text, written in chalk upon the pavement, further challenges the freedom of the spectators to engage with the work. While taking the money would clearly be to their advantage, the use of the pronoun 'our' forces such an action to become an ethical dilemma since it reifies its position within a shared currency. To take the money would be to both participate in the art event and its demise - creating a situation wherein to actively negate the work is simultaneously to actively participate in its perpetuation. Likewise, to *not* take the money is also now an ethical decision - either to prolong the artwork's life or to conclude you have no right to take it: contrary to Debord, spectatorship, inactivity, becomes a form of action, a political choice. An artistic narrative that pre-empts the nature of true or effective participation not only presents a patronising narrative - that truly involved participants will participate in the correct, pre-determined manner, as designated by the artist - but its inherent inflexibility excludes those for whom participation might manifest in other ways.

By invoking multiple layers of potential action, each placed at the intersection of the individual and their community, what is foregrounded is not so much any player's ability to oscillate between distinct positions - that of a performer or actor, someone for or against the work - but rather the distance between these positions. Presented as a performance, the positions occupied by its participants are both mediated

and bound by the event - any position taken up is temporary, relating only to this action. Those who choose to take the money do so outside of any normal ethical construct – the art event allows them to explore modes of being unavailable to them within normal life. And while it may be easy to dismiss the artist as being less well-placed to interrogate philosophical matters than a philosopher proper, to do so would be to insinuate that art harbours no direct relation to social ethics. The point of work such as this is to demonstrate that the art event directly conjures and explores the ethics of its community – that art is, or at least can be, a pragmatic way for a society to explore its own ethical contours.



Figure 10: (Photo: Layla Tully): An audience gathers as the artist writes upon the pavement

By focusing on temporary shifts in its participants' social/ethical positions, *30 Gold Coins* attempts to destabilise the fixity of its elements – people, coins, social spaces. A similar effect can be seen in the work of Beuys – particularly within his notion of 'plasticity' (Beuys, 2007). Employing substances such as wax, fat, and honey,

Beuys demonstrates how an act of relation - such as the addition of warmth - determines the perceived state of a material. The artwork lies not in the objects presented but in the making visible of substance as process. Beuys's objects are chosen because they change form when an external pressure is applied; likewise, the participants of *30 Gold Coins*, placed at an ethical intersection that problematises notions of ownership, public space, artistic merit, and fair gain, are being treated as materials whose reaction to social and ethical pressure directly shapes their perception of the work. Some, initially content to watch from the sidelines, found themselves compelled to intervene when others took the coins, unable to let what they considered as an unacceptable breach of social etiquette pass unchallenged. The resonance of the materials - replete with specific social functions, complex heritages - and the tension of their placement upon the street, served to engage the participants on a moral level, addressing their existing social responsibilities and presuppositions as to the fundamental rights and wrongs of the world, and forcing them to enter a position of instability. Coins are a plastic form in so far as their value is relational - allowing them to act as currency one moment, an art-form the next, an ethical dilemma, and so on. Their role is not to *be* the artwork, but to foreground plasticity as a means of drawing out potential responses - rather than idealised perceptions - from its viewer. The event of *30 Gold Coins* - whether in the sonic aspect that encourages physical movement through space, or the conceptual affront that requires the drawing of a personal ethical contour - is to place its participants in resonance⁴⁶ with their environment. By sketching out a multitude

⁴⁶ Being, as resonance, is innately relational, reliant on the proximity of Other (i.e. an object to re-sound from), and shaped by its size and contours (much as the shape of a room fundamentally changes the nature of sounds emitted within it). To be, is, much like to sound, "to vibrate in itself or by itself: it is not only, for the sonorous body, to emit sound, but it is also to stretch out, to carry itself and be resolved

of concurrent vantage points (moral, social, cultural), the work serves to elucidate the responsibility (and therefore difference) inherent to any community that arises from people *being* together.

This responsibility is not only that of Levinas's "pre-original challenge", but a second-order relationship to Other, conducted in sentience and with specific rather than innate outcomes. The onlooker who, witnessing the coins' 'theft', chooses to intervene when an other's conduct breaches his own moral disposition, does so with intent - responsibility carries over into measured, considered interaction. Indeed, we might consider art as a bridge between primordial and critical modes of being, a way of consciously testing resonances and responsibilities by reimagining the already present social interactions that exist in the everyday.



Figure 11(Photo: Layla Tully): A coin-less pavement after the performed giving

By offering an alternative way of perceiving existing social relationships, I would argue that art allows us to experience the potential beyond tried and tested relations

into vibrations that both return it to itself and place it outside itself" (Nancy, p.8, 2007).

to Other - an operation achieved precisely because it is distinct from life, even as it operates in the same field, and with the same tools. We might even consider art as making up for a flaw in our cognitive framework that results in the perception of a single fixed reality in the first place - as a series of objects (things), rather than life cycles (*things+difference/time*). We can perceive a coin, but must imagine its long history as a nickel-brass composite, a lump of unrefined ore, and so forth. Equally, we might just as easily say we can see the coin, but not its past life as somebody's lunch money, the last hour on the electricity meter, or the death of the gold standard. For Levinas and Nancy, such a lack of epistemological plasticity inevitably leads to totalitarianism, as differing - and equally rigid epistemologies clash over the utility of their shared objects. To escape such conflict, what is required is not an external ethical construct, designed to arbitrate the experience of multiple selves through existing conditions of communally-set good or bad behaviour (thus making up for the unaccountable difference between disparate unities), but instead a re-orientation from a reliance on experience, to a reliance on sense (sensing). In artistic terms, this might be seen as the difference between laying coins on the street and then proceeding to publicly shame anyone who takes them as a thief and destroyer of art, and creating an event wherein passers-by are encouraged to approach alternate perspectives through the social dialogue instigated between the artist, the work, and its multitude of participants/spectators. This orientation does not amount to the stripping back of the coin's signification, or nullifying its context until all players equally face a pure, unadulterated piece of metal (and thus finally share a common experience). Rather, it consists of amplifying the difference that any resonant object naturally conjures, celebrating a multi-faceted being for which its unknowability, the impossibility of its subsumption into the terms of self, is precisely what makes it glow.

An orientation towards the act of sensing, as opposed to the subsumption of already-sensible objects, seems to go hand in hand with the expanded concept of communication offered by Luhmann. If communication is the means by which the unique perceptions of distinct individuals are passed between the members of a community, a focus on the act of sensing - with all of its subjective grey area - has the potential for far more informational slippage than a reliance on pre-determined sensed-objects, drawn from limited categories of things. Luhmann however, suggests that communication is not so much a bridge between operationally closed individuals, as it is “an independent type of formation in the medium of meaning, an emergent reality that presupposes living beings capable of consciousness but is irreducible to any one of these beings, not even to all of them taken together” (Luhmann, p.9, 2000). From this viewpoint, communication is not concerned with the distribution of symbols - such as would be provided by culturally pre-defined stimuli - but rather with an individual's relationship to both the act of sensing and the act of expressing what is sensed. Our inability to directly pass unique experience between one another - in short, our operational closure - provides communication with its independence from either sender or receiver and the subsequent need for an interim. As with Nancy's Other, the concept of operational closure suggests an orientation towards something that is not only unknown, but *unknowable*. It is an orientation towards an act that never resolves, that perpetually feeds back. The sense implicit to such an orientation is not about *making sense* - joining up the dots of pre-existing experience - but of putting oneself in a primordial position of sense, where Other (replete with its contexts and significations) can be approached in all its foreignness, without any illusion of making it a sensible part of a self's understanding. Central to Luhmann's theory is the idea that a system must com-

pensate for the shortcomings of the elements contained within it. If, as Luhmann suggests, the “consciousness compensates for the operative closure of the nervous system, just as the social system compensates for the closure of consciousness” (Luhmann, p.10. 2000), it is a situation that underscores the production and reception of creative stimuli. The artwork exists not only as a relational construct between a self and its Other, but as a reflection upon, and interrogation of, the social system in which such interaction takes place.

5. INTERVENTION PART 2

5.1: Listen!

A small crowd has gathered upon the square, drawn by an advert placed in the local press a week prior that read simply 'Listen! 11 am, Wednesday, outside the library'. They wait in the cold for a few minutes, idly chatting, breathing into their fists, before I appear - march directly to the centre of the square, pause by the pink plastic Indian bull that lives there and prick an ear to the birds, the cars, the crowds; all the while carrying a large painted sign hoisted over my shoulder. 'Listen.' One bird chirps, then another. A hospital bus pulls up to watch. The waiter in Pizza Express opposite gazes at me nonchalantly. After a moment I approach the crowd, hand each of them a slip of paper and, without a word, head swiftly across the street and up the adjoining staircase, stopping only to admire the clamour of a woman locking her bike to a lamp-post. The crowd follows. I lead them up the stairs and into an alley, past the open windows of a modern office block then on to the shopping precinct, our little parade keenly observed by those who pass it, a handful of silent pilgrims following a man with an unwieldy wooden sign. Children mock us from afar, shouting 'Listen to what?' and laughing, only to lower their voices to a hushed reverie as we approach, as if frightened by our stated task, as if they don't really want to be heard after all. Towards the end of our journey we are approached by a middle-aged man - dressed in an expensive looking suit and clearly in a hurry, oblivious to the peculiarities of our group. 'Where's the nearest cash-point?' he demands. We pause for a moment as I remove a small slip of paper from my breast pocket and hand it to him, before heading off down the street, leaving the man to read it with a mixture of anger and bewilderment. 'Listen.'

*Listen!*⁵⁷ is based upon Max Neuhaus's piece of the same name (1966), a multi-media work that exists in forms as varied as a sound-walk, an essay series, a photograph and a stencil, but is at its heart simply an approach to sense, an orientation. In his original notes, Neuhaus describes arranging to meet his audience on a street corner, stamping their hands with the work's title, and then proceeding to walk around the city in silence. As a piece of participatory art, the combination of a clear and easily repeatable action (walk) and concept (listen) creates a situation in which there is no direct instruction to the participants. They are free to join in on their own terms and, lacking a distinct instruction ('listen' being no more than a statement geared towards an existing and currently active capacity) are faced not with a task to be undertaken, but a relation to potential. Neuhaus's work exemplifies the difference between interactivity and participation, as defined by Massumi in his concept of 'semblance' (Massumi, 2011). For Massumi, with interaction it 'is the form of the technical object that is emphasised... It is supposed to be all about social relation, but the dynamic form of the experience tends to get reduced to the instrumental affordance as concretised in the actual form of the technical object. It gets reified in an objective function" (Massumi, p.46, 2011). In contrast, participation relies not on utility, but on potential. To interact with a work, I must know (for example), where the big red button is, how and when to press it. I have to have an understanding of the existing dynamic by which the work operates, as well as my place within it. To participate however, is to elucidate the potential beyond the work as it is given. I am not led to a particular interaction so as to elicit the desired outcome of the artist (*'I pressed the button, and the ball went into the air!'*) but rather to experience the whole event, consisting not only of buttons and

⁵⁷ Appendix B: *I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, Listen! photographs* (box/usb)

balls and artists, but places and contexts and all manner of inextricable complexity. In this way, Neuhaus's work employs, in its specific, open-ended and indirect nature, the kind of 'escapes', 'sinkholes' and 'creative outs' that Massumi describes as vanishing points, wherein "the interaction turns back in on its own potential, and where that potential appears for itself" (Massumi, p.49, 2011). Neuhaus suggests no particular affordance, no particular quality to be observed within the city. Instead, he presents an orientation by which the participant can re-experience the city's (sonic) potential from a range of positions. Neuhaus is not asking us to experience the soundscape passively but, much like Nancy, uses the word 'listen' to imply a more general approach to resonance - both as a sensory act and a cognitive or moral orientation⁵⁸. For Nancy, listening is "an anxious state", wherein "to listen is to be straining towards a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible... listening strains toward a present sense beyond sound" (Nancy, p.6, 2007). Much like Massumi's critique of interactivity, listening avoids the delineation of an instruction based work that ultimately demands a participant to do one specific thing (and not another). The sense to which Neuhaus seeks to orientate his listener is not defined, and is made available only in the effort of his participant to engage with their environment.

In undertaking Neuhaus's work, I was keen to explore the degree to which its open-ended structure allowed for a productive balance between accessibility and autonomy. Reliance upon recognisable cultural objects offers accessibility, but only lim-

⁵⁸ "The impetus for the title was twofold. The simple clear meaning of the word, to pay attention aurally, and its clean visual shape – LISTEN – when capitalized. It was also its imperative meaning – partly I must admit, as a private joke between myself and my then current lover, a French-Bulgarian girl, who used to shout it before she began to throw things at me when she was angry" (Neuhaus, 2016).

ited autonomy, since it necessarily reduces potential in its attempt to fulfil standardised forms. Part of the resonant quality of *Listen* is that it obviates this duality: the tension between creating events that seek to point to an ever-increasing potential beyond the materials contained within them, and the fact that arts-practice immediately delineates that potential along fairly narrow lines. Art, as a work, tends to co-opt certain traits that define it as *art* - it is performed, presented, installed. For it to be recognised as art it must first objectify life; it must abstract a moment for itself from the ongoing bustle of activity that surrounds it. It is because of this abstraction that art allows us to test potential ways of acting without consequence - art is, after all, a *practice*. To perceive its function as this alone, however, runs the risk of art being simply a pedagogical game, a training exercise for some specific outcome within its community. It is the autonomy of works like *Listen!* that allows us to step beyond this limitation, by not only representing alternative positions but encouraging us to actually embody alternative ways of being - to become, however momentarily, Other.⁵⁹ Rather than being a practice towards a specific end, it is the speculative properties of difference that allow art to forgo what Rancière calls the “cause and effect” of more directed relationships. The *work* of art is not to create a specific outcome, but to forge an “aesthetic efficacy” (Rancière, p.63, 2009) from its lack of any distinct, overriding point:

Aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination it presupposes disrupts the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. What it produces is not rhetorical persuasion about what must be done. Nor is it the framing of a collective body. It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they are living in and the way in which they are ‘equipped’ to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of faults and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and feasible. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of com-

⁵⁹ A movement towards Other, rather than a subsumption of Other into self.

mon objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation. However, this political effect occurs under the condition of an original disjunction, an original effect, which is the suspension of any direct relationship between cause and effect.

(Rancière, pp.72-73, 2009)



Figure 12: (Photo: Layla Tully): The artist leads participants through a busy street

Politically thematic art lacks the disjunction - the potential inherent in its failure to make sense - by which art elucidates potential. As with all forms of communication, the direct link between cause and effect that politically thematic work often hopes to invoke – hear the punk song, smash the system – washes over the uncertain grey area by which art gains resonance in the first place. The political effect of *Listen!* is not that it points towards a specific change in the terms of its community's governance, but that it reorientates its participants in regard to their environment, the terms of their public life. Indeed, Neuhaus's impetus for the work stemmed directly from the lack of political effect he perceived in the avant-garde's acceptance of all sound being made available to music, as per John Cage's manifesto (Cage, 1937). Neuhaus observed that, though he agreed with the premise, "most members of the audience seemed more impressed with the scandal than the

sounds, and few were able to carry the experience over to a new perspective on the sounds of their daily lives” (Neuhaus, 2016). Whereas Cage points towards a general conceptual shift as to what might count as music - and does so in a highly theatrical, even shocking fashion - Neuhaus seeks to bring people quietly to the position where they themselves can perceive these qualities of sound, without having them thrust upon them. This could be seen as a radical shift in the position of the artist as a political force. Cage, in a work such as *4'33"*, ultimately opts for a big reveal - *it was YOU making the sounds after all!* - a method available to him because Cage has already taken up the mantle of ‘the artist’ by staging the show that allows for such a dramatic turnaround.⁶⁰ Neuhaus on the other hand is almost entirely absent from his work after the point of its conception. There is no dramatic unveiling of what is, or should be, revealed in the act of listening, but rather the work succeeds by facilitating its participants to explore the concept and its outcomes for themselves. As such, *Listen!* exemplifies the difference between a work that points towards a particular political position - a propaganda poster, for instance - and one that is innately political because it actually elicits, however indirectly, some form of social change.

By carrying around a sign emblazoned with its title, I was not encouraging people to take up a particular position - for or against the existing sonic or social environment. Rather, the resonant nature of the word combined with the universality of the action, allowed the sign to act as a mirror for their own reflections upon the space.

⁶⁰ Cage would no doubt challenge this opinion, since he very openly sought to excise the artist from his own work. However, I believe that, although he excised the artist/decision-maker from the musical material he offered up, Cage (with a capital ‘C’) himself was integral to the event of his work, which explains how he has become such a figurehead of the avant-garde.



Figure 13: (Photo: Layla tully) The artist listens to a woman unlocking her bike

This is not to suggest that there was no element of performance at work. Indeed, by carrying a large, obtrusive sign, I was deliberately problematising the political nature of the work - providing a highly visible aesthetic direction absent from Neuhaus's version. This compromise was made to widen the number of participants. Neuhaus worked with the assorted group of cohorts that turned up to his invite; I wanted to directly engage the uninvited general public by creating a relationship built upon the act of *watching* someone listen. There was the group of teenagers who felt inclined to shout obscenities from afar but fell mute as we approached with our sign, as if suddenly acutely aware that someone might listen to his or her cries as something other than the boisterous yells that they were designed to be. Conversely, two girls in the park, no more than fifteen, engaged us with a long list of everything they could hear, punctuated with the occasional 'oh yeah!' as they discovered something new in the act of deliberate, conscious listening. At one point we approached a building site - the loudest object in the nearby environment - only to watch the builders first mock us, then hurriedly cover their generators in blankets, whispering to one another that we were '*probably from noise abatement*'. In each of these in-

stances, the audience chose to reflect upon their current mode of engagement in the world and to adapt in accordance. The reality of our shared space was re-articulated by the presence of the work - these people were participants as much as those who actively chose to follow me around with the sign.

