# "Addressing otherness in and through sound arts to establish intimacy and proximity as a form of co-creativity and as critical terms for discourse production"

by

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# Abstract

This research offers an alternative approach to the critical understanding of sound arts, equipping makers and theorists to account for intimacy and proximity as fundamental elements at work within sound arts, both experientially and as part of meaning-making. The suggestion is that intimacy and proximity enable the co-creativity of performer and audience, which enables the inclusion of otherness and alterity. To articulate this suggestion this research situates sound art works as performative, and specifically as 'liminally performative': as generative intra-active and co-creative temporal and physical spaces (Susan Broadhurst 1999).

Through the critical consideration of my creative writing practice and my sound art creative practice, discussed through Luce Irigaray's 'caress', Susan Broadhurst's 'agential liminality' and Karen Barad's 'diffraction' and 'intra-action, this research develops as its central finding the notion of the "*Other's-Other*": a thought-device by which one can appraise oneself as an other in the relationship as a co-creative protagonist. It is this thought device that introduces intimacy and proximity as critical terms into discourse and subsequently allows me to articulate from those terms the performative elements of sound art works, which enable the moment of co-creativity and thereby importantly bring otherness into direct consideration. I ask, what otherness is being experienced and how; and how that otherness acts as a co-creative force in the fruition of the work.

Writing critically about my own creative practice motivated a study of binary otherness in phenomenological and existential philosophy as a first theoretical working ground. From there, and in critique of the binary definition, the otherness that comes to the fore in this thesis is a 'non-binary otherness', an otherness not caught in fixed oppositions, but which is plural and shifting, producing an alternative way of thinking about subjectivity, participation in relation to sound art works. By making and speaking about sound art works as performative, I move away from the distancing otherness of voyeurism in Sartre's *The Look* (1943) towards the intimacy of Luce Irigaray's *philosophy of the caress* (2001). Thus the *Other's-Other* is formulated from roots in my classical musicianship practice through Irigaray while also integrating Karen Barad's entanglement and diffraction (2007), and Donna Haraway's *response-*

*ability* (2016). I also use performance theorist Susan Broadhurst's liminal performativity and reference to scenographic practices to clarify intimacy and proximity in my own practice and spatialized installations, borrowing Broadhurst and Erika Fischer-Lichte's descriptive terms to consolidate my development of the *Other's-Other* through key artistic auto-ethnographic accounts.

*Chapter Zero*

# Introducing my Practice and Methodology - Prologues i and ii:

**My practice falls into two defined aspects/categories: performative events pertaining directly to musical performance and practice, and creative auto-ethnographic writing. Both of these practices serve as research tools in this thesis. I therefore introduce these two facets of my practice through two prologues. The two practices touch and inform one another, but also stand parallel and autonomously as two separate practices: one of writing and one of making sound art. This practice-based thesis uses this creative practice pairing as a dual methodology which generates and tests questions about otherness and co-creativity.**

## i

## A Criticality from Creative Writing Practice

One facet of my creative practice, which is key to the research undertaken in this thesis, is auto-ethnographic creative writing. This writing became integral as a critical research method that serves as a means by which to address and discuss the otherwise abstract concepts of otherness occurring in both my own event-based sound art creative practice and sound art practice in general. My sound art practice is often transitory and dependent on a moment of proxemic completion by an audience as its 'crucial revision' (Braun 1969:256). Creative writing became both a reflective tool and active solution to what this project deems as a want of language by which to describe and work creatively with notions of otherness, co-creativity, proximity and intimacy in sound arts and its theory. My auto-ethnographic creative writing practice, which takes the form of retrospective or imaginative accounts of experiences, allows me to discuss the intimacy and proximity occurring in mine and other artists' works. From there I apply this applied understanding of intimacy and proximity as a form of criticality in the theoretical discussion of sound arts theory, and as a relevant

aspect of making in sound arts which acknowledge co-creation and thus makes a space for otherness to become a relevant aspect of the work.

Midway through this research project, I was invited to participate in a 'Points of Listening' event. PoL is a programme of experimental workshops, activities and discussions based in and around London. The series explores sound and listening as an investigative lens and artistic focus for collective, communal and participatory practices.[1] For this event I wrote the following piece about my creative research practice. I include it here to convey both a sense of my practical creative practice (performance events), and also as an example of my essential creative writing practice. The excerpt also presents some of the key ideas around otherness that my practice generates and this thesis pursues:

> How do I research? Mainly through practice itself.
>
> I repeat, I repeat. I step in and out of perceived peripheries. I repeat, I repeat.
> I look in, I look back, I am looked back at. I am looked back at myself looking back.
> I use my body as a reference, as a centre, as a tool, as a reality, as a way to imagine the other, as my unreality.
>
> I think in terms of desire, of shame with a capital S.[2]
>
> I create collisions: between two, between more than two, but always reducing back to the two. Me and you.
> I create collisions: between two, between me and the object, the object and me.
> I diffract through these collisions. I see myself, yourself in the collision. The collision creates another new reality.

[1] pointsoflistening.net

[2] Sartre (1943)

I create entanglements. I look at the entanglements.[3] I am entangled in the entanglement.

I think in terms of the philosophy of the caress.[4]

I desire for collision: a collision that does not create sameness, otherwise the diffraction that creates the new thing does not take place.

> Desire that wants only the same cannot escape conflict in order to appropriate the other's transcendence.
> Desire grows from an irreducible alterity.
> My perception must remain a path towards you, towards us, an us which is always disunited, distanced, always a two irreducible to one.[5]

How do I research?

I repeat myself over and over, both in physical making and in writing. Like dough, I knead the same thing, in the same way, over and over and over and over.
I disappear my body by repetition. The action of the repetition becomes the focus.
I both write myself and my body into and out of the equation. Then, I know where it is, where it can be.
Over and over, the same action, the same repetition, the same physical gesture. I become a master at a simple action, and in doing so my actions become imperceptible. Have I truly disappeared or am I in the object even more than before?

Every time the repetition is different. By increments, by an almost imperceptible shift of difference, the action changes with a self-awareness and co-existing with my body and its limits.
By now, my body is the one ruled by and altered by the object.
By colliding my body, my gestures and my skin over and over at the object, I am disappeared and appeared by the object at the same time.

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[3] Barad (2012)

[4] Irigaray (2000)

[5] Irigaray (2000)

I am located, the self at the periphery.
I am in the thing's creases, folds and lines, I am in the action taken. The action and its residue belies the self. I collide, I force myself into the object, I force a realisation of myself through appearance and disappearance. Collisions cause diffractions, diffractions cause new materialisations.
I, me, I collide. I collide with the object, with the other. I collide with myself.
The moment of collision is the thing. The moment before, in which I hope, expect. The moment of, when we cross over, when we alter one another. The moment after, when I realise my self-ness, its it-ness, your you-ness.

I collide strangers. I un-collide strangers. I hide them from one another. Create doubt.
I collide them, screen them, lull them, expose them, collide them.
I take away possibilities of collision. I lure towards collision.
I stretch and shrink the gap between others.
I encourage the uncomfortable concoction of desire and distance: the disharmony and harmony of various proximities.
Through the philosophy of the othering, of desire, of the irreducible negotiation of the caress, I think out the exchanges.
I re-realise the self via diffraction.

5th March 2018 – part of a www.pointsoflistening.wordpress.com event.

This piece of creative writing aims to convey the repetitious nature of my making and performance work: both as a musician learning and perfecting her repertory and as a sound artist making and creating performative events which investigate otherness in performance from a musician's perspective. At the PoL event I performed this text by reading it out loud, emphasising repetitious words thereby linking my creative writing practice to my sound art practice. It works to describe through creative writing the central notion in my work that the colliding of protagonists, whether they are live (people) or inert (objects) in performative event situations results in a change in experience: that my or my participants'/protagonists' collision with one another is a formative and co-

creative event in itself. I collide works in this thesis to describe the meeting of two or more in a new experience, with the collision acting as a pivot-moment of performativity.

In *The Creative Critic, Writing as/about Practice* (2018), editors Emily Orley and Katya Hilevaara advocate creative writing as a form of critical writing. The volume explores an array of different approaches to critical writing, varying from manifestos to imagined theatrical scripts. Each approach lends further understanding to the works that are interrogated, with each piece of writing offering a viewpoint or assessment made through creative writing that may then become critical and useful. In this thesis I use and develop my own creative-critical writing practice as a methodological device to originate and explore the questions that arise from my practical sound works. I use it as a way to return to events that have taken place - usually my own performative sound work, but also for re-appraising my experience of other artists' works. Specifically in this thesis, rather than existing as speculative pieces of creative writing in themselves, I write retrospectively about actual experiences. Jane Rendell describes this mode of writing as a 'return backwards' that puts certain aspects into focus: "*The progression of meaning involves, then, a return backwards in time which adds, retrospectively, to the content it had initially, as well as a choice 'fixing' one of the various possibilities.*" (Rendell in Orley and Hilevaara 2018:xix) In a number of this thesis' chapters, creative writing becomes the focal or access point for investigating a work and exploring the intimacy and proximity of otherness within it.

A central question which emerged for this project from this text and its performance, and which relates directly to the creative writing aspect of my practice asks how we might better appraise, discuss, address and make work that acknowledges otherness as a creative force within sound arts practice. By using auto-ethnographic writing I am enabled to explore the otherness in my own and in others' practice as a stretching, changing, and collisional, generative and experiential collision between others.

# ii

## Using Performance to Question Otherness as a Form of Co-Creativity

My sound art practice springs directly from my personal perception of otherness as experienced during my twenty-five year career as a professional classical musician. This very specific field of performance generated in me a sense of my own otherness which resulted directly from the playing out of roles and expectations within a historically pre-established music performance structure. Classical music performance events generally fall into the proscenium arch[6] theatre format (although there are exceptions) or they at least retain a sense of the performer actively presenting or translating a work or score, and of the audience as the receiver of this interpretation. As an instrumentalist performing in a number of different classical-music-based performative contexts (as a soloist, a chamber musician, orchestrally and in experimental improvisation with other instrumentalists, dancers, poets and actors) I found my sense of self was changeable within the moment; dependent on my fellow musicians and their engagement and actions; often dictated by the audience; and entirely affected by the context in which I was performing.

My experiences brought to the fore a sense of entanglement, occurring between myself as the performer and the audience, which I understood as my Other, but equally of a directly reversed relationship in which I was also an other: the audience's Other. I am intensely aware that this relationship of otherness flows both ways, forming a shared experience, and that this shared experience is changing in the moment as a direct result of our interactions. At the centre of my curiosity about this relationship is an awareness of how the audience's behaviour and engagement directly influenced the musical performance I executed as a result.

With a need to understand this experience better, I began to explore this sense of an entangled otherness that was occurring in my musical practice in my sound art practice. Sound art is a means to practice which I came to in 2012,

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[6] a 'picture-frame' style arch dividing the stage from the auditorium developed during the Renaissance, now often referred to as the 'fourth wall'.

having been a professional musician already for decades. I came to sound art as an extension of my musical practice and as a way to expand my compositional scope when writing music. Although I am fundamentally a classical music performer I also have had a sparse practice of music composition in the background since 1999. This practice previously involved writing for solo and chamber groups, a practice I had departed from in the mid-to-late 2000s and recently returned to in a different form in sound designing for the spoken word. In 2010 or 2011 before beginning my own MA, I had experienced a Masters degree group's sound art exhibition which blew apart my traditional classical music performance-based notions of the performer-audience relationship and gave me new ideas and questions about what was compositionally possible when using this relationship as a centre for creative intention. As a fusion of my musical interests - composition and performance - sound art offered me a way to compose without sitting for hours writing instrumental parts. I began to think, is it possible for me to instead *compose physically*? i.e to create spaces and to carefully mediate these spaces as time-based, site-based physical or structural compositions that shape experience via architectural or space-based means. My first major installation involved a forty foot long walk-in spiral at the centre of which was a live opera singer who sang specifically for each individual participant upon their arrival at the centre.[7] This installation, PROXIMITY (2012 - 2016 -) involved the collision of performer and audience at its physical and metaphorical centre, as a one-to-one performance in a specifically designed space. It is this specific interest in creating places and situations as spaces for collisions and the experiential that emerged from this work which inspired this research and which contextualises this thesis, bringing into direct relation music, composition, site-specificity, live art and scenographic practices.
This focus on the performer/audience relationship was further augmented and informed by associated visits to art galleries that included *Light Show* at the Hayward Gallery in 2013, where space was delineated by light, forming liminal spaces, and a large, walk-in installation by Olafur Eliasson, where participants could interact with their bodies as though the installation was a large playground, experienced around the same time at the Royal Academy of Art.

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[7] The documentary film of this work, an interview with performers and accompanying photographs can be viewed at www.juliegroves.com/proximity

Both these exhibitions motivated further research and work in this area as they showed me a totally different approach to audience experience than what I was used to due to my own heritage as a performing musician, where audience performer barriers are total and performance experiences generally take a predictable format and are less collisional in terms of audience experience.

The sound art practice I came to establish in my own Masters degree year and which has continued throughout this research project is steeped in an exploration of witnessing, of dialogue and in appraising the self in performative contexts which are however still always created from a musician's perspective. In this practice I subvert and make permeable expected performance boundaries - which are constructed with reference to classical music performance - and play with the participants' sense of their expected role. Due to the activeness that I perceived in the presence of others and in the presence of space and place as part of this sound art practice, I come to describe both participants and space as active protagonists in the course of this thesis. I found that in my installations which include performative elements, expected roles will apparently reverse or disappear, or the space and setup will demand that we behave differently than we would expect, both as audience-members and as performers. In this way I question what the relationship between performer and the audience-member is, what the role of our otherness as different protagonists of the same work is, how it inter-relates to the other 'others' (present protagonists) and objects that are present in the space, and how that relationship comes to form the completed work through that unrepeatable moment of performance together.

In my sound art practice (as differing from my creative writing practice) I create often mildly uncomfortable or awkward performance confrontations that play out within or at the boundaries of the expected performance practice as would usually be seen in classical music. The performance practice that my work refers to is specifically a musicians' performance practice rather than a performance art or theatre practice, although the questions posed by my work have, in the course of this research, led me to refer in part to performance art and theatre practice and theory. Due to the central emphasis in this investigation on the co-creative potential of Otherness I primarily draw on philosophies of self and other to construct my thought-device, the '*Other's*-

*Other*.' Through my music-based, sound-arts practice I ask what otherness is being experienced and how; and further query how that otherness is acting as a co-creative force in the fruition of the work.

What follows here is a creative writing description that outlines the main sound art performance work that I created during my investigation. This work both generated and explored most of the questions around which this thesis is formed and stands as the main representation of this creative practice investigation. As with the performed writing for the PoL event, I have written the description of the event as a piece of creative writing in order to increase its immediacy and sense of being in the space for a greater critical understanding of the way the work plays out, rather than simply giving a description of the materials used and the score or an installation shot. These are provided later in the thesis.[8] Here I do not want to detract from my interpretation/writing through images, but rather to allow the experience to be generated in the reader's mind as a form of experience.

**And so I met my Other's Other (2017)**

A large glowing, opaque cube sits atop of a monolith-like structure at the centre of the darkened auditorium. At the signal of the artist a group of perhaps forty to fifty of us have quietly trickled into the space, awaiting an event that will unfold.

Split at the centre horizontally where the cube meets its black support, I can see bare feet of people inside the cube through the gap. They seem to be on a sort of raised stage and the silhouettes of their bodies and musical instruments fall onto the material walls of the cube itself.

[8] This approach early on in the thesis is in keeping both with my practice (both the creative practice of installation work and its presentation as creative writing) and my methodology overall as it increases the immediacy of an introduction to the work which by circumstance of it being written down must be given in absence of the actual live experience. This thesis is about intimacy and proximity, for which the first person seems appropriate as a way to reinforce my thesis' aim to offer an alternative way of writing and thinking about sonic works.

Nothing happens.

Will anything happen?

Is this a prank? Is this part of the event or are we too early?
Ah no, a violinist inside has moved - I can tell from the silhouette and yes, I think I heard a tiny plucked note!

Someone inside coughed! They sighed!

Ah, more small sounds from inside the cube… (perhaps they are warming up?)

**[Are they supposed to have totally bare feet?! Is anything else bare?!]**

People are rustling and moving about around me - my fellow audience-members. I stoop to try and see in through the slit at the performers' foot-level from where I am standing, but I can only see a very little, and the silhouettes. So if I want to see more of what is going on inside I have to get up closer to the gap in the structure. This is awkward. (Will anyone else move to the slit first? Ah, someone has!)

As I get closer to the gap, the activity inside seems to become less again. I feel the eyes of others checking what I am doing and where I am going.
I feel pretty exposed up here.

Wow.

One of these people inside has *very* hairy toes!

Some shifting about and moving seems to be going on…

**A face!!!**

One of the people inside just crouched down and looked out, straight at me!!!
I'm somehow frozen to the spot.

And now her foot is poking out!

A man from the audience has just touched her foot!

And now she is making silhouettes on the material… Haha, the guy with the hairy toes - he has just put his glasses out through the gap as though he is looking at us all through the glasses! And another face! I think there are three people in total in there. Unsure.

They're starting to play again. Everyone in the audience seems a bit more brave - quite a few other people are looking right in through the gap since they stopped looking out at us and that older chap interacted.. somehow the fact he is in his seventies or something and dressed quite well-to-do makes me feel more safe! Weird. I wonder what that says about me.

It sounds like the piece they're playing is getting going.

Some people in the audience are still standing well back, actually, now that I check.

Hang on, another musician is looking out and she is looking at us all for ages!
Our eyes met just for a second as she scanned the room… she has a bit of a cheeky air about her!

The rest of the musicians have stopped and they're *all* looking out through the slit on their knees. This is NOT how a concert event usually goes, right?! This is really uncomfortable! I'm smiling though - it is a bit fun… they seem really game and fun, this trio!

What just happened there?!

Someone in the audience has taken off their red sock and thrown it through the slit! And the first musician who looked out, she has taken it and is putting it on!
She now has one sock on! Who the hell threw that?! It came from nowhere..! Was that planned?!

They're playing again - all three of them. The piece is getting really intense now. Loads more of us are closer to the cube and moving about the auditorium space. That was quite fun!
But

I can hear another sound

I think…

Yes - The music has somehow spilled out to the auditorium and the auditorium is humming.

Is it a track out here or an echo or something? What IS that?

I glance around to see the source and people are starting to turn and part.
It is a singer - no, two singers!!
One brushes my arm as he comes forward - they are dressed just like us - are they part of the show? I saw the guy in the foyer just chatting, though, before. That's a bit strange? Or are they just joining in? (Am *I* supposed to join in?!)

Ah, no, they're definitely part of it… they're singing words now - I'm not quite sure what. I'm keeping well out the way but m not sure where "out of the way" is..!

Woah okay. So the whole piece is actually string instruments and voices and it's really busy and kicking off sound-wise now. Where did they come from?! Were they here all the time?! What the hell?! Is anything else going to happen near us?! I was so focused on the cube I never saw or felt them arrive!

They're reaching the centre by the cube - the whole thing has peaked.

Oh!

And the performers are all applauding! I think that's the end!

Well,
we're all clapping too….!

(The score for this work appears on page 148.)

The central question asked by this work and teased out through the writing is: who is the other in this scene? Is it the performer, or is it the audience-member? And, are we not all in some way 'the other' as soon as we collide with the work and the space. The question is: do you feel your otherness? With otherness always implying the presence of at least two as an outward-reaching concept. The title of the work, *And so I met my Other's Other* literally translates as "And So I Met Myself As My Other" as though I have turned and seen myself as another might encounter me. This piece was conceived in 2013 and the title itself was unconsciously derived as part of its realisation in 2017 from my reading of Sartre's *The Look* (1943), Luce Irigaray's *to*

*be two* (2000) and her *Philosophy of the Caress* and Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance: A new aesthetics.* (2008). I will retrace and reconstruct this development as part of this investigation in chapters two and three as part of developing the agential nature of intimacy and proximity in otherness.

In restricting the audience's view the inside of the cube becomes an almost private space rather than an open, clearly cut performance stage. By undermining expected boundaries and roles - such as the performers themselves peering out and returning the gaze of the audience; and the auditorium space shifting shape and size when performers appear at the room's periphery, suddenly changing a safe viewing space into stage-space - we are pushed to re-appraise ourselves and our roles. In essence, we are pushed to question and re-see the relationships taking place between ourselves, others and the space. This re-seeing also puts the relationships and interactions under the spotlight as exchanges play out, allowing us to question what outcomes they influence and how outcomes might be co-created between us.

This particular work stands as the primary sound art work that generated and set into action the questions that are researched in this thesis about otherness and co-creativity. The name of the thought-device devised in this project is directly derived from the title of this installation. *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017) implies that one's outward gaze towards one's other has been turned in on itself and folded together. I will contextualise this through Sartre and Irigaray in chapter three. Expected roles are subverted and questioned and otherness is explored as a role that may switch, change its direction and flicker as part of a shared experience where otherness is multidirectional. In the course of this thesis I come to refer to this flickering as flimmering: a cross between shimmering and flickering, with reference to the German word 'flimmern' which translates as a type of flickering, shimmering or twinkling as a way of describing the continually changing nature of the relationship between protagonists.

My practice often runs a course in which there is merely an urge to 'collide' people and expectations through various performance setups and situations that use sound, space and proximity as their operative central elements, and which almost always play with expected boundaries and roles.

By colliding people and spaces and situations I work to question both our sense of self and our sense of otherness and to explore how those relationships entwine to form the experience of the work. It is during and following the performance or performative experience that behaviours and experiences are studied as meaningful iterations of what the work explores and what key ideas are being expressed through it. The practice of describing and addressing what seems to be playing out between the protagonists involved within the space is what forms the critical writing and thinking produced in this thesis. It is the performance event itself that provides a crucial moment of revision in which a variety of outcomes are enabled to come about. These outcomes are directly related to the individuals present and the specific qualities of the performance event situations.[9] As a result, the central tenet of this project is an investigation of otherness, understood as a co-creative collision between two, viewed mainly as otherness on the one-to-one or between-few level rather than in general cultural or large-scale terms and explored through the lens of sound art performance. Springing from my own practice as a performing musician I recognise performance not as the content itself but as the main method or vehicle by which I can think and test ideas about otherness and through which I might treat this otherness as worth investigating as a creative and co-creative element in sound arts.

The second most central work that explores the co-creative otherness of objects is *Letters* (2014 -). *Letters* is grounded in repetitious performative acts based directly on my lifelong practice as a musician. This work began as a letter-writing experiment in collaboration with a poet. It rapidly developed into a repetitive performative act in that I made the same origami shape into various papers hundreds of times. This same practice was also applied in a later work called *The Call* (2018) in which I made 777 origami birds as part of a sound installation. As a professional musician, one spends hours and weeks perfecting, sometimes minute, passages of notes. As one repeats the same passage over and over, it is as though you - as the musician - disappear, and the evidence of your body (in erroneous notes or a breathy tone etc.) is erased from the passage. However, in the same stroke one applies one's body and mind so

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[9] *'There are potentially as many meanings as there are viewers'* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:164)

many times that in a way your body likewise *becomes* the music. In my own bodily disappearance is also an appearance: presence and absence are complexly intertwined. For *Letters* in particular, I experimented with various different papers, some of which were incredibly resistant to my actions upon them. This experimentation resonated with my experience as a musician plying the music to my bodily actions. Often the technical aspects of the music are met with a physical resistance or initial inability to master the sequences; and likewise one finds oneself trying to master one's use of the instrument. The instrument may resist me and likewise the paper resisted and caused my fingers to ache and smart as I attempted to recreate the origami shape perfectly. Here, the object resisted my attempts to work it resulting in an effect on me as the actor upon it and an effect on the way I engaged with it. In the context of this research this raised the question of whether the object, the material, can also behave as a co-creative other in a work, an idea explored in chapter four. This drew in space and place into the investigation, explored in chapter five.

These two performance works, alongside my creative writing practice, are representative of the creative practice undertaken as part of this thesis having motivated and formed my question. I felt it necessary to include introductory prologues to stage this background. These and other works are also described and discussed throughout the thesis as part of its trajectory. This is a practice-based PhD in the sense that it is the work that formulates the questions and problems investigated, and it is the work that offers avenues of answering these questions. In conversation with theoretical ideas, this performative collision between theory and practice builds the main part of this thesis.

**Context: Resonances with theatre and performance theory**

My creative practice - both sound works and creative writing - experiment and reflect on the intimacy between participants or protagonists, with a direct focus on the proximity of others and objects in sites and spaces. For this reason, and also because my practice is rooted in a particular type of performance - that of classical musicianship - my work finds resonance in the field of theatre and performance theory and practice. In particular, my sound installation pieces

such as PROXIMITY (2012 - 2016 -) and *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017) discussed above exhibit strong resonances with the genre of immersive theatre as exemplified by Josephine Machon's *Immersive Theatres* (2013). Her work specifies attributes which she asserts define a work as immersive: *"A unique* ***'in-its-own-world'****-ness…created through a dexterous use of* ***space***, ***scenography***, ***sound***, ***duration*** *within* ***interdisciplinary*** *(or hybridised)* ***practice***. ***Bodies*** *are prioritised in this world; performing and perceiving bodies; the latter belonging to the individuals who make up the* ***audience*** *- a pivotal feature of this practise - whose direct insertion in and interaction with the world shapes the outcomes of the event. With this audience a '****contract for participation****' is either explicitly or implicitly shared in order to allow full immersion in the world. The level of immersion experienced is ultimately influenced by the artist's* ***intention*** *and* ***expertise*** *in the execution of the work."* (Machon 2013:278, emphasis in original)

Relating to her ideas, my sound installation work also forms a hybridised practice between sound art, music composition, music performance, performance, live art and installation art and relies on the presence and meeting of bodies in a carefully designed space which is accompanied by a durational aspect. Everything is made with a sonic sensibility derived from my history of musicianship which directs the manner in which these installations are constructed, as in composed physically, from all the materials, bodies, space and their presence together. Participants and performers meet in a specifically structured space and setup, lending my durational pieces an 'in-its-own-world-ness' which is directly related to scenographic approaches contextualised by performance theory. The audience is, as Machon puts it, pivotal, as is the construction of the space in which the performance takes place. This attention to space in relation to the audience's experience is indicative also of scenographic practices. As stated in *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (2009) *"…scenography is defined as the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment…[it] is not simply concerned with creating and presenting images to an audience; it is concerned with audience reception and engagement. It is a sensory as well as an intellectual experience; emotional as well as rational."* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:4)

In this respect, my drive to 'compose physically', or in other words to create experiences through careful construction of spaces as mediating elements -

sometimes restrictive or permissive - could be viewed as a use a scenographic approach to sound art. Many theatre directors and actors have worked towards a *'language of the senses'*[10] and for objects, operating as part of a sign system or semiotically, to take on an equal signifying potential as an actor, which I explore in this thesis in terms of spatiality and objects as active protagonists in chapter four. Jiří Veltruský, Czech semiotician, aesthetician and theatre theoretician states that it is *"…impossible to draw a line between subject and object, since each component is potentially either…thing and man can change places…man can become a thing and a thing become a living being."* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:153). Similarly, my practice explores this inseparability between subject and object by incessantly colliding the two and insisting that they see themselves in their entanglement. In this way research from scenography adds depth to my investigation into the object-as-other and the importance of space in setting boundaries that can be undermined or reinforced as part of meaning-making.

The combination of qualities exhibited in my practice draw on a number of paradigms including live art[11] and the one-to-one, installation, performance and theatre, a combination which is described by Claire Bishop as falling under the term 'installation art': *"'Installation art' is a term that loosely refers to the type of art in to which the viewer physically enters, and which is often described as 'theatrical', 'immersive' or 'experiential'."* (Bishop, 2010:6 in Machon 2013:33). The multiplicity of influences in my practice (its hybridised quality) draws in a variety of contextualising theory but at the very centre of this creative practice-based endeavour is the question of how to speak about the relationship of otherness that sits at the centre of my own practice and which is also seen occurring in these related practices. For this reason, a substantial part of the thesis investigates and contextualises otherness through philosophy, namely drawn from Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism as a necessary first exploration, through Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology due to the fundamental importance of his work on being and most importantly through Luce Irigaray's concept of between-two. Otherness and a co-creative relationship of otherness stands as

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[10] Poet, actor and director visionary Antonin Artaud is one example who maintained that *'the stage is a tangible, physical space…it ought to speak its own concrete language…'* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:33)

[11] Live Art is a term that refers to performance art, action art and happenings, and performance since the 1960s that involve the presence of the artist or a performer.

the central focus of this creative practice-based investigation. The thesis works to understand this relationship and to establish a way to describe it and think creatively in its terms.

The sound art works I made and the creative writing written for this thesis' investigation all direct towards the making of a theoretical thought-device, generated by experiments in performative sound works, that I come to call the *Other's-Other*. Formulating this *Other's-Other* device is the central work undertaken in this thesis, based on my creative practice works and its contextualising fields as explained above.

## Questions generated by my practice

The performer/audience relationship that occurs in my musicianship performance practice I contend is a central and very recognisable element of a work's moment of fruition. Informed by my background as a classical musician the notion of creating something for another to witness, and recognising that act of witnessing as a the creative act's completion, is at the fore of my work. As a classical musician, my role appears clear. When I began to make sound art, my role was less clear. All the work and planning in my musicianship practice is directed to the singular moment of performance, in essence to the moment of a collision of others in a space. It is that collision, or meeting of others, which constitutes the experience of the work. The emphasis is heavily on preparation. Musicians work to one hundred and fifty percent "perfection" and hope for a good execution of a work on the performance day, considering the performance itself as a moment of managed nerves and expectations for a ninety percent "perfect" execution. After performing the piece as intended with planned expression and tricky technical moments intact, not being distracted by a restless audience-member or a mistake is the main focus.

The transition to making sound art entrained in this type of performance practice removed my learned role and left me unsure what my role was or how it should play out. Often in sound art there is no standard single moment of performance: many works also use recordings, video and sound design. In essence, in my sound art practice I am continually asking *"where am I in this and*

*what is my role or purpose as the artist?"*. This searching incorporates the questions "W*here am I? Where are you? What is happening here between us?".*
My over-arching answer is that I am Other; and likewise you are also Other, and that we are Others who are together creating something new, as opposed to colliding in a pre-existing work that I am delivering perfectly. The work is co-created between us through, via and because of our otherness. For this reason, the central endeavour undertaken in this project is an investigation of otherness and from this, an endeavour to formulate a way to discuss otherness in sound arts. To do so I work to establish a thought-device that addresses otherness and allows us to think of this otherness in works as a form of co-creativity which is rooted in intimacy and proximity.

**On mapping creative practice questions**

The questions asked and investigated through practice and writing in this thesis are multiple, but always returning back to the central question of Otherness as a creative relationship. My practice generates questions about presence and absence, protagonists, peripheries, boundaries and inter-subjectivities and the returned gaze; it tests them by mediating experiences via liminal performative spaces and comes to also question the role of the object as an other, leading to an idea of plural otherness as a co-creative state. These creative-practice tests work to generate, as an outcome of this investigation, a thought-device as a solution which is built around a relationship between others: the *Other's-Other*. Using the device aims to fill the gap in sound art theory to facilitate an easier approach to identifying otherness in works and identifying this otherness as a co-creative relationship relevant also for discourse production. In this way, through practice I query the effects of collisions, the roles of protagonists, performer and audience, things, spaces and objects, and thus use performance as a vehicle to formulate questions such as:

- *Can (my) sound art works also hold a collisional pivot-moment alike to my music performances?*
- *Can I experiment with the boundaries that are familiar to me in my musician practice to find out what happens at, behind and beyond them?*

- *And can I make non-performance-based sound works that also hold performative collisional pivot-moments?*
- *Can I make sound art that acknowledges both the audience/visitor/listener and the artist/maker as fundamental protagonists whose meeting - in the work - completes the work?*

Added to these are questions about co-creativity:

- *Do these collisions cause work to be co-creative?*
- *Are objects and spaces also active and co-creative protagonists and how do they affect the work?*
- *Can I make works that allow a sense of otherness to play a central role?*

And, centrally, about Otherness:

- *What is the relationship between boundaries and otherness?*
- *Is it the otherness between others that causes the experiential work to come into being?*
- *Can I describe this co-creativity of otherness occurring in my own and others' works?*

This investigation is practice-based, but it is not practice-led, and although there is a direct link between the written thesis and the creative practice, the link is not always strictly mappable as a simple question/answer relationship. My work asks questions, and these questions are taken up in the writing without always finding direct answers but always finding other relevant and related discussions. There is, then, some autonomy between the two parts, the practice and the writing as theory. A kernel of investigative interest might lead me to a particular theory or work, which may then in turn bear fruit one step away from the initial idea. My practice presents questions - described in the sections above - but by its open and context-based nature (much depends on participants and interactions when it comes to outcomes) - it only provides some parts of the answers it presents questions to. Other answers are found in more separate autonomous theoretical discussions instigated by questions posed by my practice, such as the discussion of otherness and the looking glass self in chapter two; diffractive methodologies in chapter three and liminal performativity in chapter five. Therefore the writing that constitutes this written thesis opens as another arm of practice which allows me to inform my

theory-making from my practice and to open further questions and possibilities, especially in terms of theory-making.

## A methodological parodos[12]: Eavesdropping.

**Introducing performance as a crucial part of my practice and as a testing ground of presence, complicity, boundaries and roles.**

> *'…performance tends to operate by means of displacement,*
> *subverting or usurping places, unlocking their formation,*
> *questioning the thoughts, discourses and nominations*
> *by which place is solidly constituted.*
> *Performance enacts a felt and interrogative transgression of boundaries,*
> *a process of breaching that throws into question*
> *the very oppositions by which place is formed.'*
> (Heathfield 2004:11)

The following piece of creative writing introduces performance as used in my practice as a pivot-moment that alters experience and helps us to see ourselves as present and agential. It sets the scene for the way I use performance methodologically in this thesis to formulate the *Other's-Other* device. *A Year and Two Months* was a short and simple experiment that looked at the idea of participants and audiences or listeners becoming agential protagonists through altered boundaries. This exploration is continued more fully in chapter two through study of Mark Peter Wright's *The Thing in the Margins* (2015) and a creative writing account of a sound walk in Venice in 2015.

[12] A parados is the first ode or song sung by the chorus as it enters the stage. In theatre, a parados follows a prologue and works to set the scene by providing a commentary or background information about the play. This parados introduces, via creative practice writing, a summary of a live creative practice work which encapsulates the questions posed in this thesis.

*A Year and Two Months*

24th October 2017

*In semi darkness, I sit in the centre of the front of a room.*
*The room is in LCC in Elephant and Castle.*
*In a small semi-circle, my fellow CRiSAP researchers face me, pen and paper in hand. We form a group of perhaps eight people.*

*Today, I am thinking out in practice the notion of eavesdropping.*

*I turn on a small spotlight, shining it into my own face - making it the central focus of the room - and begin my practice-experiment. I give a pre-cursor to my audience: "write anything that might come into your head". I have not given them any indication of what might happen during the experiment.*

*Taking my phone, which is hooked up to a small speaker, and keeping my face as upward and outward-looking as possible I begin selecting my own private voicemails at random. They play out, broadcast through the speaker at my colleagues. Some voicemails are long, banal, garbled messages sent on crackling lines from moving vehicles about scheduling lessons. Others are about deliveries. One is a hurried message from my mother. One is a birthday message from a close friend, and one is from another close friend with whom I have had a serious disagreement about work which is still ongoing. I plough through them, unable to hide my gritted teeth at one and my amusement at another. I am unsure what will come out of the speaker each time. One voicemail is a few minutes of violent walking heard from inside my father's trouser pocket.*

*As I play these pieces I feel much more exposed than I had imagined I would. I had listened to most of them beforehand, just to check for any unethical defining features or for anything that I really didn't want to be broadcast about myself. But still, I sensed doubt about how I might be judged by these audible markers of my everyday life.*

*Afterwards, we discussed what people had written down.*

As is common in my creative practice, I executed this practice-experiment without knowing for certain why I had constructed it so: the moment of its happening would provide the crucial revision to consolidate its gesture and content. In this way the moment of performance, through the work's collision with an other (the listener/audience member) works as a pivotal moment of fruition. This pivot-moment is ingrained in my work as a means of access to the in-between. Adrian Heathfield, in *LIVE: Art and Performance* picks out performance as directly interrogating that in-between: *'… the performer-spectator 'divide'. The divide is precisely what performance puts into question, interrogating the often unspoken contract that exists between the two parties…'* (Heathfield 2004:11). Contemplating this in-between allows a discussion in terms of protagonists and otherness.

**Re-framing for performance pivot-moments**

This practice-experiment, *A Year and Two Months,* performs eavesdropping, shifting it from an everyday experience to one that sets the roles of performer and audience vibrating, resulting in participants questioning their roles. I used this performance pivot-moment to shift eavesdropping into a communal setting to find out what the performative context would do to its meaning. Essentially, I wanted to know what happens as a result of making everyone in the room at least nominally answerable to their act of eavesdropping in some way. As I "performed" my answer-machine messages, those present were encouraged to note down their thoughts and responses: in other words, asked to be actively engaged and entangled with the performance. As a result of this performative framing, an experiment in accountability was set up: Our collective presence and experience created an accountability to one another inside the co-creative performance space serving to bring my spectator-audience into the work and to force their complicity.[13] My own illuminated face acted as a centre-point to the performance, introducing the possibility of the returned gaze, meaning participants were observed in their intentional

[13] Participants were obliged to give some kind of response – even if as a refusal – which would be witnessed by others as part of the performative experience.

listening, altering the usual state of anonymity experienced in eavesdropping.[14] I will claim and develop in this thesis that the pivot-moment of performative fruition works to make the in-between - the space of understanding and experience between listener and listened to - discernible as an active space between others, in this case consequently allowing us to re-experience and re-think eavesdropping in terms of our own presence. [15]

**Boundaries and roles in the performance pivot-moment**

A voice message is a performance of sorts, but it is singular and private. Announcing my ownership before-hand would have prepared my audience for what they were about to hear, serving as a form of invitation that laid out the boundaries of permission. The now expectant listeners would have instead experienced the privilege of a clear and privy role in proceedings with the uncomfortable nature of over-hearing that which is private having fallen away. In other words, a granted permission would have acted to remove the friction

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[14] Broadcasting my voicemails *without* sitting in front of the listeners would not have sufficed to problematize the act of eavesdropping or to reveal what we might co-create between us in this collective action through shared entanglement and a liminally performative presence (Broadhurst 1999).

[15] Whether this experiment was truly eavesdropping is doubtful. Removed from its normal situation, I was willingly presenting these voicemails. A true eavesdropping could only be carried out if we, for example, all boarded a bus together and listened as we might in a sound walk for what would by chance be overheard; or if we had bugged a room, but then in either of these situations no single person in our group would be "the observed" or "the eavesdropped," as our subject would remain outside of our accountable group. This performed eavesdropping instead played out with a willing subject, but in the same moment this subject - myself - was also *forcing* their listeners to eavesdrop. As the subject of the voicemails and the broadcaster of messages, I held a large responsibility in what I was subjecting the eavesdroppers to and in what I was forcing them to be complicit in. I was also, from my position in the spotlight, bearing a responsibility to the voices of my friends and associates who appeared in the broadcast. Like a sordid voicemail conversation taking place on public transport, my fellow researchers were bearing the brunt of receiving simple secrets that were not their own. I distinctly remember one message being from a close friend I had fallen out with and also another from another close friend wishing me a happy birthday a few days before. Should or would my eavesdroppers ask me whether the situation was resolved? I hoped not. I did not want to have to re-live the details. Should or would they wish me a happy birthday? Their engagement in my private voicemails opened up a wealth of intra-active possibilities springing up between us as a result of the performative event. In this context, all manners of responsibilities to one another were exposed.

and conflict that is produced by undefined roles and boundaries. I contend that one's role within a performance is intimately tied up with an awareness and sense of intimate proximity with others. In terms of scenographic theatre practices "*Perception in the theatre, as elsewhere, is related to seeing the rest of the world in respect of oneself. Being a spectator, being part of an audience, is a spatial experience in that one is conscious of one's own reactions and responses in relation to other spectators and performers on stage.*" (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:177). Our roles as performer or audience are reliant on being shaped by others around us. A one-to-one experience would suggest or demand different roles and manifest different boundaries than a stadium performance. As a crucial part of this experiment I did not watch from the outside: I was instead inside and part of the experiment, appraising it experientially in company with my listeners.

For the purposes of this thesis, I speculate that the contrived performative over-hearing of something private allowed us to experience our own perceived roles differently in direct relation to boundaries and roles: doubt caused us to continually re-evaluate whether we were performing the perceived correct role or whether we had "over-stepped" implied and indistinct permissions. In this experiment I believe my returned gaze caused customary permissive limits to take on an indistinct nature, making boundaries unclear and shifting in terms of accountability. Listening and looking between audience and performer became messily bound up together in a confusion of roles and responsibilities with our senses of location and responsibility set shifting and changing, or 'flimmering'.[16] Barbara Freedman, quoted in *Visuality in the Theatre, the locus of looking* (2011) refers to this as a "fractured reciprocity", '*… whereby beholder and beheld reverse positions in a way that renders a steady position of spectatorship impossible…the given to be seen has the power both to position us and*

[16] 'Flimmering': as introduced briefly in Prologue ii is used in this thesis to mark the unpredictable involuntary flickering of plural states of otherness. 'Flimmering' inhabits the qualities of flickering and glimmering equally, and serves as a way to describe the nature of the relationships taking place: they change so fast and as a result are almost invisible. Flimmering describes and marks out the state of the relationship and the in-between space produced as a result. It is a space of ever-changing, non-static, fluid and unfixed emphasis and role-fulfilment. Flimmer translates from the German flimmern as 'shimmer' and in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as an intransitive verb meaning glimmer or flicker (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/flimmer)

*displace us."* (Freedman, 1991:1 in Bleeker 2011:9). Recalibrating the performance situation via eavesdropping and, likewise, by recalibrating eavesdropping through performance allowed me to remove and confuse or position and displace expected roles and customary boundaries. Our awareness of our intimacy and proximity became elevated by boundaries that had become elastic. As a consequence, I could observe the way we collectively form a situation through our entanglement with one another and re-view how the pivot-moment of a performance can illuminate roles and actions as entangled and as affecting one another.

**Making sound material; becoming protagonists**

Snippets can of course be accidentally and freely overheard in real life courtesy of, for example, the loud voice in the next aisle on public transport. However, what fascinates me about eavesdropping when it is recalibrated as a performance situation is its power to make something immaterial[17] – the slippery and leaky, unbounded and unruly thing we call sound – into something material and boundaried; and that which is usually not performed (eavesdropping), performative.

Performing eavesdropping allowed me and my audience to experience listening with an awareness of its uncertain boundaries. In this case, I believe it was these uncertain boundaries that came to imbue the over-heard with a material or object-like quality. Previously unnoticed roles and boundaries became evidenced through their shifting and changeable nature. Like a revealment or a thickening of the immaterial or the ungraspable, the performative context caused an awareness of the over-heard as being boundaried and of these boundaries as being defined by our own proximitous relationships with and to them. In this context, during the CRiSAP 'soirée' in 2017, the ensuing discussion between my fellow CRiSAP members and myself showed that as soon as we think about listening in the terms of a conscious,

[17] Here I use the dictionary meaning of the word *immaterial* to denote that which is incorporeal, not material, bodiless, disembodied, impalpable, ethereal.
Irvine, A. H., (1959) In: *Collins New English Dictionary,* London and Glasgow,Collins p499 and the second meaning in *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary,* [Accessed 05/11/2021 Online] Available at: https://chambers.co.uk/search/?query=immaterial&title=21st

performative eavesdropping i.e. as soon as we think of that thing that we have listened to as being something that we did not necessarily have a right to hear - where the boundaries and roles are made conspicuous by their uncertain nature - we become consciously aware of 'appropriating' what is heard and crucially of the heard being tangible and boundaried. These flimmering boundaries also begin to set our own roles into question, including our responsibilities and accountabilities. As a direct result, questions begin to arise around possession in relation to sound and the heard, and the eavesdropped becomes alike to an object: something that can behave as a type of tangible property, even if it is via an unwanted listening.

I contend that as soon as we think about sound as a material, as an object, and about the notion of possession in sound, *who* it is who sounds, *who* it is who gives or does not give permission to be heard and *who* it his who willingly or unwillingly receives the heard, becomes relevant. The suggestion is that we are all in entangled relationships with one another as part of the experience. A consequence of thinking about presences and possession is that we must think about possessors: in essence about active protagonists with power to influence outcomes.[18] Therefore, the specificity of a performed eavesdropping - more distinctly than in a performed listening – crucially forces us to think about protagonists: about who is present, who has agency and what is happening between them as a result.

My research is not about eavesdropping itself. The subject offers up an entire other research project with which parts of my investigation could overlap but is not directly concerned with. Instead, for this thesis, I am interested in the co-creative and liminal in-between that occurs once we become aware of the protagonists that a performance causes us to appraise, in this case the performance of a usually unperformed experience. In equal measure, this thesis appraises protagonists and thus brings otherness into consideration. The intimacy and proximity of others becomes a way to think about the entanglements taking place. In using the contextual framing of performance to redraw customary boundaries, this investigation appraises the protagonistic

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[18] If I have taken this sound's meaning, or I have acquired what it imparts, without permission, whose property then is this sound if I was not allowed to hear it or to take it or to have it? Who is present to possess it and likewise to give it away or have it taken from them?

subjectivities at these boundaries as active co-creators of a liminal in-between space of agential and pivotal fruition.

As a moment in this thesis that occurs between the prologue and the introduction as an introduction to my practice and methodology, I have used this parados to introduce performance as a crucial pivot-moment which will be used as a principal tool of investigation throughout this thesis. *A Year and Two Months* allows us to begin thinking about peripheral observers as response-able[19] protagonists, to regard ourselves in the mix and to see our potential as actors with accountability.

I contend that the performance pivot-moment causes the revealing of a complex web of entangled subjectivities: through it, protagonists (including objects and spaces) become visible and accountable in the work. In this sense, performance is not the topic of this thesis, rather is my methodology and thinking ground by which to reflect on the notion of accountability as well as intimacy and proximity in the active, co-creative in-between of sound arts. In that sense, the questions raised by my practice and the subsequent insights generated through their discussion in writing, theoretical and creative, do not only feed back into performance discourse but rather make a contribution to the discourse of sound arts and music, performative or otherwise. I have introduced the notion of boundaries as flimmering and have identified their potential to produce a shifting and changing in-between space. This fluid in-between becomes central in this thesis. I will come to address it as a co-creative space that acknowledges the intimacy and proximity of otherness.

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[19] *"Thinking with my work on cat's cradle…players pass back and forth to each other the patterns at stake, sometimes conserving, sometimes proposing and inventing…In passion and action, detachment and attachment, this is what I call cultivating response-ability; that is also a collective knowing and doing…""* Haraway (2016:34)

# Introduction & Background

Having staged a chapter zero in order to in detail and with care lead the reader to the questions and problems that motivate this thesis from my practice, I now present an extended introduction that stages the aims and objectives as well as the methods of this PhD project through its historical and contemporary background and motivation.

As discussed in chapter zero, this investigation sprang into being as a personal and practice-based endeavour to equip myself with the language, means and criticality that would enable me to describe and discuss my own particular thread of sound art practice. As its central undertaking, the outcome of this project aims to provide a means and criticality by which to describe and discuss sound art works in relation to intimacy and proximity. Using my experience of classical music performance as a lens to think about otherness, the project's key work is the development of a facilitative thought-device: the *Other's-Other*. The device intends to enable us to address works in terms of otherness, and as a consequence to also include in its remit intimacy and proximity as essential critical terms.

This thought-device construction, the *Other's-Other*, is generated directly from my own performance-based creative practice by contextualising and developing it through an in depth exploration of otherness. The device is developed via its testing in my own creative practice; via creative critical writing; as prospected in philosophy; through the study of experiential works (both sound art and non-sound art) and performance theory. It works to fill a gap in sound arts discourse and theory by introducing the intimacy and proximity of otherness as crucial critical terms, likewise reinstating the importance of authorship and performance in the field.

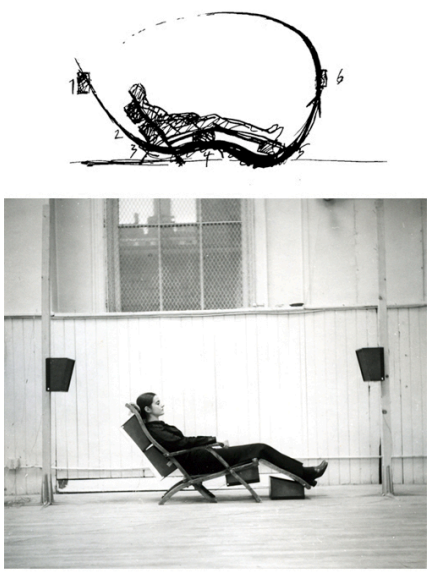
In 2012 I had concluded my Masters in Sound Arts with a final creative piece that problematized ideas and notions of proximity and intimacy. I found it almost impossible to successfully discuss and describe the work with the language and tools readily available in sound arts discourse. There was no theory available that articulated the complex performative relationships

between the physicality of subjects and objects colliding in liminal performative spaces; creating dialogues, entanglements, responsibility and response-ability[20] as realised by my work. And so a central motivator and task of my PhD project became to find elements of theories, works and practices from which to build such a theoretical articulation that could express and critically discuss what was happening in my work.

The work I was making in 2012, and which I have continued to make as part of this investigation, problematises collisions of subjectivities; deals with the effects and the consequences of collisions; and with the artwork and the artist's intentions as part of, as creating, and as functioning in, liminal performative spaces. I set out on this research project to investigate these fundamentals in my own practice and to find a critical context and language that could gauge their meaning and consequence and which could appraise the in-between as a critical active and co-creative space in all sound art work.

As part of my search to source theory and writing that addresses the collision of the audience with the work in sound arts I compare the writing about Bernard Leitner's *Sound Chair* (1975) and Kaffe Matthews' *Sonic Bed* (2005). These are two similar works that were created thirty years apart, and which I contend also perform the complex collisions generated by my work, and which equally lacked language to critically engage in them. Despite the decades of discursive opportunity that had elapsed, between them I found that these two very similar works were both surrounded by a dearth of language by which to describe the interactions and entanglements taking place in their realisations. I discuss these two works in great depth in chapter five as part of the development of the *Other's-Other*'s terms in regard to liminal and spatial performative space, non-docile bodies and the agential nature of external space. However, it is useful to refer briefly to them as part of this introduction to contextualise the gap in theory that this project hopes to fill.
Leitner's *Sound Chair* sends sonic vibrations through the sitter's body, and Matthews' *Sonic Bed* sends sonic tracks through the reclined audience's body in a similar fashion. Both pieces are pictured below.

[20] Haraway (2016)



L: *Sound Chair* (1975) https://images.adsttc.com/media/images/55e8/8ed7/e258/46be/0e00/003c/large_jpg/1248128756.jpg?1441304274
R: *Sonic Bed* (2005) Image available: https://www.kaffematthews.net/project/sonic-bed_london

Both these sound art installations rely directly on completion by the presence of a participant - or what might also be described as the performance of the installation by the audience, yet none of the descriptions or discussions of these works that I sourced described the participant as being pivotal for the works' realisation or as entering into any kind of performative entanglement. Instead, the available theory speaks of these works as placing, in reference to *Sound Chair* '*…sounds and series of sounds in various, exactly performed movements that create "spatial models in an invisible (new) geometry."…*' from Oscar Lopez in 1970 on Leitner's work (https://www.archdaily.com/168979/bernhard-leitner-sound-spaces?ad_medium=gallery); and Brandon LaBelle forty years later in 2010 focuses on what he sees as the main quality of the work: its contact with the deep points in the body such as the back of the knee or the kidney-region as though the listener's body is simply a passive vessel with an 'interior' to be filled, "*The work speaks directly to an interior by caressing the skin, passing through it to arrive at deep points of the body from the kidney region to the back of the knees. The work uncovers the sound space of the body, where "the listening body, the acoustically perceiving body" parallels the ear, creating multiple levels of perception: one external, the other internal.*" (Brandon LaBelle 2010:175).

These theoreticians describe the work as being directed at a body, but fail to address the pivotal moment of proxemic completion by the participant as being in any way performative, agential or in any way part of a collision of otherness worth discussing. Bodies of protagonists are instead described as surfaces upon which to project sound waves. In 2005, Matthews too describes bodies at which she might project her music using instead the term 'embodiment' to serve as a complete description of the complex participative realisation required by her work. *Sonic Bed* is described on her own website as: "*Subtle, dynamic, at times beyond hearing, Sonic Bed plays music to feel rather than just listen to.*" (https://www.kaffematthews.net/project/sonic-bed_london), referring to "*the sensational and biochemical response maps of human bodies to particular frequencies*" as part of her Music for Bodies project, started in 2010 which involves use of the same installation bed with different tracks being streamed through it.[21]

Both Leitner's and Matthews' works are described extensively in terms of the vibrating installation objects' measurements and materials rather than in the greater descriptive depth offered by their experiential, performative qualities. Searching among these types of descriptions of works offered me no guidance or aid in my search for a way to describe the experiential qualities found in my own or others' sound works. However, performance theory built around immersive theatres (Josephine Machon), scenographic practices, liminal performativity (Susan Broadhurst) and autopoietic feedback loops and eventness (Erika Fischter-Lichte), the between-two and intimacy (Luce Irigaray), entanglement and intra-action (Karen Barad), response-ability (Donna Haraway) and otherness (Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty) provided me with the possibility of forming my own theoretical approach to co-creative otherness.

**Situatedness in classical music performance**

My creative practice is intrinsically tied into my personal background and long history as a performing musician, as set out in Prologue ii. Conservatoire-trained, and working professionally now for over twenty years

[21] Music for Bodies can be found at https://musicforbodies.net/background/

in the classical music field, a main difficulty with the contemporary discourse of sound arts is that there is a predisposition for removing sound arts from its own entangled relationship with its partner-discipline, music, especially my own specific field, "classical" and contemporary classical music. It largely fails to acknowledge the shared similarities and histories of a discipline in which sound arts has at least some of its roots. In particular, I propose in this introduction the argument that it is the moment of performance that it is often overlooked as a valuable practical and theoretical thinking-tool in sound arts. In response, it is performance that I use as my investigative lens in the thesis that follows.[22] Sound art theory's discursive avoidance of the traditional performance setups found in classical and contemporary music results in a lack of attention to the paradigm's inherent relationships of otherness. In this way, I contend, sound art theory leaves important elements of the experiential quality of sound arts undiscussed or at least only partly addressed.

One recent volume that has worked to address this disconnect between the practices of 'classical' music and sound arts is *Colloquium: Sound Art – Music* (2016) edited by Salomé Voegelin and Thomas Gardner. The volume was the result of a colloquium hosted by the editors in 2012 which dealt with the current debate concerning the relationship between sound art and music. It focused on "*the lack of a joint critical framework for sound art and music and was inspired by their persistent separation…"* with aims, "*to initiate a debate about the relationship between sound art and music."* (Voegelin and Gardner 2016: 1-2). The fact that these twelve theorists and practitioners came together to participate in generating a new discourse about the relationship between music and sound art is indicative of a perceived gap in available theory. My own project, rather than taking a general approach to the disconnect between sound arts and classical music, focuses on the moment of performance and what I deem its deep importance to how we might discuss and expand sound arts theory.

In regard to this thesis, I was particularly interested in a key idea put forward in *Colloquium* by Nye Parry that "classical" music - or at least classical

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[22] Maaike Bleeker refers to performance as "*…a process of undoing pre-determined points of view rather than constructing them. Since it tells nothing and imitates no-one, performance escapes illusion and representation to reveal what remains hidden behind the symbolic mediation that takes place in the theatre. 'Performance rejects all illusion', writes Féral (1982, p.171). It 'presents, it does not represent' writes Pontbriand (1982, p.155).*

musicology - tends to disregard the performer in favour of the score, or the work-concept[23]. Interestingly the score - imbued with an infallibility since the advent of recordings - apparently grants the performer an almost mystical understanding of it which the general public are not deemed to be privy. In the abstract for his response to Voegelin's first provocation in the book, Parry observes that *"the symbolic representation of sound on paper still shapes contemporary ideas on sonic arts."* (Parry in Voegelin and Gardner 2016:31). His observation is one small part of his argument, but it is of direct significance to my research, in that we still turn to the score for answers about what a work does, and likewise, the score works to separate performers and audiences from one another, ascribing the performer and composer with exclusive authorial control. I contend that the pivot-moment of a performative realisation is often overlooked as a meaning-making or revealing moment in a work due to this priviledging of the score as identified by Parry.[24] In the context of this

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[23] *"The concept of the musical work is based on the assumption that a composed piece of music is a work of art. From a historical perspective, authorship stands as a comparatively recent determinant of the work concept. Imposing the concept of the work of art on music required the translation of the ars musicae from the context of the artes liberales into a more modern system of the arts. Around 1400 a new musical realm of experience emerged, and with it the idea that composed music was first and foremost a presentation of text to listeners, a concept introduced emphatically by Ciconia. A prerequisite for aesthetic discourse is the regular availability of music - or put differently, the reproducibility of a notated text and its sound; and it was written traditions that enabled composers to refer to each other and compare works through both reading and listening."* (Lütteken and Steichen 2015:55-68)
In music-making until the late romantic and early 20th century period, scores served merely as references and almost like general recipes for reproduction. Scores often served to performer composers as quick sketches of shapes and gestures merely to commend compositions to memory rather than as unquestionable document of intent. Scores that grew out of a need to record intentions and ideas and have become ratified and authorized statements of action whose proper translation is perceived as being known only to the performer. Thus they became structures that can be viewed as statements of power and control.

[24] Claudia Molitor touches on the possible reasons for this preoccupation with the score and the need for theorists to be conscientious in regarding the score for what it truly is: the record of a making, *"…the difficulty with music, when you are talking about composition, is that you are not really writing music, …[one is] sort of making it, but you're not really making anything concrete: that's why we're all obsessed with station[e]ry because that's the only thing that we make, paper and pen. In the art world we've got an object, we make something and then we can look at that object or installation or painting and we can always return back to it and go, ok this was made and we can see how it was made. In music that is much more difficult to hold onto because there is no made object and maybe that's why it's becomes so important that you go back to the people that have written the score or have played from the score or have improvised on their instrument and actually talk to them about their motivations."* (Voegelin and Gardner 2016:92)

investigation, I seek to demonstrate that this preoccupation inherited from musicology also influences the way we address and think sound art works. This preoccupation has also, I contend, stimulated the opinion in sound arts that the performer - seen as the powerful translator of the work-concept - must be erased in order to ratify sound art as an entirely distinct democratized genre, as I will discuss in relation to Sabine Sanio's lecture, cited later in this introduction. The erasure of the performer (and thus, I argue, our entangled relationships with performers as protagonists) appears to offer sound art theoreticians a means by which to counteract ideas inherited from musicology about authorial controls, as I will presently describe. I propose that there is a risk in this gesture, as through it we lose sight of a very particular in-between that springs up between performative protagonists. As a result, the value of the in-between as a co-creative space is diminished. Absenting performance and its innate structure from the discursive context leaves us ill-equipped to discuss the intra-active, co-creative quality of present bodies as a dialogic and consequential part of works. In this way we also lose connection with a substantial part of the meaning-making and descriptive processes in sound arts. This project works to find an alternative approach that instead equips us to discuss the intimacy and proximity springing up in the in-between.

In the discussion transcripts of *Colloquium*, sound artist Claudia Molitor warns against bypassing the performer/maker/composer/practitioner as a matter of course in everyday theory. In the same transcript, Parry identifies that as a consequence of dividing the practitioner from the work the importance of what I call the generative pivot-moment falls away from the theoretical discussion: "*…the performer's role is reduced to an attempt to represent the relationships defined in the score as accurately as possible…the confusion, identified by Schaeffer, between the written symbols of notation and musical signs consisting of actual sounds in relation to one another in a piece of experienced music has led many musicologists* ***to sideline performance and the network of meanings brought into play at the moment of a work's realisation.***" (2016:42-50 emphasis my own). In theory which is produced out of a climate in which the score has become the prime source, performance is "side-lined" with the result that we are distanced from describing works in the terms of the readily available intimacy and proximity that performance provides. In the same response-discussion, David

Toop also raises the issue that the practitioner and all they have to offer theory simply begins to disappear from discussion: "*at a time when there is an amazing growth of theoretical writing about sound and listening, and philosophical writing, … it tends to sideline practitioners, but gradually they disappear from discourse.… gradually the practitioners disappear.*" (2016:91) With the disappearance of the practitioner from theory - I believe as a direct result of an inherited musicological obsession with the score - there is a conscious move away from the notions of authorship and authorial control in some sound art making and discourse.

In the *Colloquium* transcripts sound artist and theoretician Aura Satz describes her own interest in removing agency from the work instead as a positive move in sound arts. In her research she removes authorial control to discover new intentions and meaning. In terms of this investigation, I believe that this approach is directly linked to a conscious move away from the work-concept and score, as identified by Parry. As a concerted effort to step away from a musicological inheritance it also acts as a severing of the power that is ascribed to authorial control. Satz aims for "*…the removal of authorship, the use of aleatory means for music composition, …with this drive towards the removal of human agency, or at least the questioning of authorship, ownership, intention, to allow new meanings to emerge.*" (ibid. 2016:112). I perceive this as a striking removal of human agency from the work as a move to democratize its authorial elements, a quality identified by Nicolas Bourriaud as '*…forms which do not establish any precedence,* a priori, *of the producer over the beholder…*' (Bourriaud 2002:58). This thesis counters that removal of human agency from a work is absolutely impossible and that human agency is in fact the key to generating useful discourse about a work in terms of intimacy and proximity: elements that are essential to describing sound art's experiential qualities. I contend that the attempt at a removal of authorial agency hinders our ability to discuss and be aware of the presence of agential protagonists by stripping them of co-creative potential. Thereby, the potential for creating a discourse that acknowledges and uses the unique aspects of intimacy and proximity inherent in the role of the performer, in partnership with the audience, is dissolved.

This thesis pursues a direct inversion of methods that remove authorial agency. It works instead in opposition to Satz's approach to augment the ways

in which we are enabled to discuss sound art works. I argue that the removal of the authorial practitioner or performer nullifies the usefulness of the performance structure. Satz's research reasons and aims are entirely interesting and useful as work-processes. In the context of this project however, I contend that they move us further from the approach that I claim will be of theoretical benefit in regard to the discursive and creative possibilities of the practitioner's role when viewed in combination with the audience. In this way this investigation faces and explores the complex entanglements of agency arising from performance structures which hold within them power hierarchies and authorial controls.

It is in particular the performative binaries, the groundings of self and other, and the negotiation of that relationship of otherness sewn so deeply into the practice of performance which I believe offers important tools by which to form a novel criticality for sound arts practice. I propose that a focus on performance, of two others in a moment of meeting, directly stemming from my own experience as a performing musician and threaded thematically through each of my creative practice works, allows appraisal of the presence of all protagonists and their various agencies. It allows us to address what takes place between others as part this pivotal collision that sets their roles as subject and object flimmering. In this way, the *Other's-Other* device I create during this PhD project works as an affective approach which, as Brian Massumi describes it: *'to affect and to be affected is to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity… It is through it [openness] that things-in-the-making cut their transformative teeth. One always affects and is affected in encounters; which is to say, through events. To begin affectively in change is to begin in relation, and to begin in relation is to begin in the event.'* (Massumi 2015:ix) Rather than severing relations as a way of democratising work, this project works to affectively approach events and relations as responsive, entangled and based in the encounter of others which include authors as well as participants.

