

Live Materials: *Womens Work*, Pauline Oliveros & the feminist performance score

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Abstract

Womens Work [sic] is a score magazine project co-edited by Fluxus artist Alison Knowles and composer Annea Lockwood, who published two issues in 1975 and 1978. The project, which gathered together the work of 23 of the co-editors' female friends and collaborators, offers an invaluable counterpoint to the overwhelmingly male neo-avant-garde canon, evidencing a network of diverse artists relating their practices to the feminist (art) movement of the 1970s through the medium of the text score. Yet this multidisciplinary publication has rarely been referenced and never considered in its own right.

This thesis offers an expanded history of the *Womens Work* project that takes as its starting point the work of composer and artist Pauline Oliveros. I demonstrate that her turn to writing text scores, foregrounded in listening for intimate group work, is inextricably linked to the development of her own distinct feminist thought that I term *Oliverosian*. I ask what constitutes a *feminist performance score*, a neologism that emerged from working with Oliveros' works of the early 1970s and my resulting encounter with *Womens Work*. I argue that the *feminist performance score* is at the heart of any shared feminist aesthetics within this constellation of projects. I chart these connections amidst a wider community through oral history portraits of eight further contributors to *Womens Work*: Julie Winter, Jacki Apple, Simone Forti, Heidi von Gunden, Beth Anderson, Nye Ffarrabas, Mary Lucier and Mieko Shiomi. I explore through my own practice as a curator how to work with such *feminist performance scores* and the wider historical ecology in which they emerged, leading to the demand for an *embodied curator*, a host to the *live materiality* of these works.

I situate this thesis within the theoretical framework of Karen Barad's *agential realism*, which foregrounds the fundamental indeterminacy of wave/particle duality, and I argue that this framework can be read throughout, from the formal duality of the score itself as both written text and live performance, to the implications for authorship and labour that both

preserve autonomy and require deep collaboration, to the radical potentialities of a wider capacity to hold different and sometimes conflicting political positions at once.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the contents of this thesis are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in this, or any other university. This thesis is the result of my own work. The written thesis (Chapters One to Six) contains 72,493 words.

The written thesis is accompanied by:

- a physical copy of the new edition of *Womens Work* (Knowles and Lockwood 2019)
- documentation of the exhibition project *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE* (printed publication and USB memory stick comprising full digital documentation)

Alongside Chapter Five, that documents my workshop series *These Are Scores*, the above comprise the practical components of this thesis. These are available with the printed written thesis at London College of Communication Library.

Therefore, this electronic version solely comprises the written thesis. For reasons of copyright, this electronic version also does not include the Appendix and certain images.

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Papers and articles

Academic conference papers:

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Gestures, University of Manchester, February 2019

“Exploring the ‘feminist performance score’”

S::G::F::A Tokyo, Tokyo University of the Arts, October 2019

“Introducing *Womens Work*: A message-in-a-bottle”

Vitreous Immersions: Annea Lockwood’s Sonic Arts special panel

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Contemporary Music Review 41 (*Performing Indeterminacy*, 3-4). This article includes parts of Chapter One, and brief parts of Chapter Two and Three, further introducing the Oliveros score and *Womens Work* respectively.

Revell, Irene. 2022. “Working with *Womens Work*.” In *The Body in Sound, Music and Performance*, edited by Isabel Nogueira and Linda O’Keeffe.

London: Routledge. This book chapter is an earlier and shorter iteration of Chapter Five.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis has four central interrelated elements at its heart: (1) a 1970 textual instructional performance score (hereafter, text score) by the composer Pauline Oliveros, (2) a further multi-authored collection of text scores called *Womens Work* (1975, 1978) (3) the question of a *feminist performance score* that connects these two ‘objects’ (1 and 2), and (4) the question of how to work with all of this as a curator.

To expand: my story begins with a text score by Pauline Oliveros written and first performed in 1970 and titled *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (hereafter, *To Valerie Solanas...*). This score poses the suggestion that it might be a *feminist performance score*, in multiple senses and explored more in what follows. This concept of a *feminist performance score* then leads to finding a magazine of text scores titled *Womens Work*, first published in 1975 with a second issue in 1978, co-edited and self-published by Fluxus artist Alison Knowles and composer Annea Lockwood in New York and containing multiple works by Oliveros. This leads to the question of how to work with these scores, or these *feminist performance scores*, as a curator: both in as much as this enquiry is driven by my own curatorial work with these elements in the first instance, and in terms of their wider curatorial implications. These elements form the basis of this thesis, which writes a history of *Womens Work* as an expanded project through historical methods and my own work as a curator, beginning with Oliveros’ *To Valerie Solanas...*, with the question of the *feminist performance score* an ongoing thread.

I will introduce these four central elements more in the below ‘Origin Story’ (1.1), which recounts a series of encounters with the Oliveros score that led to my own discovery of *Womens Work* and to these allied questions. I then give

an outline introduction of *Womens Work* (1.2). This is followed by an outline or *speculative* conception of the *feminist performance score* (1.3), including an introduction of a Baradian (2007, 2014) theoretical framework (1.4). I then build on all of this to further articulate my research questions (1.5), explain my ensuing methodology (1.6) – including notes on my approach to writing – and introduce the resulting chapters that comprise this thesis (1.7).

1.1 Origin Story

My initial encounter with text scores – and in turn the wider histories that this thesis engages – was on a teenage school trip, meeting Yoko Ono's *event scores* of the 1960s dotted on the walls of Stuttgart's Staatsgalerie. It was the first time I had felt an urgent relationship to contemporary art: I loved the economy of the work; brief, simple, cheap, like extracts from the typewritten *riot grrrl* punk fanzines my friends and I were making then in the mid-1990s. Not to mention the implications of the texts themselves, the poetic ambiguity of their performance: was it all in your head, or did they do these things, could one *still* do these things?

TAPE PIECE III

Snow Piece

Take a tape of the sound of the snow
falling.
This should be done in the evening.
Do not listen to the tape.
Cut it and use it as strings to tie
gifts with.
Make a gift wrapper, if you wish, using
the same process with a phonosheet.

1963 autumn

Fig 1.1 Yoko Ono, *Tape Piece III* (1963), excerpt from *Grapefruit* (1964)

In 2008 I visited the touring exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Butler and Mark 2007) hosted at MoMA PS1 in New York, the first such 'blockbuster' retrospective of the US feminist art movement of the 1970s. There in a modest vitrine was Pauline Oliveros' 1970 score *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, in Recognition of their Desperation*, alongside ephemera relating to her contemporaneous ♀'s Ensemble, formed at the University of California, San Diego. In common with the encounter with Ono's work, the score was richly seductive. I felt at once enticed by the title and the words on the page, yet an almost equal level of frustration, unable to grasp any deeper meaning. That is to say that there was a significant discrepancy between the score's implications and its display.

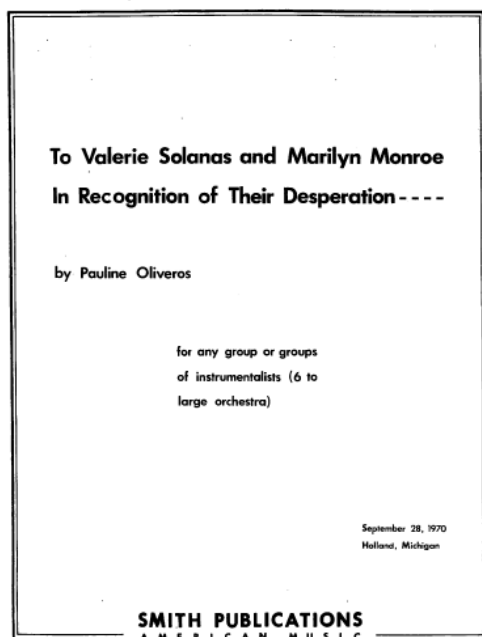


Fig 1.2-1.3 Pauline Oliveros, *To Valerie Solanas...* (front cover; page 1 of 2)

Knowing that I wanted more, in 2012 I co-organised a performance of the Oliveros work with sound artists Cathy Lane and Lee Ingleton. We gathered a group of 17 women and non-binary musicians for rehearsals in London and the piece was performed in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in the thrilling presence of Oliveros herself, the keynote speaker at our wider symposium *Her Noise: Feminisms and the Sonic*.¹ I then became involved in conversations around a filmed performance of this work that artist friends Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz were working on in Berlin, which brought further insights. I was party to ensuing discussions about how to interpret the score for their eponymous 2013 film installation, sharing my experience from the earlier iteration in London. I was also present during the final shoot. Boudry/Lorenz's decision to make this work was also inspired by their own encounter with the score in the *WACK!* exhibition in New York some years earlier, and further informed by hearing about our performance in London. These encounters highlighted the multiple, autonomous, though

¹ The event marked the donation of the archive from the *Her Noise* project (co-curated by Lina Džuverović and Anne Hilde Neset) to the University of the Arts London Archives and Special Collections. I expand on my own earlier involvement with this project in Chapter Two.

often intersecting and overlapping, lives such a score-based work might take, here enfolded these iterative histories. It was only through this *process of realising the piece through performance*, in this case iteratively, that the thick embodied meanings in the two-page textual instructions began to reveal themselves. As a curator it became increasingly apparent to me that



Fig 1.4 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas...* (2013), still

merely displaying scores like these on gallery walls or in vitrines, as enigmatically seductive as they might be, tends to serve the purpose of visual fetishisation—and here I mean the fetish for such histories and their visual ephemera—without offering any deeper experience of their embodied performance let alone this *process of their performance*, or the multiple iterative instances of the work’s live presence as exemplified by these experiences. This story expands on art historian Liz Kotz’ dualistic articulation of Fluxus event scores: that they are “inseparably words to be looked at and actions to be performed” (2007, 9). A succinct assertion that there are these two distinct yet “inseparable” modes of potential for any such work: the written two-dimensional score on the one hand; and the iterative, processual multiplicity of live performance on the other. I further assert that these two inseparable modes, this *formal duality*, might hold particular potential in a feminist context. Duality, inseparability – concepts I will draw out more in the theoretical section below – are, I insist, in opposition to the

notion of a *binary*. Not either “words to be looked at” or “actions to be performed” but “inseparably” both at once: an *ambivalence* that holds this *processual in-between* of reading and performance; that is beyond, or in opposition to, any binary.

Indeed, at the heart of these questions is one of feminism: what *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* seemed to be emphatically suggesting throughout these encounters is that it is a *feminist performance score*; a neologism first proposed by Lane, immediately evoked by its title, and further confirmed in more involved understandings of the structure of the work (and of course reinforced by its inclusion in the *WACK!* exhibition). At the positing of such a term, the next question surely is whether there are other so-called *feminist performance scores*?

Oliveros herself would go on to have a rich engagement with feminism from the early 1970s onwards, not least through the *Sonic Meditations* (Oliveros 1974), briefer text scores initially developed with her ♀’s Ensemble. While the vitrine-based display in the *WACK!* exhibition had sat alone without a peer group, what of others’ works or artists? This line of inquiry led me directly to the magazine project *Womens Work* (Knowles and Lockwood 1975, 78), an anthology of multidisciplinary text scores in two issues that includes Oliveros among its 25 contributors. The very existence of such a collection arguably lends traction to this notion of a *feminist performance score*, confirming not only that there might *be* these further examples, but moreover that the textual instructional performance score was the medium chosen by these diverse practitioners for the expression of a collective feminist project in the 1970s.

1.2 Introducing *Womens Work*

I first acquired a copy of *Womens Work* in 2013 for my exhibition project *Slow Runner*, that took Boudry/Lorenz' film installation *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (2013) as its starting point which I will discuss in more depth in Chapter Five. I then went on to interview Annea Lockwood about *Womens Work*, as well as her *Piano Transplants*, the scores contained within the magazine, in 2014.² This interview heavily informed my initial research into *Womens Work*, and the formation of this project, and I will begin by citing a couple of key passages in the introduction that I make below to *Womens Work* – an introduction that I have iteratively updated throughout this project.

“*Womens Work* came up because Alison [Knowles] and I were sitting in her loft in Spring Street and just running through the names of all the women artists we knew in various media who were doing great work. And, as I recall, we more or less looked at each other and said, “Why don't we ask for a bunch of scores from them!” Of course the title was highly deliberate and highly focused. And the intention was to assert that there were many women doing really good work whose names should be more and more familiar...a body of work coming from a number of women, not just isolated exemplars in their fields.”

(Lockwood 2017, 120-121)

“[We] wanted to publish work which other people could pick up and do: that aspect of it was really important...[t]his was not anecdotal, this was not archival material, it was live material. You look at a

² This interview took place in the midst of *Someone Else Can Clean Up This Mess*, a series co-curated with Claire Louise Staunton at Flat Time House, London, exploring four women artists in the orbit of the London 1960s avant-garde, including Lockwood, whom we had invited over to London. The two ensuing published interviews appear in *NOIT* (2014) and *Cesura//Acceso* (2017), on the *Piano Transplants* and *Womens Work* respectively.

score, you do it.”
(Lockwood 2017, 121)

Lockwood’s insistence that “[y]ou look at a score, you do it” resonates with Kotz’s assertion of the inseparability of “words to be looked at and actions to be performed” (2007). Here the “live material” is another, more poetic articulation of this *inseparability*, or *formal duality*. I take the phrase “live materials” as the title of this thesis for its pervasive meaning throughout this project. Lockwood’s conception echoes the introduction/colophon page of the first issue with its opening line:

“These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances.”
(Knowles and Lockwood 1975)

Beyond the questions of the scores themselves, it is the generosity of this opening line with its evocation of “live material”, along with the project’s explicit title *Womens Work* and the heterogeneity contained within its pages, from which my argument for the feminisms at stake in this magazine project flow. I will extensively expand on this argument in Chapters Three and Four.

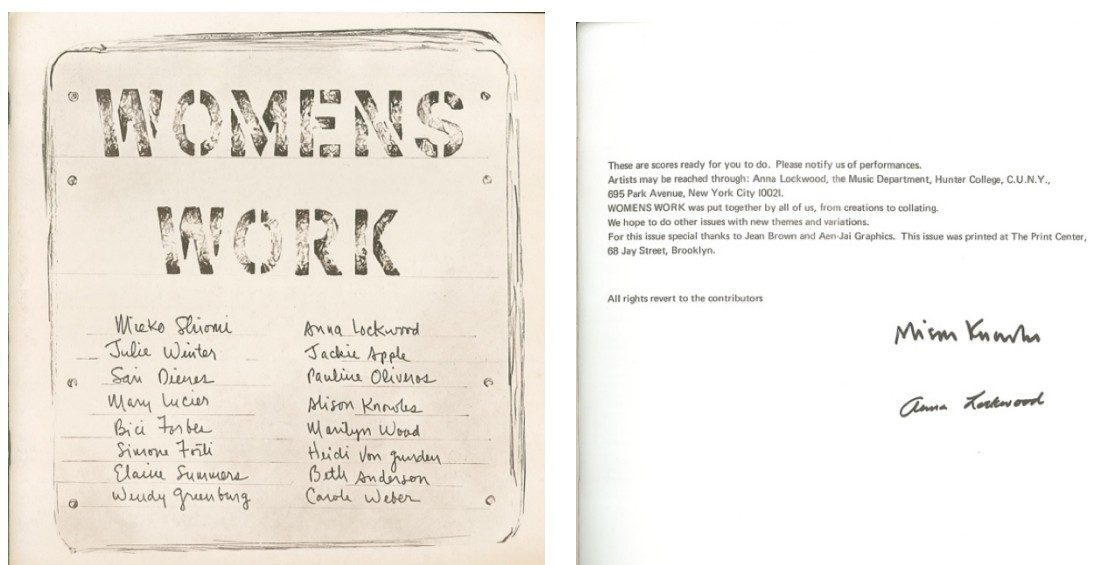


Fig 1.5-6 *Womens Work* issue one (1975), cover and colophon/introduction page

The second issue released in 1978 is a single-sided foldout poster 22 by 17 inches (56 by 44cm) with works that are accordingly more concise yet heterogeneous in format, using some of the “much too much great material”³ gathered for the first issue, and the opportunity to “include a few more women” (Lockwood 2017) with 11 contributors: Ann Noël (as Ann Williams), Lisa Mikulchik, Carol Law, Alison Knowles, Françoise Janicot, Takako Saito, Barbara Benary, Christina Kubisch, Carolee Schneemann, Ruth Anderson and Annea Lockwood. There is a coherency in the overall design of the two issues, the second again employing a similar aesthetic, though with lightweight gloss paper stock. Moreover, I note that this design aesthetic had already been established in Knowles’ recent prior collaboration with Oliveros, *Postcard Theatre* (1974), a series of postcards depicting both artists at various ages (and Knowles’ twin daughters), each one framed by a striking title/slogan, “BEETHOVEN WAS A LESBIAN”, “BRAHMS WAS A TWO-PENNY HARLOT”, etc – where Knowles notes that “[t]he color is manilla and the ink is sepia”⁴. According to Lockwood, the first issue of *Womens Work* was organised in conjunction with a number of the women in the collection, though she and Knowles decisively sign the introductory page as co-editors and are clearly evidenced as such in the call for contributions, and the multiple correspondences, discussed in Chapter Three. This group were responsible for the ordering of the collection, and “it was a collective distribution process, in addition to placing it in various bookstores” (Lockwood 2017).

The primary disciplines of the contributors include composition, fine art performance, choreography, installation, video art and astrology. However, many could be said to straddle more than one of these and Lockwood underlines that “it was very natural at that time to be in touch with many disciplines” (2017). Most of the scores are open to any performer. Some are more abstract or esoteric; many do not necessarily directly engage an

³ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros c February 1974, Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

⁴ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros c Spring 1973, Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

audience outside of the immediate performers, while some are larger-scale and ambitious. Relatively few are works of choreography or composition that require specifically trained dancers or musicians. Furthermore, there is a notable diversity among this group beyond the disciplinary. At the time of publication the ages of the contributors range across generations from several in their 20s, including composer and editor of *EAR Magazine* Beth Anderson, many in their 30s and 40s including Oliveros, Knowles and Lockwood, to artist and co-founder of the feminist A.I.R gallery, Sari Dienes, who was in her 70s. Most were based in or had connections to New York, yet had multiple ethnic and cultural origins, and notably, numerous histories of migration. There are various, often overlapping communities of practice in the collection but perhaps the most prominent is the (New York) Fluxus scene, albeit less active by the 1970s, which involved Alison Knowles, Nye Ffarrabas, Takako Saito, Carolee Schneemann and Mieko Shiomi with others in close proximity. Charlotte Moorman's New York Annual Avant Garde Festival featured very many, if not all, of the contributors over its 15 editions (1963–1980).⁵ The musical performance group Sounds Out of Silent Spaces (1971–9) included Knowles, Lockwood, Ruth Anderson, Barbara Benary, Carole Weber and was co-founded by Julie Winter taking place in Elaine Summers' loft, the Experimental Intermedia Foundation. The tradition of marathon readings of Gertrude Stein's 925-page novel, *The Making of Americans*, was co-founded by Knowles and Lockwood over New Year's Eve 1974/5 at Artists Space, and again included many further contributors over the years. These contexts will be explored in more detail in Chapters Three and Four.

⁵ The exhibition catalogue of the touring exhibition drawing on the Moorman archive, *A Feast of Astonishments*, features reproductions of the festival posters that always included a full list of participants, that ran into well over a hundred names by the 1970s (Corrin and Granof 2016).

1.3 Introducing the ‘feminist performance score’

A note on terminology: I use the term *performance score* in the wake of John Cage’s 1952 composition *4’33”* and the closely related birth of the *event score* within Fluxus (Kotz 2001, 2007), amidst a wider opening out of possibilities offered by textual, instructional, graphic and other new forms of notation (Cage 1969; Sauer 2009; Lely and Saunders 2012). My focus here in this thesis is on textual instructional performance scores (that I abbreviate to text scores), as these comprise the exemplary points in my enquiry – Oliveros’ *To Valerie Solanas...* and the shared medium in the first issue of *Womens Work* – though that is not to say that certain facets I discuss may not be equally true for other forms of notation. I note *event scores* as a specific category of text score, that, as Kotz describes, have their origins in John Cage’s celebrated class at the New School in 1958, attended by originators George Brecht and La Monte Young (2007, 24).

The kinds of *feminisms* that this term might imply are the central topic of this thesis. That is to say, the term *feminist performance score* is not used in relation to any particular branch or tradition of feminism but stems precisely from the qualities of the work itself. What I am establishing in everything that follows is the notion of a feminism that indeed begins with Pauline Oliveros’ *To Valerie Solanas...*, and where any theory stems from the logic contained within the work(s). If Oliveros’ *To Valerie Solanas...* may now be joined by this array of further possible examples in *Womens Work*, I lay out below the initial terms in which I understand there to be a broader feminist potential within the textual instructional performance score.

Expanding outwards from Kotz’s forementioned articulation, “inseparably words to be read and actions to be performed” (2007, 9) my proposition is that this feminist potential derives precisely from this inseparability, this *formal duality*. I posit that it is this dualistic (and non-binary) potential – and qualities that stem from it – that opens to a potential for a feminist politic(s). This *formal duality* is the precise finitude of the printed page(s) and the immediately related yet potentially infinite embodiments that arise

through performance. As with other such score-based performance works, there are certain parameters that are clearly determined by the score and others that are explicitly or implicitly open to the determination of those making the performance. This produces a work whose authorship is at once utterly clear yet open to a significant shifting and sharing through performance; a negotiated exchange both between the score(r) and the performers, and among the performers themselves, in an opening up that I suggest is *speculative* and interrelatedly *diffractive*. I sum up the qualities that express this *formal duality* as:

- An exacting, two-dimensional visual, textual form on the one hand; and an iterative plural live-ness on the other.
- A clear single author on the page; a more complex shifting or sharing of authority in performance with accordingly distributed forms of labour.
- A piece of paper that can be easily copied, transmitted with profuse uncontrollable outcomes.
- An artefact with authority that on the exhibition wall, or vitrine, can stand in for a multitude of moments that have and will come to pass.

Where feminist movement(s) struggle to bridge the need for the autonomy of singular voices and the desire for collectivity in its inevitable mess⁶ – made explicit by Oliveros in the case of *To Valerie Solanas...* in the structuring of the work, drawing on Solanas' articulation of the individual and the group (discussed in detail in Chapter Two) – the performance score seems to hold decisive potential, almost manifesto-like in its written authority yet a discrete stand-in for the complexity of collaboration. Of course, this *formal duality* is also the case in a wider range of event and performance scores: rather, I wish

⁶ I am thinking here of both anecdotal histories such as the struggle to avoid media 'stars' within the US Women's Movement in particular, and in more theoretical terms that might include Joreen's (aka Jo Freeman) 1972 *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*, and indeed is explored in Oliveros' work, discussed further in Chapter Two.

to argue for what these two distinctly different potentials contained within one work, what this *duality* can offer as a feminist approach. My interest is in thinking about them as latent qualities that taken together in combinations and constellations, punctuated by these very intentional acts of framing and titling, produce this *speculative* form that I am calling the *feminist performance score*.

Art historian Kevin Concannon discusses these multiple written and live contexts in the case of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1965) in his appositely titled essay "Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*: From Text to Performance and Back Again" (2008). Within his wider discussion of the work, he includes a disavowal of the term *re-enactment* to describe what are simply new performances of an *event score*. However, he also questions feminist readings of the work, which began only during the 1990s. The contention here is that any understanding that comes later cannot properly be said to engage with the work's original intentions. While understandings of the intention of any work in its initial moment of making are undoubtedly crucial – and I will return to this argument of Concannon's in the final concluding chapter – I am introducing it to conversely underline my wider argument here: that such performance scores, through their multiple live and printed iterations, might have accordingly multiplicitous understandings, significantly contingent to each future time and space. While a work such as *Cut Piece* – or indeed Lockwood's *Piano Burning* (1968), included in *Womens Work* but written in the previous decade and open to feminist interpretation much later (Lee 1999; Marshall 2018, 82-83) – may or may not be read as feminist in terms of 'original' intentions, it is not so much these intentions, or indeed primarily any 'content' of such a work, that I wish to engage in any feminist argument. Rather it is the works' capacity to open up to future moments and take on new contexts and accordingly new understandings that I wish to assign as "feminist" in my notion of the *feminist performance score*. I am invested in an understanding of such performance scores that precisely embraces the possibilities for these profuse outcomes and shifting meanings and interpretations. An understanding that such works might be considered to offer a feminist aesthetic *because* of this very instability not in spite of it;

fundamentally, because of this capacity to hold difference that stems from this *formal duality*. And that such a work could contain a *latent* or indeed *speculative* potential – “ready for you to do” – in these political terms through the fact of its many iterative occurrences. Hence, a feminism that can hold difference, that is open to change in each new repetition, each new context both cumulative and shifting.

1.4 Theoretical speculations

In line with these understandings, I insist on the importance of *speculation*, both equally in the notion of such score-based performance works themselves that inherently speculate on future performance(s), and accordingly in any coherent account of their shared aesthetics. Cecilia Åsberg, Kathrin Thiele and Iris van der Tuin in their compelling essay, “Speculative Before the Turn: Reintroducing Feminist Materialist Performativity”, re-claim the *speculative* in light of the recent turn to *object oriented ontology*. They insist on the intrinsically *speculative* understanding of any feminist project as always inevitably tentative and future-oriented – both attributes that could equally describe textual instructional performance scores. They argue that “the entwined dimensions of both the speculative and the visionary play a constitutive role in any feminist thought, art and activism.” (2015, 153)

Underpinning Åsberg *et al*'s new materialist feminism is, amongst others, the work of particle physicist and philosopher Karen Barad, best known for *agential realism*, her paradigm-shifting understanding of matter and meaning as iteratively, performatively co-constituted (2007). For Barad, matter is inherently indeterminate, which is to say that there are no *a priori* things, objects etc. Rather, matter and meaning are co-constituted in iterative performativity. Barad comes to this by what she terms a *diffractive* reading of Michel Foucault's notion of the *discursive practice* with physicist Niels Bohr's ontological philosophy, most notably his *principle of*

complementarity—that “light”⁷ (the building block of all subatomic matter) is both wave and particle, and that this is not an epistemic matter of *knowing* which, but rather an ontological one, of *being* both, a state of fundamental indeterminacy. Some significant implications within *agential realism* concern the nature of agency, ethics and politics. For example, agency, then, cannot be understood as a property of things, as there are no determinate things to speak of, but rather agency is a *doing* and *becoming*, with a potential for change in every iteration and thus an inherent ethic and politics laced throughout.

I propose that *agential realism* offers a highly apt theoretical framework for considering these kinds of score-based performance works in their ephemeral, inherently iterative and indeterminate materiality, where meaning is indeed co-constituted at each iteration. Not least that it is this indeterminacy that stems from a duality: in physics the wave/particle duality; and here, then, we might then call this *formal duality* the performance/score duality. And it is this fundamental indeterminacy, to hold both states at once, “inseparably”, that feels so profoundly resonant within this overarching project.

Another key aspect of Barad’s *agential realism* is her notion of *diffraction* (2007, 2014) where I suggest such scores are inherently *diffractive*. In basic physical terms, diffraction is the phenomenon of a wave being *opened outwards by a diffraction grating*; a singular wave travelling in one direction becomes diffracted by the grating (that is of resonant width/wavelength), proceeding circularly outwards in a process of interference and resonance. In Barad’s own words, the “phenomenon of diffraction [is] an apt over-arching trope” (2007, 71) both as it appears in the experimental apparatus at the heart of the physics of the wave-particle experiments of Niels Bohr and considered within a wider methodology for political practices that move beyond the *reflective* (reflecting sameness) towards *diffraction* (the production of difference). Barad foregrounds her

⁷ ‘Light’ meaning the electro-magnetic spectrum, where visible light is in fact only a small section of this spectrum.

interest in diffraction in filmmaker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha's attention to "critical difference within" (ibid, 72; Minh-ha 1988) in opposition to an "apartheid" understanding of difference. And at more length, she cites Donna Haraway – re-cited here as it is perhaps the most concise way of introducing Barad's own notion of diffraction:

"Reflexivity has been recommended as a critical practice, but my suspicion is that reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and really real...Diffraction is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world. Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about heterogenous history, not about originals...diffraction can be a metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness [...] one committed to making a difference and not to repeating the Sacred Image of Sameness...Diffraction is a narrative, graphic, psychological, spiritual and political technology for making consequential meanings." (Haraway 1997, 16).

I propose that the *feminist performance score* is one of these very diffractive technologies that Haraway speaks of. That is to say, the singularity of the score from its own "critical difference within", its inseparable performance/score duality, *diffracts* in an open-ended opening out into the multiplicity of performances, across time(s) and space(s). In particular then, the *feminist performance score* might be tending towards these qualities of a *diffractive* politics drawn out by Barad via Haraway: "a history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference, another kind of critical consciousness, one committed to making a difference."

I note that these theoretical groundings are decidedly something that I bring to this project through my own interests and intuitions (and not least my original academic background in physics), though I believe they are resonant and most of all, helpful. Moreover, although not contemporaneous to most of what I will explore in what follows, their foundations may share profound

overlaps with Oliveros' own interest in Bohr's notion of complementarity (discussed further in Chapter Two), which she relates to Sonic Awareness, the practice she would later come to term Deep Listening. Furthermore, I would insist that there is nothing odd about such an anachronistic comparison: I contend that such works are indeed "speculative and visionary" (Åsberg et al 2015, 153) and as such it should not come as a surprise that they might resonate as much with a theoretical particle-physicist's feminist philosophy written after the turn of the millennium, as much as they may do in the future with ideas yet to be formulated. Such is their generous capacity to open outwards temporally towards the future.

1.5 Research questions

The genesis of this thesis is encapsulated in the above 'Origin Story' (1.1), which springs from encountering *Womens Work*, propelled by this question of the *feminist performance score*, that arose directly from working with Oliveros' *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation*; as well as this interrelated question about how to work with such works as a curator across the modes of printed score, performance and moreover, this *process of performance*.

The essence of this thesis' abstract could have been as simple as using *Womens Work* as an object of study to answer the question, "What constitutes a *feminist performance score*?" In reality, and as will become clear over the course of the chapters, the relationship between any notion of a *feminist performance score* and *Womens Work* is more nuanced, requiring an historical enquiry that goes beyond the individual scores themselves to consider this larger *body of work*. Equally, while I accordingly characterise this thesis most of all as a history of the *Womens Work* project, the Oliveros score seems to insistently re-insert itself – not only as my own catalyst in all of this but central in historical terms as well, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three – and it is thus a starting point for this expanded history. Within this history, I seek to answer a series of further yet immediate questions, beyond

the constitution of the *feminist performance score*:

What is *Womens Work*? How is it a feminist project? And to what extent does it exist in an expanded feminist history – this *constellation* of a magazine project, its contributors, with Oliveros and her score(s) centrally among them, and its satellite and tangential projects? How then might a curator work with these histories, and most specifically, these score-based performance works?

If anything, rather than using *Womens Work* as an example or object to articulate the *feminist performance score*, it is the reverse: I have used this speculative notion of the *feminist performance score* in order to write an expanded history of *Womens Work*.

Whilst there is extensive musicological work on Oliveros, including two monographs, there is not any sustained account that takes as its main focus her feminist philosophy. Heidi Von Gunden, also a contributor to *Womens Work*, includes an excellent and insightful analysis of *To Valerie Solanas...* in her 1983 monograph *The Music of Pauline Oliveros*, though this does not examine the question of feminism in any detail (39-45). Conversely Martha Mockus' 2007 monograph *Sounding Out: Pauline Oliveros and Lesbian Musicality*, as its title might suggest, covers a great deal of hugely relevant archival and interview material, though its goal is fixed on understandings of Oliveros' work in terms of sexuality not any *Oliverosian* feminist philosophy, a term that I will introduce in Chapter Two.

Womens Work itself has never been the topic of any sustained historical or other analysis, though it is mentioned in passing in Mockus (63). I anticipate an excellent account of the project within the wider oeuvre of co-editor Alison Knowles' work in Nicole L Woods' monograph, *Performing Chance: The Art of Alison Knowles In/Out of Fluxus* forthcoming in 2023, that I hope this thesis will complement. Indeed, among Woods' published texts, she has notably described Knowles' event and propositional scores in feminist terms precisely because they require the completion of others (2012), which

resonates strongly with this notion of a *feminist performance score*. On the topic of Knowles and questions of feminism, and in relation to the inherent indeterminacy in her work, art historian Julia Robinson suggests “that new terms might be required to speak of this dimension as a politics” (2004, 109), a call that I hope this thesis goes some way to answering.

There is a small but growing literature around the medium of text scores. I include here of course Liz Kotz’s foundational work on “post-Cagean aesthetics and the ‘event’ score” as she puts it (2001), and her subsequent monograph, *Words to Be Looked At* (2007). Lely & Saunders make a profound contribution to the field with their 2012 anthology, *Word Events*. As composers this is a practical project as much as a scholarly one: the book gathers several hundred historical and contemporary examples with commentary on adjacent pages, often through interview with the “score” in question; and there is an introductory essay that uses considerations of grammar to analyse textual notation. Choreographer and philosopher Josefine Wikström makes another significant contribution in her very recent monograph *Practices of Relations in Task-Dance and the Event Score* (2021) in a Marxist analysis of instructional performance. However, there is no explicitly feminist analysis of such works except in the case of individual scores such as *Cut Piece* (Bryan-Wilson 2003; Concanon 2008), or the works of Knowles and Lockwood mentioned in the above (Stone 1999; Robinson 2004; Woods 2012): that is to say, nothing that connects these practices together in the way that I propose in this thesis (or as proposed in *Womens Work* itself).

Indeed, I suggest in Chapter Three that there is a wider gap in histories of artists’ publications of scores. Whilst Liz Kotz is in the process of preparing a monograph on Jackson Mac Low and La Monte Young’s 1963 *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, this will be the first sustained scholarly account of any such publication project.⁸ Douglas Kahn along with original co-editor of the

⁸ This project is noted in Kotz’ biography at University of California, Riverside: <https://arthistory.ucr.edu/faculty/liz-kotz/> Last visited 26th June 2022

magazine *Source: Music of the Avant-Garde* (hereafter *Source*) Larry Austin, produced the 2011 book project *Source: Music of the Avant-Garde: 1966-1973*, but this largely consisted of the re-publishing of certain scores from the original issues of the magazine with relatively brief introductory framing. The intention of the book was to make selected works from these now extremely rare issues more widely available, rather than produce any exhaustive history of the magazine itself. Musicologist Rebecca Y. Kim includes an important introduction to John Cage's *Notations* project and its 1969 anthology within a wider essay on Cage's numerous contributions to the early years of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (2013, 73-81). Though I contend it is highly notable, given the vast and ever-growing literature that surrounds Cage (Haefeli 2018), that there has never been a single dedicated article never mind a book-length study on the *Notations* project.

Outside of the field of book studies, there is perhaps a seeming tautology in the idea of writing a book about a book, in a similar sense that, as I note in Chapter Two, there is in describing in words a text score. Austin & Kahn's approach of reproducing key works as opposed to writing a history of the *Source* magazine project itself does make perfect sense. And yet, in all of these cases, and not least with *Womens Work*, these are not only the sum of their published scores but complex and often sustained projects in themselves, intended to represent and galvanise wider communities. It is my contention that there are many histories to be written on these and other publications. I further contend that the re-publishing of scores or indeed any whole publication of scores, and the writing of their histories, are not mutually exclusive projects. Indeed, that is what I have undertaken here with *Womens Work*: to write a history, as well as working to make it available across a series of contexts through my own curatorial practice, including re-publishing a facsimile edition (Knowles and Lockwood, 2019).

1.6 Methodology

In this thesis I have employed a mixed historical and practice-based methodology that draws insights from three central strands – interviews with ten of the contributors to *Womens Work* (including Knowles and Lockwood), extensive archival research, and my own practice as a curator working with *Womens Work* across a series of curatorial formats. I attempt to bring these three strands *diffractively* into conversation with each other, to differing extents across the different chapters.

With regards to *Womens Work* specifically, I have had one main limitation, which has been to focus on the first issue of 1975, rather than both issues. I made this decision because of my overarching focus on text scores that is so tightly the case in the first issue, and not at all the case for the second issue of 1978 (which is not to say that some of those contributors to the second issue did not otherwise make textual instructional score-based works, but these are not evidenced there). This also had a practical aspect in limiting the number of interviews I would conduct to eight beyond Knowles and Lockwood, and the number of artists I would be researching in any given archive. Within my own work as a curator, this focus on the first issue enabled the development of methods for working specifically with text scores across their dual, inseparable, printed and live forms, as “live material”.

1.6.1 Interviews

In terms of interviews, my focus was on the two co-editors of *Womens Work*, Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood, and all of the living contributors to the first issue that I was able to reach: Julie Winter, Jacki Apple, Simone Forti, Heidi Von Gunden, Beth Anderson, Nye Ffarrabas, Mary Lucier and Mieko Shiomi. I describe my interview methods in more detail in Chapter Four, but at its heart was the question of *Womens Work* and their involvement, including their work(s); their relationship to textual instructional performance scores, and their relationship to feminism and the Women’s Movement in the 1970s. I was able to interview Alison Knowles earlier on in

this project in September 2017 on her visit to Paris for her exhibition *House of Dust* by Alison Knowles. The other interviews were then mostly conducted on my five-week research trip to the USA in autumn 2018. There I was able to conduct a second interview with Lockwood, building on the earlier interview preceding the inception of this project that I cite from above (1.2). In October 2019 I was lucky to be able to interview Mieko Shiomi at her home near Osaka, following an edition of the SOUND::GENDER::FEMINISM::ACTIVISM conference in Japan. It was always my intention to bring as much of these voices directly into the text of the thesis itself, including longer excerpts. Moreover, this is what informed my decision to compose Chapter Four more or less entirely of the voices of the contributors to *Womens Work*, as I will discuss more there.

1.6.2 Archives

Prior to my USA research trip, I was able to visit in London:

- V&A Theatre and Performance Archives relating to Annea Lockwood's time in London: Arts Council; The Place (ICES); The Roundhouse (ICES)
- Tate Archives: David Mayor (Fluxshoe) and for a physical copy of *An Anthology of Chance Operations*
- British Library: a number of Alison Knowles' artist books as well as numerous score collections including *Source* magazine, *Verbal Anthology* (1972) and *Scratch Music* (1972) as UK comparators, and the 1980 anthology *Scores: An Anthology of New Music* (1981) edited by Roger Johnson that includes some of the works in *Womens Work*

In the USA I was able to organise my 'tour' around a series of archives relating to the interview locations:

- Getty, Los Angeles (Jean Brown Papers, The Kitchen, Dick Higgins)
- University of California, San Diego (Pauline Oliveros Papers)
- Northwestern University, Chicago (Cage Notations project, Charlotte Moorman NYAAG Festival, Dick Higgins Correspondence)

- New York Public Library (Pauline Oliveros Correspondence, Elaine Summers/Experimental Intermedia Foundation)
- MoMA (Silverman Fluxus archive)
- Fales, NYU (Linda Montano, AIR Gallery, Jacki Apple)

My focus in the archives, and in turn the areas where they enter the thesis the most, is around the Oliveros work *To Valerie Solanas...* as well as other Oliveros works of the early 1970s, not least the ♀'s Ensemble. Equally her correspondence with Knowles and Lockwood over *Womens Work*, that draws all these elements together. These mostly enter in Chapters Two and Three, on Oliveros and *Womens Work* respectively. Other areas that pertain more immediately to *Womens Work* include the Cage Notations Project archive, where Knowles was a co-editor and so there is an immediate adjacency; and in philanthropist and archivist Jean Brown's correspondence with Knowles, as the funder of *Womens Work*. All other archives were addressed more speculatively, focusing on any instance of any contributor to *Womens Work*, that helped me to both build a sense of many of the individual contributors but also their interconnectedness and collaborations with each other.

In deciding to focus the historical writing around the living interviewees, even where I was able to look at other contributors in some detail in the archive (for example, Elaine Summers) it has been well beyond my scope to bring all of these materials into this thesis now. One unintended but significant consequence of this decision that is important to note is disciplinary: as it happens, there was only one choreographer amongst my interviewees, Simone Forti, whose work is also very much at home in visual arts contexts. The prominence of choreography amongst the contributors would have been stronger were I to have been able to interview Marilyn Wood and Elaine Summers as well, both of whom sadly had already passed away before this project. At the same time, this limit also follows my own personal limits in that the area of choreography is the discipline with which I have by far the least working knowledge, producing this "known unknown". In any case, I acknowledge that this project, while highly multidisciplinary in its own approach, and that of its "contents", is situated in disciplinary terms

somewhere at the intersections of visual arts, sound and music, as well as my own practice as a curator and writer amidst these fields. On a related disciplinary question, I note that aside from the in-depth analysis of *To Valerie Solanas...* in Chapter Two, I do not go into such deep analysis of any single work elsewhere, although in Chapter Four each of the *Womens Work* contributors discuss their own work(s) in the first issue. Rather than a series of works to be discussed and analysed musicologically, art historically, or otherwise, I am seeking to articulate a *body of work* and its genesis: the social relations, ideas, philosophies, aesthetics, that it holds.

1.6.3 Curatorial practice

Building on this sense of the importance of the *process of performance* and the insights that it generated into the Oliveros score, it was always my intention to foreground this in some way in my curatorial work during this project. Originally, I had intended to convene a multidisciplinary performance group who would over a number of months meet and “workshop” the works in *Womens Work*, both in order to produce a final performance programme that I imagined would be the culmination of my practical element, and in order to generate insights into the individual works through this process. As I describe in more detail in Chapter Five, this idea shifted quite quickly as I became more familiar with the works themselves. Both because a singular final outcome started to seem conceptually out-of-step, but also upon realising the potential of the workshop itself as a curatorial format, a means-to-an-end, as it were. Rather than simply mining the *process of performance* for its insights into the work, more fully embracing this in my own practice. In this way, my main curatorial work throughout the project became a series of one-off workshops in a variety of different contexts, titled *These are scores* after the first line of the introduction to the first issue of *Womens Work*. This produced more of an ongoing dialogue between the practice and the historical research, and as much as I did glean insights about specific works from these workshops, it also made the questions of their historical contexts more prominent, pushing the historical research to explore the kinds of group situations in which such

score-based performance works were written, developed, performed, and distributed, and in turn how one might convey some of their qualities in contemporary situations as a curator.

This ongoing workshop series was then punctuated by an exhibition project *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE (OSOGE)*, co-curated with a friend and colleague Karen Di Franco in 2018, in which we brought our historical research materials (in my case *Womens Work*, in hers, Carolee Schneemann's *Parts of a Body House* (1957–68)) into dialogue with the work of five of our contemporary peers, in a certain sense re-producing Knowles and Lockwood's gathering-together. Here we worked with the score-based materials with a designer and in close consideration of the architecture of the gallery space to push to the limits the possibilities of visual display.

Finally, and with most public impact, I initiated and worked on the facsimile re-publication of *Womens Work* with the New York publisher, Primary Information in Spring 2019, as managing co-editor (with James Hoff).

While I confine a direct discussion of these practical elements of the research project – the workshop series *These are scores*, the exhibition project *OSOGE*, and the 2019 re-publication of *Womens Work* - largely to just one chapter (Chapter Five, and a part of Chapter Six), my historical understandings throughout are heavily informed by my own engagement with these works, which have been multiple and iterative. In broader terms, I am always thinking from a curatorial perspective and how these works meet a public, rather than only focusing on the relationship between score(r) and performer(s), although these different positions do notably overlap or collapse in certain instances. Furthermore, I have always regarded writing as a part of my practice, with significant cross-over in terms of curating. This 'curatorial' aspect to my writing, in its sharing of the materials as a curator and drawing upon anecdote and encounter, is integral to this thesis and constitutes a further element of the practice, in addition to the three practical elements outlined above. I discuss this further in the following section.

1.6.4 Writing

An important part of this project personally has been to further develop my own “voice”, in seeking to find a form of writing that is both reflective and productive of my thoughts and research. I would not claim to have resisted a traditionally “academic” style of writing here because that is not an idiom I had ever thoroughly developed in the first instance. Nevertheless, this writing has been an integral part of this project, and as such for me forms a part of the practice that I have developed.

Drawn intuitively to writing *through experience*, and further influenced by the writing of my peers that is similarly anecdotal, such as artist friend Charlotte Prodger, this methodology might fall under the umbrella term of *autotheory*. In her recent monograph, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism* (2019) Lauren Fournier states that “[a]utotheory emerges as a term to describe the ways artists and writers process and transform these discourses and frameworks through their practices of living, making art, writing, and formulating critiques.” (313 e-pub) For me the autobiographical aspect of this is crucial: this thesis is clearly not a memoir, and yet it is highly situated in my own history and interests in a way that is common to feminist work. Indeed, that could be further elaborated through the lens of *fandom* developed by art historian Catherine Grant in her landmark 2011 essay “Fans of Feminism”. The threads that this thesis follows are not merely following professional and/or academic interests, but have a significantly personal drive, one that Grant compellingly locates in terms of the figure of the fan, a queer-er form of affinity than the matrilineal models espoused by earlier psychoanalytic feminist art histories. There could be various more conventional art-historical, or musicological / ethnomusicological ways of approaching the topic of textual instruction and feminism, or indeed the history of *Womens Work*. Rather, the component elements of this project – Oliveros’ score, the question of the *feminist performance score*, and the uncovering of *Womens Work*, not to mention the associated curatorial question – are idiosyncratic in their precise

combination here, deriving from the lived experiences of these multiple encounters.

Within this wider field of autotheory, I find feminist literary theorist Jane Gallop's notion of "anecdotal theory" (2002) particularly helpful, understood here through these multiple encounters across both contemporary, and historical, moments. Not least, this is how I have come to my own specific insights that frame this project, as outlined in 1.1. Gallop's anecdotal theory comes from an objection to forms of literary theory that are not literary themselves, so-to-speak. This fundamental entanglement of form and content feels equally important here, and the anecdote an apt form of writing to capture the encounters with works, indeed the iterative encounters that the works exist in and through. Gallop's proposition is to "[r]ecount an anecdote and then attempt to "read" that anecdote for the theoretical insights it afforded." (Gallop 2002, 2) I am attracted to Gallop's concept not least because her method attempts to straddle two seemingly oppositional positions: the *personal is political* of 1970s feminism and 1990s deconstructionism, a dualistic and ambivalent project that seems equally at home here.⁹ Where autotheory might be as broad as to encompass "memoir with footnotes" (Fournier 2019, 18 e-pub) , and while I do not shy away from using a first-person address where it feels appropriate, I am using these personal encounters as anecdotes to be examined for their wider insights and signposting in the journey of research. If there is an autobiographical thread, it is through these repeated encounters that also function in the structuring of my argument, in their repetition and difference: a *diffractive* as opposed to a (*self-*)*reflective* autotheoretical approach, in the terms of Barad.

Diverging further from autotheory more generally, I am also using the anecdotes and accounts of others – sometimes at length – and mining them for similar insights. I have also assigned significant meaning to sometimes

⁹ Gallop's *anecdotal theory* notably gained notoriety through her extensive discussion of the experience of being accused of sexual harassment. I suggest that I significantly diverge with Gallop's understandings here in that my interest in anecdote, whilst personal, always pertains to the works themselves at their core, not solely inter-personal encounters.

short phrases spoken by others, which I repeatedly deploy. I take a phrase uttered in one context and re-deploy it in another to insist on the resonances that occur across the contexts under examination, hence taking the introductory phrase “[t]hese are scores” as the title for my workshop series, and indeed Lockwood’s insistence that these very scores are “live material” as the title for the whole thesis. In this way, I hope that the fullest sense of the methodology of this thesis should speak for itself in the writing to follow. More than anything what I am hoping to achieve is a text where my own voice and experiences meets those of others, in a way that is analogous to that in which I would approach working with any artist to show their work, and very much in line with the emphasis on both the autonomy of the individual and the collectivity of the group that is so crucial to Oliveros, that I will explore in this next Chapter Two.