5.2: The Rights Room

*The Rights Room*⁶⁷, was a collaboration with visual/performance artist Layla Tully and Brighton Youth Centre, centred around the recently publicised abolishment of the Human Rights Act.⁶⁸ Incorporating workshops, open debates, text, performances and sound-making, the installation sought to provide multiple access points to its political theme, while its facilitators remained politically neutral. Upon entering the shop, visitors were faced with a board detailing the 15 articles of the current Bill of Rights, beneath which lay 15 objects,⁶⁹ each representing one of the articles. To their right sat a large empty blackboard, some chalk, and a microphone. Visitors were able to re-write the Bill of Rights, make additions, and to record sounds or statements with the microphone. As they explored the space, they were encouraged to bang, rub, snap and otherwise sonify the objects, the hope being that by treating such materials abstractly - exploring how they might sound rather than what they 'do' - it would become easier to engage with the Rights themselves in a more open, abstract fashion. The sounds produced were added to an ongoing, evolving loop that played back from speakers hidden around the shop.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Appendix B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, *The Rights Room* video (usb).

⁶⁸ The Rights Room can be seen as a fairly direct exploration of the relationship between art and social ethics, since it deals with the law and the reality of its application. It is a fertile area of artistic study - in creating the piece we initiated an ongoing relationship with the newly formed Sussex Art and Law Network, and similar expositions of the HRA have been conducted in works such as Monica Ross's *Acts of Memory*.

⁶⁹ These objects included seeds (the right to have children), scales (the right to a fair trial), a megaphone (the right to expression) and a crucifix (the right to practice religion).

⁷⁰ In a number of ways, *The Rights Room* constituted the most traditional of the series, and as such served a way of exploring theoretical assumptions made in some of the other more experimental pieces. In contrast to previous interventions,

Despite presenting ourselves as being political neutral, it was interesting to observe that the vast majority of participants automatically assumed the work to be a critique of the government's ambitions to abolish the Human Rights Act.



Figure 14: (Photo: Layla Tully): A participant reads the bill of rights outside The Room Room

This, in tandem with the fact that those involved had chosen to enter a designated art space - as opposed to stumbling upon a street performance - led to a somewhat constrained dialogue, since those present already felt themselves to be part of the same homogenous community.

Anthropologist Victor Turner suggests describes the formation of community – what he calls ‘communitas’ – by way of three related terms: breach, crisis, and redress (Turner, 1988). The first indicates a breach from existing normative social condi-

the work took place inside a gallery, involved clear instructions as to its participatory elements, and promoted a much stronger divide between the artist/facilitator and the audience/participant.

tions or relationships within the community, the second a crisis that follows,⁷¹ and the last how that crisis is redressed by the adaptation of the old, or creation of a new, community. If my previous interventions sought to explore such *communitas*, they did so by enlivening a momentary breach in socio-normative behavior – such as by handing out coins or dragging a harmonium – entering their participants into a period of (moral, perceptual, cultural) crisis.⁷² The community of the Rights Room, however, differed in so far as it, certainly at first, lacked any form of crisis – its members were in broad agreement, and their initial involvement in the work did little to change that. The work was seen as somehow benevolent by its participants – visitors often felt the need to thank us, or highlight what a ‘good’ thing we were doing, something that rarely occurred in any of my other interventions. The overriding assumption was that the work demonstrated our own opinion on the subject, even though we did not actively contribute to the opinions on display. Surprisingly, it was this assumption that created what crisis the work offered. As the amended Bill of Rights grew – and developed an increasing diversity in doing so – its participants would directly challenge us as to the content. Two camps soon emerged – those who welcomed the diversity of responses, and those who were loudly critical of any ambiguities, simplifications, jokes, the macabre, or spelling mistakes.

⁷¹ Turner suggests this crisis takes the form of a “contagion”, in which the community is divided and takes sides against itself. This is the violence of *communitas*, in so far as it is this stage that gives rise to existing antagonisms, “non-rational considerations” (Turner, p.34, 1988) and thus the potential for change.

⁷² An outcome in keeping with Turner's description of crisis as a liminal stage, acting as a threshold “between more or less stable or harmonic phases of the social process” (Turner, p.34, 1988).

Crisis came about due to the nature of the work's temporal disjunction. Its participants, though initially acting as members of the same homogeneous community, lacked the immediate social feedback⁷³ that would normally validate and curtail their actions. Though the work evolved in a linear, temporal fashion, its participants were able to move back and forth along its timeline, not only recalling earlier versions, but restoring elements that had been erased, adapting their earlier additions in response to changes in tone and new ideas, and adapting/erasing the additions of others. As participants returned to see the evolution of the work, the initially homogenous community experienced crisis as its membership's opinions were challenged by an Other with whom they had no direct contact. By allowing people to participate in the construction of the same object, but days apart from one another, its members were unable to know one another directly and reliant instead on the third term – Rancière's mediatory concept/object that occupies the distance between parties - that was the short additions to the Bill of Rights/soundscape each had provided. In this way, the work critiqued the very freedom its participants wished to protect – any individual's right to expression could be overwritten by the community at any time.

Participatory art is fundamentally political since it necessarily pertains to public life – the *being together* of its community. At the same time, art must retain its relationship to potential, and thus point to something beyond any specific political outcome. It is at this nexus that Rancière places the term “dissensus”, in which both art and politics offer a “dissensual reconfiguration of the common experience of the

⁷³ This can be compared to the comments boards of internet news sites. Though provided with the same stimuli, the lack of immediate social feedback creates an atmosphere where people are free to respond in increasingly bizarre and opinionated ways, often resulting in an extreme representation of a community that is far from the actual make up of its members.

sensible” (Rancière, p.140, 2013). Dissensus does not, however, suggest any “cause-effect relationship being determinable between the intention that is realised in an art performance and a capacity for political subjectivation” (Rancière, p.141, 2013).



Figure 15: (Photo: Layla Tully) The sound table inside The Rights Room

An artwork is itself not politically effective, even as it engenders an embodied re-configuring of experience and space. It allows the self to practise reconfiguring its relationship to Other and yet, crucially, it can only do this because it operates beyond the normal parameters of the everyday. Art can create the conditions for political effect, but it is not political change in and of itself.

The Rights Room in particular seems in danger of offering a far too cosy relationship between artistic construct and political effect, leading to the problems of its somewhat homogenised community of participants. It could likewise be critiqued for merely emulating change - allowing its participants the pretence of political action to compensate for the reality of their political impotence. Throughout the exhibition week, however, the distance between its participants' positions *became* the fundamental quality of the work. What began with simple chalk additions to the blackboard, or a few tentative explorations of the objects, soon transformed into impromptu discussions upon the scale and wording of the Rights, critical commentary as to others' responses, poetic outbursts, and an hourly reading of the *Rights Act* to passers-by with a megaphone. By providing a platform for political discussion, rather than a directed political outcome, participants were able to explore for themselves what it meant to hold and express certain opinions, with some returning numerous times and bringing their own literature to add to the debate. The work's potential emerged not from the dissemination of political knowledge, but from the distance and temporality born of the artistic construct - participants were able to conceptually explore alternate positions in a way both embodied and without the threat of long-lasting repercussions. Whilst it is easy to criticise art for failing to hold any real-world traction, that is precisely what makes it a carrier of potential - not only would a completely transformative art⁷⁴ no longer be art, it would also no longer be politically active, since it is this distance that allows both art and politics

⁷⁴ As Rancière suggests, once art had achieved its goal of complete political autonomy, it would no longer have any need or desire for artistic means, since a true community "does not tolerate theatrical mediation... the measure that governs the community is directly incorporated into the living attitudes of its members" (Rancière, p.3, 2009). Rancière is far from the first to take up this position – a similar argument is at the core of Wagner's *Art work of the future* manifesto (Wagner, 1993).

to fulfil their remit - the perception of difference that serves to enliven potential ways of being. The politic of *The Rights Room* lies in its articulation of a political event in order to enable the unworking of its community, the redrawing of its ethical contours. Participatory projects that encourage a community to engage with a specific political task risk being at best condensing, and at worst deliberately distracting from the actual political agency of their participants (which is to say, the actual power of *communitas*).

By pointing towards an explicit political outcome, such works miss a fundamental aspect of community as defined by Nancy. The community, like the Other(s) that comprises it, is unknowable,⁷⁵ and cannot be defined. As such, an artwork that addresses a community must do so without presupposing what that community is, or how it might respond to stimuli. Rather than fulfilling any pre-ordained outcome born of the existent circumstance of the participants or their site, the community instead engages in a process of flux that amounts to the perpetual death and re-birth of the community. Within the Rights Room, this flux was enlivened by the fundamental dichotomy of the work's theme - to engage with the evolving creation of Rights, to add, amend or replace the words and sounds of the community, is literally to transcend the rights of those who came before. The artistic act is not an outcome in and of itself, but rather the potential for change that guides action - the possible that compels the political.

⁷⁵ or 'inoperative' (Nancy, 2012) - by which Nancy means not only unknowable but actually lacking stable identity.

5.3: Five Nights Beneath the Pier

There are clear parallels between notions of operative closure, the intermediary nature of communication and art, and the unknowability of both Other and its plural, community. If we are to return at this point to our initial enquiry - the social function of art-making - it would seem increasingly evident that this research is uncovering a dichotomous pattern that revolves around work, sense, environment, unknowability and potential: *who* undertakes the act of ‘making’ sense, under *what* conditions, and the potential inherent in their inevitable failure. One area of confusion is the interchangeability of sense (to perceive via the sensory organs) and *sense* (to construct or affirm the sensible). My research increasingly attempts to demonstrate that these two terms are malleable and that the ‘function’ of art, if we are to argue for such a thing, lies in precisely the slippage between them. Indeed, what Massumi calls “becoming” and Levinas simply “being”, is nothing but the beyond of sense - beyond *the thing that is sensed* and prior to its abstraction into the fixture of *the sensible*, it is the moment at which sentience begins to attempt to make sense of stimuli as a prerequisite to *being* in one's environment – that is, to achieve selfhood. A crucial aspect of this conflation of sense (sensing) and *sense* (the sensible) is the idea that the activity of being, insofar as it strains between what is sensed and what is deemed sensible, relies on the nature and proximity of exteriority for its very existence. This is a fundamental tenet of Levinas's notion of responsibility – there exists a primordial relationship well in advance of any individual's agency, born of the simple fact that without Other there can be no self. This exchange, this sharing, occurs not between fully-formed individuals, but as the defining part of their mutual co-construction, and it is through its incompleteness that

being can emerge. Sharing, like all forms of communication,⁷⁶ must remain incomplete if it is to illicit feedback – there must always be something left to ask. Likewise, for Luhmann, sharing is an ‘independent formation’ that is neither the object shared nor those involved in the sharing, but instead the act of sharing - not reliant on language, since it pre-empts any attempt at meaning. Sharing may well be meaningful, but it is itself a straining towards sense (a straining towards the idea of the sensory, not towards an explicit shared language) rather than an attempt to make sense – much like a journey is more than an attempt to arrive at a destination.

Luhmann suggests that our experience of the world exists on multiple levels at once, broadly divided into perception and intuition. While perception denotes the immediacy of external objects as they are encountered, intuition “implies a double move... a transcending of what is immediately given in perception towards the *constitution of spatial and temporal horizons* and an *erasure of information concerning its own spatial/temporal location*” (Luhmann, p.7, 2000). It is intuition that allows us to imagine, to experience a string of notes as a melody, or to comprehend the historical significance of Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper* (1495), the spatial affront of Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917). What Luhmann calls intuition, Massumi calls ‘Dual immediacy’ (Massumi, 2011), a facet inherent to the art event that allows us to extend beyond a western epistemological model still fundamentally reliant on subjectivity - that is, on things being objects and being perceived as objects. To engage

⁷⁶ Sharing is, as the base operation of communication - the presentation of the third term, what Luhmann calls an ‘independent formation’ that is neither the object shared nor those involved in the sharing, but instead the act of sharing - not reliant on language, since it pre-empts any attempt at meaning. Sharing may well be meaningful, but it is itself a straining towards sense (a straining towards the idea of the sensory, not towards an explicit shared language) rather than an attempt to make sense – much like a journey is more than an attempt to arrive at a destination.

with the event is to be participating in the paradox of both being a part of the world in general, and being part of the highly specific ‘just-so’ that is the unique and unrepeatable characteristic of that moment, at that time. The subject is not involved merely in a creative transformation of seemingly distinct, fixed objects, but rather is embroiled in the act of self-creation, “process as becoming” (Massumi, p.2, 2011). Subjectivity relies on the ‘just-so’ relation to the objects it perceives even as it becomes evident that no such ‘objectivity’ exists:

The world is not an aggregate of objects. To see it that way is to have participated in an abstraction reductive of the complexity of nature as passage. To "not believe in things" is to believe that objects are derivatives of process and that their emergence is the passing result of specific modes of abstractive activity. This means that reality does not exhaust the range of real. The reality of the world exceeds that of objects, for the simple reason that where objects are, there has also been their becoming. And where becoming has been, there is already more to come. The being of an object is an abstraction from its becoming. The world is not a grab-bag of things. It's an always-in-germ. To perceive the world in an object frame is to neglect the wider range of its germinal reality. (Massumi, p.6, 2011).

The idea of a germinal reality that escapes the abstraction of ‘things’ has a long history in the arts. La Monte Young uses duration to demonstrate the ‘beyond’ of the object, deliberately exploiting the point at which objects lose their perceptual integrity. By actively courting conscious boredom through the use of long, seemingly static tones with little perceived variation⁷⁷, Young places the crux of the work in the exposure to pure sense that can only occur once any tangible connection to the nuances of the individual elements - the objective value of the sonic material, or the perceived accomplishment of the whole - is lost. Sense, by Young’s reading, can only be reached once sensing supersedes the kind of associa-

⁷⁷ A feature of much of Young’s work, exemplified by the ongoing ‘Dream House’ installation (see Grimshaw, 2011).

tions that are implicit to the mind's attempt to 'make sense' of objects.⁷⁸ Young's objects - long held tones, or evolving harmonic patterns - are freed from the shackles of association and representation, and can be, as much as is possible,⁷⁹ experienced autonomously. This approach allows for a "suspension of the analytical" (Schaeffer, in Duckworth and Fleming, p.25, 2012), in which the brain can no longer perceive the contours of the objects it employs, and must instead rely on the act of sensuality. For Young, a focus on "inspired intuition" rather than "theoretical deduction" (Schaeffer, in Duckworth and Fleming, p.29, 2012) points not to the simplicity of his work, but rather to a complexity whose end goal is its own vanishing point. The phenomenological complexity his work offers functions as a third term between the self and the environment that is its Other - resulting in the perception, and autonomous creation, of harmonies, frequencies and rhythms not (immediately) present in the materials themselves. By utilising specific frequencies and harmonic relationships so as to invoke standing tones and location-specific frequency 'beating', harmonic and rhythmic content literally emerges over time, a quality not

⁷⁸ Young's theories explore the neurological response to stimuli, particularly in regard to how perception operates beyond conscious, cultural reflection. Young's utilisation of Just intonation bypasses a culturally conditioned response to musical materials (such as 'I like this') and instead operates directly as a neurological level. By invoking, as Just intonation allows, the "exact repetition of phase relationships, the continuous firing of identical neurons will create, according to Young's research, a more intense psychological state" (Gann, in Duckworth and Fleming, p.162, 2012)

⁷⁹ This is exactly what Pierre Schaeffer attempted to do with his acousmatic music. The difference with Young's work, is that he is not asking us to overlook whatever associations objects arouse, but rather presenting them in a way that directly challenges our ability to make such associations. Even where this is unsuccessful (which on some level I believe it always will be), the attempt actively opens up the potential for a diverse range of associations beyond any initial "sounds like..." that occurs by (for example) sounding a typewriter without actually showing a typewriter.

of the material nor the perceiver, but of their between.⁸⁰ What Young demonstrates is that the objects of the art event are only meaningful over time and in relation to their environment – the object is nothing but a momentary awareness of a thing's temporary, abstracted state. By this reading, the abstract is not the removed, wilfully confused remnant of the object to which it relates - a cubist painting of a not-quite person - but the lived state of the object.⁸¹



Figure 16: *Thee Bald Knobbers perform beneath Brighton Pier*

The degree to which temporality and environment not only frame but acutely construct the art-event, was the primary rationale behind *5 Nights Beneath the Pier*.⁸² Created and presented over 15 nights, the work comprised a 5 day filmed night-

⁸⁰ Marian Zazeela, who provides the light sculptures that accompany the sonic material, describes a situation where “external others, my body, and my awareness is a theory - and can only have meaning relative to ensembles of experience over time” (Zazeela, in Duckworth and Fleming, p.122, 2012).

⁸¹ “to abstract in this fuller sense is a technique of extracting the relational-qualitative arc of one occasion of experience - its subjective form - and systematically depositing it in the world for the next occasion to find... what we call objects, considered in the ontogenic fullness of process, are lived relations between the subjective forms of occasions abstractly nesting themselves in each other as passed-on potential” (Masumi, p.15, 2011).

⁸² B: *I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, Five Nights Beneath the Pier, video.*

walk between the Brighton Marina and the Brighton Pier, followed by 5 nights of editing and composing an accompanying soundtrack, before a final 5 nights' presentation of the film beneath the pier. By undertaking the walk at night, the impetus was two-fold. Firstly, I was interested in the type of community that forms around the beach at that hour and hoped to record the unique interactions that occur there under the cover of darkness. Secondly, I was interested in the voyeuristic nature of recording such interactions. Filming at night, it was virtually impossible to record images without some form of light source - and yet, the presence of an artificial light to the otherwise dark beach served to invert my role. Though I was a spectator to the other occupants of the beach, the addition of the light made me the most visible, spectacular thing present. As such, any attempt at voyeurism was apparently negated, a dynamic that saw the other human occupants of the beach gravitate towards me as I filmed. Furthermore, even with the light, the camera was unable to pick up images more than a few feet away - whereas the light made me visible for several hundred metres. As such, there was no clear dividing line between me and my environment, since my presence drastically changed the environment, affecting both the limits of my visibility - altered by slight changes in my angle or speed - and the actions of those Others who ran towards or away from me, simultaneously altering the limits of their, and my, perceptions.