In this thesis I work towards using binary mechanisms in a positive and fruitious way: specifically as performative binaries in which each side of the

binary can co-create the work.[25] Unlike a dualistic binary which maintains divisions, I will use performance structure as a vital tool in establishing a performative binary which can serve us well in speaking about and identifying agency, protagonists and entanglements of subjectivity in sound arts. I refer to the binary I am describing as performative to firstly show its potential to intra-act[26] and secondly to distinguish it from what I will use it to criticise during my development of it: a Sartrean binary that is rigid and dualistic. Intimacy and proximity and their performance allow for a critical reimagining of the artist/audience binary and thus by extension and binary identification including that of the self/other. In this way I offer an approach to sound arts discourse that is not habitually removed from the - to me useful - tradition of musical performance and particularly from instrumental performance practice, and thereby from millennia-old music performance practices. In this thesis I negotiate a different and more useful interpretation of the binaries presented by performance and as a result also reappraise otherness, via intimacy and proximity, as positive and as crucially co-creative element of sound arts.

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[25] The notion of binaries and dualisms is a hotly debated topic particularly in relation to gender and the Anthropocene in terms of, for instance, man/woman and nature/culture. In feminist and queer theory, the gender binary is contested as a dualistic scheme of thought. Theorist Rosi Braidotti identifies some of the fundamental premises of the Enlightenment and modernity as producing "*the dualistic schemes of thought that position Man/reason/culture on the one side and Woman/matter/nature on the other…*" from which the dialectic of self and other also springs: "*Subjectivity is equated with consciousness, universal rationality, and self-regulating ethical behaviour, whereas Otherness is defined as its negative and specular counterpart…these Others raise issues of power and exclusion.*" Braidotti (2015: 9-11) In the context of this thesis, I do not use binary without being aware of these difficulties. The word binary appears in discourse often in direct relation to unmoveable and rigid opposites that are mutually exclusive and that do not allow a more fluid, ambiguous, unlabelled, evolving or uncertain position. In the terms of my thesis I use the term binary as a springboard from which to complexify it as unfixed in nature and as a performative and flimmering binary. I use the term binary within this thesis to denote the parts of each collision (whether between flesh-others - who are both human - or between flesh and object-others who are inert) and to stand as a starting point for discussions and developments. Performance itself comprises a general binary of performer and audience and it is this binary that I wish to use and investigate for its co-creative possibilities and fruitious potential as a move to revealing the critical nature of the dialogic in-between. In chapter two I study the dualistic binary of self and other presented in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and explore its potential to be developed as a non-dualistic pairing. Therefore, I often refer to binaries but develop them towards being performative binaries in which roles are not fixed and rigid or closed.

[26] Haraway (2016)

The absence or scarcity of performance as an investigative tool in sound arts theory reaches further than the discussion in 2012's *Colloquium*. Early on in this research journey I came across an unpublished lecture titled "*Aspects of the Performance Situation in Music and Sound Art*" by Sabine Sanio given in Linz as part of the well-known Ars Electronica Festival on the 10th September 2016. The lecture, in the most part, offers a comprehensive overview of sound arts (referred to at points with the German term, *Klangkunst*) and its practice and research. In her talk, Sanio gives an excellent summary of the varying formulations of sound art that exist within the genre. She covers technology, media, its links with music performance practice, likewise its links with visual art, and its way of existing in spaces and in both sculptural and installation forms.

I was drawn to this lecture title's focus on performance in music and sound arts. Sanio's opening also states that "*The place and mode [of]…sound research is arguably the performance situation…*" (Sanio 2016: 5). Eagerly, I read further for clarification on how to speak about performance and its relationship with sound arts and what it could teach us. However, it became clear in reading the lecture that the performance situation was mentioned only in order to encourage a view of its instead being defunct in its usefulness for sound arts theory. Rather than revisioning its usefulness for sound art by focusing on the co-creative partnership between performer[27] and listener as I had hoped, her lecture appraised the role of the audience alone, considering instead their listening in terms of a new mode of art: "*In sound art, the audience's capability of collective, silent, and concentrated listening, which had been put to the test by opera and concerts, has been transferred to new and unusual but primarily unprotected places in the midst of modern life, or concepts have been drafted for alternative venues of reception.*" (2016:1). In Sanio's understanding of opera and concerts, the role of the performer or performance is invisible (resonating with the conventional view of musicology of the score-as-work), and that sound arts offers a listening located in new spaces and venues that are distant from the concert hall and a musical inheritance. Pivotally, she also specifically identifies a "*…relinquishment*

[27] In chapter four I come to address performers also as inert objects with which we interact as audiences so in sound arts the performative relationship may be seen as playing out between spaces and audiences.

*of performers"* (2016:1) as the basis for her description of sound arts as being different to music. In this way, for Sanio, the possibility of addressing sound arts as performance is removed, as is the potential for utilizing the interactions between performer and audience. Through lifting the performance situation out of its historical context, Sanio removes and discards the performer, guiding us instead towards a consideration only of the listener. This focus on the audience or listener and the consequential severance of the experiential partnership between performer and audience results in a study of perception. Therefore, her lecture negates a view of sound arts as holding a jointly participative and productive relationship and therefore rejects the possibility to appraise works with attention to all participants or protagonists. Instead of being performance-focused her sound arts theory attains a focus on the work as work, as a finished object. I perceived a discursive void left by the deliberate removal of the fundamental and historical performance relationship, substituted instead by a discussion on the spatial nature and temporal flexibility of sound works. In her theorisations that position sound arts as an alternative and wholly other to music, the perceptions of the audience becomes the sole creative process worth discussing and also, importantly, sound art ceases to be understood in terms of interaction.

In contrast and response to Sanio, for whom the notion of subjectivities colliding in the guise of performers and audiences is entirely erased, my own study of the temporal and spatial characteristics of sound works takes place in chapter four and five where I mark these event spaces as performative. However, through the lens of (musical) performance, I come to label these pivotal spaces of action as liminally causative and as being produced by plural protagonists co-creatively in a co-creative experience that I perceive as being formed by bodies and irreducible others together in the performative space of sound arts. My creative writing approaches to Mark Peter Wright's *The Thing in the Margins* (2015) and my experience of a sound walk in Venice work to show the presence of protagonists in sound art works - even to the extent that the artist is present - to mark out the importance of retaining our awareness of these authorial actors.

Sanio's lecture stands as an example of a dominant viewpoint that sound arts is marked out by a removal of the performer and subsequently authorial

control. A relinquishment of the performer in sound arts, and in turn the relinquishment of what is perceived of as a power hierarchy, aims, according to Sanio, to democratize sound authorship. While I value the idea of democratization and non-hierarchical relationships, I would like to achieve this goal through the collision of performer and audience, rather than by avoiding it. To this end, and in response, for me, the space opened by this relinquishment implies a useful space for this thesis' research to engage in. In this PhD research, I would like to suggest that musical and artistic democratization i.e. symmetrical participative agency, can be developed in another way, not by erasing the performance situation, but by granting all the protagonists around a work agency rather than removing it selectively. In opposition to an approach that removes the performer and authorial control, this thesis seizes the innate structure of performance, formulates a thought-device through its principles, and uses this to tell us what it can about intimacy and proximity, their inter-relation and what this teaches us about a work. I will argue that the notion of presence implied by the performance setup holds the potential of intimacy and of the notion of a bodily and physical proximity that holds its own consequences, implying an array of complex relationships worth studying. Rather than relinquishing and instead refocusing on the performer as relational with the listener and other elements of the work, the opportunity to think works in terms of intimacy and proximity and as complex and entangled relationships becomes possible and we gain an array of valuable material useful in discourse that can articulate an emancipated and democratized theory on sound art works. It is in this context and understanding that I discuss performance as a structure by which to develop the device of the *Other's-Other* to better understand the complex co-creative experiential relationships occurring in sound arts when it is taken as a performative practice.[28]

In this thesis I position the performer as an important element in sound arts discourse because it allows me to deeply - to and from that position - consider the experiential and co-creative qualities of works. I will argue that the

[28] Therefore, in the course of this thesis I come to develop this thinking-device through performance to offer us a way to appraise and explore the co-creative qualities of sound arts, even in works that do not directly involve a performer per se (as I will develop in chapter four) providing the means to critically grasp the co-creative and entangled experiential natures of works.

authorial performer does not control the work, but brings a vulnerability and a relationality into the way we may speak of and think about a work[29]. In this way, using the authorial as vulnerable and the binary as entanglement, rather than dismissing them as hierarchical and dichotomous, this project works to bring the intra-active and entangled qualities of works to the foreground of sound arts discourse via the *Other's-Other*.

**A flimmering methodology**

As part of generating the thought device of the *Other's-Other*, I found that the main first resource at my disposal to negotiate and possibly reinsert the binary, self-other/performer/audience terms of performance resides in philosophy. However, the relevant existential and phenomenological philosophy I encountered in the early stages of this research was predominantly from the last century, written in the third person, written by hyper-invisible[30] (Voegelin 2019:34) white men from an angle of spectatorship and from a visual rather than an auditory stance. I found that these existential philosophies simply perpetuated an established and obstructive view of binaries as dualistic[31] where binaries are limited to that of between self and other, object and subject, and mind and body. This was useful to an extent, because it allowed me in the course of this thesis to investigate and unpack and finally to treat these dualisms not as an end point, as a set binary, but as a beginning in my endeavour to find, create and develop a new discursive approach to sound arts through a productive performative binary.

My response to the dualist terms of these existential and phenomenological philosophies came to shape my fundamental approach to this thesis and to my creative practice. Discovering that these philosophies failed to equip or enhance my means, reaching only partway into my research, I

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[29] Whether the performer is performing someone else's work their own is irrelevant as it is the performative liminal context that bears consequence and which introduces the idea of reciprocity.

[30] *The Political Possibility of Sound* (Voegelin 2019)

[31] I refer to binaries and dualisms in this research. The binary refers to a partnership in which two opposites have the potential to work together. The dualism here refers to opposing opposites which are assumed to be incapable of working together.

consciously searched for discourse and writing that broke down these long-perpetuated dualisms and which instead appraised the liminal space in-between these designated dualist opposites as a fertile ground of co-creativity and production. I consciously searched for theory and philosophy that advocated for the proximity and intimacy of the in-between as discursively useful and revealing.

As part of my quest to address entanglements of irreducible others as entanglements of minds with bodies, not minds and bodies, I found a conscious removal of bodily intimacy in a predominantly white, male, Western philosophy, and a lack in dealing with the body in its intimacy, as a means by which to understand interactions. This removal of the body is ingrained in nineteenth and twentieth century western philosophy (Sartre, Descartes) and in that sense is not dissimilar to nineteenth and twentieth century score in musicology, as a device to avoid the body, and the affective and to foreground rational study. This avoidance of the body and of presence seems to have become as a ground upon which all further philosophy about entwined subjectivities has been built. Therefore, in this thesis I speak of intimacy rather than the body because intimacy does not foreground a singular body, that of the author or audience, but suggests a proximitous other; it suggests joint presences which produce this intimacy; and it suggests proximities and a world larger and more encompassing than solely a body alone and floating in the world. This body alone tells us nothing; but this body spoken about in terms of intimacy and proximity grants insights into aesthetic as well as social and political dynamics and thus into the democracy of a work. Intimacy and

proximity allows the presence of subjects and objects to be present simultaneously and to exist with what I call 'protagonistic consequence'.[32]

As part of my search for the discussion of intimacy and proximity in discourse, I turned to the body in discourse. I found that even in philosophies which purport to break down the established referents in subjectivity and dualisms, for example in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's "body without organs", proved to be not entirely useful.[33] Although they explore the potentiality of the unformed, the unstable and the flowing, they still perpetuate the same fundamental attitude of speaking about the body as though it is not connected to the mind or the social/artistic situation. It is not a performative body. Instead, the body is constantly referred to objectively, severing its worth as part of an entangled collision of others. In this way, the dualism is instead merely shifted to another plane. As a result, a focus on the dual occurs as the centre of discussion rather than a focus on the space that occurs between them. Activating Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs" through conjunctions

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[32] The established dualistic approach described above – and which is eked out specifically in the terms of this thesis during the earlier chapters – failed to move my discussions and evaluations forward in any useful or fruitious way that developed beyond the limits of those traditional divisions. None of what I found allowed me to speak successfully about protagonists and their actions and effects in sound arts. I was still searching for a discourse that thought about the inter-subjectivity rendered as a result of the effects of the work; and that thought about the subjectivities which remained invisible to us as a result of the way we make and speak about sound arts. As though I had entered a game, all I could do with the philosophy readily available in the mainstream was to flip-flop between the opposing ends of each dualism, gaining in the process absolutely no new or enlightening ground from the in-between spaces and the "non" areas between the two to which they paid no attention. In the most part I found myself researching grand ideas which had found their genesis in the enlightenment and in dualistic approaches, yet still needing to discuss quite the opposite. I wanted to explore the intimate and proximitous worlds I was creating and experimenting with in my own practice and through this also explore a possibility of working against notions of transcendentalism and dualism in the way I discussed and spoke about mine and others' work.

[33] Deleuze and Guattari's bodies – as an example of discourse that is striving to move away from dualism yet I believe does not succeed - focused entirely on the dualisms of mind and body: except this time forming a philosophy based on one without the other and without, even, its organs at all. Again, I found this just did not resonate. I was searching for philosophy and discourse in my research which appraised both the body and the mind at once; subjectivity and objectivity at once and the cerebral and the physical at once, and, preferably all the other worlds in-between in order to work towards a more whole understanding of the entanglements taking place in artistic collisions. As a result, defining my own research by what it did *not* resonate with became my recourse.

with other bodies persists in spectating a type of body and a type of interaction between beings which is still "under the microscope," and perpetuates the idea of a viewing that is carried out by a removed and invisible spectator at distance. In this way bodies can be spoken of as though they are on the outside, not part of us and as though they are unimportant in a crucially phenomenological understanding of a work or scene.

In response, this thesis works to fuse body and mind through what Luce Irigaray terms "irreducible interiority" and to address the proximitous and intimate in-between that occurs between minded-bodies, and minded-bodies with spaces and objects. In this way it aims to break the perpetuated notion that the body itself can become a final destination both for actions and for discourse, as I will fully discuss in chapter five. I have worked instead to pull the body into a discourse which acknowledges its role, but which also acknowledges intimacy and proximity as co-creative elements of shifting and fluid space of fruition. I have also worked against the idea that this body behaves like an object in the world in order to move away from theorising the body and embodiment as a conclusion or end point in a discussion about experiences. As I discuss in chapter five of this thesis, I would frequently read discourse about works which arrived at the body and embodiment as the solution to its questions. These examples likewise speak about the body as though it may think and entangle itself – in divided dualism - independently of the circumstance it is in and the mind to whom it belongs.

This thesis aims to provide a criticality based in intimacy and proximity formed by approaching sound art works as performance. The majority of this thesis' investigation threads begin with a problematization of my own experience of creative practice making. As a result, I often focus deeply on the smaller scale, intimate nature of connections and collisions occurring between one-to-one protagonists (or sometimes the one to-no-one if the other is an object). In this way this thesis aims to break down and pull apart those philosophical grounded themes of dualisms and opposites, re-colliding and conflating those terms in order to produce better and more useful set of critical tools for use within sound arts discourse. My approach, developed from my practice, offers a way to discuss sound art works through the recognition of active protagonists and the importance of the intimacy and proximity that

occurs as a co-creative force between them, helping us to recognize the co-creative possibilities of collided otherness.

The methodology of this project utilizes the idea of performative binaries (over and above dualistic binaries) as a central tenet of this investigation. A main premise of this investigation is that I do not wish to abolish the binary of self and other or performer and audience but instead intend to make it flimmer in partnership. I aim to make binaries have contact, to collide, have proximity and friction. Through this proximity and resultant intimacy a flimmering relationship springs up and out of this complex entanglement a co-creativity, and new ways of speaking about co-creativity, emerge.

This methodological intent, discussed more fully in the introductions to my practice (the prologues) manifests itself in the fabric of this thesis whereby chapters unfold often in two parts, with the one part flimmering against and with the other to create a more whole understanding of that particular chapter's focus. Chapters fall often into parts one and two – one part focusing on theory and the other on practice - as a means of representing my own creative practice and the need for presenting in words how two opposites in a performative binary can create new understanding and meaning and work to produce something other than themselves in isolation.

**Chapter Overview**

The **introduction to my practice and methodology** in the **Prologues** at the start of this thesis act as a **chapter zero**: a chapter which lays out my dual creative practices; how they are intimately tied to the questions posed and answered in this thesis; and my history as a classical music performer as the context for performativity as a methodological approach. The Prologues serve as a frame for the whole thesis, which should be read in and through the context of this opening chapter 'zero'.

In **chapter one, *"Presence and Absence: Protagonists, peripheries, boundaries and intersubjectivity"***, I acknowledge and appraise protagonists via the "performative binary" of presence and absence and of appearance and disappearance. I use the camera obscura to think about absence and presence in

relation to boundaries and peripheries and to introduce the notion of the observer and the observed. In particular, I focus on Mark Peter Wright's *The Thing in the Margins* (2015) to develop the idea of inter-subjective relationships as part of these performative binaries and to re-view the performer or practitioner as non-invisible and present. I use my creative practice writing about Wright's work and about a sound walk in Venice to eke out ideas about peripheral observing and inter-subjective relationships.

**Chapter two, *"My Other's Other: The Look, The looking Glass Self and a returned gaze"*** develops the thinking device of the *Other's-Other* through creative practice writing about a listening practice in regard to an 'accidental sound art' and the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Look* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Sense and Non-Sense.* From there, and moving into more contemporary discourse I use Maaike Bleeker and Rosalind Krauss, Thomas Scheff and Ervine Goff to contextualise and form the idea of the *Other's-Other* as an intersubjective tool. This chapter studies intersubjectivity and works to reconfigure the antithetic relationship between the self and other towards making this relationship a useful way to think about otherness as entwined and co-creative.

**Chapter three, *"Generative liminal spaces and manifestations of the Other's-Other"*** develops the *Other's-Other* further by marking out its twofold nature as is proposed in this thesis: as a thinking device, and as a way to refer to the experiential quality of participation and making. I study the *Other's-Other* as manifested in a number of artworks - Adrian Howells *Footwashing for the Soul,* works by Marina Abramovic; Angelika Festa; Maria Hassabi and my own practice. I again use my creative practice auto-ethnographic writing to explore the *Other's-Other* in the context of a one-to-one intimate experience and to think the consequences of its manifestation in these works. In this chapter, Luce Irigaray's *Philosophy of the Caress* and Karen Barad's notion of entanglement serve as the pivot for developing otherness as an irreducibility of agency and as entangled and co-creative. The *Other's-Other* can be understood in this chapter as a gesture-caress and irreducibility as part of an agential intimacy.

**Chapter four, *"Developing the object-other: the one-to-no-one"*** problematizes otherness in the context of an encounter with objects and space. In this way I move towards an exploration of space and location as liminal

performative spaces. I explore the object-other as holding its own irreducible interiority of agency, and begin to think the object as co-creative other through reference to Rosi Braidotti, Jacques Carelman, Graham Harman and the new materialism appearing in my own creative practice. This chapter references my work *Letters* (2014 -) closely as an example of an intra-active agential and intimate object-other, using this to expand the scope of the *Other's-Other* device.

In chapter five, "***From "subject and object" to "to be two" to "to be plural""***, I think otherness as plural, as shifting and flimmering and as the boundaries that usually mark out otherness as themselves flimmering. I use Susan Broadhurst's notion of liminal performative acts to develop this idea and compare docility and non-docility in protagonists. In the first section I return to works by Bernard Leitner and Kaffe Matthews to address liminal space as active alongside a carrying-through of Barad's ideas of "agential separability". In the second section I undertake an in depth study of the work of Pina Bausch through creative practice critical writing, informed by the now complete *Other's-Other* device to appear protagonists as intimate and proximitous and as generating a co-creative in-between of happening and understanding between them.

I conclude the thesis with ***"From "subject and object" to "to be two" to "to be plural""*** which uses the work from the previous chapters to establish a radical and two-fold new way of thinking and approaching sound art. I lay out terms that have been generated in the thesis and describe the device that has been generated.

I close with a creative writing epilogue that applies the thought-device and ideas generated by the thesis.

## *Chapter One*

# Presence and Absence:
# Protagonists, peripheries, boundaries and intersubjectivity

The central tenet of this thesis is the formation of the *Other's-Other* thought-device through the contextualisation of gestures found in my own creative practice via other performative works, philosophy and performance theories. Chapter one serves as the first step in establishing a criticality for sound arts through the development of this thought-device by working to acknowledge the crucial presence of what I will call "protagonists".[34] In the context of the *Other's-Other*, protagonists are actors who co-creatively form the performative context or scene of a work. I will argue that it is their presence and collision with one another that forms the meaning and consequences of a work. Chapter one specifically deals with identifying and acknowledging both visible and invisible, and absent and present living protagonists. It does this by addressing the elements of performance, protagonists and plural otherness taking place in two sound art works through critical creative writing: Mark Peter Wright's *I, the Thing in the Margins* (2015) and my experience of a sound walk in Venice the same year during the Venice Bienale.

Protagonists are often referred to in this chapter as 'others', preparing for the terminology of the *Other's-Other* device developed further in chapter two. The idea of the other will indicate one or both parts of a simple intersubjective relationship in chapters one and two, and in chapters three and four, it will be developed to also include objects and spaces. This project works to use intimacy and proximity as new thinking tools which bring otherness into consideration.

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[34] In *Immersive Theatres* (2013) Josephine Machon identifies present audiences that are referred to by assorted terms by different theorists and practitioners: *'Barrett's "comrades", Howells' "audience-participant", Lundahll and Sietl's "visitors", Holdsworth's "co-creators", Mercuriali's "guest-performers", Stevens's "playing-audience" or Wilson's "attendant" audience.'* (Machon 2013:99). Wildworks audiences are described as *'percipient…"whose active, skilful, embodied and sensorial engagement alters and determines a process and its outcomes" Misha Myers quoted in Pearson, 2011:178'* (Machon 2013:72). I opt for the term "protagonist" to imply the capability of causative acts but also, crucially, for protagonist qualities and capabilities to also be granted to objects, as I will explore in chapter four.

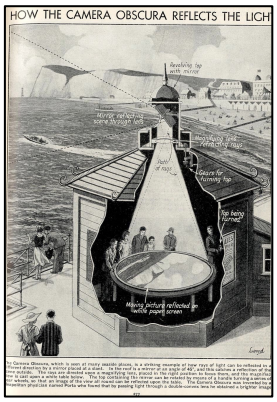
Therefore, I use "other" from the very start of the investigation to maintain it as a central site of consideration.

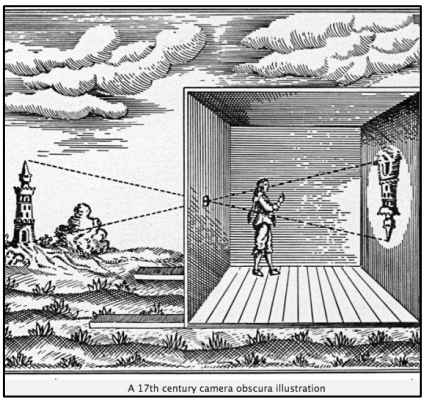
In this chapter one I begin by using the visual device of the camera obscura to think about the structure of performance. Familiar, practical and easily visualized, it serves to help us think about protagonist-others who are making marks and carrying out actions. The camera obscura also enables me to address invisibility and visibility; and appearance and disappearance, as directly occurring through and as a result of the actions of protagonist-others. It also enables me to think about performative actions as a "protagonistic authorship".

In the course of this chapter, these ideas are developed and discussed in relation to Mark Peter Wright's *I, the Thing in the Margins* (2015) and my experience of a sound walk in Venice. Through these works I explore both the idea of a "parasitical protagonism" as well as intersubjective, and potentially co-creative, shared subjective states. These case-studies allow the early development of some useful terms and lay the groundwork for forming the *Other's-Other* thought-device. Chapter one sets the discursive pattern and method of my writing by being auto-ethnographic, as a grounding for subsequent theorization. This works to build terminology and represents a discursivity that is rooted in the experiential nature of intimacy and proximity.

My initial concern in this chapter is to describe a performative intersubjectivity occurring between protagonists: between both the separated (or invisible) observer and the observed in relation to one another. The distinct planes of separation provided by the camera obscura allow me to explore both foregrounds and backgrounds as peripheries that act as axes for intersubjectivity.

## The Camera Obscura[35]






Images: Camera Obscura. Left available: https://www.matrise.no/2018/07/camera-obscura-and-the-world-of-illusions/ Middle: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Officer_and_Laughing_Girl
Right: https://edinburghcameraobscura.wordpress.com/2014/04/04/the-camera-obscura-how-does-it-work/

A camera obscura image can be achieved both through the use of a lense or by the means of a small aperture in a screen. Through the hole, an inverted but identical image of what is occurring on the other side of the screen is projected onto a surface. On first appraisal, the camera-obscura copy produced signals to its viewers that it has not been interfered with in any way: that it is a pure, faithful and tamper-free precise duplication of the real. It's clarity and precision render it seemingly as a scientific 'truth': a non-negotiable, objective statement of fact. We are presented with what performance theorist Maaike Bleeker describes as "*…the illusion of a world on stage that exists independently from our position as audience, a world we are looking into, rather than implicated in.*" (Bleeker 2011:20) Therefore, through the camera obscura, the author, and the viewer of the copy, shift into a kind of invisibility as an assumed neutral position of observation, discreetly instigating a complex set of relationships with regard to authorship and audience-ship.

[35] A natural optical phenomenon sometimes referred to as a "pin-hole image". It served throughout history as a tool for scientific experiments experiencing popularity in the 18th-19th centuries as a drawing aid. One notable user was the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer who reputedly used it as a tool to capture perspective.

**Materialising Protagonists: Appearance and disappearance, visibility and invisibility**

In her 1990 text *The Blink of an Eye* art critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss uses the camera obscura as a tool to critique the invisibility of the authorial observer and uses it to mark out boundaries across which desire and intersubjective relationships take place. In the camera obscura, the observer is usually hidden and presumed absent. Krauss reads this absent observer as authorial, identifying that this absence leaves some calibrations of intersubjective relationships untouched and unseen in discourse:

"*Beaming light through a pin-hole into a darkened room, the camera obscura focuses that light on the opposite wall, allowing the observer. . .to view that plane as something independent of his own powers of synthesis, something that he, as a detached subject, can therefore observe. . .the 18th century observer confronts a unified space of order, unmodified by his own sensory apparatus, fully independent of his own body subjectivity, on which the contents of the world could be studied and compared, known in terms of a multitude of relationships.*" (Krauss 1990:189) This eighteenth-century observer believes themselves to be a detached subject, removed from the observed scene in an act of seeing is entirely objective, scientific, and detached with no occasion to consider themselves as being within or part of the scene.[36] Krauss describes the observer's authored copy as existing outside of his body subjectivity, rendering him separate from and, crucially, invisible in the set of relationships that spring up. However, Krauss reveals a complex web of intersubjectivity taking place across boundaries by instead using the camera obscura as an indicator of boundaries and locations with the power to situate and locate the observer at the epicentre of the scene rather than at the objective removed periphery.

For Krauss, the act of seeing and of documenting via the camera obscura inescapably indicates the presence of a body and indicates a sensation of desire in the one who looks: "*There is no way to concentrate on the threshold of vision, to capture something - as Duchamp would say* - en tournant la tête, *without siting*

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[36] Bleeker describes the secondary observer's (seer's) acceptance of what is presented to them as 'absorption': '*Absorption describes the context in which the seer takes up the position or point of view presented to him or her, and does so without giving it a second thought.*' (Bleeker 2011:33)

*vision in the body and positioning that body, in turn, within the grip of desire. Vision is then caught up within the meshes of projection and identification, within the specularity of substitution that is also a search for an origin lost.* Con, *as they say,* celui qui voit." (Krauss in Carroll 1990: 197). Looking is, as Krauss describes, " with" the one who sees, and the one who sees is sited in an experiential body. Therefore, the one who sees observes from the rooted location of a physical body and this physical body holds - in conjunction with the mind - a forward projection of desire and yearning.[37] In this way, by noting the location of a physical, desiring body, Krauss identifies the one who sees not as detached and objective but as located and bound up in a complex intersubjectivity with the seen, becoming visible acting and desiring at the boundaries rather than slipping into the background. Krauss also shows us that the protagonist who observes exists as part of a plane that is boundaried, across which they experience a desire to engage with the seen, and that this desiring or yearning body is intimately linked with its location. Krauss scrutinises engagement with the camera obscura in terms of active bodies-with-minds, directing her readers towards the actions – protagonistic actions – of the author of the image rather than to the image itself or the device, and likewise to those actions as being located and embodied.[38]

Thinking and appraising now-visible boundaries as sites that host located, desiring bodies-with-minds contributes a possibility in this thesis of appraising planes and boundaries as active spaces of intersubjectivity. In this way, I may introduce the terms of authorship, possession and inter-subjectivity via protagonists located behind, at and across boundaries.

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[37] In this investigation I equate the experiential body always as being a body with a mind who is caught up in "meshes of projection and identification" (Krauss in Carroll 1990:197) rather than as a body without a mind or a mind without a body.

[38] In the camera obscura copy the bodily subjectivity of the protagonist observer is not evidenced. For example, after the event of taking the copy the observer does not appear in the resultant exact scientific image: he is not evidently present in the image itself and neither is he present through the physical quirks and idiosyncrasies that might translate into an eye-to-hand-drawn record. It could be considered, therefore, that as a result of the direct appearance or materialisation of the camera obscura copy, the protagonist who makes the copy disappears. He who chose the scene, the viewpoint and the angle, seems to vanish without any evidence of the self in the final facsimile. Krauss denies the observer this objective invisibility. According to her, this original author of the image does not fade into the background and out of the discussion. Instead they are reappeared and located by their perspective as shown in the copy they make.

With our focus, brought by Krauss, to the absence of the author's physical presence in the final obscura copy, our attention is conversely and intentionally directed towards the author's subtle but continuing presence and indelible authorial control over this obscura-scene duplication. The relationships springing up between bodies and boundaries - as part of what I term protagonistic actions - are used by her to show planes of separation and to locate the protagonist within and at these boundaries. In short, Krauss uses their disappearance to discuss re-appearance.

It is through Krauss' notion of the reappearance of located protagonists that I am enabled to consider the presence of multiple others who can act to co-create an experience together. Krauss' perception of the camera obscura works as a simple device by which to imagine and realise the presences that exist at peripheries and boundaries and who act from those positions. How they act in a desirous way – in a pulling and reaching gesture with the observed – is also key in this investigation, and I will come to this in chapter two onwards. Appraising the presences of protagonists enables me to begin addressing their intersubjective experience as co-creative.

**Multiple peripheral protagonists:**

I contend that peripheral protagonists, in relation to the image in this case, are in fact plural and overlapping within the intersubjective space. I speculate that if I approach the resultant image as a secondary observer, I arrive directly in the original recordist's stead: I accept their perspective as my own and have no choice in the perspective that is related to me. I would be forgiven if my secondary viewing accepted their scientific and exact copy as a truth, as though I had directly witnessed it myself. This witnessing which I participate in as a secondary viewer, is removed twofold from the original image, and the author's perspective becomes a rhetoric that I accept from my distanced

position.[39] Bleeker describes this use of perspective as a convincing representation of 'how it is' rather than a true impression of reality: *'The viewer is offered a position from where the image produces an 'eternal moment of disclosed presence' as an effect. This presence-effect - and not correspondences between image and reality depicted - turns the image into a convincing representation of 'how it is'.'* (Bleeker 2011:12). Instead of representing the image itself, the image presents a chosen viewpoint, presented as an actuality.

Although I may experience a shared experience with those who also view the same final obscura image as I do, importantly I also experience a

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[39] The perfect, scientifical truth achieved by the camera obscura is identified by Johannes Hoff in his theological book *The Analogical Turn* (2013) as a form of "rhetoric"; as a tool for persuasion and exploitation and a rhetoric which convinces those who view it that it shows an objective and purely documentary, realist record of the world. In this realist depiction the authorial hand as nowhere to be seen. The author is notable by his or her absence, implying objectivity. Hoff describes a distance between protagonists or between things created by perspective: of a removal of the bodies Krauss has used in her argument. He speaks of perspective as a technology and means of persuasion/presentation which comes to be accepted as a truth due to an apparent absence of identifiable authorial subjectivity:
*"...art historians such as Hans Belting, who builds on Erwin Panovksy and Ernst Cassirer, call the Western concept of perspective a "cultural technology." The modern perspective of space was not "discovered"; it was the outcome of an artistic invention that was incompatible not only with Islamic and Eastern Asian habits of perception...by provoking proto-Kantian doubts about the question of how visual appearances are related to the "thing itself" the translation of Alhazen's magnum opus into the image-focused visual culture of the West triggered an increasing distance between the thinking "subject" and the "object" of perception, as if thinking creatures were no longer part of the creation their eyes are created to view."* (Hoff 33-37:2015)
Hoff's *The Analogical Turn* casts light on perspective as something that has repercussions for the separation of the subject from the object, and perspective as therefore being relevant in this present discussion where the camera obscura serves as a linchpin into addressing sound arts in terms of intersubjectivity and performance. In the example of the camera obscura - where the recordist disappears from the resultant image, his body subjectivity removed - his single unified and chosen perspective becomes a non-negotiable fact. Here we see Hoff's view of perspective in action. If I arrive at the projected camera obscura image I am not only once removed from what I am viewing, but *twice*: The viewpoint or perspective has been chosen on my behalf by an invisible other, and my viewing of it is already second-hand. The image I view is merely a reproduction of that which existed in reality. I did not choose it and I did not ever perceive it with my own eyes. I am no longer part of the original object of perception; I am the witness of a non-negotiable facsimile.

shared viewpoint with the author of the image. The camera obscura occludes my own, free experience of the original scene which I may have chosen to experience from any number of different angles, or in any number of different ways. However, it also enables two other kinds of experience. Firstly, I receive an almost direct shared experience with those who also re-view the author's, now pinioned, camera obscura scene. Collectively with them I re-see the author's filtered scene: the chosen perspective is perceived as a non-negotiable fact by any number of the audience who views it hereafter. But secondly, the same moment of re-seeing the author's scene holds the possibility of enabling a *re-appearance* of the recordist or author. Due to perspective, we can pinpoint exactly where the recordist stood or captured their chosen scene from. I am able to turn and face them: I know their hidden location at the periphery because it is also my location. They are perpetually present at the fringes of the recording, and although they are not directly announced, I can locate them. I share his prescribed filtering of the image through nearly the same eyes, from a shared perspective, and as a universal truth. Therefore, although the recordist has chosen the parameters, there is opportunity to understand what I am witnessing through the eyes of another. In this way, the fixed camera obscura scene becomes a means by which I may move towards and identify with that other, intersubjectively. If I look past what I am expected to see and recognise them as one of Krauss' detached bodies on the periphery, I am also therefore enabled to see myself as fulfilling the same or a similar role.

In this scenario, therefore, it is possible for all the protagonists to become present at the same time. Locating the invisible author and his viewpoint also locates me.

This calibration of looking or observing in this way transmutes invisibility into visibility, and absence into presence, allowing a re-entry of multiple protagonists: through these present protagonists we are enabled to think about a multitude of intersubjective relationships that are occurring across the planes and boundaries between us.

In terms of this investigation, it is specifically the incognito quality of the camera obscura recordist which interests me. In the following section I will present two case studies, for which I use the model of the camera obscura as a

pivot to address the simultaneity of concealment and revealment, and to locate shifting boundaries and protagonists. This simultaneity will later be described as a flimmering in chapters four and five. And it allows me to begin addressing sound art works as performance. In the context of this thesis, the model of the camera obscura becomes a conceptual device - a thinking device - that aids me in speaking about present protagonists at the peripheries of the works. As a result the fundamental roles of authorship, performance and audience-ship which unfold invisibly between us when we are part of them, can be thought about.

This thesis investigates the possible consequences for sound arts and performance practice of re-seeing the physically absent detached observer (whether this observer is ourselves or another) so that we may then also reintroduce the audience-witness in a way which highlights the relationship between the two.

What happens when we turn towards the equivalent invisible recordist in sound arts and seek him out? How does it alter our relationship with what we see, and what are the consequences when applied to sound arts and sound arts practice? Engaging with Mark Peter Wright's *The Thing in the Margins* (2015) in the next section, using creative auto-ethnographic writing allows me to engage in these questions and to develop the notion of protagonists and peripheries further. This approach allows me to seat my discussion in the experiential and from the perspective of an audience-witness. As a method of using creative writing critically, this creative writing is an opening that slips into non-creative-writing discussion to discuss protagonists at boundaries in Wright's work.

**The Thing in the Margins and the returned gaze**

I am seated in IMT Gallery in the East of London. I am here to see sound artist Mark Peter Wright's exhibition *I, the Thing in the Margins* (2015) and listen to 'All You Monsters,' a public conversation between the artist and sound theorist Angus Carlyle. The event lasts over an hour and teases out a multitude of layers upon which the exhibition plays. Slightly late from searching for the venue and wedged into the corner of the room at the edge of the group, I am hot and sweaty from travelling winter-clad on an unusually mild October day. I try to remove my coat very quietly.

As specified by the gallery's website, Wright's exhibition creates through sculptural assemblage, sound and image, a re-imagining of the "*traditionally silent or lone recordist as a chimeric identity assembled within the margins of representation.*"[40] (IMT Gallery, 2015). The scenery surrounding this particular live event – the artist in conversation – has a domestic feel to it. I find myself in a space made up as though it is a living room: an amplifier is in place of what would be a living-room television, partnered by a low-slung chair from which a human-sized 'being' surveys and listens to the scene. The being is to all intents and purposes human-like in form, though it is covered from head to toe in the dense fluffy fur usually used to make microphone wind-shield covers. The figure sits passively, wedged into a slightly-too-low, slightly-too-small 70s style chair that harks back to the artist's childhood.

The apparently comfortable setting is bathed in a vaguely sinister green light. I observe that its walls are dotted by insect-like shapes which upon a closer look are gunshot microphones made invertebrate by the addition of six-legs.

The small capacity of the IMT Gallery means that Wright's installation itself is the venue for the interview event. We are a large group present together in this uneasy and contrived domestic space. Due to us being seated in the installation space, throughout the interview this furred, human-sized figure sits closely at the artist's right elbow as he responds to questions. This

[40] iMT Gallery website accessed October 2015 www.imagemusictext.com/exhibitions-archive/mark-peter-wright-i-the-thing-in-the-margins

seemingly inanimate, furry and life-size being, almost Chewbacca- or Bigfoot-like in appearance, lurks behind the artist, silent and unmoving.

This figure is the now-stationary stuffed and repurposed tailor-made suit which was worn by the artist for the photographic and moving images also seen elsewhere in the exhibition. Its form - a large, human-shaped microphone wind-shield - is eyeless, earless, identity-less and mute. It is both silent stealth and clumsiness all at once and this evening in particular, it persists on the periphery of our discussion.

Images: Left, the exhibition at IMT Gallery. Right, the video image still.
Available: http://markpeterwright.net/the-noisynonself-or-i-the-thing-in-the-margins and https://wsimag.com/art/17801-mark-peter-wright-i-the-thing-in-the-margins

Later, in a neighbouring room I see this suit in action. Video footage shows Wright blundering about, blind in this furry suit. The footage shows him rendered utterly dependent upon his photographer's assistance for finding his footing and his sense of direction. As the documentation unfolds, we see footage of the pair taken from a video-camera that was left running during the photograph's setup time and which was initially shot without Wright's knowledge. It shows Wright and the photographer in shot as they go about staging a reproduction of the iconic 60s image of 'Bigfoot' for the photographic content of the show. During the talk, a final photograph still hangs on the wall on my right back in the main gallery space, like a family holiday snap in this fabricated sitting-room.

I believe that this video footage neatly encapsulates Wright's intentions for *I, the Thing in the Margins*, which is to mark out his own effects in the field as a field recordist, by accentuating his behaviour to highlight it. This microphone man we see in action in the woods is so patently at odds with the landscape he hopes to record. He is portrayed as being 'made' of microphone as though his existence is solely for that purpose and he is identity-less in every other respect. He is clad in wind-shield material in order to block out his own acoustic artefacts of noise and clatter [41] and yet we see this human microphone crashing over twigs and tussocks, arms flailing for balance. Wright creates an interesting contradiction in the desire to dress as a microphone and to remain unheard. However, instead of achieving a camera-obscura-like perfection of disappearance - in which his actions melt away from the final image - he is seen totally intruding physically and aurally upon the environment: a noisy bodily presence spilling into the aural scene that he hopes to encapsulate. In an effort to disappear into the environment he studies, he instead appears in a violent torrent of noise. Here, Wright appears despite his total apparent body-silencing garb and apparent efforts to disappear.

The being that Wright has become is the centre-piece and the focus of *I, the Thing in the Margins*. In this work, Wright, whose practice is grounded in years of working as a field recordist, intentionally becomes the antithesis of his professional self who would have ideally stealthily recorded a sonic camera-obscura version of his surroundings. This being he has created is a representation of himself and works to problematize his relationship both with the natural world he records and with the resulting artefacts he creates through his practice.

Although originally accidental, this video footage plays out Wright's problematic visually and with clarity. Conventional field-recording practice attempts to block out all extraneous noise, eliminating wind and handling sounds produced by the recordist's contrivances to achieve a 'pure' unencumbered scene while simultaneously providing the author with a veiled invisibility in the final edit. Like our camera obscura recordist, in an ideal

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[41] Accidental interference and extraneous noise caused by a field recordist's actions during recording are known as 'artefacts' of their presence.

situation the traditional field recordist fades out into the periphery, his bodily subjectivity remaining outside of and disappeared from the final recorded rendering of the scene. However in this video, Wright - covered from head to toe in this muting material - crashes about in the undergrowth in an explosion of unintended cacophony which forces out any hope of recording a "perfect" version of the scene's sound. His disguise, his microphone suit - a metaphor for his recording tools – addresses the issues of the notion of an objective recording and shows us the artefacts of the recordist visually as well as aurally.

Wright's allusion to Big Foot is an intriguing choice.[42] He lifts qualities of the iconic character and legendary sighting and reapplies them to a re-creation of himself in the field. This Big Foot character who tries to absent himself from the recording allows Wright himself to fall back into the margins, watchful of his own actions as other in the scene.

Bigfoot is a character who lives on the peripheries of civilisation, a wild-man at the margins who does not belong to mainstream existence: this being is a character who fits neither into the scene in which he is 'spotted' nor into the world he is ostracised from. He makes a life as an imposter in the forest and as an outcast from society while humans watch and seek to record a documentation of him; alienated by his other-ness and drawn to him by his similarities to ourselves.[43] With Wright's re-calibration of the video-documentation into an artwork and in his recreation of the furry being in the gallery space we also come to stand now at a periphery, and at this periphery

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[42] Wright references the Bigfoot character portrayed in the iconic frame 352 in the Patterson-Gimlin film which lasts a total of 59.5 seconds and was shot on 20th October 1967. Patterson and friend Gimlin shot the footage in known 'Sasquatch,' or Bigfoot territory at Bluff Creek, Northwest of New Orleans, USA. Patterson had become interested in Bigfoot creatures after reading an article in 1959. Biped, humanoid creatures of giant proportions and wild-man habits have been part of many different cultures across the world and especially in indigenous peoples of the Northwest Pacific coast. Patterson became a 'believer' who sought to film the beast. Their chance-encounter footage (whether a hoax or real) has become an iconic snippet of film subjected to debunking attempts many times. It depicts a sentient humanoid, bipedal being who exists in the wilderness, with an expression on turning to the cameraman of "contempt and disgust…", in Patterson's own words.

[43] A traction of curiosity about an intersubjective experience pulls us towards Bigfoot. It is the possibility of a magical moment where he gazes back at us, his observers, which is so thrilling: it is his (our other's) sentient recognition of us as his other. It is the moment of being seen looking and listening, the eyes locked to one another's, a mutual recognition, that sends shivers down the spine.

we are open to the chance of a returned look. Where now are the margins? Where now are the boundaries? In a sighting of Bigfoot we look into the margins, yet he returns our gaze. It is across these boundaries then that a returned gaze and an intersubjective experience becomes possible.

In Wright's IMT Gallery exhibition installation of *I, the Thing in the Margins*, pervasive feedback noise features heavily. It is transmitted from the TV-like amplifier at the now seated, inert suit of the furry figure. This feedback noise was originally intended to be caused by the presence of gallery visitors in the space, evidencing our presences in the installation. Like the invisible recordist, we too as visitors tread around artworks at the periphery with no apparent effect on the scene. Wright, however, does not grant us our usual invisibility and marks us out aurally using feedback to show us our own protagonist effects in the scene. This gallery feedback includes *us*, the visitors.

Playing on many levels of other-ness, Wright's installation presents us with a being who is made aware of *himself* as protagonist in the scene, and who also forces us to be aware of ourselves as present and acting: The feedback played via the amplifier at the Being is both his *own* feedback - the aural marker of a body in the space – and that of other visitors' bodies, and also of *others* who are viewing in the space. The fluffy 'Bigfoot' (almost taxidermied in this installation representation) sound recordist, is the centre-point of the installation but as observers ourselves, we are unusually caused to step outwards to another layer of viewing where others (other visitors) are littering the space and where others include ourselves. Wright's setup causes he-who-aimed-to-remain-invisible to become visible, even to himself as marked out by his feedback noise through the amplifier. Wright could have stumbled about in that undergrowth without a suit on, merely blindfolded - performing as himself. Yet the furry disguise creates another layer of observation. By using the furry suit in the piece, Wright may re-view himself in the scene as the other when he watches the footage. With his body subjectivity removed through supplanting himself into another character's physicality Wright can be located both at the periphery looking in and also at the centre of the work. In this way what I will come to term a plurality of others is springing up, multiple selves are also coming into being. The gallery video footage succinctly encapsulates the aural-camera obscura author emerging from the margins: here we see him

in action, imagine his activities and witness him appearing into his own scene. Here the potential thrill of being seen by one another is set up again and again via layers inside layers of observation.

The whole work plays with shifting boundaries and with plural others who are also shifting in their roles and locations. As visitors enter the installation, they are set up to feel as though they are observed, or at least made evident by sound in the space: that their movements and actions matter. One might usually slip round a gallery installation on the periphery, a viewer looking in, but in Wright's piece, each viewer is pulled out of anonymity by a piercing howl of feedback noise. Wright sets up margins that we do not remain passive at: We simultaneously gaze at the scene while also being pulled into it across expected boundaries via our own aural artefacts. Are we at the edge of or at the centre of this piece? That question, at the forefronts of our minds, serves as the core of the work.

**Parasitical Behaviour**

During the IMT conversation, reference was made to the four or five insect-like microphones poised, mid-creep, about the floor and the walls. Wright describes these as six-legged representations of the field-recordist's microphone, which likewise exhibit the possibility of, in this case, a locust-like animation. These usually inanimate shot-gun mics are now imbued with identities of their own, engaging in what the artist describes as "parasitic activity." I come to explore the quality of objects as protagonists in chapter four. These insects exhibit a self-instigated impetus in raking the scene of its sound: potentially agile, nimble and fast, they lurk in the corners and on the peripheries, drinking in intended and unintended sound, exploitatively lifting material from the scene. Insects are those creepy-crawlies that can get into everything, into your flour, into your ear in horror films and who can take over the world in fantasy literature. They are fascinating and abhorrent at the same time, exhibiting an unsettling agility and potential facility for mass collective coordination and organisation. Parasitical organisms have the ability to destroy a living being quietly from the inside, out.

Images: *Left:* https://wsimag.com/imt-gallery/artworks/78613 *Right:* https://wsimag.com/imt-gallery/artworks/78615

During the artist Q & A, Wright described these microphone-insects as representing "*the microphonic I . . . Sucking and draining the room . . . draining a place of its identity*," causing both a preservation and loss through their activity. I believe Wright sees himself, and other field recordists, as reaping a place of its yield for their own uses and understands this act and its final presentation as reflecting the activities of the 'parasite' as much as it does the place itself. Once the act of recording takes place, it is already manipulated, already altered: already in someone's power. As a self-instigated critique or challenge of recording practices, including his own, Wright describes his work as agitating a broader field. In *I, the Thing in the Margins*, Wright aims to "blur the self, subject, object and objectified" as a way of questioning how a recording agitates and manipulates the real. Through causing the situation to occur, through choosing his material and in recording it in his particular way in the first instance, Wright acknowledges his manipulation and exploitation of reality: Wright admits and plays on the idea of this manipulation and agitation of reality as also containing him. Wright aims to reveal his peripheral presence and blur the realities together to draw aspects of the practice into the light, revealing its agitating force. It is not just about his presence but his parasitic presence: a parasite can *do* things as a protagonist, not merely be present.

In Wright's exhibition set up, away from the field as seen in the video footage, he markedly acknowledges the sound recordist's presence in the room - he is seated in the chair. It is also, more importantly, he and the presence of other viewers in the space which cause the channelled feedback in the space and makes us now aware of *ourselves* on the margins: we also materialize

visibly and audibly into the scene, now implicated into the relationships of looking and looked-at or listening and listened-to in the gallery space before us. At this point, and with reference to Krauss, we all "appear" into the scene as protagonists: are we then also parasites? Are we also acting exploitatively? The parasitical nature of field recording is present in *I, the Thing in the Margins* as a challenge to gallery visitors also. As with this thesis' earlier exploration of eavesdropping, visitors are made aware of their own responsibility within the scene. First of all Wright marks out behaviours through feedback noise. Our coming into an awareness of our own presence and actions in the scene also imbues us with a sense of responsibility and with a sense that our actions may have effects and consequences. In this way, the bodies pulled in from the peripheries are treated by Wright as bodies who begin to understand this experience as transactional, intersubjective and consequential.

Wright's work directs our attention towards the other who, pivotally for this investigation, is also sometimes ourselves. In his work others become plural, and our own personal experiential otherness also manifests as plural, shifting and flimmering. At times we look in as the self, and at times we see ourselves in the act of looking in. He holds up a mirror up to us in which we recognise ourselves gazing back, captured in our own camera obscura detail. As a result a whole range of intersubjective implications both for the observer and the observed spring up.

A creative writing account follows which plays on this idea of the self as the other at the margins and as part of a plural otherness that saturates the experiential nature of works.

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## Me As The Thing in the Margins

"BASTA!! ...Basta!!" or is it "...Bastardo!!"? I am unsure. The speaker has been walking with us some time, though I am unsure whether he knows what we are doing. He has tired of our pied-piper-like walking already: "That's enough ...enough!! Bastards..." he shouts from the back, gesticulating at us. Then, he lights up a cigarette and turns away.

I am in Venice with CRiSAP (Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice) the research centre based at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. We are here for a symposium and for the 2015 Biennale *All the World's Futures*. Tonight, we are going on what will turn out to be a three-and-a-half-hour long sound walk across the city with our Italian hosts. As we move about Venice as a 40-strong silent mob, we pause in open spaces. Venice is a perfect city for a sound walk. The all-surrounding sound of water moving in architectural vessel-like spaces lends a completely new sense of place, and the lack of road-noise makes it a place to hear the unexpected details of people going about their lives in a city. During our long, weaving journey we pause in the piazzas and I find myself listening to people preparing their evening meals three storeys above me; and to the clink of everyday plates and cutlery drifting down through the hush on a threadbare carpet of broken radio voices. They are not aware that I am here, that we are all quietly here, lifting them of their unsuspecting carefree conversation. I hear the click of their spaghetti-fork in the pan and the chink of the cups being stacked with which they had shared coffee earlier that day. Am I entitled to hear this unpublished tête-à-tête? I have unexpectedly stepped invisibly into their apartment, draining someone else's sounds into my ears without their permission. Here, I am Wright's parasite. I cannot help what I hear, but in turning my attention toward it, I step invisibly across a line: here I am actively reaping these people of their sounds, becoming an insect-like microphone ear.

For anyone who observes our group, we are mute, listening, zombie-like apparitions. Spewed from dark passageways while talking into their phones, Venetians going about their daily business rush into our silent

collective. As they hurry through the darker, less picturesque areas of the city, their voices become part of a soundscape that we silently consume. We make little noise of our own. They are entirely unaware of our presence until they rush into our midst. And, all at once, they are aware of an inexplicably large group of people dotted silently across the space. They hesitate, questioning what they have stumbled into and I experience our large, fluid group involuntarily evolving into an unplanned performance. As though our prey has turned and gazed back at us: we are recognised as an observing other and our eyes become locked to one another's in a mutual realisation. Bystanders become gradually aware that they are in the midst of an inexplicable and seemingly clandestine meeting of persons, while others are unknowingly swept up into the wave of collective movement, absorbed momentarily into our activity. Others merely observe us enter and disappear from their worlds as we quietly drain the city of its sounds, some of us with recording devices in hand.

At one point I find myself observing first-hand a bystander's confusion after he clocks one of my fellow sound walkers facing a brick wall in the surroundings. His nose is almost touching the clay, and his behaviour is unfathomable to anyone who is unaware of our very specific activity. From an outer layer, an outer periphery of this unfolding scene, I watch this sound-walking observer observed in return by him who he had intended to observe. Our soundwalk, if conducted in a smaller group, would have more easily retained its anonymous quality. Yet, as a cumbersome mass of listeners we cause a complex transformation of the environment: our presence becomes potentially site-specific and the climate of an installation piece is almost created in the city's various areas. I see people vaguely expecting some kind of "flash-mob" behaviour. Here in the darkened piazzas, they turn and look back over their shoulder - like Bigfoot in Bluff Creek - and view us back. This unexpected turn of events makes me re-assess whether we are still sound walking or if we are performing some other kind of sound installation. Yet we only stay in each stopping-place a little while, and the potential for an envelope of performance to occur and develop in stationary places gets nipped in the bud each time.

In this particularly large sound walk we become observers observed. We weave through the city, clogging up passageways with our single-file snaking; poising almost motionless in the piazzas. I do not carry a recording device this time around as I have done in sound walks in the past: I instead spend my time observing us active in the spaces and the people who are around us. I witness the distinction between those listened to and those listening become indistinct and unsure: who is the object and who is the objectified becomes unclear. Overlapping and increasingly layered, the lines between the observer and the observed become muddied and intertwined. We as sound walkers are viewed back by our chosen scene and a multiple folding in of relationships - a collapsing and reconnecting of new balances occurs over and over, layered and perpetually shifting. Previously oblivious to us, our own subjects unexpectedly become our observers. The relationship between us takes a new twist and we become engaged with each other under a very particular set of circumstances. The thrilling lock of the gaze that occurs between us, between the pursuer and the pursued, transforms the experience of a sound walk into a dynamic and changing entanglement of relationships not usually reserved for the form.

**Slipping into performance**

In this scenario, I would contend that our activity became something very different from a conventional sound walk.[44] Through our cumbersome size and unexpected visibility to our 'prey' we instead entered into a performance observed. We were obviously not performing as one might in a flash mob - meticulously planned, choreographed and smiling - but the relationship between those who look and those who are being looked at became heightened

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[44] A **soundwalk** is a walk with a focus on listening to the environment. The term was first used by members of the World Soundscape Project under the leadership of composer R. Murray Schafer in Vancouver in the 1970s. Hildegaard Westerkamp, from the same group of artists describes soundwalking as "*... any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment. It is exposing our ears to every sound around us no matter where we are.*" (Westerkamp, Hildegard (1974). "Soundwalking". Sound Heritage. **III** (4).) [Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soundwalk accessed 03/10/2021].
Soundwalks can take many forms, but it was unusual for such a large group to conduct this particular walk.

in a way that resembled the structure of performer and audience. The strange and unexpected situation of observing people who are observing me caused both a change in my behaviour and an alteration in my awareness. The expected dynamic of the conventional sound walk changed and my actions, now unexpectedly publicly witnessed, became conscious (or perhaps more specifically self-aware) and controlled. Following the initial shock of our accidental and collective slip into visibility, we became aware of ourselves appearing into our camera obscura-like scene, much like Wright appears to himself as a 'horrifying visualisation' in his *I, the Thing in the Margins*. Usually comfortably hidden behind an authorial camera obscura-like veil in which a small microphone and/or our own ears go unnoticed, in Venice we unintentionally became listening-made-visible. It is this kind of self-awareness which crucially translated the soundwalk into a type of performance. This slip into performance taking place at this crucial time in my research allowed me to begin marking out and recognising protagonistic engagements within works and later to appraise these engagements of others as contributing a co-creativity worth pursuing as an aspect both of otherness and of intimacy and proximity in sound arts.

This particular Venetian sound walk scenario became a more obviously public endeavour than a normal sound walk. I found myself entering into a new set of relationships with those about me. My relationship with my space and my actions, my behaviour and my awareness became influenced both by my fellow participants and notably by those bystanders who witnessed the unfolding slip into visibility. I was no longer merely sound walking with my companions: we were now performing our shared subjective state with others. I will explore how this shared subjective state is a type of performance and how this contributes to the research in this thesis.

**Towards Performance: A shared subjective state**

In both of these examples, in the massed Venice sound walk and in Mark Peter Wright's *I, the Thing in the Margins,* listening is made visible or apparent, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and the listener or observer is drawn out from the margins and into an active, protagonistic space. In both

circumstances, the spectator or spectators became visibly and tangibly present in the scene and a dynamic of relationships suddenly came discernibly into play. Once one protagonist is caught in the searchlight, all the other participants equally become easier to see - they emerge from the sidelines, revealed as instrumental actors and potentially pivotal forces in the playing-out of the work. Like our camera obscura recordist, the now-revealed invisible listening soundwalker alters the situation that is being observed. As protagonists materialize from the margins and their involvement becomes obvious, a new awareness arises about the inter-relationships between all of those who are present.

In a revealed situation where the invisible authors and protagonists have been appeared or made visible, we find that all of those present are sharing an experience and mutual awareness of each other, and this awareness of the other translates into an awareness also of the self behaving as someone else's other. The relationships interlock and overlap: I see you as you might see me; I imagine what you see when you see me and so, likewise, do you. A previously concealed network of shared subjective states is unveiled and multiple new questions about roles, about who performs and who receives and about who holds the power in each situation begin to arise. A web of intersubjective relationships, where each individual responds and reacts to the other individuals present with a voluntary or involuntary tug on the silk, is exposed.

This self-awareness, caused by the presence of other self-aware protagonists, equates in my research terms to performance, with useful implications for how we might more successfully address and discuss sound art works. This notion of the art work as performance, is the central premise of this thesis, and at this point in the research, I have established the possibility of multiple and plural others being present with the work and thus part of this performance. Considering the boundaries marked out by the camera obscura, Krauss' notion of appearance at boundaries and two auto-ethnographic experiential accounts I have worked to turn our gaze towards the margins, and I have also through this shift of the gaze towards active protagonists at boundaries, working in this way to introduce the performative binary terms (as described in the introduction) of performance into the discussion: Inherent in the structure of performance is held the actions and partnerships of

protagonists on either side of a boundary: the performer and the audience. Between these two protagonists something occurs as a result of their collision with the work and with each other through the work. Introducing performance by drawing protagonists from the margins is the beginning of a greater exploration in the following chapters of entanglement as a co-creative becoming.

**Self-judgement: A Two-fold Self as a step towards the Other's Other**

In both of these experiences of sound works, an un-nerving self-seeing takes place. As Wright answered questions during the conversation it was almost as though he was subjected to a form of self-judgement by the presence in the corner of the room, of his own creation, sitting at his elbow: In this way the artist was present twice. He became his own audience - spectated by himself - and the role of artist-recordist became inseparable from the image of the recordist-now-made-visible. His new visibility and revealment could not now be reversed, the way to slip back into invisibility was now barred. Similarly, in the Venice sound walk, I found myself appeared into the scene by observers suddenly seeing me as observing them. Caught in their line of sight, I became more than another local in a piazza and instead became recognized as exerting some type of will and action within the everyday scene. Both myself and Wright were manifested two-fold into the scenes, gazing back at ourselves in action in the spaces.

It is precisely this un-nerving form of self-judgement, of self-seeing, that I understand to form the basis both of intersubjectivity and of performance. The slip into irreversible visibility causes both a realisation of the other's presence, and a self-realisation of one's self as simultaneously the other. In chapter two, I will develop this assertion in terms of Sartre's *The Look*, shame, and sociological discourse on intersubjectivity as an expansion of an understanding of sound art as performance. From here I will use my explorations to formulate a thinking device based around otherness as plural and shifting.

Key to my study, and to the strands of discussion in the next chapter is that in Venice, as long as we remained unobserved, we did not perform. But, once we were observed and a binary relationship - a term that I will develop

with performativity in this thesis - of listening-walker and viewer was set up, we entered into a state of performance. It is this state of performance that I claim is a criticality useful in sound arts. Performance itself provided a liminal context and framing springing from the visibility occurring for both the observed and the observers. Until Wright's Bigfoot-like character steps into view, everything is as in the camera obscura: merely a scene observed discreetly by an invisible observer or recordist, captured in exact form through the pin-hole. In the sound-walk, while we remained as assumed bystanders and local people going about our business, this too was as the camera-obscura. Once the being turns back and gazes into our faces, and once the Venetian locals saw us as behaving oddly, a performance situation was created: and in the springing up of performance the two binary halves of a dialogue distinctly appeared. I will come to describe this binary as overlapping and flimmering in later chapters. And rather than acting as bystanders, everyone present will be appraised as a protagonist with powers of action and perception. Everyone present will be seen as entering into a new role with a whole new range of potential engagements and reactions set into play by the materialisation of the Other in the scene.

As an observer in Venice and as a gallery visitor generating my own feedback-howl in the IMT Gallery, I became intersubjectively related to the others in the space by dint of our shared experience. It is this shared experience that American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley indirectly refers to in his "Looking Glass Self" in *Human Nature and the Social Order* (originally published in 1902), and which is taken up also by sociologist Thomas Scheff in his 2006 book, *Goffman Unbound!: A New Paradigm for Social Science* which I will refer to in chapter two. Cooley's "Looking Glass Self" is a summary term for the concept that a person's self grows out of society's interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others. It allows for the idea that the capacity of the self includes the propensity for reflection on one's own behaviour. Goffman and Scheff later attributed this as a constitutive part of intersubjectivity. Cooley describes in *Human Nature and the Social Order* the stages of the Looking Glass Self:

*"As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do*

*not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it.*

*A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification. The comparison with a looking-glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgement, which is quite essential. The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind."* (Cooley 1912: 152)

This 'reflection of ourselves', rather than being taken in this discussion to solely refer to a mirrored reflection also serves to act as a marker of our peripheral activity becoming visible. As I have described, it is this visibility that allows for a performance context to spring up and is that which allows for protagonists to be appraised. In the quotation above it is as though Cooley describes my own personal experience as a performing musician. As I will describe in chapter three, this self-appraisal happens as part of my own performative space when working both with music and with objects and it is through these further examples that I will come to eke out the importance of describing and addressing this type of intersubjective relationship within sound arts practice and as part of sound arts discourse. It is the "*sharing of subjective states by two or more individuals*" described by Scheff in 2006 which eventually equates to intersubjectivity as I am using it in this thesis; and it is this entanglement of subjectivities which interests me in regard to performance as a critical turn for sound arts discourse. This will at the end of chapter five bring me to how this intersubjective intertwining can lend sound art a new set of terms and access points by which to create new and useful discursive terms and approaches.

The next chapter takes the notion of the returned gaze introduced by the reflected self and by the protagonist other, and explores this through Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Look* (1943) as a way to think historically and foundationally about shame and the other as part of performance. It also introduces Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological body as a means by which to use his

embedding of the self in the world as a way to root Sartre's transcendental philosophy into the world and into real performative situations that are further developed in chapter three. Although sound is my discipline and is the genre for which I am devising a new approach to discourse in this thesis, many of the following investigations into works are not specifically based wholly in sound works. I feel that this investigation benefits from a drawing together and reading together of a number of different artistic paradigms which are all related to performance, therefore a specific discussion of sound alone doesn't necessarily suffice to help me reach my thesis' conclusions. As a result a broad set of investigative studies form my investigation.