1.7 The Chapters

Throughout this thesis I situate Pauline Oliveros as a central force in the feminist histories concerning these wider communities of practice; in particular, her conjoining of the text score with a feminist politics in the early 1970s, and immediately adjacent to this, the history of *Womens Work*. In as much as this research began with Pauline Oliveros, it felt essential that this written thesis begins with her. In Chapter Two, which I accordingly title ‘Big Pauline’, I focus on Oliveros’ relationship to feminism, both through an in-depth analysis of the work *To Valerie Solanas...* that profoundly confirms its status as a *feminist performance score*, and through expounding on her wider relationship to the Women’s Movement. I unite these in what I term an Oliverosian feminism. This is a feminism that follows from this *performance/score duality* of the score itself, acutely at stake in *To Valerie Solanas...* that explicitly explores the importance of *both* the individual *and* the group, underlined by Solanas in her *SCUM Manifesto* (1968). This theoretical position, which stems from this particular work, is then more widely espoused in an *ambivalence* that insists on *both* an explicit allegiance *and* a contrarian refusal. I relate this ambivalence to art historian Jonathan

Katz's hugely insightful reading of the queer politics of silence in John Cage's *4'33'* that he terms "both/and" (2001, 54). A generation younger and at the cusp of the Women's Movement, Oliveros is able to take these politics further, making them more explicit whilst retaining this Cagean right-to-silence, or refusal. I again situate this deep ambivalence in the more contemporary paradigm of a Baradian indeterminacy, that in turn finds traces in this history.

In Chapter Three I write a history of the *Womens Work* project itself, primarily through the words of its two co-editors, Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood. These are drawn both from contemporary interviews as well as contemporaneous written correspondences, significantly between Oliveros, and Knowles and Lockwood respectively. I situate Oliveros as a central node in the development of this project, noting profound proximities with the earlier but adjacent *Postcard Theatre* postcard publication (Knowles and Oliveros, 1974). It is the possibility to write and share such "live materials" – moreover that they might become "live" through their sharing and performance – in which I situate their feminism, further drawing on this notion of an Oliverosian feminism that seeks to be both explicit in certain instances, not least in the titling of the magazine and the naming of authors that adorn its cover, but equally to hold difference. I insist on *Womens Work* as an *expanded* magazine project that might include these earlier philosophies of Oliveros, and the extended activities of its community.

In Chapter Four I extend this history of *Womens Work* to include the interview accounts of eight contributors to the first issue, Julie Winter, Jacki Apple, Simone Forti, Heidi Von Gunden, Beth Anderson, Nye Ffarrabas, Mary Lucier and Mieko Shiomi. These are presented as individual "portraits", mirroring the Oliverosian philosophy that foregrounds the individuals in any group. These interview portraits attempt to give a sense of overall biography, while including detailed accounts of their respective works in the collection, their relationship to textual instructional notation more generally and equally their relationship to feminism and the Women's Movement. Where the notion of a *feminist performance score* has been so

clearly refined through the detailed discussion of *To Valerie Solanas...* in Chapter Two, here the question is effectively returned to and multiply complicated. While there is a strong connection to Oliveros running throughout these narratives in multiple senses, nowhere is there that same direct connection between feminist thought and the textual instructional performance score. Nevertheless, the qualities and sensibilities that this *feminist performance score* of Oliveros' articulates are strongly evidenced in multiple ways through work and life amongst these portraits.

Though these last three chapters are somewhat chronological, I would characterise this arc more along diffractive terms, of an opening outwards as multiple voices join the fray: Oliveros in Chapter Two, joined by Knowles and Lockwood in Chapter Three, then by these eight further figures in Chapter Four. The next chapter sits apart as it takes place primarily in the contemporary. Here, in a sense, I begin the journey again, repeating the encounter with *To Valerie Solanas...*, but this time to speak about my own work as a curator, the body of curatorial work and insights that followed. I start with the format of exhibition, so immediately at stake with the Oliveros score in its 'box' at MoMA PS1, exploring the wider question of the exhibition of scores, as well as discussing the forementioned exhibition projects, including *OSOGE*, where I worked with *Womens Work* as printed scores/archival documents. I then discuss in more detail my workshop series, *These are scores*. I outline how this format emerged, the basic structuring, possibilities and limitations. I culminate in focusing on what for me has been the most impactful aspect of this workshop series as a curatorial format: the entering of my own body as a curator into the midst of the work, which I term the *embodied curator*.

In the concluding Chapter Six I draw out the combined conclusions of the prior chapters, including wider remarks, and a discussion of areas that have been beyond my scope here but may be grounds for further inquiry. This includes returning to the two initial concepts, the *feminist performance score*, and the question of how to work with these works as a curator, now termed the *embodied curator*, to see how they have fared over the course of

these chapters. I then turn to the republishing of *Womens Work*, which I understand as the conclusion of my project. Here I will chart just a few of the outcomes that have arisen from making it available again, including one clarifying example: a concert programme by vocal and movement artist Elaine Mitchener titled *Womens Work*, after the eponymous magazine, that took place at London's Wigmore Hall this International Women's Day, 8 March 2022.

I end this introduction with a final note about the varying forms of writing across these chapters, while all broadly within the realms of what I describe above methodologically. My introduction (Chapter One, this chapter) and conclusion (Chapter Six) act as such in more conventional terms akin to the 'sandwiching' of the project, where each of the four main chapters in between more unconventionally engage in slightly different styles of writing, which is reflective of the differing materials engaged with.

CHAPTER TWO: BIG PAULINE: TOWARDS AN OLIVEROSIAN FEMINISM

Fig 2.1 Pauline Oliveros, *Teach Yourself to Fly (Sonic Meditation no 1)* (1971), excerpt from 1974 Smith Publishing score

Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016) is a composer and artist perhaps now best known for Deep Listening, her practice of meditative, non-hierarchical listening, or listening “to everything all the time” (Oliveros 2005, 60). Working prolifically over seven decades, her first major impact can be traced to 1962, when she co-founded the San Francisco Tape Music Centre, an initially self-organised studio of significant influence on the 20th-century development of electronic music (Bernstein 2008). There she would pioneer tape work, especially experimenting with delay(s), collapsing moments of the past, present and future. Initially teaching at Mills College, Oakland, California, in 1967 she moved south to take up a position at University of California, San Diego (UCSD), whose wooded cliff-top campus was just being completed. While she further explored tape there, developing her Expanded Instrument System that would be ongoing throughout her life (Mockus 2007,

171), she also developed a growing interrelated interest in meditation and long tones that would evolve into writing text scores for group situations in the early 1970s, including her widely known *Sonic Meditations* (Oliveros 1974, 1984; Von Gunden 1983, 87). There she remained until going ‘independent’ in 1981 (Von Gunden 1983, viii) and moving to Troy, New York, where the Rensselaer Polytechnic still posthumously hosts her Deep Listening Institute.

The title of this chapter, “Big Pauline” is the *nickname* given to Oliveros by “Little Pauline”, Pauline Boudry, and Boudry’s collaborator Renate Lorenz, to distinguish between the two Paulines during conversations around Boudry/Lorenz’s film installation version of the score *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1970) made in Berlin in 2013, and discussed in the second part (2.2.1 and 2.2.2) of this chapter. The ‘big’ is translated from the original French usage ‘grand’ – connoting age, the older of the two Paulines, rather than size or popularity in this case, though as such, playfully mis-translated into English.

Metaphorically speaking, however, it will hopefully become clear over this and further chapters that Oliveros’ reach and importance among a wider group might make both senses of this *nickname* stick: ‘big’ within these histories, and ‘big’ as in a beacon, especially among her women peers and those of the following generations. A *torero*, a Spanish bullfighter, “this great strong woman”, in mentee Beth Anderson’s words cited below (2018), or, as Heidi Von Gunden, another contributor to *Women’s Work* and author of *The Music of Pauline Oliveros* (1983), put it to me in our interview:

“Well, you’ve met her, right? She’s powerful. Just walks in the room and, arrgh!” (Von Gunden 2018)

Big here, then, as a figure that is often to be seen literally centrally. As someone who would command great respect and attention while simultaneously diffusing it; the central dualistic ambivalence that will be drawn out in this chapter.



Fig 2.2-4 What's Cooking? festival, UC San Diego, 1977 (Below: Suzanne Lacy, Pauline Oliveros, Alison Knowles; Jerome Rothenberg, Allan Kaprow, Pauline Oliveros, Eleanor Antin). 102/12/1, Pauline Oliveros Papers, UCSD

Through all of my research to date, then, it feels as inevitable as it is essential that this thesis must begin with Pauline Oliveros, her work in the early 1970s and its relation to feminism(s). This question of Oliveros as a feminist artist and composer was at the heart of my discovering *Womens Work*. I argue

over the course of these chapters, beginning here of course with Oliveros herself, that this connection was not a coincidence but rather that Oliveros is a central catalyst – in Oliveros’ collaborations and friendship with Knowles and Lockwood respectively, and in turn in their joint project, *Womens Work*, and equally in their wider communities of practice – as shall be clarified in Chapters Three and Four. Oliveros was both centrally located (‘big’) to many, if not all, of these wider figures, as well as the most explicit and emphatically feminist in her work during the period in question. The objective of this chapter is to come to an understanding of Oliveros’ own relationship to feminism in her work that might feed into a wider understanding of any meaning of “women’s work” within these networks. Within this, I more deeply explore the feminisms at stake in *To Valerie Solanas...*, the *feminist performance score*, that catalysed this research.

In the first section (2.1) of this chapter I make a ‘portrait’ of Big Pauline as a feminist figure, laying the groundwork for a more complexed understanding of Oliveros’ relationship to feminism. I do this through an account by a younger mentee (and *Womens Work* contributor) Beth Anderson; through my own changing relationship to her work over the past two decades; and through two seemingly contrasting instances where her status as a major feminist icon is seemingly made and un-made, introducing this notion of *ambivalence* to join the closely aligned *performance/score duality* already at play. In the second part (2.2) of this chapter I return to her 1970 text score *To Valerie Solanas...* through a series of encounters, contemporary and historical. It is this work that both set me on this path of inquiry but more importantly has inaugurated Oliveros’ entrance both into this ‘feminist’ period of work and thought, as well as a major milestone in her movement towards listening as the central force in her composition. Through a deeper analysis of this piece, I demonstrate how her feminist politics emerge in the work itself, indeed exactly how this work is a *feminist performance score*.

In the final section (2.3) I turn to an anecdote written by writer Kathy Acker about her experiences of the ♀’s Ensemble in relation to Pauline’s sensibilities, to bring all of these strands together into a more concerted

*Oliverosian*¹⁰ feminist position. Or rather, one where *multiple positions* are integral, drawing on art historian Jonathan Katz's "both/and" formulation of a Cagean queer politics of silence (2001, 54). This is further brought into dialogue with a wider notion of complementarity that stems from physicist Niels Bohr, which was of pertinent interest to Oliveros herself (Von Gunden, 1983; Oliveros 1984), and more recently taken up by feminist philosopher Karen Barad (2007).

2.1 An ambivalent feminist icon

Beth Anderson, Brooklyn, New York, 2018:

"I was always looking for women composers when I was a kid. You didn't get a woman composer until the fourth year of the John Thompson Piano Book, these little red books that everybody used in the 50s, and it was Cecile Chaminade, Scarf Dance, and it was like, "Yes! I knew there were some!" and then I didn't hear about another one until I found out about Pauline Oliveros when I was 16. I had a music history teacher who played Steve Reich's record Come Out (1967) and on the flip side was Pauline Oliveros.¹¹ It was wonderful: I was so excited to find Pauline! And there weren't hardly any records, there was no research, there was just nothing. The festival [1973] was actually Bob [Robert] Ashley's idea, "I think it's a good idea for you to run a women's music festival," and I said, "Sure, who are we going to invite?" and he said, "No problem, I already invited them," and it was Vivian Fine, Pauline Oliveros, and Charlotte Moorman.

¹⁰ I chose the neologism, *Oliverosian*, in particular for its phonetic inclusion of *rose*: Rose, or Rosie, being pseudonyms of Linda Montano during her relationship with Oliveros that began in the Spring of 1975 (Mockus 2007, 96, 103), as in the contemporaneous composition title, *Rose Mountain Slow Runner*.

¹¹ The 1967 compilation recording *New Sounds in Electronic Music*, features Oliveros' *I of IV*, recorded the year prior at the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio.

Pauline was hilarious, because she had had trouble getting paid from Mills¹² previously, so she showed up and said to me, “Where’s my cheque?” and I said, “Oh, the cheques are going to be issued and sent to you after the concert,” and she said, “No, they’re not: I’m not going on until you get the cheque.” Anyway, we got her paid and she went on and everything was cool. I had already been to something of hers down in San Diego, it was at the university, and she had the ♀’s Ensemble. I was down there to interview her to write a paper for my class at Mills, and I had never met her. Because she was doing the concert that evening apparently she had a ritual that the day of a concert she did not speak! So I spent the day: some of her women came and picked me up, and we stopped off at a used clothing store for fun, to shop, and I found the paint-by-numbers scroll that I used for Torero Piece and I thought that was so perfect, because I thought of Pauline as this great strong woman and then here I find this Torero. And then we went to her house, and she had this huge cage of birds that were growing crazy and I recorded everything for about 12 hours and I have not one sound out of Pauline, it was the most hilarious thing! But, you know, I talked to her students and I went to the concert, so that was the greatest interview! I took her all my music up until that point, I printed it and bound it and handed it to her, like to the great master, you know!”

2.1.1 A Little Noise in the System

An auto-didact similar in age to Beth Anderson in her story, I had begun to scour the “contemporary classical/avant-garde” sections in record shops for the names of women composers and musicians in my early 20s. I was interested in finding the most strange or dissonant sounds while also being drawn to the politics of liberation, especially feminism via the *Riot Grrrl* punk era of the 1990s. Most importantly, I felt that there must have been a link between the two. In this way, I remember finding and immediately

¹² Beth Anderson was studying a Masters in composition with Robert Ashley at Mills College, Oakland, California (see Chapter Four).

purchasing a copy of Pauline Oliveros' album *A Little Noise in the System*, a translucent 12" picture disc of the 1967 recording released by the Table of Elements label in 2003. Once back at home listening, I distinctly recall liking the soft minimal drone, but not feeling as moved as I had wanted to be by the title, which was so full of radical promise – the sense of subtle alterity contained in the “little noise”, modest, unassuming yet nevertheless perhaps stealthily infiltrating. In fact, as I know now, this was one of numerous and similarly appealing titles for Oliveros' tape works of the later 1960s, including *Particle-dangling for Gertrude Stein* and *Big Mother is Watching You* – both made on a fellowship at the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio in 1966. The titling of apparently abstract works is a topic that will come into deeper significance in the second part of this chapter (2.2). Back at the turn of the millennium, I surely lacked a sufficient frame of reference for what I was listening to both sonically and historically, a piece that was “composed in real time [on Moog] at UCSD” (Oliveros 2003). Yet although Oliveros' tape works of the 1960s are perhaps the recordings she is best known for, connected to her status as co-founder of the San Francisco Tape Music Centre, it is not this period of her work that would go on to hold such importance for me.

It was around this same time that I started to work for Lina Džuverovič and Anne Hilde Neset, two curators who had a project called *Her Noise* that seemed to articulate in more cogent and professional terms some of these connections I was seeking between feminism and avant-garde sound cultures, contemporary and historical. In doing this work on what was to become the *Her Noise* archive I came into contact with several more Oliveros recordings, as well as a copy of her then new book *Deep Listening* (2005). In general terms, this work confirmed for me that there clearly were women who played significant parts in these histories, often relatively if not entirely overlooked, and this called for feminist scholars and curators and fans to fill in the gaps. But were any of these historical women part of a wider feminist movement and was their work at all informed by these politics? Were they themselves then doing this work, as much as we were doing it now? None of this work on the Her Noise Archive seemed to hold the answers; a fact

perhaps speaking more to the limitations of ‘curatorial’ research and the time and budgetary pressure to ‘produce’ (a question to be further discussed in Chapter Five) as much as anything else.



Fig 2.5 Stacks at UAL Archives and Special Collections, London College of Communication, January 2020 (L-R: *Her Noise* archive, Irene Revell, Lina Džuverović, Anne Hilde Neset)

As I have already recounted in Chapter One (1.1), it would take a more fleeting encounter with another exhibition project, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, the first survey of the North American feminist art movement of the 1970s, to enable me to begin to address this question. In one of the final rooms of this vast travelling exhibition that I visited at MoMA PS1 in 2008 was a modest vitrine dedicated to Pauline Oliveros. A room in a basement where Oliveros sat seemingly peer-less in terms of other composers or artists working with sound; a room seemingly dedicated to the exhibition curators’ miscellanea. This apparent peerless-ness was at that time incidental to the discoveries within that vitrine, though I now understand it as an important facet of Oliveros’ relationship to the wider feminist (art) movement: one of ambivalence and a feeling of misunderstanding that I expand on more below.

I will return yet again to this encounter with the vitrine and consider it from a curatorial perspective in relation to the score(s) that it contained in Chapter Five. Here I am more immediately concerned with its sheer contents, that

were to me both thrilling and unexpected; more-or-less the “smoking gun” I had been searching vaguely for all these years. Here I learned for the first time, through the archival ephemera contained behind the glass, about Oliveros’ ♀’s Ensemble (1970-73); and through the inclusion of its three-page text score, the 1970 work *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation*. The provocative title of the latter spoke most immediately to me: the juxtaposition of Solanas and Monroe – *recognising them both together at once* – a seemingly complex combination of affinities, as incisive and seductive a combination now as they must have been, if not more so, in their historical context. A title equally or more explicit than *A Little Noise in the System* and one that I would keep in mind until 2012, when alongside sound artists Cathy Lane and Lee Ingleton I staged a performance of the work, described in in the second part of this chapter (2.2). Here, quite suddenly, Oliveros had for me transformed from being an intriguing and important composer working across these avant-garde histories to being an explicitly *feminist* composer, or that is to say, one who had espoused these politics in her life and work during this period of the early 1970s.

2.1.2 A speculative history of the feminist (sonic) avant-garde

Clearly it was possible to know something of the work of Oliveros, and yet not know that she had had this explicit period of feminist thought and practice. The *Sonic Meditations* (Oliveros 1974) may have been relatively widely known, but as written text scores would have effectively circulated in a different economy than the commercial recordings I had encountered; and although I was aware of Oliveros’ early web presence for her Deep Listening retreats, I wasn’t aware of the origins of this practice, just that this seemed to be both intriguingly inclusive yet slightly alienating to me in its ‘New Age’ aesthetics (see fig 2.6) Of course, the *Sonic Meditations* are included in the forementioned Deep Listening book, but that text makes no reference to the fact they were significantly developed in the context of the ♀’s Ensemble, nor to a wider set of questions Oliveros contemporaneously posed to do with what constitutes a feminist music. Indeed in her introduction to the 2005

book she references the Meditation Project, a research project she initiated at UCSD in the winter of 1972 that effectively continued the work of The ♀’s Ensemble, albeit in a mixed and more academically structured framework, but not the several years of meetings of the ♀’s Ensemble that preceded this. One would need to read the introduction to the 1974 Smith Publishing edition of the scores to find that they were in fact dedicated to the ensemble; or indeed the first occasion in which the *Sonic Meditations* were published in *Source* magazine in 1972 – which I will go on to discuss in the next section, 2.1.3. One would also need to read the copy of Oliveros’ *New York Times* article “And Don’t Call Them ‘Lady’ Composers” (1970b), or her collection of early writings, *Software for People* (1984), out of print until its second edition in 2015, to find her public commitment spanned over a number of years across these very different forms and contexts.



Fig 2.6 Screenshot from archive.org, 2005

It is beyond my scope here to explore historiographically the ways that Oliveros’ work has been taken up and understood across different moments, but I suggest that these experiences speak to two not unrelated points. Firstly, the richly heterogeneous body of Oliveros’ work across seven decades that is still mostly only selectively appreciated: that is to say, often different

facets or periods in different contexts.¹³ Secondly, and more specifically, it might also speak to the nature of her own engagement with feminism that it is both at once always explicit where intended, yet never the final word, never separated from other concerns – to such an extent that this intensive period would slowly work its way through a series of projects, emerging anew. A genealogy of Oliveros’ term “deep listening” might trace this evolution from its (feminist) origins in the early 1970s, the crucial involvement of the ♀’s Ensemble in the development of what she then termed “sonic awareness” (Oliveros 1984), to then evolve into Deep Listening after the punning album title of the same name in 1986. These feminist origins are available for anyone committed to tracing them yet evolved through several decades of development into a uniquely *Oliverosian* project where it seems she no longer needs to make them explicit.

2.1.3 A “two-legged human being,” or, *Being Pauline*

Here I wish to present two examples that seem almost diametrically opposed though both share a similar sense of desire to challenge orthodoxies. Firstly, the injection of explicit feminism into *Source* magazine, in the framing and iconography of her *Sonic Meditations* as they were presented across its pages, arguably the primary source so to speak, of wider understandings of Oliveros’ feminist position in her work. I contrast this with the second example, a lengthy anecdote written up by Fluxus poet Jackson Mac Low of his performance of *Being Pauline* (1975) where he accordingly attended a gala for women composers hosted by Gloria Steinem as Oliveros – part of Oliveros’ *Theatre of Substitution* (1975–77). This was an act of mischief, if not outright antagonism, seemingly at odds with any straightforward notion of Oliveros’ relationship to the Women’s Movement.

As mentioned above, the *Sonic Meditations* were published by Smith, Oliveros’ music publishers in 1974. But their perhaps more public entrance

¹³ For example, there has been a posthumous profusion of interest in Deep Listening especially in the visual art world which generally makes no tangible connection to Oliveros’ interests in electronics.

occurred with their initial publishing in 1972 in the tenth issue of *Source* magazine, guest-edited by Alvin and Mary Lucier (the latter also a contributor to *Womens Work*). I will go on to discuss *Source* in more detail in the next chapter in relation to score magazine projects and anthologies, and this particular issue appears again in Chapter Four in the words of Mary Lucier. Suffice it to say at this stage that the magazine was “internationally known among all those interested in new music and related arts at the time” (Kahn, 2011, ix). It was certainly of marked significance within these specific circles: Oliveros’s text “Some Sound Observations” in the third issue of *Source* (1968) is what would initiate correspondence between Lockwood and Oliveros from 1970, and the former’s ultimate transatlantic migration in 1973 (Mockus 2007, 57). In this sense, the publishing of any score in *Source* was a means of putting the work unsolicited before a wide audience of peers, whereas more formal music publishing makes the work available only to those ordering and purchasing, usually with the intention of a public performance(s).



Fig 2.7 Sonic Meditations, Smith Publications, 1974, cover

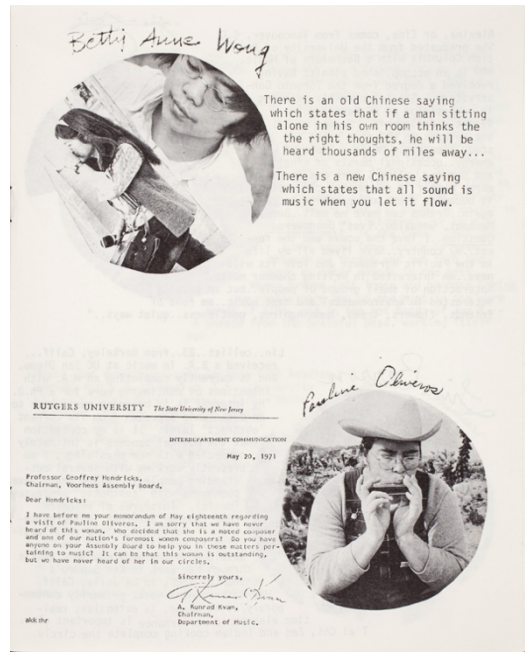
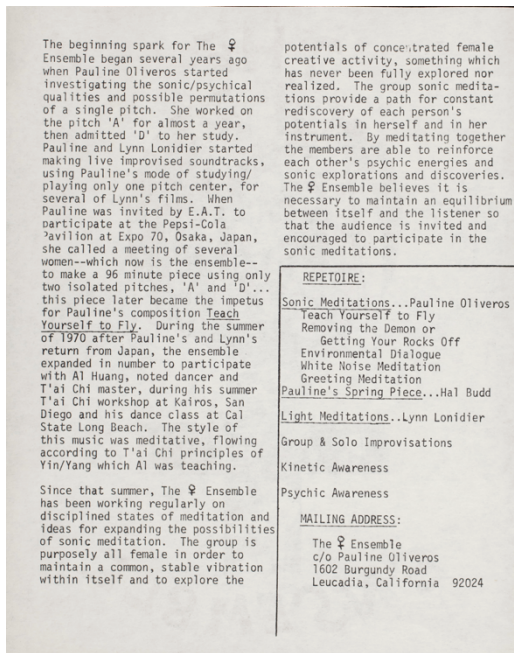
The first 11 *Sonic Meditations* of the 25 that would go onto be included in the 1974 Smith score, were published in the tenth issue of *Source*. In both instances the works are prefaced by the same introduction that dates them “March – November 1971” and dedicates them “to the ♀’s Ensemble and

Amelia Earhart”, going on to describe the process of the former. I note here that the first, perhaps most widely known and performed of all the *Sonic Meditations* is titled *Teach Yourself to Fly*, hence the playful connection to Amelia Earhart, the first woman to circumnavigate the Earth by plane (see fig 2.1). In *Source*, laid out over two double-page spreads (figs 2.11-14), the brief textual scores are notably handwritten in Oliveros’ distinctive cursive (where they are later printed in the Smith edition, fig 2.1 and fig 2.7), an intimate and hand-made feeling that would be taken up again by Knowles and Lockwood in the design of *Womens Work*. In *Source* this handwritten text of the scores is also underlaid with photography of the ♀’s Ensemble. Overall, the design reproduces significant elements of the style and layout of a slightly earlier unpublished “information pamphlet” (Mockus 2007, 45) simply titled *The ♀’s Ensemble*.¹⁴



Figs 2.8-10 ♀’s Ensemble information pamphlet, 1971 (front cover; first double-page spread, over page)

¹⁴ Pamphlet, undated 1971, 102/12/1, Pauline Oliveros Papers, UCSD



This earlier pamphlet begins with a more extended introduction to the ♀'s Ensemble (fig 2.9):

“Several years ago when Pauline Oliveros started investigating the sonic/physical qualities and permutations of a single pitch. She worked on the pitch ‘A’ for almost a year then admitted ‘D’ to her study”, work that then influenced her performance for the “Experiments in Art and Technology Pepsi-Cola Pavilion at Expo ’70, Osaka, Japan, for which she called a meeting of several women - - which now is the ensemble - - to make a 96-minute piece using only two isolated pitches, ‘A’ and ‘D’...”¹⁵

This earlier pamphlet did not include the scores themselves, though it lists the first six by name, among other repertoire. Rather, the main content is a series of profiles of each member of the ensemble with a circular headshot, and while each ‘bio’ has a similar half-page layout, each takes its own heterogeneous style of writing. Notable here is Oliveros’ own contribution, in the form of a letter from Rutgers University (fig 2.10). The letter seems to

¹⁵ *ibid*

follow up on a suggestion by artist Geoffrey Hendricks (then husband of *Women's Work* contributor Nye Ffarrabhas) to invite Pauline Oliveros to talk, which is being queried by his colleague, who states:

“I am sorry but we have never heard of this woman. Who decided that she is a noted composer and one of the Nation’s foremost women composers?”

A. Kunrad Kvam, Chairman, Department of Music”¹⁶

In the accompanying portrait, in which Oliveros plays the mouth accordion, she is wearing a stetson and dungarees, seemingly in a meditatively absorbed defiance of these suggested norms. It is notable both as an example where Oliveros takes pleasure in drawing attention towards what she deems to be idiotic correspondence, as we shall see she does again towards the end of the second part of this chapter (2.2.3). But more simply in its presentation of her basic precariousness, her status – although in certain contexts already long-established by this point – is still up for serious question.

¹⁶ *ibid*

Fig 2.10 Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditations* in *Source* issue 10 (1972), cover page

It is the cover-page (fig 2.10) of the *Sonic Meditations* in *Source* that seems most directly in dialogue with this pamphlet: it follows a similar style with image and bio. Here the bio is even more polemical, possibly a pre-emptive retort to dismissive gatekeepers like the Rutgers Professor the world over, not least declaring Oliveros to be “a two-legged human being, a female, lesbian, musician, composer, among other things which contribute to her identity”. The work title, *Sonic Mediations*, and Pauline Oliveros’ own name as composer are written into an ochre/brown ‘Women’s symbol’ (♀), something that asserts an unambiguous link between the Women’s Movement and this composer, and indeed this set of works. Moreover with another circular portrait of Oliveros enclosed within the symbol, here she looks typically androgynous in comfortable, informal clothing. I posit that this invitation from the Luciers to contribute to this issue of *Source*, while by no means Oliveros’ first appearance in the magazine, is the crucial, electrifying and first major public manifestation of this body of feminist work, and as such, an opportunity to publish not the pamphlet *per se* but to transmit the spirit and aesthetic of this *feminist zine* into the wider arena of

Oliveros' musical peers. This moment seems to provide some form of widely visible declaration or even manifesto, to the extent that Oliveros' feminism, when it is known, is perhaps taken for granted as an obvious one, through clichéd symbols, photographs of androgynous women in 70s clothes, group-work etc. This easily misses the depth, complexity and thereby power of her thinking and work in this area, which I will draw out throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Figs 2.11-14 Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditations* in *Source* issue 10 (1972)

Within the *Source* cover-page, while the imagery on the left-hand-side seems to give no room for doubt – and it is easy to zone in on the adjectives on the right-hand-side that would have been most striking in 1972, foremost of all “lesbian” – I argue it is easy to overlook how the text of this bio already complicates this *surface* reading. Not least, the choice of “two-legged human

being” as her primary identity ahead of all others, book-ended with “she is her self.” Whatever the intimate women-only spaces depicted in the images might mean to Oliveros, she is unequivocally never a separatist, never partisan, simply “her self”. I am aware that “two-legged human” may read to some as ableist language. I concede that this may be something she might not have put in these terms in later years; however I do not read it that way myself. Rather, that by drawing on what is a common facet for many humans it also draws attention to the fact that may not be taken for granted either. Any one of those identities in that list could be otherwise for another person, which speaks to the heart of the kind of politics I am arguing for in this chapter.

My second example takes the opposite motion, which injects Oliveros’ circle of male colleagues – or one in particular, Fluxus poet Jackson Mac Low – into the culture of the Women’s Movement. Understandings of this anecdote flow from a brief exchange with Kate Millet, an artist associated with Fluxus in the 1960s who would go on to be most famous for her 1970 book, *Sexual Politics*, and seen as one of the founders of the US Women’s Movement. The exchange is within Oliveros’ correspondence archive at New York Public Library and also discussed in an interview in Martha Mockus’ 2007 book *Sounding Out: Pauline Oliveros and Lesbian Musicality*. Millet gets in touch with Oliveros to invite her to take part in the first “Women’s Music Festival”, happening in May 1973 in Sacramento, California. Oliveros’ response to Millet, typical of her excoriating epistolary style in any matter she wished to challenge, asked what is meant by “women’s music”:

“Is it enough to borrow sexist forms and impose feminist words?...I am not sure at all that it is “SAFE” to borrow forms which continue a sexist message such as rock, rhythm and blues, sonatas, symphonies etc. Maybe we have to search around and find something else. Maybe we have to give up on what we know and love...” (Oliveros, 1973¹⁷)

¹⁷ Letter from Pauline Oliveros to Kate Millett, 16th April 1973, Box 18 Folder 26, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

Here Oliveros is rejecting what might now be understood as a neo-liberal politics of inclusion, arguing for a formal radicalism, a complete overhaul. This is essentially what she was advocating for in her *Sonic Meditations* – a paradigm shift in fundamental notions of performance/listening, performer/audience, and often abandoning the notion of the latter altogether. Here it is clear that as much as Oliveros was making strong connections to the signs and symbols of the Women’s Movement, she was very much advocating for an avant-garde radicalism, in as much as she was already evidencing it in her own practice. A later generic letter from Millett seemingly aimed at encouraging stragglers, dated a week before the festival commenced, gives some insight of what Oliveros was effectively questioning: we learn the festival is to be hosted at the University of California, Sacramento, and that travelling women will be hosted by local women. There seems to be no set programme but anyone arriving who wishes to perform will simply sign up, with daytime concerts in a hall, and “at night we want to get it on and dance to bands”. The event, Millett proclaims in her ending will be “[m]ellow...[a] celebration...loving.”¹⁸ Oliveros tells Mockus in 2007 that she felt her already existing work was not acknowledged:

“I think I was holding out because there was no honorarium attached to it. It was like, ‘just show up,’ and it felt unprofessional to me at the time.” (Mockus 2007, 152)

As much as the professor at Rutgers might be questioning her reputation from within the overwhelmingly male academy, so too, in a sense, was this anonymous amorphous gathering, that somehow was not able to acknowledge her existing 15 years of practice, arguably working on the question of “women’s music” in significant ways for much if not all of this period, but certainly in the years immediately preceding this exchange. After all, might not have each and every prior meeting of the ♀’s Ensemble been a Women’s Music Festival of sorts? As will be expounded later in the second

¹⁸ Letter/newsletter from Kate Millett address “Dear Sisters into Music (and with a hand-written “Dear Pauline Oliveros” above), 26th April 1973, Box 18 Folder 26, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

part of this chapter (2.2), there seems to be ample focus in these plans of Millet's on *the group* but not on the needs of the *individual* within that, or specifically, of the need for *recognition*.

In the interview in Mockus' book, Oliveros goes on to link the refusal of this invitation with a later invitation to attend a Ms Magazine Gala, 'A Celebration for Women Composers', in New York in November 1975, hosted by Gloria Steinem, editor of the magazine and perhaps the most widely known 'leader' of the US Women's Movement (Mockus 2007, 152). Here Oliveros answers the invitation by sending in her place her New York friend, the Fluxus poet Jackson Mac Low. Mac Low had recently visited UCSD where Oliveros had performed in one of his works, thus now returning the favour, performing in Oliveros' *Theatre of Substitution*. Though not discussed further in Mockus' book, in the corresponding report written by Mac Low, *Being Pauline: Narrative of a Substitution* (1976) and published in *Big Deal* magazine, we learn that Oliveros instructed Mac Low to deliver a handwritten note to Steinem, simply reading:

"Dear Gloria,
Jackson Mac Low has agreed to be me for the Ms. Concert.
Thank you. Pauline Oliveros"

Mac Low's relatively lengthy published narration includes complications with the RSVP, and extensive descriptions of the concert repertoire itself. At the following reception Mac Low introduces himself accordingly as Oliveros to varying levels of resistance and amusement. Steinem accepts the note. Perhaps the most insightful exchange he describes is with Kate Millet. On Mac Low introducing himself as Pauline Oliveros to Millet's then-husband, sculptor Fumio Yoshimura, Millet insists on adding that he is "actually Jackson Mac Low". In his report, Mac Low muses:

"I was with Kate an inadequate substitute as I did not draw her in naturally without arousing her hostility, resistance, suspicion...maybe that I was pulling everyone's leg, even with the evidence of Pauline's

note (maybe that Pauline & I were jointly trying to “pull everyone's leg”—which was, of course, part of the truth if not the whole truth).”
(Mac Low 1976, 173-4)

Mac Low goes on to describe drinking a lot of the white wine at the reception, as well as taking a number of oranges home for himself and his son in his knapsack. He claims to have walked home with a new acquaintance, who takes him briefly to a gay bar, before heading off alone to a massage parlour where he describes having sexual intercourse with a (female) sex worker for the first time. The relative incredulity of this latter twist in the story only makes the whole episode seem all-the-more fantastical.

In Heidi Von Gunden's 1983 monograph, *The Music of Pauline Oliveros*, she lists in the appendix of compositions *Theater of Substitution* under “Miscellaneous Compositions”, referencing the text by Mac Low (Von Gunden, 178). Indeed, in a 1979 interview for the Canadian feminist newspaper *Broadside*, Oliveros shares the episode and notes that “[Mac Low] wrote a piece about it called ‘Being Pauline: Narrative of a Substitution’. Quite a wonderful piece.” (Oliveros 1979, 13) Oliveros was seemingly just as content with this highly unorthodox reaction to the notion of being honoured by the Women's Movement, as she was with sharing its signs and symbols just a few years earlier, as she was in turn in being profiled in such a feminist newspaper a few years later. Her trust in collaboration with Jackson Mac Low was every bit, if not more, important to Oliveros than recognition by these powerful Women's Movement figures, Millett, Steinem *et al.* Mac Low writes in the text of his relationship with Oliveros, “though never very close in any ordinary sense, we mean a lot to each other – a pleasantly mysterious affinity”(168). And it is after all Mac Low who writes the introduction to Oliveros' second anthology of writings, *Roots of the Movement*, published in 1998 – not Millett, Steinem or any such ‘Movement’ figure.

Clearly it is the work itself that remains most important to Oliveros, including her recognition both as a lone woman composer amidst male colleagues, and in turn within a wider world that might include the Women's

Movement. If “she is herself” is taken as a central tenet of Oliveros’ feminist rubric, then we must understand this to include *Being Pauline* (Mac Low, 1976), at once both ludic and entirely serious, that deepens this sense of rich complexity in any understanding of Oliveros as a feminist icon. It is clear from her *coming out*, in its multiple senses, in *Source* magazine that Oliveros was not reticent at all about espousing her own relationship to feminism. What is further clarified in this second anecdote with Jackson Mac Low (and Kate Millett) is that Oliveros may be explicit, but always on her own terms. Her serious engagement with Millett – as much as it outlines her alienation from conventional *women’s music*—is nevertheless a sign of broader commitment to the movement, and indeed Mockus notes that Oliveros would go on to present a *Sonic Meditation* at the 1986 Michigan Women’s Music Festival with a crowd of 7,500 women (Mockus, 2007, 161). Equally, she did not ignore or turn down the invitation to the Ms Magazine Gala. Rather, in employing one of her own performance works, *Theater of Substitution*, she was able to engage on her own terms with a playful irreverence that is thoroughly redolent of what I term an *Oliverosian* feminism: a deep ambivalence that, as will be further elaborated in the next part (2.2), comes straight from the heart of her work in textual instructional performance.

2.2 ‘Valerie’ and her multiple appearances

“If you want to talk about feminist theory, well, that piece embodies it.”

Oliveros on *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1979, 13)

As this is the main instance where I will describe a textual instructional score-based performance work, I want to begin by stating what I see as a fundamental challenge in writing about such works, that in their basic written description might prove tautological. This is to say that the work’s very material and structure as textual instruction already describes itself in its written form, not least in the case of the two pages of prose instruction in *To Valerie Solanas....* Here I briefly summarise the score in order to signpost

enough understanding for the arguments that I will go on to make following this introductory section and include the full score as an appendix. My brief overview of the work is drawn from reading the score (Oliveros 1970a), Oliveros' own more recent notes on the work (Oliveros 2011), Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto* (1968) and Heidi von Gunden's succinct but immensely helpful analysis in her monograph, *The Music of Pauline Oliveros* (1983, 39-45) introducing more of the latter in my further discussion.

During the 1960s Oliveros was increasingly drawn to working with long tones and drone-like forms, in parallel with exploring improvisation within her compositions: she founded her first improvisation group in 1957 (Von Gunden, 33), going on to incorporate elements into her compositions as early as 1961's *Sound Patterns*, a piece that won her the Gaudeamus Prize and was for a time one of her best known (Von Gunden 1983, 34). She was particularly interested in the possibly for variation within a tone brought by modulation, overtones, etc. In effect, this was the creation of a structure within which individual improvisation was also possible. Such long tones provide the basic materials in *To Valerie Solanas...* as well as the basis, as above (2.1.3), for what would go on to be the ♀'s Ensemble. Towards the end of the 1960s she had also started to more actively explore meditation (Von Gunden 1983, 87; Oliveros 1984), whilst encountering the nascent women's movement:

“[S]hortly after it was published in 1968 the *SCUM Manifesto* by Valerie Solanas fell into my hands. Intrigued by the egalitarian feminist principles set forth in the *Manifesto*, I wanted to incorporate them in the structure of a new piece that I was composing. The women's movement was surfacing and I felt the need to express my resonance with this energy. Marilyn Monroe had taken her own life. Valerie Solanas had attempted to take the life of Andy Warhol. Both women seemed to be desperate and caught in the traps of inequality: Monroe needed to be recognized for her talent as an actress. Solanas wished to be supported for her own creative work.”

To Valerie Solanas... LP sleeve notes (Oliveros 2011).

The resulting work brought this feminist impulse into what would also mark a decisive shift away from working with tape altogether to composing scores for group performance that employ listening at their core. The piece is a composition for six or more musicians on any instrument(s) and has three parts of equal length, indicated by red, yellow and blue lighting respectively, either 30 or 45 (originally 60) minutes in total. The work was commissioned by the New Music Ensemble of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and premiered slightly earlier in a *chamber* version at Hope College, Michigan in October 1970. The score's two pages of text instruction specify certain aspects in detail while others are left entirely to the determination of those staging the performance. All players follow the same parts with no hierarchy.

The piece draws specifically on Valerie Solanas' insistence on the need for the autonomy of the individual within any group, or collective process, outlined in Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto*:

“A true community consists of individuals – not mere species members, not couples -- respecting each others' individuality and privacy, at the same time interacting with each other mentally and emotionally -- free spirits in free relation to each other -- and co-operating with each other to achieve common ends.”

(Solanas 1968, 18)

This thinking manifests variously in Oliveros' score (Oliveros 1970a; Von Gunden 1983). Each player independently chooses five tones, “at least two of [which] must be in a non-diatonic or dissonant relationship to the other three pitches” (Oliveros 1970a), as well as certain forms of ‘modulation’ appropriate to their instrument, in advance of the performance and without any prior discussion with each other, ie kept autonomously to themselves. In the first part the players introduce their own tones, while in the second the players can begin to ‘steal’ materials – that is to say, borrow someone else's tone, or modulation-style – while the third part mirrors the first – an

introduction/action/resolution structure that is common to a number of Oliveros' instrumental pieces from the early 1960s onwards (Von Gunden 1983, 26). Although the complex instructions call on a degree of competency in any given instrument, the emphasis of the piece is on intensive listening to others, rather than traditional musical virtuosity. And "if any player starts to dominate the musical texture, the community that is created by the piece absorbs the outstanding sounds back into the collective" (Oliveros 1970a). The long, discordant tones create a serene, contemplative bedrock for the piece that befits the dedication in the work's title; the dynamism of the ongoing play between the individual performances and the sound of the group as a whole acts as a potent metaphor for the political and artistic practices emergent in the contemporaneous women's movement. Thus the work, echoing Solanas' concerns, constitutes a perfect expression of Oliveros' belief in the dual needs for autonomy and community at stake in political, musical and other forms of organisation, an embodied feminist theory no less, according to Oliveros' opening remarks.

In 1977 the score itself was published by Smith Publishing, and a vinyl recording was released in 2011, consisting of the Hope College premiere and a later 1977 performance at Wesleyan University. There followed numerous performances of the work, including the 1979 iteration at the Lincoln Centre that sparked the 'Baker's controversy' that I will discuss in 2.2.3. Diverse recent performances include an opera by Opera Povera, REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012); at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto (2017) with open rehearsals; the forementioned instance in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London (2012), that I will now go on to discuss, alongside Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz' filmed version at the Berliner Rundfunk in 2013.

Although the question loomed (seemingly inevitably) large for us as soon as we had set out to stage the work, Von Gunden's analysis from 1983 does not query whether or how *To Valerie Solanas...* is a *feminist* work beyond stating that the title "is a dedication to two women who struggled with their personal artistic expression". This makes a strong link here, and elsewhere in her book, between Oliveros' coming into feminist consciousness and being able

to fully grasp new directions in her work – meditation, improvisation, and ultimately the combination of the two, *sonic awareness* (later known as *Deep Listening*). In fact, Von Gunden refers to Solanas as an actor (rather than writer and playwright) and does not cite any of Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto*. The only other connection that she does make is:

“[A]s a “non-hierarchical relationship of the players” all members of the ensemble are equal...[t]hese conditions resonate Oliveros' belief that feminism should encourage, at the very least, an examination of stereotyped patterns, in this case the structure and functions of an orchestra.” (Von Gunden 1983, 40)

Something that would ultimately propose a different kind of ensemble altogether, the *circle* found in the later *Sonic Meditations*. Here I am not so much concerned with the score as text but more its implications, especially its ambiguities and ambivalences, in the process of its performance, through group reading and its subsequent live moments. In order to pursue this fundamental question of what constitutes the “feminism” in this work, I will go on to analyse a series of anecdotal experiences from my own involvement in its performances. I do this in three parts: firstly, the series of questions that were produced in relation to the score and its negotiation, that pertained as much to me as a curator wishing to stage a performance as to those performing it, including my co-curator, Cathy Lane (also a performer herself); as much as to an artist-duo (Boudry/Lorenz) staging a filmed performance. The answers, mainly drawn in the first instance from email correspondence with Oliveros, and in the second, a joint Skype meeting, are interwoven with von Gunden's more conventionally musicological insights, not least from her own performance of the work. The second part dwells on one specific anecdote from the film shoot in Berlin, a passing comment made to me by the sound recordist, a compliment in fact, that ‘punk’ musicians were not usually able to master the performance of avant-garde compositions so adeptly, examining here the complex implications of such an anecdotal, even perhaps otherwise throwaway comment. In the third part I turn to the 1979 correspondence generated when the Lincoln Centre erroneously

suggested that Oliveros was herself a member of Solanas' Society for Cutting Up Men, an error reproduced in the review of the concert in the New York Times, and ultimately traced back to a 1971 edition of the *Baker's Dictionary of Musical Biography* – an assertion that Oliveros almost obsessively sought to quash, in spite of her apparent admiration for Solanas.

2.2.1 London and Berlin

Once Oliveros had affirmed our idea of presenting this work alongside her keynote talk at Tate Modern, we actually had to “quit being cute and start studying scores”, as she herself had urged in the pages of the New York Times contemporaneously with the writing of this score in her widely cited comment piece “And Don't Call Them ‘Lady’ Composers” (Oliveros 1970b, 49). The more we discussed it, the more uncertain I felt: not through any wavering of desire to hear the final work live, but more an imposter syndrome, not quite knowing what we had committed to, or whether we were even able to achieve the basic terms of the score in the conditions we had in terms of space, budget, technical means. Whilst this might in part be because I had little experience of staging historical score-based composition, it became increasingly clear that this was also because of the nature of the score itself. I have sometimes described its two pages plus title page as a “lengthy prose score”, which it is by comparison with much shorter *event scores*. Yet it is also fairly succinct, and reads as precise not poetic, *just* the basic instructions. Still, these seemed to produce almost as many questions as they answered.