After editing the footage, I projected the film and its accompanying soundtrack⁸³ on the bottom of the pier, as a means of reintroducing the work back into the space of

⁸³ The soundtrack consisted of three main sources - audio recordings of my walk across the beach, The Clancy Brothers' song *Carrickfergus*, and a modular synthesizer. The synthesizer was primarily comprised of several cross-modulating low frequency oscillators - the frequency modulation or amplitude of each oscillator was

its creation. Crucially, however, I wanted the dissemination of the work to reflect the transitory, environmental and temporal aspects of its process of creation. With this in mind, I invited local musicians from the free improvisation scene to provide additional material each night, requesting only that they be willing to improvise not just musically, but with the environmental challenges of the site. The ‘stage’ consisted of the ground between the base of the pier and the sea, a space of anywhere between 1 and 25 metres width dependent on weather and tides. The improvisers were faced with numerous impositions, including sea-levels, the volume of the waves and wind (ranging from a quiet whisper to a howl loud enough to drown out even amplified music), and the force of the wind that could, on occasion, knock over both performers and their instruments. There were also human conditions to contend with: the sound of cars and revellers on the pier above, locals holding nearby beach parties, and the homeless community residing beneath the pier. The performers, faced with such difficulty, soon broke into two camps - those who blamed me, the instigator, for concocting such an event (acting as if I had, in my lack of clarity or instruction⁸⁴, fundamentally misunderstood something about the nature of music, though unable to articulate quite what) and those who enjoyed the open-handedness that such an environment required. As with previous interventions, it was the artwork’s resulting social dynamic that I sought to prioritise – the improvisers’ struggle with both their environment and the concept mirrored similar concerns in the film’s exploration of voyeurism, limitation of control, community, and use of space. The artistic material on offer was secondary to the event of ‘failing’ to successfully put on a normal musical performance/screening. This

controlled by the frequency of another, resulting in audible content occurring only when several independent oscillations coincided at complementary states.

⁸⁴ A lack of instruction here indebted to the participatory openness explored in my interpretation of Nehaus’s work (see chapter 5.1).

was manifest both by the impossibility of showing the work under certain conditions - on the first evening my film was nearly invisible and only barely audible such was the light and sound emitting from the pier - but also by the utility of site-specific elements beyond the pre-prepared work of the improvisers. One performer (Tom Bench AKA Hardworking Families), who had brought along a metal chair to play like a drum, ended up simply burying it, surmising that the audience could barely hear his violent actions upon the chair above the waves. Similarly, one act - Thee Bald Knobbers - that had brought along electric guitars and amplified cymbals took to 'playing' the metal underside of the pier, since it was far louder than their instruments. Less tolerant of the environment was vocalist Ingrid Plum, who appeared to become somewhat irate after her voice was periodically drowned out by the wind and waves - despite the interesting sonic effect it produced. What was produced by my performers was not a specific artefact, but a staging of the tension present between conflicting modes of being. Those involved sought to undertake a pre-emptive movement through the space - such as playing an instrument - yet the nature of the site forced them instead to respond with a primacy that circumvented any prepared response. It was for this reason I chose to work with self-declared improvisers - my interest was in highlighting the performative potential that exists in the slippage between critical and primordial responses to one's environment. This is not to suggest, however, that those who 'got' it contributed more to the event than those who did not. Indeed, it was the ensuing conflict between their different positions that defined the work, more so than any specific artefact. On the third night, instead of performing as planned, a string ensemble took the 'stage' to critique the lack of direction I had given them, environmental concerns, the fact they were not being paid, and a number of other qualities they were unhappy with. This resulted in a 30-minute debate amongst both performers and audience as to the

nature of improvisation, artistic promotion, and site, without any musical content whatsoever. Indeed, the degree to which the event of engaging with the environment took precedence was such that the film that instigated the event was only shown on three of the five nights, the other two producing unexpected emergent qualities from the community (such as the impromptu debate) that seemed to negate the validity or necessity of actually showing an artwork at all.



Figure 17: (Photo: Agata Urbaniak): Kev Nickells and Rebecca E Davies perform beneath Brighton Pier

5.4: Brighton Community Choir Does 'Without You.'

The wooden sign weighs heavily against my shoulder, pulling coarsely against the damp wool of my suit. The men and women that surround me are drunk and snarling, laughing wildly, fighting one another in doorways as I approach. The first of them turns and sees me - a hen party with matching angel wings, fedoras, and feather boas. The hen, I presume, reaches wordlessly for the microphone clutched in my left hand, bends down to lick it, immediately turning it into some phallic symbol while her party giggle and scream in unison. And then it begins...

'I can't forget this evening, or your face as you were leaving...'

Three or four muscle men storm past, one striking me with his fist as he does so, winding me. I struggle to keep the sign aloft, to maintain my frosty composure, suddenly filled with a very real fear. The women sing louder now, joined by the passengers of a car pulled up at the lights, then by the smokers loitering outside the nearest pub. One very bearded man, charged with a captivating gusto, begins to lead the assorted group of strangers through the refrain, arms raised high above his head...

'you always smile but in your eyes your sorrow shows, yes it sho-oows...'

The words momentarily trail off, the group struggling to recall the next line in vain, before the hens get bored and launch straight back to the beginning, the others quickly following. I turn, head further up the street, through the heaving crowds. Soon I pass a man handling his own sign, a walking advert for a nearby pizza shop.

Our eyes meet. He looks... confused, rushes to put down his sign lest he is seen as part of my act, and in doing so drops the thing onto the pavement, where it clatters loudly between us. I continue up the road for a time, pausing every few feet whenever people break into song, or dance, or hug. At the top of the hill I am suddenly accosted by a group in their mid-twenties, their bodies forming a triangle across the pavement, blocking my path. Their leader, a lady struggling to speak without the obvious slur that betrays the degree of her inebriation, wobbles forth, finger outstretched and poking me in the chest. 'Why?' she demands, jostling forth. 'Why?' Lacking an answer, she repeats herself at greater volume, turning to her playmates momentarily, before returning her gaze to me and adding, with venom, 'Are you really this sad?'

I face her in silence, unwilling to explain or justify. She stares back at me, visibly angry. Her entourage, two equally inebriated men, saddle up, one puffing out his chest, the other, shorter, more pensive, meekly suggesting 'Maybe it's his religion?' As if to answer him, the queue of people at the cash point behind them suddenly erupts into song, its meagre queue linking arms and twirling in circles, voices thrown high into the tense, dank air.

'I CAN'T LIVE, IF LIVING IS WITHOUT YOU...'

If we are to argue that objects are defined not by what they are, but how we relate to them, the same is true of spaces. They have been built to house certain rituals, to advance certain relationships between those who visit them. While this may include elements designed to be conducive to the art experience - strong acoustics, white walls - the reality of such decisions is that they make assumptions about the needs of their patrons. Since such assumptions will be more accurate for some

than for others, these spaces enhance certain kinds of aesthetic or social relationships – certain ways of being together - whilst simultaneously diminishing others.⁸⁷ A building's design will reflect its architects' assumptions as to its inhabitants, and will thus delineate what goes on inside. That said, the degree to which the design of art venues prioritises the art that inhabits them, is often negligible. The vast majority of small venues - particularly for music - are first and foremost pubs, and have been designed for the purchase and consumption of alcohol. The ceremony they cater for is rarely art itself, but a social context that occurs independently of any qualities of the artwork.⁸⁸ Even the most dedicated art space must cater for art-in-general, rather than the specific qualities of any individual work. As such, the relationships prioritised are unlikely to be those that elucidate a work's latent potential, its Otherness, as much as those that best serve a previous (known) community.

Small argues that art-spaces act as a breach from the everyday, dislocating the relationships of the art-event – as defined by the expectancies and ceremonies of the building - from those of daily life. From this perspective, the very existence of such spaces is problematic for the stability of the art event. Art is, as demonstrated by Rancière, defined by distance - it is not a part of life, but a space removed from so-

⁸⁷ Spaces “impose a mode of behaviour on those who are unaccustomed to it. They become somewhat self-conscious, lowering their voices, muting their gestures, looking around them, bearing themselves in general more formally. They may even feel something like awe. But frequent concertgoers who are accustomed to the place cease to feel the need for such submissive behaviour, and with it their demeanour changes. The muted gestures are replaced by gestures of body and voice that are not only relaxed but *signal* relaxation” (Small, p.23, 1998).

⁸⁸ It is not simply the financial constraints that prioritise certain aspects of artistic experience in this way. Small points out that “if the cathedrals and palaces (that) in Europe in earlier times when the scenes of many such performances were grand and opulent, it was not for the sake of the performances themselves but for the religious or aristocratic ceremonies of which the performances were no more than a part” (Small, p.20, 1998).

cial activity in general, in which its players can explore alternate ways of being. Designated art spaces risk overlooking the reality of such distance, taking a way of being that is itself once removed from social activity and extracting it further. Art venues are places that “allow no communication with the outside world. Performers and listeners alike are isolated here from the world of their everyday lives. Commonly, there are not even windows through which light from outside may enter. Nor does any sound enter from that world, and none of the sounds that are made here will be allowed to escape out into it” (Small, pp.25-26, 1998). Although this is something artists increasingly seek to remedy, the reality of such spaces is that they risk their participants being twice removed from the world of which they are a part.⁸⁹

At its most basic, the very concept of walls problematises the notion of Other. If, as has been explored, Other is ultimately unknowable, this is clearly quite different from an Other who is unperceivable – we must, at the very least, know that there *is* an Other out there. Walls, particularly those designed to divide one community from another, disavow the very presence of Other, blocking them from view, silencing their noise. To perceive objects, Others, or even whole communities in isolation, is to eschew the processes that made them. The perception of our environment's noise is nothing but the perception of its ecology, its diverse biosphere. Indeed, I would argue that it is this isolation⁹⁰ that has become the very remit of artistic activity - if art often seems to want to return our noise to us, it is because it is considered

⁸⁹ Although dual immediacy requires distance - the ability to perceive objects and contexts - such a pronounced and repeated division risks simply divorcing the objects involved from any external context altogether.

⁹⁰ The community may be defined by isolation – the coming together of operatively-closed individuals – but perception (which, as Luhmann makes clear, remains unavailable to the community as a whole) is continuous.

missing. We all too often omit the sounds of processes - the people who pick our vegetables or build our computers, the trucks that drive them to us - because to do so problematises the individuality of which post-Nietzschean sociality⁹¹ is so proud. As Garrett Keizer suggests, “the noise in our culture has a weirdly disembodied, spiritualised quality. It is the noise of ghosts” (Kiezer, p.15, 2012). By distributing our noise - whether the physical noise of factories, or the conceptual noise of art galleries - into private, separated pockets, we risk merely creating a fabricated silence so as to convince us we are “quieter than we really are. It can tell us that our seemingly ‘quiet lifestyle’ disturbs nobody. Noise, on the other hand, has an uncanny way of telling the truth” (Kiezer, p.46, 2012).



Figure 18: (Photo: Jack Moore): The artist is observed with his sign

⁹¹ Although not wishing to break off into a lengthy philosophical tangent at this point, I believe it would be naive to overlook the profound effect Nietzsche has had on modern thinking – not only within the western philosophical tradition, but as vital precursor to the ongoing cultural phenomenon of the individual that has, from the 50’s rock n’ roll rebel through to the theatrical alienation of grunge and metal in the late 90’s, underscored musical identity (see Frith, 1998). It is because this interpretation of Nietzsche places the individual in opposition to their community that it seems desirable to block out the noise of Other in the first place – the noise of the community, which is nothing but the noise of isolation, compromises an individual that wishes to be continuous.

The reality of such silence is that it avoids conflict, and therefore crisis. If we separate our communities into ever smaller sects that can no longer hear or see one another, that cannot breach each other's boundaries, then the formation of new communities, the evolution of the political, dries up. What is more, art – in so far as it relies on the perception of difference – fundamentally requires the breach of existing norms as a facet of its being. By demanding originality - difference - within a closeted environment that is actively excluding it, the community of the art space must instead offer increasingly shocking stimuli to defeat the ever more tolerant expectations of its membership, all of whom are only present because they already identify with the sort of extremities that divided art from society in the first place. By doing so – by cutting a baby cow in half,⁹² or covering Christ in piss⁹³ - they further exclude those who are not already familiar with this escalation, with such works appearing as simply crude or crass to those outside their clique. The noise of these works becomes simply an emulation of noise, an attempt to expel anyone who might have wandered in by mistake, while simultaneously reaffirming the capacity, and validating the experiences, of its community. There is no crisis. Or rather, crisis becomes a genre of art, rather than a reformatory power. For want of a better example, this leads to the somewhat preposterous situation where ‘noise’ artists can perform ‘noise’ music to a room full of people already familiar and approving of the form, none of whom find the experience in the slightest bit noisy.⁹⁴

⁹² Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child* (2007)

⁹³ Andres Serrano, *Piss Christ* (1987)

⁹⁴ This is not to suggest that noise music is inherently apolitical – merely that the gentrification of supposedly extreme practices nullifies their ability to point to the beyond-sense, the genuinely noisy. The history of noise music, as documented by Paul Hegarty (Hegarty, 2010), is synonymous with my overarching theme – it is a process of line-making, a continually evolving, “negatively defined” (Hegarty, p.5,

In *Brighton Community Choir Does... Without You*⁹⁵ I was keen to explore ways to interact directly with the noise of Other. As with previous interventions, the work revolved around the introduction of a new resonant object to its site as a means of fostering participation – in this instance, with the hope of creating a community choir. It was important to choose a site in which people could autonomously participate without transgressing the expected or afforded behaviours of its locale.



Figure 19: (Photo: Jack Moore): A hen party steals the sign from the artist

With this in mind, I selected the clubbing district of a Brighton's West Street - a highly ritualistic space, replete with inherent codes concerning its costumes, utility of space, and permissive behaviours. Crucially, however, the nature of the site's ritual is such that it actively celebrates its own transgressions. Acting outside of general

2010) response to its contextual technological and sociological advances. Only when it ceases moving and becomes a thing – a genre, a work – does it cease being noise.

⁹⁵ Appendix B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, *Brighton Community Choir Does... Without you* video (usb).

social norms, and the collective punishment of that acting out, is commonplace, and acts such as blocking traffic, shouting, and fighting are an expected manifestation of that community. With this in mind, I was interested in harnessing the existing energy of the site to invoke new modes of creativity among its participants. In particular, I was interested in the specific users of that site, a demographic (17-30 years-old) who had shown the least interest in getting involved with my previous interventions, and who are often considered a hard-to-reach group in general.⁹⁶ I wanted to create an event that prioritised some aspects lost by traditional participation and impact assessment models – notably, to avoid self-reflection at the cost of accessibility, to critique the linear relationship between process and outcome, and to utilise existing community spaces *in the same manner in which the community autonomously uses them*.

Like many of the interventions, the work is ostensibly very simple, involving nothing more than the act of a performer carrying a sign adorned with the lyrics to Mariah Carey's *Without You*⁹⁷ through the clubbing district on a busy Saturday night. The

⁹⁶ The idea of engaging with hard-to-reach members of the community is an underlying theme of community art in general. Recent experience of working with a community choir left me with the impression that its participatory, amateur, and self-reflective format – though attempting to be as inclusive as possible – only catered for a very small fraction of its membership. Most notably, there seemed a pronounced relationship between impact assessment and the dearth of younger and male participants, many of whom were vocally opposed to the sort of self-reflection that the such documentation required.

⁹⁷ A good pop song is a de facto resonant object. As with all poetry, well-written lyrics are multi-layered, thematically and emotionally rich objects, designed to convey the most acute possible meaning to the greatest number of people. The Harry Nielson/Mariah Carey song *Without You* (1993), is successful precisely because it achieves this so succinctly. It invokes one of the most recognisable tropes of romantic and gothic literature, the love forlorn antagonist who would rather die than be alone. And yet, the resonance of that particular song lies in its musical context – a short, simple melody that increases in drama with each repetition via the addition of new instruments, harmonies, and key changes. It is instantly recognisable and,

goal was not to patronise my participants by suggesting they lacked a specific quality or skill that only the artwork could restore, but to demonstrate their existing creativity, for which a familiar pop song acted as a vehicle. The function of the artwork was not to elicit a specific outcome (even, as with community choirs, if that outcome is allowed the freedom of amateurism), but to channel the volatility of the community into a creative, musical act.



Figure 20: (Photo: Jack Moore): A crowd of strangers gather to sing *Without You*

A similar use of a choir to critique and engage with the intersection between community, non-specialism and participation, can be seen in Bill Drummond's *The 17* (2006 - present). Drummond's work extends from the belief that standardisation (in

due to its utility of repetition, can be hummed after only hearing the first few bars. By placing a well-known dramatic statement over a chorus that is ultimately an extension of the verse - albeit a greatly embellished one - its listener can join in, even if they haven't heard the song before. It occurred to me that those words - *I can't live if living is without you* - would also take on a resonance beyond the life of the song when presented in their text form alone, pointing not only to the song but to the predating dramatic device that inspired it. Indeed, after I first painted the words upon a large wooden sign in a studio and then walked it back to my house, I was stopped by several men who, upon reading the text, tapped me on the shoulder and whispered 'Good luck mate' or some similar sentiment, assuming that I must be returning to a lover in hope of reparation.

the form of recorded music) has damaged the social function of music-making, and promotes instead a return to a prior state in which the history, traditions and even existence of music has been forgotten - leaving the community with only an innate desire to create it, but no idea what that would sound like. *The 17* is a work that I feel immediately compelled to point out I only discovered at the very end of my research, such is the degree of its similarity - in both conception and execution - to my own practice.⁹⁸ Originally a series of text scores created by Drummond (but since added to by his participants), the work employs geographical arrangements of groups of 17 people and encourages them to sing or hum, usually unrehearsed, within a specific social context. Broadly speaking a performative manifesto, the work engages with unusual locations, temporalities, and social groups - prisoners, anglers, hairdressers, World War Two veterans, Imams - indeed, anyone that might traditionally fall outside of the experimental, avant-garde or anti-pop traditions of which the author is a part. Drummond's work plays upon the manner in which a community defines itself - often encouraging pre-existing communities to work creatively with one another completely outside the primary context by which they are bonded.