## *Chapter Two*

# Formulating the Other's-Other: The Look, the Looking Glass Self and a returned gaze.

In the last chapter I worked to turn our gaze towards the margins and to open up the possibility for protagonists to be actively present at peripheries and boundaries where they would usually be perceived as passive and invisible. By appearing them via Krauss' discussion of the camera obscura, I laid the ground for addressing works in the terms of performance. Performance offers up a state of two: the binary of performer and audience, serving as a step toward speaking about works in terms of a performative binary. In this "performative" binary, protagonists are not fixed against each other in opposition, but are present and active in relation to one another. In other words, they are relational and intersubjective. In regard to this, I worked to deliberately appear these protagonists and then to contemplate the possibility that they might interact with one another co-creatively. As a result, it enabled me to argue that in performance, protagonists are not necessarily passive but are acting and engaged in a dialogue in which each party simultaneously exists and interacts both as a self and as an other – generated by the scene and the presence of other protagonists. Thus, recognising this active performative binary allows me now in this chapter, to explore both otherness as well as the intimacy and proximity that is involved in our experience of it to begin my formulation of the *Other's-Other* device. I suggest via an auto-ethnographic account of listening, Cooley, Sartre, Krauss, Bleeker and Merleau-Ponty that the presence of two in performance itself implies a range of intimacies and proximities. In the prologue and parados, I established that the structure of performance allows for protagonist roles to be considered anew and differently. This chapter looks at the interplay between protagonist roles as a key discursive focus in my proposed approach to sound arts, with especial reference to the other and the body in existential philosophy to bring in intimacy and proximity as part of the *Other's-Other* device.

I recalibrated my auto-ethnographic experiences in the previous chapter by attributing the protagonists within them simultaneous states of otherness. This simultaneity of otherness - or what I will classify as a plural otherness as part of chapter four and five - was attributed equally to the authorial or acting artist, as to the observer or audience. By exploring this type of performative intersubjectivity further, in this present chapter I will, by using the notion of otherness as a device, begin to direct our attention to intimacy and proximity as integral and pivotal elements in a performative intersubjectivity. I will later in this thesis come to identify intimacy and proximity as valid and crucial elements in sound arts discourse, at this stage, I simply introduce and explore them. As part of this chapter's endeavour, intimacy and proximity begin to augment my understanding of otherness, which I contend marks their importance as part of a deeper criticality.

This chapter expands specifically on the subject of self-seeing, self-witnessing or shame as a central constitutive element of the performative intersubjectivity which I will be defining, exploring and terming as a performative rather than dialectical binary. Therefore, in this chapter I firstly look at self-seeing as part of an approach to sound arts that acknowledges the discursive possibilities of intimacy and proximity. I contend that for a performativity to take place, a form of witnessing must occur - whether this is a self-seeing or simply being witnessed by an other. In terms of this assertion, this chapter is pivotal in the development of the key thought-device developed in this thesis: the "*Other's-Other*". The *Other's-Other* marks out protagonists in relation to one another and serves as a device by which to think otherness as entangled and co-creative. The *Other's-Other* crucially also acknowledges this entangled and co-creative relationship as flimmering: as co-creative directly due to the collision, caressing and friction occurring between and because of (perceived) present binary relationships and protagonists. The notion of flimmering as a product of a plural otherness (a plural otherness that acknowledges intimacy and proximity) becomes a central concept in developing the critical terms of this thesis' investigation. Flimmering begins to replace the traditional ideas of a binary relationship by setting these perceived

binaries humming against one another, in a process which is not fixed but is intersubjective and interdependent.

This chapter is the first chapter to fall distinctly into two halves as part of a writing methodology. The idea of a productive flimmering occurring as a co-creative element of collisions between others is transferred (from this point) also to some of the chapter formats whereby chapters often fall into self-contained pairings of creative practice auto-ethnography and theory that flimmer against one another in order to produce new ways of thinking about the works in question and sound arts more generally.

To begin developing the *Other's-Other* thought-device, I open this chapter with my auto-ethnographic approach - this time in relation to a listening activity I undertook in 2016 and again in 2017. Using my creative writing practice as a vital step and direct link towards relevant theory, from this listening account I build on the idea of the returned gaze and the "looking glass self" that were introduced in chapter one. At this stage in the thesis I introduce the idea of self-seeing as something that we can use to think about witnessing; and of witnessing as part of a performativity that acknowledges plural others as bound up in an intimate and proximitous co-creativity. The flimmering second half of the chapter approaches self-seeing and witnessing via phenomenology and specifically via Sartre's *The Look* (1943) as a direct response to contextualising my main installation work of this project *And So I Met My Other's Other* (2017). This work, as described in Prologue ii, has the act of looking at its centre, with various layers of looking forming a work in which boundaries and roles shimmer and shift in a changing dynamic of interaction. In *And So I Met My Other's Other* the moment of the look and then the returned gaze is a central pivotal moment of the performance which draws the audience into complicity with a collision of others defining its performative realisation. As the audience-protagonist is engaged by the performer-protagonist, they both see themselves as their other's other, I use *The Look* as a springboard to think about the possibility of the dualistic binary relationship of looking as being performative and co-creative.

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## *Self-seeing*

## *Autumn 2016 and Summer 2017 - Auto-ethnographic account*

A few months ago, after having curated an exhibition which included both sound works and visual works, I was approached by a local visual artist, who is also a family friend. Though Eleanor Ockenden is an avid visitor of the national galleries and exhibitions in the capital she had little experience of sound art until fairly recently through my involvement in sound arts.

Directly after having taken down last year's local exhibition, Eleanor approached me with a cassette tape. She explained that it was a tape from the nineties which she had kept because it felt special to her, and because it had unexpectedly captured a certain moment in time. It was unique in comparison to other recordings she had made from the radio, which she had ultimately recorded over. Visiting the local exhibition and listening to the sound works there had given her a different perspective on this particular cassette recording. From the viewpoint of this thesis, I would say that Eleanor's own flimmering against the works in the exhibition created a new relationship for her with this old recording. Her first enthusiastic words as she approached me brandishing the tape were "Julie, I'd like to show you my accidental sound art!"

Back in the nineties, Eleanor had attempted to record a concert from the radio. The piece she had recorded is of epic proportions: Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah* Op. 70, MWV A 25 (1829). I have performed the piece a number of times as a professional flautist. It is renowned in instrumental musicians' worlds as a long, dense and for wind players especially as a very tiring piece to execute which runs the risk of putting reed players' lips out of action for the following days. There is also always the danger as a musician that you might miss the last train home when performing this piece as without cuts it lasts around two and a half hours, excluding the interval. This is my practical relationship with the piece. In musical terms, the work is a profound and lengthy account of events in the life of the biblical prophet *Elijah*, taken from the Book of Kings (1 & 2) in the Old Testament. It is no trivial matter. *Elijah* is modelled on the oratorios of the Baroque masters: Bach and Handel. It is a very Victorian account of the biblical passages, and contains musical depictions of visions, an ascension on a fiery chariot and the dramatic resurrection of a dead youth. It takes place in two extensive parts.

Eleanor, one evening a couple of decades ago had heard that this particular performance of *Elijah* by a well-known, probably London-based, orchestra would be broadcast on the radio. I have a recollection that she may have mentioned the BBC Proms. In her affection for the piece, she decided to make a copy of it.

Eleanor set up a simple radio with cassette recorder and player incorporated in the kitchen so that she might get on with that evening's domestic chores at the same time. As far as she was concerned, all went well during her recording of the performance. She caught up with chores and also experienced the broadcast first-hand. Still in her possession a couple of decades later in 2016, Eleanor brought me the tape so I could perform my own listening, with an instruction to look after this treasured possession.

**A listening account:**

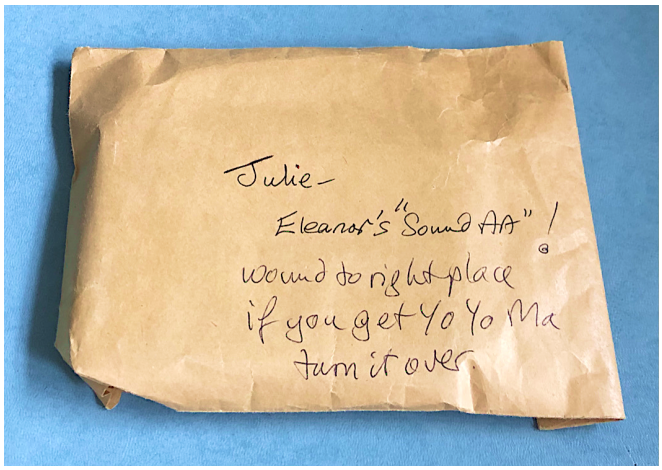
As I write this, I am listening to this tape again now. I will describe what I experience.

I have spent some minutes finding the tape, infused with a mild sense of panic that I might have mislaid it. I eventually find it, safely stored in a paper envelope inscribed:

Julie -

Eleanor's "Sound Art"!

wound to right place
if you get Yo Yo Ma
turn it over.

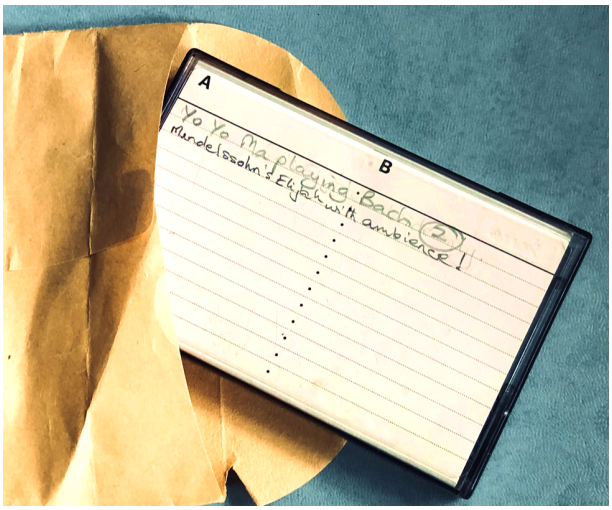



Inside the carefully rolled down opening, I find the cassette tape inside. This too is inscribed.

Yo Yo Ma playing Bach 2

and, directly underneath and added in a different, presumably later pencil marking quite recently

Mendelssohn's Elijah with ambience!




It takes me some time to work out how to use the tape player on the small, cheap old radio we have. I am filled with trepidation about recording over Eleanor's treasured tape. I find myself searching stupidly for the buttons that operate the cassette player, suddenly remembering what I should have been looking for when I see a row of clunky push-in cubes with the markings I

need on them. I grew up playing about with the recording function on tape machines as a child and teenager. My first ever single was bought on cassette tape and even I have forgotten how to make them work. As I push eject, I recall the physical engagement that I now perform with the touch of a thumb or the click of a mouse. I still tend to listen to CDs, but even CDs feel much more sleek and smooth than this. It takes some effort to push the keys down.

Weirdly, on this machine, play points from right to left, not left to right, and the cassette sits tape-up in the slot. In fact, all the buttons appear to be in reverse from what I remember. It infuses the whole experience with an anxiety and disorientation. I hope I am doing this right…

I listened to this recording once before back in 2016 as soon as I received it. This time, a year later, I find myself having to press rewind and play (which looks remarkably like fast-forward) a number of times in order to find the beginning. I hear snippets of a large choir in full flow; I hear Yo Yo Ma playing Bach on the cello - I must have rewound too far. It is like dipping an indicator test paper at random. It occurs to me that Eleanor must have spent some time sourcing the start of the track she was after for me last year. A labour of love.

I decide to listen until Yo Yo Ma finishes.
Then, I will know more about where I am on the tape.

Immediately at the end of Yo Yo Ma's final cadence I hear a clunk…

...I hear a fly!...

...A fly is buzzing near the microphone!... A fly long-dead by now. I wonder what it was after. I wonder what kind of day it was when she recorded it - a hot one? Summer, Winter?

I hear the familiar recorded clunk of the buttons going down, and we are in… not at the start of the piece, but during the first couple of chords and during the first proclamation of the prophet.

The ensuing opening is sublime. It is hushed and chorale-like. It is calm and evocative - pensive, almost.

Alongside this sublime cascade, I hear the creak of a board. And, as I hear the choir ascend, peak, and descend through the opening harmony, the swish and slap of rubber gloves being adorned and the crash of a pan into water rudely finishes the phrase. Again, another crash! Another...! The clunking and the crashing is violent, sustained and relentless. The loud chinks of crockery being piled near the radio on the draining board peaks to a cascading racket as a pile slips: all as an accompaniment to this slow, sublime, portentous opening.

Eleanor's washing up is totally unapologetic. And it is totally at odds with the sentiments of the performance.

I hear pans submerged, drowned in the water. The glub-glub-glub of a sinking vessel being forced beneath the waterline. The wet sloshing and swooshing of water is peppered with clinks and crashes. The first forte full-choir entry is highlighted by the smashing of a handful of cutlery which slides across the metal draining-board. I hear the slap and crunch of plates against plates, the hammer of the brush-end on the walls of the aluminium sink; the boom of a roasting pan. It sounds as if Eleanor is doing the washing up after the carnage of a rip-roaring party for thirty from the night before. I know she is not. She is doing the washing up for a maximum of three or four people. It is its juxtaposition against this exquisite music which makes it pop into a more intrusive and shocking set of sounds.

The transcending quality of the choir and orchestra before the entry of the bass is brutally crashed through by resounding glass and china - each interjection surprising me more than the last. It is the pan lids and grille that make me jump the most.

This washing up is relentless.

Eleanor descends into a hard scrubbing and sloshing. Then, at last, a quiet period. No, I speak too soon: We are obviously onto the roasting grill - I always leave the dirtiest part to last, too.

With a final crash, I hear Eleanor peel off her gloves, do some final pieces of tidying up and she disappears from the scene.

I am alone with Mendelssohn again.
Yet, I have somehow been comforted by the previous sounds. It is like the sound of home. I feel safe. I even feel cosy. I can imagine her husband Richard sitting in the living room, perhaps. Perhaps the curtains are drawn. I imagine Yo Yo Ma's rendition of JS Bach having been recorded at the height of Summer and Mendelssohn's Elijah in the Autumn. Perhaps even for the BBC Proms in early September. Listening to the tail end of the recording, I imagine the glow of closed curtains from outside and the warmth and peace of perhaps a Sunday evening in a quiet household - seeing the evening out until bedtime. I am most likely completely wrong, but that does not matter. It is real to me.

Eleanor must have returned. I hear her chuckle as she hears cheering from the audience at the end.

The rest of the tape is blank.

Using my own creative writing auto-ethnography to speak about my listening experience works to materialise myself at the boundaries of Eleanor's recording. In this account, I am present as an active, listening protagonist rather than writing about the experience as though my viewpoint is universal or the only perspectival viewpoint, thereby avoiding a perceived passivity and instead highlighting the relationship of my interaction with the piece as a listener. In this way I work to generate the visibility of myself as my Other's-Other in my account.

This recording is a gem. I can see why she hung on to it for so many years. In listening to Eleanor's *Elijah*, I found myself pulling another's world into my own although, unlike in Venice, this time I had been given permission to eavesdrop. Likewise, Eleanor's recording caused reactions in me through my interaction with it: humour at its paradoxical collision of the sublime and ridiculous; a sense of home and reassuring comfort; even unease that I might wipe over the sounds.

What fascinates me about this recording and Eleanor's sharing of it with me is her description of it as "*Eleanor's "Sound Art"!*" and verbally as her "accidental" sound art. In essence it is merely a recording which includes extraneous and unintentional elements, but rather than viewing this recording as a mistake and erasing or re-recording over the top of it, Eleanor carefully kept it for years. Something about hearing herself back – of witnessing and of self-witnessing - gave this blunder a different quality. Here, perhaps Eleanor found herself in Cooley's *Looking Glass* from chapter one: listening at a reflection of herself and also to a depiction of households all over the country. Perhaps she felt "*some sort of self-feeling*" (Cooley 1912:152), and in listening back to her own recording, some kind of self-judgement. In hearing the artefacts of her own activity she experienced a re-seeing of herself as the other who was now layered into a performance of *Elijah*; equally experiencing herself listening now as a spectator-other of her own sounds. In this recording Eleanor was herself a plural other. This self-seeing or self-experience constituted a dense entanglement of othernesses which I will come to refer to as a plurality of otherness: a facet of the *Other's-Other* device by which we can think sound arts through the terms of intimacy and proximity. Plural otherness and intimacy and proximity are terms that I shall define through one another in the course of this thesis.

Like Eleanor I too am compelled by this recording because, via sound and through my own listening I am momentarily allowed to gaze into her life and to hear qualities that resonate also with my own experiences. I believe likewise that my own secondary listening became another form of a self-seeing, forming yet another plural layer of otherness within the complex entanglement. Through a mechanism of othering in which I experienced an intimacy with Eleanor, I too was enabled to look back at myself. In both of our listenings, we

appeared at the periphery of *Elijah* as an other. In that crucial moment of self-seeing or self-awareness and of performativity, my own self was materialized into the aural space as a protagonist capable of actions that might bear consequential shape for meaning-making.

**A returned gaze and the moment of recognition: witnessing as a catalyst of the flimmering performative binary.**

In the auto-ethnographic account above, what marks witnessing out as a crucial constitutive component of performance and performativity is its subtle action in transforming Eleanor's self-listening into an unexpected performance. At this stage, I simply contend that at the moment of listening to herself, Eleanor's recording ceased to be the straightforward documentation of a live concert, and that her personal sound-producing artefacts - now imprinted into the recording and acting as a signal of her own presence - caused the recording to become something other than a camera obscura documentation of a radio broadcast. Instead, the sound was infused for her with a self-witnessing. As with Mark Peter Wright who regarded his own self simultaneously in and at the margin of his field recording, so too Eleanor materialized twofold into her own recording, doubling up in the moment of her second listening and becoming aware of her plural presence.[45] Furthermore, the chance nature of Eleanor's recording makes it notable due to the absence of any pre-conceived ideas of performance and/or of a contrived performance setup already calibrated to play intentionally on an audience-performer binary, yet we can still think it in these terms.

The absence of this contrived or intentional binary brings her self-witnessing to the fore, and marks it as a significant and crucial active or catalyzing element: it is the act of witnessing that recalibrates the mistake into 'almost' sound art. Witnessing transmutes the experience into a performative entanglement in which a dialogue springs up between Eleanor on the one hand as the listener today and herself as the unintentional performer in the recording. Although she is alone with herself in her second listening, the basic

[45] Instead of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, a totally different performance took place. If Eleanor had intentionally recorded herself into the mix, it would still be a performance but of a different and choreographed kind, projected towards intentionally present witnesses.

performative pairing perseveres: she is her own performer and her own audience simultaneously. As though she now gazes into Cooley's looking glass Eleanor's self-witnessing or self-listening generates a complex web of intersubjectivity in which she is plurally present in every permutation and angle of the performative binary.[46]

In terms of my own listening, I heard a person layered into the recording – a person who was an other to me who, in her sounding, allowed me to hear sounds that resonated with my own experiences of life. Through my other's sounds, I was enabled to gaze back at myself. This self-feeling will be developed further in chapter three. For now I turn to the idea of witnessing one's self as the other, and the recognition of the other as part of an entanglement existing at the core of sound art experiences (and likewise in performance) through a brief study of the sociological theory of Cooley and sociologists Erving Goffman and Thomas Scheff.

**Reading Shame as self-witnessing: Intersubjectivity and the Other**

Cooley's fundamental work on interaction is useful in this study of intersubjectivity that is directly tied to an experience of self-witnessing.[47] His development of the "looking glass self" in which "*The thing that moves us to pride*

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[46] It might be argued that Eleanor merely appraised herself – but as part of that appraisal I contend the complex interweaving and entanglements of self and other roles still came to the fore, though these were performatively scrambled and mixed together. In my career as a classical instrumentalist/performer, the act of performing involves a complex constant self-appraisal. Note-to-note and microsecond-to-microsecond involves both a self-appraisal of physical and technical demands (for example perhaps I have not taken enough breath three phrases ago affecting my ability to breathe well enough to carry the present line, or upcoming is a particularly difficult interval I must prepare for while also taking care of my volume, intensity and vibrato); and an appraisal of my presentation to my audience. At any movement or sense of distractedness or implied disinterest from my audience I recalibrate my next move in a constant and exhausting dialogue between both us and between myself and the demands of the piece and the instrument. Self-appraisal is integral in performance and it is dependent on the other others in the performance calibration.

[47] Cooley established three principal elements of the 'self-idea' which he developed via the looking glass self:
1) the imagination of our appearance to the other person

2) the imagination of his judgement, and

3) self-feeling as a result such as pride or mortification.

*or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind."* (Cooley 1912:152) is fundamental in much of the sociological theory that followed it. His work is now accepted as focal part of modern social psychology and interaction, appearing in most basic sociology textbooks.

Cooley refers to both pride and shame as given social emotions in *Human Nature and the Social Order* (1912), using them as though they require little elaboration, discussion or explanation. Following Cooley, Erving Goffman writing in 1956 in his *Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life,* indirectly (though it is assumed directly) points to the notion of shame in Cooley's looking glass self and develops it further to include such feelings as embarrassment, shame, humiliation, pride and anticipation.

In Eleanor's self-witnessing, elements of this "looking glass self" arose, as they did likewise in my own listening. Eleanor, in witnessing her own artefacts imprinted into the *Elijah* performance was suddenly enabled to see herself as others might have done, and to step back and to view herself from the perspective of an other and as a result to feel a range of feelings and reactions. Like an aural looking glass, she was projected back at herself. I too, through hearing Eleanor's artefacts, imputed sentiments of my own existence into hers. More importantly for this thesis, Eleanor's aural reflection stands as an example of self-seeing and also as an example of what actions and consequences a self-seeing might bear on a binary which is performative and entangled. Is it therefore possible that the flimmering of a co-creative space also springs up between the self-as-the-self and the self-as-the-other through self-witnessing?

Thomas Scheff in *Goffman Unbound* (2006)[48] describes a type of shame which he claims is integral to intersubjectivity. It is useful for the next stage of this research, which develops the device of the Other's-Other, that Scheff singles out Cooley's use of the word shame (previously developed into a number of types of shame by Goffman in the interim) as a pivotal part of intersubjective relationships. Shame and self-witnessing are inextricably bound up together. As I move into a discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Look* in the

[48] Scheff undertakes a semi-translation of Goffman's 1956 work and identifies its main focus as being on *"what might be called the microworld of emotions and relationships…the moment-by-moment texture of our lives"* (Scheff 2006: viii)

next part of this chapter, it is useful to approach shame through Scheff's description of the word. Scheff describes how the language of traditional societies (e.g. in Spanish) use one word 'shame' (verguenza) to describe the sensation of shame and also of embarrassment: *"Languages of traditional societies, such as Arabic, are the same. In Western culture, embarrassment, usually a less intense form of shame, is less taboo. Embarrassment is speakable, shame is unspeakable, in ordinary conversation."* (Scheff 2006:39)

Scheff explored the current case for augmenting and bending our idea of shame and intersubjectivity in Western thought towards a better understanding of it as part of intersubjectivity: *"Western culture has at its center the embedded idea of the isolated, self-contained individual. Since the shame triad implies that our self-feelings are dependent on other people, it violates the principle of Western culture. For this reason, discussions of shame and its relatives are usually avoided, both in lay and social science discourse."* (Scheff 2006:40) Scheff identifies that the self-seeing nature of shame is often left undiscussed in much Western discourse.[49] To usefully employ the notion of shame in this investigation, I will stretch or augment the word's meaning – as Scheff and Goffman have - to equate it with the sense of self-witnessing that took place for Eleanor; for Mark Peter Wright witnessing himself and his own actions in field recording; and also for myself in Venice as I came to re-see our group as modifying the cityscape. In this way, I am enabled to hold a discussion about and with the shame presented in Sartre's

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[49] Scheff identified a reason for the self being almost invisible in Western art (apart from when it is laid bare as the focal point of the work):

*"The second component of the Cooley conjecture, shared awareness, also involves violation of the canon on individualism. Intersubjectivity, living in the minds of others, implies that individuals, as well as being separate units, may be joined together as components of larger units, such as pairs, threesomes, and still larger groups. Although the idea of shared consciousness is a staple in Eastern cultures, it is unacceptable in Western thought. The Cooley/Goffman conjecture, linking a taboo emotion, shame, and a taboo idea of unity, is infinitely unacceptable in the West."* (Scheff 2006:40)

The idea that experience is dependent on other people violates the isolated and self-contained model of individualism at the centre of Western culture. Is Western culture's idea of the isolated and self-contained individual the reason that the author and the observer stand behind a safe veil where anonymity can prevail in performance? Is this why sound art is often assumed to have discarded performers and performance – as is often proffered as its claim to a difference from music? I will address this propensity for overlooking the intersubjective relationship between performer and audience, or at least the historical erasure or their relationship, in the next part of this chapter. I do this by following Scheff who continues his argument in *Goffman Unbound* (2006) by moving from a traditional idea of shame to the idea of it instead as being seen as part of a shared and intersubjective awareness.

*The Look* so that I may use it as a device by which to appraise a plural otherness as part of a performative binary which I will show to be useful to sound arts discourse. A theoretical shame then partly comes to account for that self-appraisal or self-witnessing that enables us to suddenly see, account for, and to think about otherness as plural, shifting, fluid and active.

As the next stage in developing the role and entanglement of protagonists with one another in their intersubjective relationships, plural otherness, and in order to develop the thinking device of the *Other's-Other*, I turn to Sartre's essay *The Look* in *Being and Nothingness* (1943). Despite its datedness, as a text important to my investigation, being focused directly on being and the sense of self, it is essential to address existential philosophy and phenomenology as part of my formulation of the Other's-Other thought-device. Philosophers such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are, among others of the era, directly relevant if I wish to formulate a thought-device that is built 'from the ground up' on the core relationship of self and other. Addressing these philosophers is part of the fundamental backbone of this device, even though I use their writing to springboard my thinking of otherness as instead co-creative and entangled. Although at odds with my understanding of the co-creativity of otherness, Sartre's reference to shame is, still relevant as I build the Other's-Other from the basic philosophical binary relationship of self and other. Sartre's particular use of this binary conveys the self and other as distinctly separate and almost conflicting in their struggle for power over the scene. Therefore, instead by re-thinking and repurposing shame as a useful state of self-witnessing, rather than as a negative and regretful state, I will use it to critically shift the way we might regard the binary of the self and other in the performative situation. In this way, an imperative reference to shame during the building of the Other's-Other does not come to close down discussion due to its negative associations. Instead, shame or self-witnessing enables me to think about intimacy and proximity as fundamental performative elements worth exploration.

Theatre theorist Maaike Bleeker refers to the forward gesture of looking instead as longing, and as a marker of intentionality towards the other: '*Longing is the movement of intentionality and is therefore a structural and ineradicable aspect of intentionality itself. It is an integral part of the way we relate to what we are confronted*

*with.'* (Bleeker 2011:40).With Bleeker, the self-seeing that I have described could more productively be stretched to encompass this idea of longing: longing is that outward seeking of witnessing that also stands as part of a relationship that causes a returned look back at the self, and is intricately bound up also with shame. I use Luce Irigaray's notion of the between-two later in chapter three to build on this idea of longing bound up with intentionality. In this chapter I view and work with the binary of self and other as a co-creative and entangled relationship, offering scope for thinking otherness as plural and shifting, while also crucially offering a distinct shift in the way we may discuss otherness in works.

**The Other as the catalyst: building foundations of the *Other's-Other* device, beginning with The Look**

In his essay *The Look* (1943), Sartre discusses what I read as being a similar sensation of self-horror to the one that Wright associates with the moment of becoming visible in *The Thing in the Margins,*[50] and which I perceived as self-awareness in Venice. I came to this particular essay as a direct result of contextualizing what was occurring as part of my installation *And So I Met My Other's Other* (2017) described in Prologue ii. Structured around a central raised stage which can only properly be viewed through an opening at audience eye-level and performer foot-level, the situation created in *The Look* provided a philosophical contextualisation of some of *And So I Met My Other's Other*'s questions. In *The Look*, Sartre describes an imaginary scene in which he is poised at the keyhole of a closed door and unbeknownst to the viewed, observes the scene that plays out behind it. As he gazes through the keyhole - a visual eavesdropper or voyeur - he is taken aback by the approach of another person from behind him. This sudden discovery by another, or as he

[50] In the artist Q&A of his exhibition in 2016 at iMT Gallery, Wright described this as "a horrifying visualization of the self"

phenomenologically terms it: by "the Other[51]," specifically induces a sense of shame in him, which I read as being akin to Wright's "horrifying realisation of the self" and to Cooley's self-feeling. His cloak of invisibility and his immune status are suddenly stripped violently from him by the sound of approaching footsteps. His immunity from any responsibility upon the scene falls away as soon as the Other approaches. Sartre is no longer on the outside of the scene. Instead, he becomes part of what plays out and is now responsible within that web of relationships. To his approaching Other, he has become merely an object within, rather than without, that scene:

"*...when I naively assume that it is possible for me to be an objective being without being responsible for it, I thereby implicitly suppose the Other's existence; for how could I be an object if not for a subject. Thus for me the Other is first the being for whom I am an object; that is, the being* through whom *I gain my objectness.*" (Sartre 1943: 270)

Crucially for my discussion, Sartre describes an intersubjective interlinking: the definition of Sartre's Other is first and foremost the being for whom he is an object. In this relationship, he becomes the one who is observed. The self-judgment or the shame is entirely dependent on the presence of the Other and crucially, his shame "appears" the protagonists who are witnessing his looking, into the scene: it is making both them and himself present and responsible.

Interestingly, those who are viewed - those who remain safely behind the door - remain blissfully unaware as the voyeur poises at the keyhole. Sartre drains the scene through the keyhole with what could be considered a microphonic eye or as Wright coins it in *I, the Thing in the Margins*, a "*microphonic I*". Sartre's body subjectivity remains, if naively, transparent and immune only until the Other steps into the scene and views him as an object

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[51] Here he applies the other as a proper noun, also distinguishing this Other from the other which he observes. In phenomenology, referring to the Other sites it as the opposite of the Self, or the Other being he who is on the outside of the Self. According to early transcendental phenomenologist Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the Self requires the existence of the Other. Later, Edmund Husserl applied the concept of the Other as a basis for inter-subjectivity and Sartre applied the dialectic to show that the appearance of the Other shows the world as oriented towards the Other person and not the Self. In this example, Sartre uses the terminology with awareness of the Other as a phenomenological term in which the Other who enters onto the scene is related in some intersubjective way to the other protagonists. The Other who arrives in the scene is the Other in relation to himself and he is tied to that Other by an intersubjective relationship.

like any other, recalling our aural observers from earlier. Like Eleanor in her listening to herself listening, her own presence as an other in the scene causes its recalibration: the boundaries and rules are altered. In *And So I Met My Other's Other* the possibility of a returned gaze and the eyes of other audience-members' also changes the calibration of looking with boundaries also being destabilized by the entry of performers from the perimeter of the room.

In becoming an object, in becoming aware of and witnessing his actions as an other might in the space, while poised at the keyhole, Sartre's experience heralds the change in relationships that take place upon the entry of the Other. It is the Other's look that is active and which destabilises the entire scenario, recalibrating the previously existing network of inter-subjectivities and causing a new dynamic to consequently play out:

"*. . .the* Other's look *as the necessary condition of my objectivity is the destruction of all objectivity for me. The Other's look touches me across the world and is not only a transformation of myself but a total metamorphosis of the* world. *I am looked-at in a world which is looked-at. In particular the Other's look, which is a look-looking and not a look-looked-at, denies my distances from objects and unfolds its own distances.*" (Sartre 1943:269)

The entrance of the Other causes the scene to shift its balance: *'His transcendent position is transcended…'* (Bleeker 2011:132). No longer does it play out upon Sartre's terms with his body subjectivity 'behind' the keyhole, removed and apparently objective. Instead, the scene becomes dependent upon the actions of the Other and upon Sartre's reactions to that Other as part of that scenario: Protagonists have consequences. In terms of the *Other's-Other* – by which I mean to think these relationships anew - he is no longer obliquely at the keyhole, but now plays a direct role in the scene that he previously remained outside of. He is, I contend, now subjected to a whole new set of inter-relationships. In the same way that he who is approached from behind experiences shame at being viewed looking, surely the one who views from behind feels a shame induced by being observed as viewing his Other *by* that very Other. The sensation of shame is two-fold, and in the capacity of each being each *Other's Other,* self-judgement, self-awareness and shame are shared dynamically between those present. Through mutual self-awareness, those present enter into a state of performance. "*To be discovered at the keyhole is, thus,*

*to be discovered as a body; it is to thicken the situation given to consciousness to include the hither space of the door, and to make the viewing body an object for consciousness."* (Krauss 1990:179). Here, the act of witnessing-witnessed causes one's consciousness *"to leap out beyond him"*(ibid.) and at this moment for the situation to *"thicken"* to *"include the hither space of the door"*. The entry of the Other's (who peeps) Other (who views the peeping taking place) recalibrates the experience so that it becomes a dual upsurge creation of the space between them.

Sartre is exposed - caught in the act - and he describes as a result a sense of shame.[52] I contend that alongside his shame comes a sense of performative responsibility in the intersubjective network which has been suddenly created by his visibility. Previously immune and seemingly uninvolved in the scene with his body subjectivity separated from the plane before him, the now visible Sartre becomes part of a web of identification between himself and his Other. As with our Venice sound walk experience, he emerges into the situation and becomes as visible as the others who are also present. Like Eleanor, who unexpectedly encountered herself, the entanglement causes the circumstances of a performance to take place: selves and others are appeared as protagonists. Sartre's visibility and actions become consequential. No longer merely on the outside looking in, he is now implicated into a web of inter-relations. It is crucially the presence of the witness who witnesses that reconfigures the scene, a reconfiguring that Sartre perceives as denying him his power over it and as unfolding its own distances. Here, witnessing acting through otherness to recalibrate and to create new meaning and relationships.

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[52] In *The Look*, contrary to perceiving the entry of the Other as a welcome turn of events, Sartre finds that in this newly visible state he becomes saturated with sensations of shame, relating this turn of events to sexual desire. Although *The Look* plays out later on in the text in terms of sexual desire - as with much psychoanalysis and philosophy of the era - the context of my particular investigation lies more in the possibilities of the intersubjective dialogue which is created and what it may reveal and contribute in terms of sound arts as a form of performance that places protagonists at the fore. I separate Sartre's shame from sexual shame and its negative connotations and I choose to discuss shame as a useful factor in the dialogue intrinsic in the relationship of the *Other's-Other,* enabling a reconsideration of performative binaries in sound arts.

**Reciprocity: Re-configuring the antithetic relationship between the Self and the Other.**
**Introducing the body through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and exploring a theoretical basis for co-creativity between others.**

*The Look* is an essay which belongs to part of a larger philosophical study on phenomenological ontology (a study of subjectivity and being): *Being and Nothingness* (1943). Following *The Look* is an essay on the body in which Sartre creates an idea of *being-for-others*[53]*:* a state of perpetual conflict in which each person seeks to "*recover its own Being by directly or indirectly making an object out of the other."* (1943:630). In terms of this thesis, in which sound art is addressed through the prism of a performative binary, this conflicted relationship could alternatively be seen and used as a state of perpetual exchange and reflexivity. Sartre's very particular view of the relationship between protagonists excludes the possibility of any mutual intertwining (or as I will refer to it more specifically via Karen Barad's work later, as entanglement) of experience between those present. The idea of the self and the other's upsurge being co-creative or combined together is impossible. Sartre's approach is a useful place from which to think otherness via a binary that I may use as a springboard to rethink and re-address otherness as well as the binary itself.

Merleau-Ponty, directly influenced by *Being and Nothingness*,[54] instead views this phenomenological body as our connection into and as part of a seamless web with the environment. In the terms of this thesis I see Merleau-Ponty as granting this phenomenological body or bodies with a proximity and intimacy with the world and with others. It is this seamless web of interaction – seen as part of a plural otherness in this thesis - which interests me in addressing sound arts as performance. Merleau-Ponty goes so far as connecting with the body as a means of expression, which I will come to later on in chapter three.

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[53] Being-for-others (*être-pour-autrui*). The third ekstasis (*q.v.*) of the For-itself. There arises here a new dimension of being in which my Self exists outside as an object for others. (Sartre BN 1943:630)

[54] Merleau-Ponty and Sartre were by 1941 close friends and withdrew to write their major works of philosophy at the same time as one another – *Being and Nothingness* (1943) dates from this period, as does *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945).

In *Sense and Non-Sense* (1964), Merleau-Ponty claims that the body is *not* experienced by us as merely an object among other objects, but that: "*The relationship between subject and object is ….a* relationship of being *in which, paradoxically, the subject is his body, his world, and his situation, by a sort of exchange. . .the antithesis of the* for itself *and the* in itself *often seems to be alternatives instead of being described as the living bond and communication between one term and the other."* (Merleau-Ponty 1964:72)

Merleau-Ponty's approach lends insights into the notion of bodily presence as a means of perception and also as a basis for intersubjective relationships: as a proximitous and intimate body acknowledged as active and protagonistic. Critically for this investigation, Merleau-Ponty allows the body a role as a pivot by which one experiences one's part in the world, and as a means of access by which one can reach a truthful understanding of it.

In essence the body, for Merleau-Ponty and importantly for this investigation, crucially allows him to discuss an experience of intersubjectivity: an intersubjectivity that implies proximity and therefore intimacy. My body is my common truth shared with my Other, my physical reality, and the means by which I can understand the possibility of the situation being shared between us rather than only via the opposites of self and other. Bleeker states: *'My body … creates the world as one world that is both visible and audible and tangible … It is my body that creates the world as an object of perception.'* (Bleeker 2011:160) Similarly, Merleau-Ponty addresses the *coexistence* of space and things through the body and the idea that "*. . . rather than a mind* and *a body, man is a mind* with *a body, a being who can only get to the truth of things because its body is, as it were, embedded in those things."* (Merleau-Ponty 1948:43). Through Merleau-Ponty and Bleeker I am given a definition of an intimacy that is rooted in embeddedness, or in other words in intimacy and proximity. Merleau-Ponty's approach to the self and intersubjectivity allows for the self to co-exist proximitously with the world around it and with the Other as *part of* that world. This notion will become fundamental in my work towards including intimacy and proximity as essential elements of otherness in this investigation, especially in the following two chapters. Rather than being reduced to Sartre's object-ness upon the dichotomous entry of the Other - becoming objects the same as any other object such as a cup or table or wall in the world - Merleau-Ponty sees us as being

'embedded' into that world and embodied and embroiled with it. He describes this embedding in the world as a collaborative 'consummate reciprocity' in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945):

*"No sooner has my gaze fallen upon a living body in process of acting than the objects surrounding it immediately take on a fresh layer of significance: they are no longer simply what I myself could make of them, they are what this other pattern of behaviour is about to make of them … it is precisely my body which perceives the body of another, and discovers in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world. . .we have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world."* (Merleau-Ponty 1962:353-354)

For Merleau-Ponty, protagonists intimately *'co-exist in a common world'* with the experience of the world arising between the two. Experience is shared and mediated by both in terms of the other. As with my experience of listening to Eleanor's world, I *"discover in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions"*. It is this reciprocity that fuses each Self with each Other as *"a dual being"*. I understand this reciprocity as taking place during performance and witnessing as a fluid and flexible partnership and dialogic binary that is performative: where others may be embroiled in this way with one another during sound arts, both co-creatively and in an entanglement of flimmering and plural otherness. This implies that the binary is contingent and performative. It is not static and absolute as a dialectical binary but performs a productive intimate loop of experiential proxemic reciprocity. This performative binary is at the centre of my construction of the Other's-Other, as is the intimacy and proximity bound closely up within and as part of it. Viewing sound arts as moments of witnessing and through a performative lens allows protagonists (artists and audiences) to be viewed as being in proximity and intersubjectively intimate. Merleau-Ponty's willingness to let the minds-with-bodies be embroiled with the world and with one another directly grants intimacy and proximity weight as discursive terms.

This idea that bodies inhabit one another simultaneously "…*so my body and the other's are one whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon. . .we have*

*here a dual being…"* (Merleau-Ponty 1962:354) through a shared experience is for me, however, not the only outcome of this scenario.[55] Merleau-Ponty's clear focus on engagement based in intersubjectivity further enables there to be a *reciprocal relationship* between embroiled subjects. Through Merleau-Ponty, appraisal of a situation or experience in an entirely new way with new criteria becomes possible. Merleau-Ponty allows for an embroiled co-creativity to be discussed as integral in intersubjectivity, and therefore as part of performance and – in this thesis – as part of sound arts. The previously separate roles of Other-ness in *The Look* via Merleau-Ponty, become freely interchangeable. A web of interdependent inter-subjectivity arises in our consciousness where constantly altering relational possibilities and outcomes become visible like a loop of connectivity.

**Towards formulating the *Other's-Other***

Through Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, the notion of the other changing one's own protagonistic role within a scene is made possible: *"he has established in me a new type of being which can support new qualifications"* (1943:222). *The Look* de-stabilizes the accepted hierarchy of he who is "outside" and he who is "inside" in the context of his voyeurism; of he who is the Other and he who is the Self. Once each self turns towards his other, a new balance between those who have been revealed is set up: "*The Other's look touches me across the world and is not only a transformation of myself but a total metamorphosis of the* world . . ." (Sartre 1943:269). The Other is pivotal in the consequent shape of the scene or experience. In the context of this thesis I put the Other to work as a device through which to discuss works in terms of a co-creative entanglement of otherness. Identifying the Other and granting it its own actions in the scene is essential in my endeavour to address sound arts in terms of proximity and intimacy. By approaching sound arts as being in a large part constituted through the presences of multiple or plural others who are intersubjectively embroiled in the scene and with each other, I may introduce intimacy and proximity into the discourse about it. Otherness is essential in an approach that opens the door to discourse that acknowledges the intersubjectivity of intimacy

[55] Sartre calls this a "haemorraghing" forth towards the Other.

and proximity as constitutive in our experience of sound arts. Formulating the device of the *Other's-Other* is at the centre of this project.

**The Other's-Other as a useful thinking device in performance and sound arts**

In this way, with the permission for there to be more than one Self and one Other in the scenario – or, plural others - I contend that the dialectic set out in *The Look* allows for a progression of the scene in terms of what I have specifically come to term, the "*Other's-Other*". In the circumstance created in *The Look,* there are multiple roles played out by any one person: Each Other who is present - and equally each Self who is present - enters into an intersubjective dialogue which allows for a non-polarised multiplicity of roles to unfold at once. Thinking of these complex relationships as the *Other's-Other* grants the acknowledgement of a dynamic relationship in which roles freely shift interchangeably between the Self and his Other. The two ends of the dialogue are bound together in a constantly shifting loop where each participant is concurrently permitted to be the Self and the Other at once in a far more generative and less restricted way. In the relationship of the *Other's-Other,* between the Other and his Other hums a performative non-dialectical dialogue created by the interchangeability of roles that results from visibility and mutual self-awareness or shame. In Venice, for Eleanor and in Wright's *I, the Thing in the Margins*, the presence of the spectator becomes significant: the entry of the spectator from the margins - sound recordist or sound walker respectively - causes the scene to unfold differently with protagonists entering into a dialogue in which actions or presences affect the playing out of things in the world. In *And So I Met My Other's* Other the act of looking and or being observed looking and a returned gaze are the cornerstones of the entire work, which I will explore in depth in chapter four as part of expanding and enriching the terms of the *Other's-Other* device. This dialogic intersubjectivity allows for the network between performers - between all the *Other's-Others* present - to be seen, and in being seen to exist, this network becomes a space of growth, negotiation, shared experience and reciprocity. In this way, this dialogic and reciprocal intersubjectivity found within the *Other's-Other* allows us to recognise newly found interactions within performance and sound art and enables us to address

sound art in these new terms. The *Other's-Other* also stands as a device by which to mark out and identify these pivotal relationships as part of a critical discursivity.

In summary, the notion of the *Other's-Other* allows for the subtle oscillations that exist in the fabric of this intersubjective dialogue to become real and useful. Using the *Other's-Other* to address sound art works provides an access point by which to quickly mark out protagonists and to study the interactions between them. These interactions are what I claim create, or co-create, the work, as will be discussed in the following chapters. In this way, the *Other's-Other* device allows us to approach the works in terms of the intersubjective intimacy and proximity playing out.

Without using the *Other's-Other* all that remains is the Self and the Other. Intersubjectivity without the *Other's-Other* serves only as a means to prove that others exist in the same space as me, that they exist at all and that my world might be altered by them. The idea of the *Other's-Other* grants both ends of the relationship a full scope existence both as the Self and the Other at any one time without creating the polarity of roles seen in the Other imagined by Sartre. The notion of the *Other's-Other* allows the spectator and the observed to enter into this intersubjective network, to be thickened into and as part of the situation. In the *Other's-Other*, the two are bound by the inter-relationship between them more than by their categorisation purely as each other's opposite. With the *Other's-Other*, protagonists are granted visibility and power to influence the work. For sound arts I intend to use the *Other's-Other* in this way to think about the dialogic relationships that might remain unaddressed in its discourse.

With the entangled dialogue proposed by the *Other's-Other*, rather than being reduced to merely thesis and antitheses, opposing forces reduce in favour of a more generative and interchangeable experience of the world and of being. The speed of the interchange between roles - which are entirely dependent on each respective Other - generates, *through* tensions, a dialogue of intersubjectivity created only by the presence of two Others in one space. Being observed *binds* me to my observer and binds me into an entwinement which is created *between* us and generates a new world of experiences by our interaction.

I propose that a non-dialectical dialogue enabled by the *Other's-Other* functions in a manner where oppositions do not necessarily become reductive or static. The relationship between Self and Other does not culminate at the point at which shame is induced or self-awareness takes place and the spectator is seen. Shame or self-witnessing itself becomes the device by which the non-dialectical dialogue is generated into action. The non-dialectical nature of the *Other's-Other* does not aim for this absolute state where all those present are categorized and in which the 'experiment' is therefore closed, concluded and resolved. Instead, a freely developing negotiation spirals outward in which each *Other's-Other* influences and affects the relationship and situation that follows. There is no absolute outcome, and the dialogue evolves onwards and forwards in an open generative nature. With the *Other's-Other*: the intersubjective dialogue serves to allow for any outcome, for any experience and any intertwinement of subjects to become possible. The circumstance of this entwinement is the whole of this experience.

With this notion of the *Other's-Other* I will articulate a critical means to access sound arts as a means by which to think a thickening of works and experiences, providing a basis from and by which to re-approach and re-assess the way sound arts are understood and function. Via the *Other's-Other* I propose thinking and speaking about works in terms of an intimacy and proximity that is inaccessible in discussion conducted without awareness or understanding of the active creative space created by the presence of flimmering and plural others.

The *Other's-Other* allows us to question and re-assess what might be being overlooked or be remaining undiscussed in or about a work, and to allow for a new and more in depth understanding of the co-creative spaces occurring in sound arts.

I contend that the Other is central to an understanding of the intersubjective nature of performance. Performance is my overall approach within this thesis, used as a way to think works as firstly involving plural protagonist others and secondly as involving protagonist others who intersubjectively co-create a work, consequentially offering the beginning of a new and more in-depth approach to sound arts discourse. I put forward the idea that this particular

research project, which looks to identify intimacy and proximity in sound arts via performance as useful terms by which to describe works, is achieved by applying the notion of the *Other's-Other* as it is developed in this chapter. The *Other's-Other* allows me to speedily access the idea of multiple protagonist others being present as part of a work, and to continue to frame my discussion of works in terms of these plural others and their intimacy and proximity to one another. The recognition that every protagonist present in a scene has the potential to be an *Other's-Other* allows us to recognise the importance and the effect of protagonists in creating a performance in any art situation. Thus, in the next chapter I intend to show how the *Other's Other* allows previously unforeseen insights into a new way of addressing sound arts practice. Sartre's *The Look,* reached as a theoretical tool through my listening practice and creative writing practice, has served as an excellent first access point into addressing this loop of connectivity which occurs between people during a performance and as part of sound arts and sound arts practice. Contextualising this essay to find a less antithetic and more perceptive body in the world through Merleau-Ponty, Krauss, Bleeker, Goffman and Scheff has closely informed the foundation of my study of sound arts in terms of the generative, intersubjective and co-creative dialogue of performance.

The recognition of the Other, of the thing in the margins, opens up a discussion of an oscillating relationship between the work, space and protagonists which I intend to focus on in relation to sound arts discourse and practice. With an intersubjective relationship revealed by the presence of the Other, I contend that furthermore, the relationship between the *Other's Other* that oscillates back and forth between those present allows us to acknowledge all parties in the experience and their respective roles in generating both the performance and the work.

In my own sound art practice, I constantly address and explore the non-dialectic dialogue which is set up by the performative presence of multiple others, playing with the tension between parties and maintaining that tension in order to create something new every time the work is experienced. Once I accept performance as that which requires the relationship of an Other to an Other and the division of a Self with Self in an infinite rotation of roles - rather than the one-directional relationship of the Self to the Other - a wealth of

performance possibilities open up. In this way I may address sound arts in terms of its intersubjectivity as created by a performance/audience relationship. I assert that his intersubjective relationship is a performance situation and that the dialogue created between each *Other's Other* is our route into assessing both performance, and sound art as co-creative performance.

Chapter three develops the *Other's-Other* device further by the inclusion of performance theory and examples. This following study of performance and its intersubjective dialogic feedback loop applies the *Other's-Other* in other contexts as a way of addressing sound arts and sound arts practice as a performative binary.

# Chapter Three

## Generative liminal spaces and the twofold nature of the *Other's-Other*: working from the one-to-one

In chapter two I developed the notion of the *Other's-Other* as a device by which to think all protagonists - those present as part of a work - as others. I proposed that it was useful in allowing us to think more specifically about both the co-creative space that occurs between others and about the crucial power of otherness in the formation and experience of a sound art work. I had previously laid out the contingent binary of self and other through the tool of the camera obscura in chapter one, and in chapter two I furthered my understanding of self and other via the returned gaze and self-witnessing. I also introduced the body as an experiential pivot-point of inter-subjectivity, using Krauss' appraisal of Merleau-Ponty's dual upsurge of consciousness to propose a co-creativity of otherness.

The current chapter studies overtly performative works including those that are classed as live and immersive art to develop the terms of the *Other's-Other*'s experiential basis. Falling into two parts, part one pays special attention to the immersive practice of the one-to-one which is discussed through Luce Irigaray's notion of the *caress*. Through the *caress* I am enabled to think the intimacy of the *Other´s-Other* as an agential presence between two, making intimacy and proximity discursively important. Part two takes this caress forward and explores its denial in performance works as a way of developing an irreducible and plural other and to consolidate the terms of the *Other's Other* as an open co-creativity of others who are not subsumed or transcended by the intersubjective relationship. Working towards a full formulation of the *Other's-Other,* the chapter following this then develops and applies these findings by paying attention to what I term the one-to-no-one which specifically addresses objects and spaces as others.

In the current chapter I address a number of works in regard to the *Other's-Other* as part of performative events that play on the agential presence of others: Adrian Howells' *Footwashing for the Soul* (2008); Marina Abramovic

*Lips of Thomas* (1975) and *The Artist is Present* (2010); Amir Baradaran *The Other Artist is Present* (2010); Angelika Festa *Untitled Dance (with fish and others)* (1987); and Maria Hassabi *PLASTIC* (2016). I discuss my application of the *Other's Other* not only as an experiential part of performative works and as a discursive device, but as a centre around which to build works. The basic notion of the *Other's Other* relationship sprang directly from the title and issues with which I was working when I developed *And So I Met My Other's Other* (2017). I also discuss the interviews I conducted with the performers of my work PROXIMITY which was further revisited and developed in 2016 as part of this project's creative practice research. Appraising these and others' works in this chapter serves to consolidate the basic idea of the *Other's-Other* towards its further development as a twofold thinking and making device. Studying works in this chapter which, by definition, align in some way with performance and performativity - either because they are classified as performance art, or involve performance as an integral element - works to test and develop the device's scope, use and transferability, with anticipation that the *Other's-Other* will also be useful for appraising and discussing works that are not pre-designated as being performance-based.

Through the writing of Luce Irigaray, Erika Fischer-Lichte and Karen Barad in relation to these works, the device of the *Other's-Other* is developed as a co-creative iteration of the intersubjective relationship of others. In this way, as the central undertaking in this thesis, I continue to develop the *Other's-Other* as a device with multiple uses that become applicable to sound arts, both in terms of theory and as a way of doing making. Subsequently in this chapter, the *Other's-Other* is eked out and augmented further via Karen Barad's feminist writing on diffraction (2009). This helps me articulate the *Other's-Other* as a diffractive methodology which accounts for, discusses and perceives more completely the experiential scope of works. Barad, in an interview conducted in 2012 ("*Matter Feels converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers*") describes a diffractive methodology which perceives and interprets more than a single measurement or experience at any one time. Barad's notion of agency, or *agential realism* (Barad 2012), is rooted in entanglement and difference. I take up this notion of entanglement as a central quality of the *Other's-Other* and as part of intimacy between irreduciblem agential others. Through Barad and Irigaray I

discuss the device itself as a twofold diffractive methodology which offers the means by which to discuss works as performative; and also the method/device by which to think and make works.

As a direct result of engaging with Barad's diffractive agential realism, I also begin to explore the importance of the liminal, generative space created by performance and plural otherness which I explore fully in chapters four and five. At this stage, I merely mark experiential space as causing and allowing entangled relationships to be studied and recognised. I introduce the idea of this liminal space as a site for score-making as part of a description of my own practice. The score-making potential of liminal spaces will also be developed and discussed in chapter five as as a central and essential inherent immanent force in the overall construct of the *Other's-Other*.

## Case Studies in Performance Art
## Part 1 | The one-to-one: intimate agential presence

Straddling theatre and art, spectatorship and participation, performance art provides multiple examples to think in the terms of, or to employ the device of, the *Other's-Other*. Using the boundary between audience and performer to substitute my terms of self and other, I here use performance art as a vehicle by which to further develop the terms of the *Other's-Other* that ultimately I intend to apply to sound arts. In particular, the intimate and proximitous space of one-to-one performances provide access to discussing the intersubjective relationship between two. The works selected in this section take place between the artist and the participant on an intimate scale and would nowadays be classified as immersive works. A discussion of works by Adrian Howells and Marina Abramovic alongside my own practice enables me to explore the intimacy of the others' presence and the presence of two as producing an artwork experience. Machon describes this attribute of immersive theatre in which presence is key: '*…immersive practice,…demands bodily engagement, sensually stimulates the imagination, requires tactility.*' (2103:26) with the presence of the participant acting to co-create the work: *'At every stage of this process the work is responsive to the actions of its audience, moulding them as co-authors of their experience.'* (2013:23)

In this way I develop the device of the *Other's-Other* towards a feminine or feminist Irigarean reconsideration of its terms which were first generated in this investigation from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. I begin to explore the *Other's-Other* as a twofold construct through these works: as a device employed in their making and also as a device by which to think about and discuss them which also creates an awareness of space as generative.

***The Other's-Other studied via the mode of the One-to-One in Adrian Howells' and my own work.***

**Adrian Howells' *Footwashing for the Soul* (2008): Introducing the caress.**

Adrian Howells' *Footwashing for the Soul* (2008) utilises a heightened state of awareness between the participant and the artist as its central material. Functioning through direct physical contact between the artist and the audience Howells' *Footwashing* demands that the audience must physically partake in a specific experience - carried out in conjunction with the artist - in order for the artwork to come into existence.

Image left available: https://i.ytimg.com/vi/k_a8PDfErtA/maxresdefault.jpg
Image right available: https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/mar/19/adrian-howells-performance-artist-theatre-tribute

*Footwashing for the Soul* is based on a passage in the New Testament in which Jesus washes the feet of his disciples (Book of John, Chapter 13:1-17). The staging of the work takes place in a room away from the gaze of anyone else. Howells meets the participant in this room and washes, dries, massages and anoints their feet with oils. The piece culminates in Howells asking permission to kiss the participant's feet. Each full engagement lasts just over 30 minutes.

Performed at Battersea Arts Centre in the UK and in Israel, Howells invites visitors to take off their shoes before entering the space, this being described as the first of *"several 'pacts' between the artist and each participant...whereby the latter must decide whether he or she will accept a situation of vulnerability and be 'performed upon'."* (Lightman: 2009 available www.haaretz.com/amp/1.5090521 ) In a 2010 British Arts Council interview, Howells describes how the performance aims to allow the participant to be very "present" and "to engage with themselves," describing how a very special connection would come to arise between himself and the participant during the piece. He describes his participants' responses as often emotional, and details the feet as a key vulnerable part of the body that he has both invited to be exposed and that they have allowed to be touched. In keeping with his oeuvre of confessional art pieces he describes the virtue of simple direct action and a personal disinterest in character, characterisation and narrative even though he is working in the paradigm of performance. He emphasises instead that his interests are focused on what is *"real" ... "what really happens to people and what really happens to me and the experiences that I go through"* and in *"in facilitating someone's experience or investigation."* (Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7btf8Tdg_s).[56]

*Footwashing* is a performance, but Howells is very clear about its properties as an experiential and participative performance rather than one which is narrative or characterised. In the interview, Howells is eager to emphasise the interaction of the one-to-one as constituting the whole performance, and stresses the importance of a shared responsibility playing out between the audience and the performer. Interviewed by Josephine Machon in *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* Howells describes this participation as a co-authoring:

*'I always refer to the 'audience-participant' in my one-on-one work…because they're not a passive spectator; they co-create, co-author the piece with me.'* (Howells in Machon 2013:263).

In the second part of Howells' online interview with the British Arts Council, he describes how participants will often behave very differently in

[56] Howells' middling-to-later practice specialised in one-to-one performances with an audience-participant. Howells referred to these works as "confessional art" created in the context of a mass-mediatised and secularised culture. The emphasis of these works is on intimacy and an exchange of the otherwise unspoken or private.

one-to-one experiences than they do in his group performances. He observes how his solo participants feel compelled to comply with all of his demands in order that they may not, as they believe, "ruin the artwork." He states that he finds it necessary to make clear to them that as audience members they must not "relinquish their control" and that this retaining of their own control within the work - importantly for building the *Other's-Other* - allows for a "meaningful quality of exchange" (British Art Council 2010) to spring up between them. I will return later in more detail to what Howells describes as not "relinquishing control" in terms of what this implies for the role of the self within the performance, and as part of a discussion of Luce Irigaray's "irreducible" "caress". At this point it is useful to note that in the interview, Howells specifically acknowledges his participants' agency as co-authors and their power to halt any of his requests as being a highly important element of both the exchange and in the work: this exchange of consent and the entanglement of their roles together is a central focus.

**Engaging with the Other; Engaging with the Self**

In *Footwashing for the Soul*, what is it that specifically causes or allows, as Howells asserts, the participant to be "present" or, more specifically for this inquiry as Howells describes in the interview, to "engage with themselves"? I contend that this self-presence and self-engagement results directly from an intense awareness of the other's (the artist's) intimate touch and direct returned gaze. Through this heightened state of awareness - instigated by the close presence of another who touches and engages both with the person and with their physical body - the participant enters into an induced self-consciousness which results in an increased sense of the self as an other in the space. Howells' work resonates deeply with the idea that the body holds an affective power, as described by Machon: *'…performing bodies and perceiving bodies … the particular affective power for communication that results from the proximity of each combined in space.'* (2013:149); *"…the interacting body of the audience member is as vital to the performance as that of the performer. As Howells observes, the audience-participant's body 'co-authors' the work with the artist.'* (Machon 2013:98). In *Footwashing*, the participant and the artist enter directly into the reflexive loop of the *Other's-*

*Other*, which was described and established in the previous chapter: one interacts with the other in a continually shifting intuited exchange of signals and actions which are largely dependent upon the other's reactions.[57] Simply by placing themselves in an intimate situation with a stranger (in the particular framing of a performance artwork) the participants heighten their awareness of how they appear, engage and behave. The face-to-face, skin-to-skin engagement causes the participant to recognise himself as his other's other and, as a protagonist in the performative context, entangled. The loop of the *Other's-Other* inevitably comes into play. Howells deliberately utilises this reflexive loop of otherness that springs up between them as an immersive technique: it is how the artist and the participant behave in relation to one another that forms the artwork. A reflexive loop of otherness and self-awareness constitutes the ever-shifting and altering experience of the work, with an entanglement of selves and others here viewed as as other's-others creating the material of the piece.

In the context of the space and framing generated by performance, I contend that the paramount driver in the work is the participant's intersubjective entanglement with the artist. For the artist also, the work plays out depending on the reactions and responses of his other, the participant: each is his or her *Other's-Other.* Framed and contextualised by performance and set in a temporal and physical space which is unlike the usual space of everyday interaction, the experience of this one-to-one interaction becomes the central element of the piece. Howells' judgement of when the time is right to begin the next stage of the performance is directly dictated by his other's interaction and response as a complex entanglement. It is the relationship between two others that forms the work.

Howells describes how his participants would often begin the *Footwashing* interaction with a series of apologies about the state of their feet - of cracked heels or stumpy toes - unconsciously tucking them under the chair and away from his hands. In the heightened state of the one-to-one encounter, the participant can be seen here self-assessing and entering into a heightened state of self-judgement. This is demonstrative of the interaction taking place overall: desire and shame play out in the basic touch and potential touch between

[57] I refer to this as "*Other's-Othering*"

people. In *Footwashing* the participant is the central presence of the work. Without the dialogic, intersubjective engagement that takes place between artist and audience, which is riddled with desire and shame, the work would not exist.

The importance of shame and desire in this investigation are as levers by which to move to the intimacy explored by Irigaray towards the development of the *Other's-Other* as a diffractive methodology and agential entanglement which will be developed through Barad in the second part of this chapter. In Howells' reflexive experiential work the fabric of performance - the presence of the self and the other, of the performer and the audience - engenders an entanglement which is termed in this thesis as *Other's-Othering.* Approaching these works in terms of the *Other's-Other* allows us to focus on this relationship as agential, pivotal and creative.

**Participatory, immersive practices in my own work**

Performance and the exploration of the relationship between the self and the other, the performer and the audience, is a continuous integral seam which runs through my own sound art practice.

This practice was first most obviously manifest in a work I first made in 2012 and re-exhibited in 2016 to include performances also from a female singer as part of deepening my creative practice research. Much of my understanding of the self-seeing otherness this work played on came to light as part of this second installation. The 2016 performances included an interview with the performers about their experience of the installation, making it a relevant part of my practice during the research of this project. *PROXIMITY* is an immersive sound art installation piece constructed using what I termed "physical composition" at the time. This approach to composition is contextualised in reference to scenography, scores and spaces later in the thesis. *PROXIMITY* is a spiral ammonite shape which forms a gradually reducing spiral 40 foot passageway that a single participant enters and walks through towards a central space. The walls of the passageway have narrow slits in, but the white walls are 7 feet tall, so that a participant cannot see over the walls although it has no roof.

Image: Julie Groves PROXIMITY (2012, 2016) Photo by Ana Escobar. Available: http://juliegroves-soundart.com/works/proximity/

On entering the passageway, having been let in by the artist or a steward, the participant walks slowly towards the central space - unaware of what they will find there. At the centre of this spiral is a live opera singer who is seated and rises to greet them as they reach the centre. On its first showing, *PROXIMITY* was performed by both the participant's participation and a tall, male, black bass-baritone opera singer: Rodney Earl Clarke, and on its second showing in 2016 both Rodney Earl Clarke and 5'5" white female soprano Susie Parkes performed in the space.

Image top: Julie Groves PROXIMITY (2012, 2016). Photo by Ulysses Alvarez
Images middle and bottom: Julie Groves PROXIMITY (2012, 2016). Photo by Ana Escobar

On rising, the performer sang a flexible score as a one-to-one experience which they could manipulate and alter depending on the reactions of their participant. They were free to employ any repertoire or warm-up exercises that seemed suitable for the individual visitor. Many of their choices showed the human voice being agile in unusual and resonant ways that are not often

experienced by the general public. Participants were amazed at the power and the flexibility of these exercises alongside a fascination at the singers' ability to draw them into a world where everything else had apparently dropped away (Machon's immersive *"in-its-own-worldness'* (2013:278)). An intention in devising the length of the passageway had been to ensure that the participant felt suitably disorientated and therefore felt they had moved away from the outside world into a new space.