In both cases, London¹⁹ and Berlin,²⁰ although the execution of the score was ultimately entrusted to the musicians, there was nevertheless a need to understand it in a deeper way in order to make the determinations to get to

¹⁹ Musicians Ray Aggs, Viv Corringham, Angharad Davies, Sharon Gal, Naomi Graham, Lee Ingleton, Caroline Kraabel, Cathy Lane, Lina Lapelyte, Sarha Moore, Maggie Nicols, Greta Pistaceci, Lucy Railton, Verity Susman. Conductor Claudia Molitor.

²⁰ Musicians Ray Aggs, Peaches, Catriona Shaw, Verity Susman, Ginger Brooks Takahashi, William Wheeler

that point, drawing in all of those involved in the staging of the performance(s): in the first instance, for a public performance at Tate, in the second in order to think through the production of Boudry/Lorenz's artwork, how to conduct the rehearsals and the shoot. Not least, in both, was the question of how to choose those very musicians. In London, we wondered whether we needed a conductor. The score seemed to suggest this as an option, or for an orchestral version even a requirement. Yet this also seemed at odds with the autonomy required in the work: is the conductor then as much autonomous and/or collective as any other performer? We understood our configuration with separate sections – strings, wind, electronics, voice – as orchestral and appointed composer Claudia Molitor as our conductor. In Berlin with six 'punk' musicians, this must then be a 'chamber' version, so it is not needed. We asked to what extent should the lighting – the time-basis that cues each new section of the work for the musicians with changing colour plus intermittent flashes – be merely symbolic or fully immersive? The answer became "as immersive as possible", something I will discuss more in the next section (2.2.2).

At the stage of rehearsal, numerous more questions emerged: the musicians wondered what they ought to wear, how that related to the piece; in a work on the interplay between autonomy and the collective, how do we think about dress or *uniform*? Is there a sombre aspect to this given the dedication of the work, should we wear dark colours (as we did in London), or each musician a different bright colour and bring their own individual style (Berlin)?

In Berlin, in a sense there were even more questions, as the score will become a work within another work, a filmed performance of a score presented as performance installation. In such a *filmed* performance might the camera be a fellow performer (Boudry and Lorenz 2014)? Can the work be shorter for the purposes of such a film: could the performance length be 15 minutes, half the minimum suggested time? The basic material of the work is long tones with suggested combinations of (contemporary) classical instruments: what about other instruments, what about 'punk' instruments? For instance, Ray Aggs, one of two musicians who played in both performances, might rather

play guitar than violin in this instance, and Verity Susman keyboard rather than saxophone. Oliveros was very much in favour of all of this. Her only stipulation was that the instruments must be able to produce the long tones and have the possibility for the modulation required by the score (achieved with pedals for the keyboard). She seemingly wasn't interested in the detail: she seemed to trust in our ability to understand and interpret the exacting nature of these instructions. That what mattered would be faithfully adhered to while the rest left to our own playful imaginations.



Figs 2.15-2.16 Pauline Oliveros performs *Listening for Life/Death Energies* in the Starr Auditorium; *To Valerie Solanas...* in the Turbine Hall (Her Noise, Feminisms and the Sonic, Tate Modern, 2012). Photo: Katie Snooks

What becomes most clear across these negotiations is the extent to which the text instruction both provides a fixed set of intentions that produces a surprisingly similar set of iterations sonically and musically (at least in the case of this score) yet allows for these very diverse musicians and their respective contexts. Most significantly, it seems such a work requires *both* fidelity *and* deviance in its realisation; emerging from the *formal, performance/score duality* of such a score itself, a dualism that furthermore seems to fit perfectly in this emerging understanding of an Oliverosian feminism. Moreover, it became obvious that all of these questions, these exchanges and discussion are precisely the expanded material of the work, and as I discuss further in Chapter Five, while not evident to the audience,

crucial to the process. Thus producing a work whose authorship is at once utterly clear yet open to a significant shifting and sharing through performance; a negotiated exchange both between the score(r) and the performers, and amongst the performers themselves – precisely this notion of a *feminist performance score*. As Oliveros was to explain in an interview with fellow University of California San Diego colleague, the late art historian Moira Roth, in 1977:

“I loved the element of surprise that comes out of the kind of instructions that generate events. There is a collaboration between myself as the composer, and the performers, where I don’t know what is going to happen. I do but I don’t, and to have that kind of surprise is wonderful.”²¹

In this specific work through the invocation and influence of Solanas, an explicit suggestion that this both *knowing* and *not knowing* common to such performance scores might produce the work of feminism, the politics at stake in the negotiation between autonomy and collaboration; “I do but I don’t.” Understanding this phrase as non-committal would be a misunderstanding of the power Oliveros implies in what I wish to suggest is a *deep ambivalence* that stems from the score’s *formal duality*.

²¹ I note that in the interview the primary focus is on her textual instructional 1971 score *Link*, included in *Womens Work* and later known as *Bonn Feier*, winning the Beethoven Prize in its performance in Bonn in 1978. Von Gunden qualifies this under “Theater Pieces” whereas *To Valerie Solanas..* is listed until “Improvisation” in her *Catalogue of Compositions* (1983). This reflects the more mixed and non-specialised nature of the performers in the former, though both are similar-length textual instructions that give many details to follow while leaving significant gaps to negotiate in each new performance, hence the *wonderful surprise*.



Fig 2.17 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas...*(2013), still

2.2.2 “The better one’s ear”

Although I know the sound recordist meant the remark as a truly positive affirmation of what we were all doing together, it was hard for me not to hear it as a back-handed compliment at the same time. I don’t remember the exact wording, but it was something along the lines of: “They’re doing a really good job, normally when these kinds of (punk-rock) musicians do avant-garde stuff it’s not so sophisticated”. This was Rashad Becker, the sound recordist speaking on the set of Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz’s film shoot in the Second Hall of the Berliner Rundfunk in July 2013. It was nominally both of our jobs, alongside the musicians themselves, to give feedback about how each take had sounded. The film was shot in approximately seven takes over two days, after several prior days of rehearsal *in situ*. The ambition was to use one continuous take for the film, the one deemed to be the best performance overall sonically, with a few detail shots taken on a second camera cut in at moments. Becker, best known for his mastering though also a musician, has worked on many of Boudry/Lorenz’s films and he and I were sitting behind one of the two screens that projected the colour (and at the film’s close, an image each of Monroe and Solanas respectively), in a ‘blind spot’ invisible to the circular path of the 16mm camera; cinematographer

Bernadette Paasen moving with the camera as she always does in almost dance-like gestures, encircling the musicians, their instruments, the two screens.

At the moment he made the comment I felt somehow quite personally wounded. Several of the musicians were friends of mine. Moreover, I feel both a great affinity for this culture of alternative, sometimes DIY, music that they represented, but also the project of bringing it into dialogue with Oliveros. I would have never thought to question that the resulting musical performance would be exquisite. I do not recall my response, probably polite agreement before the filming would have started again. But the comment haunted me: I certainly did not read it in gendered terms – “not bad for a girl” – although the group were all women and non-binary musicians. But it did feel like an informed insight on the relative incompatibility of these two cultures, if not in this instance with these musicians, then in more general terms; or more pertinently to Von Gunden’s forementioned suggestions (1983, 40), the existence of a *hierarchy*.

Indeed, what I realise now in retrospect is that Becker was effectively highlighting the power of Oliveros’ score, which allows for very different kinds of performers brought together by their skill in listening to each other, as much as any orthodox classical virtuosity. I certainly do not now read the comment as pejorative, rather underlining in practice this extremely important point. I may in fact have taken for granted this perhaps most radical aspect of the piece that speaks to this major paradigm shift that Oliveros was proposing: to place listening as the central activity, thus dissolving conventional hierarchies, not only between musicians themselves, and between performer and audience, but also between different musical cultures. As Von Gunden further comments:

“This requires a sensitive person [...] I have performed the piece and [...] in preparing a performance it becomes quite evident that listening and concentration skills of each person control freedom. For instance in stealing pitches and modulating techniques, the

performer's ear becomes the criterion for matching pitches and duplicating internal actions within a sound. The better one's ear, the freer that person is to enter into the action of the piece." (1983, 40-41)

And indeed this qualification does not just apply to the ears of the musicians, but also to us as fellow listeners in the room (or in the gallery installation thereafter):

"Changes in lighting indicate changes in sonic material..[t]he main problem for the audience is sustaining the concentration necessary to understand what it is hearing. This is the art of listening... the real challenge is registering and recognizing the successes. Both audience and performers are involved in the same kind of intensive listening necessary for dynamic improvisation." (ibid, 41)

Here it becomes clear in Von Gunden's analysis that the coloured lighting, intended as we learned to be immersive within the space, is not just a cue for the performers. Indeed, it functions as more than a metaphor for the materiality of sound that is shared as much by everyone, not only those conventionally *performing*. We are all "involved in the same kind of intensive listening". Performers and audience are all ultimately bound through their shared listening, and hence require the same shared cues – an alternative virtuosity that in effect Becker was speaking of; and spoken of by my interviewees in Chapter Four (Julie Winter, Mary Lucier, Mieko Shiomi *et al*). Moreover, the piece implicitly links this form of shared group listening as a feminist practice, not least through its dedication to Monroe and Solanas, which I will go on to discuss further in the next section (2.2.3). Von Gunden's analysis follows Oliveros' own insistence of both the individual and the group: the more one hones one's listening to others, the more one might enter into play, the more successful one's own play might be.

2.2.3 Society for Cutting Up With Men

Within the series for compositions held at Oliveros' archives of her works at UCSD are two separate files for *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation*. There is one file for the work itself and the development of the score. A separate second file documents the forementioned incident where Oliveros was erroneously described as a member of Solanas' Society for Cutting Up Men – an essentially fictional group (Fahs, 2014) – in a review in the *New York Times* which stemmed from programme notes taking that information from the Baker's Dictionary of Musical Biography.²² Von Gunden told me that, so important an issue it was to Oliveros, she had reassured Oliveros that she would “set the record straight” (2018) in her 1983 monograph on Oliveros. Accordingly, barely two pages of Von Gunden's book are given to discussing the work itself, followed by more than four pages on the ensuing controversy that occurred nearly a decade after the work's premiere. Yet, what exactly is it about this essentially ridiculous association that Oliveros felt was so appalling to her? How could the same person who had sought to harness the implications of Solanas' name in one of her own titles so adamantly disown any personal affiliation? At a surface reading the whole episode seems intriguingly fickle. Essentially an attempt for Oliveros “to have her cake and eat it”, evoking Solanas' *edge* without any reverberation on her own reputation.

To tell the story in more detail: the erroneous information first came to light for Oliveros when it was written into her bio for the programme notes for the forementioned programme at Lincoln Centre in Autumn of 1979.²³ She was so alarmed upon reading the published booklet in advance of the concert that the organisation agreed to produce an inserted addendum (see fig 2.18). Additionally, Oliveros was also disappointed that the insert used the term “Ms Oliveros”, asking why she couldn't have been referred to simply as

²² *To Valerie Solanas...* Correspondence 102/07/6 and *To Valerie Solanas...* multiple drafts and published score 102/07/7, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

²³ Programme, 1979, 102/07/6, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

“Pauline Oliveros” (“and don’t call them ‘lady’ composers”, indeed). To confound matters, the reviewer for the *New York Times*, Donal Henahan, evidently did not pay attention to the insert and reproduced the misinformation that Oliveros was a member of SCUM, Solanas’ Society for Cutting Up Men, in the midst of a disparaging review. Von Gunden published the three-page letter that Oliveros subsequently wrote to Henahan following his review in its entirety in type-written form in her book; it is a typically strident, at times hilarious tract. What emerges in further correspondence with Lincoln Centre is that the misinformation in the programme had originated from the 1971 edition of Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians and in yet further exchange between Oliveros and the editor of the dictionary, Nicolas Slonimsky, that he had simply assumed this connection from Oliveros’ use of Solanas’ name in her work title.

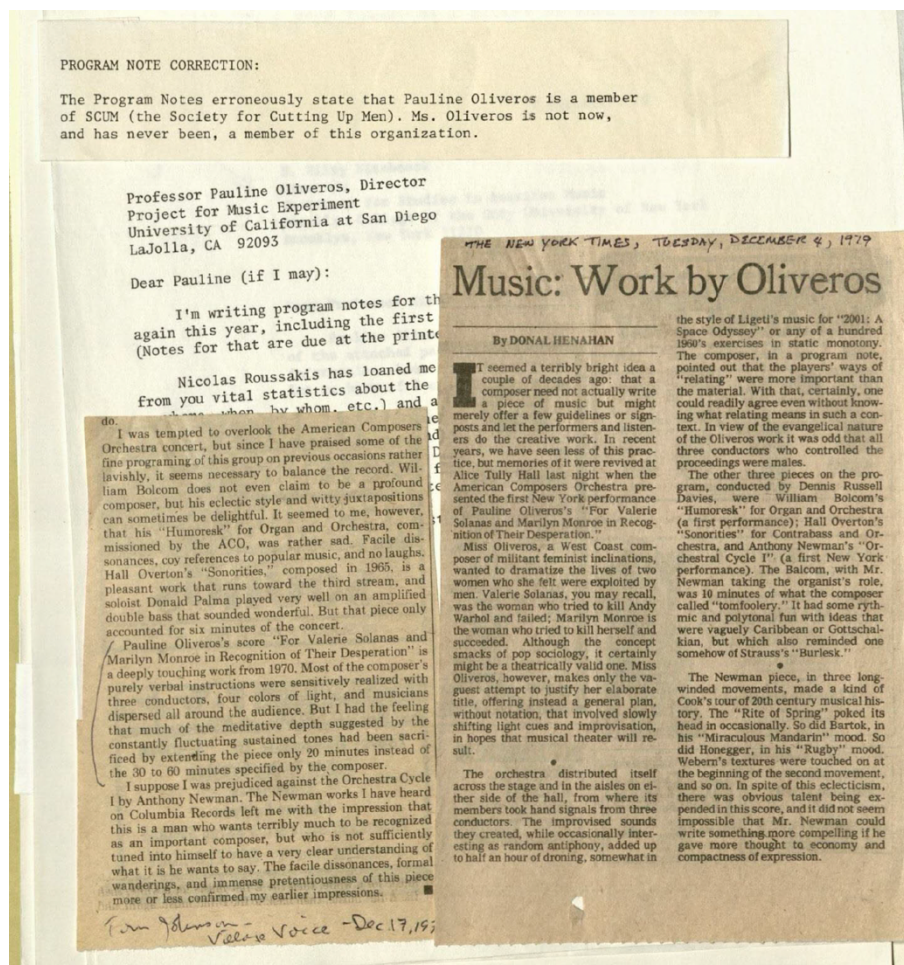


Fig 2.18 Addendum to Lincoln Centre program notes & NYT review. 102/07/6, Pauline Oliveros Papers, UCSD

On first reading of this in Von Gunden's book, even before reading this extensive correspondence in the archives at UCSD, I had become fascinated by the seeming contradiction I laid out at the opening of this section. I wondered whether it might be that something had shifted for Oliveros between her titling of the work in 1970, and this prestigious performance in 1979. For one thing I thought it strange that someone so concerned with keeping their public profile so precisely mediated would not have been aware of the entry in the dictionary for the eight intervening years. I asked Von Gunden why Oliveros might not have otherwise seen this and she replied matter-of-factly: "[UCSD] wasn't a musicology place, Baker's had no use down there" (2018). In fact, in the exchange with Slonimsky it emerges that he had sent a questionnaire asking for her CV prior to the 1971 publication. She had returned this but heard no further reply nor was she sent a copy of the ensuing book, thus assuming she had not been added.

In any case, several independent sources confirm that Oliveros had nevertheless maintained her initial affection for the work of Valerie Solanas. In her extensive interview with Martha Mockus in the latter's monograph (2007), she comments: "I saw *Up Your Ass* in San Francisco in 2000 and it was wonderful. Very cheeky, street stuff. I keep my ear out for Valerie Solanas stuff and there it was" (156). Its evocative title aside, *Up Your Ass* is also the play that Warhol had famously failed to return to Solanas after losing interest in its staging, enraging her and providing one of the triggers for his shooting. Moreover, in the same interview Oliveros situates the *SCUM Manifesto* (1968) as pivotal in her work that was to follow, stating:

"Well Valerie Solanas was a street kid, a street feminist. The structure of community was detailed in that manifesto...[t]here were rules about how to be a part of that musical community in the piece so that each person could express themselves individually. So that was me expressing at the deep structure what SCUM Manifesto meant. From there, you know, I went on to do Sonic

Meditations and many other pieces, but it was really out of the understanding of both community and the individual – which was in her manifesto – that became the principle, or the philosophy, of the music I began to write. That’s why I say it was very important. She had something to say, and she said it forcefully, of course.”
(Mockus 2007, 155)

If this leaves any doubt about how pivotal this work is in the development of Oliveros’ oeuvre, then what she told composer Miya Masaoka in an interview for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* at around the same time would corroborate this understanding from another perspective. When asked to list the three most significant influences on her work, she responded:

“I knew about Fluxus, and in the early ’60s I read in the New York Times a piece by Yoko Ono, where it tells you to feel the moon and keep on feeling until there is no more moon... One: Finding my mentor and teacher, Robert Erikson; I studied composition with him; so did Ramon Sender, Terry Riley, Loren Rush, and Paul Dresher. Two: Reading that Fluxus piece by Yoko Ono was another. Three: Reading the Scum Manifesto [sic] by Valerie Solanas.” (Oliveros 2002)

How can Oliveros hold Solanas as such an influential figure on her work yet shun this false association that seems potentially harmless? Without further discussion with Oliveros herself that is now sadly impossible, it is hard to say with certainty what was most at the nub of her irritation with this series of events. Returning to the *New York Times* review that was the trigger for this episode and reading this text in more detail, it seems clear that it was not simply this erroneous association, but perhaps that it came as the final straw in a series of insults, or underestimations. Towards the end of her letter in reply Oliveros simply asks, “[h]ow do you account for the warm reception given to me by the audience?” In the review itself, Oliveros is titled “Miss” (not even the irritating-enough “Ms” of the Lincoln Centre *addendum*), and perhaps most ignorantly of all the piece is characterised as “a general plan,

without notation, that involved slowly shifting light cues and improvisation, in hopes that musical theater will result” (Hanehan, 1979)²⁴. Plainly the reviewer was unfamiliar with the score – which, as outlined above, in fact contains a vast amount of detailed verbal notation – and was happy to disrespect both the piece and its composer. In her letter, Oliveros accordingly retorts: “[y]our underlying sarcasm seems to spring, perhaps, from a wrong conception of what constitutes appropriate musical notation.” The reviewer also comments that “[I]n view of the evangelical nature of the Oliveros work it was odd that all three conductors who controlled the proceedings were males.” Most crucially for me, she responds to this point:

“I would be more likely to belong to the Society For Cutting Up With Men. In any case the core of my feminist philosophy is based on those social energies and directions which are beneficial for all living beings.” (Oliveros, 1979)²⁵

Here again, the “two-legged human [..][who] is her self”, as much aligned with Mac Low as with Millet. My reading of the episode, and the proportions it took on for her, is that Oliveros desperately needed to hold the emancipatory power of a figure like Solanas, a “street punk” no less, close to her at the same time as her desperate need to take control of her own career as a composer and to garner the widest possible respect, *especially* within a mainstream publishing context such as the *New York Times*. Essentially the very issue she had identified for Solanas and Monroe; that the two needs are both necessary at once.

²⁴ New York Times review, 102/07/6, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

²⁵ Letter from Pauline Oliveros to Donal Henahan, 12th December 1979, 102/07/6, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

2.3 Conclusion: The deep ambivalences that complement an ‘Oliverosian’ feminism

Kathy Acker, San Diego, 1972:²⁶

“Pauline Calls and I cry cry scream:

I am angry with you

SHE DOES NOT GET EXCITED (which scares me)

SHE DOES NOT GET SWEATY.

SHE DOES NOT GET ANYTHING BUT MORE QUIET

and her voice seems flat and nasal.

I don’t have time she says.

You were hostile she says.

Are you serious she asks again.

I cannot understand how my joy could be read as hostility.

I could not see how Pauline could get quieter as I got more hysterical.”

I was struck by the inclusion of the above amongst the ♀’s Ensemble materials, an unpublished text by the late writer and novelist Kathy Acker, in another insight drawn from how Oliveros chose to order her archive that she deposited in 1981 at UCSD upon her departure from California, and academia. This above excerpt is the ending of a longer three-page description of Acker’s experiences of attending the ♀’s Ensemble,²⁷ followed by this subsequent telephone stand-off with Oliveros, 15 years her senior (Acker was a Masters student in fine art at UCSD at this time). What is most striking is that this text is placed at the very front²⁸ of the first file on the ♀’s Ensemble

²⁶ Unpublished manuscript by Kathy Acker c 1972, 102/12/1, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

²⁷ For a contextualisation of Acker’s manuscript in her wider oeuvre see Karen Di Franco’s excellent essay (2019).

²⁸ Whilst archival documents sometimes get shifted around within any given files and lose their original sequence, I don’t believe this is coincidental as it

papers, affording it an immediate prominence. Whilst Acker later became a highly esteemed and celebrated writer, which Oliveros would have understood, and likely enjoyed through this historical document, it is also a suitably ambivalent sketch in which neither Oliveros nor Acker are painted in a straightforwardly appealing light. I include this text here largely as an almost contemporaneous couplet with this chapter's opening testimony by Beth Anderson.²⁹ I set off these two perspectives in relation to each other because together they seem to paint quite a coherent portrait. For Anderson, Oliveros was desperately needed and she in turn supported. For Acker, who offends Oliveros, there is a seeming antagonism and no need to be liked; Oliveros' inertia and silence "scares" Acker yet delights Anderson in equal measure. For both texts, their returning us to the question of silence, perhaps both "morally superior and actively therapeutic" (2001, 19) in the words of art historian Jonathan Katz as he described Cage's silence, is what I turn to now below.

Fig 2.19 "I am beginning to understand why you often do not talk. Ashley says your check will be ready Saturday night, March 9. Love, Beth, 2/5/74" Note from Beth Anderson to Pauline Oliveros. 1/18, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

exists this way in the order of the series that would undoubtedly have been arranged in dialogue with Oliveros or at least 'signed off' by her.

²⁹ While both Master's students were of analogous age, I do not know that the two would have met during Anderson's brief visit to San Diego, though Anderson would go on to use an excerpt of Acker's writing alongside one of Gertrude Stein's in her 1974 composition *She Wrote*.

In his widely regarded essay on John Cage's queer politics of silence, and in particular *4'33"* (1952), art historian Jonathan Katz proposes understanding this as a question of "both/and":

"Cage had undergone a remarkable alchemy: his anxiety and pain had metamorphosed into detachment, which was both morally superior and actively therapeutic. Through his early Zen involvement, then, he first theorized a system in which detachment paradoxically yielded engagement, stemming not from an ideological preconception or program, however, but from simple attentiveness to the world. This detached engagement—what Cage often called, simply, "listening"—served as a precursor to his detachment from political doctrines and engendered his explicitly anarchist convictions.

One of the points of silence, Cage was fond of reminding his audiences, was to give life itself a more ample hearing: "Sometimes we blur the distinction between art and life; sometimes we try to clarify it. We don't stand on one leg. We stand on both."

(Katz 2001, 19)

Katz goes on to assert that "the development of Cage's anti-expressive aesthetic correlates with the wholesale changes in his personal life: "[t]here are both surrender and resistance in these silences, in a relation not of either/or but of both/and." (ibid, 53-54) It is evident that Oliveros' own solution to these questions appears to be a similar turn toward the meditative, and indeed to her own forms of silence. Though occurring two decades later, at exactly 20 years his junior, Oliveros is clearly also able to take on an overt and explicit politics to a further degree than Cage ever did or could. Nevertheless, I wish to argue in what follows that this figuration of "both/and" might be equally applicable for Oliveros as for Cage in any political theories at stake in the work of Oliveros; indeed in an *Oliverosian* feminism.

Ambivalent is a word that in its common usage in the English language might be synonymous with luke-warm, uncertain, unsure, doubtful. In Latin *ambi* simply means *both* without the pejorative sense, while *valens* means strength or bravery. It might, then, more accurately mean “strongly both”, or, at least, “of two minds” without necessarily implying any sense of doubt, simply thinking both. Philosophically speaking, we might say that the notion of ambivalence only acquires this negative sense on the premise that there is only ever one *correct* opinion or position: and so ambivalence represents a failure to resolve this correct position; or at least, to be still in the process of resolving – unresolved, unfinished. However, a Baradian understanding of “agential realism” (2007), as discussed in Chapter 1, renders that finality redundant where at its very basis, matter and meaning are indeterminate and “open to both” in their iterative co-constitution – fundamentally underlyingly *both* wave *and* particle simultaneously, where the property of one only emerges according to a given method of resolution, but never precluding the possibility of the other in a different set-up.

Oliveros herself was aware of, and wrote of, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle: that measurement of a state will always produce an alteration of that state through its process of measurement. She further refers to the notion of complementarity, Niels Bohr’s crucial elaboration on the uncertainty principal:

“Perhaps participation in ‘Teach Yourself to Fly’ [the first *Sonic Meditation*] is to experience Heisenberg’s principle of uncertainty. Although my instructions ask for observation in its receptive sense, somewhere complementary action is occurring.”

(Oliveros 1984, 150)

Moreover, Heidi Von Gunden in her monograph, *The Music of Pauline Oliveros*, refers to Niels Bohr explicitly in her discussion of sonic awareness:

“Bohr introduced the principal of complementarity [...] when he

realised that different modes of observation can produce different and not contradicting information about natural phenomena”
(Von Gunden 1983, 107)

In the present day, Barad in turn builds on Bohr’s principle of complementarity which itself builds on Heisenberg, in emphasising that it is not only a matter of measurement (epistemology) but of being (ontology); that measurement produces just one *intra-action* in what is otherwise an indeterminacy, a fundamental ambivalence, so-to-speak. Barad brings further philosophical and indeed political bearing on this profoundly fundamental understanding of our material reality: that each inclusion enacts an exclusion; that a determination could be made otherwise from a difference *within*; that agency is in a doing and becoming, and a politics and ethics is interwoven in all matter and meaning; that is to say, that in this way incremental change is possible.

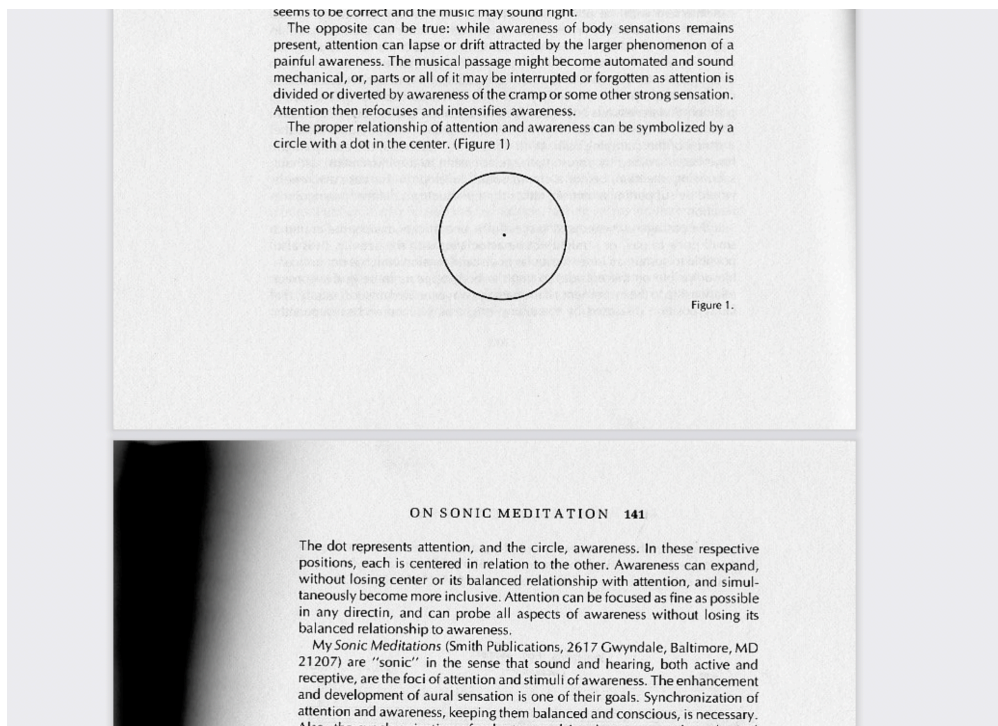


Fig 2.20 “The proper relationship of attention and awareness can be symbolised by a circle with a dot in the center.” (Oliveros 1984, 140-141)

Complementarity in this Bohrian, Baradian, and I wish to add, Oliverosian sense is not at all an abnegation of moral absolutism, not that ‘right’ and

‘wrong’ are both ‘right’ (or indeed both ‘wrong’). Rather than where there are multiple states, identities, affiliations, it may be a radical intervention to be able to hold more than one at once. By an Oliverosian feminism I mean most of all: to hold together elements that may seem otherwise in conflict. This is most fundamentally at stake for Oliveros within the practice of sonic awareness that she cultivated throughout the 1970s and would come to later be known as Deep Listening, which at its essence is a development of *both* “heightened focal attention” *and* “expanding global awareness” simultaneously (Oliveros 1984, 140). This turn to listening as the core of her practice of composition was arguably enabled by her nascent feminist consciousness at the end of the 1960s, that for her centred the importance of artistic freedom, as expressed in the title of *To Valerie Solanas...* Moreover, the early development of sonic awareness was for Oliveros intrinsically linked with her interest in a feminist music. This fundamental *duality* at the heart of her practice repeats itself in many further realms, particularly in relationship to the individual and the group, in terms of collaboration, where again Oliveros was acutely drawn to both at once, the need for the two to be simultaneously present, via Solanas. Moreover, it might be understood in her attitudes towards feminism itself and a feminist identity where all of these share a sense of complementarity that might otherwise consider them mutually exclusive: either focusing on detail, or the whole soundscape; either caring for your own individual authorship and recognition, or for a collective approach; for uniform or for individual expression; to be a feminist, a lesbian, a separatist, or to collaborate with men. I have argued throughout this chapter that a *deep ambivalence* – not an uncertainty but a deeply held feeling for more than one position – is at the heart of Oliveros’ practice, and that this is inextricably linked to the impact of early 1970s feminism within this. What might seem sometimes like a political *ambivalence* in the common usage of the word – sometimes steadfast, at other times dismissive or outrightly disowning – may in fact be a profoundly radical form of ambivalence in its truest sense, one that with later developments in feminist theories, including Barad, only seeks to underline the ongoing importance of Oliveros’ work and thought.

CHAPTER THREE: WOMENS WORK: A SCORE MAGAZINE AS FEMINISM-IN-PRACTICE

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to narrate one version of the history of *Womens Work* as a project, and within that, to analyse how this is a feminist project and the kinds of feminisms that are at work. It does the latter in two main ways: by considering *Womens Work* in relation to its immediate ‘peers’, that is, to precursors in terms of score magazines and multi-authored score publications (3.2) and in the project’s more explicit articulations of feminist praxis (3.3). The first part (3.1) premises the fundamental principles of the project in one version of its ‘origin story’; while section 3.4 acts as a conclusion, noting some of the key, immediately related live contexts which will be further explored in the following Chapter Four. I attempt to weave a loosely chronological narrative throughout – from the conception of the project in autumn 1973, to its call for contributions that Christmas, the collection of the works in the New Year of 1974, unsuccessful fundraising attempts throughout 1974, and its final printing by hand in April 1975. This is a narrative that is underpinned by relatively lengthier citations from correspondence from and interviews with Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood, the two co-editors, mixing contemporaneous articulation and commentary with more recent interview reflections. This chapter intends the story to be told as much as possible in the voices of the co-editors, bringing my own voice in mainly for analysis. I argue that Pauline Oliveros remains central to the project, her correspondence with both co-editors running throughout the process, and in turn woven throughout this chapter.

Notes for the reader: I refer to Annea Lockwood as “Annea” throughout, even though she would only go on to change her name from Anna to Annea after the publishing of the first issue of *Womens Work* in 1975 (and so is referred to in the historical materials as Anna). I also refer to the project as *Womens Work* throughout, as that is the final title of the first issue and also the title as

we determined it for its re-publishing in 2019. However, it is usually referred to prior to 1975 in the historical materials in the grammatically correct form of “*Women’s Work*”.

3.1 “Like Shedding a Skin”

3.1.1 Knowles & Lockwood

Alison Knowles³⁰ (b. 1933, New York, NY) is a visual artist whose work encompasses participatory installations, performance, sound, poetry, publications and tactile objects. She graduated in Fine Arts from Pratt Institute in 1956. A founding member of Fluxus, Knowles began using Cagean compositional devices, such as indeterminate performance and chance operations in the early 1960s. Knowles created one of the earliest ever book objects, *Bean Rolls* (1963) – a can of text and beans – that began her more than 30-year experimentation with the sculptural potential of the book. Among her Fluxus performance scores are *Make a Salad* (1962), *Shoes of Your Choice* (1963), *The Identical Lunch* (1969), and later sound installations such as *Bean Garden* (1971). In 1967, Knowles’s *The House of Dust*, produced with composer James Tenney, was among the earliest computerised poems, winning her a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1968 to build the associated sculpture, a physical realisation of one of the many hundreds of versions of the poem. She brought this work to CalArts, where she taught from 1970-1972.

Annea Lockwood³¹ (b. 1939) was born in New Zealand and came to London in 1961 for a Master’s in Composition at the Royal College of Music, going on to attend the Darmstadt Summer School in 1963 and 1964. She was part of a multidisciplinary 1960s London avant-garde community, including composer Hugh Davies, concrete poets Bob Cobbing and Henri Chopin,

³⁰ Bio excerpted from one sent by the artist.

³¹ Bio comprised of detail from Louise Marshall’s thesis (2018), and further informed through my own interviews with Lockwood.

conceptual artist John Latham, and choreographers including Richard Alston. She took part in the Destruction In Art Symposium organised by Gustav Metzger in 1966, and became widely known for her *Glass Concerts* (1967–70) with a score published in Source magazine issue five and a commercial recording *The Glass World of Annea Lockwood* released in 1970. Her *Piano Transplants* (1966–2013) too began in London. This project began with *Piano Transplant no 1*, a permanently prepared piano – now in the Hugh Davies archive, Goldsmiths, University of London, and included in the exhibition project I will discuss in Chapter Five. The first *Piano Burning* (1968) and *Piano Garden* (1969–1970) took place whilst Lockwood was still in the UK. And her *River Archive* project, bridging the transatlantic move, described below by Alison Knowles at the 1973 Charlotte Moorman New York Annual Avant Garde Festival, would ultimately give birth to perhaps her best known installation and recorded work *Sound Map of the Hudson River* (1984).

Annea Lockwood arrived in New York from London in the summer of 1973, in preparation for covering composer Ruth Anderson's sabbatical in the academic year of 1973/4 as director of the Electronic Music Studio that Anderson had founded at City University New York (CUNY). This opportunity had been arranged for Lockwood by Pauline Oliveros, a mutual friend of both women with whom Lockwood had already developed a correspondence (Mockus 2007, 57), and Lockwood and Oliveros had had one earlier but brief physical meeting in December 1972.³² The trans-Atlantic move was always intended to be, and would become, permanent. Lockwood has described, at the time and since, how much she was drawn to these composers and artists in the US with whom she felt she had a close resonance, amongst them Oliveros, as well as wanting to leave behind what she saw as a moribund UK scene:

³² This is famously captured in an audio recording as their first meeting was on Charles Amirkhonian's KPFA radio show, *Ode to Gravity*, where Oliveros interviews Lockwood live on air: <http://radiom.org/detail.php?omid=OTG.1972.12.20.A> Last accessed 6th June 2022.

“Britain at that time felt as if it was slipping into an economic depression. The Arts Council’s funding had dropped considerably, there was less support – and so the scene began to feel a bit more limp, sort of de-energised.

Whereas in New York, it seemed possible to do anything, not because there was a huge amount of funding, but just because there were spaces, there were people who were willing to put on a series of performances and so on, for very little.

They were already sort of in my life when we were in London, there was such a hospitable generosity emanating from them all, bless their hearts, that it seemed natural to come here and become part of that community: I really felt as if I was [already] on the fringes of that community.”

(Lockwood 2018)

This strong sense of community is something I will draw out further in the concluding part (3.4) of this chapter and is evidenced repeatedly in the next chapter. Upon her arrival in NYC, on mid-summer’s eve, Lockwood wrote to Oliveros of her excitement and relief³³:

“[i]t’s something like shedding a skin might be for a snake...it’s a very good feeling to have finally come to be amongst our friends.”

Lockwood had come to New York with Harvey Matusow, her then husband, though the two would soon separate in the autumn of 1973 while Lockwood got together with Ruth Anderson with whom she would go on to share her life until Anderson’s death in 2019. Alison Knowles had herself returned to New York the previous autumn of 1972, after two years in Los Angeles teaching at CalArts as Director of the Graphics Lab, taking the studio on Spring Street in which she still lives and works. Forty years of age at this

³³ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros, mid-Summer’s eve 1973, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

point to Lockwood's 34, Oliveros' 41 and Anderson's 45, Knowles had also recently separated from her own husband Dick Higgins (though the two would go on to re-marry each other in 1980)—whose Something Else Press had been central to Fluxus in New York, publishing the Great Bear Pamphlet Series that include monographic collections of textual and propositional scores, including *By Alison Knowles* (1965). Annea's use of the metaphor of a snake shedding their skin to specifically describe her relocation might hold a wider resonance amongst these friends during this time, in seeking independent lives with already established careers and unassailably solid achievements already behind them, perhaps letting go of younger anxieties and obligations. Not least, at the genesis of this story as I am framing it here, are these women sharing opportunities and resources with each other, and in turn through the *Womens Work* project that was about to emerge, opening them out further to women in their wider communities. If there is an economy of desire at stake within my account of these histories, it is one first and foremost of friendship. In the correspondence with Oliveros both Knowles and Lockwood discuss their respective (ex-)husbands, and in Lockwood's case, her falling in love with Ruth Anderson. It is not this aspect of their lives that is driving this narrative, however, but their friendships with each other.

3.1.2 Initial conception

In 2014 I conducted an interview with Lockwood focusing on *Womens Work*, in which she outlined how the project emerged out of her friendship with Knowles that developed in the autumn of 1973. The below, already included in the summary introduction of *Womens Work* in Chapter One, is an excerpt that 'sets the scene', and I repeat it again here now:

“Womens Work came up because Alison [Knowles] and I were sitting in her loft in Spring Street and just running through the names of all the women artists we knew in various media who were doing great work. And, as I recall, we more or less looked at each other and said, “Why don't we ask for a bunch of scores from

them!” Of course the title was highly deliberate and highly focused. And the intention was to assert that there were many women doing really good work whose names should be more and more familiar...a body of work coming from a number of women, not just isolated exemplars in their fields.”

(Lockwood 2017, 120-121)

In an undated letter at the time that likely narrates the same conversation (sent just prior to October 1973), Lockwood reports to Oliveros³⁴:

“Ah, talked to Alison Knowles (who of course I like very much and find stimulating, easy to be with) about the magazine-scores idea ‘Women’s Work’, she is enthusiastic. Looks like we’ll be putting it together, together. Her involvement with graphics, printing and so on meant that immediately we began to figure out print numbers, costing etc. Perhaps 500 copies an issue - done as easily and simply as possible - no distribution beyond handing them out, mailing them to people such as yourselves. Thinking of them as a sort of samizdat publication which is handed on from person to person - performed from, quick and handed on. No charge - funded by Foundation Grant [sic].”

This contemporaneous account starts to outline some of the prior experience that Knowles and Lockwood brought to this project: for Knowles in very practical terms her experience with design and printing which I will expand on below. It also adds a glimpse of the centrality of friendship within the project: first and foremost, the burgeoning friendship between Lockwood and Knowles, itself entwined with Oliveros. For her part Knowles, in an undated letter that autumn, informs Oliveros that she is “enjoying Ann[e]a, will see her again this week”,³⁵ and in mid-December 1973 writes³⁶:

³⁴ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros, c September 1973, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

³⁵ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros c September 1973, Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

³⁶ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, mid-December 1973, Box

“Ann[e]a and I encountered the festival together, the Avant Garde Festival, that is. Her piece was to listen to rivers – she had tapes and headphones – it was marvellous, nothing like it around...”

This excerpt commences a longer account of Charlotte Moorman’s 10th New York Annual Avant Garde Festival held in train carriages at Grand Central Station, in a letter in which Knowles also sends Oliveros the printed call for scores for the first issue of *Womens Work*. She tells Oliveros that they are hoping for contributions, including her own, to be sent in by February 1974. In Knowles’ follow up to Oliveros she confirms³⁷:

“Received your scores, and will use the piece for Marilyn Monroe and Valerie Solanis [sic] – we have collected much too much really good stuff for the first issue – we will save LINK which I loved, for later on. “Women’s work” will go into typing this coming week. Anna and I typing that is!”

In fact, *LINK* (1971) is included in the final publication. There could be any number of reasons for this, perhaps simply that it was a newer work that Oliveros would continue to develop, famously performing an iteration re-titled *Bonn Feier*, in the city of Bonn in 1978, aptly winning that city’s Beethoven prize (see “Beethoven was a lesbian” (Knowles and Oliveros 1973), below). But the proximity of this earlier work, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1970), discussed extensively in the previous chapter, is crucial to note, resonating strongly with the connections that would come to link this earlier score with *Womens Work* in my own experiences 40 or more years later. This is also to say that both Knowles and Lockwood, respectively in turn with Oliveros, both discuss the emergence of their friendship with each other and this shared project. In fact, the whole arc of the project can be read through Knowles and

15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library
³⁷ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, January 1974, Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

Lockwood's respective correspondence with Oliveros. While reading this correspondence in this way self-evidently places Oliveros as a major centre of gravity for the project, in the third part (3.3) of this chapter I will discuss further arguments for her framing thus, which also build on the centrality I have already highlighted in Chapter Two.

Fig 3.1 Printed call for scores for the first issue of *Womens Work*, mid-December 1973.
15/30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

Returning to Lockwood's initial statement to Oliveros about *Womens Work*, the economy of the project is clearly articulated from this earliest of moments: it would be cheap, simple and easy to produce, and intended for use in performance in a very immediate sense. The project is also framed as a magazine, not a one-off publication of scores, a significant taxonomical point that I will explore further in the concluding part of this chapter; and a *samizdat*³⁸ publication no less, thought of in terms of furtive subversion. The call for contributions (fig 3.1) that came at the end of autumn 1973 reinforces much of this initial conception, as well as a heightened ambition reflected in a larger print run (2,000 up from 500) and the commitment to distribute it "free to performance groups" and "low cost in bookshops" (Knowles and Lockwood 1973).³⁹ That Knowles and Lockwood chose to solicit "complete scores, not documentation" further reinforces this desire for immediate use in performance. Meanwhile, keeping copyright in the names of the individual contributors and attempting to include direct contact details (although the latter is not what ultimately transpired) reflected what was clearly a desire to productively diffuse the power and networks beyond Knowles and Lockwood as co-editors, and indeed beyond commercial publishers. Not specified in the call is that the first issue would focus on text scores, though it seems likely that this was the result of an editorial decision taken after surveying the "much too much" that they had been sent, noting in the first issue's colophon that "there will be issues with further 'themes'" (Knowles and Lockwood 1975). Aside from the eventual size of the publication, which dropped down from an 11" square to an 8" square, there are no other major divergences between this call and what ultimately came to pass.

³⁸ Samizdat was the name given for underground newspapers and publications critical to the regimes in post-second-world-war eastern Europe, the clandestine copying and distribution of literature banned by the state, especially in the formerly communist countries of the region.

³⁹ Call for contributions, included in letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, mid-December 1973, Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

3.2 *Womens Work* in context

3.2.1 “These are scores ready for you to do”

I propose that it is highly instructive to situate *Womens Work* in the context of some earlier proximate examples of score publications to understand the extent to which *Womens Work* is unambiguously emerging from within this specific area of artist publishing history, as well as its significant divergences, most notably its open generosity towards the use of the scores in performance. On this point of permission for performance, Lockwood noted in our earliest interview:

“[We] wanted to publish work which other people could pick up and do, that aspect of it was really important. [...] This was not anecdotal, this was not archival material, it was live material. You look at a score, you do it.” (2017, 121)

These more recent words indeed echo the introduction/colophon page of the first issue:

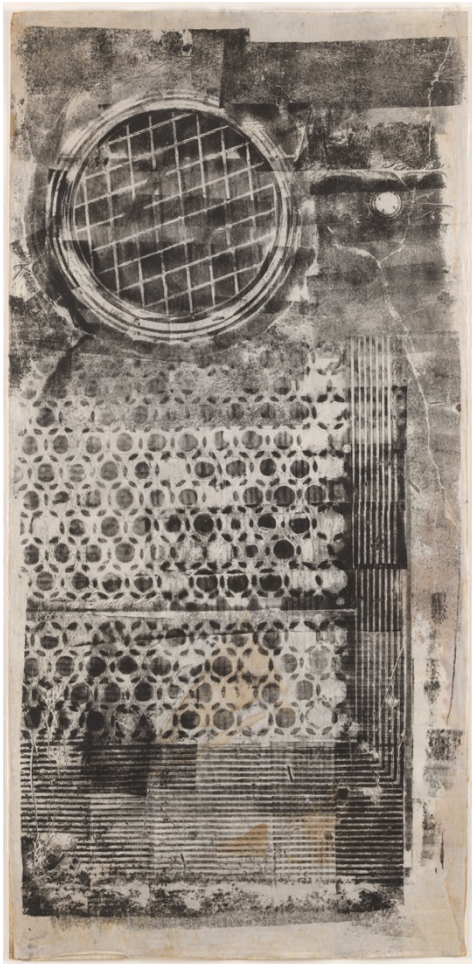
“These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances.” (Knowles and Lockwood 1975)

Evidently delivering on their initial conception as it was related to Oliveros by Knowles above, I propose that the crux of the project is expressed in this opening line, and in particular it is what constitutes the project as distinctly *feminist* in relation to these earlier examples.

For my part, I encountered *Womens Work* for the first time after spending several months researching performance scores contemporaneous to the 1970 Oliveros score *To Valerie Solanas...*, hunting for evidence of other so-called *feminist performance scores*. I had found my encounters with *Source* magazine at the British Library especially impressionable – including the forementioned tenth issue (1971) guest-edited by Alvin and Mary Lucier with

Pauline Oliveros' *Sonic Meditations* – seduced by the lavish scale (oversized, landscape) and colour-printing that infects their contents with a clear sense of admiration, elevation, fandom even. As I have already described in Chapter One, coming across *Womens Work* felt like a hugely significant personal discovery that promised to be the missing piece of this puzzle – not only this question of the potential of the *feminist performance score*, but the wider desire to understand the connections between these evidently intersecting histories of avant-garde performance, and of the feminist movement. One morning in September 2013 at Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe, the FedEx from Annea Lockwood arrived at the gallery, containing the two issues of *Womens Work*, just in time for their inclusion in the exhibition described in more detail in Chapter Five. I was thrilled to have received what felt like this hugely personally important document. But in honesty, I was also slightly disappointed: the publication felt so humble, quite plain and almost dowdy, somehow not bursting with the glossy excitement that these other examples I had been looking at seemed to. I must emphasise that this was my superficial first impression, looking and leafing, before taking the time to physically read anything. I then recall sitting with the publication for a couple of hours in the gallery and taking some of it in before working out what to do with it in terms of display, the latter of which I detail in Chapter Five. I recall two distinct subsequent revelations. As I read and researched further, one was how many unknown (to me) but incredibly exciting artist names were included, “not just isolated exemplars” (Lockwood 2017) indeed. I especially recall looking up Sari Dienes, discovering her immigrant journey to the US across Europe, learning about her mentorship of younger artists including Jaspers Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, being a founder of the feminist AIR Gallery in New York in the 1970s in her 70s, and most of all her incredibly intriguing work, especially her New York sidewalk *frottage* works (fig 3.2). I came across images of Marilyn Wood's *Seagram Building* performance (fig 3.3) and found it hard to understand how an image of such a striking work wasn't circulating more widely. But before all that, the first serious impression was given by the colophon with its insistence that “[t]hese are scores ready for you to do,” which on reading somehow immediately seemed to dissolve my misunderstanding about the

humble nature of the publication and re-orient the project to one much more immediately allied to my own background, one of DIY urgency, punk even. A project dedicated to this very immediate impulse, and still now as then evidently every bit as urgent: that “these names should be more and more familiar,” a “samizdat”⁴⁰.