The community of West street share an intimate and highly resonant space - replete with social performances, dress codes, games, and rituals - and yet their interactions rarely involve any form of mass creative collaboration.⁹⁹ In my numerous

⁹⁸ Drummond even specifically worked with the clubbing scene - the score *Nightclubbing* calls for its realiser to usher in the attendees of a nightclub into a cordoned off back room in groups of 17, and to "make a deep drone of a constant pitch with their voices" (Drummond, 2016).

⁹⁹ The obvious exception being the numerous hen parties who plan and execute often extravagant wardrobes and props in advance of their night out. This is not to suggest that other forms of creativity don't occur, merely that they are often under-

visits to the site I noticed that, particularly among men, the frequent confrontations that occurred were almost exclusively centred around attempts to exhaust the creativity of others as a means of promoting an individual's status. My own passage through West Street was often hampered for this reason – the communal sharing that my sign offered drew attention from the individual to the community, a shift in focus that resulted in numerous acts of violence from those seeking to regain control.¹⁰⁰ This is not to suggest that there is an inherent conflict between autonomy and community.



Figure 21: (Photo: Jack Moore): A group of young men sing along into the microphone

taken as a form of competition rather than cohesion. Indeed, this is the very crux of my reticence to engage with 'art' spaces: they presuppose that creativity is not an ongoing and perpetual quality of social construction. What the clubbing scene has always demonstrated, is the degree to which people paint themselves, take on characters, dress up, adapt, dance, sing, explore creative shortcuts, and otherwise celebrate being as a matter of course within everyday human social interaction.

¹⁰⁰ Most of the interventions were either photographed or filmed (by myself or by an external cameraman/woman under my direction), and there was a marked difference of response in this regard between those where the camera was an obvious part of the work (such as *Brighton Community Choir Does...*) and those in which the camera was hidden or absent (most notably *30 Gold Coins*).

The nature of *Brighton Community Choir does...* was such that it sought to harness individual spontaneity as a means of encouraging participation. By doing so, the work actively critiques the imposed binary that might see the individual as fundamentally opposed to the community. Those who choose to obstruct the creative act, however violently, do so in relation to their community – their individuality is entirely *indivisible* from those around them. The decision to participate, as well as the manner of that participation, are autonomous, since the instigator asks nothing of those present, relying instead on a third term occupying, and making resonant, the space between facilitator and participant. In this respect, *Brighton Community Choir...* serves to demonstrate the aversion to fixed states that my practice has so far explored. The work does not provide a new space in which you are invited to come and join an artist in some carefully constructed - whether conceptually or practically - rendition of a specific artistic act. Instead, it relies on participants' existing knowledge, context, and capacity to explore the distance between interlocutors. The elucidation of community that *Brighton Community Choir...* achieves, occurs because it seeks to counterbalance accessibility (replete with its 'way in' that presupposes a lack of complexity or specialism) with a flexible ambiguity that allows for the straining by which community is brought into being. Indeed, the underlying rationale behind community choir projects in general - certainly those I have previously worked on - has not been to achieve a splendid rendition of such-and-such a song, but to use the embodied act of singing to bring a community physically, and cognitively, together. This embodiment - which might be seen as a returning of creative agency to a culture in which the activity of singing has become a specialised skill - amounts to the reinvigoration of the individual *within* the community, celebrating the autonomy and difference of the elements that make up its whole. If traditional participatory choirs embrace amateurism by ultimately not

minding if things go a little off course, they do so while retaining fundamental expectations as to what a successful performance might sound like. *Brighton Community Choir...*, however, relocates performance from an outcome to a means of access. As such, participation was not hindered by the under-confidence of its contributors (since neither success or failure were applicable to the action at hand), and the community were free to explore and celebrate the instability that such an unexpected, and embodied act might bring forth. As the artist, I was not concerned with encouraging a specific action from my participants. The act of singing was only a conduit to a *communitas* that, as with *5 Nights beneath the Pier*, might just as well be realised by the idea or process of an artwork as by any tangible outcome. The work of my art was in the setting up of a temporary event whose outcome could not be fully predicted. It was the participants, rather than myself, who denoted the terms of our mutual shared space, with my initial gesture serving only as a catalyst for the new social, ethical and political contours that in turn construct the specific coherence of lived experience.

6.

COLLABORATION

It is not a matter of making, producing, or instituting a community; nor is it a matter of venerating or fearing within it a secret power - it is a matter of incompleting its sharing. Sharing is always incomplete, or it is beyond completion and incompletion. For a complete sharing implies the disappearance of what is shared.

(Nancy, p.35, 2012)

Introduction to the collaboration

Although I would consider both the interventions and interpretations to be collaborative in a sense – reliant as they are upon an active participation with Other – it was helpful to dedicate an area of my research to collaboration in its more traditional, musical guise. *New Communion*¹⁰¹ took as its starting point several of my key themes – resonance, site, community, sharing, participation, and temporality – and explored these often philosophical concepts in a pragmatic and embodied fashion. Conceived as an ongoing exploration of the score in a single site with a small group of recurring participants, the project ran from June 2014 until August 2015 at St Mary’s Church, Brighton, and involved visiting the building, always at night, for 16 hours, approximately every 8 weeks. Working alongside three collaborators – James Mather, Kev Nickells, and John Guzek – the score was used as a means to document and respond to the building, both in terms of its sonic reality and its social function, interpreting and developing the text as we did so musically, spatially, temporally and conceptually.

The *New Communion* project acted as a bridge between the more traditional musical event of the interpretations, and the communality of the interventions, focussing as it did upon both the specificity of place (replete with the objects that define it) and the performative, lived-in potential existent in a communities exploration of that site. The community – in this instance myself and my three collaborators – were able to share our reflections and responses to the common object of the church, passing between us unique experiences that, though born of operatively closed agents nevertheless exist as a “world-fragment including all the

¹⁰¹ Appendix D: New communions (usb).

others from its own perspective" (Massumi, p.58, 2011). Although the entirety of this project is underscored by a focus on the omnipresence of creativity – that is, in acknowledging that the art event takes place within the already rich experiential framework of the everyday – the separation and grandeur of the closed church site allowed us to distill and amplify many of the creative decisions inherent to the process of a community's unworking. Pragmatically, to collaborate in a space defined by resonance – both acoustically and historically – is to embody the heightened awareness of Other that Beuys posits as the function of all art-making,¹⁰² and that Nancy defines as the very nature of the self-construct.¹⁰³ It is to be in a perpetual state of tension with exteriority. The minor movements made by a collaborator are amplified not only by the acoustic qualities of the building, but also the spiritual connotations of the site as a whole, which serves to cast the most innocuous act in reverence. To experience the sound of the church is to enter into

¹⁰² For Beuys, art is not so much a talent as it is a way of being. What Beuys terms 'preparation', amounts to a constant and evolving practice of dual immediacy from which both further artistic activity, and ecological stability, stem. If creativity allows for, and relies upon, a perceptive focus that includes both the object and its history/context, preparation serves as a means of harnessing that duality, of bringing the creative duality into the everyday, a situation wherein "I have to keep preparing myself throughout my life, conducting myself in such a way that no single moment is not given over to this preparation. Whether I am gardening, or talking to people, whether I am in the midst of traffic or reading a book, whether I'm teaching, or engaged in whichever field of work or activity I'm at home in, I must always have the presence of mind, the overview, the wider perspective, to perceive the overall context and set of forces" (Beuys, p.12, 2007).

¹⁰³ "To be listening is thus to enter into tension and to be on the lookout for a relation to self: not, it should be emphasised, a relationship to "me" (the supposedly given subject), or to the "self" of the other (the speaker, the musician, also supposedly given, with his subjectivity), but to the relationship in self, so to speak, as it forms a "self" or a "to itself" in general... [listening] can and must appear to us not as a metaphor for access to self, but as the reality of this access, a reality consequently indissociably "mine" and "other", "singular" and "plural", as much as it is "material" and "spiritual" and "signifying" and "a-signifying"" (Nancy, p.12, 2007).

a relationship that is fundamentally beyond the sonic – it is not to *hear* but to be engulfed, both in signification and sensorality, as a condition of presence.

New Communion: community and collaboration within shared space

The brief I provided to my collaborators was simple – we were to bring instruments to the church, lock ourselves in for an extended period, and explore how the instruments, and ourselves, responded to the acoustic and aesthetic properties of the building. The recording of our explorations would proceed hand in hand with the creative act – a recording studio would be set up in the church to capture everything we did, as well as pen and paper used to produce a series of instructions for future collaborators. This document, created in tangent with my own experiments outside of the church, would form a cohesive score by which to orientate our movements.



Figure 22: (Photo: James Mather): The artist at the piano in St. Mary's church.

The demands of making such a recording forced us to directly engage with ideas of movement, embodiment, sense, and non-linearity. Rather than relying upon the prior utility of the church, the space was repurposed with a view to capturing its strongest sonic presence – whilst the presbytery, sanctuary, and quire traditionally

might be used to project sound around the space, our goal was to record not only the sound source, but also the buildings acoustic response. As such, most of our movements took place across the transept, ambulatory, and crossing, with the more traditionally performative spots of the presbytery, sanctuary, and nave instead housing the microphones used to document our performances. Although there were some fixed objects we wished to record – notably the organ and piano – much of our initial work in the church focussed on trying to develop an understanding of the acoustic, historic, and social aspects of the building. The sessions would begin with a series of exercises – the participants moving or dancing through the church, reciting passages from the texts already present at the site (bibles, fire exit signs, etc.), and discussing the objects that resided there (the stained glass, the stonework, the community notice board, etc.). This would be followed by more sound-specific work - measuring the reflections and frequency response in different areas of the building, capturing impulse responses, documenting the relationship between the external noise of the street and the internal acoustics, exploring the effect of spatiality and reflection on improvisation/collaboration, and testing the sonic potential of existing resonant objects (pews, bells, railings, etc.). My goal was that our experience of the church site would be continuous, with no distinction drawn between the musical and contextual elements with which we worked. The social history, architectural traits, and acoustic properties, would be treated as a single common material with which my collaborators could work. Our performances were informed by discussion and research upon the historical and cultural heritage of the site, with our compositions punctuated by discussion upon the religious and social connotations of its location and utility. The prior experiences and extra-musical specialities of my performers – an expert in site-specific sound-recording, a Theologian, and a statistician for the local council - were fed into these discussions,

allowing us to further blur the distinction between art-making and a more general social practice.



Figure 23: (Photo: James Mather): A microphone captures the church's acoustics
By attempting to circumvent any prevailing sensibility – the paths one is supposed to walk, the reverences or actions one usually ascribes to objects – I wished to reverse many of the abstractions that the likes of Small, Ingold and Rancière claim have been enforced by the western cultural and epistemological tradition. If, as

Ingold suggests, our innate understanding of place as “a knot tied from multiple and interlaced strands of movement and growth” is now perceived instead “as a node in a static network of connectors” (Ingold, p.75, 2007), the temporal and spatial disjunction of the church allowed us to reconfigure potentially static, linear responses to the environment. The scores text allowed us to respond to the building and its contents in manners with which we were not immediately comfortable – attempting to ‘stand for a moment in every corner’, ‘touch every wall or edge’, and to ‘climb as high or as low’ as possible, encouraged us to move beyond our usual methods of engagement.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, the community that formed around these unusual interactions - taking place over extended time periods in the dead of night – soon began to develop its own normative behavior (ways of playing or being together) far removed from our actions outside of that space. This development was most obvious in the nature of our extended, semi-improvised sessions. Based loosely around a few distributed sentences of score, we found ourselves playing for up to 40 minutes at a time, often in near darkness, only communicating through the often subtle variations in our individual performances. Melodic, harmonic and rhythmic changes would be constructed as we went, not with a view to completing recognised patterns or scales, but rather appearing as undulating waves of consonant and dissonant matter, or emergent changes of density born from a confluence of the minor inconsistencies of its players. Working with percussion, violin, French

¹⁰⁴ Our movements through the church were as such synonymous with the innate, autonomous, super-sensible participation that governs all of a communities interactions. If, as Ingold suggests, “people in modern metropolitan societies find themselves in environments built as assemblies of connected elements”, this focus on an embodied re-articulation of objects and their perceived affordances, points to a reality in which people continue to cut their own paths through shared space, to devise shortcuts and to walk on the grass – a world of active participation in which people “continue to thread their own ways through the environment, tracing paths as they go” (Ingold, p.75, 2007).

horn, piano, voice, saxophone, organ, and synthesiser, we would explore different formations across the site, working with between one and four players at any one time and allowing our proximity and the spaces resonance to impede and promote new relationships between us. The resulting composition/recording focused as much on the instruments as it did the ambient noise of the building – the clicks from its ancient ceilings, its archaic fans, and its overpowering reverberations. Microphones were set up to record the body of the church, alongside its organ loft, kitchen, bell tower, and external arches, allowing us to concurrently document the space from a multitude of positions, with performers moving between these spaces as they manipulated the environment and their instruments.



Figure 24: (Photo: James Mather): John Guzek performs upon the violin

This evolved into a body of work that walked a fine line between embodied improvisation and environmental communion. The same extract of score might be played multiple times, in multiple formations, with hugely varied results, despite being guided by similar rules regarding space, environment, temporality, and

interplay, as taken from the score by its performers. The involvement of multiple collaborators allowed me to explore the resonance and interpretability of the language that comprised the score. Text was amended to incorporate passages that seemed to invoke the most performative potential – with a balance being sought between language that was specific enough to provide creative contours for exploration, and open-ended enough to allow my collaborators to make critical decisions concerning the nature of the composition. Often, my own preconceptions about the utility of the text was over-ridden by the responses I received. An initial reliance on analogy as a creative device was severely culled over these sessions, as my collaborators struggled with what they perceived as unrelated or unworkable literal instructions (such as “play with the feet instead of the hands” or “with three of four tongues”). Instead, I found they often responded better to associative language that referenced common cultural stimuli. My primary collaborator, who was unfamiliar with both improvisation and experimental scoring techniques, responded strongly to narrative descriptions based upon made-up scenes from science-fiction television shows, providing live soundtracks - replete with complex ideas and developments - to unseen images as they were described to him. Collaboration around a pre-existing cultural object or theme thus produced far more creative outcomes than what I had previously considered to be a freedom in fairly abstract language,¹⁰⁵ which more often than not lacked the framework through which my collaborator felt confident to experiment. It seemed that the open-ended nature of overtly poetic or abstract language risks circumventing the concrete nature of the object, the Other from which a self can re-sound. Just as with Massumi’s proclama-

¹⁰⁵ I appreciate there is a question to be raised here concerning the perceived openness of poetic language – however, its utility in the score is not as a form that eschews all existing signifiers, but simply as a medium that can offer enough plasticity to point to multiple potentialities in its interpretation.

tion, “neither object nor subject: event” (Massumi, p.6, 2011), creativity seemed to germinate not from a completely blank page, but from the potentiality of an object – the score’s text - that doesn’t oppose the abstract, but embodies it. As the remaining trace of a former moment in time, the object is not temporally static, pointing only to what it was, but fuels the subject to reach beyond any present sense. As Massumi suggests, “the objective belongs to the immediate past of just this occasion” – in this instance, our shared cultural memory of science-fiction television. And yet, the object also points forward, it “just as immediately belongs to that occasions proximate future” (Massumi, p.9, 2011). Put simply, the object, as an abstraction in time, allows us to imagine what might come next.¹⁰⁶



Figure 25: James Mather improvises drum parts

Another major aspect of the collaborations was that they allowed me to research the nature of a creative community in a highly constructed space, somewhat di-

¹⁰⁶ The object, replete with its associate meaning, provides a horizon upon which the perceiver can strain towards further possible, as yet unrealised meaning. As Levinas makes clear, “signification does not console a disappointed perception, it just makes perception possible. Pure receptivity, like pure sensibility without signification, would be a myth or abstraction” (Levinas, p.11, 2006).

vorced from the general social activity of which its participants are typically engaged. If both the interpretations and interventions often sought to challenge the sanctity of designated art spaces in favour of a creatively resonant and universally accessible everyday, the church location amplified the kind of social divisions that the closeted art-event promotes, as critiqued by the likes of Christopher Small. Entering at night and locking ourselves in, our explorations were conducted in secret, despite the building's rich contemporary and historic social connotations. Innately hierarchical in structure, the church's architecture and fixtures – with its golden rostrums and ornate altar, situated at the head of a cross - promotes the dominance of its primary performers (priests, choristers, etc.). The church has a specific social function, and commands a specific utility and gravitas for the objects that comprise it. And yet, the space of the church is also the space of the socially out-cast – the poor, disabled, homeless, and drug-addicted are all catered for by the various food banks and support groups run from the site, and our sessions were often interrupted by the sounds of its more typical inhabitants knocking on its doors or sleeping in its arches.¹⁰⁷ Our commandeering of the church – indeed, our very desire to seek out non-linear ways to interact with it – mirrors this duality, wherein we are both deliberately engaging with the specific just-so that is the social and acoustic resonance of the site, and simultaneously attempting to circumvent it. If, as Small suggests, “every building, from the tiniest hut to the biggest airport terminal, is designed and built to house some aspect of human behaviour and relationships, and its design reflects its architects' assumptions about that behaviour and those relationships” (Small, p.20, 1998), the changing social function of the church,

¹⁰⁷ Indeed, on one occasion we witnessed a man falling asleep in the building's only night-time entrance/exit, forcing us to play our music as loudly and frenetically as possible in the hope of waking him so that we could leave.

and our navigation of it, exemplifies the human capacity to re-configure such a linear, top-down approach. As an inner-city church in an area of social deprivation, many of its regular inhabitants forge a pragmatic utility that goes well beyond the intended reverie of those who built it. Likewise, the community formed with my collaborators sought to reach beyond any cursory or predetermined utility – our actions sought to reconfigure the space of community and the terms of our participation within it. In contrast to contemporary criticisms of the specific art-space's divorce from general social activity, it was by virtue of its separation from the everyday that we could explore and repurpose its inherent resonance in such detail.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1: Conclusion: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice.