Some participants giggled the whole way through the experience while others cried or had a deep emotional experience. Especially with Parkes' participants, people described a sense of a cocoon-like space where they experienced a loving and cradling sense, some experiencing a spiritual heightening. Some others found the collision with someone taller than themselves an uneasy experience, or intensely sensual. All reactions were different, and I do not claim to have been able to predict or to apply a general rule to the responses. Each response was totally dependent on the combination of the individuals or protagonists involved, of both performer and participant. Some moments were lullaby-like and others were loud and abrasive, but the performers had the freedom to read the reflexive relationship into which they had entered with their participant and to respond and to judge their unfolding performance accordingly. Rather than subjecting the audience to a set score which took no account of their responses, the score was created and formed between the two of them based on the reflexive joint experiential loop that was occurring between them both.

On *PROXIMITY*'s second performance in 2016, the opportunity of exhibiting it with two genders and two different (although both British) racial heritages offered the opportunity of interviewing the performers themselves about the experiential nature of the piece. Their comments included observations on the personal and private nature of their experience's as performers in the space; and an intimate symbiosis of sharing the same vibrations of sound with another person. Parkes described how she felt she was 'feeding off the energy' of the other in the space, and responding in the moment to every tiny response. For her, she described the space at the centre of the spiral as feeling as though it was a womb-like 'creation-space': a space in which something entirely new was coming into being between herself and her

participant. In this way, she played on the responsive nature of the other. Both performers described an experience different from their usual performances as opera singers with Clarke identifying a situation where he felt as though the participant's feelings (apprehension, enthusiasm, trepidation or anxiety) were channeled through him and back out to them due to the responsive nature of the task. Both performers identified the experience more as an engagement than what they would traditionally call a performance due to the participative and proximitous nature of the work. Its open nature, unlike the narratives found in roles in opera or recital settings, lent the experience an immediacy in the moment. They felt they had committed to an experience with this other person, as had the participant and a transactional nature arose which might be described as complicity. This interview may be found at https://www.juliegroves.com/proximity .

*PROXIMITY* is an example of the immersive one-to-one in my own practice, and in it we see the same collisions playing out as in Howells' one-to-one work. Participant, musician and writer David Toop described the experience as exploring "*...not just ideas of intimacy, presence, space and the body but actualised them in a way that was both confrontational and consoling. Something about the discomfort and rarity of this contradiction opened the experience out to unpredictable subjectivity.*" (2016 In a private email as a feedback request accessible on my website). As with Howells' moment of collision with another during feet-washing, *PROXIMITY* also caused a heightened awareness of the self in the space and the self as seen and perceived by one's other: eyeball to eyeball, face-to-face, the performance played out according to the specific interaction and reflexive loop occurring between the participant and the performer.

In *PROXIMITY* and in *Footwashing*, the protagonists' (both performer and participant) co-author the work as a shared experience. Face-to-face, both protagonists create the work through their flimmering presence in which they continually come to experience themselves as their other's other in the space. In an experience built on reactiveness the returned gaze of the other is a key part of how the experience unfolds, with the protagonists becoming self-aware and responsive through the framing of the *Other's-Other*.

**Irigaray's "caress": granting the *Other's-Other* an intimate, forwards-gesturing, non-transcendent irreducible other**

Moving directly from Howells' physical caress in *Footwashing*, and the face-to-face of *PROXIMITY* I now turn to a philosophical caress in order to move towards intimacy as part of the *Other's-Other*. In *to be two* (1994/2000), Luce Irigaray describes a manner of appraising the other through the "caress", formulated as part of the *"philosophy of the caress."* In this philosophy, Irigaray uses the "caress," as a "gesture-word" (Irigaray 1994/2000:26) that allows for an irreducibility between others. Irigaray uses the sensual and consensual terms of the physical caress as a basis for building a way of thinking: an approach I wish to incorporate into the *Other's-Other* which also incorporates intimacy as an agential presence between two. Her notion of the caress consists of an offering to the other, which neither takes nor possesses. Instead of invoking the male Western philosophical attitude which tends towards ideality and rationality, Irigaray instead evokes a less conflicted irreducible invisible otherness which manifests as an invitation to a shared experience which allows each protagonist to maintain their own self-hood and interiority: *"The caress is … is a call to a return to you, to me, to us: as living bodies, as two who are different and co-creators. It is a common act and work, irreducible to those acts and works dedicated either to individual or collective needs.*

*The caress is a gesture-word which goes beyond the horizon or the distance of intimacy with the self. This is true for the one who is caressed and touched, for the one who is approached within the sphere of his or her incarnation, but it is also true for the one who caresses, for the one who touches and accepts distancing the self from the self through this gesture."* (Irigaray 2000:26)

Irigaray's caress holds a possibility of co(-)mmunication which recognises the interiority of and the distance of the other while also appreciating an intimacy created by a shared gesture. The caress is given, yet still an asking: never a taking or a forcing. Likewise, it is a gesture-word which allows us to think otherness, it forms a bridge between two and enables us to imagine another's otherness which is connected to our own. The caress allows me to imagine an un-conflicted *Other's-Other* in which two might together co-create.

**Reflexivity: The power of the participant**

Key to the development of the *Other's-Other* through Irigaray's caress is the essential role of the participant who maintains power and control of their own consciousness (or transcendency) within the unfolding work. In his one-to-one pieces, Howells encourages absolutely no relinquishment of his participants' control; in *PROXIMITY* I aimed to allow the artwork to unfold as a reflexive and participant-dependent piece. This is fundamental for evolving the device of the *Other's-Other* away from its conception in Sartre's conflicted otherness and towards Irigaray's reflexive philosophy of the caress. Howells' other does not after the first moments flee, recoil or involuntarily perpetuate this initial early sense of shame as would be predicted by a Sartrean experience. Although a self-conscious and awkward sensation may possibly persevere throughout for some participants, Howells still describes a "presence" that develops; an "engagement" taking place; and a "special connection" that arises between himself and the participant. Whether every participant finds this an enjoyable interaction or not is irrelevant: the matter of the engagement still exists and it is this engagement that lends itself to an Irigarayan permutation. In the otherness I was exploring through *PROXIMITY,* gestures were likewise reflexive. The performers, Parkes and Clarke, performed sounds and repertoire whose shape, volume and intensity was dictated entirely by audience reactions. The presence of the performer in PROXIMITY catalyzes a self-engagement into being, as with Howells' *Footwashing*. Upon the participant's arrival face-to-face with the other, the returned gaze acts to stimulate in both of these protagonists a sense of their own selfness and otherness. In this way, the work is created by a unique and unrepeatable reflexive entanglement of others. This collision forms the central and active focus of both works. In keeping with the Irigarean caress, neither participant transcends or subsumes the other: both contribute to a unique and unrepeatable version of the work and two independent consciousnesses or interiorities move forwards in negotiated tandem.

Howells' work and *PROXIMITY* are examples of collisions in which the caress plays out between an irreducible two. in which both parties are irreducible to the other and the experience plays out as an invitation to another's interiority. Irigaray broadens my formulation of the *Other's-Other* as a

reflexive device for making and for thinking within sound arts by embracing the reflexive possibilities of otherness as difference: *"Thanks to perception, we can each become, the one for the other, a bridge towards a becoming which is yours, mine, and ours. I can be a bridge to you, as you can be one for me. This bridge can never become the property of either."* (Irigaray 2000:43). This otherness of irreducible alterity widens the *Other's-Other*'s usefulness and scope as a means for making and thinking, and constructs it as a methodological device which accounts for multiple selves and others that diffract to form new experiential readings and understandings of works.

**The irreducibility of the other as agential presence**

The resonances between one-to-one immersive works and Irigaray's recognition of the in-between that exists between others as a shared and co-creative experience manoeuvres and expands the terms of the *Other's-Other* relationship. Irigaray asserts that *"thanks to perception"* we can create a bridge between each other which becomes property of neither. Thanks to perception, and thanks to the shame and self-awareness created by the collision of ourselves with another, our individual interiorities can move forward in tandem towards a different, shared future. In *to be two*, Luce Irigaray describes the other as *"an other who is irreducible to me"* (Irigaray 1994/2000:19). Irigaray approaches this transcendence through difference and alterity, allowing for each of her protagonists to maintain their own individual transcendency while still providing a crucial role in the shared, entangled experience that occurs between them.

For Irigaray, the other remains transcendent from her through their alien body, words and intentions: she specifies that they *"are not and never will be mine."* (1994/2000:18) For her, the other is un-transcend-able: the state of transcendence over the scene does not lie only with one protagonist or the other, but with each participant concurrently. For Irigaray, one plus one still equals two, whereas for Sartre one plus one must become or combine to leave only one again.

Irigaray lends the idea that the perceptive and reactive-responsive relationship of the *Other's-Other* can come to fruition as a shared becoming: the creation or

realisation of an artwork can be rooted in this "shared ownership" - this shared bridge towards becoming - that comes into being via the direct entanglement of others. In both of the works described above, one part of the reflexive loop is not subsumed in or dispelled by the other as a transcendence transcended. Instead, self and other are encouraged to coexist, in respective difference, towards the creation of the complete work. Each individual transcendency remains intact although both partake in and are affected by the reflexive loop of the experience.[58]

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[58] Irigaray also points to a fundamental blind spot in Western philosophy: in what she describes as the "first relationship" between mother and child which adds to an understanding of otherness I am working to create in the *Other's-Other*. She questions the absence of this relationship in Sartre's self/other sexual shame and in male Western philosophers' renderings of desire. She identifies a substantial void and basic understanding of, and with, the other. Irigaray describes the urge to transcend the other as a conflict that stems from a desire which wants the same through appropriation (2000:18). Irigaray's approach, in contrast, allows for conflict to be part of the relationship and for this conflict to exist in possible futures created by those who are entangled. This informs the type of *Other's-Other* I am building in this thesis: the other is one which I may have a response and a responsibility to which is experienced equally by the other in a twin upsurge of becoming: The future movement forward is defined by each other's response and desire. In Irigaray, two others create a negotiated future between themselves, dependent on their interaction, within which both giving and refusing are accounted for. Her approach allows for an otherness that is not sexually based and which allows for a caressing and nurturing giving/receiving aspect to be at its centre. Irigaray describes male Western philosophy's striking lack of attention (in a philosophy of desire) to the importance of nearly every newly born child's first experience of the other, that of the mother: *"Since the first relationship between two consciousnesses has been erased, each one has been transformed into a zombie, into a neutral individual, into an abstract creature. The concrete encounter with the other, entering into carnal presence together with him, has become impossible. We are no longer two, but subjugated, both of us, to an abstract order which divides us into one+one +... parts of the community." (Irigaray 2000:31-32)* Irigaray describes this erasure of the first encounter as leaving a void in Western philosophy that can only be bridged through appropriation, objectification and subjugation, and through active and passive roles: i.e. by transcending another's transcendence.

Irigaray identifies the otherness of our existence as sexuate beings as a step towards thinking about desire as an irreducible alterity. Therefore, in Irigaray I find a resonance of the non-dialectic performative binary that I propose for thinking sound arts. Irigaray marks out the notion of an intention to the other-which-it-is-not as a pre-given in the body: "*This property: being sexuate, implies a negative, a not being the other, a not being the whole, and a particular way of being: tied to the body and in relationship with the other, including therein the return to the self.*" For Irigaray it is this which already inscribes the self with otherness and with its object-ness in the world. Although Irigaray uses sexuate nature as the basis of her premise, it is the focus in her work of that-which-is-not-me that holds particular interest for this investigation. Her approach ascribes both parties a consciousness that is denied by Western philosophy of the existentialists. In Irigaray, there is no simple factuality or "facticity," but it is already consciousness (2000:30-31), and a consciousness that shares certain aspects of existence with its other. Its sexuateness (in these more recent times, a fluid and malleable sexuateness that we might mould to our own needs and preferences, yet always measure it against that-which-is-not-me) also imbues the self with an interiority with which it can connect, and more importantly without which it cannot connect in a caressing, non-conflicting way. A sexuate nature allows the participant in Howells *Footwashing* to reconnect with this interiority or irreducibility and to that inner space which is not the other: *"This new interiority could exist only in the sphere of a sexuate relationship: since I am not you, I can open a space of interiority in me."* (ibid. 2000:36) It is this sexuateness as otherness which already allows for the two and therefore for the "between two" and for an interior otherness which arises before our collision. I already am not you, and there is no way of subsuming you into me due to this interiority of self (or our transcendent interiority). Irigaray identifies a selfness which-is-already-an-other as the core which forbids your subsuming me into you: *"This two does not allow the submission of one to the other, if it is not to suffer the loss of the two. It does not even correspond to the juxtaposition of one+one subjects. It has to do with a relationship* between." (ibid 2000:35) These irreducible interiorities are what produce a relationship between and it is this between that holds potential within this thesis as a space of co-creative and intimate space. Likewise, with the possibility of a relationship *between two* arises a space that is conducive to the terms of Irigaray's "caress", and which is fundamental to my construction of the *Other's-Other*.

**The *Other's-Other caress as* granting agency and liberating authors**

With the possibility of an interior space, which is naturally and already created in each protagonist, arises the possibility of a relationship between two which avoids a Sartrean transcended transcendence. In this way I may grant all protagonists in the entanglement of the *Other's-Other* with meaningful agency, abolishing the idea of authorship as problematically exclusive or powerful in sound arts discourse. Consequently the removal of the performer or the author championed by Aura Satz (see page 34) and Sabine Sanio as a democratisation of sound arts becomes unnecessary. Likewise, it does not remain necessary to avoid speaking about protagonists who are completing a work in discourse (as seen in Brandon LaBelle's accounts of Bernard Leitner's works as described in the introduction, page 31). In "the caress", *"Perceiving you does not involve losing me or you, as long as I accept that* ***this perception is not simply mine.*** *It is mine and not mine... My perception must remain a path towards you, towards us, an us which is always disunited, distanced, always a "two" irreducible to one."* (Irigaray 2000:43, emphasis my own) For Irigaray, the interiority of the self is not created only by the presence of the other, it begins from a sexuate space, and the collision between two holds within it possibilities of intimacy and proximity. I use Irigaray's sexuate divisibility, her already existent otherness, in this thesis to attribute an otherness in which it is impossible to transcend another and instead the caressing *Other's-Other* - as a collision between two - becomes a positive reaching forth which does not wish to claim power, instead: *"...an offering of consciousness, a gift of intention and of word addressed to the concrete presence of the other"* (2000:26), *"...Rather than grasping you - with my hand, with my gaze, with my intellect - I must stop before the inappropriable, leaving the transcendence between us to be. "You who are not and will never be me or mine" are and remain* you, *since I cannot grasp you, understand you, possess you. You escape every ensnarement, every submission to me, if I respect you not so much because you are transcendent to your body, but because you are transcendent to me ... This "to" safeguards a place of transcendence between us, a place of respect which is both obligated and desired, a place of possible alliance...Instead, I stop in front of you as in front of an other irreducible to me: in body and in intellect, in exteriority and in interiority."* (Irigaray 2000:19)

Irigaray's idea of irreducibility, her idea of a separateness in which one retains one's interiority, is an attribute of otherness that I can use within the notion of the *Other's-Other.* Irreducibility becomes a quality of being a protagonist: an other who is capable of agency as part of an entangled between-two. It allows me to manifest the *Other's-Other* as a device that highlights the space between us as co-creative due to the agency and authorship of protagonists and for this agential presence to be a form of intimacy between us. The result is a reflexive *Other's-Other* relationship fulfilled without *"ensnarement, submission or possession of the freedom of the other"* (Irigaray 2000:26) with each protagonist arriving to the scene already complete with their own interiority which cannot be subsumed by, altered by, or transcended by the other.

I will now take Irigaray's caress up in the *Other's-Other* through a discussion of works which involve both the face-to-face and the one-to-one but which also play specifically on a denial and refusal of this relationship. In this way I will problematise the *Other's-Other* in a wider contextual setting of audience-ship working to increase its scope as a device for use in terms of sound art works and making. In expanding to larger settings than the one-to-one, I also pave the way toward discussing non-reactive space itself as other in the next chapter.

## Part 2 |*Agency: The caress and denying the caress*
## A relationship between - Marina Abramovic; Angelika Festa; Maria Hassabi

In similar ways to Howells, Marina Abramovic's body of work takes the inter-play between artist and participant as its focal concern. Despite this, she tends to put the relationship of the caress under tension through its denial or restriction as a central vehicle in her works. Studying this denial also as an iteration of an agential intimacy between two serves to augment the terms of the *Other's-Other.* Generally, Abramovic's work tends to play on pain and self-harm, as will be discussed later in regard to her work, *Lips of Thomas* (1975). Thus, she offers a different perspective on Irigaray's caress - that I am using in my construction of the *Other's-Other.* In offering it, and then refusing it or pushing the interaction to the limits of its endurance, Abramovic (and Angelika

Festa later in this chapter) still, I contend, deny the bridging caress out of a dialogic agency between two which remains intimate in its terms. Often she will push the caress so far that the urge in the spectator is to end or take control of the situation she has created, and the moment of an audience being on the cusp of needing to seize control features in some of her more intense earlier works. Abramovic's 2010 performance piece, *The Artist is Present* bears many of the same hallmarks as Howells' work. Staged in wholly different surroundings, it plays out in the public space of the Museum of Modern Art in New York rather than in a private room. The piece unfolds both as a one-to-one performance and also on a grander performed scale as an engagement observed by hundreds of spectators; witnessed also by millions of people via "sharing" on social media.[59]

In *The Artist is Present* Abramovic is seated at the centre of a large space on a chair at an over-sized table with a similar chair placed on the opposite side for her participant. At the edge of this large area, people queue to take part also observing the work unfold. As the performance evolved during the run, the table was eventually dispensed with, leaving two chairs facing one another. *The Artist is Present* took the form of an extended performance which lasted three months with Abramovic in situ for 8 to 10 hours daily. The curators had doubts whether anyone in the busy city of New York would take time to participate, but queues were consistently long for the duration of the show, with some people waiting overnight or queueing for up to 16 hours in order to partake in the experience.[60] After queueing, visitors came one-by-one, as directed by exhibition staff/security, to sit opposite and to lock eyes with the artist. In the course of the performance, Abramovic met the gaze of 1,000 strangers. She treated the work as an endurance piece by ensuring that she did not have to leave her seat, achieved by a latrine installed in her chair. She had also trained herself not to eat lunch for a year beforehand.

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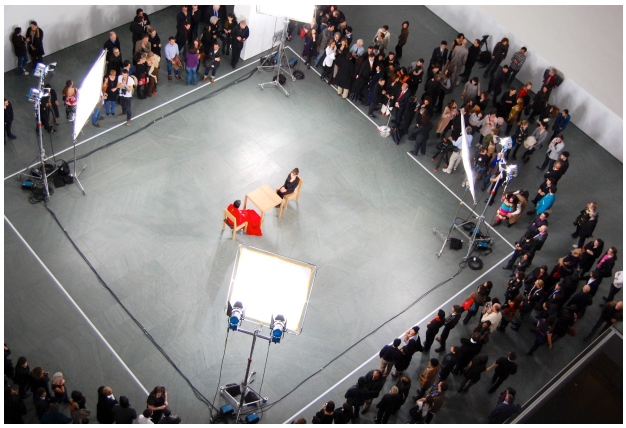
[59] The piece is inaccurately characterized online by the powerfully emotional moment between Abramovic and former partner and artistic collaborator Ulay. In this interaction we are able to observe a deep emotional reaction exhibited by Abramovic, which is not seen in any of the other interactions.

[60] This interest in the work was put down to people's need to connect; I would contend that not only is the desire to connect with an other, but the connection with the self is paramount. In gazing into the face of another, one may become aware of oneself. Abramovic does nothing but return your gaze, so one meets oneself through imputed sentiments. One meets their Other's Other.



Images available: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marina_Abramovi%C4%87,_The_Artist_Is_Present,_2010_(4422516968).jpg

Like Howells' more personal and physically shared engagement, Abramovic's piece is ostensibly formed for the one-to-one encounter. However, Abramovic is apparently far more inaccessible as no touching or verbal communication takes place. Some online videos of the performance glimpse a security guard clearly saying to a participant "there is no speaking, okay, no talking to the artist." She remains an untouchable other. In *The Artist is Present,* you do not just encounter an other, you encounter an experience of an other who is Marina Abramovic, the performer. The *Other's-Othering* caress is complexified as a highly structured public meeting in which conversation or touching is forbidden. The only engagement is that Abramovic returns your individual gaze. In this way, the majority of the participant's response is through imputed sentiment. The other (Abramovic) denies a full interaction, causing the experience to be far more about the participant's collision as an other interacting with their own sentiments and self-seeing. This idea of a caress restricted or in parts denied feeds into the next chapter's notion of the one-to-no-one as a form of *Other's-Other.*

**The inaccessible one-to-one, the irreducible other**

Although many restrictions on interaction exist in *The Artist is Present,* this basic one-to-one encounter - an intimate form - plays out multiple times. Abramovic simply invites this particular engagement: one may sit opposite her and in return she offers her returned gaze to your particular presence. A new performance of this gesture plays out with each new encounter, and a unique

reflexive dialogic loop of returned gazes is set into action. There is no escaping that, with a lack of permitted speech, no normal or frank communication of each other's thoughts or state can be firmly given, only approximations of feelings and reactions as seen in each other's eyes and faces. Each other who is present in the loop that springs into being remains irreducible: each present other's interiority of consciousness remains untouchable, although both engage reactively to one another in terms of a safeguarded place of transcendence that occurs between them.

In terms of irreducible others Abramovic is perhaps even more 'other,' and more impossible to transcend than your usual 'everyday other' met across a tabletop. The work's title denotes the special significance of the presence of Marina Abramovic herself, the presence of a very 'other,' other: *The Artist* herself *is present.* Is she more present than her participants? Thousands of others who engage with her are also very present in each engagement, but her presence is the ground and the theme that binds the whole work together. In this work, the other (Abramovic) is most definitely the one who *"[is] not and never will be mine"* (Irigaray 2000:19). Abramovic is in a difficult to grasp halfway-point between sitting on a pedestal as an inaccessible other, and as a directly reactive other who is in direct eye-contact and close proximity with her participants as part of an intimacy of presence. Placing Abramovic's role is difficult. Both participants in *The Artist is Present* will remain irreducible, but Abramovic's presence as the artist already introduces this unseen theme of irreducibility into the work even before it has got underway.

In the documentation of Abramovic's work, we see hundreds of emotional faces but not many stills of Abramovic's own face. The emphasis appears to be on her effect on others: its construct promises that "this is what will happen to you," that this engagement and feeling is possible here and now instead of all other "nows" due to the presence of the artist herself. Whether one might have an effect on Abramovic is less emphasized. Men, women, children, her ex-partner and a number of other performance artists are pictured in collage stills. We see these participants or spectators as Abramovic may see them as they are seated opposite her. I personally would have liked to see Abramovic's face opposite each of her others - to see her side of the caress, but we are denied such a direct view. Abramovic is wholly irreducible. She has set

that relationship up before the work even opened on its first day. We, the participants and visitors are in fact both equally enabled and limited by this work. *The Artist is Present* plays keenly on the public's desire to communicate with the other in a one-to-one, as shown by its popularity, yet Abramovic only allows this engagement to unfold to the point where one would desire more interaction. As is common with her work, she brings her audience to a boundary and refuses further engagement past this point, as I will discuss in reference to *Lips of Thomas* later in this chapter. The option for real physical or verbal engagement with Abramovic is denied. Abramovic instigates desire in her visitors yet this desire to enter into a reflexive *Other's-Other* caressing loop with her is refused by the limits she has placed on the performance: namely no speech and no touching. Therefore, the participants mainly meet themselves in this setup.

**The Loop Destabilised - the denial rejected and the desire for the caress highlighted.**

Fascinating moments which are documented from live and planned footage of *The Artist is Present* show a number of participants aiming to take control within the one-to-one engagement that is offered. In this documentation we see them attempting to resist the relinquishment or sublimation of their own agency to Abramovic in a variety of ways. In particular, they are seen exercising their own will over a performance piece which invited their involvement as audience-participant.

Image available: https://virtualartistresidency.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/artist_is_present_sitting_with_marina.jpg

The gesture of the caress and an intimacy of presence remains at the centre of *The Artist is Present,* but this reflexive loop is challenged and in some ways denied by the limits and separations that Abramovic places upon the piece. As a result, during the run a number of interactions occurred which challenged, from the side of the protagonistic participant, the usual pattern of the performance. One occasion saw New York make-up artist Paco Blanca (who has infiltrated a large number of her performance works over the years) befriending museum guards and sitting opposite Abramovic for a seven-hour stint in what could be described as a personal performance piece. Another altered interaction was created by a young woman who undressed in front of the artist and who was removed by security guards. Her post-streak tearful reasoning revealed a mistaken perception of the integral and intentional limits Abramovic had placed on the work. Her desire to "just be with Marina" and to "share a special moment" were met with Abramovic's averted gaze and total non-interaction. The performance remained Abramovic's. Abramovic pointedly did not allow the participant's agency to lead the future-path of the work, exercising her own will in the one-to-one. The gesture-caress exists in *The Artist*

*is Present*, but Abramovic's denial of certain types of agency and interactions emphasizes the irreducibility of the other and its presence in the interactive loop of reflexivity: if one side of the encounter denies full responsivity, the future-path of the work is affected.

Also of interest is the agency claimed over the work by another New York-based Iranian-Canadian performance and media artist, Amir Baradaran. During his visit, Baradaran created a series of engagements relating to the piece which were possibly intended to hijack the high-profile attention given to Abramovic's work. What is relevant for this inquiry is Baradaran's outright acknowledgement and use of his own powerful agency in the work even just as a standard participant (e.g. someone who does not enjoy the privileges of her former lover, or is not a permitted infiltrator like Paco Blanca).

**Baradaran's *The Other Artist is Present:* its claiming of agency and an example of irreducibility**

Baradaran's *The Other Artist is Present* (2010) consists of four "acts," with some of these acts taking place outside of the museum space. One of these acts consists of him gazing at his own reflection in a museum window, in a setting reminiscent of the image of Abramovic at her table. This is perhaps indicative of the idea that the one-to-one makes you see yourself as your other's other.

In the first of these acts, *Act I: Bodies and Wedding*, Baradaran takes part in Abramovic's performance as other participants have done before him by sitting opposite Abramovic at the table in the museum. For this act, he enters dressed in an identical gown to Abramovic's but in the colour red, vibrant next to her deep blue gown. Abramovic alternated her colours, of which red was one.

Image available: http://www.nyartbeat.com/nyablog/2010/04/the-other-artist-is-present-amir-baradaran-at-moma/

In *Act I: Bodies and Wedding,* Baradaran sits opposite Abramovic in the same standard format as all previous engagements. He disregards the rules of no speech, however, (perhaps these were introduced after Baradaran's act) and through speech he attempts to draw her into a '*sobhat*'. A *sobhat* is a Persian Farsi term for a conversation which has both spiritual and corporeal dimensions. In the video documentations of his *Act I* Baradaran says: "I love your bodies of work…and I would love to be wedded to this body…do you accept this marriage, here and now?" (http://amirbaradaran.com/ab_toaip_act_I.php). This verbal proposal is met with silence from Abramovic, a denial of its terms both as a question and as an offering of a new kind of interaction, although his presence in the red gown induces a smile. He asks three times for her hand in marriage - each time he is met with no response - and each time Baradaran responds to her silence with an excuse which he gives on her behalf. On his website, Baradaran describes how traditional excuses are given in Persian culture and that these excuses are what he offers in place of her response. These excuses are: the first time that the woman is busy collecting flowers and then the second time that she is busy making rosewater. At the final silent denial, Baradaran launches into what he describes as a joyous Persian

dance which is totally at odds with the previous engagements that have been seen in and allowed in the space.

Baradaran's website claims that he has wed the "icon" in a manner reminiscent of her own work *"through a juxtaposition of the solemn and the celebratory"* (ibid.) in the terms of the Shiite provision of temporary intimacy. Within this investigation however, it is Baradaran's claiming of and attempted fulfilment of his own agency within the engagement that is of interest. The entanglement of the *Other's-Other* is the main constituent part of the piece, as with Howells' *Footwashing*. It is an inter-reactive engagement between two witnesses and by acting outside of the rules, Baradaran directly manipulates and experiments with his own role in this entanglement. He causes us to acknowledge the role of Abramovic as an other who is alike to ourselves in the work, as Abramovic is challenged to react likewise now on Baradaran's terms, not her own. Although Abramovic gives no response and apparently refuses to engage, her refusal of an expected response still constitutes a reaction to what has been proffered. Abramovic has been required to engage in a new form of entanglement created by the presence of the other artist which is outside of the usual, time-practised-and-formed rules of the engagement that she has set up as constituting the work. Whatever her reaction, positive or negative to his request, she has been forced to participate as an other - beyond her expected untouchable otherness - who now has a new role in the scene. Baradaran has exerted his own agential power as her other, and Abramovic has denied it. I can understand this change in the entanglement via the *Other's-Other* played out according to Irigaray's caress. Both participants are shown to be irreducible to one another while also being entangled into a reflexive loop of agential intimate presence. This creates a new pathway for the unfolding work.

What Baradaran also achieves in his performance is a focus on the difference which charges the *Other's-Othe*r entanglement. His offering as participant is rejected, and the until-now predictable form of the work is subverted. Abramovic is pushed to engage differently with her other and the caress-dialogue of the *Other's-Other* becomes apparent: we observe them both participating in a new entanglement before us. Key in the relationship is the fact that both artists exert their own agency on the interaction. Who controls the work - until this moment apparently Abramovic - suddenly shifts into doubt as

Baradaran seizes a form of control, however much this is denied or consented to by Abramovic.

**Intra-active Agency in the *Other's-Other*: Entanglements and Diffractions**

Baradaran's engagement with Abramovic's work highlights the loop of the *Other's-Other* as a caress which can also be conflicted and denying in its terms of entanglement. The interiority and irreducibility of agency allows for this. The caress of the *Other's-Other*, which is developed through Irigaray, respects that which is irreducible, that which is intention and interiority in the other, towards the creation of a new version of the work that is created by colliding and entangling agencies. Baradaran's undermining of Abramovic's established and accepted rules causes both the original intention of the artist-who-is-present to be experienced alongside Baradaran's intentions and desires towards a new formulation. Desires are realised and refused all at once: each artists' intentions and interiorities are seen occurring and overlapping at the same time. A collision of others takes place, creating a new version of the work. Through an *Other's-Othering* caress, two elements are shifted into a new occurrence.

The *Other's-Other's* caress in Baradaran's interceptions draws this investigation towards Karen Barad's construction of a diffractive methodology which accounts for all elements at once, rather than in separate bodies of data. Baradaran's interaction with *The Artist is Present* recalibrates the work, and alters - or as Barad would put it, diffracts - the work. Barad suggests that reading diffractively allows different elements to influence what is observed and to alter and influence results: "*… a diffractive methodology, a method of diffractively reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their fine details, together with the recognition that there intrinsic to this analysis is an ethics that is not predicated on externality but rather entanglement. Diffractive readings bring inventive provocations; they are good to think with.*" (Barad 2012:3) Baradaran works as a diffraction or bending that brings new understandings of the work through his entanglement with it. When thought in conjunction with the *Other's-Other* it bends our perception of Abramovic's work: In his series of "Acts" more is revealed to us about Abramovic's work than when the work unfolds as

planned. A new version and understanding forms as a result of the two works' collision. Through Baradaran's *Act I: Bodies and Wedding* we can observe two intentionalities and interiorities, or agencies, coming together in the same moment generating a new set of intentionalities.

In an interview, *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (Open Humanities Press 2012), Barad discusses new materialist[61] diffractive methodologies in quantum physics and her 2007 book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. The interview is entitled "*Matter Feels converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers.*"

In this interview, Barad proposes a new, creative and suggestive feminist approach to quantum studies. Building on Donna Haraway's[62] work, Barad's main thrust is to lay out a new way of perceiving and recording what is taking place in experiments in the field of quantum physics. She suggests that one must take account of two or more differing ways of analysing measurements which usually remain separate from one another. By taking account of both of these perceptible elements diffractively - by acknowledging that each affects the other - she encourages using entanglement as a means by which to "*…open up and rework the agential conditions of possibility.*" (2012:6) This "diffractive methodology" is contextualised by her interviewer as: "*the relational nature of difference, as a methodology for treating theories and texts not as preexisting entities, but as intra-action, as forces from which other texts come into existence.*" (2012:11) Similarly, in this investigation, I can borrow Barad's notion of diffraction and intra-action within the device of the *Other's-Other*: others overlap, intra-act,

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[61] New Materialism opposes the transcendental and humanist (dualist) traditions that are haunting cultural theory, standing on the brink of both the modern and the post-postmodern era. Transcendental and humanist traditions, which are manifold yet consistently predicated on dualist structures, continue to stir debates that are being opened up by new materialists (think of the feminist polemic concerning the failed materialism in the work of Judith Butler, and of the Saussurian/Lacanian linguistic heritage in media and cultural studies). What can be labelled "new materialism" shifts these dualist structures by allowing for the conceptualization of the travelling of the fluxes of nature and culture, matter and mind, and opening up active theory formation. (R. Dolphijn and I. Van der Tuin 2009) Available online: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/11515701.0001.001/1:4.3/--new-materialism-interviews-cartographies?rgn=div2;view=fulltext

[62] an American scholar and professor who writes on the subject of feminism in relation to science and technology, working in the departments of History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies at the University of California

collide and affect one another, exerting irreducible forces of interiority upon one another, forming a new pathway for the work.

This project works towards using the *Other's-Other* to identify others as protagonists (and as I will explore later, also liminality) addressing entanglements as intra-active and diffractive across and between protagonists so that we might arrive at a new way of perceiving the intimacy and proximity that plays out as part of sound arts. It is this intimacy and proximity that will help me to articulate the intra-active and entangled nature of meaning making in works as critical terms in relation to sound arts discourse.

Key in Barad's proposition is the element of agency seen as mutual response-ability.

I locate this agency in the collision and entanglement that takes place in the *Other's-Other* caress between Baradaran and Abramovic. Agency is essential for the success of Baradaran's intervention which intends to create a new entangled experience of *The Artist is Present* and *The Other Artist is Present*. For Barad: *"…agency is about response– ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly reconfigurings. Set agency is not something possessed by humans, or non-humans for that matter. It is an enactment. And it enlists, if you will, "non- humans" as well as "humans"..."* (Barad 2012:9). It is Baradaran's enactment of agency that proves Abramovic's and his own agency as enactments.

Barad makes clear that agency itself is an integral, flexible pivot for producing re-configurings and mutual responses known as "response-ability". Like Irigaray's caress, in Barad's diffractive methodology irreducibility is accounted for, and thus interiority is maintained and agencies diffract across one another to create a new unfolding. In this sense, the intervention of Baradaran's *The Other Artist is Present* introduces a possibility of agency and response-ability which attends to the power imbalance in *The Artist is Present,* and through this attention, both works are reconfigured. Response-ability springs directly from the notion of a diffraction – in that irreducible others may come to influence one another through diffraction by bending and altering outcomes through and because of each other's presence. Baradaran's enactment of performance allows the *Other's-Other* to play out as a reconfiguring of agency. It does so via Irigaray's interiority, and Barad's diffractive methodology, positioning the

*Other's-Other* as a diffractive device. This allows a recognition of irreducible interiorities and holds the potential to appraise a co-created and new in-between: through the *Other's-Other* I may diffractively draw in many discursive elements and re-see or newly appraise sound art works.

**Observation as a form of protagonistic agency**

Harking back to our camera obscura observer from chapter one, and thinking about others at the periphery of a work also as protagonists, Barad describes how in tests and observations that take place in quantum physics slit tests[63] the presence of an observer at the moment of measurement-taking affects the way results play out in scatter pattern tests.[64] Barad identifies how the presence of an audience - the scientist observer - causes the particles to behave differently in two-slit apparatus experiments. The phenomenon has puzzled scientists for decades. Barad asserts that in her opinion by observing the experiment, "*[p]hysicists are actually making time in marking time, and that there is a certain way in which what we take to be the "past" and what we would take to be the "present" and the "future" are entangled with one another … we assume that time is a given externality, just a parameter that marches forward, and that's the past already happened and the present, that moment "now" just slipped away into the past, and that the future is yet to come. But if we examined this carefully, again using the insights from feminist theory, from Post – structuralist theory, and things that cultural studies*

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[63] "*Particles are very different from waves. Particles are localised entities that occupy particular place in space and in time, and you cannot have two particles in the same place at the same time. On the other hand, there are waves, and waves are not entities at all. Waves are disturbances in fields. If you think about ocean waves, you see that waves often overlap with one another. They can occupy the same place at the same time; that is part of what they are famous for doing. So on the one hand, we have something localised, and, on the other, we have something very non– localised.*" (Barad 2012:14)

[64] The conundrum has baffled scientists for decades. In discussing and explaining the effect of the observer, Barad references an experiment conducted by American anthropologist and psychologist Barbara Smuts.
In 1976, Smuts conducted an experiment on the behaviour of wild baboons. During this study, Smuts found that trying to observe the baboons behaviour from a position outside of the group caused the baboons to completely change their natural behaviour. This made her study impossible to carry out. She progressed the experiment successfully, however, by integrating herself - the observer - into the group until they trusted her and accepted her: after this point they began behaving as they might naturally and she was able to complete her observations.

*has been telling us, and so on, and bring them into Physics here, what we can see is that what is going on actually is* the making of temporality… *what we are seeing here is that time is not given, it is not universally given, but rather that time is articulated and resynchronised through various material practices."*(Barad 2012:21) Barad identifies that physicists observing the slit-test are affecting their own results: they resynchronise the test through their own material entanglement with the experiment. Her notion of temporality being made, not given is also resonant of the "in-its-own-worldness" proposed as a immersive quality by Machon. In immersive theatres I would claim the the *Other's-Othering* that unfolds generates a temporality of its own. This unique temporality is dependent on the entanglement of protagonists. Barad proposes taking account of past and present using her diffractive methodology, allowing for a more coherent study and observation of their entanglement, also importantly accounting for the observer's entanglement. The observer in two-slit tests cannot remain un-entangled with the experiment. The observer's presence works to change results - as with our audience or observer who influences works. Observers hold protagonistic agency on the way the work unfolds.

Regarding this particular research into sound arts, which is not a scientific endeavour, I here am working to give the *Other's-Other* ability as a diffractive tool that allows us to firstly mark out protagonists and then to appraise how they are response-able, intra-active, and as a result, co-creative. The idea of diffraction also contributes to the notion that creating work through thinking with the *Other's-Other* might allow for different approaches and sensibilities. The *Other's-Other*, applied to both discussing or creating works results in a diffraction of present elements that allows an alternative viewpoint or approach. This will help me to describe works as co-creative and entangled, and subsequently enable me to discuss the experience of the *Other's-Other* as a caress and for it to, in its twofold function, be used as a diffractive methodology of sound arts criticism. This methodology will allow me to address sound art works in a new and more holistic and comprehensive way that includes all protagonistic elements in terms of their proximity and intimacy.
The diffractive *Other's-Other* is a construct which potentially takes account of Barad's pasts and futures and which recognises the entanglements that take

place within it as constituting the creation of its future. When the *Other's-Other* is seen as an Irigarean caress, interiorities and agencies maintain their own selfness, and, when viewed with Barad's diffractive methods, as co-creating a new entangled future.

Barad also identifies that the observer is not separate as a quantity in the experiment, but part of the experiment, affecting the outcomes and behaviours of what they study. By accepting their presence as a determining factor in the experiment she recognises their entanglement. In quantum physics, the pattern occurring between waves and the particles can never return after having been observed by the observer - it is lost forever and subsumed into a new future-formation through and by the action of the observer. I suggest that new future-formation caused by the observers' entanglement also applies in relation to artworks. I articulate this response-ability as impact in terms of the construction of the *Other's-Other*: The observer or audience who partakes in a work affects this work with their agency, with their own interiority, and causes it to play out differently: the presence of others causing the work to be diffracted and to be recreated into the future.

**The complexity of the one-to-one observed: accounting for plural others in the *Other's-Other***

Returning with a knowledge of Barad's diffractive methodology to the artistic case studies in this chapter, it is worth exploring the one-to-one as an observed relationship. Unlike Howells' intimate one-to-one encounter, Abramovic's piece (and Baradaran's) plays out in a public way, adding extra layers of engagements and dimensions of looking to the work. There is the *Other's-Other* as it plays out between Abramovic and her participant; and there is the other who looks in from the periphery as they queue for the experience; there is also the other who observes the queue and the performance from the outside - perhaps only passing by, stumbling on the work - who possibly experiences bewilderment or confusion, or who has no intention of fully participating beyond observing it as an event that is taking place nearby.

*The Artist is Present* strikes up a strange friction between the one-to-one encounter taking place between Abramovic and her participant and the almost

overwhelming hubbub of chatter and voices of an audience of hundreds who are observing the scene. People stare, walk, talk, stand in fixated silence, take photographs, record videos, all around the periphery of the performance area. Thus, layer upon layer of performance plays out. Beyond the intimate one-on-one, the *Other's-Other* entanglement that plays out between Abramovic and her participant is a performance in a different respect: The duo seated opposite one another at the table perform also for the greater number of people who are watching from the "outside." At every moment Abramovic maintains a performance, or as Barad would term it an "enactment", which lasts even throughout Abramovic's own unexpected visits (Ulay). Her opposite other likewise enters into this liminal, altered space of performance, both while at the table and as they leave the queue and walk to or from Abramovic. They also exist as part of the enactment just by standing at the periphery. The interaction between Abramovic and her participant is a performance of its own, but their entangled agency and engagement form a performance which is affected by and entangled with the mass presence of the audience spectators at the periphery. Observed at all times, they remain thus aware of their appearance to others in the museum alongside an awareness of themselves in front of each other. Their one-on-one engagement is always observed by another other at the boundary: the boundary "others" perhaps imagining their own upcoming "performance," or identifying with the other who already performs before them as a version of themselves.

The audience - these others congregated at the periphery - are of particular interest because their status within the overall performance is less overt than the other who voluntarily sits opposite Abramovic. They are more alike to the voyeur at the keyhole in *The Look*, eavesdropping on a tête-a-tête unfolding at the centre of the space. Looking in on what is a private menagerie à deux they resonate as a group of others who quietly hum with their own entanglement in the scene. Their own *Look* experiences possibly no returned gaze of any kind, yet still they are bound up into the loop of reflexivity via their own state of observation. Like Barad's influential observer, these observers also

affect the way the work plays out.[65] These peripheral others may interact with other observers or perchance lock eyes with the returning participant, or even briefly with Abramovic herself. The observed pair must feel a judgement in their observed looking and observed action.

Abramovic's long-maintained performance enactment must alter during episodes of unusual diffraction such as Baradaran's offering of a *sobhat*, for example. During this *sobhat*, the pair perform for one another in an entanglement of interior agency alongside a concurrent awareness of performing for others at the periphery. The diffracted work functions on multiple levels of spectatorship: like layers of an onion, it plays out through the gaze and the returned gaze of the other in a complexly intertwined and inter-dependent negotiation of the reflexive ever-altering entanglement of the *Other's-Other* (in its experiential version.) In *The Artist is Present* the gaze and entanglement of the other, as part of the *Other's-Other*, constitutes the main generative core of the piece and this entanglement also reaches out into peripheral engagements around the room.

Some participants returned to sit opposite Abramovic for up to twenty-one times. Such substantial repetition of ostensibly the same experience would imply that the experience itself alters every time. The dynamic between the participants involved would generate differently depending on multiple factors such as mood of each, respective fatigue, the effect of the preceding visitor, the intentions of each, background noise and so on. The ever-altering material generated by the *Other's-Other* manifests itself differently from moment to moment: flexible and reflexive. Although the *Other's-Other* could be overlooked as part of normal interaction, in *The Artist is Present* this *Other's-Other* entanglement constitutes the fundamental, predominant, active material of the work.

**The *Other's Other* and the active peripheral gaze in my own work**

The complexity of the peripheral gaze was something I used as a central focus in my large-scale performance work *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017). An

[65] With absolutely no audience at the periphery of the performance space, *The Artist is Present* would become an entirely different piece, more akin to Howells' *Footwashing*. Likewise, the lack of a participant in the opposing chair would transform it again.

auto-ethnographic account of it appears in Prologue ii. This installation is the main work undertaken during this investigation and the term the *Other's-Other* is derived directly from its title. In this particular work I explored and played on preconceptions regarding what roles are due to play out over the course of the piece. The performance was carried out by a classical contemporary string trio on a raised stage and by two singers (a baritone and a soprano) who were planted within the audience.

In this work, I built a raised stage which stood rather like a monolith in the centre of the room. The work was first exhibited in Wimbledon Space as part of *Acts ReActs 4*, a performance research hub. This high-ceilinged, large space of the theatre was left darkened with only one light shining down onto the raised cube stage. The effect was that when the audience entered the space (at the signal of myself) they entered a dark space which contained a glowing, cube-shaped monolith. The bottom part of this stage-cube was around 5′ 5″ tall and the glowing stage space on top of this was around 6′ tall. Therefore, the complete structure was more than 11 foot in height, 8′ wide and 7′ deep.

Images: Julie Groves *And So I met My Other's Other* (2017). Photographed by Mike Couchman.
Available: http://juliegroves-soundart.com/works/and-so-i-met-my-others-other/

Inside this raised stage space was a string trio performing a work I had commissioned for the piece from composer Ed Scolding. The "happening-score" I provided him with denoted the time-lapses for each event and shift in music. I used a traditionally classical formation of instrumentalists to create a set of expectations for the opening of the work. The aim was to provide the entering audience with an already established set of preconceptions and expectations about how the work might play out considering the materials (classical musicians) used.

Beyond the temporal specificities of the score, the physical and architectural structure of *And so I met my Other's Other* was integral to the way the performance played out. I will discuss in depth the importance of the structure's physical scenographic attributes in chapters four and five in terms of "physical composition" and its relation to the liminal and altered space of performance. Here I focus on the layers of looking within this work.

The stage in *And so I met my Other's Other* was entirely screened by rough calico: a material which allowed the shadows of those who were on the stage to be seen and through a brightly lit interior space for the impression of bodies and shapes and actions taking place within the screened stage-cube to be evident to the audience. Importantly, between the calico screened-walls of the raised cube and the black base was a 5" slit through which the entering audience could see the bare feet of the trio of performers inside. The only way to gain the clearest possible view of the performers inside the calico cube was to move towards the slit and to peer into the gap, upwards.

Images: Julie Groves *And So I met My Other's Other* (2017).

Photographed by Mike Couchman. Available: http://juliegroves.com/and-so-i-met-my-others-other/

As people entered the space at *Acts ReActs*, the work's opening involved a long silence from the performers which lasted around 4 minutes. The audience

began questioning whether a performance would take place at all. Eventually, in an atmosphere of doubt, gentle, almost inaudible sounds of the violinist tuning up with quiet pizzicato strumming of a string began. This was followed by a pause, interjected by the sound of coughs from the performers, signalling the presence of people/performers inside the calico cube, acting as a provocation or invitation – a forward-caress inviting them to come and watch.

Please find a copy on page 133 of the happening score I provided to the composer. In it are laid out a series of long silences and playful moments, all designed to draw in a curious audience.

As *And so I met my other's Other* unfolded, audience-members were drawn to the slit in the staging. Peering in, the audience members could see the feet of the performers as they played, and if they got very close, they could see their faces and instruments and actions too. If they stood back they could witness the moving shadows of those inside cast onto the calico. For a while this set of unconscious behavioural codes endured: audience-members could safely observe the performers from their position on the floor, gazing in at events inside, able to see the performers' often ugly, veiny feet and hairy toes. The performers had far greater difficulty in returning their gaze – most viewers remained only partly visible, as did the majority of the audience in the space. Presenting the performers in this way aimed to induce a subliminal sense of power (and safety) in the onlooker: gazing in, the audience could observe parts of the performers' bodies that would not usually be in evidence during a normal performance - especially in a classical string trio performance. The "rules" and expectations surrounding string chamber ensemble performances are long-established and practised. They do not usually encompass the baring of slightly vulnerable and rarely exposed body parts that the performer has no control over you observing. The feet, as in Howells' descriptions, are a fairly vulnerable and private part of the human body. Rather like hands, they are expressive, yet less familiar, and usually covered up: especially in the context of a classical-contemporary music performance.

This opening part of the performance aimed to lull the audience into a sense of security. They were meant to feel in control of the situation: as with Sartre's *The Look* they could peer in through the slit without having to feel as though they were necessarily implicated into the performance itself. Safely, the

audience could choose to observe from the periphery of the cube. Of course, the audience was aware of the other audience-members around them with some partaking and others standing back. They looked to each other for confirmation that their actions were permissable, looked at one another as well, smiled or pointed. Already, the audience were beginning to be performers: the presence of the other peripheral observers formed an audience to their actions.

Image: Julie Groves *And So I met My Other's Other* (2017).
Photographed by Mike Couchman. Available: http://juliegroves.com/and-so-i-met-my-others-other/

# Skeleton SCORE for realising for
# *And so I met my Other's Other…*

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| **Length of happening:** | **Happening:** |
|---|---|
| [0-5 minutes] | People enter in ones and twos through the door and are welcomed by the artist |
| | *Surroundings are dimmed/very low light apart from the installation which is lit from inside. Entrance door shuts.* |
| [1-2 minutes of silence] | This will be fairly flexible depending on the behaviour of the audience |
| [3-4 minutes] | The piece begins with brave amounts of silence. It begins with muted sounds and pizzicatos or small motifs so that initially listeners will be unsure whether they really have heard it, unsure whether the performance is really starting.<br><br>The piece begins to become more dense across the space of a couple of minutes |
| [30 secs] | Back to total silence |
| [10 sec] | A face peeps out from the installation. Flexible timing dependent on interactions. The performer gazes out directly into returned gaze from the audience |
| [20 secs] | Face disappears again. Silence. |
| [3/4+ minutes] | Playing resumes. Again, much playing with silence. More dense, however, than before. During this episode, a face of one of the performers peeps out for an extended amount of time. This part of the piece must be scored for two players only.<br>Face eventually disappears to rejoin the others. |
| | *After a substantial amount of playing time, the players all cease to be playing* |
| [1+ minute] | Performers ALL gaze out at the audience. Looking around and moving around the bottom slit to get different views and various interactions. They even perhaps reach out through the gap. |
| [1+ minutes] | All disappear and resume playing. |
| [4 minutes overall] | After a little while a voice from auditorium begins to hum/sing low/ sing quietly. If preferable this voice can enter solo in a rest in the trio music. The voice intertwines with what is going on in the strings. Later another voice enters from auditorium loud and surprising. Also adding to an overall crescendo of sound. |
| | *The two singers are both encircling the room and walk along the periphery of the room so that the space is enclosed by them.* |
| [2-3 minutes?] | The music crescendos to a peak with everyone involved.<br>The music finishes loud and finishes by all the performers clapping as an audience does - turning the situation on its head one final time.<br><br>They suddenly cease applause and the lights go on. **END** |

Later in proceedings, this comfortable gaze was subverted, the established relationship between performer and audience undermined: suddenly, those gazing in found that one of the performers had got up and pressed her face to the slit, gazing back out at her viewers. The audience was surprised, entertained, and initially stepped back, away from the interaction. They found themselves eyeball to eyeball with the subject of their observation. Here the performer reclaimed their agency: their returned gaze shifted the engagement that had been playing out into a new engagement, in which they too had their own interiority and will. As the performance progressed all three performers inside the cube began gazing back out, reaching out to their audience physically with hands and feet as well: at a few points audience members too began to put their hands back into the cube proffering their own hands and find them touched and stroked by the performers inside. The performance became an engagement, a dialogue that could freely play out between protagonists.

Both others: the performer-other and the audience-other entered into a negotiated entanglement with one another. The future-path of the work was determined by the structure, the score, the agency and interiority of the performers and by how that agency collided with the agency and interiority and intentions of the onlookers. The stage, usually rooted in one place spilled out, opened itself out and included the audience as participants. I refer to this dialogical space as a liminal space which is created by performance. In chapter five I develop it as a liminal performative space, using Susan Broadhurst's definition of liminality as performatively generative. In *And so I met my Other's Other* this liminal space is created by performance and becomes un-contained, absorbing the entire space. This active liminal space comes to include even those who stand at the periphery - as in *The Artist is Present* at MoMa. *And so I met my Other's Other* highlights this liminal and performative space by shifting its perceived performance boundaries twice over.

Of particular intrigue during this first staging of the performance was the fact that an audience member was drawn to interact even further than I had predicted by taking off her own sock and throwing it into the calico cube! Her agency was exerted, she was response-able: and as a result she chose to alter the unfolding future-path of the work. An unexpected occurrence to the performers, the violinist Anna Cooper willingly entered into this reflexive loop

with the woman who had thrown in her sock. She took it and dressed herself with it, slowly donning the object in sight of the audience, now entangled into the gestural enactment.

As with all my work, the score and the evolution of the performance was rooted in some semi-set marked and planned occurrences, but otherwise, I left the entanglement open to alteration, intra-action and diffraction by the audience. The performers and audience were generally free to interact in this way with each other for an indeterminate amount of time, with an allowance for the performers to judge, based on their own interactions, when the time felt right for the next set action or occurrence to be executed. In this way the whole central part of this performance was fairly freely formed by the entangled intra-action between audience and performers: a fertile ground for audience's enactments to play out freely for a period of time in the centre of the work's time-span.

The final part of the performance was set in place, however, at the point where the two singers who join the string trio complete the piece. Throughout the earlier parts of the work, these two singers had been behaving as though they were part of the audience by interacting as audience-members and wearing usual clothes. The final segment of the performance involved these singers, located at the very periphery of the area - behind the audience who are interacting with the string trio - emerging into ensemble with the trio. From behind the audience, the baritone Rodney Earl Clarke began to sing a note which matched the trio's harmony very quietly, gradually increasing volume so that initially the audience were unsure whether they had heard a singer or not. Turning and looking over their shoulders, the audience were intended to feel a second shift in the periphery of the performance space. The bass-baritone's auditory, and then physical, entry destabilized the audience's sense of where the line between the performers and themselves lay. Spilling outside of itself, the stage suddenly slipped out and also encompassed the audience's own space: here they found themselves inside the stage, standing suddenly within rather than without the perceived boundary of the performance area. In this way, even those audience members who had chosen not to closely interact with the performers through the slit experienced a sense of being immersed into the scene of the performance. Joining the baritone voice then came the soprano,

Susie Parkes, with them both weaving their way among the audience as and when it felt correct to do so towards the monolith structure.

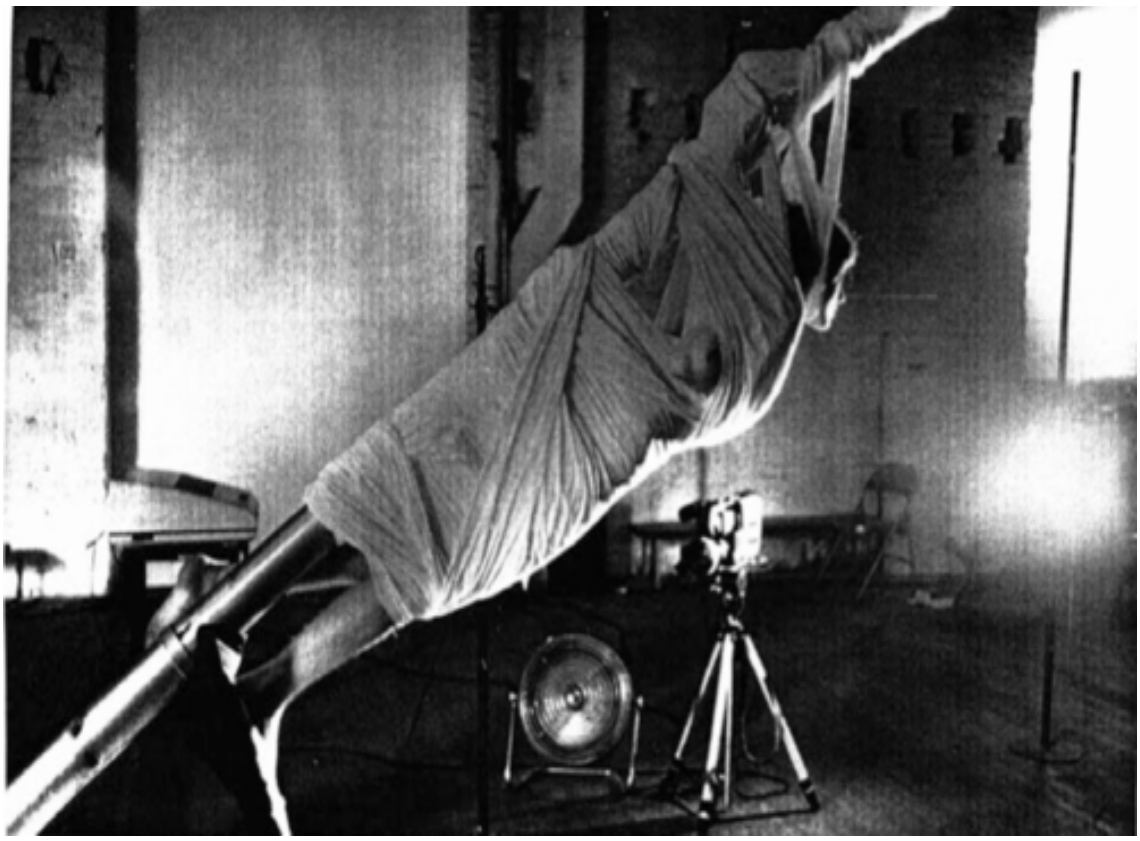
In *And so I met my Other's Other* I used the play of interaction and the shifting of peripheries to explore what effects altering these peripheries might have while also experimenting with the shifting returned gaze. Once the peripheries shift, it is as though they become boundaries: crossable and negotiable. Through the returned gaze I aimed to heighten my audience's sense of self, encourage them to use their agency and to raise the sense of interiority as part of an entanglement experienced between others. In this particular piece I used the other to reappraise the-other-who-is-the-self: to instigate a self-realisation and to encourage reflexivity between performers and audience. The Other that one meets as part of the experience of *And so I met my Other's Other* is oneself: hooped in by shifting boundaries of the performance space, the audience self appraises and experiences the self as their other's other. In this realisation they are granted agency through a realisation of their own interiority and from this collision of agencies springs up a caress-like *Other's-Other* co-creative reflexive relationship.

**The denied gaze as protagonistic**

In Abramovic's *The Artist is Present* the potential for the returned gaze is perpetually present. In *And so I met my Other's Other* this returned gaze is first denied and masked by the calico and the screened performance space, then realised once the performers begin to gaze back out at their onlookers. This returned gaze facilitates a new future-path for the work.

By contrast, in Angelika Festa's *Untitled Dance (with fish and others)* (1987) this potential reflexive entanglement of the returned gaze is unwaveringly denied. In similarity to Abramovic's long performance, Festa's work is an extended performance piece. In it she deals with the returned gaze via the *un*returned gaze. *Untitled Dance (with fish and others)* lasted from noon of 30th May to noon of 31st May in 1987 and was incredibly physically demanding. Festa hung suspended and tightly tied by white sheets to a diagonally positioned pole for twenty-four hours. Supported by her bare feet pushing against a small platform on the pole, these bare feet were also projected onto a

screen at such an enlarged size that they appeared to be as large as her real body. Other electronic visual elements were two monitors showing the embryology cycle of a fish on repeat at either side of Festa and a monitor directed at her from her front which showed the entire scene of the work re-played. Notably, Festa's own eyes were covered shut with silver tape: no returned gaze from Festa existed.



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Festa's *Untitled Dance* is a piece which is returned to multiple times in Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* (1993). For Phelan, Festa's work is as a spectacle of pain in which overlaid images of death, birth and resurrection are manifested as a marker for female submission and oppression. I would contend that what it problematises is far more complex than this. In this contention I follow feminist writer Kim Solga, who asserts that for Phelan, Festa's work is purely a cipher for the broad claims of Western metaphysics, unapproachable from any other perspective (Solga 2009:23). Solga criticizes Phelan's failure to discuss Festa's work and brings out a more complex reading. For Solga, *Untitled Dance*'s is a profound staging of a critical encounter which intentionally directs its

onlooker's attention at the failure of self-seeing. Crucially, Festa's work refuses to return the spectating look which would usually reinforce the integrity of the watching self (Solga 2009:24), denying the completion of this expected reflexive loop. Festa's taped eyes bar the onlooker from any eye-to-eye confirmation of a more full knowledge of the spectated other: there is a sustained denial of a returned gaze and a refusal of desired entanglements.

This denial of the returned gaze causes doubt and conflict in the onlooker: conflict which is increased by the intense state of the one they observe. Festa is presumably in intense pain, yet she is cut off from direct visual contact with her spectators. Given this situation how can the spectator be sure of her levels of her pain? And how much does the spectator begin to feel as though they are morbidly fascinated by another's suffering? That they are taking liberties in a situation in which their other is in intense private pain made all the more private by her covered eyes. Speech remains possible for both parties, but it is the eyes which can give away what the mouth covers up with speech and careful wording. All around them are images playing out which promote looking and even promote a looking-twice at the whole situation with the scene being replayed and relayed for a second time via the monitor in front of the artist. The lack of Festa's returned gaze allows her other every freedom to appraise her and her body and her presence *apart* from the ultimate engagement of the returned gaze.

In *Untitled Dance (with fish and others)*, the spectator's other (Festa) is strongly present: a presence made even more palpable by this obvious endurance of immense pain during the long course of 24 hours. This intense pain increases Festa's presence in the space, and likewise this intensity of presence is restricted and denied full apprehension of due to her covered body and eyes. Likewise, this denial increases the sense of spectatorship. Elaine Scarry describes this intense pain as inducing a presence of intense certainty: "*For the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that 'having pain' may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to 'have certainty,' while for the other person it is so elusive that 'hearing about pain'* [or witnessing it in this particular context] *may exist as the primary model of what it is 'to have doubt'* " (Scarry 1985:4) Festa's intense pain coupled with her persistent denial of the returned gaze creates, for Scarry, an intensity of interiority which

generates a strong agency of presence within the work. This intense agency in turn intensifies the elusiveness of her pain, and thus Festa increases the doubt that she instigates in her other and therefore the constitution of their interior agency. In this way, Festa inverts the powers in the entanglement: through intense pain the one observed increases their presence and agency behind and via the impermeable veil of the unreturned gaze. The onlooking other's doubt and uncertainty likewise increases and two interiorities of agency are augmented and recalibrated in comparision to the simplicity of the Sartrean *Look*.

I argue that through the staging of the scene in which she cannot return the onlooker's gaze, and through the vehicle of intense pain and suffering, Festa reclaims her irreducible power as the spectated party. Her response-ability is to deny the caress of the *Other's-Other*, charging the work with unfamiliar emphases. If Festa's eyes had not been taped shut, the work would have played out very differently. The observer would then have been granted, through the returned gaze, the full presence of the artist. However, Festa restricts direct engagement with her others in the space. In her work, the diffraction created by the collisions of interiority, or increased apparent irreducibility on the part of the performer alters the work's future-path. Festa's other is pushed into a closed and powerful irreducible agency that affects the viewer's own response-ability.

Not only are Festa's eyes and gaze inaccessible - creating an intense interiority and agency - but her body is also equalled (or rivalled?) in importance by the large projection of her feet matching her full bodily dimensions. Also used in Howells' work and my own in *And So I Met My Other's Other*, feet are a semi-private and therefore semi-intimate part of the body, feet do not have the same expressive quality as the hands might, and nothing of the communicative quality of the eyes, but Festa's feet are the most intimate part of her that we can see. In *Untitled Dance* the spectator is encouraged to observe Festa's feet while they are barred from gazing into, at, or returning her gaze. There is no usual dialogue of meaning-making to be had via the entanglement of the *Other's-Other*. The future-path is directed by Festa's denial of its full dialogue. In place of usual interaction, Festa enlarges and highlights the only part visible of her body - which interestingly lies furthest

from the site of a possible returned gaze - her feet. Her feet are presented in great size and detail as though they are the main focal point; the site that will convey the most possibility of an entangled reflexive loop between performer and audience: but they do not. They cannot return any kind of gaze.