Figs 3.2-3.3 Sari Dienes, *Soho sidewalk* c 1953-55; Marilyn Wood, *Celebrations in City Places: The Seagram Building and It's Plaza, New York City, September 1972*

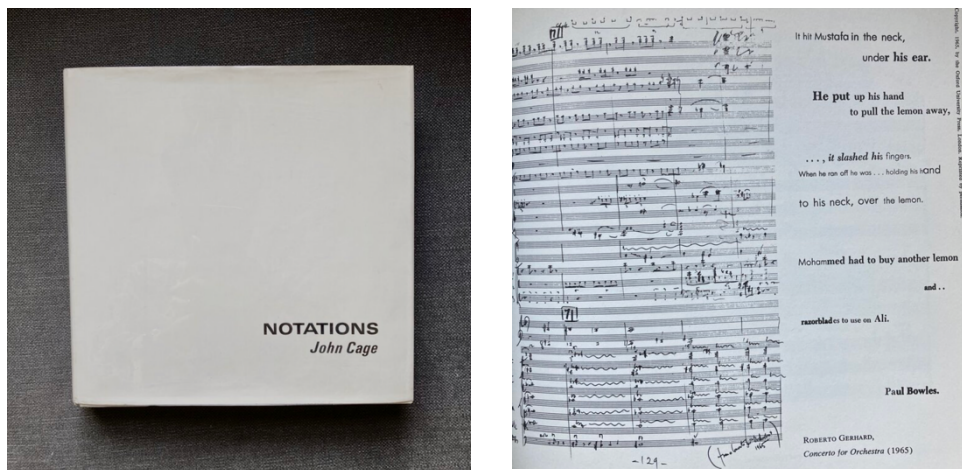


3.2.2 Comparators

This open invitation contrasts with the copyright of earlier notable collections of scores. Jackson Mac Low (Oliveros' some-time collaborator as described in the last chapter) and La Monte Young's 1963 *An Anthology of Chance Operations* is perhaps the earliest comparison in terms of being a multi-authored, multi-disciplinary publication containing multiple

⁴⁰ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros, c September 1973, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

scores ready for you to do” could not contrast more to *An Anthology* in its brevity and generosity. The latter almost seems to be speaking directly back to the former in its stark divergence. I include *An Anthology* here for this very specific point of contrast, in what is in some senses a somewhat similar project, collecting the work of a community of friends and colleagues in a similarly formatted publication. By contrast, the further examples below have a more direct connection with Knowles’ and Lockwood’s respective work.



Figs 3.6-7 *Notations* (1969)

Perhaps the most notable precursor is *Notations* (1969), not least for the fact of it being co-edited by Alison Knowles with John Cage. Another one-off collection of more than 300 examples of ‘notation’, *Notations* more straightforwardly defers permission for any performance to the composer or their publisher where relevant, arguably a more standard formulation than this second edition of *An Anthology*. Yet, this nevertheless fails to produce “work that other people could pick up and do”, as Lockwood describes the motivation for *Womens Work*. Moreover, *Notations* contained one-page ‘samples’ of notational form which in most cases were not complete works and thus not for direct use in performance, with or without the complication of permissions. Knowles has more recently talked about the complexity of the copyright in *Notations* and notes that “[t]he book initiated a lot of interest in performing these works” (Knowles 2016, 12), though evidently an interest that could not necessarily be immediately harnessed, lacking the full scores and permission for performance. This problem seems to be explicitly

addressed in the *Womens Work* call for scores that asks for “complete scores not documentation” (Knowles and Lockwood, 1973), or as Lockwood would put it more recently, “not anecdotal... not archival... live material”. Here it is worth recalling that the *Notations* publication was effectively a by-product of Cage’s impetus to foster a large collection of diversely notated manuscripts that might produce a regular charitable income for the Foundation for Contemporary Art through ongoing exhibition loans (Kim 2013, 73-81). Knowles and Cage’s 1969 publication was thus understood more as a catalogue, or ‘look book’ for this collection of manuscripts, initially in part intended to garner further interest in the sale of the collection to a museum; and in any case, the scores remain abstracted from any immediate use in performance.

Another significant contrast between the publications is in the process: the method of collecting the scores and its associated labour. *Notations* is what might be now termed a speculative archive, in that Cage set out intentionally, over a number of years, to create this collection of manuscripts with certain parameters in mind; what he saw as an attempt to represent the diversity of contemporary notation, as well as the forementioned intention to contribute towards an economic resource for the benefit of future younger artists.⁴¹ When it came to producing the book, as well as ongoing discussion of the method of layout and design, by far the largest part of the correspondence between Cage and Knowles as co-editors during this process concerns the seeking of permission to publish many of the scores that Cage had already gathered; clearing copyright with publishers and estates, not only composers; and in some cases even more involved diplomacy, for example with The Beatles, and the delicate arrangement of trans-Atlantic couriering of contracts and manuscripts negotiated via Yoko Ono in London.⁴² The book is

⁴¹ To this day the Foundation for Contemporary Arts supports a notably diverse and exciting range of artists, see recent awardees: <https://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/recipients/grant/grants-to-artists/?year=2022&page=1> Last accessed 26th June 2022.

⁴² I refer to correspondence in the John Cage Collection, Northwestern University, Series II: Notations Project, Subseries 2: Correspondence, Box 7 Folder 18: Knowles, Alison (1966-1973)

also ultimately ‘authored’ by Cage himself, as his project, as evidenced by its cover (see fig 3.6), easily overlooking Knowles’ involvement, moreover the several hundred contributors. And it is worth underlining that less than one in ten of the contributors to *Notations* were female. By contrast, *Womens Work* begins life with an urgent impulse and with the magazine immediately in mind. The simple terms of use of the publication already made transparent in the initial approach to each of the artists (as in the call for scores).

Moreover, all the contributors, whose names adorn the front cover, had a direct life/work connection with Alison or Annea, or in a few examples both women, thus simply representing themselves and various overlapping extended communities of practice. And while notably interested in the question of “Women’s Notations” in the call for scores, and various other correspondence with funders (see 3.3), in the end, unlike *Notations*, there is no introductory essay nor tract nor manifesto, no claim beyond the simple statement that I repeat once again here, that “[t]hese are scores ready for you to do”.

In parallel, Lockwood had had a working relationship with *Source* initially through the inclusion of her works but more proximately through the co-presentation of the ICES festival (International Carnival of Experimental Sound) in London in August 1972. *Source* published numerous new scores in each issue, indeed intended for use in performance, albeit largely emanating from a formal, academic context within the University of California, Davis. Moreover, with its lavish, oversized, multi-coloured and hardbound landscape aesthetic, and with many works that are highly technical or for specialised performers, it is in many senses even further from the DIY off-white monochrome of *Womens Work* than either *Notations* or *An Anthology*. Though unlike *An Anthology* it did not immediately forbid performance of the included works, it did not explicitly encourage it either; rather, I would argue, it assumes a professional knowledge that builds on the presumed knowledge of how to interpret the scores – that a public performance would most likely necessitate involvement with the composer’s publisher, if not the composer directly, either of which one would know how to contact through existing networks. Hence the significance of Knowles’ and

of authorship, seems to be stretching towards these more generous and multiple future shared moments: a *diffractive* opening up and outwards that echoes from the magazine's earliest conception, through all articulations, and sublimated here in this sentence. In another metaphor that further builds on her *samizdat* magazine, Lockwood has more recently spoken of the publication as a "message in a bottle" (2019a), an emphatic insistence that this wasn't conceived of only for immediate peers, but a far more *speculative* and open-ended generosity that opposes any sense that there is an elite inner-circle. Equally significantly, it conserves the autonomy of the authors, with a sense of generous reciprocity in the sentence that follows: "please notify us of performances" – the importance of *recognition*, à la Oliveros. Although it is stipulated that "all rights revert to contributors", the simplicity that one might just "notify us" disarms the fear of the complexity of wading into copyright or legal matters, again dissolving the sense of an inner circle who may be uncontactable or may say 'no'. *Womens Work*, then, constitutes an invitation to perform that moves from the implicit open-ness of much post-Cage-an notation to an explicit imperative. In its introductory framing, *Womens Work* seems to articulate what might be implied or understood in many *open works* (Eco 1988) but in fact not so easily actualised; it is this articulation that makes the generic open-ness of this wider area of work more explicitly feminist.

3.3 A feminist context amongst others ("both/and")

Whilst this generous insistence on performance is both an explicit but perhaps less immediately obvious expression of the project's feminist politics, then of course it is the collection's title, *Womens Work*, that serves as a more instant reinforcement, "highly deliberate" in Lockwood's words (2017, 120). A great deal about the project can be gleaned from the publication itself, and these early articulations in the call for scores, and in the respective correspondences with Oliveros; and then on the other hand in relation to its precursors as analysed in the previous section. Yet there is significant further nuance that emerges over the course of the first issue's

production, not least because of the difficulties that Knowles and Lockwood would encounter in attempting to raise the funds for its production. From receiving scores from contributors in early 1974, Knowles and Lockwood would go on to unsuccessfully seek out funding for the printing costs throughout that year, including an application in the spring to the National Endowment for the Arts Special Projects Grant, and ongoing correspondence with philanthropist and archivist Jean Brown, who after many requests from Knowles, eventually gave a much smaller grant of \$350 that ultimately enabled Knowles and Lockwood to print the first issue themselves in April 1975. From a contemporary standpoint, it seems back-to-front that the invitation to participate had already occurred, and indeed the works themselves collected, more-or-less before any funding had even been sought, let alone confirmed.

This is perhaps an indication of two factors: firstly, of how urgent the project must have felt; and secondly, how confident they were in their own convictions and capacity to translate these into action. Knowles and Lockwood both had familiarity and success with funding in their own prior work; most notably, Knowles had received the extremely prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in 1968. Yet, although they were pitching something at a modest scale, neither had direct experience of funding a publication themselves, let alone a magazine, still now as then notoriously difficult to fund. Gwen Allen, in her monograph, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (2011), describes artist magazines as often inherently prone to failure, noting that “so many little magazines are so fleeting” (28), a proposition that will be expanded on in the final section (3.4) of this chapter. There is an additional layer to this unfamiliarity with publishing – that this was an explicitly feminist project (“the title was highly deliberate” (Lockwood 2017, 120)) – which would have been an unfamiliar proposition for both artists in terms of establishing a proposal. I speculate that perhaps in their relative distance from the feminist art movement and successful personal experiences as artists (over more than a decade each), Knowles and Lockwood were not quite anticipating the pushback, or the extent it would take them *back-to-basics* in having to ultimately physically produce the

magazine themselves. More than merely reflecting the practical challenges of self-publishing, this is a phenomenon described more broadly by contemporary feminist phenomenological philosopher Sara Ahmed in her recent book *Living a feminist life* (2017) as “coming up against a world”.

3.3.1 National Endowment for the Arts

There may have been additional applications, but between the formal approach to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the ongoing correspondence, sometimes almost pleading, with Jean Brown for a more traditional form of philanthropy, reading the two sources alongside each other offers valuable further insights into Knowles’ and Lockwood’s impetus and thinking around *Womens Work*. The two co-editors had approached the NEA through their Special Projects stream and were met with a letter back questioning the appropriateness of this funding for their project. In their further reply, a typed letter sent on 30 April 1974 (and shared with me by Lockwood from her own archive), Knowles and Lockwood are put in the position of having to further justify the need for the project, and in a sense, their own articulation of feminist praxis, for this governmental, establishment context. Their letter attempts to “dispel the misunderstandings that seem to have arisen”, chief among them that the magazine would be intended only for women. They emphasise the magazine is for⁴³:

“..a broadly inclusive audience, not for an exclusively female readership. This audience will include the art public and performance groups in particular, as this is a collection of performance scores. The works belong to a new field (trans media, intermedia and conceptual art) which has emerged in this decade. Since most of this work does not fit within the traditional categories of published material, it is probable that unless specifically designed publications are created as a vehicle for it, it might never appear at

⁴³ Letter from Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood to the NEA, April 30, 1974, Anna Lockwood private archive, Crompond, NY.

all...No large body of published work by women artists exists to which contemporary women can compare themselves or relate in any way..”

This extract has the dual function of exposing Knowles and Lockwood’s potential naivety in not pre-empting that such a project might be negatively read as *separatist*, while at the same time underlining their opposition to such a position and the desire for openness that characterises their work – a broader set of attitudes discussed already in relation to Oliveros in Chapter Two. What is also clarified here is the extent to which the score collection, or magazine, is a crucial curatorial format that brings together such work in its diversity and opens it out to a public. Moreover, it highlights the extent to which any such score collection is formative of that work, i.e. score-based performance work. That is to say that the existence of these nodes of distribution of works both make their live performance possible, but equally, in many cases, produce opportunities for the conception of the work in the first instance. I speculate that in general, the proliferation of score-based performance work occurs in a reciprocal ecology where their joint publishing in collections or magazines also proliferates, and vice versa. Crucially, then, any understanding of a project such as *Womens Work* must take place within its own wider context. I will explore this further in the next chapter, which brings together the words of eight of the contributors to the first issue of *Womens Work*. Knowles and Lockwood further relate this point to feminist questions, eschewing what Annea later describes as “isolated exemplars” (2017):

“Isolated publication of individual works has been the situation up to the present time, but when the work is scattered, the energy is scattered. What we are doing is tapping this energy, and gathering together works which we consider to be strong and innovative, not sacrificing standards of excellence, for the sake of special interest...”
(Knowles and Lockwood, 1974⁴⁴)

⁴⁴ *ibid*

Over the autumn of 1972 and throughout 1973, Knowles had been working closely with Oliveros on jointly realising the latter's *Postcard Theatre* project, which would finally be printed in early 1974, the very time when the *Womens Work* project was starting to crystallise.⁴⁵ This particular iteration of Oliveros' wider notion of *Post Card Theatre* built on an earlier performance in 1972 in San Diego that "used the postal system as the performance medium, " mailing 100 post cards of St Francis of Assisi to herself from different locations, and recording their arrival (Von Gunden 1983, 141). This had been inspired by her UCSD colleague Eleanor Antin's *100 Boots* (1972-3) mail art project.⁴⁶ In the collaboration with Knowles, images of Knowles and Oliveros as small children, Oliveros in the present, and Knowles' twin daughters are depicted alongside the following slogans across the five cards:

Beethoven was a lesbian

Mozart was a Black Irish Washer-woman

Chopin had dishpan hands

Bach was a mother

Brahms was a two-penny harlot

Knowles has spoken of her ambivalent relationship to the feminist art movement and in particular about her dis-identification with Judy Chicago's *Womanhouse* project that was happening at CalArts simultaneously with Knowles' presence and her own similarly collaborative, environmental *House of Dust* (Woods, 2012). Woods' footnotes, from her own 2009 interview with

⁴⁵ I refer here and further below to correspondence between Knowles and Oliveros in Autumn 1972 and 1973 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

⁴⁶ This earlier performance, and the interest in Antin's project is described in detailed notes in *Post Card Theater*, 102/5/6, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego

Knowles, that:

“[Knowles] felt alienated from the [Feminist Art Programme], Chicago, and Schapiro, as well as some of the female faculty in general, because she was known for “working with men.”” (Woods 2012)

The *Postcard Theatre* project with Oliveros, through friendship, collaboration and the content of the project itself, seemingly provides a more appropriate outlet for Knowles’ own feminist identifications. Here Knowles is working closely with a peer for whom she clearly had deep admiration and a far closer proximity in terms of respective practices and shared communities, and also notably barely a year apart in age (where Chicago and the generation of women associated with the feminist art movement were largely younger). Not least, there was a shared sensibility for a more inclusive approach, as typified by Oliveros’ insistence that she would only be a member of the “Society for Cutting Up With Men” (see Chapter Two). As they discuss Oliveros’ slogans above for the front cover of the postcards, Knowles writes “they are great – we must do more”⁴⁷. And having nominated Oliveros for the Guggenheim Award⁴⁸, a nominator herself as a previous award holder, she comments to Oliveros⁴⁹:

“I am still an invited artist into the male power structure and it bothers me so much. All the trustees and all the members of the selection committee for the Guggenheim Grant are men. Shocking.”

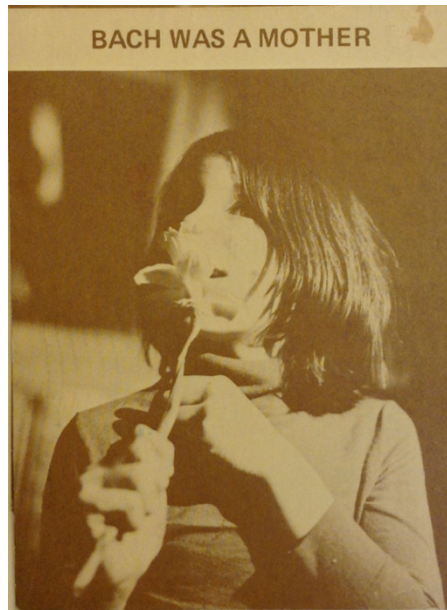
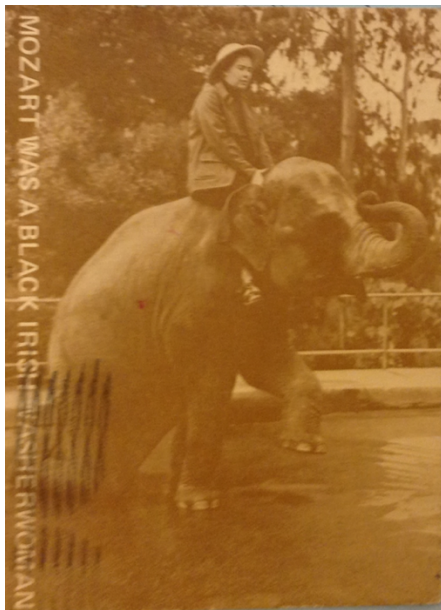
Here, Knowles’ plain-speaking sentiment seems in stark contrast with her apparent Californian ambivalence, as much as it echoes Lockwood’s more recent description of a desire for being “not just isolated exemplars” (2017).

⁴⁷ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, undated c1973 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

⁴⁸ Oliveros would successfully receive the award, which facilitated her forementioned Meditation Project at UCSD.

⁴⁹ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, undated c1973 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

Knowles later writes to Oliveros, in the same series of correspondence during the production of *Postcard Theatre* that “[s]ome day I would love to have a performance workshop with women”⁵⁰ – something that had clearly not been feasible in the context of CalArts but might begin to take some kind of form in *Womens Work*. Thus, I speculate that this prior collaboration and correspondence with Oliveros serves as a conduit to *Womens Work* for Knowles.



Figs 3.9-11 Alison Knowles and Pauline Oliveros, *Postcard Theatre* (1974)

⁵⁰ *ibid*

3.3.2 Jean Brown

In early spring 1974, around the same time as the initial approach to NEA, Knowles writes to Jean Brown as part of a pre-existing correspondence, explaining her friendship with Annea, briefly commending her CV, and then going on to say⁵¹:

“She and I have worked out an idea together for a magazine; we both think it’s still needed – a magazine of women’s notation. First of all the focus is not on women, but on new notation – but by women. We believe that women are doing new work today and we want to give some of that energy out. These will be complete scores for performance. We will request work from all over the country. We are interested in what might be a thread of similar sensibilities among creative women. Our choices will be based wholly on the strengths and quality of the work submitted and will not reflect any of the partisanship within the women’s movement. The publication will be distributed free to people who will use it for performance. We are accepting notations from all the performance arts: dance, theatre, music, intermedia and cooking! Our magazine is called Women’s Work. We wonder if you would be interested in helping us fund the first issue. I’m working with Ann[e]a on a fiscal breakdown this week.”

This further echoes some of the key facets of the project that had already been established, as well as raising various points of tension. Again, the clear connection to *Notations* is made: “[a] magazine of women’s notation...the focus is not on women, but on new notation – but by women”. However, this somewhat convoluted articulation starts to unravel the question of the nature of the feminism(s) that the project might be embracing. On the one hand this statement, and some that follow (“not partisan”) could be understood as

⁵¹ Letter from Alison Knowles to Jean Brown, Spring 1974, Box 28 Folder 36, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

relatively conservative, or apologist: it's not "on women", just work that *happens* to be "by women". Yet it might also be read in the same vein of radical thought that had already concerned Oliveros: that a feminist *music* was not radical merely by replacing men with women in the *content*, women's voices, women's words; rather, it was the very *form* that needed to be re-established. Here similarly, not *on* women, but *new notation by* women; new forms, in other words. This is reinforced by what follows: "we believe that women are doing new work today and we want to give some of that energy out...what might be a thread of similar sensibilities". Here is a more explicit commitment that also echoes in the letter to the NEA: a belief that women are making work that is not only perhaps different, but new and exciting, pushing formal boundaries, working in innovative ways in a new field, as they express it ("trans-media, intermedia and conceptual"). As Oliveros would say four years earlier, describing her motivations for writing *To Valerie Solanas...*: "I felt the need to express my resonance with this energy" (Oliveros 2011). In contrast to the "partisanship" of the women's movement itself, instead, simply in support of the many individual women artists known to Knowles and Lockwood "who were doing great work" as Lockwood (2017) puts it, supplemented by Knowles' assertion here to Jean Brown that "choices will be based wholly on the strengths and quality of the work". As it was so strongly for Oliveros ("in recognition of their desperation"), it is the possibility for women to make their work which is at the heart of this feminist argument.

I claim that the clearest expression of any shared feminist praxis among the co-editors and the contributors comes in the sublimated form of the collection itself with its explicit feminist framing – where in fact there is a range of relationships ("not partisan") to feminist and other politics, as we will see in the following Chapter Four. The nature of the collection echoes Oliveros' need, via Solanas, for *both* the community of the group *and* the autonomy of the individuals within it, this *duality* that complements and extends an Oliverosian feminism. As a collection, it plays host to this diversity: not a generic, flattened participation but assertive convictions. The collection embodies a citational politics in its physical hosting; hosted within

the printed pages of the collection, and potential hosting to come in its invitation to perform, its live moments of performance. There is a parallel sense in which both the form of the performance score, and the format of the performance score anthology, or magazine, both hold heterogeneous multiplicity; this idea of a *feminist performance score* extended to *Womens Work* itself with its generous invitation to perform. Each work, with its many different future live moments, and the anthology as a collection of these works, operates in this instance as a kind of instruction-in-itself to perform (or, as *samizdat*, or, message in a bottle).

The collection of these works together, then, is as much an act of framing and context-making as any kind of harmonising of practices — a statement that they can co-exist together in this feminist context as much as all the other contexts in which they might have already existed, or go on to exist in. Thus, it is thoroughly in line with the terms of an Oliverosian feminism discussed in Chapter Two — a fundamental ambivalence to exist in *both* this context *and* any number of others. The collection then draws attention towards framing and context *per se*, the politics and ethics inherent in each, and every, instance on the page and live. In the first instance, while some works were written for the collection, others had circulated for as much or more than a decade in different live and published contexts and indeed would go on to do so afterwards. An example here is Annea Lockwood's *Piano Transplants* that includes her *Piano Burning*, which was first performed in 1968 in London (Lockwood 2014) and its score first published in 1971 in *Source* in a quite different continuous-prose version. The piece has been performed in numerous contexts since, with and without Lockwood's involvement. Or equally, Alison Knowle's *Proposition IV (Squid)*, which had been written in 1971 as an instruction piece to help her students think about performance in the direct context of her CalArts classes held in and around *The House of Dust* (Higgins 2012). In *Womens Work* it perhaps poignantly finds a feminist context where one wasn't as available during Knowles' time in California.

Over a series of follow-up letters to Brown in spring 1974, we understand that

there is difficulty in terms of arranging a meeting between the three women as Knowles had envisaged, and the exchange infers that Brown was not forthcoming with any funding towards the budget that still stood at \$2,000 at this point. I include this follow-up note in fig 3.12 as an illustration not so much for the content that echoes these ongoing efforts to engage Brown, but because it was written on one of the *Postcard Theatre* postcards, “Brahms was a two-penny Harlot”, featuring “Alison Knowles on the beach/Pauline Oliveros with dagger” both as surly un-feminised small children (and indeed Knowles use of these postcards with Brown pre-dates their discussion of *Womens Work*, and incidentally carry on with other correspondences into the 1980s). As much as Knowles may have been drawing a certain kind of ‘non-partisan’, or even conservative narrative in relation to the Women’s Movement for the benefit of Jean Brown, she clearly did not shy away from certain forms of direct expression; though here one expressed through humour and a more oblique feminist intellect that would become more central to this later project, as I describe below. For all that the ongoing exchange with Brown might have overtones of conservatism on Knowles’ part, this is likely as much or more an attempt to respect Brown’s sensibilities.

Fig 3.12 Postcard from Alison Knowles to Jean Brown. Box 28 Folder 36, Knowles, Alison, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

In our 2017 interview, Knowles had relatively less memory of the process of the *Womens Work* project, compared with her animated discussion of *Notations*, the latter a project she must have been asked to discuss on numerous occasions over the decades, including the recent published interview for a Fondazione Bonotto catalogue (Knowles 2016). This discrepancy plainly reveals how history-writing tends to reinforce what is already canonical while smaller, self-organised projects may fall under-the-radar after a certain point, if not memorialised through scholarship, curating etc. *Notations* was a hardbound book with major distribution; *Womens Work* a *samizdat*, self-published and “taken to bookshops”, reinforcing the more informal nature of this project more than anything. Taken with her ambivalence towards projects such as *Womanhouse* whilst at CalArts (Woods 2012), I had initially, and I assert now wrongly, sensed that *Womens Work* was somehow a kind of anomaly for Knowles. Rather, I suggest it sits in this larger body of collaborative work during this time that was clearly significant for Knowles while at the same time not defining her as ‘partisan’, or as a ‘feminist artist’, echoing aspects of Oliveros’ relationship to feminism and Lockwood’s assertion that “[feminism] did not influence our lives completely” (2017, 123).

In the initial burst of correspondence between Knowles and Brown in the first half of 1974, Knowles asserts a desire to print the book before her trip to Japan in October/November 1974. The correspondence resumes after this trip in early 1975 where we learn that Knowles and Lockwood are now anticipating that they will have to physically do the printing themselves⁵²:

“Anna and I went to a small organisation called Come-unity [sic] press this afternoon. They have an AB Dick offset press and we plan to run the Women’s Work magazine there. It will take us quite a series of Thursday afternoons + learn to use it and time that neither of us have, but it must be done somehow. All those beautiful scores - we can’t just abandon or return them...so we will learn how to run this small press

⁵² Letter from Alison Knowles to Jean Brown, undated, early 1975, Box 28 Folder 36, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

and do the best we can with it. I feel that you have objections about an all-womens [sic] publication. Your name need not appear at all if that's the case. We are asking you this time for 350 dollars having cast pride to the winds and have decided together that you might be able to help us with this much smaller figure....What do you think Jean, we're willing to put in the time somehow, to produce it. [Further inset] in any case, it's the year of the rabbit – gentle and hopeful. I am here and love to see you anytime.”

Here we understand, reinforced by the ultimate NEA rejection, that the project had become difficult to complete due to a lack of funding. Clearly Jean Brown had not been forthcoming with their prior requests for up to \$2,000, and now this is downgraded to a request for \$350 on the basis that they will be physically printing the book themselves in a community press – the lower figure likely just the cost of the paper stock. Come!unity is described as a “gay anarchist press,”⁵³ and it is interesting to note the proximity of Knowles’ and Lockwood’s project with this more overtly politicised one. In the end, the colophon of the first issue states publishing at “The Print Centre, 68 Jay Street, Brooklyn”, with thanks to Jean Brown and to Aen-jai graphics in the same line. I have not been able to trace any information about this other press. The link to Aen-Jai, another radical publishing project is notable, if not directly explicated in the materials I have encountered. Not only was Aen-jai the press that had produced *Postcard Theatre*, it was an explicitly radical feminist endeavour that printed many more mainstream feminist items⁵⁴ – repeating this connection with a more overtly politicised project, and in this case one at the heart of the Women’s Movement. Thus, furthering the complexity of any assertion that this project can be understood wholly within Knowles’ and Lockwood’s pre-existing mixed communities of practice on the one hand, and on the other, the Women’s Movement and concurrent radical projects.

⁵³ Guide to the Come!Unity Press Collection, MSS. 521, Fales, NYU.

⁵⁴ Examples include the design of lesbian separatist folk singer Alix Dobkin’s second album, “Living With Lesbians” see: <https://www.dykequarterly.com/ads-from-others-in-dyke-a-quarterly/> Last accessed 26th June 2022.

Considering the final first issue in terms of its development, perhaps the most remarkable aspect, then, is the committed persistence of Knowles and Lockwood to complete the project in spite of the lack of funding and time, making it surely a significantly greater commitment by both women than they might have initially anticipated; downscaling from 11” at a \$2,000 budget to 8” at perhaps not much more than \$350 plus the large investment of their own time. Indeed, were it not for Jean Brown’s last-minute funding, a question remains as to whether it would have happened at all. Hence it seems self-evident that Knowles and Lockwood would not rush into the second issue. It is not at all surprising that this would rather take a further three years and finally materialise as a single-sided, low-weight poster that would have cost a small fraction of the already minimised first issue, which was itself already intended modestly. “It was going to be easier to mail”, as Lockwood (2017, 124) described the poster to me, perhaps a euphemistic or hazily recalled metaphor for this further downscaling. However, the ongoing commitment is abundantly clear, especially the honouring of the work of their peers. Clearly there were immediate peers, amongst them Ruth Anderson, who had not been included in the first issue, and we have also learned about the “much too much” good work Knowles and Lockwood had received, so it is easy to understand their desire to slowly proceed with the second issue even in the face of these obvious difficulties.

3.3.3 “[E]ven the cover is not decoration”

My final point before concluding again returns us to Pauline Oliveros, and the correspondence with both Knowles and Lockwood that had been ongoing throughout this process. While the two co-editors were continuing to find ways to make the project happen, they were also revising and finalising the details of the magazine’s design. Knowles writes to Oliveros in October 1974⁵⁵:

⁵⁵ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, October 1974 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

“The front cover of Women’s Work awaits us. We would like it to be your work. I imagine it as pure white with “womens work” as a large gray half tone filling the bottom. Do you have a one or two line meditation that could run across the middle? If you could write it to me in your hand I could reproduce it as is. Write the piece within seven inches with as many lines as it takes in black ink on white paper. We’ll wait for it.”

Then in a New Years 1974/5 letter to Oliveros, Lockwood repeats this request⁵⁶:

“We’d still love to have one of your meditations on the cover, one of the short ones so that it will fit on an 8 x 11” cover. So that even the cover is not decoration but is an inducement to do, oneself. It would be the finest cover, will you? Thing is, we’d like it in your own handwriting. If Jean can finance us we’ll start printing before Alison leaves for Denmark, at the beginning of April. Please, if you like the idea, if it feels right to you, could you choose a meditation and write it out for us soon - sending it to either of us? I have your handwritten copies of the early meditations, though the later ones are copied in my own handwriting and I’d guess there are new ones done in the past three months or so that I don’t know at all!”

Oliveros does indeed finally respond to these later requests, and sends a new *Sonic Meditation*, handwritten “Feb 20 1975”. This is published, though, as the final work in the collection, almost as if an epilogue, or time stamp, to evidence this lengthy journey Knowles and Lockwood had endured, with the final approval of Oliveros. Though it is not ultimately on the cover – perhaps Oliveros herself objected to this singling out, perhaps Knowles and Lockwood together came to that conclusion, or perhaps it just didn’t work aesthetically – instead the names of the 16 contributors are written in two columns, in the

⁵⁶ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros, New Years 1975, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

order in which their work appears in the magazine, in Knowles' own handwriting. Nevertheless, it is eminently symbolic that Knowles and Lockwood felt the 'cherry on the cake' of their project would be to grace its cover with a work of Oliveros', and specifically a *Sonic Meditation*, knowing they already had a lengthy new work of Oliveros' in the collection, and that even this cover might provide more room for "live material", "an inducement to do, oneself."

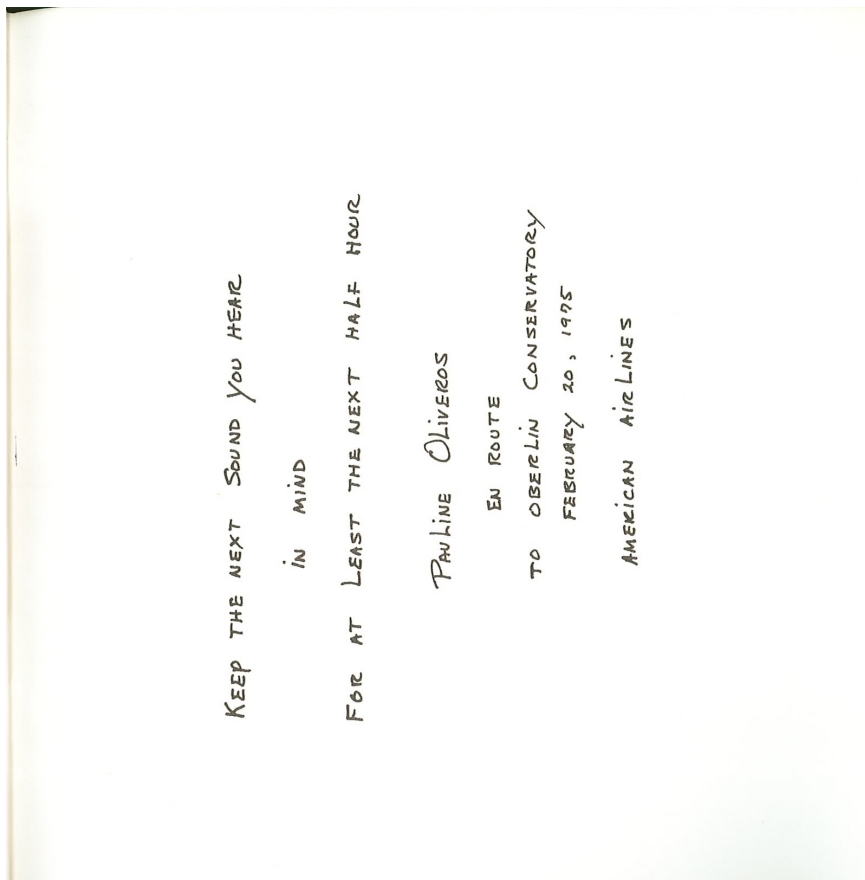


Fig 3.13 Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditation* in *Womens Work* first issue (1975)

We also learn from the above that in autumn 1974 Knowles is imagining the magazine in black, white and grey-scale. Yet what would transpire as the final outcome of the available budget would be the very same sepia/manila combination of the *Postcard Theatre* postcards. This remarkable continuity is striking, though not easily perceived unless one is able to see both publications in physical proximity. The first issue of *Womens Work* is not dated anywhere, except Oliveros' "February 20, 1975", though it appears to have been finished and sent out initially in April 1975. Knowles writes to

Jean Brown from Denmark, “I imagine our Women’s Work 1st edition is running by now. Ann[e]a finishes the ‘stripping up’”⁵⁷. Knowles also writes to Oliveros to say: “Women’s Work” is almost on the road to you - hope ya like it and will use it”⁵⁸. Later in the autumn of 1975 Lockwood seeks Oliveros’ approval, again cementing her as central to the project: “do you feel happy with WOMENS WORK?”⁵⁹. And at roughly the same time Knowles writes a letter to Oliveros, where she adds an additional heading: “women’s work does well in sales! A nice thing.”⁶⁰

3.4 Conclusion: Magazine as failure

Fig 3.14 Flyer for *Womens Work* issue one (1975). Box 28 Folder 36 – 40, Knowles, Alison, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

⁵⁷ Letter from Alison Knowles to Jean Brown, April 1975, Box 28 Folder 36, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

⁵⁸ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, April 1975 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

⁵⁹ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros, autumn 1975, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

⁶⁰ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, autumn 1975 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

In coming to realise that there was a lengthy 18-month gap between the conception and publishing of *Womens Work*, an inevitable shift occurred in my understandings of the relationship between the related live contexts I had also become aware of, and the publication itself. Where I had thought the first issue emerged in 1975, I had thought of it more as a product of certain live contexts, rather than potentially even the other way around. In our first interview in 2014, Annea Lockwood brought up Sounds Out of Silent Spaces in relation to my questions about further performance contexts. This is a group that ran monthly from 1971-9, co-organised by composer Phil Corner and his then wife, then astrologer Julie Winter (also *Womens Work* contributor, see Chapter Four), taking place in the Experimental Intermedia Foundation, in Elaine Summers' loft (also a contributor to *Womens Work*):

“We would get together for an afternoon, stretching into the early evening with food in between, say a Saturday, bring ideas to the afternoon, and just conjure up pieces together. Then the following day, Sunday, in the evening, we would do them and invite all our friends. Some [pieces] were [collectively authored], or one of us would bring a fully realised piece and then we would work on it. It was a bit of a mix, pretty loose.”

(Lockwood 2017, 125)

Fig 3.15 poster for Sounds Out of Silent Spaces (1976). I/205, Silverman Fluxus Archive: MoMA, New York

Indeed, there is extensive crossover in terms of contributors to the two projects, with Annea Lockwood, Ruth Anderson, Alison Knowles, Julie Winter and Carole Weber all involved with *Sounds Out Of Silent Spaces*, and not least Elaine Summers as physical host. These same women, along with singer Emily Derr, would also constitute their own additional group with private weekly meetings, focusing more specifically on sound and healing:

“We all wondered whether it would be possible for us to, singing, using our voices, to converge on one pitch so accurately that there were no beat frequencies even, we were right on the same frequency, and if so, what would that feel like, and that would be a very focused

energy; what could we do with it? So we would sit, working towards this, and because Julie's – and our interests for that matter – were very much around sound and healing, then, and subsequently, of course, but very focused on it then, we wondered if we could do something with such a focused beam of sound which might be helpful to people, not in any curative sense, but could it be an energy which people would like to feel and sense and maybe do something with themselves? So, we met for two years, exploring this, and then friends of ours who were very curious about what we were up to asked if they could come and sit in the middle of our circle and receive this energy! We went and did a workshop at the women's prison, arising out of those meetings and a grant that I got which had a community activity component which was great.”

(Lockwood 2018)

The context for this specific group will be further explored by Julie Winter in the following Chapter Four. Lockwood explained to me that from within this same group of women, the tradition of organising a New Year's Eve marathon group reading of Gertrude Stein's 925-page 1925 novel *The Making of Americans* emerged over New Year's Eve 1974/5 – that is, just on the cusp of the actual publishing of *Womens Work*. In this first year, Alison Knowles, Annea Lockwood, and Jean Rigg, then administrator of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, are noted on the invitation as the organisers. In the following year 1975/6 they are joined by Ruth Anderson as a fourth core organiser (see figures 3.16-19).

“Not all of us worked with [Stein's] works, so to speak, but she was very much an iconic figure, as a great lesbian writer, for one thing, and as a great female, highly assertive American writer and thinker, and just we loved the work and I think it was hypnotic to read.

It was like a great encampment, and people drifted in and out with kids or without kids, we got really tired, we got sort of punch-drunk! It just kept on and on and we'd sort of stagger out of there and get

some food – and see daylight and breathe the city air, such as it was, and blink, you know, like moles coming out. Loved it.

I mean, there's no way to underemphasise how important we all were to each other, and this was a large number of people, you know, with interlocking circles of artists and practitioners and thinkers and makers, many of us knowing many, many of the circle, and not necessarily directly collaborating but frequently falling into collaboration. There's no way to overemphasise how thrilling that environment, that soup of artists, as it were, was to me!"

(Lockwood, 2018)

Figs 3.16-19 Invitations for *The Making of Americans* marathon reading, 1974/5, 1975/6, 1977/8, Box 28 Folder 39, Knowles, Alison, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

I understand both of these latter contexts – the private ‘sound and healing’ group that would take place in the studio at CUNY and then latterly in Julie Winter’s loft, and the tradition of the readings of *The Making of Americans* as part of a continuum with *Womens Work* – as extending some of the themes, the “live material” into physical space. Moreover, in the case of the latter, it takes in the community in the widest possible sense. From the perspective of Lockwood’s arrival in New York, the *Womens Work* project had contributed towards cementing this “great encampment” she had so purposefully sought in her trans-Atlantic relocation.

One basic but profound shift in my own understanding of the project concerns the status of *Womens Work* as a magazine project. Receiving the two issues side-by-side, they are easy to read as a one-off publication, followed by a one-off poster. In being completely different in terms of format and only two issues, I initially rejected the term ‘magazine’ in general, and specifically when collaborating on the articulation of the re-publication – even if it had been initially conceived as such. I further discussed this with Annea Lockwood who agreed with me and questioned describing it as a magazine (Lockwood 2019b). Yet the historical evidence disagrees: a “magazine” project is clearly how it was consistently described by Lockwood, Knowles, and all involved at the time of producing the first issue. After all, a magazine suggests an ongoing commitment, a different set of temporalities and labour than a one-off publication: an ongoing commitment to a set of practices, to their peers, to ways of working. The failure for *Womens Work* to emerge as a more regular magazine – just two issues in divergent formats, to the extent that it is difficult to read it as a magazine project at all – on the one hand challenges this assertion of a magazine. On the other, and more compellingly, it speaks to this process and the relative economy of these practices: Knowles and Lockwood’s dogged commitment to them, and to their peer group. I posit that it can be read both as a triumph of autonomy and self-institution by Knowles and Lockwood at a highly significant point in their lives, successful on its own terms. Equally, I propose it can be read as a magazine project in an expanded sense, taken together with an extended group’s expanded activities – beginning in 1970 with *To Valerie Solanas...*, including the activities of the ♀’s Ensemble and the ensuing *Sonic Mediations*, including *Postcard Theatre*, and besides and beyond the two issues of *Womens Work*, the ‘sound and healing’ meditation group and the annual live publishing of *The Making of Americans*. That the physical magazine itself exists, if only in two iterations, I argue is as much an attempt to articulate and encourage the existence of a wider culture, both real and desired (“a message-in-a-bottle”). As Knowles assertively informs the NEA, “unless specifically designed publications are created as a vehicle for it, it

might never appear at all”⁶¹. As Gwen Allen asserts:

“[t]he beginnings of magazines are frequently dialectically linked to their endings, which often indicate not so much the dissolution of their original editorial goals as their realisation.” (2011, 28)

Womens Work, then, constitutes an act of autonomy, with a commitment to a modest economy of scale bound up in its immediacy, its intended use in live performance. In favour of groups, collectivity and co-operation, an open generosity and multiple affinities, and against “partisanship” (“cutting up with men”). In favour of formal experimentation and excellence, though not “lone stars”, nor “isolated exemplars”.

⁶¹ Letter from Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood to the NEA, April 30, 1974, Anna Lockwood private archive, Crompond, NY.

CHAPTER FOUR: FREE SPIRITS IN FREE RELATION: TALKING *WOMENS WORK*

Foreword

Following a discussion of Pauline Oliveros as an (ambivalent) feminist figurehead (Chapter Two) and the subsequent and interrelated magazine project *Womens Work* (Chapter Three), this chapter presents a series of interview ‘portraits’ of eight of the contributors to the first issue of *Womens Work*. These are with Julie Winter, Jacki Apple, Simone Forti, Heidi Von Gunden, Beth Anderson, Nye Ffarrabas, Mary Lucier and Mieko Shiomi – essentially all those that were possible, as explained in more detail below. Working out how to work with these interview materials, undoubtedly the most important primary research that I have conducted for this research, has in turn been one of the hardest aspects to resolve. As well as inserting certain excerpts and comments throughout the thesis, in setting out to write this chapter about the contributors to *Womens Work* and their respective contributions, practices and lives, using the interview material, there seemed to be two obvious routes. The first, and possibly more conventional, being to write through a series of themes, turning to multiple voices in each case. The alternative, and the one I have chosen here, is to present each contributor in turn, and let the themes emerge as repetition and difference.

The chapter title – “free spirits in free relation to each other” – is taken from the excerpt of Valerie Solanas’ *SCUM Manifesto* at stake for Oliveros in Chapter Two (Solanas 1968, 18). In this mode of understanding – where the individual and their *recognition* is as equally as important as the group – it felt important not to split these interviews up and thematise the ground that they produce. Rather, I regard each figure as a “whole one” (Stein 1925) in turn, with various ideas and characteristics running through many. My aim has been to give the contributors an autonomy that feels integral to the

values and histories they are expressing themselves in what follows, beyond Oliveros/Solanas. Letting them speak for themselves as much as possible, rather than being subsumed into my arguments does, I hope, prove to be the most appropriate approach to honour what it is they have to say on these very topics. It is an attempt at writing *with* these voices, to let them sit together, superseding my own voice here, if not altogether my argument. That is to say that it is not a chapter wholly about the individual practices as much as it is a chapter about the factors that cohere and differentiate a loosely associated group: that the interviews themselves, and the resulting edits, represent a partiality pertaining to this project and of course to my own subjectivity as interviewer and author, both aspects of which I expand on briefly in this introduction.

The Interviews

With the given limit of focusing on contributors to the first issue (1975), I made contact with as many as I was able to do so. Of those remaining, Wendy Greenberg I have never been able to find, and Carole Weber I was able to find only later through more involved correspondence with peers of hers during the re-publishing of *Womens Work*. Otherwise, these eight were all readily contactable by email through their own websites, mutual acquaintances, galleries, or in Mary Lucier's case her video distributor Electronic Arts Intermix. I note this as a reflection of their ongoing activities and presence. They were all unanimously immediate and entirely affirmative in their responses to my requests for interview. I note this here too as I insist this is an important starting point for any understanding of any shared attributes: an immediacy and generosity that reinforces what I have discussed in the last chapter ("these are scores ready for you to do").