Throughout this research, I have presented the artistic construct as a bridge between primordial and rational modes of being, a means of reimagining the everyday and enlivening latent potentialities within it. By offering an alternative perspective - whether that is a landscape we cannot normally see or the laying down of coins outside a bank - art allows us to perceive and explore the potential that exists beyond tried and tested relations to Other. What is more, I have sought to demonstrate that it is not only possible to consider *the work* of art to be in the celebration of distance between a self and its Other - but that it is both feasible and valid to score such work as a means of inspiring new relational engagements in the future. While my initial area of research - the social function of art-making - stayed constant throughout this process, there were a number of ideas that were uncovered as I progressed, particularly concerning the nature of participation and community.

Participation, as a term, was something I was deeply uncomfortable with prior to this research, perceiving it as being overly prescriptive, and ultimately overlooking, or negating, modes of participation beyond those imagined by the artwork's creator. The idea of a more holistic participation - as suggested by the likes of Rancière - was something I was just coming to terms with, and the performances, compositions, installations and interventions that comprise this body of work served as a means of testing a variety of more open-ended models of participation. These models are based on the assumption that participation is already taking place. The artwork, rather than engaging the spectator in some entirely new horizon, instead momentarily rearticulates a *chosen few* of the myriad of threads that are already tying the spectator to their site, their sense, and their community. To consider par-

ticipation in this manner is a logical conclusion, if we are to begin from an ontological position that defines Other as fundamentally unknowable. The result of not being able to know Other is that you can have no idea whether or not they are participating - or even what such participation might look like. For the artist, this fundamentally changes the game that is played each time we undertake a performance. Those actions designed to acknowledge comprehension and appreciation – nodding, clapping, dancing, and so forth – do not, in fact, acknowledge anything about the artwork itself. Instead, what they demonstrate is that the audience recognises the ritual by which the art event takes place – in short, that the work is sensible (makes sense), rather than sensual (constructs feeling). The outcome of this research project, whether in the form of interventions, musical performances, or explorations of site, was to find new ways of developing and scoring a practice that maintains both critical/conceptual depth and a focus on sensuality as a means of participation.

Terms such as participation have not been used throughout this research to pertain exclusively to the art event – indeed, the underlying argument I have been attempting to flesh out is that art is quite literally a means of practicing the wider socio-political relationships that make up the community. What I wanted to make clear in my work is that any activity that brings into question the validity of previous suppositions concerning sense data, or the cultural ‘common’ sense that such data leads to, is by its nature a political act. It serves, in however small a way, to reshape the ethical and political contours of its community. Furthermore, it is precisely in the creation of such minor interventions that we can best interrogate a society that is itself comprised of innumerable threads, linking infinite selves and Others. The concept of line-making – so fundamental to the practical undertaking of these pro-

jects – is embodied in the nature of such an ecological position: the horizon upon which we strain towards Other is not that of a linear, one-way path, but an endless web of comings and goings, unfolding in every direction at once. The art event, by engaging with such a community, must shed all illusion as to the potential for a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, for universality, or totality. A truly socially-aware art event would have to admit that *Gesamtkunstwerk* is not simply the ideal state for the artistic form, but rather the reality of a perpetually evolving, epistemologically co-constructive socio-political system. Indeed, total artistic synthesis as Wagner suggested (Wagner, 2016), does not mean that *art-activity* is somehow inextricable from general *life-activity*, but that its raw material – creativity – is the base ingredient of all human work. The art-event is a carrier of creativity whose existence does not exhaust the potential for creative activity in the everyday, but provides new means for its perpetuation. Art can explore the potential in the everyday because it is *separate* from the everyday, even as, in doing so, it points to the creative threads that pre-exist within the community. These works were designed to facilitate just such an interrogation of sense as a creative act - indeed, as the fundamental creative act - to paraphrase Nancy or Levinas - by which we co-construct self. By exploring a range of methods, resonant objects, and contexts, my goal was to enliven the act of straining towards Other, by which the art event – dragging a harmonium, or dressing up as Santa Claus – points to the currently uncharted ethical, social, historical, or sensual relations already present within the community.

In undertaking this research, there were four main areas that I sought to investigate: the validity of a variety of participatory models used to interrogate the community; the relationship between participation, autonomy, and the formation/facilitation of community; the relationship between the creativity of the

art-event and creativity in the everyday; and the feasibility of documenting artistic interrogations of community that rely on a relation to the unknown, with a view to future repeatability (i.e. score-making). The methods of participation that were explored can be broken down into six main categories – *open*, *observational*, *referential*, *constructive-instructive*, *contextual-instructive*, and *object-centric*. There is a fair amount of slippage between these categories, and most rely on a model of limited mediation – participation is rarely invited in advance of the event, but is stumbled upon as the event unfolds in the public forum.¹⁰⁸

The first two methods are by far the simplest – *open* concerns the creation of an event in which there is no, or extremely limited direction from the artist; likewise *observational* participation stems from the observation of unexpected acts within the community. Works such as *Listen!* and *Chalkwalk* operate in an open manner, presenting a situation that relies upon the autonomy of the participant for its success. It is assumed that participants will already be participating, and the event simply directs their perception in a general direction – an interrogation of the walked terrain, or the existent soundscape. These works are deliberately non-confrontational, allowing the participant to engage without indicating any ‘correct’ way of doing so. The aim of these works is not to elicit an identifiable response from the participant, nor to add a new artefact to the world, but to engender the perception of difference within the stimuli that already make up their environment. The coal added to *Chalkwalk*, or the *Listen!* sign, though adding to the existing landscape, do so in order to facilitate a perceptual shift back to the minutiae of the

¹⁰⁸ This is less true for works like *New Communion*s, *The Rights Room* and the more traditional music performances – however these pieces still rely on the manner of participation being markedly different than what might be expected prior to entering their performance space.

shared space in which both artist and participant are situated. Conversely, the *observational* model of participation is deliberately confrontational, placing the observed act in tension with the everyday usage of the shared site. While not demanding any particular response from those who observe them, the acts undertaken – such as distributing a shared currency (*30 Gold Coins*) – are deliberately provocative, even whilst not being directly obstructive. To undertake such acts is not to ask those present *to do anything*, but instead to promote a critical self-reflection concerning their own actions at that time.

A referential model of participation assumes a shared culture between artist and participant and deliberately interrogates it as a means of involvement. By utilising easily recognizable stimuli within already resonant contexts - a Santa suit at Christmas, a bunny at Easter (see Appendix H) - these works re-frame an event to which passers-by are not only already participating, but actively and creatively engaging with (buying presents, taking holidays, visiting family). The success of the work lies in the unexpected implementation of the associated artefacts – in taking the objects of cultural participation in a shared event, and utilising them a way that neither inverts nor celebrates that event. The experimentation that the artist explores – impromptu choirs, graphic scores, avant-garde music – happens within, rather than in opposition to, the creative output of the community as a whole, thus allowing a ‘way in’ for those who might be unfamiliar with such practices.

Both *constructive-instructional* and *contextual-instructional* use the same fundamental means of participation – the instruction – but in very different ways. In the first instance, instructions are used to allow participants to create new rules, methods, and means of collaboration and participation, often at the expense of the in-

tegrity of the original instruction. The instructions in these works serve to facilitate those involved to explore the limitations and potentials of their community – to re-write rules governing socio-ethical behaviour (*The Rights Room*), or even to completely rework the terms of engagement with the artwork based on their experience of it.

Existing somewhere between *constructive-instructional* and *contextual-instructional* is the *New Communion*s project, which utilises both its site, temporality, and a concurrently developing rule-set to elicit new forms of engagement. Although provided with an instruction set of sorts, the participants are charged with developing the text as experiments are undertaken in the site. Their own creative and linguistic interpretations are fed back into the score document, allowing for not only a co-composition of the musical material, but a collaborative means of preparing the work for future iterations. *New Communion*s utilised both temporality and site to facilitate such a collaboration – by isolating the participants in a specific, highly resonant space for an extended period, those involved were provided with the safety and duration required to test out new modes of being together, removed from the relationships and hierarchies present in their day to day lives. By inviting participants with specific, diverse skill sets, a collaborative dynamic was achieved wherein each member of the group could participate on more or less equal terms. Whilst not every member was competent, or confident, at every aspect of the collaboration – indeed, the experimental nature of the project was well outside some participants' comfort zone – by engaging holistically with multiple aspects of the site (as a carrier of sound, a work of architecture, a socio-religious space, etc.) participants could explore and develop their own unique strengths in regard to the project as a whole.

The final model, *object-centric*, focussed upon the addition of resonant objects to a site as a way of raising questions about place, belonging, and normative behaviour. The introduction of a large harmonium, or a slice of cake (see Appendix H), to the public agora, assumes a certain relationship between the object and its perceiver – objects are chosen because they are culturally/historically resonant, rather than because the audience will use them in some specific way. Participation is not so much reliant upon a task that the object distils, as much as the self-reflection it inspires. What is more, the participatory act is conducted in a shared environment – the object not only amplifies any one individual relationship, but the wider web of relations that inherently problematise notions of ownership, sharing, and charity.

Such models, though neither exhaustive nor scientifically rigorous,¹⁰⁹ nonetheless point to certain relationships concerning participation, self-awareness/autonomy, and the facilitation of community within the space in which they operate. Although a break between perception and comprehension was something I was keen to explore from the outset, the works that relied upon some level of confusion or questioning from their participant, were by far the most successful, whilst those that offered more direct instruction – notably *The Rights Room* and the early drafts of the score issued in *New Communion*s – seemed to struggle to engage people in more than a cursory manner. It is perhaps the idea of incomprehension that both challenges and reaffirms Debord's notion of participation and the spectacle. If an

¹⁰⁹ Although this research project is very much conducted under the remit of art, not science, it is worth emphasising that its conclusions and discoveries are drawn from a culturally limited palette – that of Brighton City Centre. Brighton is a notoriously unique city, celebrated for cultural diversity – particularly in regard to experimental, underground, or non-normative practices / positions – but distinctly lacking in ethnic diversity, certainly compared to other similarly sized cities in England.

audience can be divided into the active and the passive, it is possible because these positions are already available to the spectacle – a word meaning both to observe and to behold (www.etyonline, 2016). The power of the spectacular lies in its harnessing of both these traits. The objects it utilises are not only passively perceived (observed) but actively held in view (beheld), a duplicity born of the fact that they do not immediately exhaust their own potential – by not immediately making sense, being comprehensible, they maintain wonder. Works such as *Missionary*, or *Santa Vitae* (see Appendix H), though directly referencing typically academic practices (minimalism, avant-garde-influenced composition, graphic scores) succeeded by presenting them in ambivalent, even comic terms. The clear correlation between humour and nonsense, so integral to farce, appeared to charge the unknown aspects of the work with a certain cultural positivity – my audience, rather than feeling alienated by the conceptual elements of the work,¹¹⁰ were able to enjoy the not-quite-knowing they promoted. Although some were clearly upset by the non-normative actions contained in such events – those who physically assaulted me in *Brighton Community Choir Does...* are a particularly strong example of this – over the 40 or so performances there was a clear correlation between the playful disjunction of sense and the recurrence of engaged and explorative participants. Humour, the absurd, or the nonsensical, allowed me to articulate the tension between a clearly accessible theme, a lack of direction concerning its utility, and the reality of engagement within a public setting. The interventions were the most outwardly successful when I invoked strategies for shifting the performative hierarchy away from the artist. However, this did not so much amount to making actors of otherwise passive spectators, as it did to reducing the power inherent to the singular ac-

¹¹⁰ A common criticism of avant-garde music and its ilk, see *Fear of Music* (Stubbs, 2009).

tor, and amplifying the power already contained in the community's response to the event. This passing of control was embodied in the act of gifting which underpinned many of the interventions. *30 Gold coins*, *5 Nights Beneath the Pier*, and *Let Them Eat Cake* (see Appendix H) each relied on the distribution of a shared stimuli, with *the work* of the art being present not in what was given, but in how the community creatively responded to its giving. This sense of shared creativity was the most consistently articulated response during my post-intervention dialogue with participants. The cake-eaters outside the jobcentre were keen to reciprocate my gifting with stories of the eccentricities of the community, while the chalk instructions of *Soundwalk for a Lonely City* (see Appendix G) were re-written by participants to implore the creativity of others directly, and used as a self-reflective means of overcoming the barriers participants recognised as hindering wider participation¹¹¹. The response to *30 Gold Coins* perhaps summed this up best. After the performance I was followed through the city centre by a group of passers-by, intent to know why I had essentially just given away thirty pounds in such an elaborate fashion. Self-identifying as 'not knowing anything about art', these men initially resisted my defence that the act was an artistic gesture, only accepting the legitimacy of the intervention when I told them 'I just wanted to see what people would do'. This was a common theme – people seemed entirely comfortable with the idea that the community in which they participated was rife with creativity, even while simultaneously resisting the notion that they themselves might be considered 'artists'.

¹¹¹ The text on the outside of the box was changed to statements such as "you probably won't die!", pointing to the community's initial hesitance to engage. It was not uncommon for people to hover above the boxes, before hurriedly opening them and then immediately backing off, as if concerned they might explode.

If this research argues that art is, or can be, a form of line-making, then it achieves this status not simply by reaching out into the community by means of a performance, but by actually forging a community around the creative act – as a collaborative web. With this in mind, I have not sought to divide performance and composition, nor collaboration and presentation, preferring to approach my subject of social function holistically. Although there are practical differences between unleashing an event upon an unsuspecting public, and inviting other self-identifying artists to collaborate on the production of new material, my interest lay in exploring how both these approaches can interrogate participation with a view to creating a sustainable, re-presentable social practice. In retrospect, the project as a whole was an attempt to reify the potentially abstract terminologies of my key theorists – resonance, dual immediacy, responsibility – into the tangible practice of art-making. That there was a link between my participant's ability to step outside of traditional, object-centric modes of perception (as facilitated by the artwork) and their recognition of the shared space they occupied – replete with all the resound and responsibility between a self and Other that entailed – was evident. The works that were most successful – *Brighton Community Choir Does...* and *30 Gold Coins* – were those that more obviously highlighted the existing bonds inherent to the community they interrogated. In doing so, these works promoted alternative, creative ways of exploring that community in the future - in the case of *30 Gold Coins* by reflecting on the ethical and moral relations that capitalism often seeks to dispel; in *Brighton Community Choir Does...* by prioritising the creative celebration, rather than individualistic consumption, of a shared culture. While I felt my work to be largely successful in this regard, my other initial concern - the degree to which art as a social practice could be sufficiently scored so as to inspire future renditions – was perhaps harder to resolve. Throughout the *Line-making* performances upon the modu-

lar synthesiser, I was able to develop a practice of scoring that allowed me to consistently explore the wider ecological aspects of performance – to tie Beuys' notion of preparation to the creative activity of my own musical practice. In particular, the types of text-scores that the *Line-making* process allowed me to develop, successfully navigated many of the temporal constraints that often serve to tie performance to the utility of the objects that comprise it. By using a score that disregarded the nuances of any particular instrument in favour of a series of open-ended movements, I wanted – and to a great extent was able – to interrogate the performance event holistically. The score, by pointing not only to the actual duration of the performance but also the wider temporality of its being – the journey to the venue, the age of the building, etc. – allowed me to create musical material that might also point my audience away from the gravitas of the artist, and towards the social complexity of the event. In practice, this involved bringing text, chalkboards, dialogue, historic references and associated props into the space of performance, as well as exploring spatialisation (both in terms of speaker/instrument placement and the position of the performer) and materiality (in terms of physically playing the space, or augmenting the performance to include the existing objects therein).

It took nearly two years to refine the language used in the score, a process honed through the undertaking of the *New Communion*s and *Line-making* portions of the project.¹¹² A major concern was stepping away from thinking of the resulting document as a musical score in any traditional sense – its purpose being not to facili-

¹¹² Although the interventions also served as ongoing reflections on the scoring process, they did not allow the same level of immediate reflection that the more intimate, focussed, musical performances entailed.

tate a more or less accurate musical rendition of a composition, but to lay down the foundations for a social dynamic. If the performance art, installation, collaboration and composition that this research project incorporates seems somewhat broad, it is for this reason. The overarching medium is not that of any one particular art-form – though I as a practitioner may lean towards the sonic – but of specific social situations. The score must be able to facilitate a social relation that I as the composer have no experience of first hand – it must point towards the unknown, the truly Other. It was precisely because I applied the score to such a variety of situations that I was able to develop a language that pointed to potentiality, rather than specific outcomes. By exploring how a word or sentence might be interpreted by a collaborator in *New Communion*s, by myself in the pressure of a live performance, or as a means of defining the terms of a social intervention, I was able to ascertain what kinds of language could be best used in a broad range of potential contexts, while still remaining resonant and in keeping with the score as a whole. Although this process was eventually reasonably successful, with the score enabling me to construct and navigate often complex social events, I was aware that the underlying intention was itself somewhat problematic. The very premise of scoring the unknown seems on the surface to be counter-intuitive, and as such the *Line-making* score feels like the first step in a much longer process to be undertaken in the future. That said, the fundamental premise – that it might be possible to score a social dynamic, is borne out by the work I have created. The four albums of the *New Communion*s work in particular, not only have a strong overall aesthetic but musically reflect the relationships forged in the site of its recording. Indeed, having worked with all of the musicians involved in different contexts previously, it seems clear that the outcome is highly reflective of the ‘just-so’ reality of that particular process, rather than what I might have presumed its players would have produced

without the score (even if the score itself didn't directly require any specific note or instrument to be sounded). Conversely, the score was least effective when I was unable to dedicate the correct level of attention to the minute details of either the site or its community. Twice when performing the *Line-making* score I found myself unable to engage with the contextual elements of the site/community (due to technical errors resulting in me neither being able to sound-check or spend any time physically exploring the site), and in both instances the work soon devolved into uninspired improvisation, with the score simply nudging me from one section to the next with no real cohesion. Conversely, when I was able to spend the most time communing with the site, I was able to tease the most resonant responses from the score. Being able to factor in tangible properties of the site/community to the work – texts, measurements, social tensions - required that I spend long enough within the environment to truly respond to its elements, that I was engaged enough to tie the potentially abstract, obtuse information held within the score to the reality of the lived environment.