Festa again subverts the focus of the powerful communicative body and its presence as a whole by forcing the spectator to turn their back on her in order to view the monitor which relays the complete scene. In turning one's back, one views the complete scene again from a further removed layer. At every turn, Festa manipulates how we might intra-act with her. The returned gaze is denied us, and the monitor relay pushes the spectator even further from the potential dialogue promised by her body presence but denied by her taped eyes. The space itself is filled with cameras and projections and monitors so we gaze onto a scene at ourselves, where we observe the act of observing. Each piece of apparatus provides a means of looking but denies once, twice, thrice the actual returned gaze. As a result, the potential of the full entanglement of the caressing *Other's-Other* is denied and made all the more perceptible by its absence: our awareness of onlooker and looked at is heightened. What is emphasised is the irreducible interiority of the self who is 'closed' and the interiority of the self who is at the periphery looking in. She gives the observer full freedoms to study both her vulnerable body and the space, yet simultaneously renders the observer impotent of participating in a generative relationship via her returned gaze. Thus the observer is made even more aware of their own interiority and irreducibility through and via their collision and diffraction across Festa's own irreducible interiority.

In Festa, we see an agitation of the in-between intra-active space between protagonists. Through denial of the returned gaze, Festa limits her audience's options of engagement, and furthermore, through the use of pain in her work, challenges her other's response-able urge to interfere or help her. Similarly, Abramovic utilises pain frequently in her work as a means by which to agitate the in-between, as I will discuss next.

**Performed pain as agency**

Abramovic's: *Lips of Thomas* (1975), as with Festa's *Untitled Dance*, performs pain as a form of intensified presence or interiority which alters and focuses on the dynamic of the entangled *Other's-Other* and which intensifies an observer's sense of self and interiority. In *Lips of Thomas* she pushed her levels of pain to physical limits which eventually forced the spectators into taking actions which would prevent its continuance.

In a subtle difference with Festa's use of a quiet, sustained and muffled pain, Abramovic performs pain and uses the intensity of the *Other's-Other* relationship to destabilize the accepted boundaries of audience and performer. Abramovic challenges the limits of the boundary between the two, agitating the in-between so far as to force a realization of her other's response-ability.

In *Lips of Thomas*, Abramovic carries out a series of increasingly violent, self-abusive and masochistic actions on her body, creating a liminal space in which the usual rules of performance begin to gradually play out differently from the audience's expectations. The work begins with Abramovic discarding all her clothes so that the whole performance takes place naked. She pins up a photograph at the back of the gallery of a man with long hair who resembles herself and draws a five pointed star around it. Upon a white-clothed table in the space are objects varying from something as everyday as a two-pound jar of honey to a more unnerving object: a whip. Also upon the table is a bottle of red wine, a crystal glass and a silver spoon. Seated at the table, in stages Abramovic utilises every object on the table with each action pushing some kind of physical limit. Using the silver spoon, she begins by eating the entire jar of what, in that quantity, must have been intensely sweet and sickening honey. She then consumes a whole bottle of red wine in long draughts which must have nearly induced vomiting and caused a large surge of alcohol and sugar into her bloodstream. On completing these extreme eating and drinking tasks she then breaks the glass she had used to drink the wine with her right hand, and in the process cuts her hand which begins to bleed.

Following this, she moves to the photograph on the back wall and, facing it, using a razor blade cuts a five-pointed star into her own abdomen, causing further bleeding. Abramovic's next action is even more physically extreme: she

takes the whip and violently flagellates her own back, raising bloody welts and bruises. Also in the space is a cross made from blocks of ice above which is suspended an electric radiator. Laying herself down on her back onto the ice-cross, the heat from above causes her abdomen cuts to begin bleeding profusely while she lies absolutely motionless. Abramovic maintained this stance for half an hour without showing any signs of bringing the performance to a close, enduring, it seemed, this torture for an indefinite amount of time.

What is crucial in this work is that the performance only ended because of the intervention of her audience: unable to bear her painful ordeal, some members decided they must bring the two-hour-long performance to a close by bodily removing her from the ice-cross and covering her naked body with coats. Erika Fischer-Lichte describes the quasi-religious connatations of the close of the performance: *"Then they removed her from the cross and carried her away."* (Fischer-Lichte 2008:11)

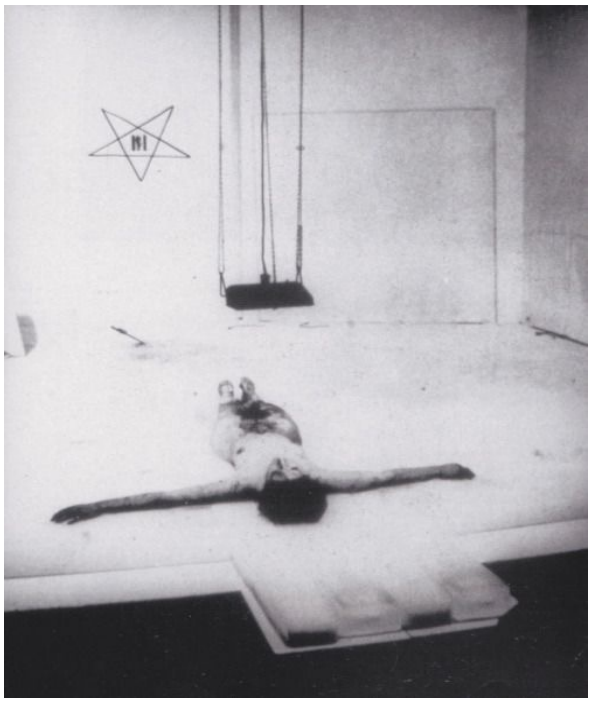

Image left: http://minamata.tumblr.com/post/174753687061/dimshapes-marina-abramovic-lips-of-thomas
Image right: http://faqindecor.com/assets/images/articles/1333/

In direct opposition to the approach in Festa's *Untitled Dance*, in *Lips of Thomas* Abramovic pushes her spectators beyond usual engagement with the work. Although the piece is a performance, the actions she takes are both a

performance and not a performance: the pain and damage really does occur to her body. There is no pretence in her bleeding wounds. She also takes the masochistic actions to the point where the performance could in fact be feasibly concluded in a peak of action. As she lies beneath the heater, causing her injuries to bleed even more profusely, she has completed the series of actions she set out to do. Yet here, the responsibility of consequent action is handed to her other(s), the spectators. Abramovic could easily have concluded and finished the performance without this final protracted prostration. Yet her persistent recumbence serves to force engagement from her audience, forcing them to act out their own agency. At the point where the audience-members interfere and move her body from the heaters, she does not resist. At this point she surrenders to the will of those who move her. This transference of responsibility to the audience - or at least the claiming of responsibility by the audience - is the culmination of a steady push towards the spectators' physical involvement.

Fischer-Lichte describes how the performance "*put the audience into a deeply disturbing and agonizing position that invalidated both the established conventions of theatrical performance and generally of human responsiveness to a given situation. Traditionally, the role of a gallery visitor or theatre goer is defined as that of either an observer or spectator...Throughout her performance, Abramovic created a situation wherein the audience was suspended between the norms and rules of art and everyday life, between aesthetic and ethical imperatives.*" (Fischer-Lichte 2008:11). In *Lips of Thomas* the accepted boundaries between spectatorship and ethical imperatives are confused. The performance unfolds in an increasingly blurred liminal space where the "rules" of interaction are doubtful. The importance and necessity of this liminal space in placing focus on and allowing the *Other's-Other* relationship to come into being will be addressed in chapters four and five. At this stage, it is useful to address the fact that Abramovic, like Festa, uses pain as a way of magnifying both hers and her spectators' interiority of self. Her performed pain is something that excludes her interiority from her others'. Her other can imagine her pain, but they cannot truly understand its level or truly feel it themselves. Abramovic's interiority is increased, and likewise so too is her others'. In terms of Irigaray's interiority as agency or response-ability, Abramovic's is increased in intensity: the more she abuses herself and causes

herself intense pain, her interiority becomes ever more differentiated from her observers'. As a result, her level of apparent agency becomes ever more powerful. In this newly acquired potency Abramovic's interiority demands that her other(s) must partake in the experience with an increased distinct sense of their own interiority and agency.

In contrast to Festa's subversion and denial of the reflexive loop of the *Other's-Other*, Abramovic pushes it so far as to demand a physical and mental galvanisation from her other. Festa's *Untitled Dance (with fish and others)* leaves the spectator pushed further to the boundary, removed from the action, pushed to gaze away from her refusing gaze. The spectator gazes in with only themselves for company and an imagined idea of their other's (Festa's) interior pain beneath her silver-taped eyes. Abramovic does the opposite: She offers a series of actions which do not demand an involvement from her other but which compel her other to move forward and to intervene with real action into the performance. She transforms her *"involved spectators into actors"* (Fischer-Lichte 2008:13) The extremity of her actions heighten the entanglement of the other so far as to compel her other into interfering with her performance. She maintains her bleeding repose as long as it takes for the audience to become aware of their own agency, response-ability and potential for action, formed out of their own interiority. Via the reflexive implication of the *Other's-Other*, the spectators have a responsibility within the scene: the alienation caused by the intense pain felt only by the performer forces a realisation of the spectators' own interiority and agency. The extreme circumstances push the self who is at the periphery into an awareness of the self's protagonistic possibilities. *Lips of Thomas* is wholly dependent on the presence of the spectators (the artist's other) and on this spectator-other's implicated response. The diffraction of these spectators' agency and interiority against her own spells out the future-path of the work.

Both Festa's and Abramovic's works demonstrate work future-paths being co-created by the combination and presence of both the performer and the artist in the space. They also both demonstrate that, what I propose as the *Other's-Other* relationship, does not have to describe a response-ability that is easy or wholesome, it can also be strained, difficult and reluctant. The *Other's-Other* is transferable between types of engagement as a way to think about what

is occurring in a work. These works also utilize the *Other's-Other* relationship – described by Irigaray as a caressing and by Fischer-Lichte as a feedback loop – to induce action or to nullify action by their Other. In either case, the in-between space of intra-action is an essential component of how the work unfolds, and thinking about it in terms of otherness allows us more freely to discuss it and its consequences.

**Temporality and the liminal space of performance: beginning to think space and place as protagonistic**

Both Abramovic and Festa's works played out in very specific stagings or spaces that had been carefully contrived by the artists. The link between the performative space and the performance itself is strong, implying that the nature of the performance space is a pivotal ingredient of the work. Festa's multiple screens and Abramovic's spectating space in *The Artist is Present* and *Lips of Thomas* play on expectations about one's role (challenging spectatorship) and active importance (whether to interfere). The relationship of the *Other's-Other* and the context in which it plays out begins to emerge as a pivotal element in these works.

Maria Hassabi's *PLASTIC* (2016) also relies upon spectatorship and other-ness. It is another long endurance work that was performed for a month at the MoMA (which also commissioned the piece) in New York from 21st February to 20th March 2016. It took the form of a live installation in which dancers performed non-stop throughout the museum during its opening hours. Choreographer Hassabi's signature is in training her dancers to perform very slow movements which are sometimes almost imperceptible. For *PLASTIC*, dancers were located in the main parts of the museum, by the entrance, on the staircase and in a stairwell. In carrying out Hassabi's choreography, their bodies moved in repose, collapse and transition, using and combining movements and formations between one another that have no apparent beginning or end (www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1611). The MoMA website describes the work as reformatting theatrical performance to remove the distance between audience and performer, addressing the interface between artistic

object and human subject. The performance was accompanied by Morten Norbye Halvorsen's sound design.

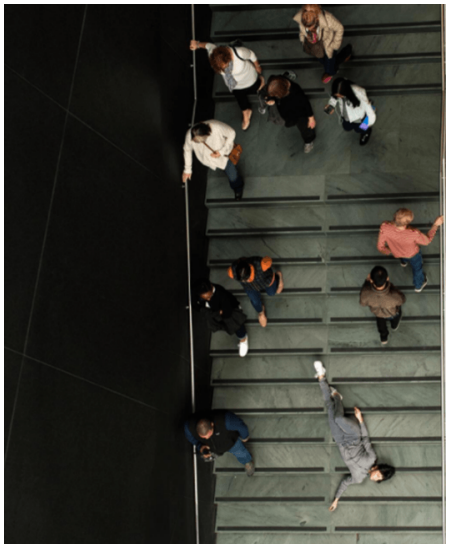

Image left: https://thebreedersystem.com/activity/plastic-maria-hassabi/
Right: https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/dancer-maria-hassabi-performs-in-the-the-agnes-gund-garden-news-photo/515576246

Visitors to the museum are confronted with bodies sliding very very slowly down the main staircase, as a lifeless body might. Due to their incongruous and unexpected presence in the busy museum the dancers require at least a second glance to establish their status. In the video documentation we see visitors parting to allow for the reclining dancers; stumbling across them and creeping by them with other spectators standing and observing them for long periods of time.

Sixteen dancers in total slip, slide and trickle over steps, chairs and floors in sequences which are not, on first appraisal, inter-related across an extended temporal span. The variety of choreographic scores they follow are on a loop but may be of varying lengths up to three hours duration with overlapping starts and ends. In *PLASTIC* Hassabi largely offers a chance of a long-sustained gaze at one's other which unlike Abramovic's and Festa's work does not force its spectators to realise their own interiority and agency in such a dramatic way. Hassabi's work is far more gentle and offers a long timespan giving open permission to the spectator's direct gaze: an invitation to gaze that its curator Philip Bither suggests could also be construed as a violation (34:18 MoMA video): Hassabi's response is that she perceives this invitation as "part of the work" and sees allowing the audience sustained time to gaze as a "gift". I

believe that Hassabi offers a suspended liminal temporal space in which the audience may experience a sustained participation in the relationship of the *Other's-Other*. The gaze in *PLASTIC* could of course, rather like eavesdropping, be construed simply in the Sartrean sense: where the spectator "steals" a look at his other without their knowledge or permission as a violation of their privacy. Of course, desire and shame do play out in the work: spectators stay to glimpse every slow nuance of another's slow-moving body with little responsibility (or response-ability) required, apart from respecting the performers space. Shame also often plays out in terms of their own spectatorship spectated, as with peripheral audience members in Abramovic's *The Artist is Present* as previously discussed. Yet in *PLASTIC* these performers already have given their consent. They have entered into performing the work in the framework of the *Other's-Other.* The relationship between others plays out as the caress, as an entanglement which respects interiority and agency: an integral component within performance itself. Hassabi's work plays out in a specific physical space, but also in a temporal space created by the dancers' incredibly slow movements. Hassabi creates a liminal space of engagement through her 'bending' of time.

The visitors are invited to enter into this entanglement to enter into its focal concern: a long-sustained entanglement with the work and the experiential *Other's-Other* relationship. A similar work was installed by Hassabi at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles which offered real possibility of sustained gaze. As a far less crowded and busy museum than MoMA, here visitors would sit and watch and sometimes draw the dancers for hours or days, immersing themselves in a sustained experience of the intimate *Other's-Other* entanglement. The nature of MoMA as one of the busiest museums in the world does not allow for the same type of experience, but still the visitor becomes implicated into a relationship with their other the dancer, and their other the spectator-other, next to them at the periphery. It is the presence of the spectator, introduced into the temporal space of a slow and sustained experience that plays out on its own temporal and liminal terms that forms the work.

In this way, Hassabi allows for the entanglement between others to develop and grow, and for interiorities to become apparent over protracted

durations. She creates a temporal span of performance which forms a large inbetween space for the work to play out and for the *Other's-Other* entanglement to be felt. This in-between, liminal space, created by performance, is integral to the construct of the *Other's-Other*, as will be explored further in the next section of this chapter. There, I will come to claim that liminal spaces hold a potential performativity that is part of the *Other's-Other* relationship. Through this argument I will find the experiential *Other's-Other* in contexts which do not involve performers specifically, broadening the applicability of the *Other's-Other* as a thinking device. In this way, in developing performative liminality I make the *Other's-Other* hold a greater and more useful applicability for discourse.

**Observation within observation, performances in performances**

*PLASTIC* exists within the museum as an installation, requiring the presence of the visitors to fully function. On the subject of the performance being documented by video camera in the space, Hassabi insists that a shift in behaviour takes place, especially in the spectators who alter deportment on sight of a camera and that *"having a camera around changes the work completely...making the work about something else, in a way...There's the relation of this other viewer which is the camera and then the viewers looking at the camera viewing us...it becomes much more photographic."* (43:23): the intra-action is diffracted or altered by another presence. In conversation with curator Bither in on 24th February 2016 (documented www.moma.org/calendar/exhibition/1611?locate=en), Hassabi describes how the performers feed off the energy of the public (49:40mins) and asserts that the show *"does not exist without the visitors...needing the passerby."* (51:46mins) … *"It is a busy museum...the flow of the visitors changes the way that we're calculating the work...it is not a place of pause"*. We see two types of intra-action: the visitor who intra-acts with the work and the camera, and the dancers who need the visitors for their intra-action to work. (Artforum.com/video/id=58365&mode=large&page_id=0 (6:10))
The influence of Hassabi's dancers and her choreography in the space comes to form a new temporality for the space. Like *The Artist is Present,* Hassabi's *PLASTIC* temporally and liminally suspends a complex interwoven set of entanglements in time. In *PLASTIC* observers are observed observing and

visitors are taken by surprise by the sprawling bodies in the public space. Visitors are seen stumbling into an *Other's-Other* relationship with the dancers and with the other spectators around them: They descend the main staircase only to find a slow-moving, reclining body across their path. They hesitate, question what their role should be in this unknown context and adjust their glance, their pace, and their trajectory accordingly. They find themselves walking into an entanglement with the work and the performers within it. Visitors self-assess their own movements, perhaps rushing by, out of and away from this performance-created liminal space (which I will explore in chapters four and five), or finding a nook from which to observe for longer. Visitors become aware of their power and agency to disrupt the work, whether by mistake or by intention, and they become self-aware as their other's other. A new level of responsibility has sprung up as soon as they are aware of themselves at the periphery of the work: their own agency becomes clear to them. Here they do not gaze simply at an innate canvas. The material of the work has a body, and a gaze, which although it is not focal part of the work itself, has the potential to turn to them at any moment. Not only do the art object bodies possess a potential gaze, but so too do the other implicated spectator-others at the periphery. In a work like *PLASTIC* or any work that involves performance, it is pivotally the liminal space created by the performers, that causes a heightening awareness of the relationships taking place within it. It is Hassabi's creation, through performance, of an altered state for the entire space that becomes of interest and important for the next part of this investigation.

During the course of this chapter, I have introduced and started to explore intimacy and proximity as part of the device of the *Other's-Other*. I did so through a study of collisions occurring between people, or flesh-others: between both artists and audiences and other observers alike. Via performance examples and *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017) I began to think intimacy as an agential presence between others that is rooted in a dialogic and response-able intra-active intersubjectivity. This study developed the *Other's-Other*'s intimate gesture-caress through real performative encounters, using Barad's diffraction to give the throught-device capacity to describe a multi-layered

liminal space which points us back at the self and to the inbetween. Using Irigaray's notion of an "irreducible interiority" found through her working of the intimacy of the physical caress, I explored this type of agency as a co-creative asking or bridge-making between two where protagonists are never transcended by their other. This study of collisions drew on Barad's intra-active agential entanglements, applying her scientific research to agential subjects and objects. Here I explored a variety of irreducibilities within the experiential *Other's-Other* including agency as exerted also through pain and the denial of the caress. For Barad, agential entanglements also, radically, account for the observer as a co-creative influence on the future-path. Thus, the terms of the thought-device of the *Other's-Other* have grown to incorporate a protagonistic agency for observers at the periphery, with particular reference to my creative practice in *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017). Barad's notion of diffraction also became useful for a broader consideration of protagonists and their agential importance and potential.

Following Irigaray's formulation of her gesture-word, the *caress*[66], I used dialogues and collisions between living others to formulate the *Other's-Other* as a thought device that uses the caress to address an ever-shifting flimmering taking place between protagonists' roles without fixing or limiting their agential positions. In keeping with the idea of a co-creativity created by agential entanglements, I used Irigaray to think *Other's-Other* intra-actions in a flexible and tensile, nascent way. In this way, with the *Other's-Other* all protagonists and relationships may be perceived as agential, and intra-actions may be viewed from multiple angles so that protagonists and future-paths may be appraised as changeable and active. Without abolishing the binary of the self and other, in the *Other's-Other* these active, what I call "performative binaries", are permitted to collide and co-create, shift and alter their agency. Crucially, this approach also lets the *Other's-Other* function as a thought-word which imperceptibly flimmers itself, alike to the intra-actions it appraises. It flimmers between functioning as and functioning through or within a liminal performative space.

Latterly I have also taken note of the significance of the liminal performative space that these works have both generated and played out in.

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[66] *"…the gesture of the one who caresses … becomes an offering of consciousness, a gift of intention and of word addressed to the concrete presence of the other…"* (Irigaray 2000:26)

Following on from this, in the next chapter I will develop the idea that objects and spaces themselves can act as protagonists with which an *Other's-Othering* and response-ability can play out by studying what I will call the "one-to-no-one" or object-others. This next progression of the device of the *Other's-Other* works to create a further iteration which addresses the in-between experienced with more-than-human protagonists: objects and the non-living. In this way, I move towards chapter five's exploration of the *Other's-Other* in liminal performative space and to a consolidation of co-creative agency or response-ability as a flimmering[67] between plural others.

[67] ***Flimmer***: intransitive verb. Glimmer, flicker. From the German intransitive verb flimmern; noun German, literally, glitter, tinsel, from flimmern. (merriam-webster.com)

# Chapter Four

## *Developing the object-other: the one-to-no-one*

The central premise of Irigaray's philosophy of the caress - its essential irreducible interiority - and a Baradien notion of agential subjects and objects introduced in the previous chapter, forms the basis for this chapter. In this fourth chapter I explore the between-two collision of the one-to-no-one (the object-other) in terms of its effect on the self and on response-ability (Barad 2012:9) within the entanglement.[68] To this aim, I approach the collision of subjects with objects in terms of a messy, encompassing, multiplicitous, ever-shifting diffractive entanglement of meaning and of meaning-making; and come to discuss the object-other as protagonistic, the same as the flesh-other discussed so far. Exploring these agential natures within the context of the one-to-no-one (a term I will also use to describe the relationship of the object-other) contributes to the *Other's-Other* thought-word's capacity as a useful device by which to further think, make and appraise art works. By re-appearing the agential self with the agential object in this chapter, I work to reappraise intimacy and proximity as agential in relation to sound arts: these are introduced as terms that enable a full and comprehensive approach to its discourse that is usefully descriptive, and which discusses the crucial co-creative in-between happening as a part of meaning-making within works. Exploring the intra-active liminal performance space of the *Other's-Other* via the object-other-collision I contend is a crucial step towards addressing the spaces and locations of work as protagonistically consequential.

The notion of this liminal performative space will be addressed more fully in the final chapter using Susan Broadhurst's *Liminal Acts* (1999). At this stage in my development of the *Other's-Other* device, it is useful to mention that Broadhurst's theory of the liminal attends to otherness as a subject position that plays out as a shifting, unfixed role. This chapter works towards this iteration of liminal space in relation to the *Other's-Other*. Via the object-other, this chapter starts to develop the space and location of works as active and therefore

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[68] In this investigation, the non-flesh other is used to pertain to inert objects rather than animals or nature.

consequential. To make the step to Broadhurst's liminal performativity, and following the previous chapter's in-depth exploration of flesh-other consequences, this thesis now turns to the object as other (or the object-other), addressing it in terms of the relationship's intra-active and co-creative possibilities. This is a move towards thinking in terms of a flimmering performativity of otherness, which will ultimately help me to settle the idea of addressing sound art in terms of the its agential intimacy and proximity.

Addressing the agential self with the agential object enriches our understanding of the flimmering twofold nature of the device as, simultaneously, an experiential and generative thinking device. Via the non-human - the inert object – and without the flesh-other I will explore an intimately agential irreducible interiority that perseveres in the object, consequentially coming to appraise liminal performative space as integral to the *Other's-Other* which through the next chapter's study helps me to complete the device's terms.

In particular, this chapter problematizes the terms of otherness through the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres and my own creative practice. I eke out the consequences of a collision between the self (or audience) and the non-human object to discuss the consequences of this type of between-two on co-creativity. I also explore the flimmering quality of the *Other's-Other*'s agential roles unfolding in both the personal and compositional space as a liminal performance through an evaluation of entanglements with objects, site, space and context. In this endeavour, the *Other's-Other* is further augmented as a flimmering thought-device which incorporates the agentiality of intimacy and proximity and by which to re-find those attributes I experience in my practice as a musician in my sound arts practice and thinking.

I investigate the work of Gonzalez-Torres and Jong Won Park in part one to think about works which gesture the caress through the object-other; and in part two I begin to think the object as co-creative other through reference to Rosi Braidotti, Jacques Carelman, Graham Harman and the new materialism appearing in my own creative practice.

## *Part 1 |Developing the object-other: the one-to-no-one.*

The previous chapter largely dealt with collisions taking place between two human entities: a *between two* where each subject who is present equally plays a role in the entanglement. In order to create a terminology that works across the spectrum of this discussion, I termed this living breathing other as the "flesh-other" so that I may distinguish between this other and the other explored in this present chapter: the collision with a non-human or more-than-human non-flesh "object-other".

As with a flimmering that occurs to co-create a new understanding or experience, I here flimmer these other-to-other relationships against one another to see what consequences might result. My study of the flesh-other informs my study of a reflexive, between-two relationship occurring between human and more-than-human others. This expands the influence and usefulness of the thinking device and helps me to explore how it might function usefully when reapplied and used within sound art practice and discourse where the human encounters the non-human in co-creativity. I problematise the device and assess its consequences and versatility in, and as, a liminal performative act which is based in and directs us towards proximity and intimacy. Thus, I work to develop the *Other's-Other* as a device by which to discuss and address sound art works through the notion of agential intimacy and proximity as discursive terms and conceptual ideas that allow me to move away from discourse that simply describes the measurements and materials of works, and towards discourse that addresses co-creative performative spaces via present protagonists while also incorporating basic descriptive qualities.

The first case studies in this current chapter focus on the gallery visitor or spectator in the works of Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Through his work I locate the object as a formulation of the other. Progressing from here, I take this object-other and address object-based works by Jacques Carelman. Later, by framing my own creative practice as a form of intra-action with the object-other, I explore the twofold nature of the flimmering *Other's-Other* as it plays out in and as a liminal performative act.

In existentialist philosophy, the object is often referred to in a Sartrean way: as an other which is looked at, observed, voyeured or spectated, and with which the self does not enter into an intimate *between two* dialogue. The object (the 'other', I would contend) is presented as part of a one-way experience: the self and the object may meet, but the self is never recognised as being influenced by that object. In contrast, scenographic practice recognises the object as holding potential as a performing subject, as stated by McKinney and Butterworth citing Prague semiotician Jiri Veltrusky in the *Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*: *'The signifying capability of all that is on stage, whether it is animate or inanimate, shifts and changes through the course of a performance 'so that even a lifeless object may be perceived as the performing subject, and a live human being may be perceived as an element completely without will'. (Veltrusky, 'Man and Object in the Theatre' p84) … Veltrusky calls this the 'action force' of an object…'* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:153).

In this chapter I approach the object as capable of performative action by considering its intra-active possibilities. I approach the inert object not necessarily as sentient in itself or as capable of its own thoughts and intentional actions, but as a pivot by which the observer - the self - might be altered, changed and affected. I consider the possibility that the object may behave as though it is a flesh-other which effects an affective *between two* with its observer, crucially behaving as an object-other which holds the same potential as the flesh-other. This object-other I contend holds the power to alter the self and the self's response-ability in the work and by considering the object's own agential action, I investigate this agential power in connection with its other. This allows the object's potentiality to emerge and to fulfil an integral and influential role in the *Other's-Other* entanglement, just as the flesh-other does. In this way, the focus is not on the power that may be exerted over an object, but on the agential powers that an object holds when it collides with the flesh-other self. This expands the remit of this investigation towards a broader-reaching encounter-based definition of the *Other's-Other,* as a flesh- and object-other broadening the applicability of and augmenting the terms of the device. The work discussed in this chapter studies the collision of an audience with an object; with the installation; or with the site or environment of the art work to discover what

occurs in terms of intimacy and proximity in these works and how this can inform the *Other's-Other* as a device, and sound art discourse as a consequence.

What is the relationship that remains once the flesh-other is not physically present in the entangled partnership I have previously explored? Does the object-other function as a marker of the absent-other (of perhaps the creator or artist) and does this absent-other created in the work of Gonzalez-Torres proffer an absent-other who is also capable of agency? Agency is not a thing, but an action, and by using Gonzalez-Torres' works I aim to form a new reading of object-hood which identifies a *between two* caress of otherness occurring as an intimately agential liminal act between flesh- and object-others. Gonzalez-Torres' work enables me to establish or find the object-other and to articulate a flesh-other who comes more fully and comprehensively into being as a self-other at its point of collision with the agential object-other.

**Agency without the flesh-other: the one-to-no-one**
**Works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres**

Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996) produced minimalist sculptural art works which would not generally be considered as performance art pieces.[69] Rather, they are minimalist sculptures and installations made from very simple, everyday and often abstract objects such as lightbulbs, sweets or stacks of printed paper.[70] In contrast to the performance art discussed in the previous chapter, Gonzalez-Torres' appeal to the spectator is far less overt in its immediate emotional or ethical demands. Gonzalez-Torres' minimal installations deal with difficult issues - such as living with HIV and being in a same-sex relationship at a time when it was less accepted than today. However, instead of utilizing the immediate presence of the other's physical body as performance artists Festa, Howells and Abramovic do, his works utilize inert

[69] Relational aesthetician Nicolas Bourriaud describes Gonzalez-Torres' minimalist work as operating in *'the relational sphere'* (2002:43) where *'They all root their artistic practice within a* proximity *which relativizes the place of visuality in the exhibition protocol, without belittling it. The artwork of the 1990s turns the beholder into a neighbour, a direct interlocutor.'* (Ibid.)

[70] An exception is performance piece *"Untitled"* (Go-Go Dancing Platform) (1991) with a live dancer.

objects arranged in the gallery space in a way which invites - rather than demands - an involvement from the visitors. In Gonzalez-Torres' works, there is no sense of voyeurism: the objects he proffers are distinctly un-sexual and there is no overt suggestion of a body suffering, of being suppressed or of being vulnerable to acts by others, as with Festa and Abramovic. Gonzalez-Torres gestures that the audience might experience his sense of loss and decay by partaking in and contributing to the incremental deconstruction of the physical constructions in the gallery; that we might partake and experience and intra-act with the issues and iniquity at hand. He offers an experiential involvement of ourselves in his work: we are not on the periphery if we do not choose to be. Unlike Abramovic, Gonzalez-Torres' pieces do not compel his audience to carry out emotionally charged "rescues" of the artist or to carry out physical interventions but instead invites the audience to partake in a simple, quiet, physical interaction with the installation object - later explored in this chapter as an intra-action - in order to complete the artwork.[71] His "*Untitled*" (USA Today) (1990) is one such example of a work which invites an inter- or intra-action with this art-object.

**"*Untitled*" (USA Today) 1990**

"*Untitled*" (USA Today) (1990) consists of a large pile of candies individually wrapped in red, silver and blue cellophane - a supply of which appears to be endless. As with a vast number of Gonzalez-Torres' works, the spectator-visitor is invited to take one of these candies from the pile: with the result that the action of the visitors thereby diminishes the installation object. According to Gonzalez-Torres, the ideal weight of the candy-pile should be maintained at around 300lbs. His invitation is therefore an ongoing gesture. Due to this replenishment the audience is theoretically unable to destroy the work entirely, but they may interact with it and possess part of it forever. According to the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles' website, where his work was exhibited in 2014 as part of *Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image, Ideology* through this particular work Gonzalez-Torres asks the spectator-visitor to

[71] Bourriaud identifies Gonzalez-Torres work as 'relations art', which '*…tends to draw inspiration more from the flexible processes governing ordinary life.*' (2002:47)

*"consider questions of consumption and loss"*…with his work often seeking *"...ways for the public to interact with art, striving for a generosity of spirit while also insisting on a consideration of society's inequities and biases."* (https://hammer.ucla.edu/take-it-or-leave-it/art/untitled-usa-today/).

*"Untitled"* (USA Today) (1990) references a widely read daily newspaper called USA Today. The journal has a reputation for reductive journalism, and for condensing and simplifying the daily news into palatable, short articles. It could be argued that Gonzalez-Torres is gesturing at consumerist society, condensing into a small, bite-size, freely-taken candy questions about our consumerism of material that is fed to us in journalism; questions about ownership, ethics, how we partake in society, how we engage with what we consume, how the act of consumerism affects us and how we partake in this act of consumption while under the surveillance of those others around us.

Left: A guest reaches for a candy from Gonzalez-Torres' *Untitled* (USA Today), 1990. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, February 8, 2014 *Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image, Ideology*. February 9–May 18, 2014. Photography by Todd Cheney. https://hammer.ucla.edu/take-it-or-leave-it/documentation/#gallery_a8a88ef0932d19d7514721fe8170d3eba21e41bc

Right: Blogger "in defense of #art" poses with Untitled (USA Today), 1990 at MoMa in 2012

Since Gonzalez-Torres' open invitation could result in any visitor shifting the whole pile into a large bag while a steward's back is turned or in someone shovelling pounds of the artwork away, what lends this piece a fascination for my investigation is that those who interact with the artwork act within implied societal rules and expectations and with what could even be considered a certain respect for the artist, his intentions, the work and the exhibition space. There seems to be an intrinsic knowledge and understanding that this artwork has been created according to and within societal rules: it is a work created by an artist with an intention for encouraging a *"generosity of spirit"* and who insists upon *"a consideration of society's inequities and biases."* (https://hammer.ucla.edu/take-it-or-leave-it/art/untitled-usa-today/) Visitors behave with sense of responsibility regarding the preservation of the work and have an awareness of some limits on their behaviour. An instance in which this understanding was subverted and documented will be addressed later in this chapter.

The respectful response evidenced in the conventional encounter signifies the visitors' awareness of expectations that arise on their side of the dialogue: I understand them as recognising themselves, their own agency and their acts in relation to the artwork as being of consequence. This awareness is considered in this thesis as equivalent to the type of awareness performed in an Irigirayan *caress*. As with Irigaray's gesture caress, which allows for irreducible interiority, Gonzalez-Torres offers up the possibility of an interaction which is not obligatory and in which he does not assume any control or power over his visitors' own interior agency. The one witnessing the artwork is granted complete control over whether they take a candy or whether they simply observe others' participation. Similarly, audience members who chose to rescue Abramovic from her own self-inflicted abuse in *Lips of Thomas* (1975) also had an absolutely free choice regarding their type of response. However, I would argue that Gonzalez-Torres offers up broadly the same over-arching gestures with a more subtle approach and a more contemplative and caress-like gesture. Nicolas Bourriaud sums up Gonzalez-Torres' gesture thus: *'"How can I live in your reality?" Or: "How can a meeting between two realities alter them bilaterally?"'* (Bourriaud 2002:52). The stakes are lower, and, unburdened with the responsibility of another's medical emergency (Abramovic's) the gesture is

felt more as an open invitation - or caress - rather than a direct challenge. A refusal as a response entirely permissible.

**Awareness of agency bestowed and the fulfilment of the between-two in halves**

Photographic documentation of *Untitled (*USA Today) includes visitors shown in the specific act of taking a candy from the pile, as shown above (p156). When people visit they ensure they are photographed in interaction with the artwork: documented as visibly and physically fulfilling its invitation and completing Gonzalez-Torres' offered transaction, taking a piece of the art-object. The transaction that comes into being, however, is less about ownership than it is about the act itself. One can own the candy taken from the pile, but one cannot own the whole art work, or the artist, through that item. The sweet that one takes away serves no real purpose: it has no monetary value and is merely a boiled sweet which would take a few minutes to consume. These objects have no real use for the one who takes them apart from as a pivot through which the visitors' intra-action with the artwork might come into being. Via the object one can enter into a proximity and agential intimacy with the art-work and with the artist. Presented as a gentle dialogue, or participation, an intra-action with the caress offered by the artist is at the fore. These visitors find themselves fulfilling - with an awareness of their own empowered agency - the return half of the offered *between two*. The object directs the visitors' attention to the agency he has willingly bestowed on them, the licence he has provided, and in two halves: from him giving and from us taking a candy, the fulfilment of the gesture-caress comes into being.

These visitors recognise that a large part of the now intimate completion of the artwork lies in this moment of fruition via a collision with their own self-held agency (or interiority). An Irigarayan gesture-caress inviting a *between-two* entanglement via the objects in the space acts as a caress or bridge - an open-ended transaction with an unknown other - with which the visitors may intra-act and simultaneously remain independent of. As Irigaray describes, the two parties cannot be reduced to one another, they are both irreducible, yet both are

able to interact with one another and to affect one another in a Baradian intra-active sense.

It could be suggested that the candies - the objects - have replaced Gonzalez-Torres. In a way, they have. The candies are the pivot of the collision between the artist and the audience, replacing the artist's presence in the intra-active entanglement, acting as our connection with the artists' sensibility. Yet, the caress Gonzalez-Torres offers functions as an enduring offer which plays out across time. In his absence the gesture is still unlimited. Beyond his death and through his artworks he has projected the possibility of a caress into a future that exists without him. Through this intra-action the visitors receive and self-create a version of the work which is unique to them, creating an experience which affects them and their surrounding visitors. More than this, I would contend that through this intra-action they re-experience and re-evaluate their own self-ness. A suggestion I will discuss in the following.

**A pivotal interlocutor**

If the candy-object can act as Gonzalez-Torres' interlocutor for the caress, if it can serve as a vehicle for the gesture, if it can transmit another's interiority across decades, then do all objects hold possibilities of interlocution? Can all objects act as such pivots and alter my experience and participation in the work/world?

Gonzalez-Torres' objects hold a specific role, purpose and intention due to their location and their contextualization. His objects hold a greater agency as interlocutors of the caress due to the liminal gallery space that they are located in and the liminal act they instigate and become part of. I would contend that these objects do hold the possibility for interlocution of the caress, but only due to their effect on my own irreducible interiority and the fact that they cause me, in the context of the gallery, to face myself. In this way they affect me in the world. I will expand on this idea later in part two of this chapter in regard to the object as other and as part of a move towards discussing the liminal space and the liminal act in terms of the *Other's-Other*. At this point, however, I remain with the idea of the object as a marker of the absent other and as acting as an encapsulation of another's interiority in the context of an artwork.

Unlike previously discussed performance art works, in *Untitled* (USA Today) at any one time there is consistently an *absent* other with whom one partakes in this between-two caress gesture. On Gonzalez-Torres' part, his work was made with an awareness that thousands of people would receive his gestural caress in the circumstance of his flesh-absence. On the audience's part, more obviously since Gonzalez-Torres' death than perhaps before, there is now absolutely no chance of completing this caress in the presence of the flesh-other of the artist who made the original gesture. *"Untitled"* USA Today provides a clear example of a work and of objects which come into a different type of being due to their contextual location. The acts which are carried out through these objects and via the caress of the other occur in an inbetween and liminal space of non-quotidien encounter. McKinney and Butterworth identify this feature as a quality also of scenographic practices: '*…scenography defines an active role for the audience. In some work, especially that which takes place outside a theatre building, scenography is used to shape a particular spatial relationship, a certain kind of encounter between audience and performance.'* (McKinney and Butterworth 2009:7) The gesture offered by Gonzalez-Torres is a structured (through the objects and their location in the gallery space) encounter between the audience and the gesture of the art-work. I will come to a closer study of liminal spaces and the role of objects within them as holding a scenographic aspect in the next chapter.

In this liminal art-encounter-space different co-created experiential paths are formed which constitute what Broadhurst terms a liminal act. I will begin to attribute these liminal acts as being at the centre of the terms of the caress; the caress itself which constitutes part of the device of the *Other's-Other* which I am carefully forming out of creative practice and contextual studies in this thesis. Gonzalez-Torres' work also comes to fruition via the caress in a way which is extended over time, space and place via an entanglement between-two which will always lack the physical presence of one side of the caress. Here we have the caress played out despite of or perhaps more accurately through and via absence: via the absent flesh-other and in the object-other as an interlocutor for the flesh-other.

In this case, here I want to ask, does the object, which takes the place of Gonzalez-Torres as the flesh-other, fulfil the role of the other in the entanglement which plays out? And how, therefore, can this type of *Other's-*

*Other* entanglement involve an interiority which is held in or perceived as existing in or via the object? What does this produce in terms of a sense of self-as-other?

Via Gonzalez-Torres' *Untitled (*USA Today) the idea of a *between-two* which may take place as part of an encounter with an object-other has been introduced, alongside the notion of a *between-two Other's-Othering* taking place via absence and with absent flesh-others. Here I have found the object to be of pivotal importance in the intra-action that opens up in the liminal space. Having found an object which holds possibilities as an interlocutor and as a pivot for the gesture-caress, I now direct this investigation towards the notion of absence and the effect of absences on the between-two.

**Colliding interiorities respond to the gesture-caress: an active, radical intra-action with the art work**

Between 1987 and 1991, Gonzalez-Torres was part of a New York based collective, *Group Material*. The aim of the members was to collaboratively initiate community education and cultural activism: *"His aesthetic project in relation to this was, according to some scholars, related to Bertolt Brecht's theory of epic theater, in which creative expression transforms the spectator from an inert receiver to an active, reflective observer and motivates social action…a reduced vocabulary reminiscent of both Minimalism and Conceptual art…asked viewers to participate in establishing meaning in his works…"* ( https://www.andrewrosen/artists/felix-gonzalez-torres ) Although *Untitled* (USA Today) is not a direct instigator of obvious and overt social action, it does offer its audience the prospect or possibility of interaction and an activation of their own agency, which could be the seed for small social actions. The audience's agency plays a significant part in completing the work. The following study of a particular agitation of Gonzalez-Torres' gesture-caress works to expand an understanding of interiority and of irreducible interiority activated by the object-other.

Gonzalez-Torres' invitation to participate in his work was taken to a whole new intra-active level during a posthumous exhibition of his work in Seoul, South Korea. "Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Double" was the first solo museum exhibition of his work in South Korea at the PLATEAU and Leeum galleries at

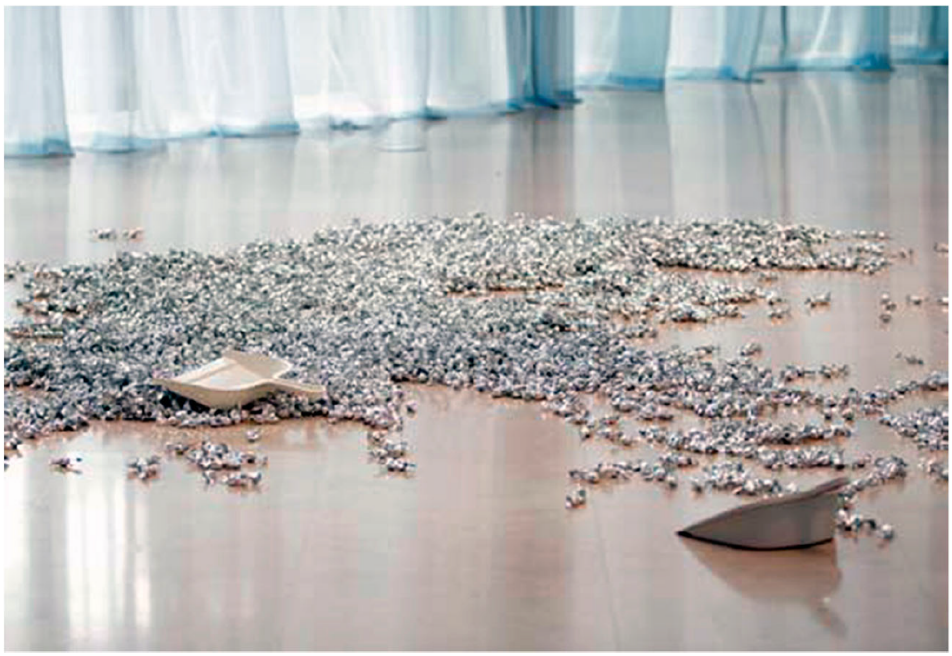
the Samsung Museum of Art in June 2012. Two months into the show, on 25th August, a happening took place which was instigated and organised by South Korean artist Jong Won Park (at the time, a Yonsei University media art student). This happening, as I will argue, was an agitation of Gonzalez-Torres' gesture-caress. The work that this happening focused upon was another sweet/candy-based work of Gonzalez-Torres': *Untitled (Placebo)* (1990), and involved its complete removal.

Image available: https://i.pinimg.com/originals/bb/d4/94/bbd494fafa192ef26b134be1e8fe06ef.jpg

Evidence and documentation of Jong Won Park's gallery-based happening is now largely erased from online platforms, presumably by the government or the museum. The happening was executed by a group of pre-organised attendees who entered the gallery and at a predetermined moment began grabbing vast quantities of sweets - some sweeping the candies into bags with brushes - until the entire installation had disappeared into various containers, pockets and vessels. They then left the gallery and deposited what they had collected into a truck waiting outside. Gallery security responses were implemented immediately and documentation that had been recorded on phones, cameras and video cameras as it took place were confiscated.

Ultimately Park's happening concluded in the negotiated return of the memory cards in exchange for the sweets (the installation).

On 25 August, 2012 at PLATEAU, the audience gathered around *'Untitled' (Placebo)*, began to grab as many sweets as they could with both hands. Some of them even swept the sweets into their big shopping bags with a short broom. The guard inside the room immediately made an emergency call for help via his walkie-talkie, photo: Jong Won Park



Scene in the gallery after the audience had taken most of the sweets from *'Untitled' (Placebo)*, photo: Jong Won Park

The participants walked out of the gallery and put the sweets into a truck waiting outside the museum, photo: Jong Won Park

Images above: Necessarily small and low-quality screenshots of Jong Won Park's happening taking place taken from Third Text journal Volume 30, 2016 - Issue 5-6 pages 474-489 https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2017.1355149

**Pivotal object-others: Absence and agency.**

The museum's reaction to Park's happening raises many questions about ownership; about what constitutes the art object; and about who has ultimate power and authority over it. Did the pile stop being *Untitled (Placebo)* or was it still *Untitled (Placebo)* in its partially deconstructed state? Was it still *Untitled (Placebo)* in the waiting truck? Was Gonzalez-Torres' artwork located in the actions of the audience - in their agency - or in the sweets themselves?

Jong Won Park's intervention spurred a re-evaluation of the function of both the work, the role of the visitor, the role of the object and the role of the museum. Gonzalez-Torres had most likely explored the possibility of this type of outcome during his time as part of the collective, *Group Material*. Park's happening was a social action that referred to the museum and to the 2012 social and cultural context of the exhibition. I would argue that as an agitation of Gonzalez-Torres' gesture from the 1990s Park's intra-action with the artwork fulfils or completes the original gesture by the artist. Yet Park uses Gonzalez-

Torres' work in the new context of a different decade also as a vehicle: Park understands the gesture offered by Gonzalez-Torres and agitates or diffracts this gesture with his own interior desires and intentions to create a new work which enlarges the gesture to include a comment on the role of the museum and on the art world. Park's happening both intra-acts with Gonzalez-Torres' original offer and also plays out as a product of its socio-political-cultural context. In his intervention we see a decades-old gesture unfolding as part of a radical new future-path due to the intra-action of an artist who is located in a different day and age. Consequently, Gonzalez-Torres' original gesture still has the potential to play out differently with each and every later diffractive intra-action due to the individual agency of the one intra-acting.

Park's agitation of the caress functioned through the disappearance of the art object. In the context of augmenting the terms of the *Other's-Other,* Park's 2012 happening directs our attention to the role of the object as an object-other, around which protagonist actions revolve. The objects themselves hold the potential to act as pivots for other protagonists' responses and actions. Park's agitation resulted in intra-actions being effected in the security staff and officials at the museum who were compelled to respond to a now diffracted gesture-caress revolving around a now absent object. The fulfilment of Gonzalez-Torres' gesture to his Other, an other, or others existing in a temporality beyond his own human lifespan, and Park's agitation of it, became a multi-layered intra-action occurring concurrently between distinctly differing interiorities, intra-actors and intentions. Here we can begin to appraise the object as an object-other as part of the development of the *Other's-Other* device.

Park's audience-members, described by writers Hyun Jean Lee and Jeong Han Kim in "*After Felix Gonzalez-Torres, The New Active Audience in the Social Media Era*" (2016) as acting in the climate of a new interactive media-art era, responded to Gonzalez-Torres' gesture caress by establishing new meaning through a radical intra-action with the work. The artwork and its surrounding space were fundamentally affected by the presence and action of the audience upon the object. These fundamental alterations to the installation's shape, size and location were the tangible changes that the museum officials acted quickly

both to prevent and undo.[72] The physical installation object(s) was the centre-point and conduit for all intra-actions that took place that day with the candies acting as the tangible pivot through which all new and extra future-paths came into being. The future-paths which sprang up as a result of the museum officials' intra-actions with Park's agitation of the gesture unfolded in the form of preventative measures against the alteration of the state and location of the material object(s). The officials' main concern, conversely, was to retrieve the very objects which they had originally encouraged visitors to take.

Image available: http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_Fs6ku7KEINQ/TI2ZVHc-4BI/AAAAAAAAAAU/fPlaD-DbIS4/s1600/4817799788_baea55626e.jpg

[72] Authors Lee and Kim attribute the new breed of event playing out to visitors' nowadays exerting their agency over computer games, online and in social media, attributing to media art's modern accessibility a shift in the way that people access and explore artworks. Today, one may access a vast quantity of art remotely. Museums and galleries offer highly detailed online images of artworks that you would otherwise be restricted from being close to by a boundary rope. Recently, as I leaned over this line to peer into Roni Horn's large glass pink cube *Pink Tons* (2009) in Tate Modern was pre-empted with a barked, "Do not touch the artwork." Even if a visitor has no intention of touching the artwork, it is pre-empted that they most likely will. In media art, many artists now set up an interactivity by which the audience may affect the shape, sound or look of an artwork. Some galleries are beginning to allow and to even encourage visitors to be physically tactile with art objects, as at York Art Gallery where you may stroke and touch marked sculptures. Lee and Kim describe how a new generation of art visitors who have grown up with computer games expect to exert the same personal agency over the way an artwork unfolds as they would to the way a game plays out.

As the only tangible element of the piece, these tiny objects were infused with a power beyond their apparent worth. Without the presence of the physical work (the pile) in the space rendered the possibility of further intra-actions non-existent. The object and its potential as a pivot by which to intra-act with Gonzalez-Torres' original gesture vanished.

Without the pivotal object, Gonzalez-Torres' pieces cannot exist in their intended form. Total absence of the object ends the possibility of intended intra-actions and Gonzalez-Torres' gesture becomes obscured, leaving the question: does the object - the object which the officials worked so hard to retrieve - act as a pivot for intra-action in the same way as a flesh-other might? Does the object in fact rise into the role of object-other, holding in it very similar powers as the flesh-other in the previously discussed works in Chapter Three? Furthermore, if the object can behave as an object-other, then does this object also hold an irreducible interiority from its visitors: an interiority with which they similarly collide and intra-act as they might with a flesh-other's interiority?

I contend here that if the object can play such a pivotal role as is evidenced through Park's agitation of Gonzalez-Torres' gesture, then we can suggest that object behaves like an object-other: as an object-other which influences the scene as a flesh-other would, influencing the intra-active entanglement. In this way, I contend that the object produces, through its pivotal collision with a flesh-other, intra-active future-paths which are dependent on the object. I will further argue this point by discussing an object-other against which the flesh-other collides and intra-acts through a study firstly of Graham Harman's Object-Oriented-Ontology and then of Jacques Carelman's deconstructed objects and my own creative practice.

Having identified the object's potential as an other in the entanglement, this chapter now ekes out the object's significance in terms of othering, of interiority, and in terms of the gesture-caress as deemed relevant in this particular investigation: Can the object become one's other? Does this object-other carry the same potential for intra-action through irreducible interiority? Can it therefore substitute the intra-active flesh-other that we have seen in Abramovic and Festa? What role can the object hold in the context of the gesture-caress and how does it expand the thought-device of the *Other's-Other*?

Thinking on the role of the object-other and the fact it may behave as a flesh-other with irreducible interiority pushes this discussion towards an understanding of objects as intimate and proximitous, and as carrying their own agential weight. In this way, otherness becomes even more plural and active. The suggestion is that the otherness that the object instigates in me forms for me a sense of my own intimacy and proximity in the work.

Part 2 of this chapter, which now follows, addresses the object in more theoretical terms, drawing on the theories of Rosi Braidotti and Graham Harman alongside other new materialist discourse.

## *Part 2 |Addressing the object as other*

**Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, Graham Harman, Jacques Carelman and new materialism in my own creative practice.**

Part two of this chapter reconsiders the object in terms of its intra-active possibilities as other, working to expand the terms of intimate agentiality and proximity within the device of the *Other's-Other* that I am forming in this thesis,. As part of this endeavour, I begin to forge the terms of the liminal space and the liminal act in relation to the flimmering device of the *Other's-Other* which will be attended to as part of this thesis' conclusion. Via the object-other I eke out the reflexivity one experiences while in collision with it and study the opportunity it provides for viewing oneself and it as the other: in other words for otherness to hold a plural quality. As part of my final development of the *Other's-Other* device, I begin by considering Harman and Briadotti's philosophical discourse, moving to new materialist philosophy, that already exists about the 'other' to develop the idea of an agentially intimate plural otherness. In this thesis, my object instils an idea of 'the other' already: the object is that which is not myself and it is also that which is inaccessible to me.

The work of feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti is particularly useful due to what I perceive as a double-angled take on otherness in her writing. Braidotti offers a way of thinking about otherness and the world about us which is both conducive to the aims of this project and which also allows me to firm up my own notions of what I describe as a plural otherness. In conjunction,

object-oriented philosopher Graham Harman's idea of the "third table" also offers a means by which to put the notional object-other to work more fully in my current undertaking in forming the *Other's-Other* device. Using Harman's viewpoint, and with Braidotti's other in mind, I will use his concept of the "third table" - as discussed shortly - to argue the case for an alternative fourth table which comes into existence via the transversality offered by Rosi Braidotti's philosophy, with Barad's intra-action in mind and with Irigaray's caress always continuing as a ground throughout these explorations. This alternative fourth table stands in this thesis to think - via a notional object - otherness as plural, shifting and interchangeable in its role and effects. Using Braidotti's anti-Oedipal other, as discussed via the animal other in *Nomadic Theory - The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (2011), I also use this notional other in a way which allows for a more feminine and flexible approach to the masculine-as-other and to otherness itself as a co-created phenomenon. I reveal the object-other's scope as an equally co-creative player in the device of the *Other's-Other*. This enables me to approach site, space and place as agentially intimate and proximitous. This thesis deals with the proximity and intimacy of the small-scale, such as the one-to-one, and with the daily and tangible collisions which form our worlds as a way of speaking about and devising strategies for self-othering and for addressing intimacy and proximity as agential in sound arts. I

therefore write in terms of the room or close contact rather than about vast stadiums, cities or the world.[73]

In this part of chapter four, I explore otherness via the theoretical object - the alternative fourth table - which behaves as an intra-active player in experience. In this way I am enabled to address otherness as being more plural than previously attested for, and for the intimacy of otherness to play out in co-creation even with static objects. In this way, intimacy and proximity can be spoken about in multiple contexts and situations: for example, when describing one's intra-action and intimate co-creative experience with a static, object-based artwork I might then describe the artwork as other, and consider my relationship to it more easily.

**The other as man - thinking transversally**

In *Nomadic Theory*, Braidotti offers an overall approach to thought which I believe stands in common with the aims of this thesis. She describes 'nomadic thought' as a means by which to re-think the issues of our day, describing us as

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[73] Philip Auslander addresses what I would substitute as intra-activity for "Liveness" in LIVENESS (1999) and in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (2009). The liveness that he describes, in terms of live versus mediated performances (via technology and online viewing for example), draws in the question of intimacy which I have addressed in chapter three via Irigaray's between two caress. He states: *'One cannot say…that a performance in a small space is necessarily more intimate than a performance in a huge space"* (2009:108) and that intimacy is relative. I agree that intimacy is contextual and that intimacy may be experienced by an audience who is entirely remote from the performance itself. The key here is that intimacy itself is not one-way: the intimacy is generated between the performance and the audience, as a between two of co-creativity. Therefore the intimacy of liveness in this thesis has been addressed as an intra-activity. The remote audience-member that Auslander describes may feel even more intimacy with a performance than the audience member who is in perhaps a less conducive-to-witnessing situation where they cannot hear the performance properly. This is due to the fact that, as investigated in this thesis, intimacy is an agential experience in which intra-action with the witnessed - or the live - is generated in a large part by the audience, whether they are as he calls it, engaged in a *'classical liveness'* (2009:110) or a mediated one. Auslander cites Steve Wurtzler's investigations into live and recorded (i.e. mediated) performances' overlapping qualities, identifying the kind of performance when *'..the performers and the audience are both physically and temporally co-present with one another.'* (2009:110), where protagonists are spatially co-present, as this 'classical liveness'. For the purposes of developing the *Other's-Other* device in this thesis, it is this classical liveness that Auslander identifies that serves best for my endeavours. By focusing on classical liveness and stripping away the need for investigating mediated work (as the intra-active qualities of others still stand as usefully applicable here) I can more easily generate clear terms and definitions of the *Other's-Other* device.

existing in an age of post-human convergence in which we must think transversally by approaching our own thinking with the awareness that nothing - even thinking itself - takes place as an island unaffected by the issues of the day, reminding us that all things affect other things. Braidotti's transversal thought is widely applicable, helping form what she calls better judgements and cultural and societal relationships. Here I will use this transversal thought to augment the idea of the other and the idea of the between-two in the *Other's-Other*.[74]

Braidotti asserts that the post-human and the post-anthropocentric converge without either humanists or anthropologists (the two discursive fields that might be assumed to have firmly established 'the human') having any basic measure of what the human is, and of what its responsibilities may be. Braidotti raises the issue of our lack of knowledge about what it is to be human and forces us to confront the notion of the human as being anything but what we assume it is: neutral. She asserts that both humanists and anthropologists - and ourselves - take this notional human for granted, never questioning what role that human might play out or who that human is, and therefore never questioning who that basic human's other is. In resonance with my own investigation, where I too am reflecting the face of the self back onto the self through collisional art works, Braidotti encourages an undoing of static authority, using her nomadic thought as a form of self-reflexive philosophy which is also intra-personal and relational in its structures. (Braidotti 2011:2-3)

If I am to explore the notion of the object behaving as a flesh-other - as becoming an object-other - it is necessary for me to clarify how that object-other might come to behave as a human flesh-other might within a reflexive *Other's-Othering*. More pertinently I must show how that object-other functions within a reflexive *Other's-Othering* which respects and co-creates the future-path through colliding interiorities. Braidotti asserts that the other, measured against that which is the "neutral" human (man) is always that which is not man: man - who is not woman, not animal, not alien. More particularly, the other, for

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[74] Massumi describes this as the transversality of affect: '*Thinking the transversality of affect requires that we fundamentally rethink all of these categories [subject and object and the body] in ways that include them the event, together…the mutual inclusion in the vent elements usually separated out from it, and from each other.*' (Massumi 2015:x)

Braidotti, is that which is not white man[75]. Under these conditions, I must ensure that I define what type of other I claim this object-other to be behaving as and to be becoming. This thesis does not aim to create an other that excludes man as other, but to formulate otherness as transversal and plural.

I agree with Braidotti's notion of nomadic thought, and to a large extent her indication of the other in Western culture as resonating as that which is not (white) man. As part of this investigation, I discuss the other as being co-created and dependent on the self with whom it is collided and explore how I personally perceive my other as sometimes woman, sometimes man, sometimes object. Western philosophy generally marks this neutral human out as white, European man and the other as that which is not this central figure. In this chapter I aim to use this idea of a co-created other as a way of re-establishing man as the possible other and thereby establishing otherness as applicable to all people, non-humans, spaces and things. Sartre's other who views him from behind in the corridor is always, in my head, a man; the other who he voyeurs behind the keyhole I also always presume to be a woman and here we see power relations playing out in philosophical exercises in my culturally acclimatized mind. Therefore, it follows that the one to whom Sartre is accountable is assumed to be a man. This then, is my opportunity to recalibrate this sense of other-ness and to use this recalibration to show the co-creative possibilities of otherness.

I aim to claim here that any other is a wholly co-created other, co-created through a self-othering in tandem with collisional co-creative othering: that the other and otherness itself is created through collisions and that intra-action forms a bridging future-path between them. I also argue that the other with whom one collides immediately causes otherness to spring up in the self, and that the very collision with that other co-creates one's own otherness. I am enabled by Braidotti's approach to use her transversal thinking in a manner which accounts for all those present in the intra-active and co-creative experience of the *Other's-Other* that I am thinking out in this thesis.

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[75] Braidotti, R. (2017:9). *Journal of Postman Studies,* Vol. 1, No. 1 [Online]. Available: https://rosibraidotti.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/369.-Posthuman-Critical-Theory-1.pdf

**Seeing man as other - Co-creating the other**

The focus of the *Other's-Other* gesture-caress is that of a Baradien intra-action which allows for all parties' interiority to remain intact, and free from phallic law's fear and desire, working as a release from perpetuating a masculine philosophy of shame. The intra-active caress forms a co-creative otherness which depends solely on the others or protagonists who are present and "*...[in] an agential realist account...it is once again possible to acknowledge nature, the body, and materiality in the fulness of their becoming without resorting to the optics of transparency or opacity, the geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theorization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect while at the same time remaining resolutely accountable for the role "we" play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming.*" (Barad 2003:812) In this type of caress-like collisional intra-action, there is the possibility of moving away from perpetuated dualist philosophies of otherness and to permit for the masculine itself to become the other: and to become that which is not the 'assumed neutral'. The caress allows for a co-creative otherness to spring up and for the other to be the white man (commonly the assumed neutral) and rather than becoming-animal or becoming-woman, instead becoming-other. Otherness becomes a jointly understood and co-created intra-action. This investigation, instead of polarizing the other as that-which-is-not-man, and rather than continuing a self-perpetuating idea of otherness, intends to eke out an otherness which is interchangeable and transversally found across and through the mixing and messy entanglements of categories.

In this way, this thesis attempts to discard the presumption of otherness as being anything that is not white European man, and instead de-categorizes - via the caress - expected dualist relations. Here, if I allow the other to be defined by the caress-like co-creative othering affirmed by Irigaray, I may then allow the other to be masculine, feminine or genderless; to be an object or to be flesh; to be animal or alien. Therefore, and in the same vein, the object I now approach here in this thesis has the potential to behave as an object-other and is freed to behave and hold co-creative potential in the same way that any other has. The object-other, one other in a plurality of others, is likewise a co-created other entangled into an intra-active creation of meaning with that with which it

collides. Otherness, in this way, can be seen as entirely co-created between us. In this way I may use Otherness as a route by which to perceive and address a multitude of works and situations. Otherness can be seen as attributable to anything and anyone, making intra-active relationships entirely free of preconceived ideas of dualistic binaries. All protagonists - flesh or object - retain their interiority and agency as part of a co-creative happening.

For example my collision with a phallic law and a white-man-as-neutral still co-creates my presumed otherness due to the fact that I am a woman. But transversally it is not so simple as this. I am woman, but I am a white, heterosexual, privileged-to-have-a-self-employed-job-and-a-state-education, woman. My interior and co-creative possibilities are specific to me, and via these interiorities my personal relationship as an other and with the other is entirely co-created by my own and their own interior presence in the collision.