Seven of the eight interviewees were based in the USA, which then produced an obvious 'tour' route. With my base in NYC, which is still arguably the centre of gravity within this group, I also prioritised specific archival research that loosely fitted around this tour. This included Oliveros' archive at UC San Diego – a morning's drive from Los Angeles where two interviewees live,

Jacki Apple and Simone Forti – as well as in LA itself the Getty Institute, home of funder Jean Brown’s archive, as well as that of The Kitchen and part of Dick Higgins’. In Chicago I visited Northwestern’s archive for the *Notations* Project, Charlotte Moorman and further Dick Higgins correspondence, that also made a base for visiting Heidi Von Gunden in Champaign, Illinois. Further archival research was completed in New York around interviews there: New York Public Library for Pauline Oliveros’ correspondence and Elaine Summers including the Experimental Intermedia Foundation; MoMA for the Fluxus Silverman archives including Mieko Shiomi, Alison Knowles, Nye Ffarrabas and Phil Corner for *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces*; and Fales at NYU for Jacki Apple’s papers, Linda Montano’s Oliveros files and the AIR feminist gallery co-founded by Sari Dienes and hosting work by Apple and others. For the most part, with the exceptions of Oliveros’ and *Notations*, these archive visits were exploratory, and the historical insights accordingly came hand-in-hand with the rich insights from these extraordinary meetings. Most of the elements in the illustrations that accompany this chapter come from these archives, along with some of my own ‘anecdotal’ photos, and I intend these as a kind of ‘scrapbook’ that augments the portraits, often relating to specific topics discussed.

Moreover, the journeys themselves offered certain insights: from the much-repeated flight west from New York to Los Angeles; to the experience of arriving on a cliff-top wooded paradise at the University of California, San Diego campus, as Oliveros herself would have experienced on her move south, as too would have Von Gunden returning from LA. The choreography of negotiating the LA traffic; making the journey northeast from this paradise to freezing Illinois, as Von Gunden also did, to the extensive journey into Vermont that distanced Nye Ffarrabas from her art career in New York, and for a time, too, Simone Forti while she lived nearby at Mad Brook Farm.



Figs 4.1-2 University of California, San Diego (Geisel Library; cliffs adjacent to campus).
Photos: author

In conducting the interviews my main method was to cover three key topics, as much as appropriate, whilst also allowing the conversations to flow naturally. These were firstly around *Womens Work* itself, how the interviewees came to be involved, who they had known and worked with, and of course about their contribution specifically. Secondly, their relationship to feminism and the Women's Movement in the 1970s in broader terms. Thirdly, their relationship to text instruction, and how their contribution fits, or not, in the context of their wider practice. Rather than subscribing to any particular method of oral history, I saw these interviews primarily as existing within the continuum of my own curatorial practice of more than 15 years, where I have been meeting artists and discussing their work, usually with some similar kind of focus in mind that might pertain to the project we are working on together. Roughly speaking, I spent the day prior to each interview consolidating my research, as I would hope to before any studio visit or meeting with any artist with whom I was working. That is to say that through a curatorial paradigm, I see these more as working relationships – not least because we would all shortly after go on to work together on the republishing of *Womens Work*.

Editing

Having family in Belarus and closely following the violent suppression of the elections there in 2020 led me to Belarussian journalist and author Svetlana Alexievic's books, beginning with *Chernobyl Prayer* (2016). Alexievic describes her style of writing with oral history interviews in these books as *polyphonic*, working on book projects often for more than a decade, where she has many dozens of recorded interviews to finally edit into one coherent text. I find there is a composerly quality to the way she works with these oral texts; one that seems somewhat at ease with the discussions already afoot. Alexievic is clearly the orchestrator of the overall narrative(s), but each voice also takes its agency on the page, to the extent it needs to tell its story. In short, to my mind her method retains the grain of individual voices in the telling of collective histories which is my desired goal in this chapter.

Starting out with what felt like so much material myself – these eight interviews, some as many as 18,000 words long, that I was lucky enough to have had transcribed – I looked to Alexievic's methods to begin to excerpt these into shorter 'stand-alone' statements. Feeling that I wanted to keep something of this formal approach in any final writing, I kept further editing each interview until each was a brief portrait of 1,500 or so words, dwelling on the main topics at stake in this project as well as maintaining some extraneous elements that I felt aided a sense of character. I shared these final statements with each contributor accordingly for their approval and any minor edits. If the first two chapters, although including my own anecdotal encounters more or less, are historical in a broadly recognisable academic idiom, then this chapter is a departure in as much as the main material is the only-somewhat-mediated voices of these other eight women – and as such comes as a form of break. Alongside this Foreword and the relatively succinct Afterword, I intend the individual texts to speak for themselves, directly to the reader. I hope certain resonances will already be obvious, as they also act as encounters between each figure in turn with the reader, where the role of the curator here is to make these introductions.

I have kept the portraits in the order in which the interviews were conducted. I go on to give brief context for each interview at the end in the short biographies I have included, along with a note about the interview itself. I have placed these biographies after the main text in each case, though they might equally be read first if the reader prefers. The biographies stem from a combination of each contributor's own existing artist biographies and detail recounted to me, and in whichever combination of the two, modified to relate to their longer text. Mostly the interviews start with the work in *Womens Work* and that is reflected here, though several take a different thread. I have not mediated their description of the work with further explanatory details as I would intend the reader to be reading this text with their own copy of *Womens Work* to hand. Keeping in the lists of who knew who, while potentially repetitious, also felt important in revealing the overlaps, and the more central nodes.

I have added underline to some phrases that stand out particularly to me. Some of the key areas that I will pick up again in the Afterword include:

- A wide set of understandings of the notion of the score but nevertheless a strong shared sensibility for collaboration and group work.
- Some clear central nodes: everyone has a direct relationship with Oliveros; many with Sounds Out of Silent Spaces and Charlotte Moorman's festivals, although everyone knew everyone else in different ways.
- A variety of relationships to the wider Women's Movement, from deep involvement to outright rejection, though all believing strongly in the autonomy of women making their own work.
- A shared sensibility for spiritual questions, Buddhism, astrology and forms of healing.
- The many personally and/or professionally transformational moments; and the role of support (or not) within them.

4.1 JULIE WINTER

IT WAS REALLY 'POWER WITH' AS DIFFERENTIATED FROM 'POWER OVER'

Chelsea, Manhattan

“Now, this was a long time ago, it was the beginning of my astrological practice, long before I became a therapist or started doing healing work. I wrote down [by hand] all the signs, the glyphs, the associated colours, associated action words — or modes — *alone or in a group*, meaning just choose one and let it take you where it does: *left to right, perform any time*. You could choose any sign and then, just hold the image of the glyph and the colours and the mode and see what you wanted to express from that focus. I thought you could do it in performance; [*almost laughing*] I don't think I thought about it much. Alison said, 'we'd love you to include something,' and I thought, 'well, this is what I can include.' That was the only score I wrote. I performed a lot, but that was the only one I wrote.

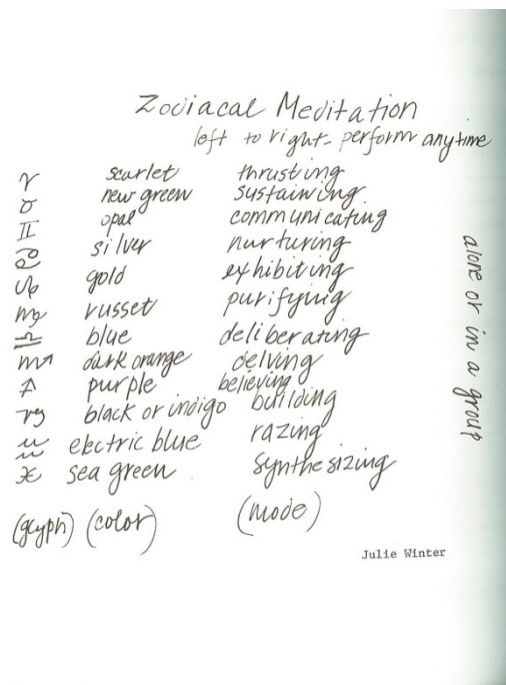


Fig 4.3 Julie Winter, *Zodiacal Meditation*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“I knew Elaine Summers, Annea, Alison, Marilyn Wood, Carole Weber very well. I knew Pauline. I didn’t see her that often, but we had a real strong connection. And Beth Anderson, she’s also an astrologer, she’s very good. I knew Sari and Simone but not well. I’d say that I’m 11, 12 years younger which at that time of life is not particularly meaningful. And these women and that whole group of people shaped my life, my understanding of the world. I was brought up with art, but I wasn’t brought up with that kind of art, of personal creativity, about people gathering and saying what they needed to say.

“I was brought up by a mother who was a feminist, whose mother, my grandmother, had been a feminist, but still, at the beginning of the women’s movement, I realised that there were things that were totally invisible to me because they were so embedded in the culture. I always say three things saved my life: my spiritual practice, my therapy, and the women’s movement. So yes, I was very deeply involved. Oh, I read everything... practically everybody you can think of.

“I began to perform with Philip [Corner, her then husband] we used his scores: they were graphic scores, since I don’t read music, and I performed with my voice; just sounding, whatever came up through the score.

“Now *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces* [see Chapter Three conclusion], that was not all women, we did it once a month for eight years [1971–9], at Elaine Summers’ loft [Experimental Intermedia Foundation] on Green Street, then on Broadway. She was *Intermedia Foundation*, they were all connected through that umbrella. We would decide during the month who was available. ‘This is what I’ve been working on, this is my idea, this is what I’d like to do,’ fine. We just met and talked about what we wanted to do and rehearsed it. It was pretty informal! And sometimes we had 11 people in the audience and sometimes we had 50.

Fig 4.4 Sounds Out of Silent Spaces: a retrospective (1981), flyer. I/200, Silverman Fluxus Archive: MoMA, New York

“Well, it gets into the nature of groups, and although this was Philip’s group, and I suppose mine, and we were responsible for making the dates and we made posters it was highly collaborative, the group was everybody’s group. There was no sense of hierarchy: it was really *power with* as differentiated from *power over*. And some of it was participatory, so the audience would participate.

“I had a sort of joke when I first met Philip and was involved in pieces that were participatory, and people would be moving around, rubbing walls or just scratching their foot against the floor. I began to be able to differentiate between people who were really gifted at improvisation and people who were there and who were welcome, but who were not very gifted, because, as you know, there really is a difference. Everyone was welcome.

“There was a strong sense of community for everyone’s well-being and creativity, which I don’t hear from the young artists, it’s become much more of a business – which is not to say there weren’t competitive feelings in

that group, too, but it was essentially community. Within the feminist world and within the larger world that included men. I also am wary of not wanting to slide into the ‘ah, it was better then’. We all tended to live in the same neighbourhoods, so you could meet easily and perform easily and have a snack. Most people had other jobs than what they did as artists, not everybody. People just did what they had to do, it was possible. Now you have to make a lunch date with your closest friends for three weeks in advance, because everybody works all the time. I don’t think you could create that kind of community in the current economic atmosphere.

“[In the mid-1970s] Annea and Emily Derr, a soloist at the New York City Opera, and Ruth Anderson and I all got together and chanted with something in the centre, a ring or matches, to see if the sound would levitate an object. Ruth was at Hunter College, and they gave her a space in the FBI Building right across the street, so we would go in and get inspected, go upstairs, close the door, turn the lights down, light a candle and start to chant. And there was one time when the matchbox moved: none of us were touching it, none of us were anywhere near. ‘Did you move it?’ ‘No, did you move it?’ Chanting, particularly sound, and the idea that it is not only healing, but can move physical objects... we decided to experiment.

Julie Winter was born and raised in Manhattan, New York to descendants of Russian and eastern European Jewish immigrants. She studied Drama at the New School and soon after met her first husband, composer Philip Corner in 1969. Corner introduced her to his ‘scene’ and she became an active vocal performer. She co-organised the *Sound Out of Silent Spaces* performance group with Corner from 1971–9 in parallel with working professionally as an astrologer, before going onto other forms of therapeutic training as well as channelling, for which she had her own Cable Access TV show, Micah Channel, in the 1980s. She continues to convene a weekly Healing Group that has met in her apartment since the late 1970s. She trained in the early 1980s with Ione, Pauline Oliveros’ widow, and in 2019 Ione published Winter’s first novel, *Dancing Home*. Although clearly at the heart of various activities, the

only reference to Winter in any subsequent scholarship of which I am aware is in passing in the recently published correspondence of John Cage: she was his astrologer from 1973 until his death in 1992 (Kuhn 2016, 540): “I did everybody’s chart!” (Winter 2018)

Julie had located her own copy of the first issue of *Womens Work* from her home in upstate New York in advance of our meeting at her apartment (that I had already glimpsed in the many online videos of her healing practice on her own website). We met first thing in the morning, Julie wearing a Chanel-style suit jacket in a meeting that felt both professional – especially due to its timing and evocation of her work as a therapeutic practitioner (we both sat in armchairs) – and warmly effusive.

4.2 JACKI APPLE

WHAT MAKES THIS INTERESTING IS THAT THIS ISN'T ABOUT BEING FEMALE, IT'S A SET OF IDEAS THAT THEY WANT TO EXPLORE, IT'S WOMEN TRYING TO DO THEIR WORK

Culver City, Los Angeles

“I wrote *Transcolor 1* [in *Womens Work*] in September 1973 – it was still a proposal at this point – and in October *Transcolor 2* was performed by Jene Highstein, a sculptor friend. He always wore a kind of army flak jacket, khaki, and the same T-shirt. I made him an exact copy of his khaki jacket, only in bright canary yellow cotton chino. All I did was change the colour. And the whole point was how would that affect how other people reacted to him, his sense of himself. I chose a colour with a very strong psychology: this was absolutely a clear yellow. He was to keep notes about how he felt wearing the jacket, and how people’s perceptions were of him, and how those two things interacted and changed during this duration. He had to wear the jacket every single day, every place he went.

“

Fig 4.5 Jacki Apple, *Transcolor 2* (1973), slide documentation. Jacki Apple Private Collection: Los Angeles

At first, he was very uncomfortable in it but by the time the week was coming towards an end, it had sort of adapted to his body and he really started to like it a lot, and then didn't want to give it up! The interesting thing was that when he wore the jacket, he found that his mood was brighter, he was more cheerful, and people seemed to have a positive response to him.

“It's about clothes as self-presentation, as image, pushing some kind of edge, investigating a set of ideas with larger social implications. And political in a way, about the relationship of image and perception in our society, what assumptions we make and how we behave in relation to the images that we choose. I was fascinated by Vito Acconci's work, he was using sound and voice, he was dealing with psychological and social space.

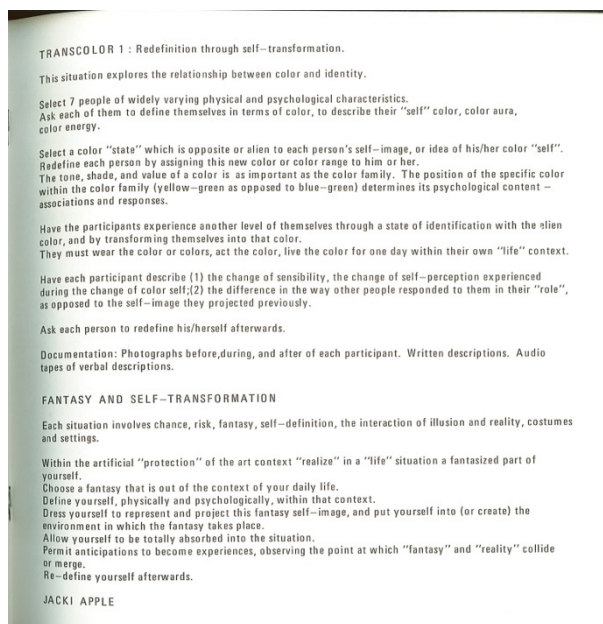


Fig 4.6 Jacki Apple, *Transcolor 1 & Fantasy and Self-Transformation* (1973), *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“This is not what I call a score. It's a concept statement. A score is, for me, from later work [large-scale theatrical performance], I have recording scores, choreographic scores, sound scores. I mean, in the case of Jene, you could say it's a performance score. [A score] can be added on to if you'd have

a different social context, the premise of this piece remains relevant and interesting in a new context. I mean, it could be performed by somebody in another country, what if a woman went out in a bright red hijab instead of a black one. In some ways you could call this a feminist piece, because it's putting a man in a different kind of situation in something that isn't his normal attire, and wearing a jacket like that for a straight white man who's in a macho sculpture scene is challenging, you know? And this took place in downtown SoHo, you know, but when he went upstate, people were suspicious of him in a rural environment, like, 'What is this guy in a yellow jacket?'

"When I started these [early] works I was still working in fashion and then of course it was the beginning of the feminist movement, and so all of that stuff converged. I was in a [Consciousness Raising] group [f]or a couple of years, I consider all my early pieces to be feminist but they aren't seen that way because they're not ideologically so, you know? They're not rooted in feminist theory, they're not angry, they're more investigative. I'm not considered part of the first-generation feminists because I moved on from that work by the mid-70s.

"I mean, Alison Knowles was a Fluxus artist, first and foremost, Annea is a sound artist and composer. Pauline Oliveros is a musician and composer. Simone Forti's work is not based in feminism. Neither was Elaine Summers' nor Mary Lucier's. It's just women, in a moment when women were not visible in the art world, on their own terms. What makes this interesting is that these women's work isn't about being female; it's about a set of ideas that they want to explore and that are interesting, in different media; it isn't about your body *per se*, it isn't angry at men, it's women trying to do their work. Merely that in the early 70s, there is the recognition that there are a lot of women out there making a variety of art, who have not been given equal opportunity and notice, and that the range of the kinds of work that women make is just as great as men make.

"In *Activity Exchange* [a collaborative work from 1972] there were

six of us, we each wrote a conceptual piece, an activity, then we put our names into a bowl. So, my piece Geoff Hendriks [Nye Ffarrabas' then husband] had to perform, Geoff's piece was that I had to sit on the floor and face six people over six hours, I was to choose the people. Annea was one of them, so we were to sit for one hour then make notes. Annea and I thought it would be fun to do this telepathically, so she sent me a photograph and I sent her a photograph and we had it timed, she's sitting in London, I'm sitting in New York, I sat and stared at her photograph and she at mine for the whole hour. OK we actually did telepathically communicate, I just don't remember exactly...

“Simone was probably the one person that I've been friends with over the years. We were friends in New York in the 70s, and then when she came here.

“I have a score in one of Pauline Oliveros' publications a couple of years ago, *Deep Listening Anthology: Scores from the community of Deep Listeners* (2009). It's visual and text, called *In the Gully: Meditations on Water*. And it's on my website, too, but actually never been recorded.

Jacki Apple was born and raised in New York and after studying art and design at Parsons, went into the fashion industry, returning in the early 1970s to art with conceptual performance and installation work, moving into larger scale multimedia theatre performance works in the 1980s on her move to Los Angeles (as she put it, “we moved from Vito Acconci to Laurie Anderson”). She was the host and producer of the widely-known Soundings radio show on Los Angeles Public Radio from 1981 - 1995; and a regular contributor to *High Performance* magazine. Her writing anthology, *Performance / Media / Art / Culture: Selected Essays 1983 – 2018*, was published by Intellect in 2019.

When I arrived, Jacki was with her cat in the water garden in front of her maisonette, unmistakable in the ‘cat's eyes’ sunglasses that contributed to

her striking image. The interview was conducted on the dining table in the cool darkened space of her living room, sometimes referring to some of her archival folders for early works. She offered me green tea from a friend in Japan, where she has worked extensively.

4.3 SIMONE FORTI

I DIDN'T LIKE IT WHEN WOMEN WERE EXCLUDED, AND I DIDN'T LIKE IT WHEN MEN WERE EXCLUDED

Westwood, Los Angeles

“I thought it looked familiar! What did I send in? I don't specifically remember making this but I did go through a time of liking to write and making a sphere out of the writing. Now I call it *Scramble*, we don't buzz, I do it in workshops as a warm-up; it's both an exercise and it can be performed, too. For me I came up with it [through thinking about the traffic in LA], so then it was important to never touch! I've added a few possible ways of doing it, at some point you start putting a hand on someone's shoulder and follow them, and then you let go of them, and it makes a different kind of formation. We've also done it where we bump into each other, and it becomes kind of like bumper cars. I must say that I'm not the only one who ever came up with this kind of instruction, a lot of dancers are interested in pedestrian movement.

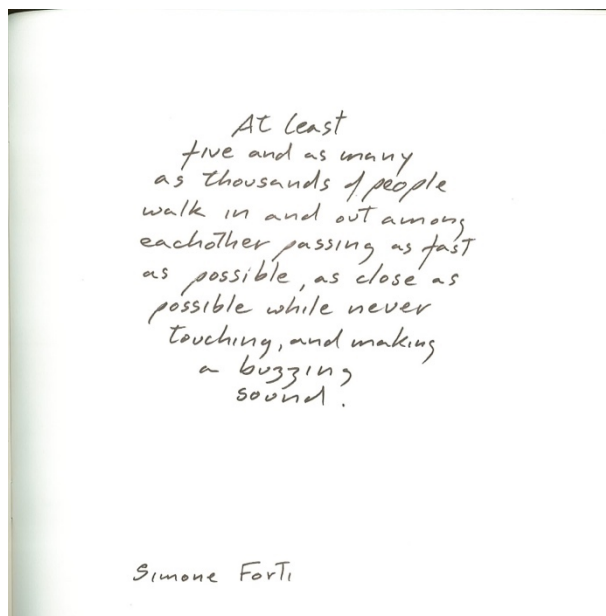


Fig 4.7 Simone Forti, *Untitled*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“At least five or as many as a thousand people walk in...’ It’s not a dance report, it’s a score; a dance report would be, ‘I saw five people’, something I experience that I’m reporting on. I didn’t work a lot with scores. I wouldn’t call [the *Dance Constructions*]⁶² scores, but there are scores for them. In fact, I hadn’t written descriptions till some years later when I wrote *Handbook in Motion* (1974). I wanted to describe the work that I had done in that period, and it just turned out that those descriptions now are handy for someone who wants to do one of them. So the score is something that can assist in performing the piece, but it’s not the first motivation.

“*Over, Around and Under* is a work developed in collaboration with Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, part of what I call Rule Games. So you decide who you’re going to go over, who you’re going to go around and who you’re going to go under. I sometimes add that you have a radio playing some kind of talk show, every time you hear a word starting with the letter of your initial, you have to roll on the floor. It could be very often, except that what happens is that you get so involved in *over, around* and *under* that you barely hear the radio. But every once in a while, you kind of go, ‘oh,’ and then you drop and roll over and then get back to what you were doing. So there’s that continuous development of the score. In fact, we tried to make things difficult to achieve, and one of the rules was that you would do your best! The point was to have that kind of excitement of trying to do something you can’t quite get there in time to do. We did a lot of things where the radio was involved to give cues, and you might have to be here and then be there immediately, so you’d do your best, and it made it raggedy.

“Mieko, [I knew] a very short time. Sari, I knew, I even was out at her place helping her clear the land, a lot of wonderful objects and environments in it. Elaine I knew, we were in the same building on Broadway between Prince and Spring. Jacki Apple I knew a little bit in New York and

⁶² *Dance Constructions* are perhaps Forti’s best known cycle of works—including *Slat Board*, *Accompaniment for La Monte’s “2 sounds”* and *La Monte’s “2 sounds”*, *Platforms*, *Seesaw* and *Huddle*—developed in 1961 for concerts in Yoko Ono’s loft, and recently taken into MoMA’s permanent collection.

got to know in Los Angeles. Pauline, we performed together one time at St Mark's Church at Dance Space, she played accordion and I danced, it was [wonderful]. Alison Knowles I probably know the best of all these people. I got to know [her] when I went to CalArts⁶³ we were in the same big house, like in a group situation, but then I spent a lot of time in New York again while she was living in New York, so we're old friends with different times that we've been in each other's environment.

"I was kind of refusing to be involved in anything that men were specifically not allowed to be a part of. I mean, I was happy to be with a group of artists, whether they were men or women, but I didn't like it when women were excluded, and I didn't like it when men were excluded. Especially in the dance and performance world, there wasn't that kind of distinction made between men and women.

Irene Revell: 'Personally, I feel I do my beautiful work in the studio situation and I would be happy to keep it there.'
(Breitweiser 2014, 33) How would you relate this comment to showing works like these in museums?

"Well, I have this analogy. In the studio, it's like taking a peach, a ripe peach, off the tree. It's warm from the sun, it's perfectly ripe, you're outdoors and it's fragrant and you eat your peach. Then, you collect some peaches and boil them down and add a little more sugar, make some peach jam, and then in the winter, you have some peach jam, and it's great!

"Well, I'm finding that [MoMA] really understand and love [the *Dance Constructions*], and that they've taken on the commitment that it should be transmitted and not lost, and we worked together for some years to organise things so that that would work. Like, there are videos of me teaching each piece, we're now training some other teachers besides Sarah, who's been the main teacher. I've written descriptions of each piece and how to teach it, what to look for, what to watch out about, what kind of presence, what kind

⁶³ Forti was not teaching at CalArts herself but lived in the commune with friends who were, including Knowles and Charlemagne Palestine

of aesthetic, and how to talk about it, so that they've got the tools. Also, Athena [Christa Holbrook, Collection Manager, MoMA] travelled to Middelburg, The Netherlands, when there was a show of all the pieces there, and she ended up performing in them! And she said that it gave her a completely different idea of what those pieces are and so there's someone there at the museum who's performed in them all. Just *Huddle* [of all the *Dance Constructions*, gets performance without my involvement]. Every once in a while I get an image of *Huddle* on email, saying, "We did it here!" That's part of the contract with MoMA, that *Huddle* is its own person! So a museum, an important gallery, they have to contact MoMA and MoMA will send them a teacher and do it all properly. But if it's a non-profit or a class or some kids in the park, then *Huddle* is free, on its own. And I shouldn't use the word "free" because it doesn't cost people to do the piece as MoMA doesn't charge anything, but part of the contract with the venue that wants to do the piece is that they're going to pay the teachers this amount there's a budget associated.



Fig 4.8 Simone Forti, *Accompaniment for La Monte's "2 sounds" and La Monte's "2 sounds"* (1961). Performance at MoMA, New York, October 2018. Photo: author

“*Huddle*, you can teach it in two hours, *Slant Board*, you can teach it in two hours, *Seesaw*, you have to develop a piece on it, so what we’re doing is inviting people who we think would do an interesting piece on a seesaw and giving them free rein what to do, there’s a lot of agency. Because what are you going to do, say, “Get on it and go back and forth”? First time it was done, I sat with my notebook while Bob Morris and Yvonne [Rainer] were on the seesaw. The first session, they just are kind of scared on the seesaw and trying to get comfortable; the next session, they try everything they can possibly think of, which is rather boring to watch. Then they start to calm down and find some interesting things, and then to get some sense of improvisation on it, how long maybe to do this before starting to do that, what kind of relationship is building between them. It’s a complicated piece, and I wasn’t going to travel every time and go through all that. And the people who are chosen can be dancers, they don’t have to be. Usually we invite one and they invite whoever they want to work with.

“I think authorship is not always in the details; it’s in the concept. And the concept kind of gives a sense of what the parameters are, so you can do anything, but within those parameters. Yeah, you’re sharing agency [with the performers] but you still have authorship of basically the piece. I think a lot of artists, men and women, were working like that, in a way that the performers working in their piece had a lot of choices to make.

Simone Forti was born in Florence, Italy in 1935 and fled in 1938 with her Jewish parents to Los Angeles. In 1955 she married artist Robert Morris and moved to San Francisco where she trained with choreographer Anna Halprin (who also trained Elaine Summers, *Womens Work* contributor and co-founder of Experimental Intermedia Foundation). She further trained with Robert Dunn, of the Merce Cunningham Dance company on moving to New York in 1959 and in 1961 her *Dance Constructions* took place at Yoko Ono’s loft, acquired by MoMA in 2015, and on ‘display’ in the Judson Dance

Theatre retrospective at MoMA during my time in NYC. In the intervening years she has worked extensively across the US and Europe, and in 2014 had her first major museum retrospective, *Simone Forti: Thinking With the Body*, at Museum der Moderne, Salzburg.

Like the meeting with Jacki Apple not far from Simone Forti's terraced house, the journey involved engaging in the Los Angeles traffic on the freeway, the difficulty of navigation, which is ultimately pertinent to the work we would talk about. And like the interview with Apple, we conducted it at Forti's modest dining table with dimmed blinds in the cool dark. After the interview I walked the few blocks to the Hammer Museum, then hosting Adrian Piper's retrospective, and where Forti had and continues to have residencies and performances. Whilst in Los Angeles I visited Forti's gallery, The Box, where a friend, Chiara Giovando, performed a *Sonic Meditation* as part of an exhibition of works by Eugenia P Butler.

4.4 HEIDI VON GUNDEN

I THINK THIS WAS THE FIRST MONOGRAPH OF A WOMAN COMPOSER. I WAS PROUD OF IT, I REALLY WAS

Champaign, Illinois

“I was working with Pauline then on *Mass for Pentecost*,⁶⁴ with these dog food cans and everything! It was just wonderful fun! She was an amazing teacher. Pretty much after that, I broke with the Church.

“People would come to UCSD to give a lecture or have a performance. I think we sort of felt like we were the Western hub. People like Cage, Ann[e]a Lockwood, Robert Ashley, Stuart Dempster – I met a lot of these people, because we’d go to dinner, and Pauline would have parties. Of the contributors to *Womens Work*, well, I knew Beth Anderson, Alison Knowles. Mary Lucier, she came together with Alvin Lucier, I remember having shrimp scampi with them! Things I’ve not thought about for a long, long time!

“And it was early on in my work with Pauline that I did *Sole Source* [in *Womens Work*] because I’d already done the piece when I met Annea Lockwood. I think maybe Pauline had mentioned it, and she says, “Oh, that sounds interesting, send me the score,” which I did. And it’s amazing how that worked.

“At that time, for some reason, I was very interested in latch-hook rug-making. I would sit at night with Mother and watch the news, there was the impeachment of Nixon in ‘72, I had knitted a sweater, from doing that I got interested in making this rug. Just the one rug and then I added other textures to it. Let me see what I did [*reading*]. Wow, I’m pretty explicit, that’s fairly well-written [*laughs*], I’d pass it!

⁶⁴ Heidi von Gunden’s Master’s composition at UCSD.

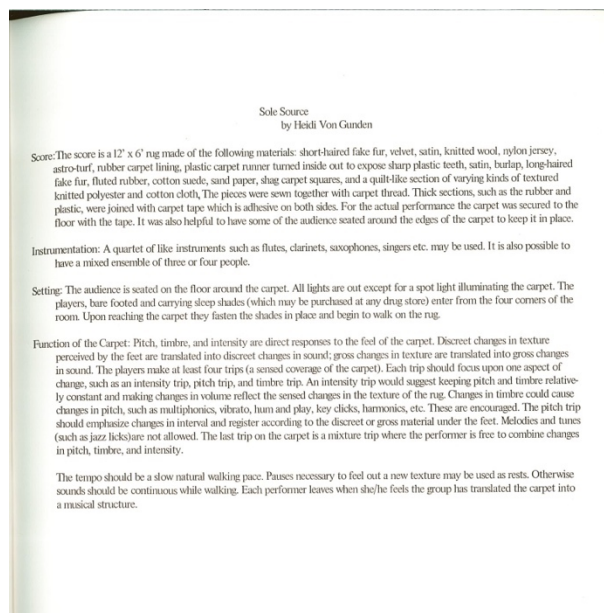


Fig 4.9 Heidi Von Gunden, *Sole Source*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“Well the first performance, in the Quonset hut⁶⁵ I had at least two trombones, because part of the theory [at UCSD] is you would write for your friends because you wanted to get things performed. It was a very practical approach to composition, and, for me, I was combining many interests, like this rug that I was making, and turning it into music, so it was like music and your life were together, something that you were involved in and then it became a composition, kind of organic. But the performance was interesting because with these trombones, would they bump into each other, would they hurt the embouchure? They’d be at their own pace, there’d be three individuals, then it all mixed together. They were very sensitive, it worked quite well. It was one of my [PhD] composition pieces, and from that, I got very interested in synaesthesia, because this is kind of what it was, with the feet. And I had just learned about reflexology and all that sort of thing. What you feel becomes sound.

“Yes, the rug was the score. The written instructions are like a

⁶⁵ A Quonset hut is roughly the US equivalent of a Portakabin, and most likely in use at UCSD while parts of the campus were still under construction.

recipe, in a way, and the ingredients are the rug, and how you create it into sound – how you cook it! Right now, this to me [the written instructions in *Womens Work*] was just documentation.

“The piece was performed a couple of times in San Diego. Then, I had the rug with me in Illinois: I brought it up to the Art Institute of Chicago and it was performed by, I think singers; then one time it was with oboists in Carbondale, Illinois. So I had fun with it. What happened to the rug? I threw it away. I was here in Champaign, it’s a big school of music and I was in the Department of Composition Theory, the only woman, and I stopped composing because I just didn’t have a voice, I knew that. So that’s why I started writing books, and throwing the rug away was like, ‘well, that’s the end of that,’ you know. I had to, if I wanted to keep a job, to get tenure.

“And the most wonderful thing for me is I’m a rather committed Zen student, and all of a sudden, I’ve started composing again. I made a little CD, and we had a 25th anniversary, so I gave it out to people. The Zen Center, when it started. PZC, Prairie Zen Center. I’ve studied Zen for a long time, in fact, it happened in San Diego, and Pauline was part of this, in a way. Pauline had already founded The ♀’s Ensemble by the time I arrived in San Diego, and I didn’t join it because I was kind of at the tail end. In Carbondale, I started a Sonic Meditation group down there, because there was no Zen, so that was my Zen. Up here, at Champaign, I would do some of Pauline’s *Sonic Meditations* at the beginning of every class. I was highly criticised for that by my colleagues, they were more *computer intellectual*, so this was bogus in their minds. It was not intellectual: you were looked down upon, but the kids loved it. It depends upon your definition of music, it depends upon your definition of composer, performer, score. Yeah, I performed that piece, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation*. Oh, it was funny. That book on Pauline Oliveros got me tenure! [*laughs*] With the boys! And I wrote the book my first several years here and went to stay in New York State several times to consult with Pauline and I could get in and see some of her things. She hadn’t established her archives yet. And it was fun writing it! I think this was the first monograph on a woman

composer. I was proud of it, I really was.

Fig 4.10 Heidi Von Gunden, *The Music of Pauline Oliveros* (1983), flyers. Box 28 Folder 9, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

“I wasn’t involved in the Women’s Movement in the 1970s. I was kind of fresh out of the convent, it was overwhelming! But here at the University of Illinois, I did several things. I got together women, I called it Women in Music and we would meet together for dinner once a week at some restaurant and just kind of talk. Not formal, but I was very aware of the troubles women were having, as I’d had them. And then, I knew that there were several cases of faculty members harassing female students, and it was pretty bad, so I did a harassment workshop for the School of Music: when I think about it now, my gosh! I knew we needed it, and the director wasn’t about to have it and I sort of forced him into it, and I said, ‘we need a meal together, the School of Music’s never had a meal together, we need a big

luncheon, and we need to have this workshop' and it happened! I was in charge of it, it was quite a time. I was I guess quite an advocate, now that I think about it! I was elected to the executive committee of the school, and my mission was to get more female faculty hired, finally they agreed that a woman should be on every search committee, a few more women got hired. There have to be agitators, so you agitate in kind of an undercover way. [sic]

Heidi von Gunden is a musicologist and composer born in San Diego, California. She entered the Catholic Sisterhood in Los Angeles in the early 1960s teaching music in public schools and leaving to complete a Masters in organ performance at the end of the decade before coming back to University of California San Diego for graduate school, where her mother still lived and she was aware of the lively community (her mother also became close to Oliveros, performing in several of her works in the 1970s). She took up tenure in Carbondale, Illinois followed by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she remains an Emeritus Professor. Her first book, *The Music of Pauline Oliveros* was published in 1983, followed by monographs on Ben Johnston, Lou Harrison and Vivian Fine. In Champaign she co-founded the Prairie Zen Centre in 1993 and was ordained as a priest in 2019.

I had flown from Los Angeles to Chicago where I stayed in Evanston for the week to access the Northwestern Archives (Cage Notations; Charlotte Moorman; Dick Higgins). On my first morning I took the Greyhound Bus several hours south to Champaign where Heidi met me at the bus station, and we drove to one of her favourite cafes. We conducted most of the interview at an outside table in the winter sun, before she took me to look around the Music department at the university, and back to the Greyhound at the end of the afternoon.

4.5 BETH ANDERSON

IT WAS LIKE I'D BEEN WAITING FOR PERMISSION SOMEHOW – LIKE AN IDIOT! – AND THEN I JUST STARTED MAKING ALL KINDS OF THINGS

Prospect Park, Brooklyn

“I wanted to go to UC Davis⁶⁶ because of *Source* magazine, you know. I wanted to go to the school where *Source* magazine was published.”

“At Mills College in Oakland, I did a piano performance Masters first, I just didn't think they'd take me in composition, I did a concert with this new group of women composers, Hysteresis – March 3rd of '73, a date that's very close to my heart – and Bob [Robert] Ashley said, “Yes, you could be a composer, Beth. Do you want to come back and do a Master's in comp?” It was the perfect storm, really. There was the big commission from the Cabrillo Festival and then I did *Joan* [on Joan of Arc] and I did the *Oratorio*, and then I did an opera about Queen Christina at Mills and lots of smaller pieces. It was like I'd been waiting for permission somehow – like an idiot! – and then I just started making all kinds of things.”

“He said, ‘I think it's a good idea for you to run a women's music festival,’ and I said, ‘Sure, who are we going to invite?’ and he said, ‘No problem, I already invited them,’ and it was Vivian Fine, Pauline Oliveros, and Charlotte Moorman. And it was quite the experience, and it set me up to do things like my concert series, Women's Work, that I did for ten years at Greenwich House in New York [2004-13].”

“The BWMPs rubber stamps? *Basic Wisteria Mythology Phase Shifter*: I associate wisteria with the 19th century and ladies in white reclining on couches, and that's the wisteria, that women can't do anything, that their corsets are too tight, I was making an electronic device that was

⁶⁶ Anderson completed her BA at University of California, Davis, after a year at University of Kentucky, her home state, where Cage fortuitously happened to have a residency.

really a rubber stamp. It was Mythology! We just stamped it on things. My 'Satie was a dyke' postcard/rubber stamp was a response to Pauline Oliveros' 'Beethoven was a lesbian' postcard. And the picture on it is from the March 3rd '73 concert. It's me playing the drums in Peachy Keen-O. It comes back to that moment!

Fig 4.11 Beth Anderson, *Satie Was A Dyke* (c. 1974), rubber stamp and postcard. AS9/1/23, Charlotte Moorman Archive, Northwestern University

“[S]o I did [EAR Magazine] with Charles [Shere] from May of '73 until I moved to New York and my last issue was February of '75, and then I did a March '75 issue in New York, that I typed at George Maciunas' house! I think Charles started it because he wanted to have a place where he could write about stuff the Oakland Tribune [*his main job*] wasn't going to publish. The monthly schedule was incredible because you'd just get one done and then you had to be started up on the next and I was doing everything: typing EAR and laying it out, taking it to the printer, bringing home like 3,000 copies in the back of my car, addressing them and binding them, taking them to the post office in zip code groups, because that's the only way you could get the cheap mailing, then also Saturdays and Sundays, I would go out to like three or four concerts, you know, to pass them out, like a crazy person!

“[In New York] I got Alison Knowles eventually involved in helping with the layout and writing articles. Nam June Paik said that we should

change the name to The Eye and Ear Infirmary because he wanted it to be more arts stuff instead of music stuff. But we were printing on low-tech and newsprint, it wasn't a great form for visual art, just writing and scores. The whole time I did it, until 1979, I never made a cent, I didn't pay myself, but I broke even. [I]t was very, very fun. You got to be in touch with everybody and people cared if you came to their concert, just as though you were a real critic. And there's not a lot of women critics. And in the old days, when the newspapers hired composers to be critics, I think you got really wonderful writing about the music itself.

“*Thus Spake Johnston*, so I have her [Jill Johnston] talking on half of it and *Frauenliebe und Leben* [Schumann] upside-down and backwards underneath her, and that's what it is. I loved her because her criticism was all about herself! She wasn't saying, 'God says this,' she was saying, 'Jill Johnston got up and could hardly walk and she'd drunk too much and she listened to this thing and she thought this about it,' it was so personal. And I used to love Tom Johnson's writing, he would go out many times a week, but he wouldn't write about it if he couldn't find something to like about it, it was descriptive, so that even if you weren't there, you could enjoy it. It seemed like something major was happening, and of course to us, it was, but eventually people didn't think so, and now you have to be the Metropolitan Opera to get reviewed, almost.

“I have a piece called *Goodbye, Brigitte Bardot, or Hello Charlotte Moorman!* that was about leaving California and moving to New York. I got this NEA grant for career development,⁶⁷ so, I decided that the best thing I could do for my career was to come to New York, because that's the centre of the universe. The other part was Charlotte [Moorman] invited me to the festival and then I got a Kitchen concert and then I won Composer's Forum, which was a concert series here, and I couldn't afford to commute, so I decided to move. The NEA was a big deal to me! It was huge! It was like

⁶⁷ Anderson was recommended for the NEA grant by Pauline Oliveros, as evidenced by correspondence in Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library, Box 1 Folder 18 Anderson, Beth

koshered from heaven. By this time I was 24, 25, my mother had given up on talking me out of music as a career. All through my childhood, I would take piano lessons and she'd said, 'Do you want to quit? Do you want to quit?' and it kept on and on and on, then I went to college and she said, 'How can you make a living? You have to get a teaching certificate'.

"I lived with Alison at the time, so that's how I got into this [Womens Work]. I knew Annea, and Julie Winter was living with Philip Corner, Mary Lucier was a friend of Alison's, and Bici Forbes. And Sari Dienes was the artist that was living at the Ear Inn when I first moved to New York: I moved in with Richard [Rip] Hayman over the Ear Inn. Oh, Simone, a very admirable dancer, and Elaine Summers, we did concerts at her loft. Jacki Apple was around, but we weren't close. I know Carole Weber: she was involved with making instruments with Skip LaPlante.

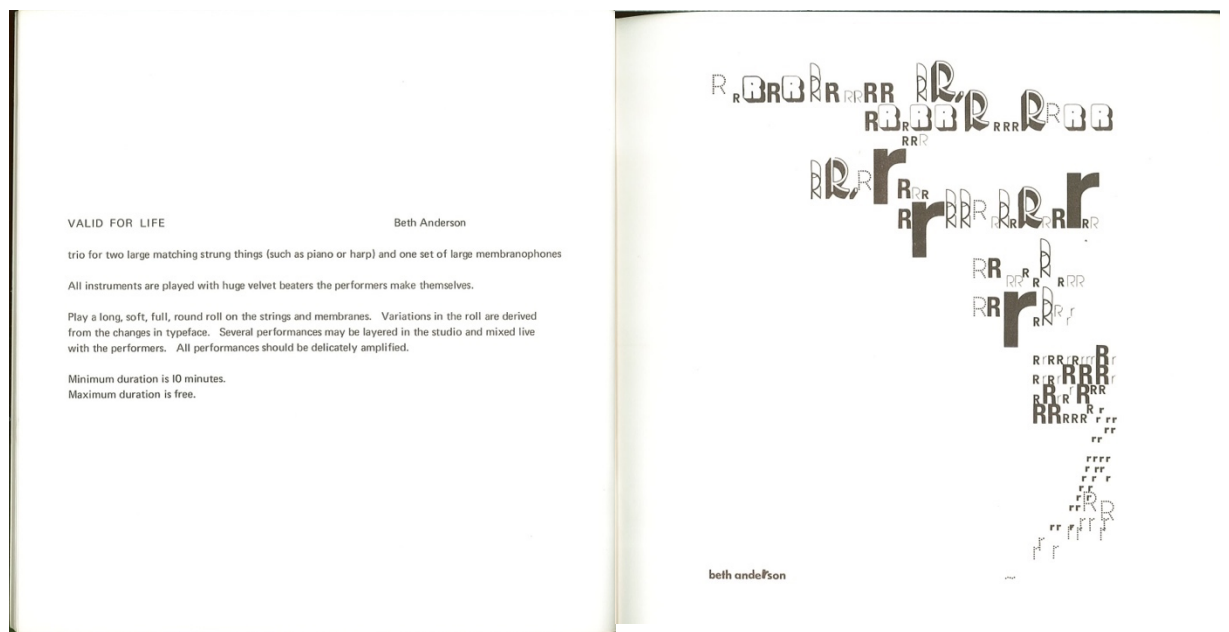


Fig 4.12-13 Beth Anderson, *Valid For Life*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

"And *Valid for Life* [in *Womens Work*], with all the Rs — one of the things that you could get when you got a Master's in the State of California was a teaching certificate, for the junior colleges! On the back it said it was valid for life. I'm pretty sure we did it at Mills once, I think we did it at Greenwich House once. It's just a big roar, and it's also supposed to look like

a breast, that's the nipple! [*laughs*] You know, Curt Sachs' notation, he liked to make up terms: *metallophones*, *membranophones*. I thought that it would be really cool to do harps but nobody let me mess with their harps, so I used the harps inside the grand pianos; we did percussion, big soft drums like timpani, and then the insides of two grand pianos. *Two large matching strung things!* I'm open! And then you just basically do rolls and you get louder and you get softer. And delicately amplified. Minimum ten minutes, maximum is free, you could go on forever! It was circulating; people liked that as a graphic score for me. *Valid for Life* may have been in Richard Kostelanetz's *Assemblings* [as well as Roger Johnson's Scores].

“[*Womens Work*]’s a charming little book. I don’t know if I showed [Alison] a variety of things and she chose, probably. Jean Brown, there she is! So she must have helped pay for it. *All rights revert to the contributors*.”

“Andrew Bolotowsky [well-known flautist] was saying, ‘Don’t do this: this won’t work here.’ Of course, he was thinking Julliard people were going to play my stuff, and they weren’t going to be bothered with this, we’ve got to have our \$500, we’re in, we’re out. And certainly in California, I had friends and teachers that would perform for me for \$5, and I could get them to do all kinds of crazy notation. It was a different feeling, where you were creating music together and the players felt like they were equally important to the composers, and that everybody was valued, instead of putting a monetary value on it. In New York I just started trying to notate things in the old way, as when I was a child, and that took a while to get used to. There *were* people that did all kinds of different things. I did some stuff at *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces* but it was different stuff. I was friends with Philip Corner, because of Alison, everybody in SoHo seemed to be friends, you know; it was nice, I miss them. But they all got mad at me in ‘79 and life changed. I mean, we didn’t have any big fights, but people had connections to each other because of aesthetic concerns, and if your aesthetics changed, then you sort of moved away from them on the bench, like Arlo Guthrie.”

“So, I had the information that I can do anything I want, because

nobody cares! Or not very many people, or, I feel free, which is, I guess, good and bad. Bob Ashley always said all my music is collage instead of process. The Swales, it's that Brion Gysin thing of cutting things up and putting them back together. I did musicals. Poetry IS music! either by just directly, the consonants and phonemes, or with changing things into rhythms or pitches or whatever. Oh, I loved Text-Sound. I'm still doing that, actually.

“Julius Eastman did my piece *Womanrite*, which is a piece for a singer and pianist which was perfect for him, and he did a great job! You know, I didn't think of it being done by a man, but he was wonderful. And we did shared concerts together at the Third Street Music Settlement in the East Village, this is in the '80s.

Beth Anderson was born in Kentucky in 1950, studying at UC Davis and Mills College in San Francisco. She became involved in publishing *EAR Magazine* in 1973, continuing after moving to New York until 1979. She has worked as a composer across numerous fields including Text Sound, neo-romantic composition and musical theatre. As well as piano accompaniment for dance, she practised as a professional astrologer. From 2004 to 2013 she organised a concert series also titled *Women's Work* at Greenwich House, New York. Her most recent recording, *Namely*, was released on CD by Charles Amirkhanian in 2021 and included Text-Sound studies on the names of sixty-five contemporaries.