Ultimately, the point of this research was to explore an underlying question concerning personal and communal creativity: what would it mean to go beyond Beuys' assertion that everyone is an artist, and to fundamentally reposition art-making as not simply the creation of objective brilliance, but as a practice geared towards its community's perseverance? That is to say, what if art's function is not to dazzle a beleaguered and creatively void public, but to engender, to facilitate, and to embolden the creative responses that are already persistent with the community, and which serve in turn to facilitate positive engagement with Other?

8.

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9.

APPENDICES

Appendices 9.1

Appendix A: A process of line-making.

Printed score-book.

Appendix B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice.

Box, objects, and usb.

Appendix C: Modular synthesis as a process of line-making.

Usb.

Appendix D: New communions.

Usb.

Appendix E: Precursory works.

Usb.

Appendix 9.2: Uses of text within the works of Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, and the Fluxus Movement.

There are three artists/movements that clearly inspired the creation and tone of the Line-making score, and I would like to examine them in turn, comparing examples of each with pages from *A Process of Line-making* score.

The first, and possibly the most obvious influence, is the Fluxus movement, and particularly the scores from *An Anthology of Chance Operations* (Young, 2016). Although a wide and often disparate movement, the Fluxus scores most conducive to the accessible, open-ended, participatory art event, are those that utilise specific grammar or verbal devices to present an often ambiguous scenario. With my own work, I was particularly interested in the use of ambiguous declarations as a means of providing both direction and autonomy. As such, sentences like -

'it will increasingly be a thump instead of a bang. The thing to do is to gather up one's ability to respond and go on at varying speeds' (Cage, in young, 2016)

propose what should be a specific scenario, in a subjective fashion. The difference between the willfully vague *thump* and *bang*, is framed by a directed movement between the two over a non-specific time period, in the form of *increasingly*. It is clear what the performer is expected to do, however the finer details, and the object upon which it will be enacted, are unclear. Likewise, the imperative that follows - *gather up one's ability* - refuses to state what is being gathered up, save that it is specific to, and defined by, the performer. Declarations risk providing set instruc-

tions or concepts with little creative distance, but can successfully articulate potential by pointing towards elements outside of the current logic of a work, bringing external ideas to life via an existent clause, as with -

'Smokers die younger

there is a quiet humming in the background' (Kudirka, in Lely and Saunders, 2012)

or

'most of them were very old grasshoppers' (Young, 2016)

Here, it is the specificity (*very old*) that frames an otherwise seemingly random subject (*grasshopper*) within a clear narrative, that can then be explored by the performer. It is not simply a random word, but a specific character, open to specific, and autonomous interrogation (Where is the grasshopper? How old is it? Why is it important?) that locates the performer in a specific context (a world with grasshoppers in it). Likewise, imperatives such as -

'Draw a straight line and follow it' (Young, 2016)

or

'remember this doesn't mean anything' (De-Maria, in Young, 2016)

point not so much towards the action that is to be undertaken (remembering, drawing, following), as the conceptual or philosophical journey implied by such an under-

taking. Within the *Line-Making* score there are similar uses of declarations and imperatives, -

'append a statement of intent
a recognition of context and the
wider narrative that supplants it
take pains to justify
however arbitrarily
where it begins and where it ends'

Here, the declaration, like Cage's, is reliant on its surroundings. If a *statement of intent* points to an unspecified position of its performer, the verb *append* suggests that whatever action is being undertaken is an extension of some already present feeling or approach. Likewise, though it uses emotive language (*take pains*) it refuses to provide the performer with an emotional position, relying on their unique experience to provide the substance. The text serves not to direct or instruct its performer, but to orientate them. Such tools, as is the case with Young's grasshopper, do not have to be vague in order to promote autonomy. Imperatives such as -

'Stand for a moment in every corner
touch every wall or edge
climb as high or as low
as you can'

instruct the performer to undertake a specific (*corner*) activity (*stand*) to an extent defined by both the specific environment (*every*) and the undertaker (...*as you can*).

Two other aspects of Fluxus scores that I was keen to explore, were the use of contingency and context - in essence, *if* statements. These statements appear in two forms - the first being the completion or instigation of one action being dependent on another, as in -

*'if the performer wears a hearing aid
it would be best to make the sounds close to the microphone
(of the hearing aid)'* (Riley, in Young, 2016)

and the second, wherein some external matter outside the performer's control imposes upon the work of the performer, as in -

*'bring a bale of hay and a bucket of water onto the stage for the piano to eat and drink
the performer may then feed the piano or leave it to eat by itself
If the former, the piece is over after the piano has been fed
If the latter, it is over after the piano eats or decides not to'* (Young, 2016)

The latter instance locates the performer not only in relation to a physical process (*bring, feed, leave*), but also - and somewhat abstractly - to a mental process, since the contingency it refers to is clearly impossible, and the performer is put in the mental predicament of knowing their actions are futile. In the *Line-Making* score, such contingencies also tend to appear as both physical and mental processes, -

strike, if appropriate

a bowl hidden at the back of the room

a name from a list

a match or a meadow

the side of a street

if not appropriate

instead pause to mourn its loss

However, contingencies can risk too clearly defining the objects and actions to which they refer. As such, many of the contingencies with the *Line-Making* score are meta-contingencies, referring to either deliberately unarticulated stimuli, or asking the performer to imagine the imposition that directs their action, as in -

either opened or left ajar so as to suggest content

or

as if suddenly aware that we

had driven up a hill

terrible at perspective

can't draw for shit

panic or attempt to climb down without notice

The conflation of multiple grammatical devices allows the text score to explore physical and conceptual processes, and to do so without relying on the sort of objects

that would populate an instruction sheet or musical score - do *this*, then do *that*. As such, text scores can be considered to be what Douglas Barrett calls 'meta-textual', providing concurrently 'both more and less than a blueprint of what to do' (Barrett, in Lely and Saunders, p.95, 2012). If the use of individual words or phrases naturally points towards fixed objects in the world, the use of grammatical devices - register, process, tense, modality, mood, voice, circumstance - allows for a level of global indeterminacy that locates the performer not simply as a carrier of another creative output, but as responsible, autonomous creative agent themselves.

The two other main sources of inspiration are from artists who use text in a manner that I argue points towards certain actions or orientations, and as such can be read as scores even if this is not their original intent. The land artist Richard Long uses text as a means of documenting his walks through the environment, with a specific focus on temporality, and thus, the instability of the objects he encounters. Sections such as -

'seven days and seven nights camping
in the mountains of Connemara and south Mayo
a sound from each of the campsites along the way

rain drumming on the tent
the wild flapping of the tent in the wind
a gurgling stream
abbey bells
the light hiss of mist on the tent
a rushing river

the lark in the morning' (Long, 2003)

contrast specific geographic locations with the perception of certain material processes. The use of adjectives and verbs (*gurgling, light, rushing*), whilst framing the journey as specific to Long's experience of it, equally act as sensorial way-markers. Rather than 'head left past the abbey', Long's journey places the route as contingent on the mental process of the walker, who must listen for, rather than arrive at, the *abbey bells* indicated. Long's work exemplifies Beuys's ideas concerning the visible processes of natural materials and, as with Beuys's preparation, his walks could be seen as a means of encouraging participants to connect with their environment on a procedural level. Thus, -

from a high tide to the vernal equinox sunset

from apple blossom to quartz conglomerate

from a cumulus cloud to a river source

from first moonlight to a fox bark

from a black lamb to a bird's nest

from a sunrise to a low tide (Long, p.187, 2002)

exposes its reader not to locations but to stages within such processes (*high, blossom, source*), with the cyclical nature of the passage indicating a movement between them over time. A focus on temporality - equally present in the Fluxus scores - serves to locate its participant in both time and space, but does so without the kind of precision that would interrupt creative autonomy. His focus on the mundane - the rocks, rivers and pebbles that populate the environment - points its reader not towards the outcome of an arrival, the equivalent of reading a map, but towards the

everyday, small elements that construct our experience. In Long's work, it is not the objects of the exteriority that are prioritised, but our movement between them -

walking with five stones

walking across five rivers

walking over five tors

walking around five bogs

walking for five days (Long, p.167, 2002)

The objects invoked (*stones, rivers, bogs*) are themselves signifiers of an ongoing process, used to orientate its participants in a broad direction and speed, rather than explicitly demanding specific actions or temporalities. Likewise, the *Line-Making* score points to certain materials and actions, but in a fashion that allows similar levels of autonomy, even whilst suggesting a more articulated artistic outcome, -

with chalk or

pencil

negative

resin

ash

make at least seven impressions and

spread them before you as you work

Within Long's work, it is often the interplay between the objects and regions he invokes that provide resonance - a key part of my event-based practice. As such, im-

peratives often take the form of declarations, or inhabit some grey areas between the two -

fragile mark(s) lined up in series

trodden line

somehow suspended

several centimetres above the ground

swaying at odds with its environment

obfuscated by the very thing

that provides its difference

The score seeks to blur the boundary between percepts and actions, in the same way my practice can be seen as blurring the division between actor and spectator. The above, for instance, can be read as an instruction for a material process (*lining up, suspending, swaying*), for a relational process (examining the environment to find traits that match the descriptions), or for a mental process (imagining what that might be, or how it could be invoked in a different form).

It is worth noting that my interest in both the Fluxus artists and Long extends beyond their use of text, and covers the manner in which they locate their work within the community. The Fluxus artists examined many of the same models of participation and event-based practices that I have done, and Long's focus on the environment and walking resonates with my work. Likewise, Lawrence Weiner's work, whilst serving as a way to consider how I might use text, also corresponds to the wider contours of my practice. For Weiner, his work involves not only the use of text for artistic effect, but also its placement within the community, and as such it har-

bours distinct qualities for the emergence of *communitas*. One of the earliest pages of the *Line-Making* score, *'there have been xx seconds since our last theft'*, explored just this intersection between text and location, created to be written not on the page, but on bus-stops, stairwells, and pavements. Weiner's statements often occupy a similar conceptual place, pointing not only to an action, but also to an ethical or social position relating to the reception and creation of his artwork. Weiner invokes short statements, such as -

*'there is an assumption that certain things must be kept apart
some sandstone some limestone
enclosed for some reason'* (Weiner, 1993)

in order to critique the changing social and material qualities of the industrial North, with the words emblazoned in steel on the surface of a weighbridge leading to an abandoned Yorkshire building that was once the largest carpet factory in the world. Such simple statements are resonant because they point, in an indirect and wayward fashion, to the geographic, historic and social contexts in which they are received. It is difficult to discuss specific ways in which Weiner's worlds and material coalesce, as much of their resonance lies in the overlap between modes of perception and articulation. The weighbridge, a device to measure and communicate mass, joins the abandoned factory to the rest of the world. As such, Weiner's *'assumption that certain things must be kept apart'* points to both the literal construct (bridge), the new and old world (abandoned factory, the rest of the world), and the value of art (now replacing the industrial function of an object designed to communicate the extent of a thing's weight). Likewise, the allusion to some sandstone and limestone, rendered in a copper industrial bridge, points to both the de-

mise of that industry (in so far as it invalidates the specific function of the weigh-bridge) and to the historic qualities of the sand and limestone rock that defined the landscape pre-industrial era. The beauty of the work however, lies in the fact that it points to none of these things directly, prioritising the conceptual journey between perception and signification.

Similarly, Weiner's '*many coloured objects placed side by side in a row of many coloured objects*' (Weiner, in Alberro, Zimmerman, Buchloh and Batchelor, p.74, 2004), invokes its action in the structure of its sentence - simple, repetitive, language that seems somehow as monotonous as the action it describes. And yet, the utility of such open-ended tools as '*objects*' and '*coloured*' project a universality that affixes the declaration to whichever environment it is perceived within. In this way, whether the writing is written on the walls of a gallery or cast upon the side of a factory, the perceiver is drawn to perceive the objects of that environment through Weiner's statement. In an art gallery it can become a sarcastic critique of the uniformity of other artists, on an urban wall it can draw you to attend to the otherwise overlooked bricks that comprise it.

The *Line-Making* score operates in a similar fashion, often relying on non-specific generalised concepts to encourage intense, but undefined, relationships between its performer and their environment, -

not particularly complicated

easy on the _____

each slightly different

each somehow the same

never really moving forward but

making some kind of progress

As with Weiner's coloured objects, the text could relate to any number of things within the environment the performer finds themselves in, and as such expands rather than delineates potential, asking its performer to turn their mental processes towards the environment as a means of fostering creativity. Statements such as -

this page had been intentionally left blank

or

delegate fees

plenary riots

strum

not exactly lacking tangent but

acknowledge intersection but

sedimented over time but

unnecessary repetition is generally considered pretentious

point in turn to real world phenomena (*plenaries, blank pages, riots*), as well as the mental processes of the performer (*acknowledge*) and their community (*generally considered*). At the same time, the suggestion of unnecessary repetition and sedimentation points to the material processes that occur in both the action upon, and perception of, objects.

Appendix 9.3: Walking is Still Honest / Small Works for Shared Spaces

Note: this appendix covers a number of smaller works undertaken as part of the interventions portion of this research, but which have, for reasons of space, not been included in the main body of the work.

To explore shared space, to tease out the other side of the object, or to perceive objects/Others as relational rather than concrete, is to assume the possibility of movement. As such, a key area of my practice and research has revolved around walking. If we are to question the validity of the concrete – to not believe in objects as Massumi suggests – walking achieves this goal by compromising abstraction, relocating objects in time and space, and in doing so banishing the singularity of any fixed concept of exteriority or Other. As a movement through a shared environment, walking allows us to perceive change first-hand – the changes of time upon objects, environment upon perceptions, exteriority upon interiority. To walk is not merely to travel from place to place, but to confront new perspectives, to feel the effect of exteriority, of Other upon the self – to perceive semblance.

Though we can travel distinct lines to take us from A to B, walking itself is not the same as travelling, but rather a renegotiation of space. The objectivity of walking – the fact that it leads somewhere – comes only after the act that endows places with significance. As with the difference between lines and linearity, walking does not presuppose destinations, even if it actively creates them. The lines created by walking are what the author Robert Macfarlane calls “signs of passage” (Macfarlane, p.13, 2013), and come over time to join place to place, to become not simply a residue but a guide, a path. As Macfarlane points out, “paths connect. It is their chief

reason for being” (Macfarlane, p.17, 2013). And yet, there is a clear difference between walking a line so that it might later be perceived by others, and walking a line as a by-product of the acting out of one's being. Though I can deliberately create a meaningful trail from place to place - by stamping down the grass in a clear line in my wake - to do so is no longer simply walking. Even walking with the knowledge that someone will follow - aware of the reality of the marks you leave behind - is somehow different than walking *in order* to leave a mark. Walking demands freedom from association as a requirement of its being, such is the nature of its primordially, its ability to become something else (travelling, directing, gesturing, making) so easily. To perceive is to imbue with intention, it is to apply meaning. To declare ‘I am walking!’, to write it¹¹³, is to stop walking, to abstract the vagueness of movement and turn it into travelling. Walking banishes objects because its defining feature is that it does not abstract - it does not stand still.

Furthermore, walking, as a renegotiation of space, has a clear relationship to both participation and politics. The popular connotation of the protest march – in which the physicality of walking allows the proletariat to use their bodies against the institution of governance they usually uphold - is a particularly concise example of mass participation's power to interrogate the space of its political community. Likewise, the signification of walking in comparison to other modes of travelling – wherein a reliance on vehicular mediation denotes social status – exemplifies the hierarchy of the Western epistemological tradition, wherein sensing is considered less important

¹¹³ Walking is a type of writing, in so far as it is a line that constructs meaning as it goes along. However, as with the verbal emphasis of *being* highlighted by Nancy and Levinas, walking is an active state, hence the distinction between walking and travelling.

than understanding. Just as ‘made’ sense is prioritised over the act of sensing, so too is the destination seen as more important than the journey that leads to it. Similar concerns are present in many of the artists and theorists whose work underpins this research. Debord highlighted the artistic potential of abstract and purposeless movement with the concept of “*dérive*” (Debord, 2016) - a wayward drifting through the world; Neuhaus utilised walking as means of activating the political agency of listening; and La Monte Young declared “*Draw a straight line and follow it*” (Young, 2016)¹¹⁴ - in doing so explicitly tying the abstract motion of artistic activity with the abstract motion of walking, fundamentally positioning the latter as the literal and conceptual next step of a creative impetus.

To perceive an object is to abstract it from its own temporality - to remove it from time, from the range of its potential, and to fix it as a singular thing, the here and now of its current state. It is also, however, to prioritise this state over all others - to suggest one way of being is of more value than another, and in turn to use that singular state as a means of governing reality. We can only perceive the world as comprised of fixed objects - marbles, jellyfish, fax machines, and drinks cabinets - if we first apply a defining power to the current state of each object’s life cycle. By seeking to change the manner in which we perceive objects - by allowing us to literally perceive the other side of an object - walking brings into question the fixity of the object world, encouraging new forms of interrogation of the community and its composition. Indeed, when Rancière describes politics as “a distribution of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise [that] pins bodies to ‘their’ places and

¹¹⁴ The same approach can be found in Young’s *composition 60* (1960), *trio for strings* (1958), and even *well-tuned piano* (1964–present) - a work that grows with each new performance, always expanding on its previous state.

allocates the private and the public to distinct ‘parts’ (Rancière, p.139, 2013), what is he describing but that which the act of walking transcends? Walking, like art and politics, is an orientation towards sense (sensing), not an outcome of sense. There is no pre-written outcome to be gleaned from the act of walking - it is walking itself that relocates me to new potentials, new horizons of sense. Art, politics and walking amount to a form of disjunction between cause and effect, a “shift from a given sensible world to another sensible world that defines different capacities and incapacities” (Rancière, p.75, 2009).