Karen Barad speaks of these co-creative possibilities specifically as a posthuman intra-active performativity and proposes *"...the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting "components"."* (Barad 2003:815) By maintaining the notion of this intra-active inseparability into a discussion of *Other's-Othering* in sound arts practice, I hope to free the flesh-other and the object-other towards seeing them as part of a co-creative, co-dependent otherness. In my endeavour to find a way to speak about intimacy and proximity in sounds arts, these plural and transversal others offer ripe elements for discussion within sound arts and sound arts practice. They offer many types of between-two and multiple approaches to an exploration of intimacy and proximity in works.

**Objects behaving as co-creative others**

In this part, I approach objects as co-creative possible others from a transversal, intra-active and caressing stance as discussed above. Through this discussion I aim to imbue the object with the possibility of a co-creative role when in collision with its own other (the flesh-other). Beginning with a basic anthropocentric argument for objects, as indeed holding further purposes and qualities within that lie outside of the object's physical attributes. Anthropocentrically, I can do things with an object and I may achieve further

things that exist beyond the object through my use of and interaction with it: I can make tea with a kettle and pot, I can eat a sandwich, I can create a painting from oil paints. In my application and use of objects, I may achieve further, human-centred, ends.

During the course of this section I will argue that not only may I exert my own force and intentions on and through the object, but that the object also, in various ways, exerts its power over me: my experience of the object is formed inseparably by the object, as also is my own sense of myself as an other. I will argue that qualities inherent in the object like-wise affect me through my contact with them and that this combined relationship can also be seen in the same between-two and intra-active terms previously touched upon in discussing encounters between flesh-others. Here, as a further stage in the development of the thought-device of the *Other's-Other* in sound arts, I now turn my attention to the between-two taking place between the flesh-other and the object-other.

Whether physical objects are the sum of what one can do with them (an anthropocentric approach to the object) or whether an object is merely matter arranged into a particular form (a scientific and mathematical approach in which the object is described in terms of the provable atoms which constitute it) are two sides of a dualist approach to objects. Neither approach suffices in regard to this project. Instead the project pursues another approach to the object which takes account for both these viewpoints, and perhaps also accounts for more than their total sum by recognising the co-creative possibilities lent by the object? Is an object more than its scientific constituent parts, and does an object hold a deeper quality than that which is readily available to me as a fallible and limited human being? Can a caress occur between myself and the object in which I am changed by its presence?

I argue that the object offers up an intimacy that unfolds via self-othering. I will show that my collision with the object is a catalyst for self-appraisal, a chance for me to perceive myself as an other in the mix facilitated by this encounter between-two. I intend, here, to approach the object in a way which allows for myself and my body, in conjunction and in partnership with the object, to be a co-creator of the reality which follows our collision. Yet at the same time I wish to allow for the possibility of the object maintaining its own

role in the future-paths which are created between myself and it; for it to remain partially inaccessible and irreducible to me; and for it to fulfil the role of a co-creator-other in the intra-action. In this way I will argue for a between-two with the object which consistently demands my self-evaluation and re-appraisal and which also furthers my re-instatement of the self and the body, intimacy and proximity into the way we speak about and into the way we create sound arts.

**Shifting the object from composite to co-creative**

Object-oriented philosopher Graham Harman suggests that objects and the non-human do have their own agency, or at least that they are deeper and more complex than they appear. In his paper *Anthropocene Ontology* given at the *SONIC ACTS Festival - The Geologic Imagination* on 26 February 2015 at Paradiso, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cR1A4ILPmjE) Harman speaks of a compound object which constitutes more than its literal self. He references in particular his own notebook entry *no.085 The Third Table* in *Documenta 13,* in exhibition director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's publication *100 Notes, 100 Thoughts* (2012)[76]. His entry takes twentieth-century philosopher Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington's example of the two tables and develops it to account for a third table which constitutes neither of the two tables signified by Eddington and which he purports is a third table which is a superior and more useful philosophical table. Harman's creation of a third table is, however, unlike my own entanglement-based attempt to approach the object in a non-dualist way as will be described, but his third table serves as a springboard by which to develop my own alternative, fourth, table.

In 1927, Eddington proposed two tables which were totally different from one another but also entirely the same. In this writing, he described the table that was in front of him while he also asserted that he could see not one table, but two. Eddington described how each of these tables was different from the other: there was the everyday, practical, sensed and used table that he worked upon - the table of everyday life; and there was the other table also before him which was defined by science as a collection of atoms and electrical charges constituting the physical material of the table. In *The Third Table*

[76] http://files.meetup.com/328570/Harman%20-%20The%20Third%20Table.pdf

Harman lays out an alternative table to these two tables, asserting that his table, the third table, is the only real table. The third table that Harman describes is a compound or composite table which he claims avoids the dualist nature of either literal or theatrical objects.[77] The alternative third table that Harman proposes instead allows, he claims, for change to take place through its presence. In a step towards a table which accounts for more than itself, Harman's third table hopes to encompass in a composite way both of Eddington's tables, while also allowing for the table to behave outside of its two-table world:

"*Eddington's first table ruins tables by turning them into nothing but their everyday effects on us or on someone else. Eddington's second table ruins tables by disintegrating them into nothing but tiny electric charges or faint material flickerings. Yet the third table lies directly between these other two, neither of which is really a table. Our third table* emerges *as something distinct from its own components and also* withdraws *behind all its external effects. Our table is an intermediate being found neither in subatomic physics nor in human psychology, but in a permanent autonomous zone where objects are simply themselves.*" (Harman 2012:10)

Harman thinks out his own third table as a sum of and as beyond Eddington's two tables, with his third table creating an autonomous zone where objects are themselves.. However, I would contend that Harman conjures a third table which does not account for a transverse or intra-active caress between the anthropocentric other or the non-human other. Interestingly for this investigation he purposefully identifies the table's interiority which is inaccessible to me, but crucially he stops there. For Harman, his third table (or object) is an "intermediate being" which he pushes into an autonomous zone. I would contend that crucially, set into its autonomous zone it does not and is unable to affect me, and I cannot affect it. Harman has built a third table from tables and not from intra-active possibilities. In this way, instead of a co-creative table transversally crossing categories and creating possibilities of otherness, Harman creates a third table which is immune to any kind of intra-action. Although Harman contends that this third table is an object which now quantifies more than, and encompasses both of, the other two tables described

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[77] Harman describes the theatrical object as the object which "does" or carries out a role in your life e.g. the table that holds up your dinner or your paper and pen.

by Eddington and that he has solved the problem of the two tables which do not overlap, his third table still, I believe, fails to stay in contact even with the body of the other (or myself) who approaches it. It exists in an untouchable triangle of tables, floating in an imaginary anthropocentrically observed world.

Both Harman and myself look in on these tables from the outside in null and void non-entanglements of immunity from one another. The third table that he describes is simply itself, existing in a zone which is untouchable by the fact of my own existence both next to and with it. For Harman, the conclusion he comes to in formulating his third table is that: "*objects are deeper than their appearance to the human mind but also deeper than their relations to one another, so that all contact between objects must be indirect or vicarious…each table is its own form: a* substantial *form, rather than a form existing only through its relation to a perceiver or some other thing.*" (Harman 2012:4/11) In this way Harman neatly removes the body of the flesh-other who engages with the object and erases any kind of fluid or intra-active effects to occur between the flesh and the object, or between the scientific object and the physical object. Here, in a commendable move to become non-anthropocentric about the object, Harman in fact mistakenly absolves the flesh-other of any self-appraisal as a self-other who may affect and be affected by the object with which he or she is existing and encountering. A self-erasure from the relationship absolves any kind of responsibility or self-appraisal in the dynamic. The three tables Harman describes all remain totally outside of us and immune to us. The third table perpetuates the divide and limits the scope for an intra-active understanding of a relationship to objects. It neuters any possibility of intra-acting with the object as an other as the object-other has been neatly rendered non-existent. Any possibility of Barad's response-able intra-activity and Irigaray's caressing entangled interiorities finds no resonance in Harman's approach. The ability of response is not required in Harman's calibration and as a result, we are written out of entanglements and out of other-ness: Harman merely perpetuates a Cartesian cut between objects and subjects.

By contrast, I next work to establish an idea of an object-other fourth table which connects with us intra-actively, and through this intra-action and through its irreducibility to us enables to think about our own otherness,

intimacy, and proximity with it: a table that allows us to see and think the between-two and to think this between-two as co-creative.

It is true that Harman's third table would resist my knowing it truly - is irreducible to me - by refusing my apprehension of it beyond merely as a tool for my use and as a tool which causes me to view it only in terms of its relationship to me. Harman's table, like my own following attempt at a fourth table, also allows the object an interiority which is inaccessible to me, but the key difference is that Harman stops there, having appeared to have solved the mystery of objects. I hope to continue *from* there and to think about the intimacy and proximity that springs up from my collision with it. By thinking with intimacy and proximity as critical terms, I may also think our otherness as creating meaning and consequences from the unique inbetween occurring between us. Objects hold a reciprocal potential within the collision and intimacy and proximity provide a pathway towards appraising it.

Harman's table remains in an autonomous zone which is apart from me - as "simply itself": untouchable, unaffected and un-affective. His object remains entirely removed from me, from my body and from my proximity to it and any kind of posthuman intra-active performativity with it is erased from possibility. Rather than rendering it unresponsive and mute and therefore rendering it unable to become an object-other, I work in the next section to materialise a fourth table in the object-other that renders it responsive and effective..[78]

In contrast to Harman's approach, and using Harman as a springboard, this thesis considers the work of Jacques Carelman's 'Catalogue of unfindable things' (*Catalogue d'objets introuvables*, 1969). Carelman's objects spell an altered relationship out to me: a relationship which unfolds more on the object's terms than my own and which forces me to make myself visible as a co-creator. The objects reveal myself to me and prompt me - through their impossibilities/ resistances/interiority - to see my relationship with them anew. In the same way I will argue, as I re-address every moment of a between-two of flesh-others, that I too conduct in my practice a caressing entanglement between-two with an object which has now become an equivalent other. The object's interiority excludes me and this exclusion forces me to re-address my own role

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[78] For Harman, the object's immunity permits me an invisibility, an infallibility and a freedom from accountability in the scene. I am no longer response-able or responsible.

in the dialogue. Therefore, before moving onto Carelman's work I briefly sketch out the idea of co-creative objects. This will allow me to identify the object's potential interiority as a part of agential intimacy.

**Co-creative objects**

How objects relate to me, how I relate to objects and what I can do with objects has been of great interest in my practice since 2012. In my creative practice I have explored both how objects can affect me and how objects, with intention, can also be manipulated to affect others. How much may the non-human object exclude from its relationship with a human, and therefore may the object go on to hold an autonomy and interiority which I cannot control? If the object may exclude me in some ways I would suggest that this capability for exclusion would create a certain type of interiority that I cannot fully engage with.

Unlike Harman, I believe that the fact I cannot engage with the object's interiority does not mean that this interiority therefore does not exist or likewise that it is not worth exploring. Quite the opposite: for the purposes of forming the *Other's-Other*, recognising the object's possibility of interiority allows me to discuss more fully the terms of the intimacy involved in the intra-action that I contend is taking place.

I would argue that my intra-action with the object works to co-create this interiority which concurrently I cannot engage with and from which I am excluded. This combination of what is, *between us* (between myself and the object), both communicated and excluded creates the climate of an intra-action: what myself and the object both succeed and fail to co-create *together* allows both my own self-based approach to the entanglement and the object's exclusivity from me to remain and to be thought out. I will demonstrate how this co-created entanglement generates the possibility of intra-activity and the possibility of a self-othering which re-places me into the relationship in a new and different way. What we (the object and myself) cannot communicate between-two plays out as an intra-action wholly specific to that particular object and to this particular flesh-other-self. The object's resistance to me makes clear what can and cannot be created and communicated between us,

generating a type of close intimacy through proximity, allowing the future-path of our intra-action to be formed.

Using the ideas and theories of new materialist Karen Barad, I will investigate a way of thinking and confronting the object that plays out as a between-two and which also absorbs or accommodates in its parts an anthropocentric approach to the object. I approach the interiority, or the excluding/exclusive aspects, of the object here not as a negative exclusion (as with Harman's object oriented ontology) and as something which separates it from me, nor in a way which nullifies or closes off the object's possibilities in the world, but instead as an interiority which through its othering of me instead binds a new formula of intra-action which comes into being via my own performative body. In this way I may better reach conclusions about objects and about their roles within the terms of this discussion, without basing my whole discussion on anthropocentricism and simply projecting meaning.

This Baradien performative intra-action approach allows my body to act as the pivot for the discussion, loading the object with possibilities rather than discarding them. I hope that my approach also allows a thinking which has no blind spot to my own presence and the fact that my ideas are my own understandings of the dialogue between the object and the self: acknowledging my own presence works to find a more rounded and full approach to entanglements. This is of particular relevance to the *Other's-Otherness* that I am forming through this investigation. This project includes in its remit a focus on intimacy and proximity as vehicles of performance which enable us to re-address sound arts discourse and making. By the inclusion of the self and the body (i.e. myself and my body as this is all I can know) I am not granted a dangerous hyper-invisibility within the discussion which would render it half-begun. My body is the pivot for the argument, and for the approach to the object; yet it is also not the anthropocentric ruler of or excluder of outcomes, but instead it is the means by which to think. In consequence, I am enabled to repurpose this approach to sound art and to approach sound art as performative and intimate, offering new insights and perceptions of sound art works and experiences.

**Thinking out resistance as a form of intimacy in objects**

To grant objects agential intimacy, I now turn to the objects created by artist Jacques Carelman. Carelman's *Coffeepot for Masochists* in his 'Catalogue of unfindable things' (*Catalogue d'objets introuvables*, 1969) is one of the most famous depictions of the apparently completely useless object. This coffee-pot takes a form which, as though already collided with the anthropocentric terms of its object-hood, it is transformed into a contradictory and oppositional anthropos-resistant object. The objects in Carelman's catalogue are created through a direct focus on the objects' anthropocentric purpose and ultimately upon the removal of this purpose and likewise, the removal of its potential fulfilment. These objects are intentionally rendered impotent in terms of their intended use for humans. His *Coffeepot for masochists* is unusable, and in its un-usability the object refers directly back to the human that may not use it. In rendering the items impotent and anthropocentrically useless, it is as though these objects reclaim a form and a shape which, by excluding the human, increases the object's inaccessible interior self-hood. This coffee-pot still retains its identity both as an object which I can-not-use and also an object which urges me to use it in a certain way yet also forbids me to do so.

Above: Jacques Carelman's *Coffeepot for Masochists* and his *Flat Chair (1969)*
Available: https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/impossible-objects and https://bat-bean-beam.blogspot.com/2016/04/the-masochists-coffee-pot.html

Carelman describes a catalogue of "unfindable things": objects which deny or alter a further human meaning-making for them, although they are created with anthropocentric purposes in mind in their original form. Carelman's objects resist me, and in this denial an interiority of object-hood is created which is inaccessible to me. All I am left with is what I cannot communicate via the object: between us and out of our collision a new object surfaces. These objects are formed through the entanglements between humans, objects, human purposes, and the denied. As a human, I cannot "find" these objects through their usual anthropocentric purpose, I may only find them on the other and new terms permitted and made available to me by the object: perhaps limiting me to an appreciation of the red-ness of the ceramic or the symmetry of the chair.

In this case, can an object *do*? And, in this "doing" how can it exclude me and change the terms of the intra-action? Once my usual way of "finding" the object is forbidden, the previous relationship that once replaced and superseded the object for me now allows the object to come to the fore as a different kind of object which exists differently in the world and in my world.

What intrigues me about Carelman's objects is that they persistently speak to me of my own relationship with them through their familiarity and through their refusal of my desired or expected interactions. I cannot appraise them in any way which is not human unless I assume my own invisibility in the relationship. However, by recognising my own stance as a human who is yearning for human purposes and causes I may more fully perceive and partake in the intra-active relationship better. These objects make me question myself in relation to them because I may no longer carry out any of my own conventional/habitual intended uses or demands upon them: as though now autonomous, they resist me in a way which alters my relationship with them and with me co-creates our altered future-path. Through these objects I am other-ed: I grow into my own otherness through my intra-active collision with their refusal of me.

These static objects therefore come to have their own agency in the situation. They retain a non-human interiority which denies me my desired intra-actions. My desires and intentions are reflected back and re-shaped by the object with this "return" playing out as an intimate between-two between object

and self. In the same way that Irigaray's other might resist or accept a caress, so too does the object maintain a resistant interiority that I cannot access. The object becomes my other as with any other flesh-other, in that partnership we enter into a co-creation of the future-path.

With Carelman's objects I contend that I am rendered response-able rather than being a master both of the situation and of the object itself. The object's interior refusal of my access to it forces a re-appraisal of myself as its other, and of my own needs or desires in terms of it. Instead of behaving as master to these objects, I must recognize my own anthropocentric terms and my role in the collision that is playing out. In a close proximity with the object, I find that I must negotiate my own role: that I must become response-able for my role in a performativity which *"…allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming, in its ongoing "intra-activity"."* (Barad 2003:803). As a form of self-othering through my collision with it, the object offers, in this thesis, an example of a way to approach apparently static or non-flesh-other-based sound art works. If my object-other can create a response-ability in me as part of my collision with it, so too can the same co-creative response-ability occur in my intra-action with sound art works. I may consider the between-two likewise in my approach to sound arts.

**An alternative calibration of otherness: *Other's-Othering* with the object in my creative practice**

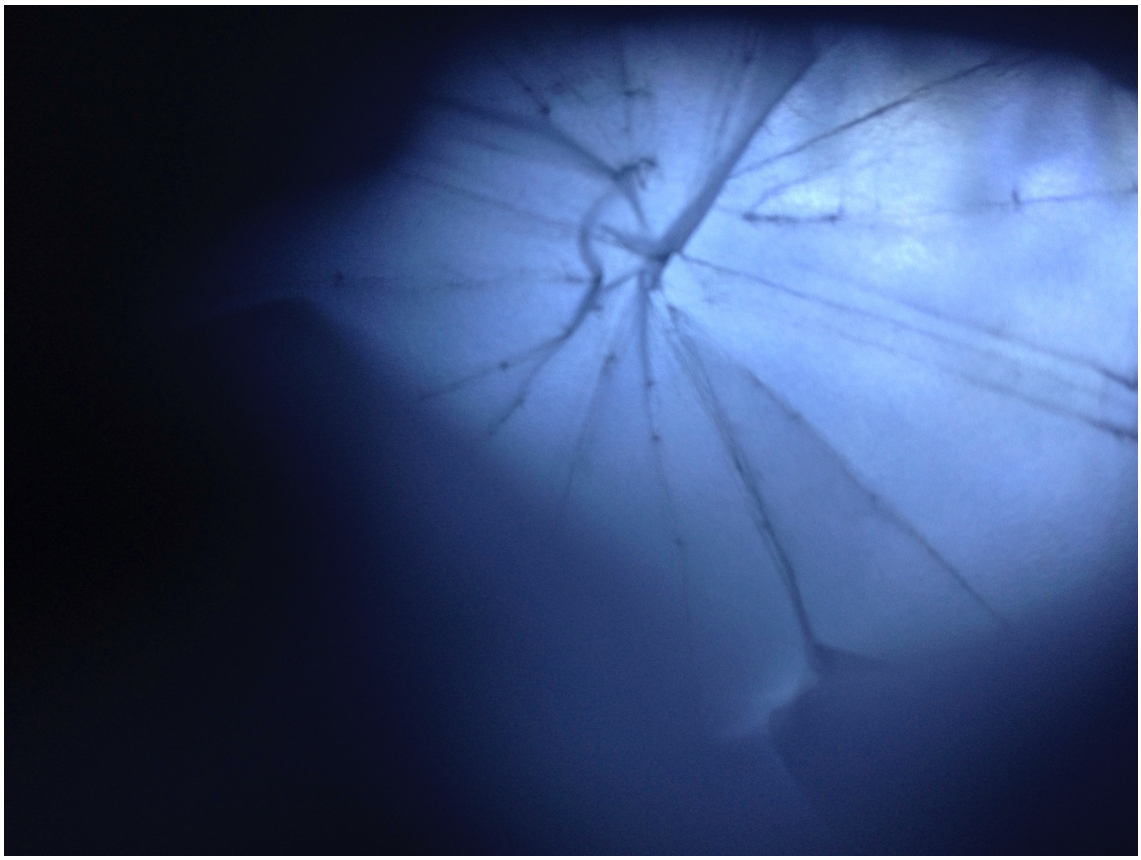
During the earlier part of my PhD research, I was exploring negotiating smaller objects as performable items that I could manipulate with my hands at the table in quiet solitude. One particular project took the form of a piece called *Letters* (2014 -), discussed in Prologue ii. Beginning as a letter-writing project, the letter-writing element of this communication fell away after a year or so. This step into working with smaller materials and in creating smaller works had begun with the premise of exploring what I might communicate through objects and what might happen in a communication carried out solely via these objects. Following my work with *PROXIMITY*, chapter three, I had become compelled by the role of objects and their ability to deny me my intentions with them and therefore I became also interested in the role of the physical in

installation works as a means of self-othering. In *PROXIMITY* I had guided the participant's experience very carefully through the creation of a physical structure. In this piece, I had treated the object I created rather like a score (like a musical score or a physical composition) which would serve to indicate to my participant how they should encounter the collision that I had set up to take place with another flesh-other at the centre. I measured my spiral corridor to a very specific and disorientating 40-foot circular length and made sure that my participants could not see over the white 7-foot high walls. This large object had mediated and guided the participants' experience, permitting them some movements and not others, turning their bodies in circles and channelling their walking options. Participants had to negotiate what the object would allow them to do - as the object itself denied them certain physical possibilities - and the experience played out via what the object excluded from the intra-action. As a progression of this work I began *Letters* with the intention of exploring how objects might communicate and how they might influence people on a smaller, more focused scale. The work eventually became a deep exploration of absence and presence and through it I eked out many aspects of my own processes and practice and also the bases for this research investigation into the intra-active *Other's-Other* in sound arts.

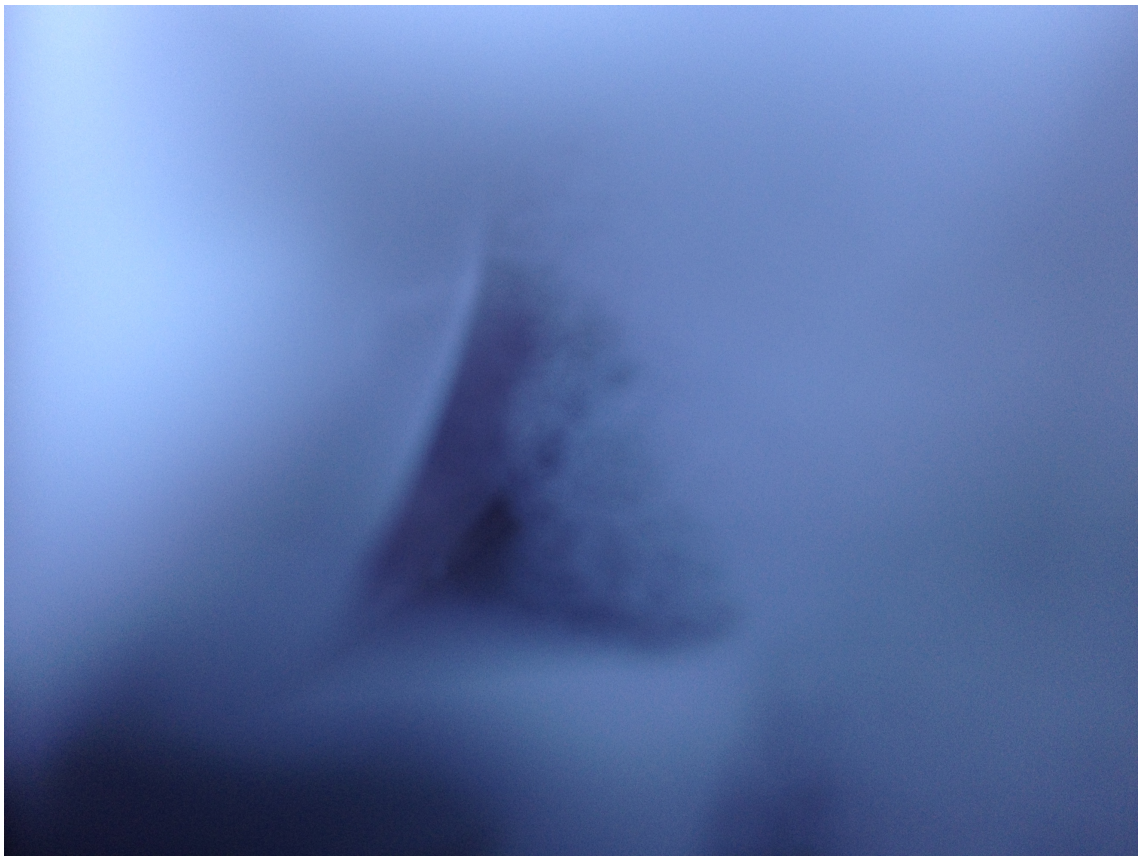
I began this letter-writing work by contacting a poet/writer friend of mine, Andrew Spragg, with whom I had worked collaboratively in the past. I laid out to him the form: that we would send each other letters which on my part were objects "physically composed" (this self-identified compositional strategy was my initial subject-matter for this PhD) and Spragg would reply in any which way he liked, most likely via his own writing paradigm. The important thing was that we did not communicate with each other in any other way regarding the project than via what we posted or sent to each other. *Letters* later moved into a solo, non-collaborative, undertaking as my focus on the absence and presence occurring between myself and the object developed and intensified, as did my fascination with a sense of a relationship I perceived between myself and my materials. The more I worked with small forms in repetitive processes I found that I must negotiate around and with what the materials would permit me to do with them. As a result, I found myself obsessed with creating repetitious paper forms made from multiple folds or

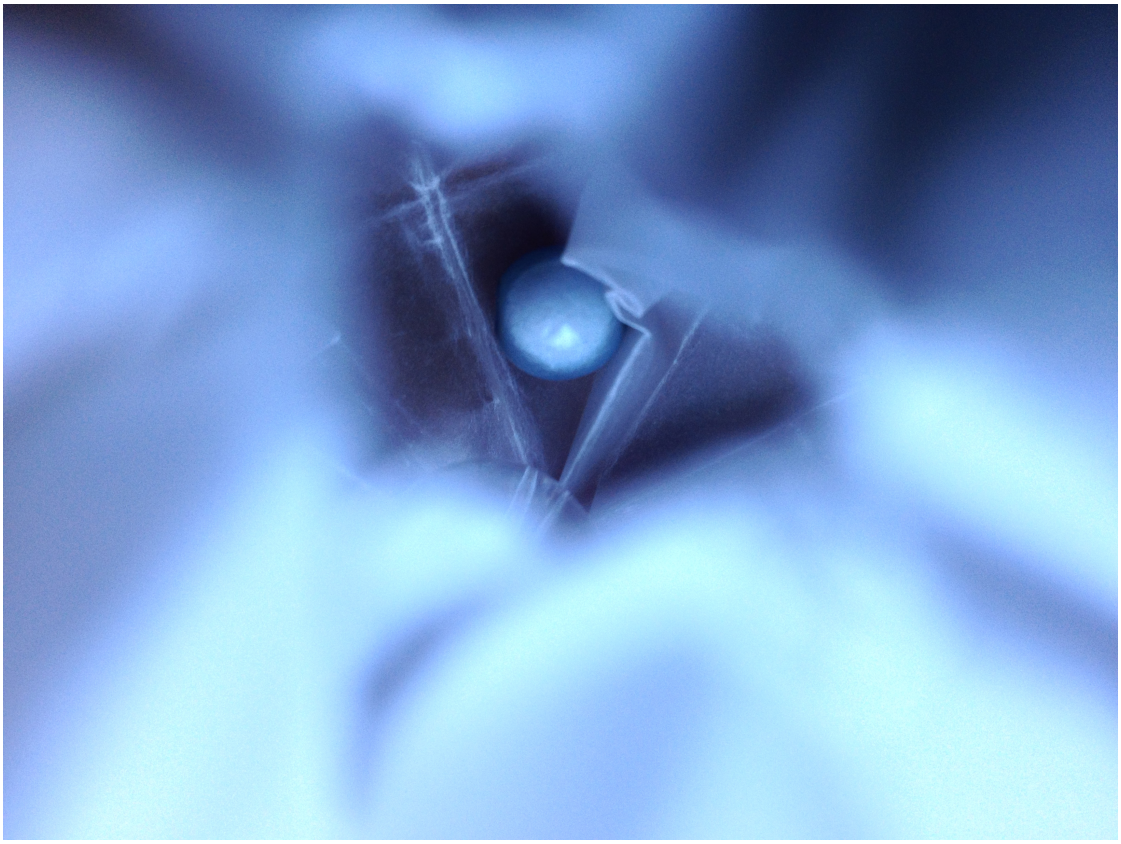
tears which marked both my presence and absence in their bodies and which also - at a time when I was hoping to define my practice better - harked directly back to my long-term practice as a professional musician which is marked by years of repetitious practice when learning new music and in honing my professional technique. This repetition was a process by which I could think again and again the intra-active relationship between myself and the object. Turning it and bending it with my hands was a repetitious process which worked differently with different materials and with different sizes of materials. I was creating forms not out of solo acts which mastered the object, but as an intra-active and co-created realisation of an intention.

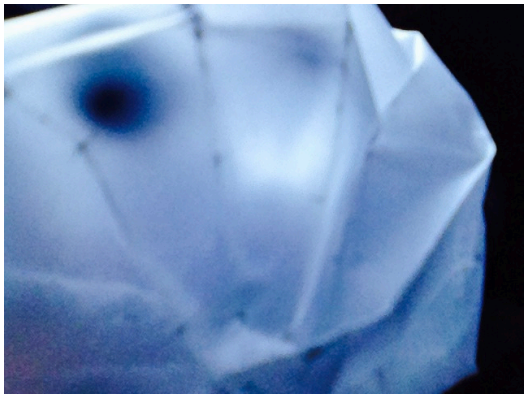
My first letter was a handmade balsa wood lidded box filled with four tracing-paper origami shapes which had hollow centres. Inside these hollow centres were various items which, when you peered into an opening at the top of the shape you found contained various things. One had three tiny eye-like beads rattling in it, another was totally empty and another I filled with the stuffing you might fill a soft toy with. When you raised this particular origami object to your eye - after having peered into other shapes which held tiny object or messages - you felt a sudden sense of blindness as you gazed directly at a fog of polymers. The encounter was confusing and unexpected. This particular object refused the gaze. My lidded box had demanded also that Spragg could only open this item at a limited speed (having heard the rattling of objects inside) , and that he would perform a number of 'looking into' actions: first the box, then each origami shape.

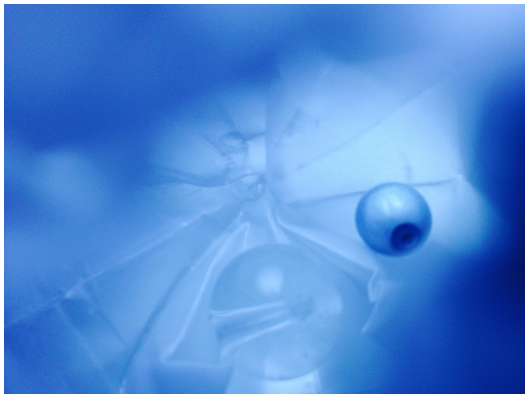


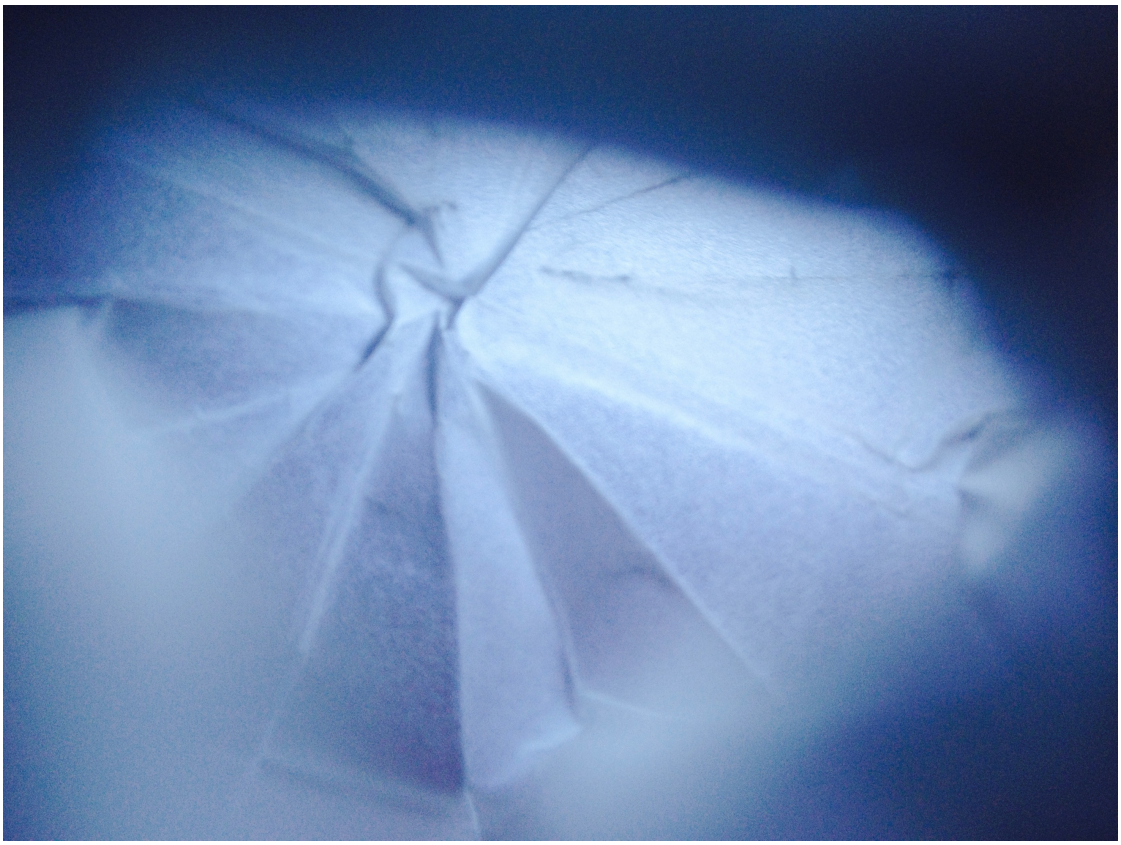
Photographs of *Letters* are my own.



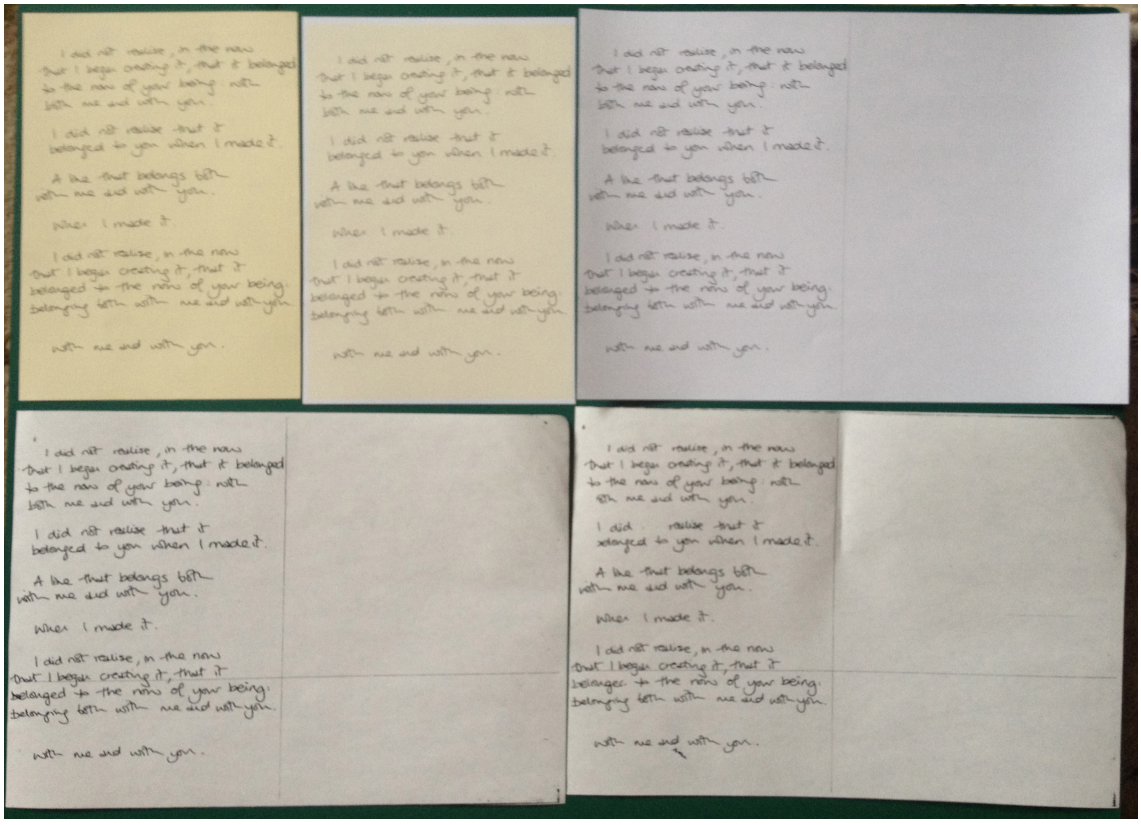


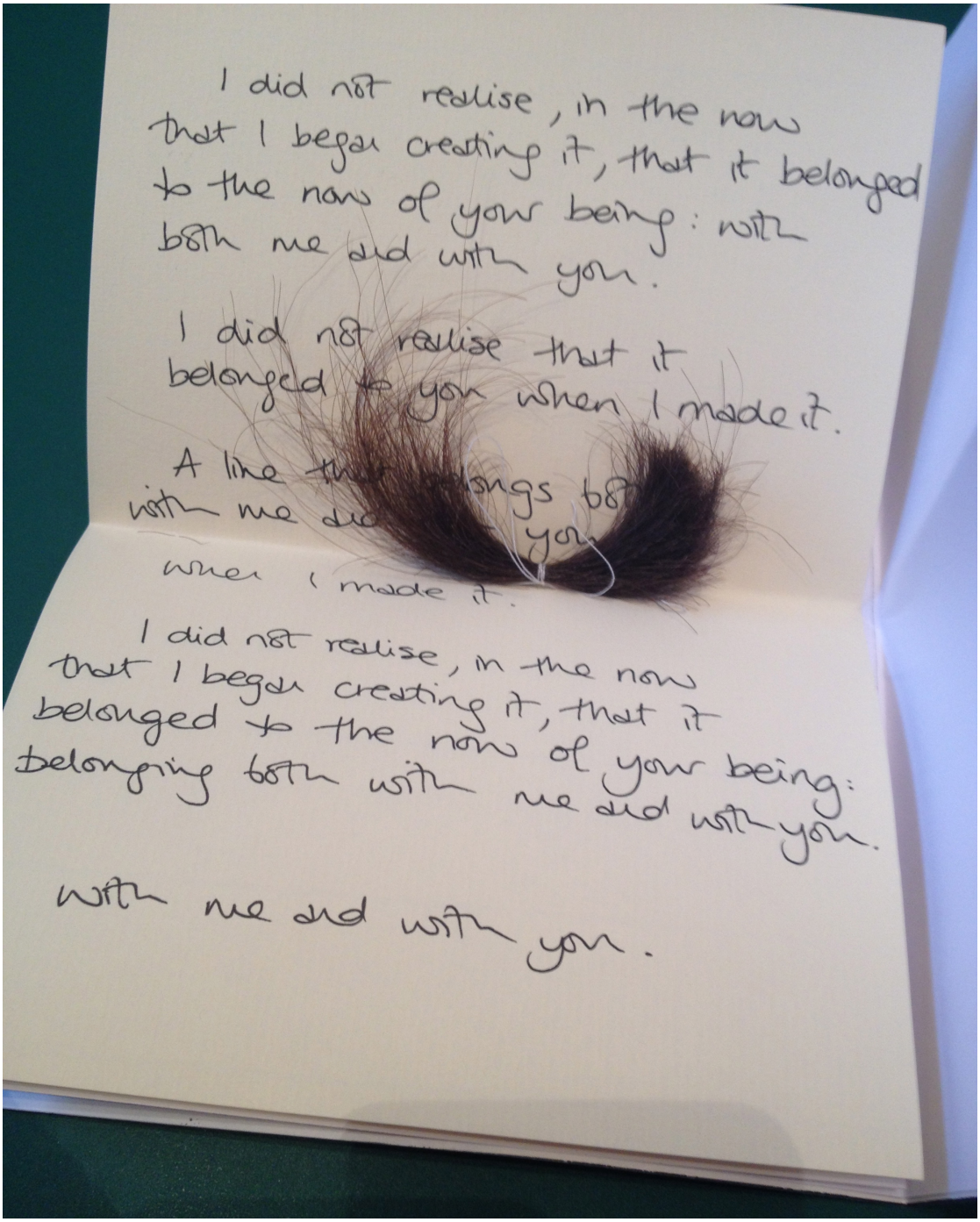






With *Letters*, a continuous loop of reciprocity sprung up not only between myself and Andrew - with our roles as receiver or creator continuously shifting emphasis - but between myself and the objects I worked with and sent. The work deconstructed the usual pattern of performing and "audience-ing." At any one time I could not have conclusively told someone which role I was carrying out. A continual fluctuation and mixing of roles took place: As Barad would put it, the matter being an agential active participant. Other objects sent involved endlessly photocopied and faxed hand-written letters which gradually grew to have obscured words and meaning; cascading uncontrollable beads from collapsible objects; locks of my own hair and repetitiously torn layers of paper (another project which grew into a larger undertaking).


I did not realise, in the now
that I began creating it, that it belonged
to the now of your being: with
both me and with you.
I did not realise that it
belonged to you when I made it.
A line that belongs both
with me and with you.
When I made it.
I did not realise, in the now
that I began creating it, that it
belonged to the now of your being:
belonging both with me and with you.
with me and with you.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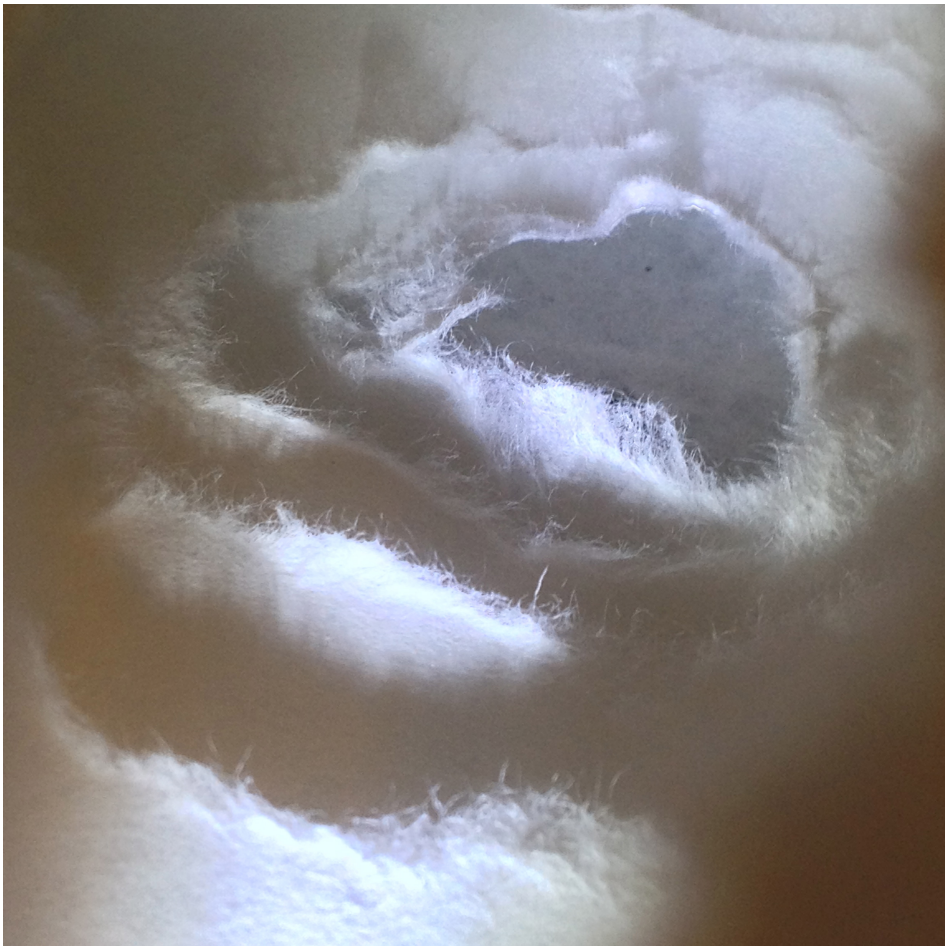
I did not realise that it
belonged to you when I made it.
A line that belongs both
with me and with you
when I made it.
I did not realise, in the now
that I began creating it, that it
belonged to the now of your being:
belonging both with me and with you.
with me and with you.



*Letters* began as an exploration of the physical qualities of a work as the means by which to begin establishing the usefulness of a new compositional strategy, and ended up as an exploration of deeper questions related to processes, to absence and presence and eventually towards an exploration of self-othering via the interiority of the intimately agential object-other. Gradually the work moved towards becoming all about the reciprocal dialogue taking place between myself and my materials. In the same way my role had flimmered as performer or audience in my letter-sending, I consistently found myself conflating subject (the self) and object (the materials) in the actions that I made onto the paper: In the physical actions of my processes, absences and presences were intermingled via the object's pliancy and resistance and through my repeated mark-making upon it.

In these tiny tracing paper origami worlds - worlds you can cradle in your palm - were minute and simultaneously vast sites once you peered inside the opening. These contained temporal worlds ran, like a performative space, to their own space and time boundaried by translucent walls and set into relief on the inside by a light spilling in from another space and place. In *Letters* and in its later permutations I chose to use a resistant paper that complained at me bending it to my will, protesting at me with loud crackles, bearing every action visibly upon its membranous self. My material fought me back, resisted my intentions: the sustained contact with the bleach in the paper gave me sore, smarting fingertips and the paper remained unyielding after a certain number of folds had been exerted upon it. The final object boldly stated its resistances to me and its interiority inaccessible to me, while likewise wearing its compromising scars and folds very apparently through light, sound and texture. The origami shapes took a form which was permitted by the material with which I worked: repurposed from its proper use, this resistant paper dictated physical form outcomes. My own gesture-caress at the paper was returned with equal amounts of giving-pliancy and resistant-abrasiveness. I found that the objects that resulted had come into being via a co-creation between myself and the material. Possibilities and impossibilities were dictated to me by the object and the object's inaccessible interiority shaped the future-paths down which I could go in my making.

**Repetition: disappearing and appearing into objects**

In the course of *Letters*, a strong thread of compulsion to apply myself through physical and repetitious action emerged in my practice. The object with which I worked became the intense focus of my attentions: over and over I would create the same pattern in the paper, applying myself and my bodily contact repetitiously with the object. In this way, in repeating the same actions, I worked not only the materials but also my own body. I learned its capabilities and re-appraised what things I could do. Via the object and my intra-action with it, I was enabled to question myself and my approaches to the material and became response-able with it. I tested the willingness of the paper and honed my skills at getting the results I wanted while simultaneously, via the object's resistance to me, testing the limits of my own body and its possibilities. As with my musicianship practice, through a self-appraisal - or self-othering - I began to learn both my own capacities, my own intentions and my own body through its physical application to the at times, forgiving, and at times unforgiving, object. In this practice I was honing a new skill and learning the material's limits, resistances and exclusions of me: its irreducibility. In *Letters*, the qualities of the object even commanded what size of paper I could work with, for example allowing me only a certain number of successful folds. As with Carelman's unfindable objects, my materials resisted me and excluded some interactions with them. With my body I conducted a co-creation in partnership with the object, with my intentions and its interiority coming together to form a specific future-path and a specific physical form.

Through *Letters* a flimmering began to take place between myself, the object and the actions or performances I exerted upon the materials. The origami object that resulted in our intra-acting with one another was a co-created object which was the sum of both my actions, and the object's resistances. Through engagement with the object I not only learned the material's limits and possibilities but I also learned that of my own body's. The object forced me to re-appraise my actions and at times it was as though I became one with the paper material, with the object. In which case, did I become-paper? Or, more pertinently, did I become my object-other's other? Did I *become-other*? Between us, or between-two, a caress played out which conflated

the object and the subject: a blurring of boundaries between my body and the object was taking place as a flimmering between myself and the paper, my inert co-creator.

Following Barad I describe this performing of the object as materialising phenomena through my own apparatus, with this intra-active apparatus serving to enact an agential cut between subject and object repeated over and over again:

*"A specific intra-action (involving a specific material configuration of the "apparatus of observation") enacts an* agential cut *(in contrast to the Cartesian cut - an inherent distinction - between subject and object) effecting a separation between "subject" and "object." That is, the agential cut enacts a* local *resolution* within *the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy. In other words, relata do not preexist relations; rather, relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions."* (Barad 2003:815)

The action of creating origami became the apparatus by which I became entangled with the object as a result of the material's inaccessibility forcing an effect on my behaviour. *"...Intra-actions enact* agential separability *-the local condition of* exteriority-within-phenomena*...in the absence of a classical ontological condition of exteriority* [enabled by performance and performativity] *between observer and observed...provides the condition for the possibility of objectivity."* (Barad 2003:815) Any processes I carried out were mediated by the interiority of the paper that at times yielded to or resisted against me in an intra-active partnership, co-creating the future-path between us.

The liminal space and conditions created by this performative space allowed for objectivity at my own presence to become possible. Unlike Harman's object, existing in its autonomous zone where it is immune from me and I from it, here with this tracing paper I entered into a truly intimate dialogue with the materials. They taught me what *they* could and would do, and also what I could do: and importantly what, between us, we might co-create together. Alike to my creative practice experiences as a musician, through the object I learned my own limits, my own possibilities and likewise the permissions and possibilities of the instrument with which I worked.

At the core of this co-creation is the condition of a performative and performed space: a liminal space of intra-action and the localized conditions

which enable entangled future-paths to come into being. A flimmering overlapping between subject and object, enabled by an agential cut of separability on a localized phenomenal level, took place in the liminal performative space that I contend is so essential in a re-appraisal of sound arts via the Other's Other.

**A flimmering between-two: absence and presence**

In the repetition of over a hundred of these container-like origami shapes a flimmering also took place in regard to my own bodily absence and presence. Another sound installation *The Call* in 2018 used the same intra-active dialogue as part of creating 777 origami birds. These birds hung in the roof of the nave and chancel of an ancient church alongside the sound of thousands of starlings in murmuration. This piece appears more fully in the supplementary material.

Photographs of *The Call* are my own.

Through these excessively repeated actions occurred a disappearance of myself and my body and a flimmering between my role as a performer and receiver as part of the physical act. With each repetition it was as though I began to disappear into the action. As I became more skilled, the actions became more smooth and easily executed. With this increased speed and skill my body became less cumbersome, less forced and more at one with the object. Gone were the crumpled marks that I produced at the start.

With this ease of practice my body began to disappear: I no longer had to think so hard about my negotiation or intra-action with the object. Instead, myself and the object moved forward together: it gave way on its own terms and I, respecting and familiarizing myself with these terms, found a way to negotiate its change into a new and assented form. Part of this disappearance was through the learned fluidity of my self-othering. I could now predict the needed and permitted self-actions in the relationship.

As with my creative practice as a musician, from which my sound art practice originates, I found myself disappearing my own body in my aim to achieve the final objects with the precision and speed of an artisan. As the objects became more precise and exact my marks became more bold, focused and definite. I manifested more of my body into and with the object, but likewise the marks showed less and less evidence of my clumsy presence having made them. As a flautist, I have spent years disappearing - or perhaps integrating - my body into my performances. Any performance that shows the difficulties involved in rendering a piece of music, or the difficulties of achieving say, an extremely long phrase or a particularly awkward combination of fast notes must never be apparent in the final performance, especially if it is as a performer who is part of a larger ensemble such as an orchestra otherwise the whole ensemble enters a "danger-zone" where things may fall apart. Even in chamber music with four or five players, we cover for each other the moments which are cumbersome and in which our bodies cannot be made to apparently disappear into the sound, or we cannot master the ongoing negotiation between our bodies and what our instruments allow us to do. Half of the joy of rehearsing together comes from mastering these corners as a team, of course. Yet invisibility achieved contrarily through an intensive self-presence is paramount for the execution of the score and for a performance to avoid becoming a performer's logistical or aural nightmare.

Repetitious work is the mainstay of musicianship technique practice and preparation. In repeating minute segments I disappear the evidence of my own body from the final product: while contradictorily as part of this same process, my body and its technique becomes honed to producing the necessary actions that render it invisible. Through my appearance into the object or instrument, and the more I co-create the final result with the object, I disappear. Those

perfected actions, achieved by repeated hours of bodily exertion vanish into the final piece. And so a flimmering occurs between myself as the subject and the object: at times I am myself, at times I am the object and at times the object is mostly me. In a reciprocal dialogue with the object/instrument I fulfil multiple roles: as the object's other and as the flesh-other: I vanish the object and sometimes it vanishes me to its will or it vanishes into my will. In the process of becoming agile and in making the sound versatile and seamless a constant self-appraisal takes place. Every second I must judge my own actions in relation to the instrument or the object that I achieve the music or the origami with. In constantly assessing my own limits, the object's limits and in making micro-adjustments even at the moment of performance or at the moment of folding the paper, I continually self-other. I critique my own actions: I assess what I should and shouldn't have done, what I should do to improve and what I should do to draw the best future-path out of the instrument and its permissions to me in our co-creation of the work. Even at the point of performance to an other, flimmering takes place. I behave as the flesh-other responding to the allowances of an object-other in a continual intra-action, while also rising into a flimmering with my own body and its allowances and exclusions.

In the resultant object's form (the origami and torn paper projects, and also my musical performances) is a vast quantity of what I have put there through my negotiative dialogue, or intra-action, with the object or instrument. Suspended in the final version of the object is a presence of my own body and intention or will and, likewise held in the object is the quantity of that which has been permitted by the material or instrument and its resistance to me. Between us, with the object challenging me to relearn my actions and to appraise what it allows me to do, a co-created future-path results in the final form or performance.

In the same way that an intra-action between-two takes place between two flesh-others - via the other's interiority which causes a renegotiation of terms and selves - so does the object's interiority-inaccessible-to-me also create a between-two intra-action. Facilitated by the object's exclusions of me, the object behaves as a flesh-other and likewise causes me to re-assess me demands

of it: and a future-path is formed between us. Through the object I am forced to re-appear myself into the scene and to become aware of my own actions.

In this way, we find that the subject or self and the object are closer together in their intra-active behaviour than we might have thought. Unlike Harman's imagined autonomous zone, here we find the body, the self, the object and othering taking place in an intimate and flimmering way. Through my own practice and through Gonzalez-Torres' objects I find that the subject (the self) has less agency than expected, that the object holds more, and that the two together experience and create a flimmering of roles which entangle as part of an intra-active co-creation. The expected (and often divided) subject-object relationship is re-calibrated in an approach which includes and recognizes an agential intimacy and proximity that operates across and in spite of an imagined autonomous zone or apparent mutual immunity. The object-other here becomes the vehicle for becoming other, or self-othering, which stands as the means by which to address works that are not one-to-one works as intra-active, intimate and co-creative - enriching my notions of the *Other's-Other* seen in action.

An important element of this flimmering between-two in *Other's-Othering* as co-creative materialisations is the condition of the performative space in which Barad's agential cut may take place. Barad identifies that a performative understanding is the route by which matter can be recognised as an "*active participant in the world's becoming*" and intra-active essential (Barad 2003:803). This appraisal in chapter four of the object as an other that holds co-creative potential through its irreducibility when it is placed in proximity with me, for example in *Letters,* brings this investigation naturally to liminal spaces themselves. The origami in *Letters* were liminal spaces of experience, but equally the process of creating them intra-actively was a liminal performative space in itself.

In the final chapter of this thesis, chapter five, I address a number of works which prove a liminal performative space as the condition and result of an *Other's-Othering* between-two co-creation, allowing me to fully propose the device of the *Other's-Other* as a means by which to constructively think and make sound arts.

# Chapter Five

## *Causal Liminality, Docile and non-docile bodies; Liminal Performative Space and Plural Otherness*

In the previous chapter, I showed that the object can behave as an other in a similar way to the flesh-other. Through its otherness the object exerts its irreducibility and behaves intra-actively by producing consequences and reactions in the flesh-other. Towards the end of the previous chapter I began to discuss the intra-active space formed between flesh-and-object-others as performative and liminal. This final chapter further explores the entanglements formed between these others as co-creative and uses Susan Broadhurst's theorization of the performative liminal act to frame this idea.

In this way, this thesis aims to finalise the *Other's*-Other as a thought-device by which to bring agential intimacy and proximity to the fore in both the theorization and making of sound arts. Throughout this thesis, the study of otherness has been central in thinking a language and terminology that integrates into it notions of intimacy and proximity. Galvanised directly by my own practice, I have explored and questioned otherness by colliding the one-to-one (the self with the live, flesh other) in chapter three and the one-to-no-one (the self with the static object) in chapter four. These two central chapters have worked to establish the device of the *Other's-Other* as a means by which to access, think and speak about intimacy and proximity in sound arts as agentially significant. The study of otherness in these calibrations has importantly contributed towards this thesis' idea of otherness being unfixed in position and playing out as a flimmering agency. It is through this othered, flimmering agency that we are enabled to address works in terms of others and thereby, in terms of agential intimacy and proximity.

After locating and appearing protagonists in chapter one, in chapter two, using Sartre's *The Look*, I addressed the commonly accepted binary relationship between self and other as limiting how we might think about intimacy and proximity in sound art works. From there I went on to complexify this through Irigaray's thought-word of the caress which enabled me to think otherness as involving irreducibility and to conceive an agential intimacy occurring between

two. With direct reference to Barad's idea of location and agency being entangled I then explored the otherness of objects. I came to offer in chapter four an idea of a thinking and doing of otherness that plays out as a flimmering and ever-shifting state of agency; with this flimmering agency forming an active plurality of entangled response-abilities[79]. This idea of otherness and agency as flimmering and unfixed enabled me to produce a way of thinking, theorizing and making sound arts in a way which positions the intimacy and proximity of otherness at its centre.

Throughout this thesis I have worked with pairings which flimmer together to create new understandings of them as performative binaries, such as the subject/object, performer/audience, one/no-one, flesh/non-flesh and of the inbetween that occurs between them. Likewise, the pairing of exteriority and interiority becomes my final arm of investigation. These two aspects - inside and outside/interior and exterior - serve in this chapter as a direct link from my own study to Susan Broadhurst's liminal acts (*Liminal Acts* 1999), and to her ideas of the co-creative value of the performative space.[80] In this way, in this final chapter, interiority and exteriority become central in theorizing the liminal as the place in which multiple types of agency occur. By augmenting experiences of works with the idea that the agency within them and which forms the experience is flimmering and changing, it becomes possible to comprehensively address all elements of a work in terms of their agential possibilities. In this way, sound arts can be thought in terms of co-creative agencies which collide and intra-act. By thinking in terms of multiple colliding agencies, I am enabled to perceive aspects, sounds, things and people as contributing an intimacy and irreducibility. This approach allows others and object-others - plural others - to be seen as contributing their own influence in terms of their proximity and intimacy.

Reaching from this research to Broadhurst's notion of liminal performative acts allows me to use her approach to complete my argument that

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[79] Haraway (2016:34)

[80] Broadhurst's aim to find a better way of interpreting or theorizing liminal performances (into which category come a range of interdisciplinary and experimental works that are all performative in some way, from theatre and dance and other genres which prioritise the body) causes her to establish liminal performance as a genre in itself. These performances take place on the outside of the mainstream and also require and create a space which is also liminal and in-between.

otherness plays out plurally: in multiple concurrent ways and actions. Consequently, during this final chapter I begin to use the idea of plural otherness as an approach in sound art works and to their theorization as involving flimmering, multiple and entangled agencies that act to co-create works via intimacy and proximity. Binding the device of the *Other's-Other* with a plural otherness allows me to think agential intimacy not only as something which plays out as part of works involving the one-to-one (flesh-others), but also as an intimacy which can be imparted by the agency of objects and spaces: bringing different dynamic and an autonomous agency to the things of the work.

**Exteriority: Liminal space's intra-active performativity as a plural otherness**

This current and final chapter accounts for the agential entanglements which I see as stimulated into being by intimate and proximitous physical intra-actions with and within spaces. Intra-actions come to form liminal spaces themselves, but this chapter goes further and describes liminal spaces in terms of their intra-active possibilities as a completion of the terms of the *Other's-Other*. Using performance theorist Broadhurst's performative liminality I will articulate that, in the same way that Irigaray identifies interiority as being fundamental in describing otherness (in terms of the intimacy of the caress), so too does the role of exteriority become vital in establishing a way of addressing intimacy and proximity in sound arts and its theory. The terms of this thesis refer to exteriority both as the physical surroundings of works and to our positioning as witnesses within them. Addressing exteriority allows me to complete my development of the *Other's-Other* as a device by which to bring agential intimacy and proximity to the fore in sound arts.

To establish this essential notion of plural otherness, Broadhurst's theorization of the performative liminal act and her strategies of appraisal become vital. I previously established performance in this thesis as a means by which to appraise and appear participants and objects as protagonists. Broadhurst devises a theory of the liminal that attends to otherness as a subject position that plays out as a shifting, unfixed role. In this final chapter I identify and develop this unfixed and shifting otherness towards building the idea of a

flimmering and agentially active plural otherness that allows for intimacy and proximity to enter into our discursive language in regard to not only flesh-others but also to liminally causal performative spaces.

In order to directly expand on Broadhurst's understanding of the liminal betwixt-and-between, I begin with reference to my own creative practice, used here as a stepping stone to contextualise a possible perceived audience docility in both my own work and in two case study of works by Kaffe Matthews and Bernard Leitner (hence the need to develop the *Other's-Other* device, rectifying discourse about them). I will shortly elaborate on how docility, a term taken from Foucault's *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969), is useful in this final stage of this investigation. To explore what I see as the benefit of using intimacy and proximity as a means by which to develop our appreciation of sound art works into an active criticality, I take the Foucauldian notion of docile bodies: bodies that have actions exerted upon them without responding to these actions themselves. I then test the idea of docility in the two sound installations and the writing that exists about them which were previously mentioned in the introduction: Leitner's *Sound Chair* (1975) and Matthews' *Sonic Bed* (2005). Through these works and their surrounding discourse I demonstrate the the *Other's-Other* as an alternative discursive approach. The *Other's-Other* enables a broader approach to protagonists (both flesh-, object-, and the liminal space) as non-docile, working to augment the discursive terms of the thought-device of the *Other's-Other* to encompass space, place and liminality as producing agential intimacy via proximity. Via these test works, I return to my opening argument that the discourse and writing on sound arts often substitutes the description of a work's physical attributes and/or the quasi-active terms of "embodiment" and "experience" as a description of how the work unfolds meaning and effects. Consolidating my reasoning for formulating the *Other's-Other* device, I identify that this use of embodiment and experience as summary descriptive terms works unconsciously to omit the potential of intimacy and proximity as critically discursive. In response to this omission, I move away from these terms and work through the *Other's-Other* for a discursivity acknowledging intimacy and proximity as its fundamental terms.