Back in Brooklyn, New York, I was able to walk over from my friend's home where I was staying in Bedford-Stuyvesant to Anderson's mansion block apartment on the edge of Prospect Park, full of books, art and archives, where we perched on her sofa. She very generously sent me home with several original issues of San Francisco-era *EAR Magazine* and in turn I sent her a copy of Tara Rodgers' *Pink Noises*— being an ongoing proponent of women composers (see Chapter Two) — and the recently published anthology on *Source* magazine (Austin and Kahn 2011).

4.6 NYE FFARRABAS

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A BIT SHY IN COMPANY, SO I TOOK THAT AND EXTENDED IT SO THAT NOBODY WAS TO SPEAK, UNLESS IT WAS A LITTLE PIECE

Brattleboro, Vermont

“I was always writing poetry. I never studied fine art. I was involved in some performances of other people’s work, and then eventually created my own, it all just kind of happened, like making a meal out of not exactly leftovers, but what was in the fridge.”

“One of the first [art] things was *A Red Rocker*⁶⁸ which eventually got replaced by this one [in the gallery]. Geoff and I were painting it. I was pregnant out to here, and so he was helping me, and then he decided it was his piece. I took the back seat to him too many times.”

“A lot of people were doing a lot of different kinds of event scores: they could be really very personal and small, it’s another kind of space to explore. I would say the greatest influence in my coming to what I was doing in art was George Brecht, but right behind that was Yoko Ono. Her book, *Grapefruit* (1964), I was very familiar with, and I was doing stuff that was very similar. We were also both mothers of young children, we took our children to the park together, and bitched about our husbands! Whatever. It was work that could just be on a page.”

“I had done some little publications that were called *The Black Thumb Summer Institute of Human Relations*, I published them as Black Thumb Press. And this [*Womens Work*] was kind of a spin-off from that, just for this publication. Well, there was one about aerial ingestion of a peach: I didn’t really think that was going to happen. The *Paper Concerto*, certainly could happen. *Maternity Leave*, ‘Wash the diapers in a mountain brook and

⁶⁸ “There was a bright-red, slat-back rocking chair with a square blue cushion with white stars sewn on it. When the chair was placed against a white wall” (Ffarrabas 2000, 323)

hang them on a tree to dry,' and 'Oil the baby's head and comb the hair like a Japanese sand garden,' I certainly performed both of those. I did at least elementary *Egg Watching*, 'Watch an egg boil for four minutes' but I didn't do 'Watch an egg being fertilised, laid and hatched' or 'Watch an egg become 100 years old'. I guess I'm doing that: 2014 was its 50th anniversary, but I probably will not be around for its 100th.

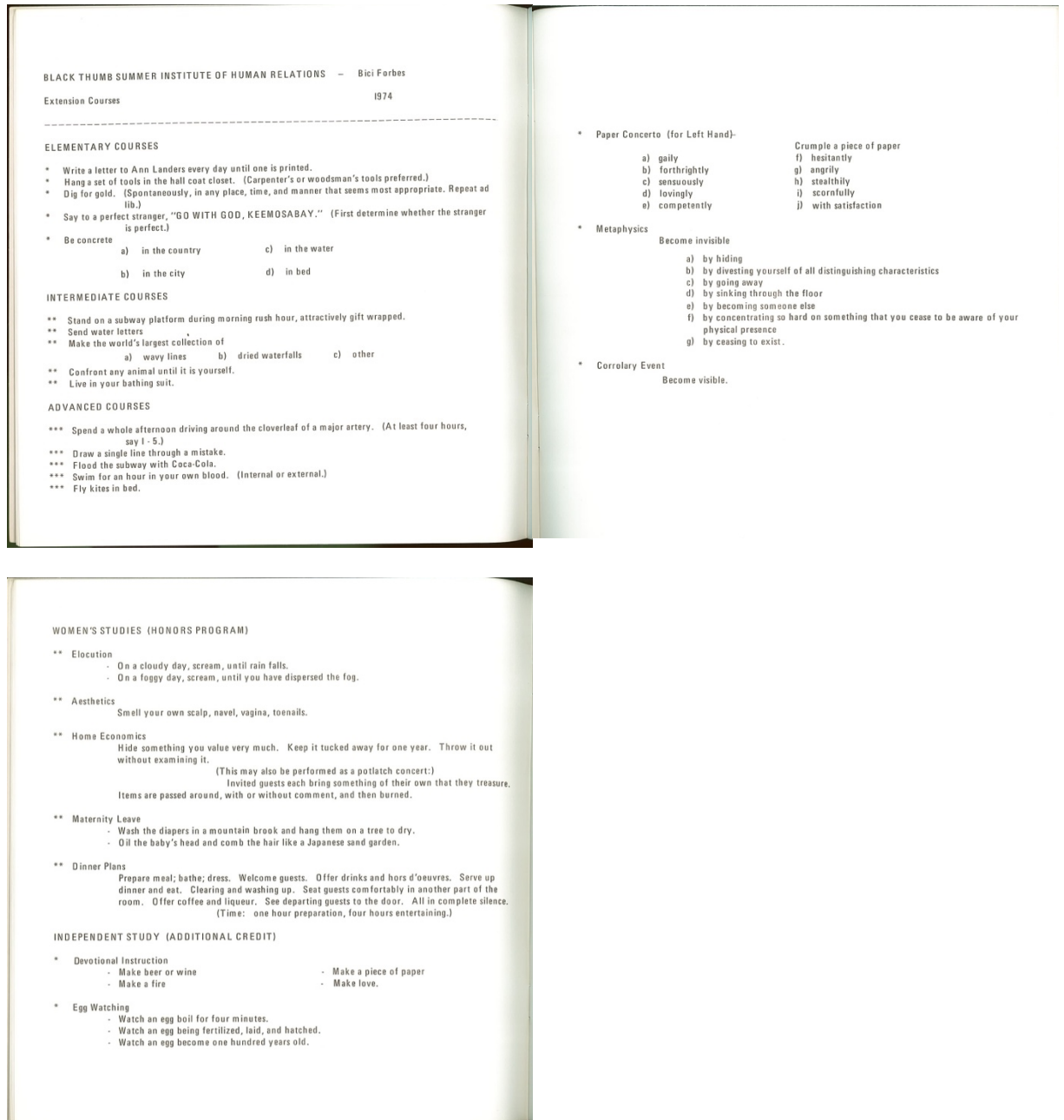


Fig 4.14-16 Nye Ffarrabas (as Bici Forbes), *Black Thumb Summer Institute of Human Relations*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“Metaphysics: become invisible and then gradually become visible again, that certainly came very much from a sense of being invisible in Geoff’s shadow, being female in the Fluxus movement. Alison Knowles, Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneemann, they were all able to get a lot of notice and travel to different countries. Women’s Studies Honours programme, that’s definitely from this publication. Oh, that was a very conscious choice with Annea and Alison, to give women space to be seen.

“The Silent Dinner, ‘Prepare meal, bathe, dress, welcome guests, offer drinks and hors d’oeuvres, serve up dinner and eat, clearing and washing up. Seat guests comfortably in another part of the room. Offer coffee and liqueur. See departing guests to the door, all in complete silence.’ When we first performed it in our apartment in New York, after a certain time, we had conversation resume. I do remember that if one had something to say and could say it as a piece, they could do that. And I noticed that there were five women present, and two or three of them were named Helen, so I pointed to each of the women and said, ‘Helen, Helen, Helen, Helen, Helen’. That was my out-loud piece. I enjoyed it very much, I think the guests did, too. One thing about it is, I’ve always been a bit shy in company, had a little trouble speaking out, and so forth. So I took that and extended it so that nobody was to speak, unless it was a little piece.

“Alison Knowles and I had brownstones a couple of blocks away from each other, we were pregnant at the same time, and her twins were born three weeks after my daughter. Annea, got in touch with me [about ICES festival, London, 1972], she was married to Harvey Matusow, Geoff and I met both of them in London; I had a wonderful piece for it, but it never happened, I didn’t go. Mieko Shiomi, I certainly knew her. Sari Dienes was a good friend. Mary Lucier, Simone Forti I didn’t know well but I certainly knew, and Elaine Summers. Jacki Apple was the wife of Billy Apple who had the gallery where I had one of my shows. Pauline, of course. Beth Anderson was a good friend and still is.

“I became part of consciousness-raising groups, but the first event that precipitated it was having a third pregnancy which was not planned, so I had an abortion and that was a very positive experience for me. The Women’s Movement really started to ramp-up, and I wrote some poems, I had a few things published in very ephemeral publications. I remember reading them on a sound truck in Union Square in New York with like 1,200 people around: that was very exciting. I suddenly realised that the desperation that I felt was desperation that any woman of any level of society might feel when having a pregnancy that was not planned and not wanted.

“And that led to meetings with other women: there was one group of about ten women doing consciousness-raising, and they were all lesbians, I had come out by then. Kate Millet, we were friends from the early 60s, she and her husband and me and my husband. She did not want me in her consciousness-raising group, she found me embarrassing. It wasn’t her group, but she acted as though it was! But there were a lot of other people who were partners or close associates of the members, and they all wanted to be in a group, too, so that became Group One, and we were Group Two and within a year and a half there were 23 groups that had spun off, it was fractal. Those groups were wonderful: they were very healing. We had a lot of healing to do.

“There was certainly overlap [between the art scene and the women’s movement] but they were essentially different energies. Well, the thrust of this kind of thing [*Womens Work*] was performance, and the thrust of the women’s movement at the time, particularly the lesbian movement, which I was very much a part of once I came out, was like, ‘Ah, I’ve found my people! Who knew!’ and that wore thin after a while, because friends come from wherever they come from, whatever directions. When the women’s movement was really raw and wanting to take down patriarchy altogether, it was not healing; it was violent and it was way too one-end-of-a-spectrum. These women were doing a similar thing against the male-dominated art world, but it was different.

“Well, Geoff had said to me in the spring [1971], ‘What shall we do for our tenth anniversary?’ and just right off the top of my head, I said, ‘Let’s get a divorce’. And then the two of us almost simultaneously said, ‘A Flux Divorce!’ which we did, and we partitioned the house with barbed wire and did all kinds of bizarre things. And we wanted to protect the children, and that’s what the [Flux Divorce] contract was basically about. I stayed another couple of years in New York but it was too much for me. I didn’t have any marketable skills, I had two still-young children. My family said, ‘Come up to the Boston area and we’ll help.’ They also disapproved of me a lot, but they cared about the children.

Fig 4.17 Nye Ffarrabas (as Bici Forbes) and Geoffrey Hendricks, invitation for *Flux Divorce* (1971) Box 24 Folder 18, Jean Brown papers, 1916-1995: Getty Research Institute

“I left the Women’s Movement behind when I left New York, also the art career. I had an international reputation, and I moved to Cambridge [MA] and it’s like I sort of didn’t exist. [On when Charlotte Moorman subsequently invited her to the NYAAGF:] ‘Well, gee, I’m not doing any art right now’. She said, ‘Well, what are you doing?’ I said, ‘Psychic readings,’ and she said ‘Great!’ I had been training to be a psychic: well, I did psychic readings for six hours in a tent until my mouth was so dry that I couldn’t talk. But you could do basically anything you wanted in those Avant Garde

Festivals. Oh, yeah, there was a sense of community. It didn't necessarily last beyond the day, but it was very nice.

“When I came to Vermont, I had a terrible case of Lyme Disease. I took two years off to recover. I still have after-effects. And so I've been dealing with that the rest of my life, basically, So, I have all kinds of history of education in this-and-that, but my life has been kind of an alternation between writing poems and other things, visual art. And getting rediscovered by Cai [Xi] was really something. I did a very stupid thing in changing my name over. It's really strange for me, revisiting all of that stuff. It's almost like somebody else. I've had quite a few interrupted lives.

Nye Ffarrabas (formerly known as Bici Forbes Hendricks) was born in Massachusetts, USA in 1932. In her teens she attended the progressive Putney School for part of her education where she met her husband and fellow Fluxus artist Geoffrey Hendricks, later marrying in 1961. Together they ran the Black Thumb Press, mostly producing their own mail art and ephemera. A poet and artist, she had her first solo exhibition *Word Works* at the Judson Gallery in 1966, also participating in the controversial *Peoples' Flag Show* there in 1970. After both Ffarrabas and Hendricks came out as gay and conducted their *Flux Divorce* (1971), Ffarrabas left New York in 1973, training as both a psychic and a therapist in Cambridge Massachusetts, before moving to Brattleboro, Vermont.

In 2014 artist Cai Xi and her husband Adam Silver discovered that she was living locally and organised a retrospective at their gallery, which is where our interview took place with several works from a recent joint show with her late former husband Geoffrey Hendricks on display. I travelled by Amtrak train to Brattleboro, an eight-hour journey, staying the weekend with Cai and Adam in their home which houses the gallery. On the way, the train became very delayed due to high winds putting leaves on the line, which heightened the sense of relative isolation and distance from New York.

4.7 MARY LUCIER

THE ART WORLD WAS PRIMARILY NEW MUSIC AND NEW DANCE

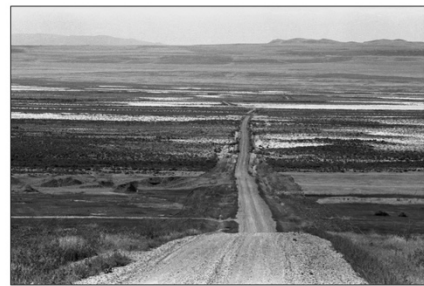
Chelsea, Manhattan

“Well, first with Alvin Lucier we lived in Massachusetts, I had gone to Brandeis and he had taught there. I majored in literature; I waited until my senior year to venture into the Art Department, I wanted to, but I was frightened. And sculpture: boom! Then [Alvin] started doing visiting gigs at Wesleyan, via John Cage, and they offered him a job, so we went to Middletown. So, this [contribution to *Womens Work*] was done while we were in Middletown.⁶⁹

“I was very involved in Alvin’s new music world – we’d go to New York – Earle Brown, and Cage and Cunningham. I mean for me, the art world was primarily new music and new dance, and I had very little interest, for example, in painting. Of course, video wasn’t really happening yet. That was the era of the happening, the multimedia experience – everybody was doing everything, all at the same time, but you knew what was good and what wasn’t. I always had a very strong performance aesthetic. Happenings came to be very loose, but that doesn’t mean people were just doing slapstick, either. A lot of things were written out. That’s why this text business is interesting, all these scores that came down, really, through John Cage, and La Monte Young. And there were composers in Europe who were also writing prose scores. A lot of this issue of *Source* [Issue 10, 1972, edited by Alvin with Mary], you’ll find a lot of these scores are prose. Not all, of course. I mean, sometimes they were a combination.

⁶⁹ The piece in *Womens Work* had come about from a visit of Oliveros to Wesleyan in April 1972 where she presented her *Sonic Mediations*, which likely led to their publishing in the issue of *Source* co-edited by Alvin and Mary Lucier later that year. See *Women’s Ensemble, 1971-2: Mary Lucier’s “Maps of Space #1 and #2”, 1972, 102/12/5, Pauline Oliveros Papers, 1931-1981, University of California, San Diego*

“But at the time, printing something like this had to be very home-grown-looking. Today, imagine what one could do online – they did manage to keep the handwriting in, that’s lovely, for instance, but they didn’t manage to do anything that I wanted here.⁷⁰



#1

Select an image of an environment. Concentrate on this image, discovering all the circles, squares, or triangles in it, until either the original scene is obliterated or an entirely new landscape emerges, or until your mind can no longer hold all the information.

Mary Lucier, 1972

#2

Se-lect an image of a long vista. Concentrate on the triangles, trapezoids, rectangles and circles in this image and by extending one or several of these basic shapes, build a bridge between yourself and the farthest point in the picture.

Mary Lucier, 1972

Fig 4.18-19 Mary Lucier, *Maps of Space #1 and #2* (1972), original contributions to *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“With Sonic Arts Union [Mary Ashley, Robert Ashley, David Behrman, Barbara Dilley, Shigeko Kubota, Alvin Lucier, Mary Lucier, Gordon Muma] we were both performing and showing visual work, we, the four women. So four highly evolved women artists accompanying these guys. We did some collaborative pieces. I mean Alvin and I, Gordon and Barbara, more like that, and then there were a couple of pieces that we did as a group. And the first time *I Am Sitting in a Room* was ever shown was with [my]

⁷⁰ The text of Mary Lucier’s contribution to *Womens Work*, for unclear reasons, did not follow the *concrete* style of her original piece, and so she made sure to email me the intended layout, which I include in the illustrations here.

slides, and that was a Sonic Arts concert at the Guggenheim Museum.

“I decided, ‘OK, I’m going to get the hell out of here’ and I moved to New York in ’74. I didn’t have space for a dark room, so I used Alison’s, because I’d known Alison, and that whole group of Fluxus-oriented people and their publications; they were just wonderful. Simone is around, she’s such a sweetheart. Julie, Annea I know quite well, I knew Pauline very well; Beth Anderson I knew; Elaine I knew; Bici Forbes, I don’t remember her very well. And Sari Dienes I knew her well, and then Jacki Apple; I really knew seven or eight, it was lovely. Experimental Intermedia, I was never particularly close to that scene. I knew them all, but somehow it was separate from the video art stuff. And the new music and the composers that I had been introduced by were off in a different school. [Charlotte Moorman’s Festival] brought everybody together. Charlotte I will never forget. I remember the very first Avant Garde Festival [1963], was I 18? Eventually I was in them.

“I was very close to Nam June [Paik], and Shigeko [Kubota]. I knew Shigeko because when she first came to New York [in 1964], she was the girlfriend of the composer David Behrman, they eventually got married and Alvin and I were the only two people at their wedding [and later fellow members of Sonic Arts Union]. Shigeko and I became very good friends, and we formed a group called Red, White, Yellow and Black in the early days of the Kitchen. She was the yellow, I was the white, Charlotte Warren – who was a black poet – was the black, and Cecilia Sandoval, my Navajo friend, was the red! [*laughs*]. It was a very typical Shigeko idea: ‘Aha, Mary, Mary, let’s do this, let’s do that,’ so we did.

“And so my first project using video, I borrowed a camera from Nam June and Shigeko and shot a mixed tribal pow-wow here in New York, at the YMCA that used to be on 23rd Street. There was an Indigenous group that held this pow-wow every year and my friend Cecilia Sandoval was invited to be in it, Shigeko, Cecilia and I were fomenting all kinds of activities. And that was one of the two pieces I did with RWY&B that was a collaboration with

Cecilia called *The Occasion of Her First Dance and How She Looked*. And I processed the work similarly to the way I processed my photographic work – so it was very grainy, very contrasty.



Fig 4.20 White, Black, Red & Yellow poster (1972)

“I want to show you the posters we did which I think are fabulous. We used to lay all these things out ourselves, so this is the one Shigeiko did

[above]. *Telephone, water, video, song, slide, speech!* It was close to the time when I left Alvin, and I was on my own, but both he and Nam June were very supportive, they both came and helped us set up the audio and the video. We did two concerts at The Kitchen, in '72 and '73.

“Nothing was truly political at that time, except anti-Vietnam War, and we were not making art that was anti-Vietnam. Jackson Mac Low was the only person I knew in the performance world at that time who made reference in his art to things political, except for Frederic Rzewski, the pianist. [With Red, White, Yellow and Black] the politics was not the focus of the group, except that people took it as interpretations of our cultures, each of us, and many people who looked at it that way thought that Charlotte Warren gave the best presentation of her culture, because she read great black poetry [her own and others], whereas Shigeko's contribution maybe had nothing to do with Japan: we all approached it in a different way. But it was just as a grouping and as using the different nationalities and cultures of each of the participants as, I don't know what – an interesting hook, not so much about the content.

“You know for me, all my work throughout my life in photography, performance and video has never been, quote, feminist, in a discernible way, and I feel that because of that – and there are other artists like me, Liz Phillips, who was the progenitor of audio art, audio installation art – she and I shared this issue of not making work that addressed our gender or addressed our sexuality or whatever, but just that we were women doing these things. There were a lot of women in early video, but most of it was not about feminism at all. And, yeah, the only thing I didn't do [with the camera] is aim it at myself. I wasn't interested in portraying myself, the way so many other artists did. So we kind of missed a boat there, not because we didn't care about it, but we didn't realise, I suppose, at the time, either, how narrow-mindedly people would approach it through content only, rather than the fact that you have these incredible women working in fields that were traditionally male.

“I have always felt that being out there with the camera is a performance of its own. And it’s usually connected to weather somehow, or an activity, when I’m doing these landscape things. So, the ardour – the difficulty, and the passion for making those shots happen, having the discipline to get out there, every morning before dawn, days in a row, is so much like performance: so much is required of you, so much consistency and accuracy and preparation, and you have to be costumed for the winter! So the installation is an artefact of the performance. I really like that notion that then all these things then can be connected through those simple processes that then begin to just take different forms as time goes by.

Mary Lucier was born in Ohio, USA in 1944. She was one of the early pioneers of video art in the USA, co-editing *Video Art: An Anthology* in 1976. (Korot et al 1976). She was married to composer Alvin Lucier from 1964-74, during which time she was a member of the Sonic Arts Union performance group, and her own early video works of the 1970s were performance-based, with many taking place at The Kitchen in New York, where she moved in 1974. Her subsequent video installations have been shown in many video art retrospectives (including *Dawn Burn* in ‘Sculpture After Video’ that was up at Sculpture Space during my time in New York), and her work is held in a number of US museums where she has also had numerous solo retrospectives.

Our interview took place over the course of an afternoon in Lucier’s Chelsea apartment, not far from Julie Winter’s. She had extensive digital archives on her laptop that we looked at whilst sitting at her dining table, occasionally visited by her Shiba dog.

4.8 MIEKO SHIOMI & TOMOKO HOJO

I ALWAYS TRY TO WRITE AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE, AS PRECISE AS POSSIBLE, TO EVOKE PEOPLES' IMAGINATIONS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Osaka, Japan

“First, I thought about one event of *Spatial Poem*. At that time, I was writing event pieces which is a kind of ‘do it yourself in your daily life’, it’s a kind of dead end, in terms of communication, there’s no way to, you know, develop it. Then suddenly I came upon the idea of doing this same type of event, regarding the earth as a big stage together with people living in many countries, then I can get communication, and also I can present the character of my event. Then I went to [George] Maciunas to consult about this idea, he said, “Oh, that’s a nice idea. You should send your invitation to these types of people,” and gave me a Fluxus mailing address list. No, I didn’t know [everyone I was mailing], only John Cage, maybe several people!

“When I finished the first one, I got good answers from the 70 contributors. So! I made about 80, 90 map and flag sets, and I sent them back to every contributor. About five or six thousand flags I made by myself. It was lots of work! I did it April ‘65 in New York, and I had to come back to Japan in July because my visa was cut. So, in May and June, oh, everyday was flags, flags, flags! And send out, send out, send out!

“In July of course I flew back to Japan, and I did *Direction Event* as the second one. At that time, I thought I should continue this as a series. And *Falling Event* as No.3. After I did *Falling Event*, I went to Tokyo to work more, especially on performance. In 1970 I married and came here. Actually not this house, this I moved into several years ago. Then I became kind of confined, because of the young children. Since I couldn’t go out much, I wanted to continue the *Spatial Poem*, from No. 4, *Shadow Event*.

“I could get good communication with people whom I invited to *Spatial Poem*, they sent me a lot of things. The social contact became active more and more. Well, you know, I followed Maciunas’ mailing list. But soon after, I got answers from people I hadn’t invited, but they were some relation to the people I had. So, from next time, I sent the invitation to them. Like, John Cage participated in one, two, three, then went away, but instead, many other people joined in. Some people stayed from number 1 to number 9! Well, of course, I could get letters from dear friends, I was so happy; and also when I got a letter from an unknown person whom I didn’t send an invitation, I was curious. But I noticed it is a kind of exciting phenomenon because this network is growing without my knowledge, and if the content of the report was good, not banal, but unique, I was delighted.

“I promised them to publish a book when I completed No. 9 *Disappearing Event*, and I sent it, again, to everyone! Over 200 people. Easier than making flags! I had to do everything by myself! I found a publisher – actually, a printer, a small office. I proposed the fundamental idea of the book, then they realised it. While I was editing, I had to ask my husband to take care of my sons, because one of them was two years old and started walking around. Alison Knowles, well, I asked her to check if the English sentences were OK.

Tomoko Hojo: Did your family say anything to you about it?

[laughs] My husband said, “Oh, you are throwing [away] stamps”.

Noooo! What did you say? It’s OK, this is what I want to do!

It’s OK. Yeah, I just believed it’s worth doing!

It must be very expensive to send so many letters abroad at the time...

Over 100, 150 I mailed out! But I was earning money by teaching piano, so I could say, nobody can stop me [laughing]!

Otherwise, you might feel guilty?

If I had asked for money from my husband, I would have felt guilty, and really I didn’t do that. But to do what I want to do: you must be independent financially.

This must be interesting for your piano students, they never know what you're doing with their money!

I have two faces! The students say, I am a very small piano teacher, and they don't know what I was doing!

Irene Revell: Were you always a piano teacher?

Yes. I have almost always been, even now, I have two students. Now I'm very bad at playing piano because my fingers hurt me. 80s are like this! Mentally, I've not changed from young age, but my body, my whole body, you know...



Fig 4.21 Mieko Shiomi and Tomoko Hojo, Minoo, Osaka (2019). Photo: author

“Sébastien Pluot sent me an email, ‘The project of *Spatial Poem* is suitable for today because of the Internet, it’s easy to do it, and why don’t you do it now again?’ but I said, ‘No, I don’t feel like repeating myself, and the desire for communication was born when there was no Internet and it was very inconvenient to communicate with the people living abroad. That’s why I started this, but nowadays, we can communicate very easily, so I don’t want to do the same thing again⁷¹. But if you want to do it as your project, I’ll say OK and maybe I could become just one of the participants. In that way, I’d be helpful to you.’ Authorship and collaboration: sometimes the collaborator may realise the piece very differently. But in that case, the realiser should put their own name on it, if you want to change some definition [in an event

⁷¹ In May 2022 I received an invitation from Shiomi to participate in an entirely new *Spatial Poem* event, the first since 1976, drawing on the possibilities of email, that will be exhibited at the Aichi Triennale 2022, exploring this new context after all.

score].

“Probably Alison wrote to me to send it. This is so strange! Maybe [printing] March 5, is just a mistake, I guess: no other intention.⁷² [It wasn't published elsewhere] I don't think so. No, I never get any [responses from *Womens Work*]. I don't remember [why they published number 3 in Japanese]. Of course, I have the English version. I thought for Japanese friends it would be difficult to understand if I wrote it in English only, so I printed both. I think I sent both to Alison. I am particular about expression, when I write this kind of [text] score, I always try to write very correctly to avoid misunderstanding, as short as possible, as precise as possible, to evoke people's imagination as much as possible. So, I keep revising how to write.

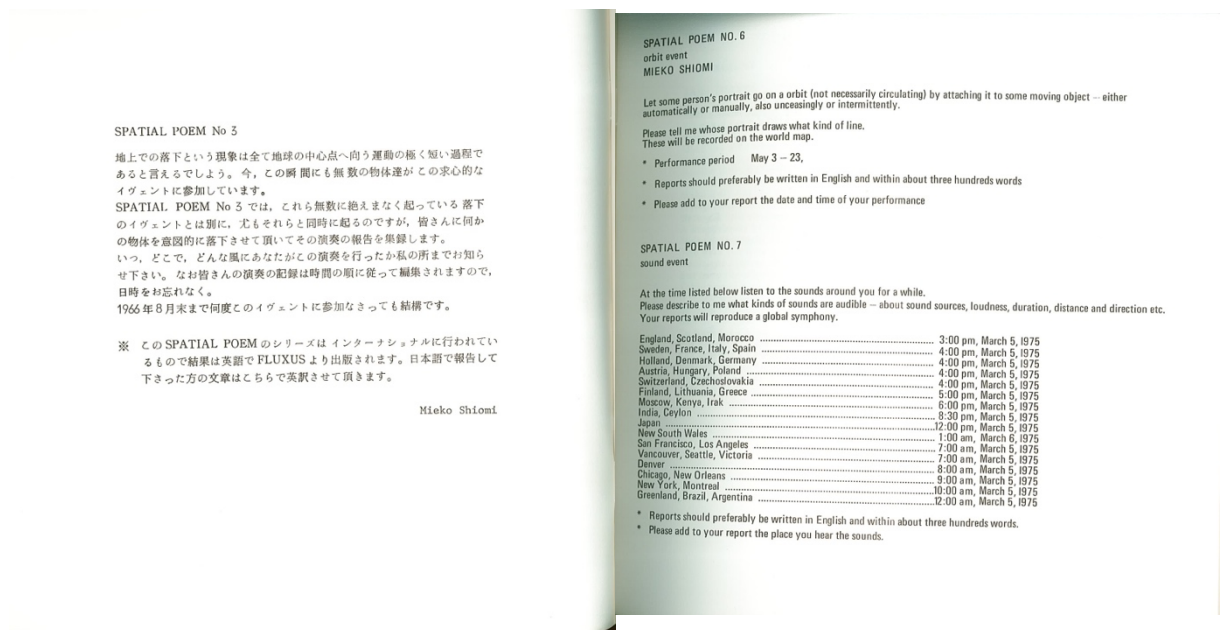


Fig 4.22-23 Mieko Shiomi, *Spatial Poem No. 3, 6 & 7*, *Womens Work* issue one (1975)

“Ann[e]a, yes, I think I met her. Bici Forbes, she was the wife of Geoffrey Hendricks, I knew her. Simone Forti, I heard her name. Pauline Oliveros, I know her very well. Actually, I performed together with her when

⁷² *Womens Work* has the date and time for the seventh event at 5 March 1975, whereas the original invitation reads 5 March 1974 (and 6 March in far Eastern locations)

her Deep Listening Band came to Tokyo in 1992. We had a five-hour non-stop improvisation performance! Amazing. It was the first time I met her. But she said, 'I knew your works very well'. And she said, 'No rule is the best rule!' So, people were wondering how we should continue for over five hours and then her improvisation is to first intake some sound, and then gradually change it. So, no abrupt, boxing-type performance improvisation, which is quite opposite of Group Ongaku's improvisation. Yeah, Group Ongaku's improvisation was just like boxing [laughing]! Counter, counter! It was energetic, it stands for that era, the atmosphere of the 1960s; but in the 1990s, people's consciousness was focused on the circumstances, and Pauline's way is to creep into the circumstance softly, not abruptly, and then change it slowly. I loved that idea of performing, I enjoyed it very much. It started at 6 o'clock and ended at 11 o'clock. Every performer looked at their watch and ten minutes before 11, we started to, you know, come down.

“Actually, I didn't attend [Yoko Ono's] concert in Tokyo, the only performance I saw was in Carnegie Hall, and the most interesting piece was her *Cut Piece*. I thought she was very brave. I would never think about such type of things. Yoko-san often proposed to have her body on the stage. Maybe for Japanese audiences, her intention was hard to understand or hard to feel empathy, maybe too aggressive. But I guess nobody was wrong. Yoko-san was right, and the audience was right, but they just didn't match.

“Regarding feminism, actually, I had no interest, I don't discriminate man and woman. I see just an artist, no matter whether he or she is a man or a woman. Actually there was a group, a Japanese women composers group, I was invited to join in, but I said no. Because if I joined in a group, it must be only by sharing similar musical thoughts, but not just being a woman.

“When I was a child, I used to play with my two younger brothers, so I was always the leader of them! When I want to do something together with others, it doesn't matter whether they are men or women. When Group Ongaku started, there were two other women, I played piano and the vocalist

was a girl and the flutist was a girl, and we three lived in a dormitory together. We started doing improvisation with the three girls, and one day I found Kosugi-san and some other boys in the same class, playing improvisation music with cello and violin, it sounded so nice. I proposed to get together and do the improvisation together. Then the flutist and vocalist went away, I became the only woman, but I didn't feel uncomfortable because the other boys were all classmates, every day we study in the same class.

Tomoko: For you it's genderless but I guess it's what others see, society?

"Society? I don't care for society [laughs]! Of course, they might say something behind my back, but I didn't hear, or I didn't care! I am not hurting people, am I? So I didn't care, just didn't care. I was so much involved in what I wanted to do, so I never looked at me from society's side. I am I! I completely have no sense of what I look like from the other side. *You are already 80 and you can't even walk straight!* Why do you keep doing things? Why not? Since I get so much enjoyment from doing what I'm doing, I don't want to stop it. You have no right to stop me doing it, as long as I do not hurt other people, you don't have to say anything! [laughs]

"I think I am a kind of Buddhist person. Buddhism is a way of living and the respect for ancestors and nature and trying to be controlled. I like Hannya Shingyo, do you know? It's a sutra, it's a Buddhist poem, that shows if your mind is so calm, throwing away every conflict, every mundane desire, you'd be so free and happy. So, of course we have a house altar, the Japanese ancestors' icon. Every morning and night, I thank the ancestors and pray for them, the souls should be peaceful and thankful, watching us. Of course, ancestors for me include ancestors in nature, our total existence of this Earth, don't you think it's a miracle that we are living on this Earth, born as a human, and communicating like this, right here now, and there are lots of trees and they're swaying with the wind, and so nature feels good?

"My parents, yes, they supported me. I think my happy feeling

comes from the memory that I was loved 100% by my parents. They are very good people, not famous, not rich. But played often with us, and we always sang songs, tried improvisation of opera in daily life! [laughs] My father was a conductor of a chorus at the company he worked for, and he brought back lots of scores. My mother had a beautiful voice, she sang for the radio programmes when she was a high-school student. So, I was raised up full of music, and full of beautiful nature, even though we were always hungry: not much food, after the war!

Mieko Shiomi was born in Okayama City, Japan in 1938. In 1961 she graduated from Tokyo National University of the Arts majoring in musicology and co-founded Group Ongaku with classmates exploring improvisatory music. In 1964 she went to New York to participate in Fluxus and in 1965 she started the series *Spatial Poem*, returning to Japan the same year. In 1976 she finished the nine events of *Spatial Poem* and published a book of all the reports. Events No 3, 6 and 7 are included in *Womens Work*, the first in Japanese. Since then, Shiomi has worked as a Fluxus member, a music composer and an intermedia artist by organising or participating in many concerts, performances and exhibitions in Japan and abroad.

Our interview took place at her home in Minoo, a town in the suburbs of Osaka where she has lived since the early 1970s. I was already in Tokyo for a symposium the previous weekend, and I was joined on the Shinkansen by my friend and colleague Tomoko Hojo, and we travelled on to conduct the interview together. We spent the afternoon in Shiomi's sitting room that seemed to also function as a little museum of her work, or that is to say that research visits seemed to be something she was ready for. She offered us tea and her favourite shortbread biscuits. I have also here included some of Hojo's questions to signal her contribution to the interview.

4.9 Afterword

Biographically speaking, building on Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood's own transformational trajectories during this time, similar stories emerge in these interviews: Nye Ffarrabas and Mary Lucier leaving marriages from the 1960s behind, Jacki Apple leaving her day job in the fashion industry, and Heidi Von Gunden leaving behind first the convent and ultimately Catholicism altogether. Julie Winter develops her healing practices further, Beth Anderson makes the life-altering move from California to New York, and Mieko Shiomi makes a family home near Osaka. On that note, I was struck that only two of these women, to my knowledge, had had children, Shiomi and Ffarrabas. This is perhaps an indication of the difficulty of maintaining a practice with the conventional expectations of motherhood that still undoubtedly persisted during this period. Similarly, it is striking how often experiences of receiving support are spoken of, from men as much as women – too many examples to enumerate here. But what is perhaps more striking is where it is absent: Ffarrabas making a bargain with her family in Massachusetts for childcare support in exchange for a wholesale rejection of her practice as an artist and poet; Anderson at battle with her mother for at least two decades over her chosen career path, not least evidenced in the title of her *Womens Work* contribution *Valid for Life*, the prized California teaching certificate, and the 'validity' she may have been seeking more widely ("koshered from heaven", she says of her NEA grant).

Beyond the physical contexts of Charlotte Moorman's New York Annual Avant Garde Festival, *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces* and the Experimental Intermedia Foundation that crop up variously, the medium of print is also widely present for all of these women in one form or another. From Anderson's deep involvement with *EAR* magazine (and indeed choosing to study at UC Davis because of *Source* magazine), Lucier's special issue of *Source*, Ffarrabas and Shiomi both self-publishing their own work, to Winter and Apple publishing their writings in the last couple of years.

4.9.1 The performance score

The relationship to performance scores and textual instruction seems equally if not more diffuse than that to feminism, which I will go on to discuss below. While all contributors had a strong relationship to live performance in their practice at the time, their understanding of “the score” varies quite markedly. Those with certain shared histories of practice, notably the post-Cagean Fluxus moment in the late 1950s and 1960s, seem most closely aligned in their understandings. Simone Forti works in the idiom of choreographic scoring, where they are more a form of documentation yet she has come to find simple text instruction useful in sharing certain works such as the *Dance Constructions*, and moreover, has an understanding of authorship and collaboration that is very close to that of Oliveros, with its co-existing limits and freedoms (“I do, but I don’t”). Nye Ffarrabas speaks directly of event scores, George Brecht and Yoko Ono, and indeed the work included in *Womens Work* might be closest of all to these earlier progenitors. Mary Lucier also references La Monte Young elsewhere in our interview and remarks on the prevalence of text instruction as a way of formalising the precision that she understands within performance works that also profess a level of freedom – though her contribution to *Womens Work* might be something of a one-off within her own *oeuvre*, responding directly to Oliveros’ *Sonic Meditations* with her understanding of what a visually equivalent meditation might be.

Although a prolific vocal performer during this decade, Julie Winter only made one score. Heidi Von Gunden sees her contribution perhaps more as a ‘recipe’; the rug itself as the score, and since destroyed. Jacki Apple, working with text instruction (and reportage) in an established paradigm perhaps closer to conceptual art than Fluxus, does not immediately associate her contribution to a score at all, understanding scores in the sense of “soundtrack”. Mieko Shiomi has an even more complicated relationship still to the basic ‘schema’ of these score-based works that I drew out in Chapter One. While Shiomi certainly has made works that are much closer to *event scores* (e.g. 1963’s *Boundary Music*), and discussed the precision and poetry

she seeks in these texts, what I had not specifically realised prior to our interview was that the *Spatial Poem* was really truly a one-off series of events, that is not offered to others to repeat, like any usual score might be. Rather, for a semi-private network of her friends and colleagues in a one-off performance, or series of performances, together. This seems almost entirely counter-intuitive when reading the simple instructions of the individual event scores in the series. Yet, their publishing in the context of *Womens Work* then essentially becomes more of a documentation, or a *Notations*-style sampling.

While Knowles and Lockwood's intention to "publish work that other people could pick up and do" (Lockwood 2017) is abundantly clear through all the mediation of their project, as discussed in Chapter Three, they nevertheless were also open to making space for that which doesn't exactly fit. Beth Anderson also has something of an outlier status in this group in terms of her contribution in that it is more of a graphic score, albeit that works with the letter 'r' in a form of *concrete poetry*, and also includes an adjacent text instruction for the graphic image. Being from a younger generation, her heterogenous use of different notational forms was in fact something of a crisis for her at this stage, between maintaining a sense of the intimate group performance situations she had enjoyed in San Francisco and was more loosely affiliated with in New York, and the pull of writing for more "professional" players and larger scale contexts, requiring conventional notation. Her story about falling out of touch with this wider community when her aesthetics changed is really quite striking, seemingly out-of-kilter with the generosity I have highlighted. Her articulation of this divide speaks of what must be understood as a fairly tight set of shared interests and the limits of inclusion. This is something echoed in a certain sense by Julie Winter in relation to alternative forms of virtuosity (also discussed in Chapter One, in relation to virtuosic listening) that were nevertheless jointly understood even if "everyone was welcome" – similar to Mary Lucier in describing her "strong performance aesthetic," or being able to detect good and bad performers. While there are pervasive aspects of generosity in these works, and through their introductory framing in *Womens Work*, a shared

set of understandings still existed. This contrast might resonate most strongly with the two portraits of Oliveros given in excerpts by Beth Anderson, and in turn, Kathy Acker, available and urgent for Anderson (in that instance, at least) and evasive and incomprehensible for Acker; an Oliverosian duality.

4.9.2 Feminism and the Women's Movement

On that very topic of feminism, and the question of relations to the Women's Movement of the 1970s, there is evidently no fully shared position here among these women. Julie Winter, Jacki Apple and Nye Ffarrabas were all profoundly involved in Consciousness Raising groups in the early 1970s. While Winter comments that feminism saved her life, Apple narrates the more complex way in which these politics were or were not perceived to operate in her work. Ffarrabas states an outright rejection of any connection to her work, echoing Knowles' and Lockwood's concerns of partisanship ("too end-of-a-spectrum"). Beth Anderson was not directly involved in groups except the Hysteresis performance group at Mills (and even in that she talks of tiring of long meetings elsewhere in our interview), but has always championed women composers, from her earliest playing (see Chapter Two), to organising her own unrelated Women's Work concert series much more recently; much of her composition work during this broad time period clearly reads as feminist in certain overt ways, the use of other women's names and often their words (Gertrude Stein, Kathy Acker, Jill Johnston, Charlotte Moorman etc) as a citational practice. What unites this work of Anderson's in the 1970s is a certain kind of playfulness in relationship to these references; and with her *Satie was a dyke* postcard, a very direct sense of her taking Oliveros' own playfulness further, as a younger generation. Heidi Von Gunden's biography precluded her immediate involvement in the Women's Movement, leaving the Catholic church and finding Zen Buddhism during this period. Her very practical work later within academia makes her trajectory perhaps emblematic of the group in certain senses, where the question of feminism is most unifyingly one of enabling women to make their work (echoed repeatedly in many of the other testimonies).

Understanding these alliances with the Women's Movement as more of a spectrum than a binary adherence or membership, Mary Lucier, Mieko Shiomi and Simone Forti might be a little further away still: in different ways all three explicitly disavow a feminist position in their work, and yet all of them were supportive of other women, working with other women. In Lucier's case, she talks of sharing resources (Alison Knowles' dark room), and more profoundly, her friendship with Shigeo Kubota, which catalysed her first significant project with video, in the context of their Black White Yellow Red group of four women friends. There are certain resonances with this group activity of Lucier's, occurring between 1972 and 1973, and *Womens Work*, in its bringing together of women working in diverse contexts in a way that is both highly explicit in its title, but not with any direct alignment to mainstream political movements; the end goal being the same – that women were making and sharing their work. This is echoed in her comments about herself and Liz Philipps (also a close friend and collaborator of Lockwood) where there is an insistence on the politics residing in the possibilities to make the work, the infrastructures, rather than the content; and perhaps a frustration that simply working in these entirely new media as early pioneers (and women) was in itself something that ought to be more celebrated, echoing Oliveros' frustrations with the Women's Movement in relation to her own recognition in Chapter Two. Similar concerns are reflected in Mieko Shiomi's interest in finding alignment with others on the basis of their work, not their gender, in explaining why she did not want to join the Japanese women composers' group. The passage where she outlines how she does not consider her gender in contexts such as Group Ongaku seems especially rich in further understanding this position. There is a strong sense in which she has had to fervently protect herself (“just didn't care, just didn't care”) from thinking too much about other peoples' perceptions of her and her work which perhaps pertains to more than gender, a more general unconventionality, that echoes in the conversation with Tomoko about Shiomi's husband (who was nevertheless supportive with childcare) or in her piano students' perceptions of her. Simone Forti is certainly the most dismissive, and although she did not shut the conversation

down explicitly, her statement that she was not interested in contexts that excluded men was so clearly the beginning and end of any conversation about feminism *per se*. And yet ultimately, she contributed to *Womens Work*, and clearly values her relationships with a number of these women. I posit that this is the most compelling expression of any shared feminism among this group; a desire for alignment with each other and each others' work.

4.9.3 Big Pauline again

On that note, perhaps the most striking similarity in all eight interviews was the extent to which all of the women had relationships with Pauline Oliveros and her work. While several of them knew only one of the two *Womens Work* co-editors (Simone Forti knew Alison Knowles well but not Annea Lockwood; Heidi Von Gunden met Lockwood in passing but not Knowles etc) all of the women had some kind of relationship with Oliveros. Julie Winter describes a "real strong connection," and was in the process of publishing her first novel with Ione, Pauline's widow. Forti describes a collaborative performance in glowing terms; Von Gunden studied extensively with Oliveros and then wrote her first musicological monograph on her; Beth Anderson discovered her work as a teenager and she became a kind of mentor after Anderson's visit to San Diego (see Chapter Two), nominating her for the NEA award that was so validating. Nye Ffarrabas remained in touch with Pauline long after her exit from the 'art world';⁷³ Mary Lucier wrote her contribution to *Womens Work* originally for Oliveros, in dialogue with each other over the *Sonic Meditations*. And Mieko Shiomi recounts her profound encounter and joint improvised performance with Oliveros, strikingly re-aligning herself with the latter's way of thinking about improvisation, in opposition to that of Group Ongaku. While it is the case that the interviews occurred only two or three years after Oliveros passed away, meaning her legacy may have been more prominent in this moment than arguably a few years earlier, this in no way

⁷³ They exchanged cards and materials in 1983 after Ffarrabas had relocated again to Vermont, see Box 8 Folder 2 Forbes, Bici, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

diminishes my argument that she remains the most central figure in this grouping, and in a sense, and as a figurehead, she might represent any sense of shared values; that any feminisms might include the *Oliverosian* emphases on *recognition*, on the importance of the individual as much as the group, on the capacity to hold multiple conflicting positions, and on the capacity for play and playfulness which, as outlined in Chapter Two, can be understood to begin with her *feminist performance score, To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, in Recognition of their Desperation* (1970).

CHAPTER FIVE: WORKING WITH WOMENS WORK: TOWARDS THE EMBODIED CURATOR

Fig 5.1 John Burtle and Elena Mann, *Propositional Attitudes* (2018), book cover

This chapter charts my experiences of working as a curator with *Womens Work* (Knowles and Lockwood 1975, 1978, 2019). As initially outlined in Chapter One, these works present a curatorial conundrum in their dualistic existence as inseparably rare archival print media and as live performance(s). This is further problematised by the insight that some of the richest encounters with such works take place during the process of performance: that is to say, the negotiation of the score by and among performers (and those staging the work). This chapter is structured through my own repeated encounters with *Womens Work* across its printed and live forms, which led to the development of *the workshop* as a curatorial format. This chapter ultimately argues for a form of *embodied curating* that here emerges from the specific challenges of curating historical textual instructional performance scores – especially through the prism of a feminist score anthology – that, in short, inserts the curator’s own active body amidst

others into the heart of the work. Text scores that stem from the 1960s and 1970s have in general terms already been the subject of ongoing interest within and beyond exhibition-making, and I discuss some of these examples here, including the last *Documenta 14: Learning from Athens* (2017). Yet rarely has this curatorial activity been critically appraised, nor alternative means for sharing such works developed. Moreover, there is a marked proliferation in the use of text scores in contemporary practice that renders these questions all-the-more timely. Recent examples include John Burtle and Elena Mann's text score anthology, *Propositional Attitudes* (2018) and text scores written by artists in New York including Park Macarthur, Constantina Zavitsanos and Carolyn Lazard that work within the framework of disability justice.⁷⁴ This chapter has two orientations in this regard: a discussion of how one might work as a curator with these kinds of scores, and the implications for the curator of such *embodied* curatorial practices that these works imply, and which may be resonant amid a wider field of work that shares their live social materiality, especially, though not limited to, sound and music performance.