A Walk Along the Edges of a Map began as a creative way of delineating the area within which my other interventions would take place: I drew a circle on a map¹¹⁵ of Brighton city centre and attempted to walk its line from memory, assuming the rest of my interventions would take place inside that circumference. This simple action soon encouraged me to explore the potential inherent in its written instruction, “*draw a circle on a map and walk it from memory.*” Having not designated the ratio of the map (nor for that matter the circumference of the circle), the action might equally result in turning on the spot or a continent-wide pilgrimage; likewise, the very idea of following an arbitrary circle across a landscape already divided into streets and squares is an impossible task, resulting in a requirement for creative solutions. With this in mind, I expanded the instruction to include a circumference size (14cm), but not a map ratio, and added the idea that the performer should not stop walking until the circle is complete - forcing them to turn, rather than pause, if

¹¹⁵ There is a certain symmetry here of which I was unaware at the time. This, one of my first interventions, shows some general similarities to Bill Drummond’s *The 17* (2008), a fact I would only discover while undertaking my final intervention. Drummond, like me, uses the act of drawing circles on maps to delineate his performance area.

they were faced with traffic, buildings, or other such impositions. Lastly, I added a final instruction - that the walk should be repeated several months later, again from memory, but this time attempting to follow the route of the previous *actual* journey, not the line on the map it was trying to replicate. As such, this work served as sort of parenthesis, temporally, and geographically, for the wider set of city-wide interventions, exploring not only the same physical area, but similar notions of labour, social noise, being-as-performance, and artistic validity. As I progressed around the city, I was acutely aware of the other inhabitants I passed, each engaged in their own laborious tasks – erecting scaffolding, painting houses, sweeping driveways. My movements – amplified as they were by the inclusion of a camera or microphone – were framed with an equal sense of purpose and yet, when approached by members of the public and asked what I was doing (“walking a circle I drew on a map and recording what I find”), people tended to laugh.



Figure 26: Blades of grass collected from every city park in Brighton

My work, though time-consuming and fairly exhausting to undertake (the walk took somewhere in the region of three hours, with my arms holding a microphone out in front of me the whole time), was not considered socially valid. This project, in turn, spawned another: *A Blade of Grass From Every Park* involved visiting every park in

the city in a single day, an arduous task that similarly resulted in many miles of walking. The outcome, a collection of grass blades, is ultimately a pointless endeavour, and masks the work's true intent - to open its performer to new, non-utilitarian ways of navigating their locale. Both works succeed not by creating some artistic outcome, or even by forging a new dialogue with the Other that is their spectator, but prioritising the work of exploring one's environment as the precursor to any further creative engagement.¹¹⁶

In *Mall Choreography*¹¹⁷ I sought to examine the way a community moves through a defined shared space, attempting to open up subtle everyday gestures to the potential of their perception as a creative act. Based around the handing out of simple instructions – “*raise your arm 3 times*” or “*scratch the back of your leg*” - to the visitors of a shopping centre,¹¹⁸ participants were instructed that their task must be conducted covertly. In this way, the work seeks to enact the unknowability of Other – the instructions are subtle enough that they might be entirely overlooked by an observer, and yet still offer a break with the normative behaviour of the individual concerned. The resulting dynamic is such that only the individual performer would

¹¹⁶ Whilst there is a clear instruction to *A Blade of Grass...* and *A Walk Along...*, it is deliberately reductive, allowing the autonomously conducted act of walking to destabilise the objectivity of external stimuli as it is encountered by the individual, without pre-empting what those objects might mean, or what their context might be. Neither work denotes a particular path, and its objects - parks, circles, maps, distances – though generalised concepts, are specific to the area inhabited by the participant.

¹¹⁷ Appendix I: Abandoned Trails, *Mall Choreography* video (usb)

¹¹⁸ This work was conducted in two other environments - an art gallery holding a ‘Fluxus’ evening, and a night club. In the former, the crowd, due to the nature of the event, were fully expecting such an intervention and many refused to even take a card. Those who did often made a show of not playing along. In the night club, the response was even more hostile, with a table of young male patrons attempting to fight me for daring to provide them with such a stimulus.

know if a performance had taken place, despite it being witnessed by hundreds of other people. Indeed, its audience - by virtue of having received their own covert action upon entering the mall, would be aware that a performance *might* be underway, even if they cannot see one taking place. What I hoped this would produce was not only a state of general heightened awareness - a mass preparation if you will - but a situation wherein there is no perceptible distinction between an actor and a spectator. Potential is prioritised over any specific action, *what might be over what is*.



Figure 27; Soundwalk for a Lonely City's black box of materials

*Soundwalk For a Lonely City*¹¹⁹ consisted of several recordings made of a walk through a specific location – Brighton's Pavilion Gardens – and later re-presented in a format designed to inspire new, semi-autonomous movements through that same space. Visitors to the gardens were met with a number of black boxes littered around the park, each containing headphones, directions (themselves distributed over several separate squares of card), and a stick of chalk. Participants were then

¹¹⁹ Appendix I: Abandoned Trails, soundwalk for a lonely city *audio/photographs* (usb)

able to listen to the prior recordings on the headphones, and to navigate their own path through the park, based on whatever order they happen to retrieve the direction cards. The outsides of the boxes were constructed from slate paper, and the instructions - open the box, put on the headphones, follow the directions inside - written on the outside in chalk. By using the provided stick, participants were able to completely erase or re-write the external instructions as they wish, creating new objectives for future participants.

The final of these works, *Momo*,¹²⁰ did not directly involve walking at all, but instead critiqued mobility through specific social and temporal strata. The work revolved around the reading of a children's story to office workers on their cigarette breaks. Arriving at 8.30am, and reading until 5 pm, the piece explores the idea of what constitutes a day's work, with my reading meeting the office workers as they arrived in the morning, continuing through their breaks and lunches, and persisting until the end of their day. Aside from the obvious juxtaposition of reading a children's story to adults, the story was specifically chosen to reflect the theme and location of both 'grown-up' employment and that site in particular.

Momo tells the story of an invasion of grey-suited men who steal time from a city's inhabitants by encouraging them to work so hard they neglect their community. The only people free from this curse are the city's children whose playfulness allows them to resist the grey-suited men. The book is set in the grounds of an old amphitheatre - the base of the children's resistance. As such, I chose to read the story from the seating of the amphitheatre built outside the entrance of the AMEX build-

¹²⁰ Appendix I: Abandoned Trails, Momo photographs (usb)

ing, where the office workers smoke their cigarettes, eat their lunches, and hold impromptu business meetings. To further reconfigure the shared space we occupied, I invited a local nursery along to listen to me read - resulting in a situation wherein office workers in suits smoked cigarettes and held meetings while pre-schoolers ran around them in circles. The duration of the work, and the physical duress that entailed problematised the perception of one act (working in an office block) as being more demanding than another (reading children's stories), a position underscored by the narrative of the text.



Figure 28: (Photo: Alex Patterson): The artist reads to pre-schoolers outside of the AMEX building

The degree to which these works could be considered political actions - despite harbouring frivolous, even juvenile themes - is perhaps the element most prescient to their undertaking. *Mall Choreography*, in particular, seems to explore a certain political urgency, opening up its participants not to a measured transformation between fixed positions (actor versus spectator, creative versus functional modes of being), but to the indefinable nature of both the work's potential and the community of its site. If traditional models of participation - as exemplified by Debord - might

consider that “to be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act” (Rancière, p.2, 2009), it is not because these traits are inherent to the position from which the spectator operates, but because we have culturally objectified the notion of spectatorship - we have made it a thing. The political act of *Mall Choreography* is such that it attempts to break down this *thingness*, to relocate potentially from the domain of the object-actor to that of the process of engagement¹²¹, now an inextricable and active part of the ontological event. To prioritise ontological engagement above object-comprehension is to favour one's unique relationship to the terms of the event above any ritualistic use-value pre-emptively assigned to the object. Such rituals are not in themselves necessarily a hindrance to the community, often serving as a means of promoting good practice, or common values as they are perceived by those involved. Indeed, as Small suggests, it is within rituals that “relationships are brought into existence between the participants that model, in metaphoric form, ideal relationships as they imagine them to be” (Small, p.96, 1998). However, rituals, by seeking ideal outcomes – however well-meaning - often serve to delineate the *terms* of engagement prior to the associated *act*, reinforcing an active/passive binary that places Other within the ontology of the self. Rituals, by pointing to an ideal way of using objects, or engaging with Others, must first reduce the vast gamut of exteriority into a limited number of *things* that the ritual can commandeer.

¹²¹ Indeed, to view the spectator as a thing at all is to both assume and enforce incapacity. It is firstly to assume that something about the nature of a spectator renders them incapable of self-transformation, that they do not alter over time and that they must instead be transformed by the work of the artist. Secondly, it is to objectify them as ‘a spectator’, rather than a unique individual who is actively participating in some manner that is not immediately outwardly visible. It is these oppositions - actor, spectator, artist, participant - that, rather than delineating concrete states, instead “define a distribution of the sensible, an *a priori* distribution of the positions and capacities and incapacities attached to those positions. They are embodied allegories of inequality” (Rancière, p.12, 2009).

Drawing attention to the shape and size of the objects of our community – city parks, street plans, walking paths - is to draw attention to the fact that a ritual is already occurring, wherein someone is making aesthetic decisions about shared space on behalf of everyone else. These works highlight, however momentarily, the invisible, arbitrary and hierarchical decisions made for the community on behalf of its participants. As with Beuys's preparation or Young's approach to temporality/spatiality, the aim is to demonstrate that it is from the perceptive act itself that potentiality emerges. Resonant objects - maps, coins, harmoniums, chalk or even other people - are resonant because those who perceive them make them so. The art-event allows such objects to take on potential by overlaying significations in a way that extends beyond the confines of the sensible. The resonance of objects lies precisely in the ability of the art-event to free them from communication, and in turn, consensus. As such, the art-event is innately participatory by virtue of its reliance on the plasticity of its materials – its celebration of distance, of meaning different thing to different people. As Luhmann suggests, art “seizes consciousness at the level of its own externalising activity” (Luhmann, p.141, 2000), and in doing so “relaxes the structural coupling of consciousness and communication” (Luhmann, p.141, 2000).

When ‘participatory’ art amounts to no more than a transformation between consensus and resistance, it fails to elucidate the potential beyond this limited, known path. Likewise, an artistic narrative that portrays true or effective participation in a consensual manner - in essence, by *looking* like participation - is no better than the fodder of didactic displays and slot machines: push the button to elicit the pre-given outcome. It reduces both potentiality and autonomy. Not only does this present a patronising and fanciful, imposed narrative - that truly involved participants will par-

ticipate in the correct, pre-determined manner - but, as with Small's rituals, its inherent inflexibility actually excludes those for whom participation might manifest in other ways. This is the very heart of transformation as a resistance to the status quo - it assumes, above all else, the moral superiority of resistance over what is being resisted, and of the methods of resistance as superior to all other modes of engagement¹²². The relation that participatory art seeks to enter into is that of a world in which every agent has equal control in the outcome. This can only be achieved by making outcome itself relational, conditional of the complex arrangement of signification that is born of the creative act.

¹²² The dogmatic view of artistic resistance is a fairly popular theme, particularly among Marxist theorists. Augusto Boal, among others, considers theatre as initially "people singing in the open air... performance was created by and for the people" (Boal, 2000), only later corrupted by the division of actors and spectators, protagonists and choruses, so imposed to more "efficiently reflect the dominant ideology" of the aristocracy. The function of participation in Boal's art is to free the masses from the clutches of the aristocracy, to return to them their voices.

APPENDIX 9.4: Further Interventions

In *Santa Vitae*,¹²³ a Santa costume is worn on Christmas morning by an actor performing a durational graphic score. On its surface, the work appears to be relatively simple - a musical street performance by a performer dressed in the obvious character outfit of the season. Beyond this, however, lies a second layer of information. The musical material - a work of an electronic drone - is markedly different from the limited and widely recognised musical output expected at Christmas, neither affirming existing modes and connotations (choral singing, Christian narratives, specific instrumentation, etc.) nor inverting them (presenting a black metal version of *Silent Night* (Erlosung, 2011), for instance). Performed upon a battery-powered synthesiser, the score utilises a series of diagrams to direct the performer along the X/Y axis of its Voltage Controlled Filter parameters, with a total of five notes available to be played together or individually, and their placement ordered by density rather than pitch. These density descriptions are based upon the lived environment of the performer: if there is a loud car passing, hold all five notes down; if you cannot make out any external noise above your performance, stop playing for twenty seconds; and so forth. As such, the two-dimensional playing field of the scores X/Y axis is designed to reflect the actual movements of passers-by on the street. Likewise, the location of the performance – at the heart of the city centre’s main roundabout, the intersection of the distinctive northern, eastern, and western strands of the city – serves to locate the performer as a central pivot around which the rest of the city’s inhabitants oscillate. Although based around the act of performing a musical score, its sonic outcome is compromised by the nature of its site,

¹²³ Appendix B: I don’t know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, *Santa Vitae* video (box/usb).

a location already rife with a literal and conceptual volume that overawes its content. In this sense, this work is a form of what Small calls ‘musicking’ (Small, 1998). The musical material serves as one aspect of a wider event and, crucially, its meaning is defined not by any pre-existing system inherent to the sounds made, but by the parameters, traditions, and objects of its environment. As part of a temporally-defined, malleable event, ‘musicking’ eschews the notion that sonic materials hold any meaning that “reside[s] in the object, existing independently of what the perceiver may bring to it” (Small, p.5, 1998). Rather than pointing towards an ideal musical object, to be perceived under the correct conditions by a suitably literate audience, *Santa Vitae* co-opts the already abundant social infrastructure in order to celebrate the event of “an activity in which all those present are involved and for whose nature and quality, success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility” (Small, p.10, 1998).

Street performance holds a somewhat unique relationship to labour – it is one of the few acts where a call for remuneration is explicitly built into the performance; conversely, it is one of the few ‘jobs’ habitually undertaken by the jobless - the domain of buskers, the counter-culture and, by virtue of its location, the homeless community. Such significations create an expectation that its performers are not professional, and lack the kind of artistic skill we expect to find in ‘proper’ venues.¹²⁴ It was this already complex relationship to labour that I wanted to tie directly to the mythical construct of Santa Claus, the toy-maker with the impossible task of delivering presents to all of the world's children in a single night. Within that nar-

¹²⁴ This idea was explored in *Pearls Before Breakfast*, a social experiment in which a virtuosic violinist performed in a Washington DC metro station, to almost no recognition (Weingarten, 2016).

native, the one day of the year that Santa is neither making presents nor delivering them, is Christmas day itself. Likewise, if we expect to see street performers in the lead up to Christmas, and in particular a myriad of Santa's in shopping malls, we do not expect them - or anyone else for that matter - to still be working Christmas morning.¹²⁵ As such, my Santa Claus is presented as simultaneously labouring, non-professional, and homeless, on the very day that we would expect both he and the actor that portrays him to be doing almost anything else. The choice of musical material – a tense, fifty-minute drone that fails to cater for populist tastes and expectations - is amplified in incredulity by its performance at such an inhospitable time.

If a certain amateurism is tolerated, or even expected, within street performance, A *Critique of Pure Representation*¹²⁶ engages with this by leading an entirely unrehearsed choir in the performance of a score that amounts to no more than a series of undefined symbols and vowel sounds. With traditional musical elements reduced to the placement of symbols upon 8-beat long bars, and a pitch instruction consisting of high, middle, or low, the onus of the work is on the performers' ability to create unique sounds with the full range of their voice, rather than fulfilling any pre-existing standard, or demonstrating any identifiable musicality. Indeed, the very idea of amateurism is problematised by the fact that even the most successful rendition of the score sits well outside of any cultural notions of skill or virtuosity. What is more, the choir are not only unrehearsed but unknown to each other, having met for the first time in the moment of performance.

¹²⁵ I noted only two other groups of people at work on Christmas day - taxi drivers and security guards.

¹²⁶ Appendix B: I Don't know Where We Are Going But It Sure Sounds Nice, A *critique of pure representation photographs (usb)*.



Figure 29: (Photo: Layla Tully): The artist In rabbit-costume on Easter morning.

As with *Santa Vitae*, the temporal/spatial context makes it clear that what is taking place holds some internal logic: the performance takes place on Easter Sunday, and is led by a giant bunny rabbit; the choir are holding scores, following a conductor, and starting and stopping at set intervals. However, the cumulative sense of the work defies any expectations that might be imbued from its individual elements. Its highly orchestrated nature - costumes, scores, props, a conductor - combined with a clearly comic aesthetic, suggests that the work does not simply not make cumulative sense to the general public (a criticism often leveled against heavily academic or avant-garde art), but rather that it does not make cumulative sense *at all*. To experience the event of the work is not to visit its individual elements one by one, and to draw a conclusion from their totality, but to perceive them, as with Ingold's notion of the line,¹²⁷ as an evolving mesh of concurrent experiences. By us-

¹²⁷ For Ingold, perception can be considered in two ways: as a series of dots, joined up by the mind into some final form, or as a passage along and through one's environment, experiencing the objects of externality en route. The latter is our embodied, lived-in experience of the day to day, whilst the former is an academic habit of

ing easily recognisable objects, contexts, and temporalities, *A Critique of Pure Representation* relies upon the existing cultural knowledge of its audience to point towards a sensible outcome – crucially, however, to perceive its elements linearly adds up to an overall experience that never resolves in sense. Rather than indicating “a kind of line that goes from point-to-point, connecting up an array of present instants arrayed diachronically as locations in space” (Ingold, p.118, 2007), the multi-layered, concurrent signifiers of these works point to numerous areas at once - myth, labour, professionalism, homelessness, temporal expectations, and so forth - avoiding any linear narrative in favour of “an overlapping thread that changes as it goes along, issuing forth from its advancing tip rather like a root or a creeper probes the earth” (Ingold, p.118, 2007).

A lack of cumulative sense is not achieved by placing random, or seemingly uncoupled objects together in the same space. Rather, any over-riding sensible outcome is destabilised by the fact that the elements of the art event are rich in connotation, and point to an unexplored linearity that in turn suggests a complexity that cannot be perceived on face value. The objects are spatially or temporally coupled, and as such do not point towards *non-sense*, but to a sense that is never fully realised. The complexity of the arrangement does not feed directly into an outcome, but rather provides the opportunity for nuance that might engender miscommunication and the subsequent potential that arises from it.¹²⁸ As such, in its inversion of cultural forms, the work emphasizes the duality of all communication.

the western mindset that is ‘more like a series of appointments than a walk’ (Klee, in Ingold, p.73, 2007).