In the second part of this final chapter's discursive pairing, I study in particular works by choreographer Pina Bausch. Bausch's works are useful as a

vehicle to demonstrate Broadhurst's routine attention to the non-docile protagonism that I seek to describe in this final step as part of developing a similar plural otherness in sound arts. This approach allows me to consolidate my research's principal aim of finding and speaking about agentially flimmering protagonists (flesh- or object-others) who intimately co-create - through this plurality of otherness - liminal works, ideas and experiences. Via Broadhurst's liminal acts I am enabled to suggest a better and more active way of approaching sound arts in terms of its fundamental co-creative and agential intimacies. I conclude this thesis by establishing how, with the *Other's-Other*, identifying, discussing and using intimacy to think and make works offers a dynamic and productive approach to future discourse, creative practice and witnessing in sound arts.

**A flimmering strategy**

By again using the strategy of addressing this research through a pairing of opposites that flimmer against one another; from a discussion of docility in the first part emerges a discussion of non-docility in the second part of the chapter. Here, I use both Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte's theories on the liminal and performance to think this protagonistic non-docility as providing the alternative discursive terms of active plural otherness. To achieve this, I look closely at their respective accounts of Bausch's *Café Müller* (1978) and augment their discussion with my own creative writing account of Bausch's 2020 Tanztheater Wuppertal revived production of *Bluebeard. While Listening to a Tape Recording of Béla Bartók's "Duke Bluebeard's Castle"* at Sadler's Wells, London, originally created in 1977.

Through this two-part organization which formulates a non-docile protagonist, this final chapter develops an alternative criticality that takes note of the value of co-creative, flimmering agential intimacy and proximity. The first part takes a more theoretical approach, while the second part puts ideas into action through my experiential creative practice prose which approaches these works via the *Other's-Other* device.

Contrasting Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte's theoretical approaches to Bausch's choreography with the discourse surrounding the specific installations

by Matthews and Leitner allows me to propose a discursivity for sound arts that accounts for performative, entangled relationships and which uses the terms of plural otherness to allow a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the work in question. This thesis' opening argument claimed that the exclusion of performance - and in my mind therefore the exclusion of protagonists or others from sound art discourse - results in a neglect in sound arts discourse of the intimacy and proximity playing out between flimmering co-creative agential protagonists. Limiting our scope for identifying and speaking about otherness in sound arts limits our understanding of works and therefore compromises discourse. I can now approach works via the *Other's-Other* and plural otherness to form an uncompromised and alternative approach to works and making.

I open part one with Foucault's idea of docile bodies which becomes part of an exploration of what I perceive as a lack of recognition of active protagonists or others in sound arts discourse.

## Part 1 | Causal Liminality, Docile and non-docile bodies

In *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969), Michel Foucault refers to docile bodies, theorizing the docile as: "*…a malleable object on which disciplinary force is acted… a node in the complex field in which power is organized and arranged.*" (Stacey Pigg 2010 https://ccdigitalpress.org/book/strategic/chapters/pigg/problem.htm ). In the context of this thesis, I use 'docile' to refer specifically to protagonists dismissed by discourse and writing. It also, by proxy, refers to an assumed docility of exteriority: namely the apparent failure of sound arts discourse to discuss the protagonistic potential of exteriority and the physical attributes of a work or installation in terms of intimacy and otherness.[81] I take Foucault's term 'docile bodies' and use it as a descriptor of the visitor protagonist who is often presented, or overlooked, by sound art discourse as merely an accepting receiver of a work: a malleable object on which force is

[81] I perceive exteriority as being used extensively in sound arts, but not necessarily being discussed as a pivotal part of meaning-making in regard to intimacy and proximity.

acted as a route to describing a non-docility in flesh-and-object-others. At the same time, with this exploration of the docility of the audience or visitor, and as a step towards describing a plural otherness in sound arts, I re-appraise the qualities of liminal space as an object-other, re-thinking it as non-docile and as producing a non-docility in the visitor. By thinking with the *Other's-Other* I am enabled to describe an alternative, generative, non-docile agency intra-actively present both in flesh and object-others as part of sound arts.

In this chapter, with a focus on this flimmering intra-active agency that comes into being in the audience-protagonist through his or her intra-action with the exterior surroundings, I now address the co-creative and protagonistic nature of flesh and object in space. Addressing protagonists as non-docile formulates a new, more fulsome discursive description of works, especially in regard to the flimmering co-creative protagonist agency of a plural otherness. In this way both the agential quality of visitors, and likewise the agential and protagonistic quality of exteriors, is acknowledged. As a consequence, intimacy and proximity can enter discourse even in relation to objects and spaces, offering a radical re-calibration of the way we speak about, discuss and describe works. This new and alternative discursive approach includes intimacy and proximity as crucial and routine discursive tools even in relation to performative spaces.

The causal liminality addressed by Broadhurst's liminal theory in her discussion of installation and theatre works involves routine reference to present protagonists and attention to liminal influence and causality. I use Broadhurst to approach the protagonists (here with an emphasis on space and object in relation to audiences) in my ensuing test-examples as non-docile rather than docile. In this way it becomes possible, as I will demonstrate, to think non-docility in terms of the intra-active agential flimmering which is tied inextricably to intimacy and proximity in this thesis: protagonists may now be addressed in terms of the intimacy and proximity of exterior spaces, in other words, in terms of causal liminality. As a consequence, the idea of otherness playing out as both flesh- and object-others introduces the idea of otherness being both active and plural, claiming for sound arts a strategy by which to discuss non-docile and plural protagonists co-creating works through intimacy and proximity.

Via the liminal qualities of works I now use Broadhurst's liminal performativity to mark out a praxis for discourse which crucially identifies the plurality of protagonist involvement as well as non-docile agentiality. Broadhurst's liminal causality enables me to speak about how works are activated by the intra-action of protagonists in physical and temporal performative space. As a result, I am enabled to address the intimacy and proximity that plays out co-creatively in the liminal context, in turn recognising their possible contribution as active discursive means. I move towards a more whole and attentive consideration of works, forging a way of speaking about spaces, spatialization and site-specificity in a manner that encourages us to regard intimacy and proximity as crucial terms of description and discussion.

**Testing docility and the liminal in sound arts discourse**

Through the two ensuing case studies and by later reflecting on my own work, I explore the way we discuss and appraise the protagonists in site-specific and spatial works, showing how witness-protagonists are often instrumentalized by our failure to fully address their co-creative powers. Through the lens of Broadhurst's liminal acts I show how agential intra-activity is part of a liminal performative act happening in the betwixt-and-between performative space. The (non-docile) liminal space allows the (non-docile) subject to change or take up ever-altering vacant positions which become available to it.[82]

I will test this taking-up of varying subject positions which are 'up for grabs' as holding potential to cause subject-hood to become a flimmering agential shift-shape state in which the protagonist becomes the active 'viewing subject' or the active 'questioning subject' (Foucault 1972: 54-5). Using examples ranging from performance art to recordings, Broadhurst theorizes liminal acts to demonstrate how a liminal performative space provides protagonists with agency and influence. I take this liminal performativity and use it as a framework for thinking about both my own work and the aforementioned installation pieces by Matthews and Leitner. I apply Broadhurst's theory to

[82] I will presently lay out how the term docility comes from Foucault; non-docility is a term I have generated as docility's flimmering other as part of my methodology.

show that non-docile 'doing subjects' are incremental in an ever-unfolding and intra-actively interchangeable multiplicity of co-creativity. I show that this unfolding co-creativity also resonates in sound arts and at the centre of my alternative theorization of it.

In the ensuing studies, I hope to prove the need for my alternative approach by showing an assumed docility of protagonists in discourse. In response I offer an approach which speaks in terms of a non-docility, hence transforming the perspective of sound art theory, resulting in a discourse which acknowledges the co-creativity of agentially flimmering plural otherness. I address the test works, Matthews and Leitner, in terms of exterior performative spaces, which hold the possibility of being discussed in terms of subject positions which are 'up for grabs', addressing them as liminally causative spaces. I use my own practice as an access point and describe the creative-practice-based problematization of my question. Searching for a way to speak about intimacy and proximity in sound arts first stems from questioning my own practice and secondly, I find the same questions arising from discourse built around interactive installation spaces that I have come across in sound arts.

**Problematizing docility to find co-creativity**

I opened this thesis with creative writing I had made about my own practice and its nature as part of the Prologues. There I describe in particular the idea of collisions and an urge to throw things, people, places and objects together to see what might happen. In that same way, my work plays with its own parameters to see what differences these parameters make to the way we enact our protagonisms, the part we play in a work we view and listen to, and how the obstructions or channels put into place affect how a work is co-created as a result. Through this ambiguity and through the inclusion of the unexpected, my creative practice explores otherness as interchangeable, as shifting and as plural.

In providing my visitor with a role - which they may perform of their own volition - certain types of protagonism are enabled. In *And so I met my Other's Other,* which involves restricted viewing and is described in Prologue ii,

visitor-protagonists did unexpected things such as a woman throwing her own sock through the viewing slit and into the musician-performers' enclosed canvas cube auditorium, with this gesture being taken up by Anna Cooper the violinist.[83] These were outcomes which I had not expected which added whole further layers of entanglement, intimacy and intra-action to the work. The entanglement of plural others resulted in the work playing out as a co-created piece: The physical shape of the installation compelled the audience to exert their influence on a space which had been forcibly, physically removed from them. Obstructing the audience's intra-action compelled them to enact it in a new and alternative way.

Through the practice of limiting or enabling actions through the creation of a very particular physical kind of score I provide a means by which the audience can perform; and often a means by which that they can become non-docile as part of works which demand their intra-action and entanglement for their completion. In this way I provide an access-point or mezzanine step via which they can enter and encounter the co-creative plane more visibly for themselves and others, and contribute to it in a manner which does not destroy or erase the work but combines to create it together more obviously.

My work and writing aims to promote physically liminal devices that play out via various exteriorities and via intra-action in a plural otherness of co-creativity. Through attention to exteriority, I seek to instigate the non-docile inhabiting of vacant and interchangeable subject positions in the same way as is also invited by Gonzalez-Torres' works discussed in chapter four. Similarly, I have searched in this practice-based research to point attention at a plural otherness which allows us to think and discuss intimacy and proximity as part of sound arts. To this end my writing aims towards revealing protagonist roles as part of my creative practice. In this sense, my creative practice and this written element of my PhD work hand-in-hand, the one nourishing the other's drive to experiment with and to discuss otherness, and as a consequence finding an articulation for its criticality and use in sound arts practice.

Theatre and performance theory's emphasis on the qualities of the liminal materialises plural protagonists into its discourse. Broadhurst and

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[83] I discuss the nature of these physically composed (with distinctly scenographic qualities) liminal spaces as influencing intra-action later in this chapter.

Fischer-Lichte's theories contain many detailed references to works which are recognized as playing on, and with, entangled agencies. In the next subsection I will discuss these examples in terms of docility and in terms of space as a site of exterior agency, bringing these observations, commentaries and theoretical parallels found and fostered in my own work to an exploration of Leitner and Matthews' practice.

**Testing docility and instrumentalisation in Bernard Leitner and Kaffe Matthews' work**

The principle tenet of this research is the claim that there is valuable scope for discussing sound art in terms of the agential intimacy and proximity of the *Other's-Other*. Sound art which occupies or creates site-specific or constructed installations and spaces offers ripe material for exploring our reciprocal experience of sonic spaces as intra-active and co-creative and in terms of Broadhurst's liminal performativity. Through my own work I have been able to discuss the possibility of exteriority and external spaces as agential: as holding an interiority that grants object-other an agency that alters my intra-action with them. Now I turn to two installation works, already discussed in the introduction, in order to investigate and articulate the agency held in their exterior spaces identifying docility happening both in the works themselves and in our descriptions of them. Both of these works are physical installation spaces which directly engage with the physical body of the visitor. This immediacy with the visitor makes both pieces useful examples by which to discuss protagonist engagement and our reversion to embodiment and the body as summative descriptions of intimacy and proximity.

I have already introduced and briefly discussed Bernard Leitner's *Sound Chair* (1975) and Kaffe Matthews; *Sonic Bed* (2005) in the introduction where I used them to demonstrate the problem that this thesis aims to deal with, i.e. the lack of language by which to approach sound art works that rely on the completion of the work by the participant. Here, at the end of this research, I return to these two two similar works in order to apply my findings in relation to them, thereby proving the applicability of the *Other's-Other* thought-device. Considering both works, I will first assess some of the existing descriptions

about these works, and then point to a way of discussing these works in terms of their performative liminality which springs from thinking of the intra-active nature of space as non-docile. Thus I identify a degree of omission in existing critical analysis in attending to the co-creative and agential qualities of visitors in the artists' and theorists' descriptions and acknowledge that the non-docility of bodies is part of identifying intimacy and proximity. By addressing non-docile bodies and spaces, I address these non-docile bodies within the liminal context of Broadhurst's theorizations. In this way I move discursively towards treating intimacy and proximity as critical terms that can offer the valid basis for new descriptions and understanding of these works.

*Sound Chair* (1975)

Bernard Leitner's work is generally described as architectural in form, although with a focus on the spaces formed by projected sound and vibration rather than specifically by concrete, metal and wood walls alone. Leitner uses the architectural qualities of spaces to help him manipulate and form new spaces within physical structures through the use of sound barriers and planes. These spaces are usually made tangible to visitors through sound, soundwaves and vibration. His *Sound Chair*, pictured below, is a work which focuses directly on the idea of the direct and physical presence of a perceiving body. In *Sound Chair*, Leitner sends waves and vibrations at the body of the participant through the chair via speakers located in and around it.

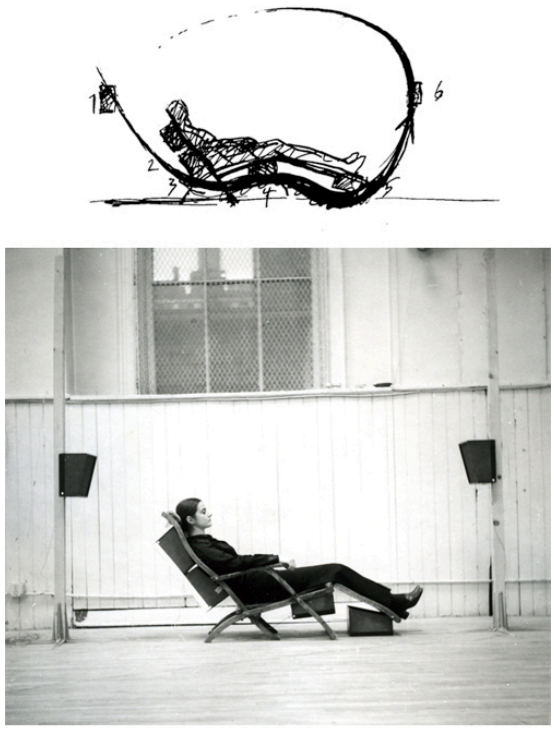

Image: *Sound Chair* (1975) https://images.adsttc.com/media/images/55e8/8ed7/e258/46be/0e00/003c/large_jpg/1248128756.jpg?1441304274

Leitner's general output in the 1970s tends to consist of spaces through which the visitor may freely move and in which they are subjected to various frequencies and vibrations. Relevant for this investigation his *Sound Chair*, however, makes direct physical contact with the body of the participant.

Writing online in 2011, Oscar Lopez describes Leitner as creating "… *audible spaces that can be felt with the entire body. Leitner speaks of "corporeal" hearing, whereby acoustic perception not only takes place by way of the ears, but through the entire body, and each part of the body can hear differently... Leitners' works deal with the audio-physical experience of spaces and objects which are determined in form and content by movements of sound. The focus is the relationship between built structures of sound and the human body"* (Oscar Lopez 2011: https://www.archdaily.com/168979/bernhard-leitner-sound-spaces). As an example of the writing about Leitner's output, Lopez clearly identifies the work's association with the human body without taking steps to identify the reciprocity brought about by its presence. The crucial bodily presence of the participant who completes the work - the irreducible visitor – is described only summarily as a form of 'corporeal listening'. For Lopez, each area of the body

can 'hear differently', although he does not explain in what way this different hearing takes place. Sound art theorist, Brandon LaBelle, focuses on what he sees as the main quality of the work: its contact with the deep points in the body such as the back of the knee or the kidney-region, failing - I contend - to indicate the relevance of these proximitous engagements on our relationship with the work as participant-protagonists:

*"The work speaks directly to an interior by caressing the skin, passing through it to arrive at deep points of the body from the kidney region to the back of the knees. The work uncovers the sound space of the body, where "the listening body, the acoustically perceiving body" parallels the ear, creating multiple levels of perception: one external, the other internal."* (Brandon LaBelle 2010:175)

As though the body has now conveniently been "uncovered" and its relevant qualities in terms of the work revealed, LaBelle's focus is on the physical effects of the work on various parts of the body. Whether this listening body is passive or is a body with a mind and a body that may perform it's own intra-action is unclear. Viewing the relationship between witness and work in reverse and turning LaBelle's reading on its head, I would suggest that conversely in *Sound Chair* the presence of a protagonist completes the work rather than provides a surface for its reception. Using one's body to sense the targeted vibrations is an act of intra-active completion or activation. This act of completion marks out the present protagonist's absolute indispensability as an integral element of the work, rather than as the surface at which the work is directed. Leitner's chair is aimed irrefutably at the physical visiting body of an other and therefore the importance of that visiting 'body' must be acknowledged in terms of its irreducible qualities (as also must the liminal space's irreducibility). Recognition of this irreducible and active non-docile, agential completion holds the potential to divert discourse into a new understanding of what the work achieves. The performative terms of reciprocal intimacy and proximity that this irreducible 'sound space of the body' brings to the work remains largely undiscussed in favour of attention to its technical,

physical and measurable aspects.[84] The body of the visitor is generally discussed as merely an instrumentalized embodiment: a useful living part of the installation upon which sound may be projected. A technical description might tell me something about the work, but it misses the physical and acoustic liminal qualities of the installation that produce agential co-creativity in the visitor who is thus active, non-docile and agential.

On Leitner's website the artist refers to *Sound Chair* as offering "acoustic awareness of the body" ( https://www.bernhardleitner.at/works ). His 1977 *Sound Space Manifesto* attends to this acoustically aware body (rather than to its performative role as being reciprocally intimate). He mentions this awareness in two of his nine manifesto points:

*"3 My work deals with the audio-physical experience of spaces and objects which are determined in form and content by movements of sound. The focus is the relationship between built structures of sound and the human body. The scale ranges from small objects directly applied to the body to large-scale architectural spaces.*

*4 Hearing with the ears is only part of the audio-physical perception. An acoustical stimulus, an audioinformation is absorbed with the entire body, not merely with the ears. This is of central importance for building spaces with sound."* (https://www.bernhardleitner.at/texts)

Leitner regards the body of the listener or visitor as essential to his endeavour of "building spaces with sound" and - although I understand his references to

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[84] One example of writing that focuses on the technical and physical rather than performative aspects of the work is Oscar Lopez's appraisal of *Body Envelope* (1970) in ArchDaily.com: "*He* [Leitner] *undertakes, as it were, foundational scientific research by studying frequencies, volumes, movements and combinations of sounds and their impact on the body, sketching possible spatial figures, such as cubes, corridors, fields, pipes, and exploring the impact of bodily posture on acoustic perception. In 1968 Leitner moved to New York, where he concretely began working on sound-space studies in his studio. He developed multi-channel compositions using sound recordings that were not musically conceived, from which he extracted specific sound material and combined it in work-specific series of sounds. He then notated these series using visual codes that he himself developed consisting of letter combinations on rolls of paper, and transferred them to perforated tape. This resulted in temporary installations of wooden slats on which loudspeakers could be arranged in various geometric arrangements. These were operated individually by way of a control device developed together with a technician, for this was not possible with devices found on the market with the then current state of technology. In this way, Leitner was able for the first time to place sounds and series of sounds in various, exactly performed movements that create "spatial models in an invisible (new) geometry."* (https://www.archdaily.com/168979/bernhard-leitner-sound-spaces?ad_medium=gallery)

the visitor's body is a recognition of a crucial presence – I believe bodily agential proximity with his work remains critically un-attended to. He does not acknowledge that each visitor to his work will bring their own interaction and understanding of the work, rather than being only an object at which to aim his sounds. In his assessment, the participants remain outside of the observed co-creative plane, being mentioned out of necessity in order to set up a destination for his sounds. Likewise LaBelle, Lopez and Leitner mention the presence of a body out of necessity and overlook the body as a co-creative crux of the work's completion. Any scope for discussing the effects of this intra-active non-docile, intimate and proximitous performative body is lost.

I do not dispute that the body 'hears' the sound corporeally in Leitner's works, as he suggests; or that this relationship is not worth discussing; or that these works are not exciting or that this type of listening is not of immense value. Most descriptions of the pieces focus on these effects on the audience. And just like the critics who focus on these elements, I enjoy the idea of these works and their experimentation with the visitor's body to create a physically perceived and consuming aural world. However, it is the discourse around Leitner's work, with its focus on the arrival of the sound at, and of the entering of the sound into, the (identity-less) docile body of the visitor that treats participants as meek, mute and docile bodies, stripped of any personal agency in the work's culmination, that I would like to critique. In order to create a set of terms by which to better describe his work, I here think about the non-docile body as a way of showing how these works are co-creatively formed.

Instead of assuming interpretation of a docile body, this project promotes a different reading, arrived at through this research and my practice-based engagement. Through the *Other's-Other* I hope to develop a discussion which attends to the non-docility of the visitor's body, to their co-creative intra-action as part of the work and therefore arrive at the physical work's own role as a plural other in the dialogue of intimacy and proximity. The invisibility of the co-creative body in the mechanism of discourse leaves a range of discursive aspects unattended to. The overlooked protagonist, now docile in the discourse, holds the potential to cause a wholly different type of discussion to emerge: one that attends to agential and co-creative possibilities and which might contribute a different understanding of the work and its effects. When we practise this

attentive discursive position, we may appraise plural others (both flesh and object-others) and begin to speak about the intra-action between those others as intimate, proximitous and co-creative. By acknowledging the protagonist visitor's presence in the installation, we can discuss their intimacy with it and begin to speak about Leitner's work as co-creatively becoming through the protagonist. We may also begin to discuss the exterior space as holding agency itself as a form of physical score. Reading about the measurements and materials in Leitner's work tells me something, but it does not address the pivotal protagonists who co-create the piece and the importance of physical space for those protagonists. I believe that when non-docile bodies are recognised as such, works can begin to be addressed in the terms of many intra-acting plural others. I purport that approaching the experience of this work through the *Other's-Other* might be realised in the type of creative critical writing suggested by Orley and Hilevaara and as shown in various creative writing practice approaches to works that I have used in this thesis. I have not experienced any of Leitner's works personally. I instead apply my experiential creative critical writing to Bausch's work, which I experienced live, later in this chapter as a way of experimenting with the *Other's-Other* as a creative critical writing practice. For Leitner, I can offer that we might appraise its experience in our imaginations and bring to the fore a projection of how it might feel to be within the installation. I hypothesise that one's body in the space may induce feelings of disorientation, and therefore uncertainty and a searching feeling; or perhaps the changing sound might vary from stimulating, to oppressing in its nature. They key here is that none of the existent discourse related to Leitner's work uses this type of experiential appraisal - therefore I have little to work with to form an idea of how one's engagement might play out with the work itself. This points to a lack in the ability of discourse as it stands, and points to a need and justification for the device I have formulated through my practice and theory during this project. Crucially, although I cannot, participants who *have* experienced Leitner's work can use the *Other's-Other* device developed in this investigation to revisit these installations.

Before undertaking this critical engagement I now move from Leitner's *Sound Chair* to Kaffe Matthews' *Sonic Bed,* demonstrating through their parallel discussion how little the discourse around works of this type has progressed in

its usefulness for an experiential understanding. I also address the over-use of the terms 'embodiment' and 'experience' in sound arts discourse as summaries that I understand to bypass any discussion about protagonistic intimacy and proximity.

**The fixation with embodiment as a discursive end point**

*Sonic Bed* (2005)

Matthews' *Sonic Bed*, created three decades after Leitner's *Sound Chair*, works along very similar creative lines and is still discussed in almost identical terms even though a decided amount of time has elapsed between the two works. Here I will briefly touch on this work to suggest how a focus on intimacy and proximity as essential components of sound arts could create a new analytical approach that, reaching a deeper understanding of how a work functions and intra-acts.

I believe Matthews' work makes a step towards recognising a participant body which holds further possibilities beyond that of a mere docile recipient. This is evidenced in the artist's almost sexually intimate description of the work (https://musicforbodies.net/sonic-bed/) in which she recognises the body of the participant as having their own possible personal responses and sensations in proximity to it. However, the effect of these personal responses is not discussed as an agential element in the fruition of the work but remains an instrumentalised physicality. Having established a non-docile listener-participant in relation to Leitner's *Sound Chair*, I will now discuss the problem when the discourse that surrounds a work is unable to account for what I would perceive as its most important element: the embedded, co-creative and intra-active body which works as a node of proximity and intimacy. The prioritisation of the terms 'embodiment' and 'experience' come to determine its discursive end-point, as I will describe. This end point leaves intimacy and proximity beyond discussion, having assumed embodiment and experience as sufficient terms of description. I propose that through using the *Other's-Other* via Irigaray's irreducible inferiorities, we can locate an agential intimacy instead.

Matthews' original work proposal from 2002 reads:

> *"**Sonic Bed***
>
> *a warmly darkened space, a large flat bed, pillow, …low to the ground, a neon instruction on a stand reads **"COME LIE"**.*
>
> *sit, lie on the bed and a music will appear from beneath you. a sensuous vibrating techno-hymn, that will soothe and relax, then stimulate as it circulates, sometimes thumps and caresses different parts of your body. where/ how you lie will determine what you feel/hear. how many people can be on the bed at once. what do you do?*
>
> *with a menu of 7 pleasure types to choose from, the listener(s) can select their ride, each listener able to adjust their own pleasure level through a remote control, the experience vibrating through 13 speakers immersed in the sleeping surface beneath each figure. the music emerging through the fabric, defying gravity, perverting time, taking the listener away."* https:// musicforbodies.net/sonic-bed/

Image available: https://www.kaffematthews.net/project/sonic-bed_london

*Sonic Bed* consists of a large double bed which has speakers installed in its sides and base. These speakers generate varying vibrations that the participant can choose between while they lie on the bed. Matthews describes a "sensuous vibrating," "7 pleasure types to choose from" and of "perverting time". In this way she signals a possible participation and agency that runs beyond listening or to the body's corporeal listening. She expects her participants to experience pleasure (although it is possible some might have experienced discomfort or unease) showing that she expects reactions in the participant that are unique to them. Matthews therefore credits the participant with perceptive skills that go beyond their appreciation of the work as a docile body. However, due to a lack of available terms with which to address this intimacy, we unavoidably arrive back at the body and embodiment as a final discursive destination: In place of addressing agential and plural others, Matthews arrives instead at its substitution: "embodiment". In this way, embodiment becomes the end point both of the work and of our discussion of it: any notion of describing the entanglements which spring up from the work in the more generative terms of intimacy and proximity falls away. And so, the non-docile visitor-protagonist is erased from the work and their bodies substituted as a site of embodiment.

Therefore, while the setup of *Sonic Bed* promises an exploration of intra-actions, Matthews' bed - at least discursively and in its description, still unfolds as a work which extends the artist's expression towards its participative docile bodies, rather than as a work co-created by non-docile protagonists. These docile bodies are recognised as receiving prospective pleasure, physically experiencing the sensuous techno-hymn she has created. They activate and complete the work through their intra-action with it as experiential and agential participant-protagonists. Therefore, I recognise them not as docile bodies but as

the active and protagonistic non-docile bodies I have been aiming to generate into the discourse.[85]

Interestingly, Matthews also has a project called Music for Bodies which is linked to *Sonic Bed*. This project was established in the early 2000s and aims: *"Through open research and public testing to make useful and accessible musical instruments."* (Matthews 2006 https://musicforbodies.net/background/questions/) As a project, the focus is on bodies as receiving vessels rather than as co-creative protagonists and it is more of an educational project than an artwork. It aims to make what she calls 'weird musics' - such as sound produced by bodies in by their proximity with sound devices, or what sound can tell us about health, etc. - accessible to the general public. One particular example of a Music for Bodies project is the playing of the music of composer Eliane Radigue through the *Sonic Bed* (2011's *Triptych: The Music of Eliane Radigue*).

The long-term investigation of the Music for Bodies project is mainly based in bio-acoustics and its effect on living systems and wellness and on what it can offer to music-making systems. She asks: *"Can an understanding of the sensational and biochemical response maps of human bodies to particular frequencies give us some answers?*
*Can we use these responses to develop new musical compositional strategies considering location of sound in space, its architecture, as an essential ingredient of its make up?"*

The idea of compositional strategies which might consider space and architecture as part of the work is something that has always been part of sound arts although it has not, I would argue, been attended to in a full way: Matthews' investigation, Music for Bodies, remains focused on the physical experience of music – i.e. music that addresses a body rather than an agential

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[85] Addressing her *Sonic Bed* as on her own website as: "*Subtle, dynamic, at times beyond hearing, Sonic Bed plays music to feel rather than just listen to.*" (https://www.kaffematthews.net/project/sonic-bed_london) she offers the opportunity of discussing her work in terms of its repercussions in its visitors. The work aims at something more than "just listening", and thereby at more than just a type of receiving. If, in its discussion the participant's body was addressed instead as co-creative through intimacy and proximity the discourse would avoid embodiment as the substitutive description of an instrumentalized, living destination. Embodiment, of course, is not necessarily passive, but the term becomes a summative end point after which the potential for further and more in-depth discussion is lost: as though the body has taken the experience into itself, embodiment suggests a withdrawal into the body and a cessation its potential to intra-act and influence the work as a result of its participation.

interiority. Matthews speaks of her installations and furniture as addressing the individual experiences of its participants only as an aside and instead emphasises that her artworks *"…create situations that transform the listening experience for the sitter, turning 'weird' or 'boring' music into something meaningful. People will queue for hours, have completely different experiences, love it and afterwards talk of the musical as well as physical and psychological experiences they've had[.]. KM 2000"* https://musicforbodies.net/background/ In this way, instead of addressing the agency of the participant and the effects on the work as a result of this, the emphasis is in the other direction: how does that work project outwards? Not, how does the work come into being through being influenced by the other?

Matthews, by encouraging her participants' 'completely different experiences', acknowledges the intra-active and irreducible interior agency of her participants yet leaves the importance of the visitor as co-creative and essential only partially addressed. Taking her stance further and acknowledging the critical nature of irreducible interior agency would allow us to discuss her works in a critically new way. On the basis of my research I propose that if we were to discuss the expression and intra-action of the visitor other in the same way, we could form a discourse that comprehensively describes a work and how that work functions as a co-creative dialogue between protagonists. In this way our participant may offer a reciprocity that transforms our idea of how the work is co-created through otherness.

In his texts (accessible online), Leitner also speaks in detail about forms of expression which pertain to the artist rather than the participant. The participant may freely experience the artist's artistic expression without the need, apparently, for any attention being paid to a reciprocal, co-creative participant-based expression: *"Creating spaces with the vocabulary of sound introduces new forms of expression – the potential for a fundamentally new experience…All works are sound space instruments. Each of them stipulates certain movements of sound, a certain way of defining space."* (Leitner, 1977 http://

www.bernardleitner.com/texts)[86] The same subject could be addressed thus with the *Other's-Other* in mind: *In witnessing sound spaces, in his or her presence, the participant instigates a whole new experience and calibration of the work. All participants are active sound space instruments. Each of them contributes an individual definition and calibration of space and therefore, the work.* (My own creative 'quotation').

Turning the focus onto the presence of the active participant who is non-docile and co-creative allows us to view these sound spaces instead as liminal performative spaces which facilitate a new experience for the participant and which the participant influences by his or her presence. Further, awareness of the agential protagonist encourages us to see the context in which they intra-act. I understand Leitner and Matthews' work as creating the possibility of reciprocality and co-creativity. While they understand themselves as having produced instruments which the body of the audience is incorporated into as part of the work's activation[87], I believe that additionally the works direct us to otherness as a critical discursive tool, as proposed throughout this research.

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[86] As though he has created some new and more impressive and versatile musical instrument (which in many respects he has), Leitner moves without hesitancy from the idea of new "experiences" to the idea of these works defining space itself. Leitner's 'sound spaces' behave rather like spatial instruments which instead of being manageable and playable by the human body - as a musical instrument might be - take on a form which subsumes and incorporates the docile visitor, with the visitor acting only to render the spaces "active".

[87] There is no absolute reason why an artist should necessarily be forced to elaborate on their creations in terms of intimacy and proximity, but such a discursive focus could lead the surrounding discourse to acknowledge the co-creative importance of participants. I argue that assuming the docility of bodies and referring repeatedly to 'embodiment' serves as an inadequate response which also reveals a lack of awareness in discourse about co-creativity and participation. Likewise, "experience" is referred to very often (e.g. Matthews' descriptions of her Music for Bodies) as an over-arching term which purports to attend to the co-creativity of participants. Instead, however, 'experience' works as a quasi-active description that substitutes a discussion of the works in terms of various respective collisions of agencies. The result is that we speak of the body instead of the visitor - who is in fact a person with their own irreducible interiority – as partaking in the space created. In this way the notion of an agential participant is not addressed and co-creativity is insufficiently materialized into the discussion. The mere mention of 'the body', 'experience' or 'embodiment' serves as deputy for a better approach which would deal with notions of intimacy, proximity and co-creative entangled agency. So it follows that experience, embodiment and the body become accepted as terms which are presumed to account for the complex intimacies and proximities of entangled, colliding and intra-active agencies which do not wholly address issues of intimacy, proximity and co-creativity.

My reasons for identifying the importance of this active and co-creative protagonist is two-fold. The installations by Leitner and Matthews take us into the three-dimensional world of otherness: in them we see the protagonists activating spaces and co-creating the work via space and the physical in a co-creativity that is two-way. This co-creation plays out as a continuously changing and flimmering dynamic that cannot be simply described as 'embodiment' or 'experience' - implying a destination and inward absorption of another's creativity (the artist's) - rather should be described as a co-creative becoming that evolves with every new participant as a bridging Irigarayan caress. In the next part, I use my own work to discuss the participant's experience of otherness and their intra-action with the work as a central focus in regard to physical spaces to demonstrate the gains that could be made for sound arts discourse through the application of the critical device of the *Other's-Other.*

**Instructions and limitations: Physically formed Liminal Spaces in the context of my own work**

My creative practice utilizes liminal performative spaces to purposefully create situations in which protagonist intra-actions play out. A creative-writing description of my sound art installation practice is situated in Prologue ii. In it I describe a preoccupation with colliding both people (performers and audiences), and objects with people, to see what happens as a result. In my work, protagonists are often confronted by situations in which they must make decisions about how to interact and therefore also how to intra-act with other participants and spaces. The experiences require a treading of the intimate and the proximitous, whether in relation to people or spaces and objects.

In searching for a category in which to place my own work and to usefully speak about the intimacy and proximity that it integrates, my preliminary research for this project began with a study of the physically affective spaces of site-specific and spatial artworks. I considered the spatialized work of composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis; visiting installation works by artists such as Olafur Eliasson and Ilya Kabakov. From there, I developed the idea that scores themselves might be constructed as tangible, physical spaces readily available for 'reading' and experiencing by the

visitor. Resonating with Antonin Artaud's development of *'a language of the senses in which 'spatial poetry' could replace the poetry of language … "aimed at the sense and independent of speech, must first satisfy the senses… this physical tangible language…"'* (MicKinney and Butterworth 2009:3) I conceived of 'physical scores' that work as architectures of instruction and limitation, behaving as liminal spaces which enable protagonists' particular entangled agencies to play out and intra-act in certain ways.

For example, in my work *Muted Niobe* (2012)[88] presented in the supplementary material, I restricted sound sources behind perspex to cause my visitor more exertion in hearing it. *PROXIMITY* (2012), as discussed in chapter four, used a specifically designed physical space to guide the visitor through a forty-foot passageway. In that work I used the exterior qualities of an architectural space to play on expectations and to enforce temporal limits that directly influenced the envelope of the work and influenced the visiting protagonists' behaviour and expectations within it. These structures exerted a physical agency that the visitors had to negotiate in order to experience the work in co-creation. Made specifically for the participation of a living, thinking, breathing non-docile and active participant, the works only become complete at the moment they collide with an audience. It is the behaviours and reactions of the audience which is the focus of each piece.

**Liminal Causality and scenographic sensibilities**

These consciously constructed physical and tangible spaces generate very particular in-between 'betwixt' spaces (Broadhurst 2007), in which a performance or an experience might play out. As described in chapter three, *And so I met my Other's Other* (2017) played on the idea both of restricting access to the live sound source and on the creation of various betwixt spaces which held a liminal causality. This work was a performance-based work which

[88] *Muted Niobe* (2012), is a cake - which was gradually going mouldy and breaking down - housed in a perspex cube, representing an archive of female soundworks rendered inaccessible by its archival nature. Inside the cube was also an audio track of myself and my mother baking the said cake together, and having conversations about the nature of being female. The only way of hearing the audio track was for the participant to press their ear to the small gap between the Perspex cube and the plinth, making much of the content entirely inaudible and resistant to being heard.

played out in both enclosed and open spaces. Audience members had to struggle to observe the performers of the work who were situated on this raised platform behind calico screens. The only access point by which to observe and intra-act with the performers was by approaching the large structure and peering through the slit located at audience head-height. This slit in the screen gave audience-members an unusual viewpoint of the raised stage seen from the performers' feet-level.

In many ways, my works appropriate aspects of theatre's immersive and scenographic practices. McKinney and Butterworth assert that in scenographic practice *'Spatial arrangements define acts of theatre* [which these intra-active sound installations could be classed as] *because they establish the essential relationship between performer and audience…'* (2009:105) and that, *'…scenography is defined as the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment'* (2009:4). *And so I met my Other's Other*, my previous installations and even *Letters* (2014) Work to physically guide, limit and permit certain physical interactions with them. Restricting the audience's viewpoint to force a looking that insisted on a commitment from them to move differently and with intention toward the viewing slit stands as just one example of my scenographic manipulation of interactions, and also reveals the arrangement of space as a causative physicality.

These scenographic limitations and permissions caused the work to play out under consciously contrived rules: the physical composition - the structure of the liminal space - came to mould actions and freedoms. This liminal architectural space of instruction and limitation created a causative liminal space of intra-action: the audience must purposefully behave in a certain way in order to fully experience the work. Likewise, the space in which the audience stood shifted to become "the stage" or the performance space, when later in the piece two singers began to sing from behind the audience. As the audience enacted their engagement by peering into the calico cube, the auditorium space was transformed into an in-between, or betwixt, performative space in which they too moved, acted and became self-aware as part of the work, co-creating it through their performed experience.

This particular work, and my creative practice in general, problematizes the idea of liminal performativity as articulated by Broadhurst and plays on its

terms with visitors becoming the performers of a betwixt space which functions both in terms of interiority (the collisions between the one-to-one) and exteriority (collisions with the space and temporality of the structures) that is constantly shifting. In it the state of otherness that the visitors and performers enter into is in a constant flimmering state: how one perceives one's location in the work is continually altering. For example, as soon as one person steps up to the slit they become both audience and performer at once, with the rest of the visitor group observing them. The cat's cradle of intra-action[89] is re-made over and over into new patterns. Problematizing my own use of physical performative liminal space by studying its occurrence in contextual works adds to my understanding of a plural otherness occurring in the liminal betwixt and between. In this way I may enhance and contribute to the discursive presence of intimacy and proximity in a discourse about sound arts.

**Liminality and plural flimmering otherness**

The liminal and event-based quality of works such as *And so I met my Other's Other* mentioned above allows us to view otherness as unfixed and as positioning the subject. In *And so I met my Other's Other* otherness shifts towards and away from the audience and the performers in a flimmering, and therefore un-pinnable way, making us aware of ourselves as others in the space. This positioning unfolds according to the co-creative and complex intra-actions between not only flesh-others but also object-others; in other words between interiority (the inner self that Irigaray presents us with) and exteriority (the object or the space that forms the liminal causative space). I have explained how the physical qualities in my creative practice not only restrict or enable interaction, but that they also contribute to the possible interactions protagonists might have with the work. In this way I have shown that the physical, or liminal, exterior qualities directly affect how and to what extent protagonists enact docility and non-docility. Therefore, these exterior qualities

[89] 'Cat's cradle' is a term used by Rosalind Krauss to describe intra-activity. The child's game of cat's cradle requires that two or more participants must co-operate and rely on one another to create the phases of the game together between them. Without a partner, only a limited number of shapes can be made with the pieces of string used in the game.

also affect how the performative intra-action co-creatively unfolds as an agential enactment: physical qualities come to act as the object-other to the protagonist flesh-other-self. As a consequence, exteriority may be viewed as an agential and flimmering protagonist in an ever-altering cat's-cradle of otherness. Thinking exteriority in this way undoes the calibration of a binary relationship of otherness (between the work and its audience) as I have previously discussed in earlier chapters, and the other begins to be manifested in every present form: it becomes plural. If we are to also recognize exteriority as being a positioning of otherness which is "up for grabs" then we come to appraise a work for all aspects of its co-creative nature.

Barad's agential separability offers a theoretical framing of this idea: *"[agential separability] rejects the geometries of absolute exteriority or absolute interiority and opens up a much larger space that is more appropriately thought of as a dynamic and ever-changing topology."* (Barad 2007:176-177) In this dynamic and ever-changing topology the role of otherness becomes plural: as an installation visitor, it may unfold that my other is manifest as the object-other (for example the seven-foot-high walls of the forty-foot passageway I have entered which cause me to intra-act in certain ways). Agential separability and Barad's idea of an ever-changing topology allows for us to treat objects and physical installations as though they are flesh-agents: alike to my flesh-other, my object-other – in a plural world of otherness – affects my experience, responses and roles as a protagonist and therefore affects the betwixt-and-between of co-creativity that occurs between us.

Particularly in *And so I met my Other's Other,* the audience's role lost their sense of absolute exteriority. The topology of their role within the space was in flux: at one point they could lurk unnoticed in the darkness, and at others they found themselves suddenly at the centre of the auditorium when the singers began to sing from behind these safe darkened spaces. Likewise, to engage with the performers behind the calico, the audience participants became protagonist-participants: they had to make distinct outward gestures towards the small viewing slit to find out what was taking place. At the slit itself, they found themselves subject to the returned gaze of the performers who knelt down and peered back out of the gap at them audience. The physical installation itself behaved in this context as a site both of limitation and of permission, similarly

to how one's flesh-other's irreducible interiority can deny or shape your intra-action, and in this way held an agential power. In this way, the installation object behaved with its own irreducibility, as was explored in greater depth in relation to object-others in chapter four. By resisting the audience's expectation of easy-viewing of the performance, the installation object played out a resistance within the context of the performance intra-action.

Thinking exteriority as other creates the terms for plural otherness and for the simultaneous non-docility of flesh and object that collapses binary assumptions. Exteriority as other as described above allows for otherness to be encountered plurally and in every performative context. As a result we may speak about protagonists in terms of a flimmering, shared and, at times asymmetrical, agency.

Identifying visitors as agential protagonists allows us to discuss how that co-creativity plays out in terms of the liminal physical space. By materialising the agential, non-docile protagonist into space, the liminal space now also becomes performative and the discursive focus shifts onto how co-creativity is intra-actively influenced by the betwixt and between. Using Broadhurst's and Fischer-Lichte's calibration of a liminal performativity in the next part, I begin to address space itself as a liminal protagonist of co-creative power, forming the terms of a plural otherness. To do so, I presently use Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte's theorization of liminal performative acts in relation to the work of choreographer Pina Bausch. I start with my own experience of her work live in 2020 and develop the terms of plural otherness in providing a framework for describing hers and other artworks as co-creative and agentially formed and activated.

## Part 2 | Liminal Performative Space and Plural Otherness

In this second part of this last chapter I come to account for the liminal causality of these tangible and physical performative installation spaces and venues through practice, and in this way address interiority and exteriority as crucial elements of the performativity found in the *Other's-Other*. I do this specifically in the terms of Barad's intra-active *"agential separability"* (Kleinman 2012:77) and also in the terms of Foucault's previously explored sense of exteriorities: in terms of gaps, interplays of differences, distances and transformations. Through a close study of Bausch's work I will show how those betwixt-and-between spaces – formed by the temporality of performance and by physical space - contribute the formation of a 'field of exteriority' which serves as a liminal container in which and through which, intra-actions unfold. Foucault speaks of exteriority as contributing to a 'positioning of the subject' (Broadhurst 1999:44-45) and here I speak of the position of this intra-active subject as fulfilling a non-docile form of agency. In this way I come to propose that liminal spaces may be discussed both in speculative philosophical terms, and in the practical and concrete terms of physical tangibility.[90]

### Non-docile protagonists in liminal performance theory

In the first part of this final chapter I established the idea of a non-docile protagonist via my own installation pieces discussed alongside works by

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[90] Broadhurst asserts that the genre she claims for in her book *Liminal Acts* - liminal performance - includes a deconstruction of binary opposites (Broadhurst 1999:34). My aim is not to deconstruct these binary opposites but to appraise these opposites as entangled subject-positionings which are, as Foucault puts it, 'up for grabs'. I do this to generate a discourse about site and space which thinks the physical qualities of an artwork as being elemental in the formation of an exteriority in which the subject(s) (or protagonist(s)) become non-docile and agentially flimmering. In this way, subjects may fulfil roles which may momentarily fall into binaries and which may also become deconstructed in the same moment: with a flimmering agentiality occurring as a result. By generating the idea of non-docile protagonists, I am enabled to incorporate into discourse notions of intimacy and proximity: once protagonists are non-docile and plural we may speak about their engagement with one another. In this discursivity, both interiority and exteriority are accounted for as being agential in co-creating a shifting and intra-actively dependent location of the subject. This intra-actively dependent location performs as a plural otherness which I contend is central to the terms of intimacy and proximity in sound arts.

Matthews and Leitner. This formulated a protagonist who is active and has the potential to be co-creative in liminal performative space. Now, in this second part I turn to the performative liminal spaces described by Fischer-Lichte and Broadhurst and created by the choreography of Pina Bausch. This consolidates my terms of liminal causality as linked to flimmering agency and as generating plural otherness.

In the performance-based theory of both Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte, protagonists – whether they be performing protagonists or audience protagonists – are already present and recognized as crucial elements in the works discussed. The construct of performance naturally allows for an effortless discussion of roles, entanglements, intimacy and collisions as integral elements of a work. Through the study of various works these theorists discuss how protagonists' agentiality plays out in relation both to each other and also with the protagonistic elements of the liminal surrounding space/event. This very specific liminal intra-action forms the centre of Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte's comprehensive discussions. For my thesis their performance theories offer examples of a flimmering plural otherness playing out in practice.

Broadhurst's theory on liminal performativity is deeply infused with useful terminology and language by which to describe the intra-active agential flimmering that I claim as a crucial part of the *Other's-Other* device. The protagonistic availability evidenced in Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte's approaches offers this thesis a method by which to also view the protagonists in sound art works as holding the same useful availability and to also ascribe exterior spaces with agential qualities. The material intangibility of most sound art – as exampled in the parados – lends it to being thought in terms of protagonists and spaces and containers. Sound walking, as one example, demands that we ascribe exteriority with some agentiality. By drawing together the works I have studied previously into the specific category of liminal acts I aim to propose a protagonist presence from the discourse which I can use to directly access non-docile agency in sound arts. I claim that this non-docility is the origin from which to appear protagonists, to speak in the useful terms of liminal performativity, thereby to introduce intimacy and proximity into discourse.

Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte are pivotal in helping me establish my formulation of the *Other's-Other* as a critical device by which to reach a better understanding of how we might accommodate intimacy and proximity into sound arts discourse in order to achieve more comprehensive, useful and meaningful descriptions of works in discourse. Their work offers resonance between performance, performativity, performance theory and my own formulation of a critical sound arts discourse and practice. Their work helps me to clarify my own approach which also attends to intimacy and proximity as part of a plural otherness. Fischer-Lichte and Broadhurst both emphasise and discuss performance in terms of the liminal. They also both view performance as an occurrence which is dependent on the time and space in which it unfolds in order to become that liminal vicinity of co-creative possibility. Their work speaks in terms of protagonists or agents (Broadhurst) and reflexive feedback loops (Fischer-Lichte) and consents to the presence of multiple actors acting within liminally performative spaces to form the work.

Following Victor Turner's work on anthropology and performance, Broadhurst describes liminal performance as taking place in a *"…no-man's land betwixt-and-between"* (Broadhurst 1999:12) in which, crucially, *"subject positions… [occupy] a* vacant *place that may be filled by different individuals at varying times: for instance, the 'viewing subject' or the 'questioning subject' (Foucault 1972:54-5)"* (Broadhurst 1999:4)

For this chapter, the terms of liminality as set out by Broadhurst allows me to lift her terms and re-apply them to sound arts, enabling me to discuss what I call intra-active, flimmering agency in a manner which does not reduce discussions about the elements of space and site in art works to mere descriptors of size, space and materials. Broadhurst crucially identifies the importance of the liminal in forming protagonist roles and recognizes the scope and breadth of what in chapter four I termed an agential flimmering that might occur between and because of objects, spaces and people who in my own calibration are all forms of active protagonists. In this second part of chapter five, I take Broadhurst's betwixt-and-between and the notion, following Foucault, of subject positions occupying vacant places which may be filled by various subjects at various times. Working with these ideas, I look at the in-between liminal space formed by installation works and its role in facilitating

the flimmering agentiality I claim as a co-creative element in sound arts. In the same gesture, I also claim a liminal causality which infuses exterior space with protagonistic qualities.

I arrived at Fischer-Lichte's work initially through my study of the one-to-one in chapter three, and through her writing I established for this thesis the notion of protagonists acting within a liminal context. In particular, Fischer-Lichte uses studies of theatre performances as a way of consolidating the need for audience and actor to create a performative space that between them as a liminal space of performance which may only exist by and through their presence together. Broadhurst takes a more encompassing overview by incorporating many different genres – from digital audio sampling to theatre – in order to formulate her overall case for works as liminal acts. Throughout this thesis I have studied works which either create or take place in a liminal space and this concluding chapter fuses the notions of co-creation as constituting an element of that liminal space with the idea of speaking about sound arts in terms of this specific kind of performativity.

I will now consider the work of Pina Bausch – to whom both theorists refer - in terms of liminal causality and flimmering agency in order to apply and test the idea of the betwixt and between of the exterior and liminal performative space as serving to form the essential co-creative possibilities, which I hope to introduce to sound art's discourse.

**Liminality in the work of Pina Bausch: finding a plural otherness**

In *Liminal Acts* (1999), Broadhurst discusses a wealth of productions, artworks and music pieces that she theorizes as liminal performative acts. Among others, Broadhurst addresses the works of choreographer Pina Bausch in relation to the notion of *Liminal Acts*. According to Broadhurst, Bausch creates very idioscyncratic and recognisable liminal spaces for her choreography, and the exteriority which surrounds the performers exerts an influential role in how the choreography plays out. Often her works involve close interaction between the performers and their surroundings as a central element of the overall piece. The immediate presence of protagonists entangled on stage both physically and theatrically causes Broadhurst's to discuss

Bausch's work as providing an easy access to the natural identification of protagonists and protagonist entanglements, and thus it provides my investigation with an example of the type of discourse based in the liminal that I hope to borrow for sound arts discourse and the *Other's-Other*.

Known for developing her pieces in what I would term a co-creative and collaborative way with her performers, and for working in a manner which blends theatre design, movement, stage sets and dance, Bausch created works in which meaning is produced via the entanglement of these various elements. Rather than creating works which played out within expectations, Bausch created works which instigated a complicity in her audience and which also revealed various protagonistic roles through the careful combination of place, space, performers and audience. For example, Bausch's pieces would sometimes begin with the almost complete obstruction of the audience's view of the stage: in *Palermo, Palermo* (1991) the intentional collapsing of a wall between the audience and the performance obstructed much of the audience's view, with the dancers picking their way through the rubble in order to execute the choreography. The exterior liminal spaces of her works – the physical qualities of those spaces and the effects on the way the performance may as a result unfold or be unfolded – feature often in Bausch's productions. In Bausch I can identify an awareness of the intra-active status of her audience through the way she constructs her works. In her work the liminal is paramount as a performative, active and creative space and Broadhurst's discourse around her work epitomises the approach I am driving towards for sound arts works, as I will come to describe.

Broadhurst singles out Bausch's typically unique staging of *Café Müller* (1978) as exemplary of Bausch's liminal productions. In *Café Müller*, a stage littered with empty chairs and tables, as though it is the interior of a café, sets the scene. The performance itself has at its centre the relationship between the pairing of a male and female dancer. Six performers partake in the performance: three male and three female. As the work begins one dancer dressed in a loose white nightdress-like gown enters the stage, eyes shut, tottering barefoot and uncertainly forwards. Against the absolute silence and the darkness of a very dimly lit stage, the noisy scrape of the chairs and tables with which she collides grates and surprises and jarrs. As the work progresses, other performers enter

moving similarly and at times differently. Overall the whole work gives a sense of failure, of repeated terminations, shortcomings and of futility. As the piece progresses, duets play out between members of the cast. These pairings remain often ignored by the other present performers apart from the performers who enter and work continuously to arrange the dancers' bodies with each other. It is as though these characters who are controlled by the other performers exist blindly and half-awake throughout. Although roles shift, the pairing at the centre of the piece is between a man and a woman who repeatedly throw themselves together (the only point at which they are stable) only to be rearranged by another dancer who moves their limbs so that the woman is lifted by the man of the pair. As soon as this position is taken, the man appears to not be able to hold the woman's weight and she slips to the floor. As soon as she does, she jumps up and they again lock into an embrace. This embrace is then again loosened by the other man and the same positioning occurs. Repeatedly the woman slips to the floor and the process begins again, faster and faster until the man who rearranges them does so no longer and they cycle is carried out by themselves alone. They constantly break apart and terminate their repetitious coupling. Failure and breaking apart plays out over and over. Likewise, in the background a similarly dressed woman who has previously been throwing herself against the wall becomes locked into a revolving door – round and around she goes, blindly toppling forwards and perpetuating her situation.

In this work, it is the performers' sustained blindness of one another which fascinates me. Only the audience appears to see everything that is playing out. Likewise, also what is most compelling about this performance in regard to this investigation is the fact that as part of it, another role also continuously plays out on stage in conjunction with the solo entries and duo dance. This part was originally played by the Wuppertal's stage and costume designer Rolf Borzik. This other actor, who moves amongst the littered chairs on the stage, acts as an attentive enabler of the dance that is taking place. The chairs that are littered about the stage form obstructions and barriers against the choreography playing out freely, so the actor attendant must watch carefully for the way the dance is playing out in the space. Continuously he reorganises the layout of these littered chairs, removing them from the dancers' path and

creating routes and avenues for their free movement. The other performers and dancers on the stage appear to be unaware of this facilitating actor's pivotal movements and efforts, with their dance playing out in the shifting available space as though he is invisible. At one point the aggression and violence with which the male dancer moves and throws himself about the stage would certainly cause him injury if the "invisible" actor (Borzik) did not rush about before and with him to try and remove the obstacles from his path. Borzik, this facilitating protagonist, becomes furtive and out of breath in his attempts. At no point do either the two women performers in white dresses or the male performer who is paired with one of the women appear to become aware of this extra protagonist working to keep them from injuring themselves by creating pathways through the obstructions. This man who removes the obstacles frantically from their paths rushes furtively about the stage trying to predict the next floundering move the dancer in question might make.

Image: https://www.cradlejewelry.com/blogs/news/art-inspiration-pina-bauschs-cafe-muller-and-rite-of-spring-at-brooklyns-bam Rolf Borzik is pictured in the centre flinging chairs out of the way of the male dancer.

This, apparently invisible (to the other performers but not to the audience), actor who frantically moves the furniture around on the stage adds

to an awareness of this work playing out in its own unique liminality. It is via this shifting exterior space that the work unfolds: the space itself exerts its own causality in the fast-paced movements of the dancers. Without this constant attentiveness to and re-creation of the stage layout, the dance would not be performable, or at least it would be intentionally performed in a different way. These performers are hyper-aware – although they perform as if they are not - of this character who is shifting about materials on the stage who watches them with a complete and alert focus. The audience see his work affecting the performance, and likewise the performance in turn affecting his own movements. It is as though the inner workings play out in front of the audience's very eyes. The process of the performance is placed at the fore. Thus, in Bausch's choreography, the audience becomes part and party to the inner construction of the work: Bausch peels away the idea of illusion as we might expect it in stage works and replaces it instead with the illusion that the process is instead invisible to the performers. In this way, the processes that create the liminal space are brought to the fore. Who, in this context, feels powerful? Knowledge of the authoring as it plays out places the audience into the event as distinguishable protagonists. By outwardly presenting her processes to them, Bausch appears the audience into the entanglement and concurrently acknowledges their presence. The audience are included in the intimate knowledge of the processes which form the framework of the piece and are presented with a constantly fluctuating and overt presentation of the liminal. Unlike a set and constant space in which one might identify the specific and fixed nature of the performative space (with its fixed nature often rendering it almost invisible, I believe) this liminal performative space perpetually unfolds before the audience's and the performers' eyes: with liminality as the central premise of the work.

In the context of this thesis, it is especially the betwixt-and-between that plays out in Bausch's works which is of great interest. Where is the between? It is constantly moving away from and towards us at every moment. In a work such as Bausch's *Café Müller* roles between the performers and the audience become intentionally muddled, overlapping, changing and shifting. I describe the nature of this type of performance as being based in, and exposing, what I earlier termed as an "agential flimmering": in this agential flimmering the intra-

actions are entangled and continually changing and altering depending on the responses and interactions of the protagonists, with the work both being generated by, and acting to generate further plural flimmering otherness. Every possible protagonist is shown to the audience, and likewise the audience becomes aware of their own entanglement in the work, revealed as knowledgeable in their viewing. Bausch treats her audience as non-docile and as being party to the liminality of the work. This works to treat the audience as equal protagonists in the sequence. Therefore, not only do the performers hold agency, but the audience too experiences a totally different type of spectatorship: one where they are party to processes and witness to the liminality of the work as it unfolds. Here, the audience flimmers between observing and being party to extra knowledge and processes: it is as though the audience in *Café Müller* is more aware of the shifting, fluid liminal space than the performers who perform it (at least) appear to be.

In this work, the audience holds a kind of knowing (and power) which ties them closer to the ideas of the work. In examples of Bausch's works where she obstructs her audience's view, so too does a shift take place in the audience's accepted role. Here, she proffers a form of spectatorship which is both alienated by the obstruction and drawn in by the empathetic attraction to her studies of intimacy and private life in her works. Broadhurst describes Bausch's work as combining visually rich production styles with techniques drawn from Brecht's 'epic theatre' which produces a resultant heterogenous performance that simultaneously distances and engages the spectator. (1999:71)

Thus, Broadhurst identifies performative liminality as the fingerprint Bausch's work. The work *is* this shift-shape space; the work *is* this intra-active entanglement that plays out between the dancers and between the dancers and the stage manager. In this temporal and physical space Bausch problematises recurring themes of the inability to communicate, the alienation between couples and the search for self-fulfilment and intimacy (1999: 73). I argue that it is through this shifting liminal space and performance that Bausch is able to present and discuss experientially these ideas of intimacy and proximity, and failure and success. Broadhurst asserts that Bausch explores liminal ideas and notions which cannot be so successfully experienced, performed or understood through non-liminal performative strategies.

In Bausch's work we become aware of multiple protagonists and of viewing the unfolding work from new and alternative angles: in her choreography our sense of otherness is continually challenged, as I will discuss further. This is relevant to this project because it is an example of work that lends itself to being described in terms of Other's Other and plural, entangled otherness. It stands as an example of how we may come to address sound arts works in similar terms and with similar types of assessment.

Bausch's choreography lends itself to being spoken about in terms of its liminality and therefore also in terms of the non-docile protagonists working within it and as witnesses to it. In the previous chapter of this part of my thesis I explained that in relation to the writing surrounding Leitner's and Matthews', although the works involve an agential audience and the works are very similar to one another in this respect, the way sound arts discourse describes them is almost identical: in the discourse we find descriptions of physical spaces and materials rather than explorations of the co-creative possibilities and effects of our entanglements with these spaces.

By contrast, in Bausch's work and Broadhurst's appraisal of it, we find a willingness to discuss her work as complex communications of intimacy and alienation. If we were to apply the same critique to the previously studied sound art works, we would be enabled to discuss these works and their repercussions in radical new terms of intimacy and proximity and plural otherness.

I will now explore my own experiences of Bausch's work as part of finding a more useful approach to otherness and to intimacy and proximity in my and other sound artworks.

### Seeing Pina Bausch's *Bluebeard. While Listening to a Tape Recording of Béla Bartók's "Duke Bluebeard's Castle"* in 2020

I recently had a very intense experience of Bausch's choreography live at Sadler's Wells in London during February 2020. *Bluebeard* is a work which has not been in the Tanztheater Wuppertal's repertoire for 26 years since 1994 due to Bela Bartok's estate withdrawing permission for the production to use the music of his opera on which the choreography is based. Created early on in her

career, *Bluebeard. While Listening to a Tape Recording of Béla Bartók's "Duke Bluebeard's Castle"* uses Bartok's score in a fragmented and repetitious way. The score is now in the public domain and the piece can now again be performed in some countries according to individual copyright laws.

*Bluebeard* is full of sound throughout, of which, alongside the swish and hiss of the movement of the dancers in the dry autumnal leaves scattered across the stage, is the broken repetitious playing of segments of Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle.* The main male dancer – a representation of Bluebeard – operates a tape machine on the stage which plays a recording of the opera in fits and starts throughout the performance. The choreography is entwined closely with these repetitious, cut-and-spliced broadcasts. So too is the production permeated with the sounds of voices – sometimes alone and sometimes in groups and always very expressive in quality.

This particular restaging of Bausch's work takes place as closely to the original as possible, with the production being reconstructed by dancers who had originally worked directly with Bausch as part of her dance company before her death in 2009 and with Beatrice Libonati who had been the original Judith. In 2020, one witnesses a recreation of the original dance-theatre from 1977. In it a whole host of dancers are involved, each male dancer representing Bluebeard and each female dancer representing his inquisitive wife Judith. In the original tale, Bluebeard has murdered a number of his previous wives, and the idea of Judith delving into his past runs as a seam throughout the piece. The two main dancers – one male and one female – play the central roles of Bluebeard and Judith.

The intricacies of this particular work are great, and there is a wealth of material on which I could write. However, for the aim of working towards finding a better way to build intimacy and proximity into sound arts discourse, I have chosen to focus on just a few over-arching elements of the work: elements which mark the piece out as a "Pina Bausch" and which focus on both the performers themselves as protagonists, and the audience as a central participative protagonist.

Using Broadhurst's approach to describing Bausch's work in terms of its performative liminality and her championing of a discussion of the "betwixt-and-between" I will here use the immediacy afforded to me of having been an

audience-member of this particular production to speak about the production as marking out the audience as potentially co-creative, and the audience as present and acknowledged actor-protagonists in the co-creative drive of the work. Approaching *Bluebeard* through my creative writing practice offers an example of thinking through the *Other's-Other.* Describing my own experiential, agential and flimmering impression of the performance takes up the terms of the device in practice. Here I am the Other's-Othered non-docile protagonist, materialising myself into discourse about this work.