5.1 Prologue: Unboxing Oliveros Again

To return again to the origin story (1.1): I came across *Womens Work* as a result of an earlier encounter with composer Pauline Oliveros' text score *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1970), described in detail in Chapter Two. The context here was the touring exhibition *WACK!* at MoMA PS1, New York (2008), the first survey of the feminist art movement of the 1970s. I was utterly compelled by the Oliveros work's title and implications but frustrated by my attempts to read the two lengthy pages of textual instruction: peering over a small vitrine, a tired gallery visitor at the end of a vast group exhibition, not an ideal condition for

⁷⁴ Some examples are included in Macarthur & Zavitsanos' 'Other Forms of Conviviality' text for Women and Performance, and on Lazard's own website <http://www.carolynlazard.com/> last accessed 6th June

reading the printed document let alone understanding what the piece might sound or feel like. As a curator, my obvious conclusion was to arrange a performance of the work. I realised this project some years later with sound artists Cathy Lane and Lee Ingleton in the context of our *Her Noise: Feminisms and the Sonic* programme at Tate Modern in 2012 with Oliveros as keynote speaker. I then became involved in a filmed iteration of the work that artist friends Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz made the following year having independently encountered the score in the *WACK!* exhibition and heard tell of our London performance. Both of these are experiences I have described in Chapter Two, in relation to their insights into this work in particular.

In addition to understandings of the piece itself, these enfolding encounters set a series of challenges to me as a curator, the more obvious being the potentialities and limitations of the exhibition format. Less obvious is the slow realisation that it is the process of performance, the negotiation of the score by the performers and others engaged in staging the performance, that holds some of the richest encounters with the work (as discussed in Chapter Two in detail): at least in the case of text instruction, that may leave significant elements open to interpretation and negotiation. I assert that this processual, social, and inevitably thoroughly embodied group experience presents the greatest challenge to the curator's mediation of such works: whether in attempting to incorporate elements into either of the paradigms of exhibition or performance, or in thinking through this processual "in-between" as its own format.

In the following section (5.2) I give an account of my work with the *Womens Work* score anthology to explore the wider curatorial challenges, potentials and limitations of the paradigm of exhibition-making. Section 5.3 offers a counterpoint: my workshop series, *These are scores*, began as a means to develop a related live performance programme that organically emerged as a curatorial format in itself, offering a sense of the embodied group negotiation that occurs between reading a score and any final performance. These workshops became my preferred format for sharing these works as a curator

whilst placing new and specific demands, as host or convener, on my own body's active presence within my curatorial work. Ordinarily, the curator herself is physically separate from the artwork(s) that she is presenting, aside from the "exhibition tour" or "introductory talk" and then always with clear distinction. Moreover, these glimpses are separate from the invisible work of curating, the process by which the project has come to pass. Rarely, if ever, is the curator, her body and her work immersed, entangled, physically, in the work she is presenting – for all the porous boundaries that this might imply⁷⁵ – as it is in the case of such a workshop. In the final section (5.4) I take up the challenges of the workshop, this live social medium, as a medium of curating and the foregrounding of the curator's own body and the labour of curating at the centre of the presentation of the works.

This chapter ultimately argues for what I call the embodied curator, who may be found in the midst of the work. My understandings of embodiment here are foregrounded in Barad's framework of agential realism, where matter and meaning are iteratively performatively co-constituted in "a post-humanist, performative understanding of the materialization of bodies" (Barad 2007, 34). Speaking from the field of body studies, Lisa Blackman articulates this Baradian approach to bodily materiality as "based on conceptions which emphasise the lively, agential capacities of matter at all scales...replac[ing] the psyche (often equated to subjectivity) with a more entangled and distributed conception of materiality, which introduces non-human agency into being and becoming." (2021, 89) I contend that the embodied curator exists through these iterative enfolding encounters with texts, bodies, their sound and movement, in time and space, which parallels the open-ended life many of these works might lead through their iterative live performance. In turn, in this chapter my writing embraces these understandings in order to speak of my own repeated encounters with these materials and their physical, embodied negotiations; not only embodied in a very literal way, as workshop host in the conclusions of this work, but throughout the years of process that

⁷⁵ There are of course exceptions to be made here too, notably the case of artist-led institutions more generally, and in particular certain histories within conceptual art.

I describe here and throughout this thesis, as a body accumulating knowledge from these multiple encounters, rather than a singular, linear, institutional engagement with history.

5.2 Exhibition as (lively) expanded publishing

5.2.1 Slow Runner



Fig 5.2 *Slow Runner*, Badischer Kunstverein, 2013. Photo: Stephan Baumann

If working with the Oliveros score *To Valerie Solanas...* seemed to invite speculation that the textual, instructional performance score might hold potential as a feminist medium, then an affirmative answer seemed to come in the form of *Womens Work*. As already mentioned in Chapter Two, I first encountered *Womens Work* through research on this topic towards an exhibition project, *Slow Runner* (Badischer Kunstverein, 2013),⁷⁶ a group

⁷⁶ Artists: Robert Ashley with Pauline Oliveros, Barbara Hammer, Em Hedditch, Alison Knowles and Annea Lockwood, Cathy Lane, Lis Rhodes

exhibition that explored Oliveros' feminist philosophy of music (specifically departing from the correspondence with Kate Millet referenced in Chapter Two) which was commissioned alongside the premiere installation of the eponymous Boudry/Lorenz work. Here I displayed the two original issues of *Womens Work* sent over from the USA by Annea Lockwood herself, alongside a series of facsimiles of individual pages – at this point, to my knowledge only one copy existed in any European institutional archive/library, in Denmark. Even as I was arranging the display, it seemed to have failed to convey the excitement that flowed through me from the materials: modest and monochrome, the vitrine felt unimaginative and, again, silent. My only resolve was to provide an additional complete facsimile copy which visitors could physically leaf through and read themselves while sitting in chairs next to the display: a small act of comfort and generosity.

Even if this first attempt at exhibiting *Womens Work* felt a disappointment, I note now that the exhibition format had been crucial in my repeated physical encounters with these historical materials. Were it not for the *WACK!* exhibition I may not otherwise have encountered the Oliveros score; in turn I learned of the existence of *Womens Work* because of its inclusion in an archival exhibition at MoMA, New York (that left behind an online blog post)⁷⁷ and then only through curating my own exhibition project. My initial impulse was to feel cynical about the placement of the Oliveros score in the vitrine, seemingly a fetish for ephemera that abstracts and even alienates the work from its performance, its sound and music, its confluence of bodies in time and space, its vital embodiment. Yet this underestimates the visual-textual power of such scores; the important modes of looking and reading, themselves no less physical acts. As Liz Kotz insists of the post-Cagean event score, and I repeat here again, they are “inseparably words to be looked at and actions to be performed” (2007, 9) – that is to say, that neither looking/reading nor live performance can be extricated from this duality, nor alternatively diminished. For all their limitations, these encounters also

⁷⁷ The online blog post where I originally read about *Womens Work* is here: <https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/womeninflux/> last accessed 6th June 2022

speak of the exhibition's potential in sharing these materials that might otherwise be confined to the domain of archives or rare book-sellers, functioning as an expanded form of publishing that might in turn proliferate their live performance(s) – where the curator has physically inserted the score into the 'path' of the exhibition visitor, bringing this material to different audiences and to those that would not have encountered the work initially, nor would seek out those later archives. Any genealogy of artists' publications of performance scores would surely underline the importance of their visual, textual printed form. And in possibly the most widely known example, John Cage's *Notations* (1969), co-edited with Alison Knowles (and discussed in Chapter Three), there is moreover an implicit argument for the exhibition of scores: the book itself being just one outcome in a more ambitious project to collect the manuscripts from which the published excerpts derive, into a museum collection for any number of future exhibitions (Kim 2013, 73-81). Here I am underlining that the exhibition of these performance scores as visual or reading material has not only occurred retrospectively; rather, that exhibition may be a mode explicitly sought by practitioners harnessing this potential. The operative question then might be how best to exhibit such scores: how to convey aspects of their live, processual nature; how to include live performance?

Recent curatorial engagements often explore the duality highlighted by Kotz. In particular, the past decade has seen a trend for the linkage of archival displays with a live performance programme, often within the same galleries. Excellent examples of exhibitions that have added to my own thinking include the daily live dance works of Trisha Brown included in the Barbican's *Laurie Anderson / Trisha Brown / Gordon Matta-Clark* (2011) exhibition curated by Lydia Yee, and numerous projects at Raven Row, London termed "Live Exhibitions" where regular performances formed part of the core of the exhibition including *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* (2014) curated by Catherine Wood, and *In Case There's a Reason: The Theatre of Mistakes* (2017) curated by Jason Bowman. These present a luxurious opportunity for the galleries to "come to life", evidently relying on exceptional institutional support. Although beyond my scope here to draw out any example in detail, I

suggest these also tend to present a compromise between programming at a frequency where most visitors to the gallery will experience something live, and the “aura” of the one-off event. Clearly the more frequent such an exhibition performance programme becomes, the less like a one-off live event it will seem, the more there is an inevitable sense of routine, going-through-the-motions. In this way, while unquestionably a generous intervention into the static gallery display, performance within the “white cube” almost inevitably absorbs some of this static ambience, risking the rendering of performance, human bodies, as gallery objects. One interesting example that I contend strongly countered this issue, was in the performance of Simone Forti’s *Dance Constructions* (1961) that formed part of *Judson Dance Theatre: The work is never done* exhibition at MoMA (2018–19) curated by Ana Janevski and Thomas J. Lax. Here, as Forti discusses in her interview included in Chapter Four, *See Saw* (1960) was performed by a different invited duo at various points during the exhibition’s run: on the occasion of my visit, two members of the artist collective My Barbarian. Moreover, those performing the other works on rota were also each celebrated performers in their own right from diverse contexts – rather than a list of names within a set of credits one might gloss over, performers each shared bios alongside that of Forti⁷⁸ – giving specific reasons for going to experience the pieces on specific days. The performances were only at certain times of the week rather than daily, and during my visit, the gallery suddenly swelled with visitors who had clearly come to see this particular set of performances, and not only incidental visitors to the wider exhibition; consequently producing the ambience of a precious one-off live moment (see Fig 4.8).

Thinking about sound specifically, curator Lina Džuverovič has described the secondary “entertainment” value afforded to sound and music performance in the museum (2020). In the multi-authored dialogic text on the question of sound, music and noise in the gallery, *Making Space for Sound* (2017),

⁷⁸One example of the performer bios:
https://www.moma.org/d/pdfs/W1siZiIsIjIwMTgvMTAvMTAvOHYyeHNsYmFoM19kYW5jZWNVbnNocnVjdGlvbnNfYmlvcy5wZGYiXVo/danceconstructions_bios.pdf?sha=306d3948c68745f4 last accessed 6th June 2022

composer and curator Chiara Giovando is even more cynical in the specific case of music performance. She insists that “[i]t cannot really be listened to in any serious way inside a museum or gallery,” arguing that this is because of “a technical issue – it often sounds a certain way (very echoic) – but also a conceptual one: against the silence of the static, music can’t help but become manipulative” (Giovando et al 2017, 17). The *Documenta 14* exhibition (Kassel and Athens, 2017) included historical text and graphic scores as one of its major thematic strands including *foci* on Anna Halprin, José Maceda, Pauline Oliveros and Lala Rukh, amongst others. These presentations notably diverged from the forementioned trend of including regular performances in the gallery, presenting one-off performance programmes of works by particular artists instead: for example, the *Tribute to Pauline Oliveros* with ICE Ensemble and IONE on 15 July 2017 outside of the Athens Conservatoire that hosted the display of Oliveros’ scores.

Most compellingly, the curatorial team of *Documenta 14* took certain score-based structures into the conception of the working processes of the exhibition itself: Jani Chrisou’s notion of a “continuum” as the basis for collaboration between artists, curators and exhibition workers; and Cornelius Cardew’s notion of “unlearning” as central to the overall exhibition’s title *Learning from Athens* (Folkerts 2017). Seeking to set these score-based practices in dialogue with the exhibition’s own curatorial practices registers a significant intention towards working with this process of performance, albeit one that in this instance is not readily available to those outside of its operations, that is to say, to the exhibition visitors. Nonetheless, in *Making Space for Sound*, producer Eric Namour remarks that “*Documenta’s* sound programme was disappointing for me. It was almost, again, like an addendum (2017, 66-7).” Indeed, on my visit to Kassel in September 2017, I encountered only more scores in vitrines and on walls, and as ever-seductive as these were, I still had this sense of frustration, so common to so many instances of the exhibition of scores as archival documents which is still unquestionably the norm.

5.2.2 ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE (OSOGE)

To return to *Womens Work*, I was able to redress my earlier disappointment with a further exhibition project, *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE* (Chelsea Space, 2018), co-curated with friend and colleague Karen Di Franco⁷⁹. Here *Womens Work* and Di Franco's respective research materials, artist Carolee Schneemann's performance text *Parts of a Body House* (1957–68), were the framework of the exhibition. We brought these into an intergenerational dialogue with five contemporary artist-peers of ours that work between the page and the body with text, sound and performance: Beatrice Gibson, Ghislaine Leung, Roy Claire Potter, Charlotte Prodger and Tai Shani. Here the acoustics and relatively small galleries, in line with Giovando's thinking, led us to an entirely separate, stand-alone performance programme in the 'black box' at LUX, Waterlow Park, with Anna Barham, Daniela Cascella, Ami Clarke, Tomoko Hojo, Nat Lall, Aura Satz and Linda Stupart. In the gallery, alongside the works by the younger artists, we worked with the Schneemann text and scores from *Womens Work* by Alison Knowles, Annea Lockwood and composer Mieko Shiomi in this form of expanded publishing with a graphic designer, Matthew Appleton. We had a small wall-based vitrine with the same original copy of *Womens Work* that Lockwood had sent to Karlsruhe (that I had since donated to the *Her Noise* archive), and we framed the second issue elsewhere on the same wall. In the vitrine with the first issue we included card-backed printed reproductions of the *Piano Transplants* scores, and then a series of photographic documentation of the works that spanned the decades. Because we were also including the original piano, *Piano Transplant no 1*, on loan from the Hugh Davies archive at Goldsmiths, University of London, we felt that it was appropriate to leave these scores of Lockwood's at a more modest scale, while we worked with our designer on the others which were all at a

⁷⁹ Please note, in addition to the full digital documentation on the memory stick, extensive documentation is available on the Chelsea Space website: <https://www.chelseaspace.org/archive/orgasmic-streaming-info.html> Last accessed 26th June 2022.

larger scale than the original and wall-papered onto the walls. Mieko Shiomi had generously sent original copies of seven of the nine *Spatial Poem* events: rather than treating them as archival documents, Appleton made facsimile copies at around double the scale, sensitively attempting to match the colour and grain of the original paper stock, and these were dotted throughout the gallery space, including on the long approach ramp. Alison Knowles' *Proposition IV (Squid)* was blown up at roughly three times the scale, so that the four small pages were more poster-sized, pasted across the corner of one of the gallery walls. And then *Parts of a Body House* was also re-set into a more contemporary font for legibility and blown up so that the 'scroll' was the entire height of the gallery, pasted opposite the picture window benching so that visitors might sit and read. Overall, in working with Appleton on these scores in this way, our ambition was to work closely with the architecture of the space to produce modes of reading that centred the comfort of the bodies of our audience, in an attempt to break free of the constrained modes of looking/reading that I have described with archival displays in the prior examples.

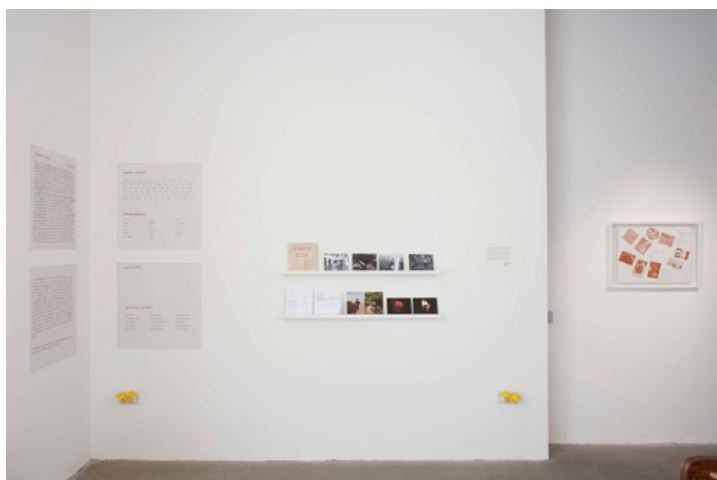


Figs 5.3-4 *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE*, co-curated with Karen Di Franco, Chelsea Space, 24th April to 25th May 2018. Photos: Andy Keate; Cherie Silver

The works by the younger artists also contributed to this human scale, including Ghislaine Leung's conceptual score, *Colour Hides the Canvas, Moulding Hides the Frame* (2013). This instructs painting the entirety of the gallery's picture window with live yoghurt, softening the natural light and creating a more intimate atmosphere where visitors are no longer visible to

the public outside, resonating with some of the more intimate contexts where the older works may have been written or performed. Áine O’Dwyer’s performance recording of Annea Lockwood’s prepared piano, *Piano Transplant No 1* (1966), is played back via transducer on the piano itself, sparse yet warm punctuations of the room’s space-time, literally resonating through the wooden archive. Linking the historical scores with contemporary practices was also a conceptual means to “enliven” their readings, bringing them into dialogue with these works by younger artists in an intimate

Figs 5.5-7 Clockwise from top left: Alison Knowles, *Proposition IV (Squid)* (1970); Mieko Shiomí, *Spatial Poem* (1965-75); installation view. Photos: Andy Keate



physical immediacy: “a kind of proliferative energy that suggests an ongoing conversation about histories, materials and acts of making and un-making,” as one reviewer, Frances Morgan put it in the *Wire* magazine (2018, 81). In the midst of contemporary works and largely outside of fusty vitrines, for me these efforts presented these scores in means that were as “lively” as possible, if not conventionally live: an approach that embraced its own limitations. This project satisfied my contention that even within the potentially limited exhibition context, there are curatorial practices to be developed that markedly improve on the literal boxes these works are so often placed in.

5.3 Live materials: the workshop as curatorial format

As extensively explored in Chapter Three, the introductory page of the first issue of *Womens Work* begins:

These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances.
(Knowles and Lockwood 1975)

If *Notations* makes an argument for the exhibition of scores both on the page and in physical space, then the *Womens Work* publication emphatically *invites* performance. As I have already argued in Chapter Three, this generous insistence on performance marks the feminist potential in this project, offering the scores for direct and immediate use and bypassing publishing institutions, their permissions and fees. After all, co-editor Annea Lockwood asserts that “these are live materials... you look at a score, you do it” (Lockwood 2017, 121). If the exhibition projects I describe in the previous section were forms of expanded publishing, bringing this otherwise little-known, rare magazine project to new audiences, then the ultimate conclusion would be to republish the collection. This is something that I undertook in collaboration with New York publisher Primary Information in 2019, publishing a new facsimile edition that includes both issues, and that I discuss further in the next Conclusion chapter. However, from the point of view of the curator this conclusion of sorts does not address such an

insistence on “live materials”, performance. I had always envisaged convening a multi-disciplinary performance group that would workshop the numerous scores in the collection, culminating in an ambitious programme of live performance — what I saw as the ultimate goal of my work with *Womens Work*. However, in attempting a prototype workshop, these ambitions fell starkly into question.

An invitation to lead a workshop with Margate-based music improvisation group, Athelstan Sound, presented an opportunity to begin to tentatively think through this group process. Yet, in re-reading the works contained in the first issue of *Womens Work* in preparation for sharing them in a workshop — that is to say, beginning to negotiate their performance — I came to more fully appreciate how heterogeneous they were in spite of their shared medium of textual instruction and overlapping communities of practice (an appreciation that would also be heightened the following year during the interviews in the USA, presented in Chapter Four). Whilst, as above, all are emphatically intended for some form of performance, I wanted to work out which works in the collection we might be able to physically perform within the scope of a two-hour workshop: for some, like Oliveros’ handwritten *Sonic Meditation* (see fig 3.13), this seemed feasible; others would need more preparation or performance time; others more ambitious still, such as Annea Lockwood’s own *Piano Transplants*. Workshop-planning aside, it became almost immediately obvious that the notion of one large-scale performance programme (albeit over several days) was an impossible fantasy, with too many diverse works to be pragmatically feasible never mind conceptually appropriate. Yet what happily emerged was that sharing these works in the format of a workshop — group reading, discussion and performance — sparked precisely the same kinds of processual encounters and thick embodied understandings that had emerged from the forementioned instances of staging performances of Oliveros’ *To Valerie Solanas*.... In their textual, instructional form, these scores share a potential that extends from their group publication into these group workshop situations. It is this social exchange that might be the “live” part that all these works can share together, beyond their confluence in print.

5.3.1 These are scores

Taking its title from the first issue's introductory sentences, I went on to develop the *These are scores* workshop series as a means for sharing the collection and its scores with a public, organising more than ten iterations to date in a range of art, music, public and academic contexts, listed below. Some of these were explicit invitations to me to conduct this particular workshop while some of the earlier iterations came about through more general invitations.

- **Athelstan Sound**

Open School East, Margate, 26 July 2017, 6 - 8pm

With members of Athelstan Sound, a loose group for those interested in sound, performance and improvisation (c 15).

- ***The House of Dust by Alison Knowles, exhibition project by Art by Translation***

CNEAI, Paris, 20 October 2017, 2 - 6pm

With students of ESBA TALM and ENSA Paris-Cergy (c 20)

Culminating in performances of works by Simone Forti, Wendy Greenberg, Alison Knowles & Mieko Shiomi on Sunday 22 October 2017 within the exhibition space.

- **Art Research Work symposium organised by the Swiss Artistic Research Network**

ZHDK, Zurich, 8 December 2017, 2.30 - 4pm

With attendees of the symposium which was free and open to the public (c 30).

- ***ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE (see above section 5.2.2)***

Chelsea Space, London, 11 May 2018, 2-5pm

With members of the public (c 12)

• **Sounding Bodies**

Sound Lab, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, 23 August

2018, 2 - 6pm

Sounding Bodies Research Group (c 16)

• **Research Week, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm**

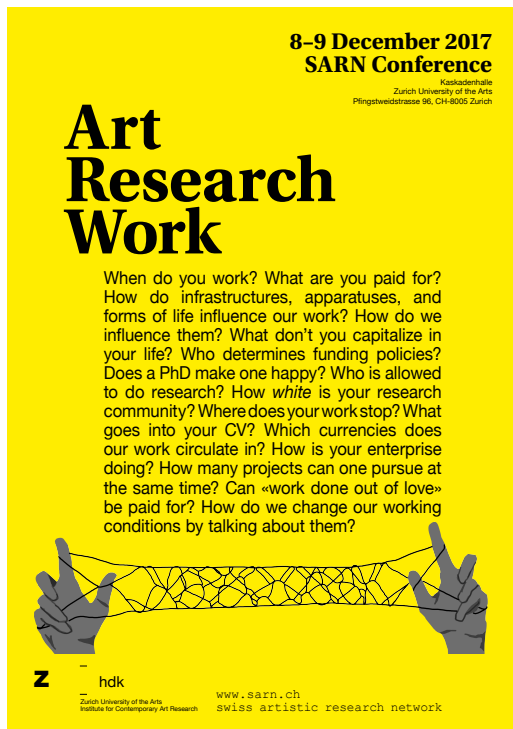
25 January 2019, 10am-midday

Researchers and members of the public (c 12)

• **Beatrice Gibson, *Crone Music* solo exhibition**

Camden Arts Centre, London, 6 March 2019, 6-9pm

With members of the public (c 25)



Figs 5.8-9 Poster for *Art Research Work*, ZHDK, Zurich, 2017

The public instances above took place among other iterations in non-public

educational settings, including a Fine Art PhD methodology workshop at the Royal College of Art, London (organised by Aura Satz and Frances Morgan); and in the Sound Arts programme at London College of Communication in both BA and MA settings.

In brief, I split the time of the workshop into two parts, 'reading' and 'performance', echoing Kotz' duality (2001, 2007), though most importantly with discussion straddling both. I tend to introduce the workshop by sharing copies of the interview from 2014 with Annea Lockwood that we read aloud in turn as a group. It introduces *Womens Work* in the words of one of the co-editors, and also ensures everyone has added their voice to the room at the outset. In certain and more academic settings I have included my own introduction that recounts some of this wider research, though I prefer members of the workshop to encounter the scores predominantly on their own terms. In some of the shorter instances the time for 'performance', ie the second half, has been quite short, or in the case of Zurich, not possible from the outset. This is to say that my basic principle is for a brief introduction in the manner I have described and then roughly equal parts 'reading' and 'performance', as I describe in what follows, though sometimes there have been modifications to fit the context.

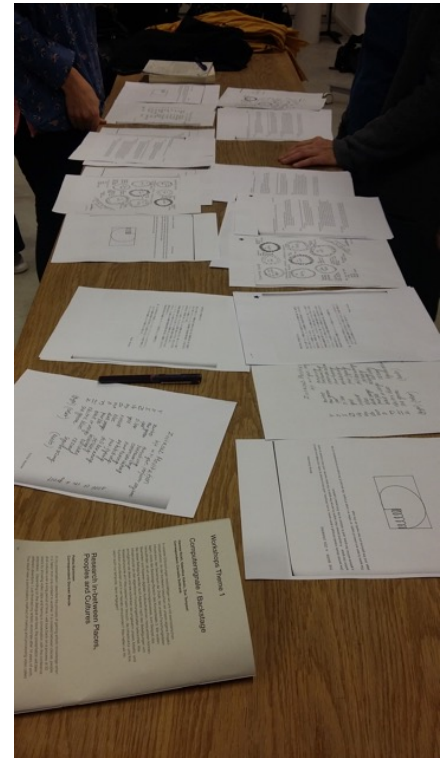
In the first 'reading' part we break into smaller groups, each with a different selection of the text scores from the first issue of *Womens Work*. Each group is then free to make their own way through any, or all, of their scores, reading and discussing. I usually share some prompts:

Which work(s) do you find most interesting and why?

Which would you most like to perform, today or in the future?

You may not have time to read / discuss everything, just pick what you find most interesting.

When the smaller groups feed back, we arrive at a consensus about which works we will focus on in the time we have for the second part, according to



Figs 5.10-12 *These are scores*, ZHDK, Zurich, 2017. Photo: Van Schaer

what has been of most interest. This might be a performance of one or more of the scores, usually with discussion about the works' arrangement, and often repetition and modification. One of the most revelatory aspects of these workshops is the extent to which the works come to life in these group situations simply through reading and discussion, and where very often performance already begins spontaneously during the 'reading' part of the workshop. The same and different works attract interest each time; profound questions often arise from the works and beyond, such as, how far can we take our own interpretation before the performance is no longer the authored work?

5.3.2 Notes from Paris and Copenhagen

As *These are scores* started to gain momentum, questions arose about whether or how to document these workshops. At the outset, I felt highly resistant to any form of documentation. If the heart of the value of such activity is in the live embodied process, it seems counter-intuitive to attempt to 'capture' that. If the aim is to free these scores from their boxes and let them become entangled with our bodily materiality, then attempting to re-present these live moments seems inherently conflictual with these goals. With the consent of the participants, I tentatively recorded the first workshop in Margate with my Edirol recorder, just an ambient sound recording placed innocuously on a table not aimed at anything in particular. Perhaps predictably, the results were far less interesting to listen to than the experience of being in the room. I also experimented with different styles of written reports so that I could keep a record for myself for the sake of future developments. By the second workshop, at CNEAI in Paris, this writing had migrated into a more personal, impressionistic way of accounting for the experience. I was also open to other forms of documentation where the particular context wished to conduct them for their own reasons. I am including in this chapter much of the photography that this generated, from a number of the iterations. One aspect I find significant about these photos is that in many of them, across the different instances, people are smiling: I hope this conveys some of the energy and fun of working with these materials. In one instance, discussed below in the second excerpt, a short video clip was also made, and I include a link in the respective footnote.

This first excerpt is from the second workshop I did, at CNEAI, Paris in October 2017 in the context of the exhibition *The House of Dust by Alison Knowles*. The workshop mostly comprised of two groups of BA Fine Art students, with no particular background in performance, groups taught at two different art colleges by members of Art by Translation (Jeff Guess, Maud Jacquin, Sébastien Pluot) who had curated the overall project. In principle the workshop was also open to the general public, though taking place on a Friday afternoon, the only other attendees were members of the gallery team. This workshop was relatively longer and also oriented towards a public performance programme that would take place on the following

Sunday afternoon. This excerpt begins halfway through the account, as we are deciding which works to carry through into the second ‘performance’ part:

Time slips by fast and it’s already after 4.30pm when I manage to insist we wrap up the feedback. Maud’s group were into the Simone Forti work, which we agree they could spend the next hour arranging and then everyone rehearse at the very end of the day, and then perform on Sunday together. The other groups seem to have self-selected – the ladies with their focus on Proposition IV (Squid) (I join them as a fourth performer). Jeff’s group with the Wendy Greenberg work. And Sébastien working with his students on the Spatial Poem.



Fig 5.13-14 *These are scores*, CNEAI, Paris, with Art by Translation.

It feels more than a little rushed but purposeful. I’m in the Squid group. Maud has done the performance earlier in the Summer in Montreal so assists the ladies in understanding it and clarifies their questions. We draw diagrams on paper and talk through scenarios. One of the ladies is overwhelmed by the rules and wants to challenge this and make her own improvisation. Maud explains that if you start to change the basic terms of the work then it ceases to be Alison Knowles’ work, it’s your work – but asserts that nevertheless you can actually take a lot of freedom in your own performance once you’ve committed to the rules. She is not convinced and says she would like to do her own thing. Maud suggests she can improvise.

Interestingly, by Sunday afternoon she has changed her mind and written her own score card which turns out to be brilliant, including setting alight lighter gel on the concrete floor in the “element” quadrant.

In the last ten or fifteen minutes we re-convene outside by the canal and rehearse the Simone Forti. Clemence [a member of the gallery staff] wants to realise this in a circle, guided by the shape of the written score. She wants us to think about opening and closing the circle at the beginning and end (although only the latter happens in the final performance). We had already discussed in the feedback session what “buzzing” might mean, and I’d mentioned the musicians in Margate but also speculated about contemporary electronics buzzing and even the invisible electro-magnetic waves (the topic of one of the artists in the show, Tyler Coburn, also Christina Kubisch’s Electrical Walks). Clemence wants us to use our voice and hum, but also to synchronise our mobile phone timers so that we buzz for 3 minutes and then all our timers all go off more-or-less at once and we then step back into the ring of the circle and stop.

I think again (like in Margate) that I wonder what it is really like for an audience. It’s notable that this piece is chosen in both instances as a seeming favourite [in fact it is chosen in almost every subsequent workshop]. I wonder if the shape and the way it looks on the pages is a little more seductive than our final performances, I wonder how one might make it more dynamic,⁸⁰ or maybe that’s missing the point. Overall, I feel pretty overwhelmed by what had just happened (in fact, I have a migraine). Because of the decision to conduct nearly everything in French it was all a bit of a haze for me. But this gave me an interesting feeling of having less responsibility and perhaps even able to be a bit more of a fly-on-the-wall, when I wasn’t feeling stressed about the quality of what we were going to produce for Sunday, whether the artists were going to give permission (could they, did they need to etc).

⁸⁰ Simone Forti would effectively answer this question in our later interview, with the additional rules she discusses in *Over, Around and Under*, including the use of the radio for cues (see Chapter Four).

In discussing this point about permissions, we agreed that as the introduction so clearly states an open-ness to anyone making performances, the emphasis was indeed on “notifying” of any performances. The only exception we felt was Mieko Shiomi’s as in the collection it is tied to a particular time and date, so we would be modifying the work – but Sébastien is in touch with her and so will email her. This is exciting. We have a brief discussion about how to approach inviting people all over the world to participate in the Spatial Poem.

This next, longer excerpt covers the whole arc of the workshop in Copenhagen in August 2018, almost a year later, not long after the *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE* exhibition had taken place, and on the cusp of my US research trip. Here the context is sound artist Jenny Gräf Sheppard’s *Sounding Bodies* research project within the Sound Lab that she was then running in the Royal Academy of Art. I include it especially because it was in this workshop that the fuller implications for me as a curator, of using the workshop as a curatorial format, started to occur to me, some of which are included in these notes I made at the time. One of the participants, Victor Vidal, filmed this [video excerpt](#)⁸¹ from our performance of Nye Ffarrabhas’ *Paper Concerto* that was being led by Sheppard, included in the below.

It is the morning after, and I’m exhausted because I couldn’t sleep because of the good adrenalin. Twenty-four hours earlier Jenny had picked me up from my friend Stine’s apartment, where I’m writing this now. We lock her bike (to itself, but not the bike rack, unnecessary here) and jump on the metro and at the other end we ascend into the ‘castle’ (Danish Royal Academy of Art). It is Hanseatic grandeur, high camp for Presbyterians. Up a giant’s staircase, the ‘Sound Lab’ seems to be in the eaves, a large dual aspect room but still somehow intimate, not the high ceilings one presumes in the lower rooms: wooden floor, lots of fold-up tables, chairs, sparse but

⁸¹ Nye Ffarrabhas *Paper Concerto*, performance with Sounding Bodies, August 2018: <https://vimeo.com/286518568> last accessed 27th June 2022

not cold, some more organic-looking objects made in recent weeks (hand-made radio antennae and E-M “listening” devices, other bits and pieces casually laid out). There is a blackboard and a whiteboard and a giant flat-screen TV. A pair of those little Genelec monitors are butting out near the projector. The Genelecs are white, which I’ve never seen before. Somehow this fact epitomises the feeling of sensitively measured abundance:⁸² next door is a recording studio; Jenny’s new technician will turn up shortly too to help out and hang out.

It’s blue-skies-late-August here. In the sound lab we’re shaded from that pale but intense Scandinavian light but showered in the surrounding soundscape, city-centre-tourists-vehicles-seagulls. Inside the courtyards of the academy it’s more like hand-drills or even heftier industrial interruptions, as technicians build a series of temporary structures for an upcoming art fair. Jenny assures me that the group members can be relied on to spontaneously close and open the windows according to our competing needs for air and quiet. I have way more time than I have ever had to pre-arrange the photocopied scores. We start with four tables together, so we will be able to sit around one large composite table, that can then be pulled apart (although in the actual event, the groups pull apart without the tables and move out into the building, with only one remaining in the room, who work on the floor). I arrange the works in four rows according to their coloured star,⁸³ then shift around within the rows until each of the four columns seems to have a decent selection. In this case, I ensure each column has at least one sound-based or compositional work, as that’s the focus of the group. I still really like having the scores laid out in advance for when the group arrives, it feels exciting to physically see the material we’re going to be using as soon as you walk into the room, and

⁸² A couple of years later, the Sounding Bodies project was named as an example of “activist research in academia” by right wing politicians, during a lurch to the right in Danish politics more generally, making the experience all-the-more precious in retrospect (correspondence with Sheppard, 2020).

⁸³ I used blue, green, yellow and red stars to code whether a work could be accordingly: i) performed more-or-less instantly, ii) within the scope of the workshop but with some arrangement, iii) not possible within the workshop, but eminently do-able, iv) larger-scale and ambitious.

then perhaps start furtively reading once seated.



Fig 5.15-16 *These are scores*, Sounding Bodies, Copenhagen, 2018. Photo: Stephen McEvoy

Later, as the smaller groups are feeding back, I feel a little anxious about how one of the groups maybe didn't have anything that they could get their teeth into. Though I also feel that that is perhaps not something that can be entirely predicted, ie I make no resolve to change my method of quickly assigning the scores into groupings on a partly random, partly informed basis. The scores that were most popular were some of the usual ones (Forti, Oliveros' Sonic Meditation), but they equally also drew out some unusual choices, including Nye Ffarrabas' Paper Concerto, which turned out to be a brilliant work to workshop. We went into each work in more thorough detail than usual in the group feedback, and in certain cases I also interjected more of what I know than I usually would do, but here it felt like matching this deeper engagement. One of the most highly engaged participants, later towards the end when I said I thought it was a shame we couldn't extend the workshop and do more performance together, suggested that in the future I could pre-select the scores, implying that I would only share the ones that are more feasible. This is something I had also thought about back before the very first time in Margate, but I still feel the first half exploring all the scores (divided amongst the smaller groups) works well as an opportunity to explore the sheer range of works being proposed together. We did spend a long time in the end, discussing in the groups and

then in the larger group, the works, but this felt thorough and complete today.

As ever there is slippage between the neat distinction of reading and performance. When feeding back in the first half, the speaker in the second group suddenly inducts us into a performance of the Sonic Meditation, “keep the next sound in mind for at least half an hour,” with scant introduction. And there we are doing it, right there, all-of-a-sudden, riding without stabilisers. “Try it for 2 or 3 minutes,” he said, but does anyone know who if anyone is even timing? I guess we will just be feeling that time. I only open my eyes after what I perceive to be two minutes and others are doing the same. I close my eyes a lot when I’m listening this afternoon and wonder if that’s a little performative, maybe my imposter syndrome trying to look like a good listener when I don’t always feel like one. But then when the eyes are closed there’s no reading anymore, it’s perhaps the moment when one could literally say the reading has dissolved into performance/listening.

In the break, there’s a group discussion on the floor in the round about the Danish accent, some of the group commute in from Malmö, Sweden, and Jenny’s still more comfortable with English, Stephen is Irish etc. A few remain while most go outside to get air, they start exchanging in English and quickly flip to, presumably, Danish. I wonder how much of this is for ease, or whether partly, it’s to avoid performing for the audience (me, the only other person in the room). I try to detect if I feel challenged or hurt by their choice to exclude me from the gist of their discussion, and on the contrary, feel light with the open-ness of the whole situation. It’s a joy to listen to them, they sound like excited younger women sharing thoughts, in any language. And I feel overcome with a desire for the moment to be prolonged indefinitely; or a realisation that this workshop, if it is indeed a curatorial structure [a thought that is still quite new], is simply a structuring device for holding open time and space for these encounters. Today as I reflect back, it strikes me that this is probably an emotional intensity similar to that which usually strikes me at some point or points

during any exhibition I have curated, in the space of the exhibition itself: the intense feeling of holding onto this temporary space and time; the space and time of the workshop not dissimilar, just slightly smaller-scale in both spatial and temporal terms, a shrunken exhibition. The feeling might be sentimental, almost a pre-emptive post-partum, but I think that is OK, as it's one of the few distinct points when I've ever felt I can truly take some pleasure in something I have initiated, the exhibition or the workshop.

I tell them they're my dream group, which is true in the sense that they both have this existing core commitment to certain kinds of group (sound) performance work, like the Margate group, but also really quite diverse in their interests and backgrounds (there's at least one choreographer, for instance, which is a first). It's telling how we're back on the floor in a circle performing a work, then performing it again. I guess we might look like the ♀'s Ensemble albeit in gothic eaves in Copenhagen nearly 50 years later and mixed genders. Victor, a Peruvian sound poet who is older, sits outside of performing both works that we tackle, Simone Forti's and the Paper Concerto. Perhaps he just doesn't identify himself as a performer, or not of these kind of performances, and it is nice because he seems to have assumed the role of conductor and documenter. The papers wrinkle in varying improvised dynamics. For the first time I let myself think: this sounds really good.

Seems like the workshop is an ideal if not always practical way of sharing the works, maybe a corollary to their re-printing? Am I only doing the workshop to circumvent the fact the works aren't available – is their value in their scarcity – would I have to introduce more of my own context or atmosphere or something 'additional' if the book were re-published? Or is the 'curatorial' work precisely this setting-up of time and space that EXTENDS the possibility of the book itself – like Consciousness Raising – you can read theory but it doesn't come to life outside of the group situation? Its cumbersome to organise. It can only take small numbers. They probably do need to have some background already maybe, though this could be in various areas – but it does seem to work well for lots of

different groups, reflecting the diffractive nature of the works and the collection, i.e. groups with different make-up get different things out of it. Are the most specialist the most receptive? Yes, probably. Isn't it true that – although there have been many wonderful opportunities to do this workshop, they are largely quite niche – to the extent of being flown around – yet, in many senses quite diverse too. Could I envisage a curatorial practice based purely around delivering or facilitating precisely these kinds of workshops? What are the precedents here? The workshops are both incoming and outgoing information – not just about what I learn but equally about what I can transmit to others. But isn't touring around giving these workshops even more exhausting than curating a show? Maybe not, in that they are repeated and smaller chunks – a little like Mieko's Spatial Poem, a new iteration as-and-when...

5.3.3 The workshop as a curatorial format

The workshop, as a live, social, group format, feels immediately resonant with some of the group work and performance contexts through which these works and their 'scorers' emerged: Pauline Oliveros' ♀'s Ensemble, discussed in Chapter Two; the Sonic Arts Union that Mary Lucier touches on in Chapter Four; *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces* discussed in Chapter Three and by Julie Winter in Chapter Four; and doubtless others. In a 2017 public - conversation with writer Frances Morgan, composer Mary Jane Leach made a striking comment on her experiences of score-based performance in group rehearsal situations:

"We would spend probably 80% of the time discussing the score."
(Leach 2017)

Hearing Leach's anecdote – albeit not one of the *Womens Work* contributors, though speaking of an adjacent if not overlapping period in New York – would come to crystallise my understandings of the workshop format as reproducing aspects of these historical group-working and/or performance contexts in certain profound sense. In her appositely titled

article, “Producing Situations: How Performer-Curators Are Rethinking Roles and Formats” (2020) musician, curator and researcher Heloisa Amaral discusses her own experiences of opening up the rehearsal space, and even within that the decision-making processes, to a wider public audience. This approach is highly resonant with my own use of the workshop to share these materials, though in Amaral’s examples the orientation is still towards a final public performance(s) as ultimate outcome. Rather, whilst a few of the iterations in my series did culminate in performance for an additional audience, such as in the first excerpt in Paris, I am here proposing the workshop as a means-to-an-end in, and of, itself.

That is not to say such a workshop format would in any way supersede the value of staging performances of any individual work. Rather, it might be particularly valuable for seeking to present a broader sense of such works and their processual nature – a ‘group show’, as it were – or indeed to explore works already grouped by their publishing, such as *Womens Work*, which already exists as a body of work. What I am proposing is a format that offers a compelling means to render the looking/reading of score-based works communal and discursive, while offering some sense of the negotiation of their live process that would otherwise not be easily accessible in any final performance, outside of the approaches Amaral outlines. Hence, a synthesis of key aspects of exhibition and performance brought together in this third paradigm. I am not suggesting that the idea of a workshop as a curatorial format is anything new *per se*: it seems perfectly in line with the notion of the *curatorial* that understands an expanding field beyond the exhibition itself, and particularly the *educational turn* within that (Martinon 2013). Yet where a curator might ordinarily include a workshop in a wider programme, perhaps with an artist commissioned to lead it, what is distinct here – aside from the specificity of score-based performance works – is that these workshops are essentially stand-alone events in themselves, where the curator *also* acts as workshop convenor or host, roles that effectively coalesce, inserting the physical presence of the curator into the heart of the activity, and largely condensing the curatorial labour into the time-frame of the event. Here I would like to suggest a connection to curator and theorist

Bridget Crone’s notion of the “sensible stage”, with its insistence on separation and immersion at once with an inherent reflexivity (Crone 2013). In the next, concluding section I will discuss what for me has been the most immediate repercussion: the implications this format has on the figure of the curator, its multiple demands on my own bodily physical presence, and suggesting what I term the “embodied curator”.

5.4 Hosting live social volumes: towards the embodied curator

In 2008, after years of teaching choreographer and film maker Yvonne Rainer’s dance work *Trio A* (1966) in her lectures, art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson – who had no formal dance training – joined a six-month workshop led by Rainer herself, to learn the dance. Rainer was artist in residence at the University of California, Irvine where Bryan-Wilson was based. The latter’s resulting essay (2012) charts her experience of the process, and ends in its conclusion with her own re-working of Rainer’s iconic *No Manifesto* (1965) that pre-empted the aesthetics of *Trio A*. Playing on Rainer’s later insistence that it ought to have been the ‘Yes Manifesto’, Bryan-Wilson’s version reads:

“yes to looking to the past for a way to endure the present, yes to inventing mediums and yes to creating new muscle memories and yes to alternative models of transmitting knowledge and yes to potential humiliation and yes to possible failure and yes to passion and yes to ageing and yes to the messiness of contemporary art history as an uncertain and vital and undefined platform and yes to queer temporalities and yes to desirous histories and, finally, yes to bowing.”
(Bryan-Wilson 2012, 74)

I include this excerpt here because the essay was vital to me in foregrounding the value of becoming part of this *process of performance* oneself, confirming all of my prior experiences. In celebrating this movement of going outside of one’s comfort zone, making oneself vulnerable, and ultimately

joining in, many if not all of these points might also apply to my own experience of hosting these workshops: “looking to the past for a way to endure the present”, “creating new muscle memories”, “yes to potential humiliation... yes to the messiness of contemporary art history as an uncertain and vital and undefined platform”. And perhaps most strikingly of all, “yes to new mediums”. On this last point, Bryan-Wilson is talking about the medium of dance, the body itself; but by extension, the workshop, via my own body, came to provide me with a new medium of curating, and it is the implications that I explore in the remainder of this chapter.

Salomé Voegelin has compellingly proposed the paradigm of volumes for the curation of sound-based works in gallery space (Voegelin 2019, 46-7). In seeking to “experience the exhibition space as acoustic environment,” Voegelin suggests “the experience of the gallery as a mobile and viscous expanse that enables and holds the work and the viewer without visible boundaries in a generative and reciprocal embrace” (2019, 46). This offers a potentially Baradian understanding of the three dimensions of the gallery as a host to the combined works, visitors and everything else contained within. For Voegelin, this might pertain acutely to sounding works that literally fill the room, “touching” other works. I find this intervention crucial in thinking through the implications this has for the medium of curating itself, in light of my own shifting understandings: the shift from thinking through the rigid architecture of institutions, gallery walls, vitrines (and their institutional time-scales) to the simpler yet more dynamic index of their volume. Taken further, the concept of volume might offer itself to re-imagining such institutions; a re-imagining that is crucially within the terms of the works themselves. My own development of the workshop as a curatorial format for sharing these score-based performance works with others, albeit emanating from specific performance histories, might share in this challenge of the medium of curating and might exist precisely in such volume(s), where the literary sense of the word functions aptly here too as much as its sonic *double entendre*. If Voegelin’s notion of volume accounts for sounding works more generally, then I further propose the additional qualification of the *live social volume*. Here it is the curator herself that produces, or holds, this live social

volume through her own physical presence as host, the embodied curator.