¹²⁸ By way of example, we might return to the work of La Monte Young. His compositions are incredibly complex, utilising standing tones, custom frequency ratios, eastern philosophy, and so forth. It is these complexities that structure the spatial



Figure 30: (Photo: Layla Tully): The artist conducts his choir

A sender and receiver cannot know one another, or else they would lack operative closure and have no reason to communicate. Conversely, they cannot be so foreign to one another that they fail to recognize the communicative potential in their mutual irritation - It is by not-quite-knowing, or being open to such unknowability, that elements can interact. As Luhmann suggests:

Communication can tolerate and even produce vagueness, incompleteness, ambiguity, irony, and so forth, and it can place indeterminacies in ways that secure a certain usage. Such deliberate indeterminacies play a significant role, particularly in artistically mediated communication, to the point where we find ourselves confronted with the hopelessly unending interpretability of "finished" works. The distinction between determinacy and indeterminacy is an internal variable of the communication system and not a quality of the external world (Luhmann, pp.11-12, 2000).

If dressing up as the Easter bunny is a fairly obvious, even crass, artistic device,

"How To Explain Opera As A Dead hare"¹²⁹ instead employs an art-form that has

and temporal aspects of the event, and yet the experience of this event in no way demands that these aspects be passed on to its participants themselves directly.

¹²⁹ Appendix B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, How to explain opera as a dead hare, *audio/photographs* (box/usb).

come to signify both social status¹³⁰ and the extent of an individual's cultural capital. My initial plan was to stage opera lessons as a form of busking - playing upon the perceived division between folk-based musical forms – folk, pop, punk - and the cultural positioning of opera as an intellectual, upper-class privilege. Starting with Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* (1932) - an opera whose plot revolves around the difficulty of explaining complex ideas to large groups of people - I sought to juxtapose this work with another that explores that same theme, Beuys's *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965). Both works critique methods of pedagogy, and both strictly divide the actor from the spectator: in Schoenberg's work the people are unable to understand the word of God until it has been dumbed down into a series of spectacular tricks; in Beuys's the audience is literally locked outside of the art gallery whilst the actor explains the art on show to the more receptive body of a dead animal. In order to reference both these works, and to critique their sentiment, I decided to *become* Beuys's dead hare via the wearing of a mask, and to explain the plot of the opera, line by line, upon a chalkboard.¹³¹

As with previous interventions, I was keen to explore the temporal aspects of the action - in this case, the historic transition of opera from a popular to an avant-garde form. To do this, I subject my performance to various rules borrowed from works that I perceived to be benchmarks at either end of this operatic spectrum: Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1874), and Mauricio Kagel's anti-opera *Staatsheater* (1971).

¹³⁰ In countless television shows and films attending an opera is used to denote a character to be rich or sophisticated. In addition, the idea that opera is the domain of a certain class of person is present throughout its history (Self, 2016), and is a more general theme of Small's critique of Western classical concert music.

¹³¹ Chalk, conjuring up images of classroom blackboards, and also quite hard to write with for long periods of time, highlighting the communicatory difficulty that is the work's theme.



Figure 31: (Photo: Layla Tully): The artist cleans his chalkboard whilst dressed as a hare

I extended the length of the performance – and the accompanying recording of *Moses and Aaron* – to 16 hours, so as to match the length of Wagner’s work. I then interspersed my protracted explanation of the plot (which, due to the use of chalk, took several hours to write out) with actions borrowed or inspired by the *Staatstheater* score: sitting/standing, reading, dragging a chair, playing the harmonium, and so forth. The performance itself was broken down into sections and undertaken over the period of a week outside an art gallery, with the ‘dead hare’ appearing every twenty minutes or so to write another part of the plot upon the chalkboard.

These three works seek to avoid falling into the trappings of mockery or pastiche, by actively critiquing both perception and the creative act – the work¹³² – that makes

¹³² I was inspired by similar works that reveal the physical or cognitive challenge or art-making as part of their outcome. In Martin Kippenberger’s *With the best will in the world I can’t see a swastika* (1984) the viewer is presented with an otherwise sensible cubist work – some abstract lines, shapes, and colours. The piece aesthetically functions as a cubist painting, but belies its own abstract qualities by alluding to a particular form (the swastika) which may or may not be present – such is the

them available to communication. If they appear challenging, it is not because they proffer some unknowable aspect, some skill unavailable to the perceiver. Rather, they appear challenging *because they are*; like *Missionary*, they demand an extended effort from their performer. Each intervention prioritises the hard work required to pull off an act that is ostensibly pointless, noisy, or unnecessary. As such, these works do not create an illusion of some other unknown, ideal world, but instead, seek to demonstrate the untested potential already manifest in this one.

In order to explore the apparent tension between politically-themed and politically-effective works, I was keen to produce some interventions with a clear political intent as a means of comparison. *Let Them Eat Cake*¹³³ took place outside Brighton's Job centre – a site that also housed the law courts, the police station, a pub/park notoriously used by the homeless, and the *American Express* building – the city's largest private-sector employer. Due to the rise in food bank usage and food waste initiatives that occurred in tangent with this project, I was drawn to the idea of distributing food as an artistic act, considering the social complexity of charity as a pertinent analogy for the issues of autonomy, community, and the hierarchical actor/spectator divide that this research had been exploring.

level of abstraction to the work. The failing to find the swastika is placed as a work of the perceiver, not a failing within the object perceived (since it is *supposed* to be abstract) - the work only fails to make sense because of the subject's inability to *make* it make sense.

¹³³ Appendix B: *I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, Let them eat cake* video (usb).



Figure 32: (Photo: Jack Moore): The artist distributes cake outside the job centre

Playing upon Marie Antoinette's infamous declaration, "Let them eat cake!" (itself a popular example of the potential naivety/duplicity of the philanthropic position), the work involved handing out slices of 'budget' supermarket cake to the visitors of the site's various conveniences, on the morning of the first Conservative budget in 19 years. Although both the social conditions (the looming budget, food bank usage) and historical reference (the title of the piece being written on a large chalkboard) were referenced within the piece, I avoided directly stating its context, justifying my actions by simply telling people I had some cake, and wanted to share it with the community. In this way, the work could be considered as a simple act of kindness, a critique of charity, or a patronizing affront – conflating as it did the unemployed and the criminal with the French peasants of Marie Antoinette's time. This resulted in a situation wherein to 'get' the work was to be insulted, while ignorance was to be rewarded. By problematising the thin line between supporting and patronising its

community, I had initially considered that this work, though not sonic per se,¹³⁴ would be defined by the very vocal conversation that would no doubt erupt during its undertaking. However, of all the interventions it was *Let Them Eat Cake* that most challenged my presumptions regarding the community it addressed. The defining characteristics of the site's users – unemployment, criminality and substance abuse – bring with them a wealth of connotations concerning everything from class to cultural intelligence. The popular image¹³⁵ is that of a community that is habitually poor, lacking education and ambition – a fact that probably seeped into my own expectancy that the site's inhabitants would either not recognise the work as art or would be incensed by any confusion it raised. And yet, for all my presuppositions as to art's power to foster *communitas*, I found in this work, more than any other, that *communitas* was already present. Rather than causing tension or confusion, my presence was nearly universally welcomed, even by those who found the venture strange, or acknowledged its political undercurrent with a wry smile.

¹³⁴ If we are to accept Cage's proclamation that all sound is music, it would seem contradictory to draw a distinction between art events that create sound through recognised musical means and those that create sound through the setting up of a relational social dynamic. Likewise, if we accept that a conversation can be a work of art – as with Beuys's *Honey pump in the workplace* (1977) – then it seems futile to distinguish between sound-based musical works and sound-based conversational works.

¹³⁵ An image created in part by the government's own rhetoric and the overwhelming reliance on "negative vocabulary" within the mainstream press (benefits stigma: how newspaper report on welfare, 2016).



Figure 33: (Photo: Jack Moore): A young girl watches the artist with his cake

Indeed, even those who might otherwise have been hostile – such as the young man I met about to be sent to prison at the law court – engaged with my sharing as if the eccentricity of the gesture was nothing but an expected part of the already apparent eccentricities of the site itself: merely another story, one more thread in the many concurrent narratives that define its location.¹³⁶

If my interventions seek to explore *communitas*, they do so by enlivening a momentary breach in socio-normative behaviour, entering their participants into a period of (moral, perceptual, cultural) crisis.¹³⁷ With *Let Them Eat Cake*, this same pattern occurs: I commit the non-normative act of handing out cake, hoping that

¹³⁶ The idea that this community in particular would be open to the unfolding narrative of the art event seems logical, given that it already utilises story-telling as a primary means of its execution. The job centre, the pub, and the law court are all places we go to tell stories - to explain our actions, to express our labour, and to reminisce.

¹³⁷ An outcome in keeping with Turner's description of crisis as a liminal stage, acting as a threshold "between more or less stable or harmonic phases of the social process" (Turner, p.34, 1988).

passers-by will enter into a period of crisis wherein their expectancies are not met or are exceeded, and from which they can reassess the space we share. The reality was somewhat different, however. The peculiarity of the act failed to achieve any level of crisis within a community that seemed already resigned to instability – that is, already engaged in a perpetual state of crisis. What is more, my work was not treated as trite or redundant by its community, but as fittingly absurd. Perhaps we can infer from this that the diverse population that inhabits the city's job-centre, law courts, and less-reputable pubs, is already in a cycle of breach/crisis/redress, a position that leaves them open to these same qualities in the art event. Rather than being destabilised by the breach of sense that the non-normative act brings, the artistic construct mirrors a cycle they are familiar with - even if the form itself is markedly different.

Undertaken on Brighton sea-front, *Chalk Walk*¹³⁸ consisted of a journey along the chalk path that runs between Brighton Marina and the village of Rottingdean. During the walk, small piles of coal were left at intervals a few metres apart upon the sea wall, and subsequently photographed. Each pile was arranged in a unique formation, taking into account existing cavities in the rock, the shape and colour of the wall, and proximity to any erosion or human interventions (screws, posts, etc.). The work, though 'silent', embodied many of the ideas behind my participatory practice, with the omnipresent crashing of the waves soundtracking its composed visual elements. By situating the work at intervals along the linear path of a popular walking route, its audience were able to approach the materials involved from a multi-

¹³⁸ Appendix B: *I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice*, *Chalk Walk*, poster.

tude of positions – first as a pile of stones, then later as a deliberate incursion, experiencing the work as a process, a temporality that extended into the past (the memory of the piles they had passed) and the future (the expectation of those yet to come). This sense of temporality was underscored by the nature of the objects involved – coal and chalk are not only themselves products of processes, but those processes, rendered in the sedimentary layers, are made available to perception upon their surface. Chalk is a defining feature of my practice - serving as an accessible and temporary method of augmenting the environment, as well as harbouring latent pedagogical and artistic connotations (school chalkboards, cave-paintings). I was also interested in its life-giving properties, particularly within the Sussex area. Chalk is present in both the water and the ground, and is as such integral to the habitation of the area: it provides sustenance for the flesh, but also serves as building material for much of the area's housing, literally shaping the landscape upon which the city is built. Furthermore, though life-giving, chalk derives from death, as the sedimentary remains of micro-organisms. It is an embodiment of the cyclical nature of humanity's relationship to their environment. Like chalk, coal is a natural material comprised of fossilised remains, though of wood rather than shell. It also harbours life-giving properties - we not only require trees to breathe, but coal serves to heat our bodies and our homes, and (historically) to allow us to move at speed through the landscape. Given the stark white nature of the chalk path, the inclusion of black coal along a path with no foliage of any kind is quite a dramatic visual proposition. The coal serves as a type of noise upon the environment, an unnecessary addition that breaches the area's uniformity. Each black pile is a violence upon the landscape, a disorder that points beyond the expected. The utility of natural materials in this way highlights the different processes underlying their very existence: the inclusion of coal prevents the perception of chalk as simply *a thing that is*

there, instead opening it up to its own potential. To perceive the difference inherent in the two opposing materials is to lead the perceiver along a conceptual path as to how such differences came about, what material processes each has been subject to before that point, and what it means that they have ended up here together. Such perception relies upon a dual immediacy that allows objects and contexts to be witnessed concurrently. A focus on the extremely subtle differences in positioning, compacted by its presentation outside of any art context, created a work that did not particularly look like art at all. It is only through the act of navigating the chalk path and finding such piles recurring at intervals, that the work appears deliberately fashioned, rather than mere debris. Likewise, it is the time taken to travel towards the coal sculptures, and the act of walking between them, that places the perceiver in a position of orientation - it is the journey through a shared environment that makes the objects within it significant.

Chalkwalk also functioned as a performance, of a kind - the act of photographing each sculpture served as a more direct way of engaging passers-by in dialogue, framing the work as art, or at least as aesthetically interesting. In addition, walking a white chalk path while carrying 10kg of black coal is not exactly a subtle undertaking. The construction of each pile left me covered in increasing amounts of soot until, by the time the 3-mile trek had been completed, I was standing out as obtrusively as my sculptures. The final performative element was the idea that I should, upon emptying the entire 10kg of coal upon the sea wall, collect that same weight in chalk and take it home with me.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This in turn, was later exhibited as part of the *I Don't Know Where We Are Going But It Sure Sounds Nice* exhibition, see Appendix B: B: I don't know where we are going but it sure sounds nice, exhibition *photographs* (usb).

APPENDIX 9.5: Future iterations

In addition to the work mentioned thus far, the score has been used, and continues to be used, in a number of contexts beyond the main remit of this research. These have included a solo saxophone performance held over two days at the *I Don't Know Where We Are Going But It Sure Sounds Nice* exhibition,¹⁴⁰ a structured walk around the Isle of Wight, a piece of live performance art, performances by a musical quartet, and as the basis of a forthcoming exhibition series.



Figure 34: Colin Tully performs as part of the *I Don't Know Where We Are Going But It Sure Sounds Nice* exhibition

In the first instance, the saxophonist Colin Tully used the score as a means of contextualising and bridging existing musical material. Although their practice was based on traditional Celtic-folk forms, the score encouraged them to expand their technique to include a number of elements rarely explored in their day-to-day practice - over-blowing, multiphonics, drone, and physical manipulation of the instrument, such as removing the reed altogether, or playing the keys percussively.

¹⁴⁰ Appendix B: *I Don't Know Where We Are Going But It Sure Sounds Nice* exhibition photographs (usb).

Pragmatically, the performer's approach was to take the whole score as one large, continuous work. The performance took place in an art gallery, where the pages of the score were hung on large sheets upon the walls – allowing the performer to not only perform any section in any order, but to physically move throughout the space as they did so.

The structured walk, by comparison, involved a single score card chosen at random, followed by a period of study by its performer, Layla Tully. The text was broken down into various actions, and applied to what little was already known about the surrounding area. Decisions were made as to the route to be walked, and the length, based upon the intersection between the text and prior experience of the environment – words such as ‘threshold’ were linked to the position of local buildings, whereas descriptions such as ‘arc’ or ‘double-back’ would be treated as much more literal instructions to locate the walker in their environment. In turn, their path was augmented by relating the materiality of the environment (such as the discovery of glass or hay) with similar descriptions within the score - opening up further interpretations of the text that could then be applied to speed, direction, and intent.

The performance artist Duncan Harrison chose a single page of the score, using it as the basis for a 45-minute performance.¹⁴¹ Literal interpretations of the text (*open a window*) were mingled with more abstract responses, such as critiquing perceived ethical assumptions within the text.¹⁴² In order to delegitimise the con-

¹⁴¹ Appendix D: New Communion, Duncan Harrison *photographs* (usb).

¹⁴² In particular, the performer took exception to the following section - “*a short reflection upon the fact that those on the outside have as much right to be here as*

tours of the performance space, the performer undertook a pretend sound-check, before pressing play on a tape player containing recordings of the pub beneath the venue, and going home. Aware that he was well-known within the community that was his audience (it was a monthly night in Brighton, at which the performer plays regularly), the performer instigated the '*short reflection*' specified in the score by leaving the space set up so as to suggest his return – resulting in an awkward 40-minutes in which his audience shivered by the open window, staring at the spines of three books left upon the empty stage and listening to the loudly amplified recordings of the people downstairs.



Figure 35: (Photo: Agata Urbaniak) Barnabas Yianni and Kev Nickells perform the score

These one-off versions aside, the Line-making score continues to be used in a number of ongoing performative contexts. The Distant Animals quartet¹⁴³ was a

any of us that their voices carry through the walls and if they don't they should", explaining that he was fundamentally opposed to the idea that art should contain any form of social function.

¹⁴³ Appendix D: *New Communion*, The New Comunions Quartet *photographs (usb)*.

group comprised of violin/guitar (Kev Nickells), French horn/violin (John Guzek), organ (myself) and electronics (Barnabas Yianni). Although initially formed as a means of observing how the score might be interpreted without any input from myself as the author, I found that I could best document others' responses to the score by acting as a 'silent' member of the group, allowing the three other players to make the vast majority of the critical decisions, with my role being to help smooth out any problems in understanding the score and adjusting it where necessary. The performers picked 11 pages from the score that were turned into 8 short musical vignettes. Two cards would be selected for each rendition, with the performers choosing to perform from one, both, or neither cards on offer. As with other interpretations, some text was used in a literal manner - to indicate the number of notes to play ("*eleven*"), the nature of changes over time ("*a waning of spirit or deterioration of _____ such as is found in weather more than people*"), or where to hit the body of the instrument ("*into the flesh, along the box, cleaner than a whistle*"). In contrast, other sections were used to inspire more abstract responses, such as '*there have been xx seconds since our last theft*', which involved the electronics player manipulating a recording he had made several years earlier of the violin player in a different context. As he played it back, he orchestrated a call and response between himself and the violin player who, having 'stolen' the French hornist's horn, was attempting to mimic his earlier, long-forgotten playing on a new instrument.