In what I have described above, I see the workshop as a means to encounter these works through directly exploring the scores in this group process where my role as host is to provide the smallest yet decisive amount of structure to enable this exchange, not to necessarily pour in my own knowledge nor act as a focal point. Though I acknowledge that my own physical presence as host is not neutral by any means, and while I believe this is a format that could be readily replicated by others (and for other forms of experimental scores, or other works altogether), there is no doubt that the personality and temperament of the host will affect the feeling in the room. I am a university-educated white middle-class person whose first language is English, and also a relatively introverted, queer, disabled person; all factors that affect my outward presence in these contexts. As host, my ambition is not to become a unilateral authority, rather to facilitate this group exchange, the authority flowing from the materials, the scores themselves, through me as host and between us all, a “viscosity”, in Voegelin’s terms. I propose that the embodied curator pushes beyond singular outcomes (the exhibition, the performance) altogether. For Karen Barad, agency is not a property of fixed ‘things’ but rather a doing and a becoming that occurs through the co-constitution of matter and meaning in its iterative performativity (2007, 178). I suggest that the embodied curator is agent precisely through this *doing and becoming*; not a unilateral presenter of works or knowledge in time and space but rather one conduit through which these group encounters with works might flow.



Fig 5.17 *These are scores*, Chelsea Space, London, 2018. Photo: Cherie Silver

Yet nevertheless, my own physical body is suddenly intrinsically present in this more social, intimate role: an entanglement which is a decisive shift in the figure of the curator. Here I am not *presenting* the works from a distance, a safe activity for any curator who has conviction in their choices. I am not wearing white gloves to place archival copies of scores in vitrines, nor introducing an evening with Pauline Oliveros safely behind a lectern. Instead, I physically ‘turn up’ – *being present myself* – in multiple contexts with a rucksack of photocopied scores to be shared out by hand, invariably wearing clothes for comfort not prestige. In committing to this format, I was almost inevitably pulled outside of my comfort zone and pulled into the work. That is to say that my work became the work of negotiating performance, hosting this process in collaboration with everyone in the room. Work that has an initial structure – e.g. two hours, two halves – but that also takes on improvisation, and involves responding to changing conditions – not least the emotional labour, the physical stress, of hosting any such group, involving moments of both uncertainty, anxiety and clarity, elation. Here the medium of curating is decisively live and social, flowing

through my own body as host, as embodied curator.

Taking place within small groups with a commitment of up to several hours, the workshop, as a case in point, is an intensive format that is not easily “up-scalable”. Yet this intimate, human scale might also be a relief. Although in my case emanating from a longstanding engagement with the materials, any given workshop or similar event does not demand complex preparation of the curator –bureaucracy, fundraising, organisation. Physically turning up with my clutch of scores requires a discrete and modest commitment of time, energy and budget where the largest part of the curatorial labour is contained within the time and space of the event itself – that is to say, that the main work of curating is happening live in the room, not as would usually be the case, almost entirely prior to any presentation of work. This thereby offers a tightly bounded format that would suit the many of us that struggle with the ever-increasing demands of “keeping up” in the art world for all kinds of reasons (Džuverovič and Revell 2020). While engendering these new demands on the curator’s embodied presence – from *presenting* to *being present* – the notion of the *embodied curator* also produces a significant opportunity to re-think curating on a scale that is commensurate with human bodies, their capacities, needs and desires; a format that allows autonomy for the curator to work within and beyond institutions, and might be applicable to an array of other situations that share a live, social material.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION



Fig 6.1 *Making of Americans Marathon Reading Group*, Longplayer Day, Island Gardens (2019). Photo: Holly Antrum

In this thesis I have written an expanded history of the *Womens Work* project, including in Chapter Five an account of my own work with it as a curator more than four decades after its initial publication. In this final, concluding chapter I will firstly draw out the combined conclusions of the prior chapters, including wider remarks, and a discussion of areas that have been beyond my scope here but may be grounds for further inquiry. This includes returning to the two initial concepts, firstly the *feminist performance score*, and secondly the question of how to work with these works as a curator from which the notion of the *embodied curator* has evolved, to see how they have fared over the course of these chapters. In 6.2 I will turn to the republishing of *Womens Work*, which I undertook with New York publisher Primary Information in 2019, and which I understand as the

conclusion of my project. I will chart just a few of the outcomes that have arisen from making it available again, the setting sail of this new (old) message-in-a-bottle – including one clarifying example that occurred on International Women’s Day, 8 March 2022.

6.1 The contribution of this thesis and further speculations

6.1.1 The Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction

In Chapter One I outlined the four key elements of this project. These are the Oliveros text score *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1970); the concept of a *feminist performance score* which Oliveros’ score suggests; my first encounter with the *Womens Work* magazine project; and furthermore what to make of these materials as a curator; how to work with textual instructional performance scores across the paradigms of exhibition and performance, and ultimately, their in-between, their *process of performance*. In addition to the ‘origin story’ that lays out these connections in more detail, I gave a succinct introduction to *Womens Work*. This latter introduction is, I believe, the first important contribution of this project, as no such overview had previously existed to my knowledge. More-or-less verbatim sentences from this articulation have since found their way into press releases for both the re-publication in 2019, and projects that have occurred in its wake, as I will discuss further in the final section of this conclusion. The existence of such an articulation of *Womens Work* has smoothed its potential for further interest with a wider public.

Chapter Two: Big Pauline

Around the same time that I began my Master’s degree in Women’s Studies (2002–3) I was deeply seduced by Lili Taylor’s depiction of Valerie Solanas

in Mary Harron's feature film *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996), having already read the *SCUM Manifesto* that had existed on the early internet in the 1990s. My Women's Studies course began with Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) going right up to the emergence of critical race theory in the 1980s and queer theory in the early 1990s. It confused me that there was no reference to Solanas at all among any of this. It feels more than serendipitous that, 20 years later, Solanas is in a certain sense a key figure in this project, where just like Oliveros I was probably "[keeping] my ear out for Valerie Solanas stuff" (Mockus 2007, 156). In fact, it is perhaps precisely because of Solanas' solitary 'non-partisan' "street" (ibid) status that she became this touchstone for Oliveros,⁸⁴ beyond the sheer resonance of Solanas' articulation of the individual and the group that became central for Oliveros' theory of Deep Listening. In Chapter Two, through an in-depth analysis of *To Valerie Solanas...* I provide a deeper understanding of this specific work as a *feminist performance score*. Through a discussion of Oliveros' wider relationship to the Women's Movement of the time, I broaden the concepts of duality and ambivalence inherent in the work itself, to argue for what I term an *Oliverosian* feminism. This is the insistence on both the individual and the group; a deep ambivalence that holds seemingly conflictual positions, an explicit avowal, and a contrarian refusal or right-to-silence that at its heart emanates from this insistence on the recognition of one's work. This chapter also underlines the way that this Oliverosian feminist philosophy was pivotal in her paradigm-shifting concept of Deep Listening – and that this 1970 score is at the fulcrum of this vital move.

Chapter Three: Womens Work

In the third chapter I turned to *Womens Work* itself and write a partial history of the project – in particular, the development of its first issue, from Lockwood's arrival in New York in the summer of 1973 to its publication in

⁸⁴ Laura Guy (2017) has written an excellent account (in a thesis chapter) of the wider influence of the *SCUM Manifesto* on artists' works across the subsequent decades, including a discussion of the Boudry/Lorenz film installation based on the Oliveros score.

April 1975. Through the recounting of this journey, I was further able to make a series of what I contend are key points about the project. I crucially situate its feminism(s) in the generosity of its opening sentence:

“These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances.” (Knowles and Lockwood 1975)

Augmented by Lockwood’s more recent insistence that the scores it contains are:

“[...] live material. You look at a score, you do it.”
(Lockwood 2017, 121)

These are set in contrast with prior comparisons, including *Notations* (1969) and *Source* magazine, which Knowles and Lockwood both had direct involvement in, to show that *Womens Work* is both firmly a part of this genealogy of artists’ publications of performance scores yet set apart by this distinct feminist sensibility. Here by feminist sensibility, I mean the opening statement’s generosity, and the speculations it implies: “ready for you to do”. In Lockwood’s own reckoning, this is both a *samizdat* – subversive material – and a “message in a bottle” sent out into the world, an act that shares this Oliverosian ambivalence of knowing and not knowing what this body of work will produce in the world – “I do, but I don’t” (Oliveros 1978) – and its wonderful surprise. This *Oliverosian* feminism is further manifest in the very precise meaning conveyed by the title, *Womens Work*, and yet the many diverse relationships to the Women’s Movement, and indeed to textual instructional notation, present in a collection with the capacity to hold difference. Finally, I link the difficulty in funding the project and its subsequent delays to the wider live contexts that surrounded it, and in particular, further groupings of women that include the private experimental “sound and healing” group that emerged out of *Sounds Out of Silent Spaces*, and the related project of New Year’s marathon readings of Gertrude Stein’s *The Making Of Americans* (1925). I propose that this wider milieu of “live materials” re-frames *Womens Work* as an expanded magazine project that

might include these other adjacent projects, and indeed the works of Oliveros already discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four: Free Spirits in Free Relation

In Chapter Four I presented the ‘interview portraits’ of eight contributors to *Womens Work* who I was able to reach within the framework of this thesis. These focus on each woman’s contribution to *Womens Work*, as well as their relationship to textual instructional performance scores more widely, alongside their relationship to feminism and the contemporaneous Women’s Movement. If the formal duality of such scores themselves are in a certain sense replicated in any such score anthology, then here the seamless communing of their respective textual works within the pages of *Womens Work* is exploded outwards into this far more heterogenous account of these eight figures. I summarise their shared commitment to their own work and that of their peers, almost all undergoing transformative changes in their lives at this point in the early 1970s. I demonstrate that their relationship to textual instruction is profoundly diverse, with a number who might share closely with Oliveros in making works that are both precise but open to significant sharing of authorship in their performance (Forti, Ffarrabas, Shiomi), with many expressing further significant qualities in more general terms (Winter, Apple, Lucier). Perhaps most striking of all is their sheer range of relationships to feminism and the contemporaneous Women’s Movement: from those who expressed the huge importance it had held for them (though not always making a connection to their work) to those who had no affiliation at all or even a disavowal of any relevance. Jacki Apple described this shared ethos, in spite of these very diverse relationships, well in her interview:

“I mean, Alison Knowles was a Fluxus artist, first and foremost, Annea is a sound artist and composer. Pauline Oliveros is a musician and composer. Simone Forti’s work is not based in feminism. Neither was Elaine Summers’ nor Mary Lucier’s. It’s just women, in a moment when women were not visible in the art world, on their own

terms. What makes this interesting is that these women's work isn't about being female; it's about a set of ideas that they want to explore and that are interesting, in different media; it isn't about your body per se, it isn't angry at men, it's women trying to do their work. Merely that in the early 70s, there is the recognition that there are a lot of women out there making a variety of art, who have not been given equal opportunity and notice, and that the range of the kinds of work that women make is just as great as men make."

(Apple 2018, my emphases)

Here again, as I discussed in Chapter Three, it is not that this group just "happen" to be women: "[o]f course the title was highly deliberate and highly focused" (Lockwood 2017, 120-121). Rather, there is an adamant focus on recognition of their work, as for Pauline manifestly (and in turn Solanas), which in turn involves admiration and support for each other, collaborations and exchanges, this "live material".

Chapter Five: Working with Womens Work

In Chapter Five I returned largely to the present moment and to an account of my work as a curator with *Womens Work*. Here I explored the potentials and limits of the exhibition format for exhibiting printed text scores. My conclusions here are less pessimistic than they might be: I insist, that for all the limitations, this may still be a strategic means of sharing the materials with a wider public, in a form of "expanded publishing". Moreover, I assert though my own work with *Womens Work* that there are viable means for rendering the materials *lively* if not *live*, thinking of the whole space as a canvas for this expanded publishing, and making the works as legible as possible with the comfort of the reader in mind. However, my ultimate conclusion to the question of how to work with these works as a curator, and in particular, how to harness the experience of this *process of performance*, the in-between of reading/looking and performance, came with the use of the *workshop* as a curatorial format. I will go on to discuss this further in what follows, but the biggest implications for me as a curator has been this shift

from, in a sense passively, *presenting* works, to *actively being present* amidst them; a shift to becoming the embodied host of these *live social volumes* – expanding on Voegelin (2019, 46-7) – and becoming the *embodied curator*.

6.1.2 Whose History?⁸⁵

When I return now to the very beginning, not of this project as it is formalised in this thesis, but to that first encounter with the Oliveros score in New York in 2008, I am struck by how such a fleeting moment has had such generative consequences for my own work, albeit through the iterative and cumulating encounters with this “live material” that came in its wake. I am also delighted by the thought that Oliveros is now no longer without her feminist peers, or co-conspirators. In my head and amidst these pages, she is joined by close friends Knowles and Lockwood, who in turn have invited 20 or more of their mutual friends and collaborators. I posit that the most profound contribution that I have made here in this thesis is to ‘join the dots’ of this constellation⁸⁶ of women artists, articulating it as an expanded feminist history across all six chapters, as outlined in the summaries above.

This project has been for the most part an ongoing source of joy for me in terms of its encounters, new connections and moments of clarity amidst gradually emerging ideas. Although its completion has been somewhat protracted due to the interregnum of the COVID pandemic, its writing has also been a great source of pleasure, a chance for me to be able to begin to share this research. Perhaps the only aspect that I have found, and still find, difficult is the question of disciplinarity.

⁸⁵ My title here is a reference to Lis Rhodes’ essay, “Whose history?” (1979) that calls for “a crumpled heap, history at my feet,” in opposition to the apparent neatness of canonical schema.

⁸⁶ I use this term in knowledge of Walter Benjamin’s statement that “ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars,” but also in relation to the notion of standing against singular stars, or “isolated exemplars” (Lockwood 2017, 121).

As outlined in Chapter Two, my earliest background is in the DIY punk music community, coming to the visual arts professionally via contemporary classical music, and working for 15 years as a curator, albeit across gallery spaces, performance and other formats such as symposia. The work of Pauline Oliveros has been mostly considered within musicology, though I suggest now that this field will widen in time and in a similar way to the broader considerations of Cage's *oeuvre*: for instance, within art-historical frames of references, including the hugely important essay by Jonathan Katz (1999) discussed in Chapter Two, and Branden Joseph's more recent monograph, *John Cage in Music, Art and Architecture* (2016). Alison Knowles' work has been notably under-researched prior to Nicole L Woods' forthcoming monograph (2023), and exclusively discussed from within art histories, with only passing reference at best made in histories of sound art and music (and always then in relation to Fluxus more widely). There is still no monographic study of Lockwood, though her *oeuvre* may be more situated within sound art and music. This is before considering the numerous disciplinary fields to which the further contributors to *Womens Work* belong; the eight interviewees in Chapter Four, for example, range in experience of choreography, composition, musicology, video art and astrology. The magazine itself might further be considered within the field of book studies, and the history of the book – in particular artists' publishing – as well as wider histories of artist-run spaces and infrastructures. Underpinning all of these areas, there must also be attention to feminist studies. In art and music conferences alike, I have sometimes felt like an interloper discussing this project, while asserting that it thoroughly belongs in all of these different contexts; truly *Oliverosian* in its capacity to hold all of these different, sometimes seemingly conflicting positions. In this sense, this modest manila pamphlet also feels like it could be a little stick of dynamite attempting to rupture apart some very difficult rocks (disciplinary borders), a "samizdat"⁸⁷ indeed.

One aspect I have not been able to look into is the reception of the magazine,

⁸⁷ Letter from Annea Lockwood to Pauline Oliveros c September 1973, Box 17 Folder 5, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

beyond knowing that “women’s work [sic] does well in sales”⁸⁸. What is sure is that by the point where I found out about it, in 2013, it was not considered in any kind of canon, very little-known outside of the archivists of MoMA’s special collections, and barely referenced. I speculate that this is precisely because of its relative un-categorisability, or resistance to singular, or ‘partisan’ belonging. Perhaps having such a visible Pauline Oliveros *Sonic Meditation* on the cover after all would have helped to ‘brand’ the project more readily. But instead, there is a list of names; a list that represents several overlapping groupings of friends. Rather than “isolated exemplars” (Lockwood 2017, 121) it is a list that begins to trace the contours of a lived community, that of course includes the friend and collaborator who is an astrologer as well as an untrained vocalist (Winter), the brilliant student of another friend (Von Gunden), the eccentric elder who fled from the fall-out of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and has taken so many younger (queer) artists under her wings (Dienes). In this sense it is a wider failure within both art and music histories to fail to read the importance of a whole community, not just the ‘stars’, the “isolated exemplars”. However, this is an approach that I hope is shifting, and one that I hope to have made a small contribution towards here.

More than anything, my conclusions of this collection of scores is that it is itself inherently *diffractive* – that it holds so much difference among its collected works and in turn the contributors themselves. In their very gathering together in this feminist context at the time, and considered again now, they ask new questions of each other, and suggest new lines of inquiry, or in the words of Haraway: “[d]iffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference” (1997, 16). As I already foregrounded, it has not been my goal within this project to look deeply into any one of the dozens of scores that *Womens Work* gathered together; some of these works have already been the subject of significant scholarship. If anything, this thesis calls for further focus on some of the individual artists and their projects while retaining this relational, *diffractive* understanding,

⁸⁸ Letter from Alison Knowles to Pauline Oliveros, autumn 1975 in Box 15 Folder 30, Pauline Oliveros papers JPB 94-5: New York Public Library

“interference, reinforcement”. In one more obvious example that emerges in her interview in Chapter Four, what new aspects might come from a consideration of Mieko Shiomi’s *oeuvre* through the consideration of her improvisational tendencies in tandem with those of Oliveros, rather than those of Takehisa Kosugi and Yasunao Tone (Group Ongaku)? While there is no question that her collaboration with the latter was both formative and of huge significance in wider historical terms – and it is not impossible to imagine that Oliveros might have come up in a different interview with Shiomi – I believe this anecdote vitally portends the other stories that might still be written. By the same token, there is surely important work to be done on the influence of Pauline Oliveros within a wider peer network, and particularly the extent to which she supported women colleagues of her own and younger generations, while acting as such a beacon, embodying the possibility to fight for one’s own recognition while also maintaining a profound generosity. Perhaps this particular insistence on *both* is the most important political implication of an Oliverosian feminism in our current moment: a radical tempering of the neoliberal drive for self-interest, while at the same time instilling a just fight for entitlement and autonomy in those for whom there is not enough.



Fig 6.2 Beatrice Gibson, *Solo for Rich Man* (2015), still (Mieko Shiomi performance)

Thinking further into the future in multiple senses, I also note that there is

great potential in analysing these works in relation to contemporary practices that may or may not explicitly work with textual instruction but take up certain shared formal and infrastructural concerns. This connection is explicit in the practice of Boudry/Lorenz who are already present in these pages, and relatedly with film artist Beatrice Gibson, whose works including *Solo for Rich Man* (2015) *I Hope I'm Loud When I'm Dead* (2018) and *Deux Soeurs Qui Ne Sont Pas Soeurs* (2019), I have begun already to discuss in these terms elsewhere (Revell 2015, 2020). Equally, there are examples of work that more immediately engage with textual instruction, such as that of Carolyn Lazard mentioned in Chapter Five, that within the framework of disability justice brings a politics and an ethics to the shared labour of any such performance score.

Fig 6.3 Carolyn Lazard, *Support System (for Park, Tina, and Bob)*, 2016
24 gifted bouquets, documentation of performance and collectively-produced sculpture,
dimensions variable

To take one example, Carolyn Lazard’s *Support System (for Park, Tina, and Bob)*:

“is performed over the course of a day, from 9 am to 9 pm. Visitors are invited to sign up for a 30 minutes slot for a one-on-one performance with the artist who spends the day in bed. The cost of admission is one bouquet of flowers”⁸⁹

I share this work in particular as it seems to so clearly actualise the potential of distributed and shared labour in textual instructional performance work, to in turn address “the transactional nature of emotional labour”⁹⁰.

One further specific area where these histories meet contemporary practices is in relationship to questions of indigenous knowledges. The currently touring ICI exhibition co-curated by curator Candace Hopkins and artist scholar Dylan Robinson, *Soundings: An Exhibition in Five Parts*, asks, in the first line of its E-Flux announcement on 25th March 2019, “[h]ow can a score be a call and tool for decolonization?”⁹¹ In his recent book, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (2020) Robinson also uses the event score format as a corollary to a number of chapters, such as *EVENT SCORE FOR THOSE WHO HOLD OUR SONGS* (147). The book’s conclusion is in part written in dialogue with Deborah Wong and Ellen Waterman, and Robinson introduces the question of whether Oliveros’ concept of Deep Listening might be a tool for decolonising listening. A discussion ensues where Wong notes:

“Certainly you *can* take in her Deep Listening exercises as if they were meant to be experienced by a unitary subject. But I’m certain they can

⁸⁹ Information on the work was formerly available on the artist’s website and can now be retrieved from archive.org:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200425071747/http://www.carolynlazard.com/support-system-1> Last accessed 29th June 2022.

⁹⁰ *ibid*

⁹¹ The E-flux announcement is here: <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/252408/soundings-an-exhibition-in-five-parts/> last accessed 26th June 2022.

be understood in other ways as well, and that Pauline’s approach troubles the self/world distinction so central to settler ideologies.”
(244)

I include this here not to absolve any such practice from the scrutiny that might be applied more widely to minimalist composition and its relationship to orientalism or appropriation of indigenous practices. On the contrary, this inclusion is to point to what might be a thoroughly Oliverosian set of productive ambivalences that these histories may contribute towards.

6.1.3 The feminist performance score?

This thesis, through assembling historical materials and its own (curatorial) practice, circles this forementioned constellation of feminist histories. As I suggested in Chapter One, more than using *Womens Work* as an object of study to further explore this concept of the *feminist performance score*, I have rather used this speculative concept as a tool to articulate *Womens Work* in its wider feminist histories. Yet this has, of course, in turn further honed my notions of this concept: both in further refining this precise form imagined by Oliveros, and this more open-ended heterogenous field of “live materials”. This is a seemingly fitting dualism analogous to the very performance/score dualism at the heart of the concept, as I outlined it at the outset.

The more that I researched Oliveros’ work of the early 1970s, the more apt the term “feminist performance score” became, the more clearly her development of text scores for intensive group listening became interwoven with her nascent feminist consciousness, and the more clearly this particular score, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation* (1970), showed itself to be at the vanguard of this major paradigm shift. Moreover, the more I learned of these wider communities of practice orbiting the *Womens Work* project, the more central a figure Oliveros became within them, especially within any explicitly feminist project(s) – and at the same time, the less important the textual instructional

performance score seemed to be in this wider community. That is to say that there was a wide variety of relationships, from those that had been using the event score format since the early or mid-1960s to those who had never written a score before. And equally, there existed a wide range of relationships with feminism and the Women's Movement, including those closely involved yet making no connection in their work, to those with no direct affiliation, or even in cases an adamant disaffiliation. Moreover, there is no correlation made between textual instructional performance scores and a feminist politics among the eight contributors to *Womens Work* with whom I conducted interviews; beyond Oliveros, no one else makes an explicit connection between the two, even if the qualities discussed in these "live materials" are rich for such an interpretation.

In summary, we are left here with the neatness of *the feminist performance score* that is *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation*; the explicit theorising through Oliveros; and the very explicit concepts brought forward in aspects of the *Womens Work* project (its titling and framing). In these more latent or speculative terms, these are inherent in performance group situations, networks, community. The former is easier to conclude; the latter a more nebulous experiential, descriptive regime, that describes a body of work, and its related bodies, just like this performance/score duality – one singular, the other in flux, and when diffracted, opening outwards circularly. Through speculation on the *feminist performance score*, there is a set of understandings that emerges of these works amidst wider bodies of work and connections, which can then be productively read as *feminist* even if they may not be explicitly intended or described as such.

Hence the notion of the *feminist performance score* is more akin to the guide star in the exploration of this wider constellation, more a key trope than a literal form or format. It initiates the project, having its prominent moment in Chapter Two where I explore *To Valerie Solanas...* in depth to draw out the inextricably connected notion of an Oliverosian feminism. And it returned in various guises, through the generosity of the "live material", the

“scores ready for you to do” offered up in *Womens Work*, and in the cohesion of a wider community and constellation of projects brought together through this medium of text instruction. And again, it returns in the various instances brought forward by the individual voices in Chapter Four:

“It was really power with as differentiated from power over.”

(Julie Winter 2018)

“So you can do anything, but within those parameters. Yeah, you’re sharing agency [with the performers] but you still have authorship of basically the piece.”

(Simone Forti 2018)

“You were creating music together and the players felt like they were equally important to the composers, and that everybody was valued.”

(Beth Anderson 2018)

“A lot of people were doing a lot of different kinds of event scores: they could be really very personal and small, it’s another kind of space to explore.”

(Nye Ffarrabas 2018)

“I always try to write very correctly to avoid misunderstanding, as short as possible, as precise as possible, to evoke people’s imagination as much as possible.”

(Mieko Shiomi 2019)

Additionally, I argue that the unifying feminist politics, explicit or not, within this group is a belief in “women’s work”: in fellow women artists being able to make their work, and in the support, friendship and community that nurtures it. Not so much women wanting to make their work in an isolated careerist way but with the support of each other.

As I already emphasised in Chapter Two, Oliveros emphatically states that she understands *To Valerie Solanas...* as the embodiment of feminist theory (Oliveros 1979). If we push this proposition out into the thoroughly embodied regime of the feminist performance score, then perhaps *To Valerie Solanas...* is indeed the embodied theory, and these wider constellational histories that I have discussed are the *practice*. That is to say that the work and the sense of support for the individual amidst the community that produced these score-based works during this time, and that they in turn can engender, is *both* unmistakably a feminist energy *and* simply itself.

Whilst my study has dwelled on this body of work – and it has been beyond my scope to analyse any further single score-based work in depth – I suggest that the concept of the *feminist performance score* is fertile ground for a more granular application in the case of further works, in light of these conclusions above. For example, Mieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem* might be the knottiest of all the works in *Womens Work* in this regard, given the knowledge of Shiomi's ambivalence towards feminism but perhaps, more importantly, the ambiguous status of whether the work can be “performed” or “conducted” by others at all. Perhaps it is through this very ambiguity that these feminist qualities might be further diagnosed: the limits of authorship, as Shiomi herself describes when she remarks:

“[S]ometimes the collaborator may realise the piece very differently. But in that case, the realiser should put their own name on it.”
(Shiomi 2019).

To keep running further with this example, *Spatial Poem* is a work that has received relatively extensive analysis (Kawamura 2009; Santone 2014). Only Midori Yoshimoto begins to suggest an explicitly feminist slant on the work through the fact of Shiomi becoming a mother and the capacity for the work to be continued from the confines of running a home (Yoshimoto 2005, 165-166). By the same token, this links the work to Shiomi's migration. If it was Shiomi's return to Tokyo that provoked the work to become a series, not just the first instance with Maciunas in New York, then perhaps it was

motherhood that continued the series into the 1970s and allowed for the slow but finite production of the final publication, with the help of her husband and others including Knowles. In spite of Shiomi's adamant distancing from feminist activity associated with "women in music", I argue that this does not undermine the profound generosity with which she offers the work. Or perhaps most compellingly, that the *Spatial Poem* publication is "dedicated to the People of 30th Century" [sic] (1976), "the speculative and the visionary" (Åsberg et al 2015, 153) indeed. Moreover, her rubric for textual instruction being "as precise as possible to evoke peoples' imaginations as much as possible" (2018) is perhaps a more poetic expression of these precise qualities of the *feminist performance score* I laid out in Chapter One, and indeed analogous to Oliveros' "I do but I don't" and its wonderful surprise (Oliveros 1978).

In extending such work on this concept of the *feminist performance score* I would also suggest an extension of the theoretical field of references. I found myself returning on multiple occasions to Concannon's 2009 essay on Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1965) mentioned in Chapter One not because I necessarily agree with its conclusions, but because it is, as far as I am aware, the one site of inquiry where the question of text scores have been brought into dialogue with questions of feminism, albeit in just this one work. In a sense the essay could be a red herring here, but I have mined it for the questions it provokes. Returning to that essay now, his contention that the work cannot be feminist because, among other reasons, it has been performed by men (he cites a performance that Jon Hendricks, former brother-in-law of Nye Ffarrabas, conducted with students in the classroom) now looks all-the-more absurd in the light of an Oliverosian feminism, which might deploy Jackson Mac Low to be Pauline Oliveros, or insist that one would only be a member of the Society for Cutting Up With Men. Indeed, this argument risks situating Concannon perilously close to the *New York Times* reviewer who in 1979 could not understand the meaning of Oliveros' feminism when *To Valerie Solanas...* had male conductors. Clearly it is beyond my scope here to explore Ono's work in more detail though suffice it to say that there are many compelling accounts of the feminism in *Cut Piece*, among them Julia Bryan-

Wilson's exquisitely moving exploration of the origins of the work in relation to the images of clothes shredded by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that were only made publicly available in the early 1960s (Bryan-Wilson 2003). But it is the other aspect of Concannon's disavowal of feminism, connected with the insistence that performances of the event score are *not* re-enactments thus distancing any consideration of *event scores* from what was then an emerging field of interest in feminist performance re-enactment, that feels the most generative. This is strictly true: I would concur that there are profound distinctions to be made between a score that is inherently written for performance stretching into the future, and the re-performance of a perhaps one-off earlier performance work. Yet on the other hand, simply discarding the notion of re-enactment, as Concannon does in his essay, risks failing to make what might be valuable connections between the two. For one thing, thinking through artworks that are in this line of re-enactment discussed by Rebecca Schneider (2011), among others, within these terms of the *feminist performance score* may produce generative new lines of enquiry. Moreover, I contend that there is also generative ground in holding onto the notion of re-enactment in relation to any such *feminist performance score*. My more generous extension of Concannon's argument is that textual instructional performance scores might then be understood to cleverly pre-empt this desire for re-enactment. We might then consider the qualities brought through re-enactment – an affective 'touching' of the past, perhaps even Elizabeth Freeman's notion of "temporal drag" (2011) – into relation with these text scores. Perhaps the *feminist performance score*, one of Haraway's technologies of diffraction (1997, 16) as I proposed in Chapter One, might indeed already be offering the potential for these aspects sometimes sought in re-enactment but here from the other end: speculating on the future, rather than the past.

6.1.4 The embodied curator

Of the two 'concepts' that I began this thesis with – the question of the *feminist performance score*, and the inherently related question of how to work with such a textual instructional, or indeed feminist, performance score

as a curator – it is perhaps counterintuitively the latter of these two that for me has more resolution at this moment of closure. Or, what I needed to express in a sentence with multiple clauses about *working with these kinds of works etc* can now be abbreviated as simply the *embodied curator*. As discussed in depth above, by contrast, the concept of the *feminist performance score* has become both more clearly defined and yet more open-ended, and hopefully open to further development.

This notion of an embodied curator has already been of great use for me in my own curatorial work. Since concluding the practice described in this thesis, I have gone on to work with this concept in a related project that I summarise briefly here. This has been, after a short experiment in the summer of 2019⁹² (see fig 6.1), a year-long reading of Gertrude Stein’s *The Making of Americans* (1925), co-organised with artist friend Anna Barham in 2020, that we titled *They are all of them themselves and they repeat it and I hear it*. Naturally, this was inspired by Lockwood, Knowles and Anderson’s activities, but with the idea to move away from the original marathon reading format, slow it down and read the book over the course of a whole year. The idea was to meet for one four-hour reading session once a month in one of our homes, semi-publicly, and friends could invite friends (just as Shiomi describes the growing mailing list in *Spatial Poem* in Chapter Four). Of course, this then continued online after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here again the work of the curator seems to be precisely this hosting of live social volumes; the admin was regular but minimal, scanning the pages we would read and circulating these, sharing the link to the online meeting, keeping sign-up sheets and mailing lists (readying the “live materials”, if you like) etc. Barham and I were hosts during the meeting itself but not in any heavy-handed way. I anticipate continuing to experiment with these extra-institutional meeting, reading group and workshop structures.

⁹² This first experiment took place in Island Gardens, London and was part of Longplayer Day 2019, co-curated by James Bulley and Helen Frosi.



Figs 6.4-5 *They are all of them themselves and they repeat it and I hear it*, co-organised with Anna Barham throughout 2020

One area that was beyond my scope here was to extend this question of the embodied curator to other examples, both contemporary and historical. While Joan Rothfuss (2014) has written an excellent scholarly biography of Moorman, I suggest that there is further potential in exploring her role as an early prototype of a curator working across sound, music and well beyond. One that is clearly *embodied*, in the immediate and central role her body plays in her own performance work, and the ways that that performing body extends into her extensive curatorial work as sole organiser of the many editions of the New York Annual Avant Garde Festival, often to be seen in the midst of the work itself, and through her phenomenally extensive archive.

6.1.5 The writing

It is my hope that in this thesis I have developed a curatorial approach to writing that facilitates the sharing of these various materials. One factor that has only become clear to me towards the end of this period of ‘writing-up’ is how much I am drawn to the spoken word within the materials that I write with – the interviews that I conducted myself, but also interviews conducted by others. In Chapter Two alone, the interviews with Oliveros conducted by Moira Roth, Deena Raskay, Miya Masaoka and most extensively Martha Mockus all provided invaluable words and phrases. And then there is reported speech as anecdote: the sound recordist’s insightful compliment in Chapter Two, Mary Jane Leach’s remark about the prominence of discussion

in the rehearsal of score-based works in Chapter Five, and the extensive panel discussion with Elaine Mitchener that I will share at the end of this Conclusion. Through my report of the workshop in Copenhagen in 2018, I remarked that I sometimes felt like an imposter in listening situations. Throughout the 2020 lockdowns, CRiSAP (Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice), the ever-inspirational research centre that I have been a part of during this project, held a series of discussions focused on ‘evidencing listening’. In spite of the pivotal role that listening plays for Oliveros, and of course within this wider group, I felt conscious that this somehow had not formed a more integral, methodological role in my own project. And yet, I now believe that is has: in evidencing a practice of writing that is fed by these heard, oral materials. It is my desire to further refine this, and to potentially take it further into the direct use of audio material in writing as audio paper/audio essay, something I modestly began in a recent paper that expanded on Annea Lockwood’s moment of arrival in New York in 1973 (as discussed in Chapter Three), using audio from interviews with Lockwood and Julie Winter to directly articulate the wider community that she had become a part of.

6.2 1,500 messages-in-bottles

The republishing of *Womens Work* has been an integral part of the project and simultaneously for me marks the most profound conclusion of this thesis, both in terms of marking the end of my immediate work with the collection but more broadly speaking, as a “diffractive” moment where the publication is now in many hundreds, or even thousands, of new hands.

Although I believe it is unquestionably the most important public impact of this project, I have not included an in-depth discussion of the re-publishing of *Womens Work* in the main chapters. In Chapter Four I noted the openness with which all the contributors (and, for that matter, their estates, usually family members) had been, both in terms of my initial request for a meeting and interview, and more widely for the republishing. Relatedly, I

also discussed how I approached these interviews in terms of the start of a future working relationship that did indeed go on to be sublimated in this republishing, and I hope, future projects. In Chapter Five, I noted the republishing in relation to the conclusion of thinking through the exhibition of scores (and their anthologies) as an expanded form of publishing. At the outset of this research project the republishing was not something I had set out to accomplish within its scope. While it is clear that one extremely important way of working with these materials as a curator would be to republish them, this was not within my immediate area of experience. Rather, it is something I perhaps imagined might happen as an effect of the wider visibility my curatorial work would bring.

Several factors aligned to change this and provided this very immediate opportunity. Through starting to publicise my workshop series, *These are scores*, sound artist and microphone-maker Jez Riley French got in touch in excitement, having not previously heard about *Womens Work*, suggesting it ought to be republished, bringing the question to the forefront. In fact, it was then through his mentioning of the publication in his own talk in Copenhagen that my subsequent invitation there occurred in late summer 2018. Then shortly after, Karen Di Franco, with whom I had just previously worked on the exhibition project *ORGASMIC STREAMING ORGANIC GARDENING ELECTROCULTURE*, met James Hoff, the Artistic Director of the New York publisher Primary Information, putting us in touch on the eve of departure for my US research trip in autumn 2018. Primary Information has a particular history of working on facsimiles, including many Fluxus-adjacent materials, such as Something Else Press' Great Bear Pamphlets, including *By Alison Knowles* (1965). Essentially the pushing of this question, and then the immediacy of the possibility of working with conceivably the most appropriate publisher, made the re-publishing suddenly possible.

Things moved very swiftly from Primary Information's confirmation that they would very much like to republish *Womens Work*, to Knowles' and Lockwood's own affirmation of the project. It was then my role to make

contact with and seek permission from each of the original 25 contributors across the two issues of the magazine. I did not write any extensive description of this process in Chapter Five because, in contrast to the great difficulties Knowles and Lockwood faced in fundraising throughout 1974, this was an incredibly straight-forward process, thanks in large part to the positivity of all involved, both the historical contributors as noted above and in Chapter Four, and Primary Information. In May 2019 the new combined first and second issue went to press in an edition of 1,500. This process involved two significant editorial decisions for James Hoff and I as managing editors. The first of these was to decide to commission the design of the outer “self-folding box” to contain both issues. Although this made the production more expensive, this felt like a vital measure: to suitably contain both issues together, but also to introduce a spine, to give the project a little more volume and durability for what would be relatively wide-scale distribution to bookshops around the world, through art distributors Antenne Books and others. While the two issues were produced as complete facsimiles, this new, light cardboard cover was designed by Rik Meyer, and reproduced the first issue’s title, “Womens Work” on the front cover, and a list of all 25 contributors to the two issues on the back. The second significant decision





Figs 6.6-7 *Womens Work* facsimile edition (2019), front (previous page) and back (above).
Photo: Primary Information

was to once again reproduce that opening phrase:

“These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances.” (Knowles and Lockwood 1975)

From my perspective, this repetition on this new (back) cover was a means to emphasise what for me is at the core of the spirit of this project historically, and of course now again in the present. And as such, it is the most succinct stand-in for any kind of contemporary interpretation, endorsement or other addition that we might have thought to make. The new edition was immediately popular and also garnered reviews in *Bookforum* (O’Neill-Butler 2018) and *The Wire* (Gray 2018) among others. By early 2021 it had sold out.

To answer the question that I posed to myself in Copenhagen about the relationship between the workshop series, *These are scores*, and the new republished edition: as I have outlined above, it is hard to disentangle the two, as in effect, one begat the other. I did my last more public workshop at Camden Arts Centre in March 2019. It is quite possible that there were no more public invitations after this point because of the re-publishing in May 2019. That is to say that once this rare, little-known collection of scores was suddenly available to purchase in an array of arts centres and bookshops around the world, the impetus for such an invitation was gone. I have nevertheless continued to conduct the workshop in various iterations in teaching settings, and I wonder whether it might emerge again in the future. But to return to Barad's notion of a diffractive politics, via Trinh T. Minh-ha and Donna Haraway, I feel it is most fitting to conclude not by reflecting on what this additional element of re-publishing has meant for me, but to open out to just a few of the doubtless many, many outcomes it has had for others, and I hope will continue to do well into the future. In Lockwood's terms: 1,500 messages-in-bottles launched anew.

In summer 2020 I was tagged on social media by the Walker Arts Centre in Minneapolis, who were exhibiting a copy of the new edition of *Womens Work* in an exhibition, where it is now held in the Rosemary Furtak Collection in their library. Indeed, according to WorldCat, there are now at least four copies in UK libraries alone (where prior to the re-publishing there had been none). I even heard about a group meeting to workshop the works in Margate, at Open School East, entirely unrelated to Athelstan Sound, the context where I did my first workshop in 2017. One major project, *With Womens Work*,⁹³ took place online in early 2021, co-curated by ISSUE Project Room in Brooklyn, New York, a space for experimental music, sound and performance. Although they had initially approached me to work on the programming with them, I took a facilitating role, contacting the original contributors to let them know that their score would be the inspiration for

⁹³ The full programme and documentation of *With Womens Work* is here: <https://issueprojectroom.org/program/womens-work> last accessed 26th June 2022

one of a series of short, newly commissioned, performance works by a series of women and non-binary artists. Although each new work has this direct relationship to one of the original works, they are not performances of the scores – they are new works that take these older pieces as “jumping off points”. For me it is exciting to see this organisation effectively gather a cohort of their colleagues and friends to make these works (again in a similar motion to the one of Knowles and Lockwood).

6.2.1 *Womens Work* at Wigmore Hall

The final example is the one I will end with that came on International Womens Day, 8 March 2022 here in London. Vocal and movement artist Elaine Mitchener is artist-in-residence at Wigmore Hall, where she is curating one major programme each year. This event of hers took its title from *Womens Work*, and although the programme did not include any of the scores in the publication, it did include Alison Knowles’s *Event score No 1: Shuffle* (1961) and Pauline Oliveros’ *THE INNER-OUTER SOUND MATRIX for Any Ensemble and/ or Reader* (2007), among compositions by Younghui Pagh-Paan, Pamela Z, Hannah Kendall, Tansy Davies, Jennifer Walshe, Matana Roberts and Jeanne Lee. Most, though not all, of these composers’ scores were text instructions. They were performed by a special one-off ensemble of Mitchener with Sarah Saviet, Mira Benjamin, Bridget Carey, Tamaki Sugimoto, Heather Roche and Siwan Rhys.

Because of my association with the re-publishing of *Womens Work*, I was invited to host the live stream on YouTube. Turning up for the final rehearsal on the afternoon of the performance, I was flooded with the most intense creative group energy. Immediately after the performance programme, there was a panel discussion on-stage where Mitchener was joined by curator Gilane Tawadros and broadcaster Katey Hamilton. I decided to transcribe the below excerpt from this dialogue because of the striking resonance with all that I have been striving to articulate in this thesis, seemingly corroborated in vivid terms.



Fig 6.8 Elaine Mitchener, Sarah Saviet, Siwan Rhys, Heather Roche, Tamaki Sugimoto, Bridget Carey, and Mira Benjamin on stage at Wigmore Hall, 8th March 2022. Photo: Wigmore Hall

Elaine Mitchener (EM): *Womens Work* is the title of a magazine that was quite short-lived in the mid-70s I believe. It was a magazine created by Annea Lockwood and Alison Knowles, who are both composers and artists. When I looked at it I thought: “women’s work”, I love the title and it’s just the work of women, you know, we work, that’s what we do, you know, we work. And I just thought actually, yeah, it’s the very practical aspect of it. And I thought well we’ve worked, this is work, you know.

Gilane Tawadros (GT): Those pieces really made you work!

EM: You know we worked really hard. We all work hard and we’re not looking for some kind of extra credit, just an acknowledgment of that. And I think that magazine was just there to balance the inequality that was there at the time and still exists as well in terms of what women present. *Womens Work*, the title was to try and address that. To re-instate us.

Katey Hamilton (KH): One of the things that’s really gorgeous about the *Womens Work* publication from the mid-1970s is that the title is printed on the front page of the pamphlet and then all the women’s names are listed

underneath. They are visible and they're there, and they are on the cover [...] The formal structures are really free, and yet clearly in some cases, have huge numbers of instructions. It's just that the level of detail is not necessarily clear to us in the audience unless we've looked at the score in advance. And I was particularly interested because the Pauline Oliveros is a series of sentences of instructions as to what to do, and if I understand it correctly, the musicians didn't know what you were going to say.

EM: No, they didn't know until we had a quick run-through; but I changed it. Because I knew they'd be fine, they were fine. Because I work in improvisation and I need to keep something up my sleeve just to see what happens – *I know, it's terrible, they could have killed me afterwards.*⁹⁴ Backstage I was thinking: I'm not sure, I'm not sure, but I had to make a decision on what text I was going to lead with and even if I start something and it's not quite right, what I enjoy about being able to work with a score like the Oliveros is you can work it out, there's time to work it out, to bring it round, to keep hearing – *alright, yeah, OK, this is fine, I've got this now* – and you're just mining, digging around for something. And sometimes you don't have any ideas, and you just keep your mouth shut – *Elaine, just be quiet* – and it will come. Matana⁹⁵ [Roberts] talks about silence being a really important aspect of music and particularly when you're improvising it's one that you do need to remember, because sometimes less experienced improvisers like to fill up the space because they get nervous if there's too much silence, but actually your ear needs that as well.

GT: You shared the scores with us and one thing that really struck me is that there seemed to be a lot of instruction and at the same time a lot of delegation to musicians and performers to make actually decisions yourselves on lots and lots of levels... how do you begin, where do you set... I mean, in a sense it's like a scaffolding is created and you have to create

⁹⁴ The sections of Elaine's speech in italics are a second register that she uses, as if talking to herself, or sharing her inner monologue with us.

⁹⁵ Matana Roberts, composer and improvising saxophonist, whose new commission for Elaine Mitchener was also included in the programme.

whatever is going to live inside that?

EM: I really like that because it can be a bit head-scratching – *ahhh, I don't know what I'm doing* – but it allows for this kind of democracy, d'you know, I'm fed up with hierarchies. We've had enough of them. And unfortunately classical music is rife with it, this whole maestro nonsense. And you know, it's the 21st century so let's delegate, let's take responsibility, and let's own the idea, and let's share the ideas as well. And that's why I liked those pieces because even with a more traditionally composed work, you still need to talk about the approach. Once you've learned the notes or the text or you've got the language down, there's a lot of discussion that goes on, there's so much information there, you just have to talk it through and try things out. And that's the joy, that is the hard work. That is the work. That is the work that you have to do before you can present. Because you need to be prepared and you need to know what it is you're doing.

GT: It struck me that one of the words I would apply to what we just heard is virtuoso, it was a virtuoso performance from everybody but not in the sense of “here is a score by Liszt, with a zillion notes and now you must make your fingers do anti-gravitational things”. But you were all virtuosos because of the amount of listening you had to do, the amount of improvisation, the number of on-the-spot decisions that had to go on, the kind of obviousness of the interaction between you on stage was compelling to watch because we could see you really reacting to each other in the moment in a way that is not built on the sort of preparation that comes from sitting in a practice room for six hours at a time.

EM: I chose the group carefully. I mean they're really badass, they really are. It's the willingness, the open-ness needs to be there otherwise it can't happen. Egos have to be left at the door; and what I like is that things that needed tightening, shaping, fixing, we were just very direct. But there's the listening and there's the trust. And the trust is really important. To know that we've actually got each other's back as well and that we're listening, it's fine, it's all good, you know, so if someone cuts out, that's fine, there's nothing

wrong, they're just not playing at that point, you don't need to panic. And it's that energy, I mean it was incredible for me, there were moments I might have looked like I was doing stuff but I was just listening and really enjoying the sounds, what I was hearing, and it was just wonderful. And everyone, I don't know if it's the greasepaint, the spot light, like show ponies, just come on and do what we have to do. But the hard work has to happen before hand.

GT: Elaine, you've articulated so brilliantly there that women's work is not just about composing works by women with women musicians and composers, but is also about rethinking the very process of how you work together, disrupting the hierarchies, rethinking the given nature of the classical music way of working. Unfortunately we've run out of time.

If the history I have written of *Womens Work* in this thesis is an expanded one of this magazine project as constellational, then this anecdote might further expand that constellation, underlining the future times and spaces this economy of the *feminist performance score* might be opening up to. When I heard this dialogue, I felt as if they were speaking the conclusion of my project perhaps better than I could. Thus, I end here with the words of others, as affirmation of this wider field of work: of group performance of textual instructional scores, which in a sense is one conclusion of this body of work, and one that poetically speaks to precisely the argument I have been making about the economy of these works and their distribution. That is to say that *Womens Work* can once again act as a catalyst for these future moments, groupings and conversations, these future "live materials".

APPENDIX

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Box 8 Folder 2 Forbes, Bici

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