> At this production of *Bluebeard* I was struck by many elements of the piece. I have never before been physically present at a Wuppertal production, having only watched video documentation of Bausch's works. Partway through an hour and fifty minutes of sustained performance with no interval, I began to notice that the work is very drawn out and long. Recent reviews have mentioned this feature in fairly impatient and derogatory terms. However, I perceived the protracted length as being evidence of Bausch testing her audience, pushing them to persevere, and challenging them to remain and to maintain their attention levels. This protracted length was just one element that signified to me that at all times Bausch had the audience at the forefront of her mind: marked out by her as another protagonist in the co-creative whole of the production.
>
> Another indicator of Bausch's continuous awareness of the presence of the audience was in the distinct sense of doubt instilled in me throughout. Not only did the length of the piece render me powerless to remove myself from it unless I struggled past an entire row of perhaps fifty audience-members in a fairly hushed auditorium, but likewise so did Bausch's presentation of difficult and troubling themes.
>
> The whole piece explores a sustained power-struggle which is taking place between the males and females: repetitious processes that take place with one gender wholly 'in charge' are often repeated the other way around. We watch women being thrown about by men and men thrown about by women. Women's heads thrust downwards to men's groins and in their turn, men pulled this way and that and presented also with the women's groins. We are taken aback by sudden changes in emotional content and mood:

apparently dead, hunted and smashed up women, who have been caught by Bluebeard and loaded up in a pile like dead meat suddenly get to their feet, laughing uncontrollably as though the whole thing has been a big ridiculous joke. At every turn I found myself riveted by this seesawing of emotion: the friction and sudden plunging between moments of play and comedy which are suddenly overtaken by dark, menacing undertones is continuous and ever-shifting. As an audience-member I felt confused as to when I should and when I shouldn't laugh; when I should and shouldn't be afraid or feeling as though I should possibly intervene in or audibly protest at this brutal spectacle as original audiences in 1977 did. I found myself very aware of my lack of control over the proceedings: my usually comfortable position of all-knowing as an audience-member looking in from the "outside" over the scene was totally destabilised. Used to gazing on the scene as an outsider, I could not at any point truly understand what exactly was going on or why; and neither whether proceedings were positive or negative. For example, was the laughter of the siren-like Judiths' laughter of happiness or of derangement?

I believe, however, that this confusion induced in me by the piece was entirely intentional on Bausch's part: Bausch pulls in her spectators and makes them complicit. Much of the time I felt I was watching something I shouldn't or watching proceedings which I should not be party to. Sexual advances played out as did moments of absolute fragility and vulnerability. I watched men pull women from the floor and throw them across the stage; I watched women pull at men's limbs and the men snatch them back, the pounding of multiple limbs against the stage resounding loudly. I watched powerless as dancers threw themselves violently at the walls. I watched an intimate sexual engagement between a woman and a doll. I felt the tension of audience-members laughing when I did not expect them to laugh; of the performers laughing hysterically and my feeling as though they should not, could not, surely be laughing *now*. My own sense of how I should behave as an audience-member was starkly at the front of my mind: I felt exposed and vulnerable and unsure of myself and at the same time implicated into the proceedings. All the rules appeared to have fallen away: and how then should I behave and engage? The violence occurring before my eyes and the play and comedy butted up closely to the former made it difficult to watch.

I was in particular continually disturbed by the involuntary child-like giggling and snorting of a grown man behind me: should I turn and tell him to be quiet? Was I responsible for him as a fellow audience-member? Certainly, the woman beside me felt responsible for his behaviour, as evidenced by her disapproving glances backward. At all times my own role felt out of my reach, but crucially - and absolutely fundamental for this thesis' ideas - I knew that I had a role to fulfil. Bausch made me totally aware of myself at the periphery of this performance and challenged me to think about my role. I felt totally implicated in the proceedings: the intimate and small sound of feet and arms and bodies moving in the leaves and the hush of these tiny noises when the performers were not shrieking or laughing or wailing or sobbing or breathing heavily or flinging their bodies against the stage made me extremely sensitive about my own noises. Would any noises I made become part of the performance? I was very aware that the snorts of the man behind me were becoming part of my own engagement with the piece, at least. That performance is marked out in my memory with the soundtrack of his snorting and sniggering. Perhaps he was reacting as he should, perhaps I was not playing my role: who knew? The point, however, is that I was questioning my role, and that I was aware of having a role of sorts to maintain.

One choreographed moment which entirely stood out in its implication of the audience was when the male dancers strutted in a line having almost strip-teased their way down to velvet trunks as they advanced toward the audience on the stage. As with the rest of the production, the same actions and processes were repeated over and over. These male dancers strutted their stuff, like peacocks. The advanced towards us, directly eyeballing us and challenging us to respond. Pivotally, at this point the auditorium lights were switched on, and the audience became entirely visible to the dancers and to one another. A girl further along my row of audience-members who had become overwhelmed by the spectacle and its length suddenly at this point, shot her head up from its wilted position on her knees, starkly aware that her fellow audience-members and the performers could now see her drooping, fainting and exhausted stance. In truth, as a performer one can always see the audience from the stage and their expressions, but this pointed gesture – of lighting the audience up, and in pointing out to them their own exposure –

made not the performers aware of the audience, but the audience aware of being an audience and of being looked to for a response. I am personally very familiar with the theatre, and very familiar with viewing my own audience from the stage, yet this moment challenged me entirely. These men comically gazed at us and made lewd and comical gestures: I had no idea how to behave in response. At first, before the repetitions of the same act, I thought I might laugh – at this point, just once in the process of repetitions, when everything was new, it seemed funny. Then, once the process was repeated over and over, how then could I respond in the same way every time? It was not the same gesture once it was repeated and repeated and repeated: Maintaining a fixed, "entertained" smile each time was not an option at all. Likewise, my increasing sense of horror at the responsibility handed to me to perform a response to my watchers was also not a facial expression I wished to broadcast. Again, in this contrived situation, what should my actions be as the implicated audience?

Many people gave the work a standing ovation, and I would usually be very comfortable with doing exactly the same. However, in this instance, I felt I had eyeballed these dancers during the performance and they *knew it.* If I now, at the end of the performance, stood up as though I had watched the whole thing with a superior knowledge of its quality and of their level of hard work, and commended them for it (which in fact is exactly what I wanted to do) what might they think? We had gazed into one another's eyes. They had seen me gawping at them; seen me squirming under their gaze: this was now no normal process of thanks. Here, even at the close, I felt exposed and implicated by my own actions. Anything I might do, any action I might make would possibly be construed as meaning something. Paralysed by this sensation, I instead remained seated and clapped politely, feeling ludicrous about myself the entire time.

This staging of *Bluebeard* left me profoundly affected by the skill of the performers and the absolute skill of Bausch's clever manoeuvring. Yet I was most profoundly affected by my own implication into the work. I left that theatre very aware of myself as having been an audience member that had spent nearly two hours not observing a show, but two hours being implicated into the acts of violence, the acts of sexuality, and the comedy that had played out. The work, without myself and my fellow audience-members present

> would have been a totally different work. In rehearsal I assume that the sense of the work is entirely different for the performers. I wondered already whether we as an audience had "come up to scratch". Would they like tomorrow's audience better? Did we do all the correct things and actions that might have been required of us?

Bausch marks out the audience as part of the piece and as integral protagonists who are entangled as part of the unfolding of the work. In her works, every protagonist is pointed at and given response-ability. Anyone present may become an other: I felt as though I played a distinct role in *Bluebeard*, and that my presence was acknowledged, and exploited, at every turn. Otherness in Bausch's works is plural and ever-shifting: otherness is a plural, agential and flimmering state that occurs in the betwixt-and-between: subject-hood is "up for grabs" and continuously changing.

It is Bausch's tangible acknowledgement of process, liminality and the presence of the audience which marks out her works as liminal performances and which enables Broadhurst to form from its study a discourse which encompasses all kinds of protagonists. This, I can borrow for the *Other's-Other* in sound arts to include all sorts of protagonists in its discussion.

Bausch directs attention to the performance's inner workings and to the shifting in-between space of liminality so that her audience becomes part of the work. In short, Bausch unfolds a choreographed plurality of otherness: in her work the space itself plays a role, the space affects the collisions on stage and her versatile use of the entire auditorium marks out this liminal space and what it contains as performatively plural. Bausch's work and her acknowledgement and challenge to her protagonist audience highlights the idea of entangled co-creative agential others who enter into this flimmering state of liminal performativity in the specific context of the work. Bausch's liminal dance-theatre acknowledges the presence of all protagonists of all forms flimmering agentially and intra-actively. This simple acknowledgement, which runs as a ground through liminal theatre performance works and theory, grants discourse about liminal theatre the scope to address the intimacy and proximity springing up from them: The protagonists' co-creative and intra-actively agentially flimmering roles are more easily addressed and spoken about. I propose that

sound arts discourse might also naturally identify and appear plural present protagonists, found as demonstrated in my creative practice writing approach through thinking with the *Other's-Other*; attribute intimacy and proximity to them, and recognise them as non-docile, and thereby address flimmering agential entanglements taking place at the core of works. In this way, sound arts discourse finds a way to speak about the presence of co-creative intimacy and proximity in sound arts, which will provide its discourse with new approaches and conclusions from sound art work, and as a consequence for makers and artists also.

In Broadhurst's discussion of Bausch's works, these audiences are continually identified as both present and as potentially co-creative. In contrast to the discourse surrounding sound arts as shown previously in the discourse about Matthews and Leitner's works, Broadhurst's discussion of Bausch's work (among others) at no point eliminates either the liminal space or the audience as inconsequential. Instead, it speaks about all the protagonists present in the co-creation of the work as a matter of course. No protagonist is forgotten or overlooked. I propose that in the same way sound arts discourse, via the *Other's-Other*, might also take a similar approach as laid out in *Liminal Acts* and might, as demonstrated by first-hand experience of Bausch's works above, move to incorporate both the audience and the liminal space into discourse as part of a plural and flimmering co-creative otherness formed between non-docile bodies. In this way, sound arts discourse may move to study and describe works in terms of a non-docile and plural otherness and as a result address the elements of agential intimacy and proximity that form a central part of the co-created work towards assessing what a work does in the world more comprehensively and fruitiously.

It is my contention at nearly the end of this research project, that as soon as discourse assents to the presence of co-creative protagonists, the trajectory of sound arts making and thinking may move into a new and more intuitive approach which recognises plural others as active and fundamental within works. *Other's-Othering* protagonists into works as active and co-creative establishes a plural otherness which, although it does not abolish binaries, collapses them so that we can discuss in sound arts the co-creative

entanglements that are playing out. In this way, intimacy and proximity can re-enter our discursive terminology.

**The *Other's-Other*, performative binaries and intimacy and proximity: Liminal works as events set in motion by artists and spectators together**

Alongside Broadhurst's idea of liminal acts, I understand Fischer-Lichte's discussion of performance and theatre to form a similar approach as the type of discourse I am working at for sound arts. In her *The Transformative Power of Performance: A new aesthetics* written in 2008, Fischer-Lichte discusses many works purely from viewpoint of the theatre discipline in a manner which is in close kin-ship with Broadhurst's approach which was written nearly a decade earlier. It is in Fischer-Lichte's discourse that I first encountered the notion of what she calls "autopoietic feedback loops".[91] And it is through reading her performance theory that I began a journey in this research which establishes a similar type of Barad-based intra-activity for sound arts.

Fischer-Lichte's approach is based on what might be called the aesthetic side of theatre and performance in which she seeks the "meaning" or "purpose" of performance furthering what she calls its "specific aestheticity," (2008:5). It is this specific aestheticity which encompasses much of what Broadhurst would refer to as liminal performance, although Broadhurst takes a more diverse and genre-encompassing approach than Fischer-Lichte's solely performance-based investigation. Unlike Broadhurst's broad-reaching and more general investigation, Fischer-Lichte is working with the specifics of theatre and its powerful transformative aesthetics rather than with a more plastic type of liminal performativity which could be applied in a variety of contexts.

Her focus on the autopoietic feedback loops which she names and identifies in performance works provides this thesis with a theoretical basis for the device of the *Other's-Other*. For this investigation, Fischer-Lichte's autopoietic feedback loops go hand in hand with Broadhurst's liminal

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[91] Autopoietic feedback loop: "*While all other kinds of machine produce something different from themselves, autopoietic systems are simultaneously producers and products, circular systems that survive by self-generation. ...as Fischer-Lichte argues, the continually operating feedback loop provided in any performance event by the ongoing interactions of performers and audiences provides an even more fundamental example of this dynamic that can be provided by literature.*" Fischer-Lichte (2008:7)

investigations. The two theories, in tandem, provide a basis for this thesis' claim of an interlocking of the *Other's-Other* device and a notion of liminality as the way to reappear protagonists as non-docile, and to seek a way to speak about the intimacy and proximity - that those two ideas in combination – might provide for sound arts discourse and making.

Intimacy and proximity directly refer us to the presence of protagonists within works and as a result, via the *Other's-Other*, discourse may address these plural others' flimmering relationship with each other as a co-creative part of sound art works. Intimacy and proximity serve as a mode by which to encounter the other in their being as related to the self. They provide an important critical approach to understand sound beyond conventional critical frameworks that foreground distance as a factor in validity. Through intimacy and proximity we can engage with a variety of works: even those that do not formally fit into a canonical understanding and expectation of sound arts.

I have previously in this chapter used Fischer-Lichte's work on autopoietic feedback loops in theatre to inform my own development of the *Other's-Other* as a device for marking out protagonist presences as co-creative. I have used it particularly in conjunction with Barad's new materialist viewpoint, which is described by Fischer-Lichte as constituting an autopoietic system which forms "*…simultaneously producers and products"* and which survives by "*self-generation*" (2008:7). As Marvin Carlson describes in the introduction of *The Transformative Power of Performance,* Fischer-Lichte works to collapse the binaries of subject and object and spectator and audience to create, as he puts it, "embodied minds on both sides of the loop". Carlson identifies this continually operating feedback loop of the performance event as creating these *"…embodied minds on both sides of the loop (actors on the one side, spectators on the other)"* claiming that part of the shift from art object to art event – i.e. the shift in thinking these works as what I identify as Broadhurst's liminal performative acts – is in the "*collapsing of binaries, headed by that of subject and object, or in the case of performance, spectator and actor."* (2008:7-8). Carlson identifies Fischer-Lichte's own understanding of the binary and co-creative (or autopoietic) loops that occur between subject and object and believes that in collapsing these binaries, one might understand the importance of their auto-generative entanglement. By contrast, this project does not aim to erase or totally collapse binaries, but instead to recognize the

flimmering nature of the agency occurring both between subjects and object, and a subject-positioning which is shifting and up for grabs. It is through, first of all, the recognition of non-docile protagonist plural others (using the *Other's-Other*) that I claim we might better discuss the entangled intimacies and proximities that co-create works, resulting in a better understanding and better discussion about what a work does.

I am interested by how Fischer-Lichte uses the notion of an autopoietic feedback loop, as Broadhurst does, to turn our attention to the binaries of subject and object, and the spectator and actor as part of what she calls the shift from art object to art event. In *The Transformative Power of Performance* Fischer-Lichte is directing her readers towards an understanding of the performances she describes as being events which exist in temporal and physical spaces: in other words, as liminal acts. It is this notion of a performative liminality, as established by Broadhurst, that allows me to work towards firstly addressing these co-creative protagonists – by finding the accepted binaries present in the audience-performer relationship which is autopoetic and generative – and secondly working to mark out this co-creative binary as a plurality of otherness, as I will show. In further applying this autopoiesis to objects and spaces which I claim hold an agential protagonism, I may address works in terms of a plural otherness in which not only do flesh-others hold agency, but so do object-others and contextual spaces.

**Establishing a plurality of otherness**

In conclusion I consolidate through a direct focus on Broadhurst's notion of liminal performative acts and with an understanding of the autopoietic feedback loop suggested by Fischer-Lichte, the notion of an essential liminality of works. This allows me to acknowledge and address a protagonistic co-creativity which is taking place in sound art works in terms of intimacy, proximity and performance:

*"The pivotal point of these processes is no longer the work of art, detached from and independent of its creator and recipient, which arises as an object from the activities of the creator-subject and is entrusted to the perception and interpretation of the recipient-subject. Instead, we are dealing with an event, set in motion and terminated*

*by the actions of all the subjects involved - artists and spectators."* (Fischer-Lichte 2008:22)

In this way, a non-docility of audience-ship and protagonists arises, and therefore speaking in terms of non-docile and co-creative protagonists becomes a possibility for sound arts discourse. Performance theory provides the tools by which to think sound arts as performance events and as liminal performative acts. In this way, Broadhurst and Fischer-Lichte offer sound arts discourse an approach by which it may incorporate and discuss intimacy and proximity, moving away from simple embodiment towards an agential co-creativity. The consequences for sound arts are that the *Other's-Other* device provides a) a way to recognise plural other protagonists in the space and b) to assess these protagonists for their co-creative agency which arises through their intimacy and proximity with one another. I speculate that this approach might become transferable to all art practices, but that it is particularly relevant for sound arts as it allows us to articulate the criticality of the sonic material as a close up and sensorial intimate experience rather than through a critical distance.

As I finish this thesis, in the next and concluding chapter, I will – via a reconsideration of this investigation - show the essential nature of plural otherness as part of flimmering agentiality, also confirming the usefulness of the device of the *Other's-Other* both for appearing protagonists as intimate and proximitous and for grasping a means by which to begin speaking about plural others in sound arts in terms of their co-creative agentiality.

# *Conclusion*

## From "subject and object" to "to be two" to "to be plural"

This thesis set out to establish a two-fold and radical new way of approaching sound art making and theory. Springing from a personal search for a constructive, positive, practical and expedient way of describing and discussing my own creative practice, this investigation sought specifically to mark out intimacy and proximity as invaluable and active discursive terms in a new way of approaching sound arts discourse and making. This investigation has worked to identify an agential intimacy and proximity in works as part of developing a specific device by which to think otherness as co-creative and protagonistic.

This investigation involved a thorough, step-by-step exploration of otherness in order to equip the device of the *Other's-Other to* appraise works as coming into being through intra-active and entangled co-creative agency. As a useful framework for the investigation - because it delineates the useful and active performative binaries of self and other; performer and audience; subject and object through its very setup - works and discourse were addressed through the lens of performance and performativity. Running as a ground through all my own sound works and lifted directly from my experience as a professional musician, performance and performativity lent a new and alternative approach to every step of this investigation of otherness as holding key co-creative potential.

As I have shown, much of my practice is linked to repetitious, crafting, physical engagement with objects and instruments and in the same way, the manipulation and exploration of the idea of investigative pairings yielded a new understanding of their inter-relationship with one another. In this way, my creative practice processes became central in the methods of my research. I built the investigation on the fundamental idea of 'collisions'. The importance of collisions in my creative practice research therefore caused performative collisions to become the central methodological spine of this investigation. The processes of colliding people, and people and objects and spaces – resulting in investigational pairings – have worked, in a fusion of practice and research, to unfold and to think otherness. Rather than working to dissolve collisional

binaries, this thesis has worked to establish their entangled nature, with a study of otherness in a variety of contexts and works crucially establishing otherness not as binary, but as plural and as co-creative. As a result, as part of this investigation I came to generate a thread of inter-related terms by which to describe othernesses, with each stage of this thesis generating in turn the next pairing of others that I would think. Lifting an idea of collisions occurring between two from my performative creative practice, each limb of the investigation fell symbiotically into collisional pairings that allowed me to explore how things are inter-related and inter-dependent. Paired terms generated from this research, that by their partnership give each other further meaning, include: performer and audience; looker and looked-at; flesh-other and object-other; docile and non-docile, interiority and exteriority.

The philosophy of Luce Irigaray - as methodologically collided with the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre in particular – has been indispensable for this research. In a collision of what could be conceived of as opposite philosophical approaches, their individual explorations of otherness brought to this research a unique and crucial understanding of the notions of exteriority and of irreducible interiority. Sartre, from whom I took the binary notions of otherness, enabled me to identify a binary opposition and to search for its paired, collisional opposite in-Irigaray. From there Irigaray's thought-word of "the caress" helped me to formulate an otherness which might be seen as flimmering and shifting. Irigaray's construction of irreducible interiority gave licence and opened the possibility for exploring exteriority in the same terms. In this way I was enabled to form the idea of exteriority behaving in the same irreducible terms and as an other. Addressing the liminal as performative and as agentially generative in its own right became possible, and as a result I formed the recalibrated terms of plural otherness.

Also essential was the new materialism of Karen Barad and her formulation of entanglements and co-creativity, alongside the idea of response-ability seen in Donna Haraway's theorisations. The search for describing the agential intimacy and proximity that I declare is present in sound art works involved the connection to performance theories and works: namely Erika Fischer-Lichte's contribution of autopoietic feedback loops – the root of my own

formulation of the *Other's-Other* device that I will shortly summarize as the central outcome of this invesigation, and Susan Broadhurst's useful liminal performativity in contributing the notion of a plural otherness.

Key terms which have enabled this research to address proximity and intimacy as active and useful discursive terms are: agency; intra-action (Barad); response-ability (Haraway); co-creativity; irreducibility (Irigaray); entanglement (Barad); liminal performativity (Broadhurst); autopoietic feedback loops (Fischer-Lichte), the caress and the between-two (Irigaray); non-docile (Foucault). Likewise, these terms enter into the vernacular when speaking about the intimacy and proximity of sound art works.
In this thesis proximity and intimacy have become important or particular because they provide an important critical approach by which to understand sound arts beyond the conventional critical frameworks that usually foreground distance as a factor in critical thought's validity. Intimacy and proximity instead bring subjects and subjectivities, the tacit and the experiential into the centre of critical discourse and debate. Through intimacy and proximity we can articulate the criticality of sound arts material as a close up and sensorial experience rather than by assessing and describing it through critical distance or through a simply embodiment. The *Other's-Other* - built through Irigaray's caress - as the access to thinking with intimacy and proximity permits a mode of encounter that allows the other to be encountered as directly related to the self, making it inclusive and open to diversity.

Generated from this research are three central, useful terms by which to speak about works as part of the formulation of the *Other's-Other* as a key thought-word device.
These terms are:

*Protagonists/protagonism* – incorporated into the term "protagonist" is the idea of non-docility and irreducibility. Protagonists act within the liminal context in an entangled and response-able agential way. Protagonists may also be flesh or object, and spaces themselves may behave as protagonists. Protagonists reveal the intimate and proximitous nature of flimmering agency.

*Flimmering agency* – flimmering agency describes the constant and minute interplay and intra-action occurring between non-docile protagonists. It refers to a response-able and entangled co-creativity which is a muddling, mixed and playful version of binary otherness. Flimmering agency occurs between protagonists as generative and co-creative.

*Plural otherness* – plural otherness is an over-arching term which refers to the entangled nature of things. With plural otherness anything can be a protagonist: spaces, places people and things, animals and elements. Plural otherness recognizes the importance of active qualities in liminal things.

These terms enable an approach to discourse which positively incorporates the study of intimacy and proximity. Through and via these terms, plural layers of agency become visible as part of a work: even objects and spaces may be addressed as active and co-creative others which collide and form consequences. In this way intimacy and proximity are more easily recognized and addressed as critical faculties in works.

Central device generated:

The central working thought-word device produced by this creative practice research is the *Other's-Other*. The *Other's-Other* and *Other's-Othering* serve as a pivot by which to address plural otherness in works. The *Other's-Other* includes in its remit a discussion of intimacy and proximity: by addressing works through this device, one may address protagonists who are non-docile, who are entangled, irreducible and co-creatively agential. It serves as the root position by which to begin addressing plural otherness in works and by which to force discourse to address the intimate and proximitous relations between people and things.

The need for the *Other's-Other* is a direct outcome of my creative practice in which I collide people, objects and spaces to see what might occur. My work to formulate this device was achieved throughout the thesis via creative practice

writing which generated access to various theoretical and philosophical contextualisations. The *Other's-Other* is formed through my creative writing, and is also realised by it: by the final chapter I was enabled to approach Bausch's *Bluebeard* with a complete idea of the *Other's-Other* device in my mind, paying attention to the complete liminal experience that was taking place. The importance of my own personal experience allowed a more (though never complete) comprehensive idea of the work that played out. Through this creative writing I was enabled to approach intra-activity occurring in and as part of the immersive performance space; in relation to others as flesh-others; as object-others and in terms of the tangible intimacy of myself as a protagonist-witness in a proximitous space.

As a culmination of this thesis' use of creative practice writing as an integral seam of investigative work, I conclude this thesis with a creative writing epilogue that again uses the *Other's-Other* approach to discuss and more fully describe a sound and video-based created recently in 2019 than is offered by write-ups already in existence.

Outcomes / application:

The device of the *Other's-Other* generated in this thesis serves as a means by which, and as an access point to address sound art works in a radical new way which acknowledges the part that intimacy and proximity play in a work. Beginning with the *Other's-Other*, one may discuss works in terms of plural otherness. Plural otherness encourages us to address every aspect of a work and the nature of the agential actions held by both flesh and object-others. It encourages us to discuss works in terms of the liminal, non-docility, entanglement and co-creative agency and to use these acknowledgements to formulate a new approach to sound arts discourse that is more comprehensive and useful.

The critical methodology I have developed in this thesis holds weight that is based on intimacy and proximity. Intimacy and proximity provide intra-activity; response-ability; care; an involved and less 'objective' viewing; a social understanding of works and of oneself as a complex agent in the co-creative realisation of a work. The way that intimacy and proximity brings subjectivities

and subjects, as well as agential objects as being more than just human through new materialism, and the tacit and experiential into the centre of the critical debate means that this research is potentially relevant and transferable to all art practices. The *Other's-Other* makes the object-other and the flesh-other equally discernible and theorisable in relation to sound arts discourse, altering our notions of agency and its potential as part of sound art works. It can become particularly useful in relation to feminist and de-colonial work as nobody - object or flesh - is assumed, but is co-created in the process of experiencing the artwork.

The device of the *Other's*-Other offers an opportunity to lead to new understandings and new ways of writing critically about intimacy and proximity as crucial elements, and through them we can engage a great variety of works - even those that do not formally fit into a canonical understanding and expectation of sound art, music or visual art.

# *Epilogue*

\- on Mikhail Karikis' *I Hear You* (2019) –

This epilogue stands as a concluding experimentation and application, using the *Other's-Other* as a device by which to reach a description of the work that identifies its deeply experiential nature as being realised through the intra-active participant or audience's attendance. Having developed the *Other's-Other* throughout this thesis, through theory, my own sound art practice and through creative writing, here I use it as a device to discuss the effects of Mikhail Karikis' work *I Hear You*, from 2019, exhibited at the De La Warr Pavillion, Bexhill, UK to demonstrate the notion of agential intimacy with the other and its liminal performativity as proposed throughout the thesis.

Describing his work, Karikis' website states that:

*'this work focuses on the often invisible and socially undermined labour of caring for people with disabilities, and highlights the role listening plays as an act of care and mutual tenderness, as well as an activist force with the power to challenge the relationship between who is visible and who is heard…Reflecting on the politics and ethics of the work of caregivers, Karikis notes that observing caregivers communicating with non-verbal people can serve as a gateway to a generous and inclusive way of thinking about relating to others. Set against a backdrop of hardship and intolerance towards people with disabilities, as well as ideologies of discrimination, political polarisation and growing differences of opinion over common purpose in the UK and in Europe, the work is a hopeful affirmation that, no matter the differences between people, communication is possible.'* (Accessible at http://www.mikhailkarikis.com/2019/09/18/i-hear-you/ )

Starting from this description, I am compelled to write this epilogue as a thesis-confirming application. I write it in relation to this particular work due to its nature as functioning through intimacy and proximity, which appears to perform the agential intimacy which I developed in this thesis and which, as I demonstrate, creates a profound emotional effect in its audience. Yet as I found

throughout my research, existing discourse  often fails to convey this profoundly intimate and intra-active effect, and thus misses its criticality, and so the works discussion here in the form of an epilogue allows me to demonstrate an applied understanding and yet again, at the end of this project, underline its critical capacity for art .

Salomé Voegelin's text accompanying  the work make a step towards conveying this quality of intimacy and proximity, which I aim to make critically available through the findings of my thesis:

'*This is a language of the caress that is not less than words but in excess of them, overflowing their meaning. It adds the body and the breath into its repertoire of sense and demands a reciprocal sensibility:* If I feel you, you feel me too.
…I Hear You *focuses on the tenderness of care that produces meaning in a complex mixture of love and whispers, frustration and unfamiliar rhythms, that throw language into doubt… It shows the world as an indivisible cosmos in which we are together, entangled with every other thing.*
*…One video captures this entanglement as it captures the caregiver and the cared-for in a play of mirrors and movements, turning and bending into each other and into their environment. It shows the reflection of the other appearing and disappearing, foregrounding their co-dependence and the fragility of the self.*" (http://www.mikhailkarikis.com/2019/09/04/i-hear-you-text-by-salome-voegelin/)

In response and as an expansion, my own writing on Karikis' work puts the *Other's-Other* into practice by putting my body into the experiential, liminal space of its showing as an intimate and proximitous reflection flimmering agentially with the intimacy and proximity vibrating within and around the work.

Karikis' installation consists of video material, displayed across five screens, filmed as part of his time spent with Project Art Works, a local artist-led collaborative project based just along the coast in Hastings that works with non-verbal, neuro-diverse people who have complex needs. The project developed as part of 'EXPLORERS': a three-year programme of awareness-raising work

created in collaboration with people with complex needs. This particular project involved Karikis spending months with his participants developing trust and ease. Focusing on the people that care for those with complex needs day-to-day or as part of art-therapy, Karikis states online and in the accompanying literature that this work on show at De La Warr hopes to centre on those working as carers who are often forgotten and invisible in the under-funded and under-appreciated work that they do.

Karikis works closely, intimately even, and across a long duration with his subjects. In this exchange, a personal and intimate knowledge develops between the artist and his participants over time, and yet somehow Karikis conveys that intimate knowledge very indirectly through his works. This unstated understanding works incredibly successfully and Karikis accesses his audience's emotion and responses without declaration or apparent design. Karikis invites you to the work, and never at any point over-exerts his message or pushes the subject matter on to the witness. It is therefore my expectation that the discourse about his work should naturally address its unseen yet powerful effects – effects that stem directly from intimacy and proximity, better describing how the work unfolds in the world.

I read Karikis' invitation as highly reminiscent of Irigaray's thought-word of '*the caress*', her idea of a bridging, open gesture between two irreducible others. As a visiting protagonist you are invited to engage, are offered avenues by which to meet the work and in no way is any response forced from you. *I Hear You,* has a small 'p' political dimension and works to raise awareness of various social injustices or invisibilities, yet at no point do I as an audience member feel preached at or forced to partake in this message. I am merely invited to witness with my presence, and indirectly I experience his works through the prism of my own emotional or cerebral response.

From here I will recall my visit to this work at the De La Warr Pavilion, to demonstrate how Karikis' work performs its critical strength and functions in terms of an *Other's-Othering* caress. As the following observations will show, my entanglement with the work pulled me into a proximity that was intimate and meaningful, that was not simply emotional, but opened the work towards a different and response-able criticality. In the realisation of this work through its collision with the intra-active visitor, a different criticality of its nature came

into being. Via my collision with it as the other, and by thinking with the *Other's-Other,* a more veritable idea of the work's nature was arrived at in which the witnessing of the intimacy of others brought to the fore Karikis' nurturing, gentle and empathetic work and content.

Available: http://www.mikhailkarikis.com/2019/09/18/i-hear-you/

As I enter the gallery, pausing at the entrance to read the introductory text, including Voegelin's text, and the 'glossary of terms' about neurodiversity, I hear unexpected sounds issuing from the relative darkness behind the heavy blue curtain. One sound surprises me the most: an almost animal-like "oo oo oo", calling of joy. I cannot imagine the image that must root it in a context. From outside this space I am curious, bewildered and drawn in. From here, I am aware of an incoherent hubbub of voices filtering out to me from behind the curtain that seems to render the goings-on inside as private and intimate. Just visible through a gap in the material is a side-on view of a video screen. It glows warmly in the darkness onto a soft, muted colour, carpeted floor.
I find the interior is cosy - even comforting. It is darkened, though not so far as to make my walking about difficult or unsure. If anything, it is a rather soft

and cocoon-like space. I feel safe. This space is carpeted and intimate, like a living room. It feels homely, and as a result my guard is down. This space doesn't feel like a gallery space, it feels like a place where people exist and sit and cuddle and whisper. There are no white walls or stark presentation. Everything is a murmur. The lighting is like a relaxed evening at home when it is dark outside; or perhaps like the glow of a night-light when you are child. Light flickers gently from the several screens which are dotted about the space in their own areas. This is no parade of screens all brightly showing on one wall: each of these screens plays to its own intimately small area of perhaps four feet, and to its own pool of contact. Each one in its own special space. It is as though the faces of these screens are gently turned away from me until I softly pad to gaze into their secret stories. I sense other people in the space with me, but the muted sounds of our movement due to the carpet and lighting render me un-bothered by their presence and I can push their presence to the back of my mind.

Five screens are dotted around the space, glowing and flickering with their images creating soft, warm lights and intriguing patterns. Noises permeate: rustles, murmurs, soft noises, soothing voices, singing, the pat of skin-on-skin, clicking, verbalized whooshings, low whistles, shh-ing, laughter. Approaching one screen and then the next is like entering into a private pool of light and sound: these screen and sound-based moments do not address me brazenly, but pull me in. They exist whether I am here or not, gently communicating to a small circle of influence. I may join in, or I may walk away. It is up to me.

As I move around the space, gazing and listening to each installation screen in turn, I am drawn into the worlds inside them. Portrait layout screens show close-up video portraiture that is always of two people: the carer and the cared-for. Each screen cuts out all the surroundings bar the close area between the two individuals – the intimate space between the carer and the cared-for – and sometimes just one or the other appears on screen.

As though the rest of the room and the world has fallen away, I am drawn into each screen. I am pulled into intimate and dynamic private worlds that are being shared between the two people depicted. I first watch an artist encouraging her art-therapy participant to "just go for it". She asks gentle questions that do not need replies. They are more like encouragements: invitations to think or do. Here, at my first screen, I become familiar with a triangle of looking from the carer's face which I see playing out on each and every following screen. This triangle of looking is like an intimate cat's-cradle between them: any slight change of movement or noise of assent is gathered up by the carer and translated into a perception of needs and responses. These characters on screen are totally entangled together: they make their world, their actions and their responses together.
I find too that I have totally forgotten that my window into their world has an operator: the artist Karikis. The shots are so close and so intimate that I feel like I am in the scene and that I am experiencing something so very close to the subjects that I too am entangled. Karikis – although it feels like myself - almost solely focuses on the artist Magda who is doing the art therapy with Darryl, her participant. I forget that I am looking in on every screen I encounter: with the eyes of the artist I become bound up in what I watch. Karikis – I learn later – has spent months with these people. He is part of their world, and he is trusted and welcome. I too am trusted, welcome, intimate.

On each screen the same intimate sensation takes place: I am in close proximity. The camera (which I have forgotten exists) is set on the actions and face of the care-giver rather than the cared for. Strangely it feels like a kind of respect for the vulnerability of the cared-for. They are no object here: instead the intimacy playing out between themselves and their carer is the absolute focus. I don't even feel like a voyeur. I am in this scene. I am so close, so enveloped in the sounds and the space between them that it feels immediate and close. Here, now with the artist-carer Magda, and Darryl, I watch the same pattern of intimacy – this triangle between eyes and hands and its between-two. In carer Magda's looking, in her attention and her care plays out

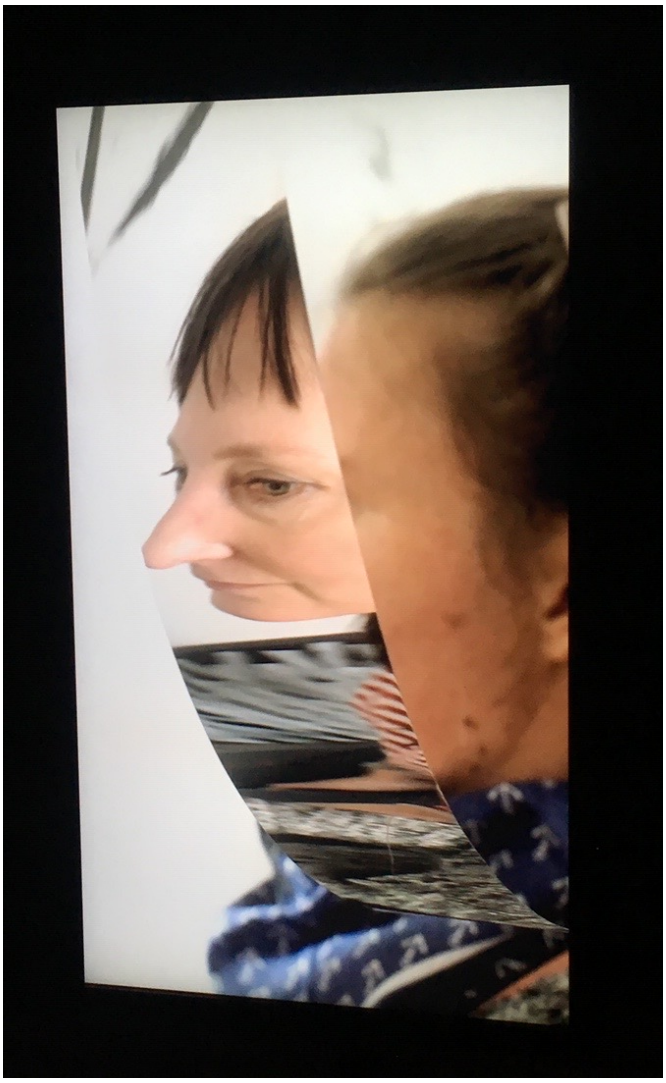
this same triangle: eyes, hands, eyes. Questioning always: are you ok?; what do you want to do next?; is my gesture accepted? Over and over the same actions repeat: Magda would look at the art they were creating, would gaze back directly into Darryl's face and back to the artwork, back to the face and eyes, and back to the artwork. Like a triangle of gaze and affirmation of where they were at in the process together with Magda continually re-assessing with Darryl what they might do next or what he might be happy staying doing. On this screen I watched an entanglement play out between the two of them. In this triangle of each other and the artwork the future between them was co-created and shown in the active and received gaze of the carer. The world created between them was exclusive to them and co-created intimately by them together.

So too, in the second film on one of the other four screens that I watched, did the same focus on the intimate entanglement between the two people run as a ground through the film. Here carer Dan and Paul sat and watched aeroplanes on a small local runway together: for all intents and purposes, they were two guys enjoying some time together on a day out. In it Dan's face was the main focus with Paul's physical rocking movements crossing often across the screen and cutting across our vision. I as an audience was looking in, aware of myself as being outside of their close-knit two: At one point they gazed at a phone picture together that I could not see, and at another moment the angle of the camera instead came from behind the two men. At this point, unable to see their faces, I suddenly felt myself as an outsider in their intimate and close understanding, their intimately entangled relationship. Here they communicated with one another but the sound of the planes excluded me from sharing their space and world. An incredibly touching moment was their shared singing of the children's song 'Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake' and Dan patting Paul's hand with his own and circling his finger on Paul's palm: an action which seemed to produce a soothed and positive effect and reminded me of my own childhood with my mother and father who would do the same to my own hand.

(All images taken by myself at the exhibition on my mobile phone)

Every screen was compelling. I stood totally absorbed in these private worlds where I simply watched two people communicating closely and intimately. I felt as though I was close to them myself, the angle of the camera being so very intimate in its framing.

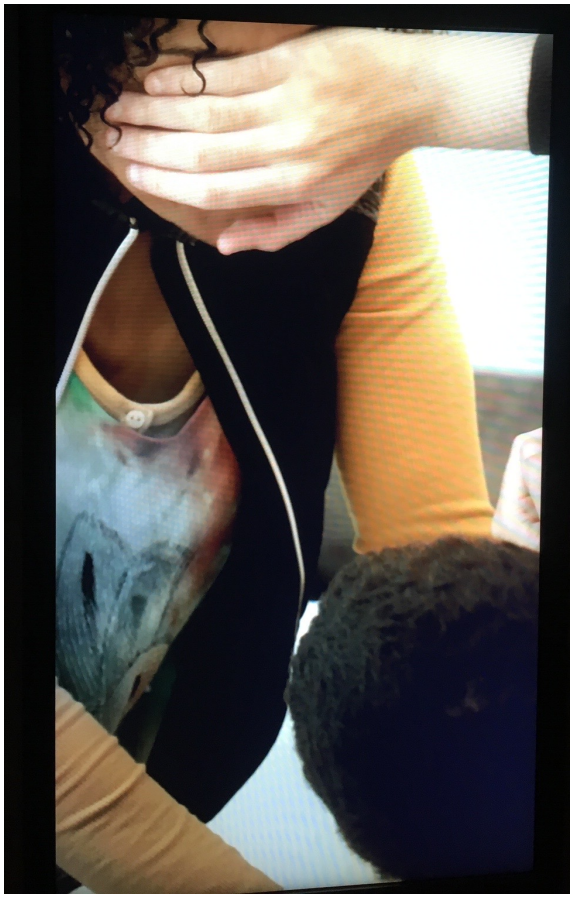
Another screen showed Sarah, another artist, working with Claire who was unable to make any verbal communication bar voicing one noise alone. Here with mirrors and paint and the carer Sarah's verbal noises, such as clicking and swooshes and soothing hisses and laughter, framed the two women. Claire would only rarely appear in the card mirrors that were gently swinging and reflecting her face. At one point the two women's faces shared the space on screen together, one in the mirror and one in the flesh, as though the world they were inhabiting was so entwined, they appeared visually connected, the images constantly shifting and changing against one another. At all times I was submerged in an aural landscape of vocal noises which interplayed with one another in affirmation and question and answer.

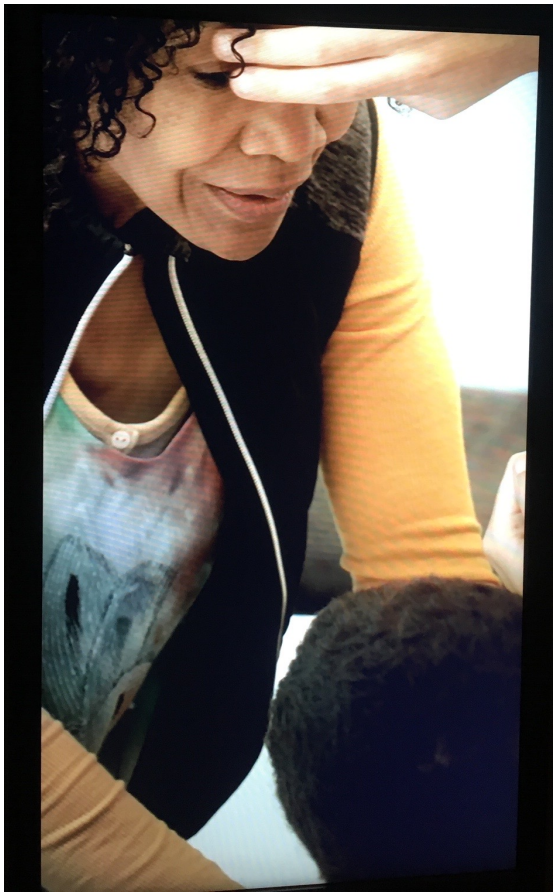


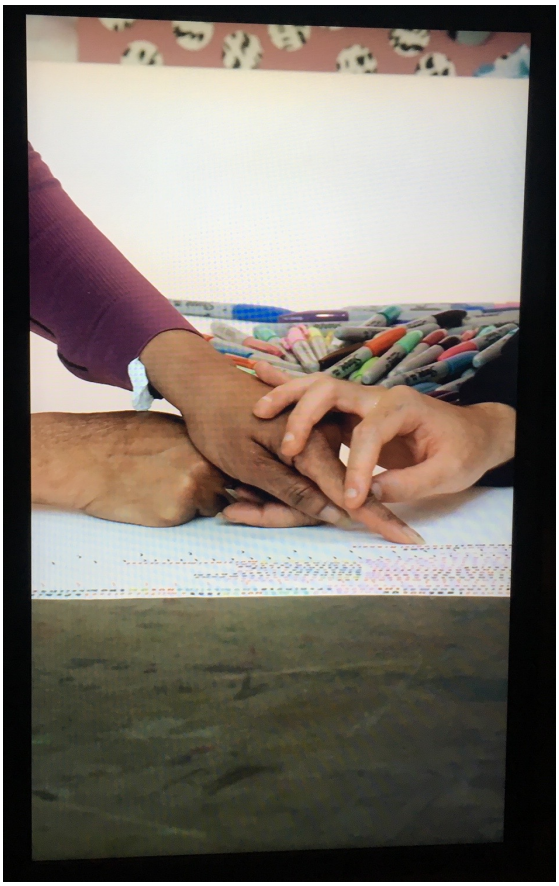
Another world in which I felt supremely close was between father Andrew and daughter Eden. Here, for the majority of the short film Eden's face was in profile, giving indistinguishable – apart from to her father – replies to her father's questions. Father Andrew was in the most part totally obscured by Eden's face as they sat cuddling on a sofa in the evening sun. Here, with the camera lens zoomed in closely to their two partially hidden faces I felt a sense of real intimacy and connectedness to a pair cuddling at bedtime and discussing the day they had just had and what they would be doing tomorrow. At one point Eden scores Karikis out of 5 for his work with them that day – a moment of humour that again touched me more than any overt pronouncement of their relationship as carer, cared-for and artist may have done and also pointed me back outwards to the camera to the other guest in the room and to myself.

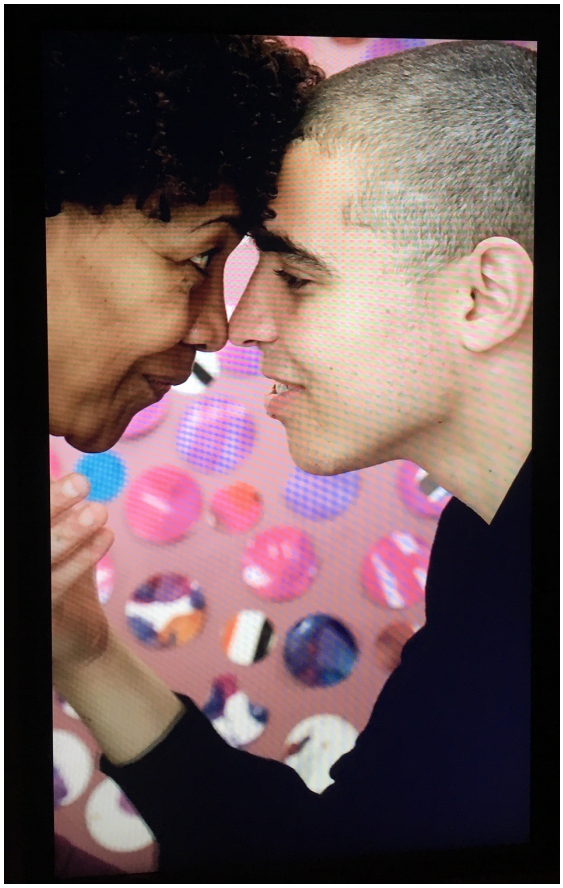
At the final screen, I felt Karikis' artistic mastery overwhelm me. Watching mother and son Doreen and Carl again interacting intimately with one another

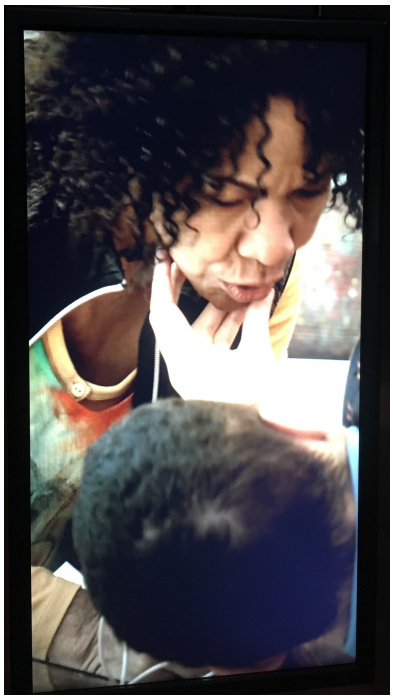
and with total understanding of each other with tickles, giggling, touch and kisses I found myself shedding totally involuntary and unexpected tears. Fat drops fell from my eyes onto my front, trickling down my chest. Without having any real explanation for my total emotional connectedness, I found myself completely entangled in the world that Karikis presented to me. Here too the liveliness of Doreen's eyes and the communication they provided came to the fore – her son Carl would gently shade his mother's eyes, as though her eyes were the thing that was speaking, as though her eyes were verbalizing the unspoken.

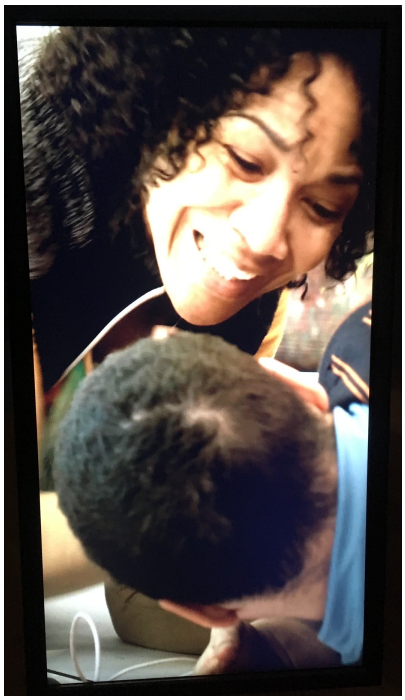


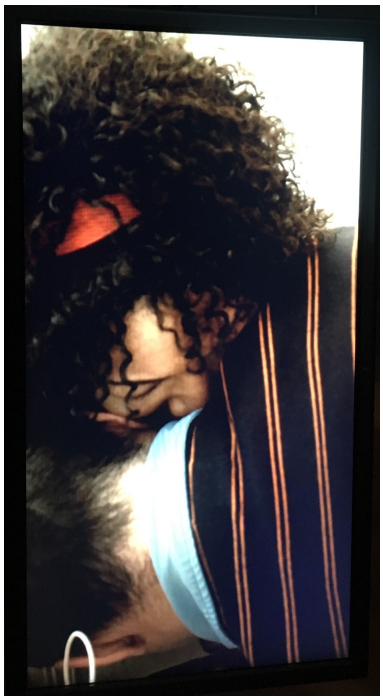












Standing at these screens in this installation I hoped to conceal the unexpected tears streaming down my face. As willing witness, had no thought of the underlying message that Karikis had described in his documentation (see page 245), and instead found myself totally entangled in the intimate private worlds of these people. Gestured to by the caress, I had wholly entered into a state of entanglement, into a cat's-cradle of intimacy with my experience shaped by Karikis' careful structuring of the space, the camera angle and the glimpses into the world of trust and communication that he had himself performed with these people over the previous months. Empathy and intimacy and proximity ruled my experience and invoked in me an emotional connection that was profound. Not only did Karikis induce an emotional response, but his presentation of the intimate, of otherness, of helplessness and of care worked as an invitation to reach the criticality of the work: to succumb emotionally to the connections presented before me, and to take this succumbing as a central vehicle of the work - as a central aspect worth criticality and discussion as the centre-point of the work.

Nurtured into a frame of mind by my surroundings, safe in the belly of this soft, muted room, this work was so much more than a championing of carers. In a complex world of othering, I was scooped up into their worlds and shown how to understand them. My own otherness became a "doing", as "substance in its iterative intra-active becoming – not [as] a thing, but [as] a doing, [as] a congealing of agency." (Kleinman 2012:80) and in me, the visiting protagonist solidified a sense of these people, these lives and this care-giving.

This PhD investigation and its creative practice
*'…considers intersubjectivity and interaction neither as fashionable theoretical gadgets, not as additives (alibis) of a traditional artistic practice. It takes them as a point of departure and as an outcome, in brief, as the main informers of their activity. The space where … works are displayed is altogether the space of interaction, the space of openness that ushers in all dialogue…'*
(Bourriaud 2002:44)

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Groves, J. *A Year and Two Months* (24th October 2017) A CRiSAP meeting happening at London College of Communication, University of the Arts, London

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# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

## Preceding works that contributed significantly towards the subject matter of the thesis:

*Unless stated otherwise, photographs are my own.*

***PROXIMITY* (2012, 2016 -)**

PROXIMITY is the main piece that galvanised this thesis' research. It is referred to a couple of times in the body of the thesis itself.

The installation, PROXIMITY, is a 40 foot long white, wooden spiral passageway that culminates in the centre with a one-to-one experience with an opera singer who sings specifically for you. Each performance may be slightly different depending on the interaction and dialogue or reciprocity the two experience together at the centre of the spiral. In the process of creating and exhibiting this work, my initial ideas about its purpose altered and aligned more with the notion of a collision of others and as a means by which to witness the self in the space or situation. I had begun with the idea of re-seeing and re-experiencing sound by placing an opera singer in a new situation that provided a totally different engagement from usual expectations. Although this aspect remained relevant, it became clear during the exhibition of the work that it also functioned on another level entirely in relation to the self, to othering and to reciprocity. David Toop's reflection on his own experience of PROXIMITY goes some way towards summarising the effect of the work in terms of a self-witnessing:

"*The piece explored not just ideas of intimacy, presence, space and the body but actualised them in a way that was both confrontational and consoling. Something in the discomfort and rarity of this contradiction opened the experience out to unpredictable subjectivity.*
*Listening, looking and being could not be separated in the shock of closeness; before a rational response could be formulated the experience was over. Perhaps it was the sense of disappearing into a labyrinth and finding other labyrinths – eyes and throat – so close, as if in a mirror, but space seemed to disappear also, leaving only the time of encounter. All the artifice of the singer's craft was suspended in that physical proximity of conversation with the listener's vulnerability."*

Further reflections alongside images can be read on the website: https://www.juliegroves.com/proximity alongside two documentary films all about the work embedded on the same page of which the main documentary film can can also be found here: https://vimeo.com/263340311?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=11965991

PROXIMITY was also a manifestation of my interest in creating physical scores, or of 'composing physically' *i.e.* using the physical attributes of a work to guide and create limitations and permissions on the activity and movement of the participant in a way that would guide and alter the temporal experience of the

work. Walking the spiral of PROXIMITY limited one's vision due to the walls being 7 feet tall; allowed the entry of only one individual at a time (although a child a parent did enter together); the slit gaps between panels gave only an enticing hint at what might be found at the centre; the performer was veiled from sight til the very last second which played on expectations, especially in a sound art show that involved no live performers otherwise; the spiral labrythine shape played on traditional ideas of transformation and transmutation and at 40' long the process was slow and sustained. This physically composed space therefore played a deep part in the experience of the visitor and in the resultant overall sense of the work.

PROXIMITY was also exhibited in 2016 with the original performer Rodney Earl Clarke (who is tall black man) and also with Susie Parkes (a short white woman) at the centre. The reported different experiences between visits to each performer were contrasting with Susie's created space giving a more motherly and nurturing feel, with Susie describing her space in the centre as feeling rather womb-like. Participants were emotionally moved by both performers but Rodney's performances resulted more in people giggling at first (perhaps slightly intimidated) and then shifting into a transformative experience, and those visiting Susie experiencing quite an immediately emotional and nurtured sensation. I believe the reciprocal nature of this installation is a focal point and that any combination of people would result in a totally different experience. A long interview between myself and the performers and their own experience of the work referred to in the thesis can be found at https://www.juliegroves.com/proximity.

Photo: Ana Escobar

Photo: Ulysses Alvarez

Photo: Ana Escobar

Photo: Ana Escobar

Photo: Ulysses Alvarez

PROXIMITY was also longlisted for the Aesthetica Art Prize in 2021 from 4000 entries down to the final 100 longlist and was exhibited in documentary form at York Art Gallery from May-September of the same year. https://aestheticamagazine.com/profile/julie-groves-2/

***Muted Niobe* (2012)**

This particular work is relevant to the thesis as a first foray into physical composition and to my experimentation with permission and limitation as part of the physical attributes of a work.
*Muted Niobe* was created as a response to my experience of engaging with a feminist sound art archive called *HerNoise* housed at LCC, UAL. My own experience of my visits to the archive had not been entirely fruitful as the archive had often been closed whenever I could visit it between my working hours. The archive itself was a vast and impressive archive of material from a live exhibition that took place in 2005 and which, among other varied items from the live show included a yurt - which had been used for performances - folded down and preserved in boxes within the archive. The entire living exhibition had been put away and stored as an archive that one could visit and view. My personal response was that a stunning exhibition of all-female work and sound art would be better experienced if it were re-exhibited or touring as much as possible rather than being locked into a sterile room. Many of the works in the exhibition had been live performances. My response (as part of a Masters qualification unit) was therefore to reflect on archiving as a form of death and of suffocation. For the installation itself, I used a what I perceived as a gendered item as the focal point: a cake baked between myself and my mother placed beneath a Perspex cube and left to go mouldy. Cakes are something I personally associate with sharing, with my mother and with women in many ways (although many male cake-bakers obviously exist!) I also associate it with childhood and with homeliness. I also recorded the sound of myself and my mother baking the cake together and having a chat about being female and her experience of feminism as a woman in her late 60s at the time. This track and further photos and description can be found here: https://juliegroves.com/mutedniobe

This piece was physically composed (imposed limitations on the viewer/listener) through the fact that I played the track *inside* the Perspex cube alongside the decaying cake. Anyone who wished to hear the track had to get very close and press their ear to the small gap at the bottom of the cube. This referred to what I perceived as the nature of the archive I had engaged with.

## Works from within the thesis period in order of relevance:

**REFERRED TO IN DEPTH IN THE THESIS:**

### *And So I Met My Other's Other* (2017)

*And So I Met My Other's Other* was first exhibited as part of Acts Re-Acts 4 at Wimbledon Space on 4th March 2017 and again as part of the Nave Gallery, Caterham in 2018.

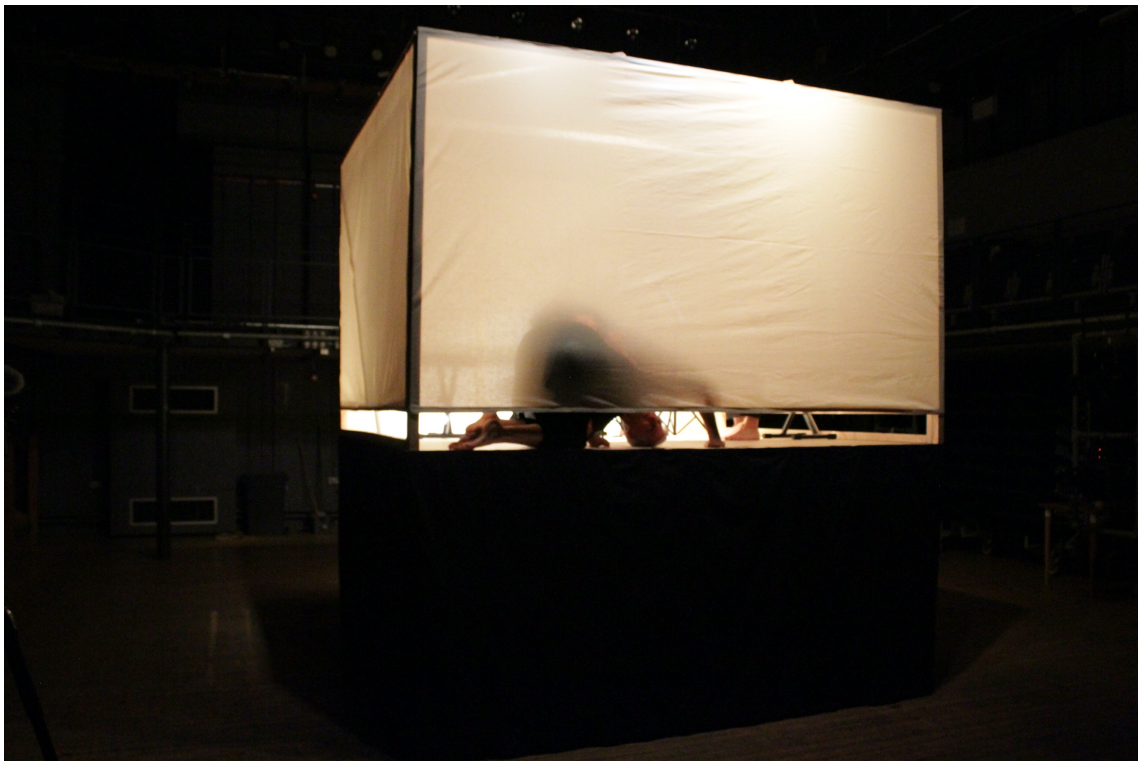
It is an immersive installation that plays on the theme of the *"cats-cradle of identification"* (Krauss 1990) and on the dialogic tension created by performance. Spilling outside of perceived boundaries, it causes us to question our roles as performer or receiver and as the viewer or the viewed through a re-conceived and physically re-composed experience of a familiar event situation. This performance installation aims to problematise the Other via the invisibly humming space of entwinement occurring between all the protagonists present.

Playing on Sartre's themes of Other-ness in his philosophical essay, The Look (1943), *And So I Met My Other's Other* creates a slippage of boundaries and an alternative awareness of the entangled self.
Playful and intriguing, this sound art performance straddles the line between instrumental music performance and sound art, the two worlds colliding to create a playful tension.

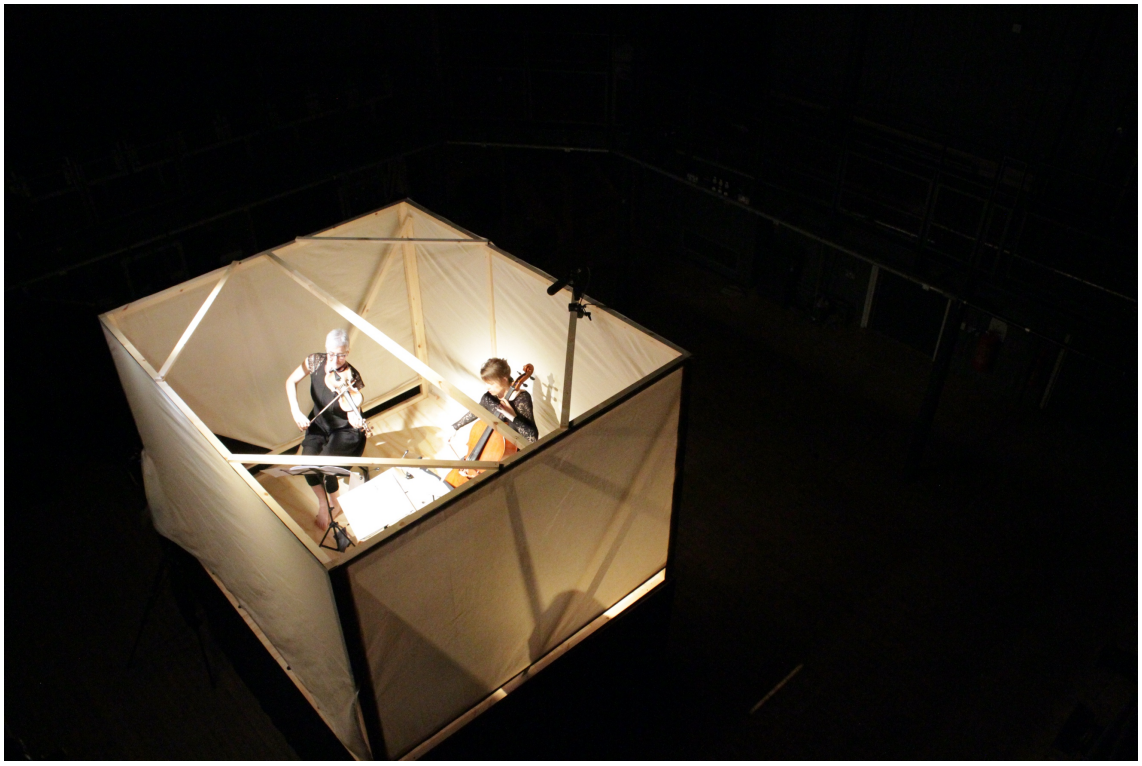
This work was also longlisted for the Aesthetica Art Prize in 2018 from over 4000 entries in the final list of 100 works and was exhibited in documentary form at York Art Gallery from May-September of the same year. https://aestheticamagazine.com/profile/julie-groves/

PERFORMERS Anna Cooper – violin; Toby Deller – viola; Hannah Schofield – cello
Susie Parkes – soprano; Rodney Earl Clarke – bass baritone with happening score realised by composer Ed Scolding.

More information can be found here: https://juliegroves.com/proximity including an explanatory documentary film which can also be found here: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/213528226



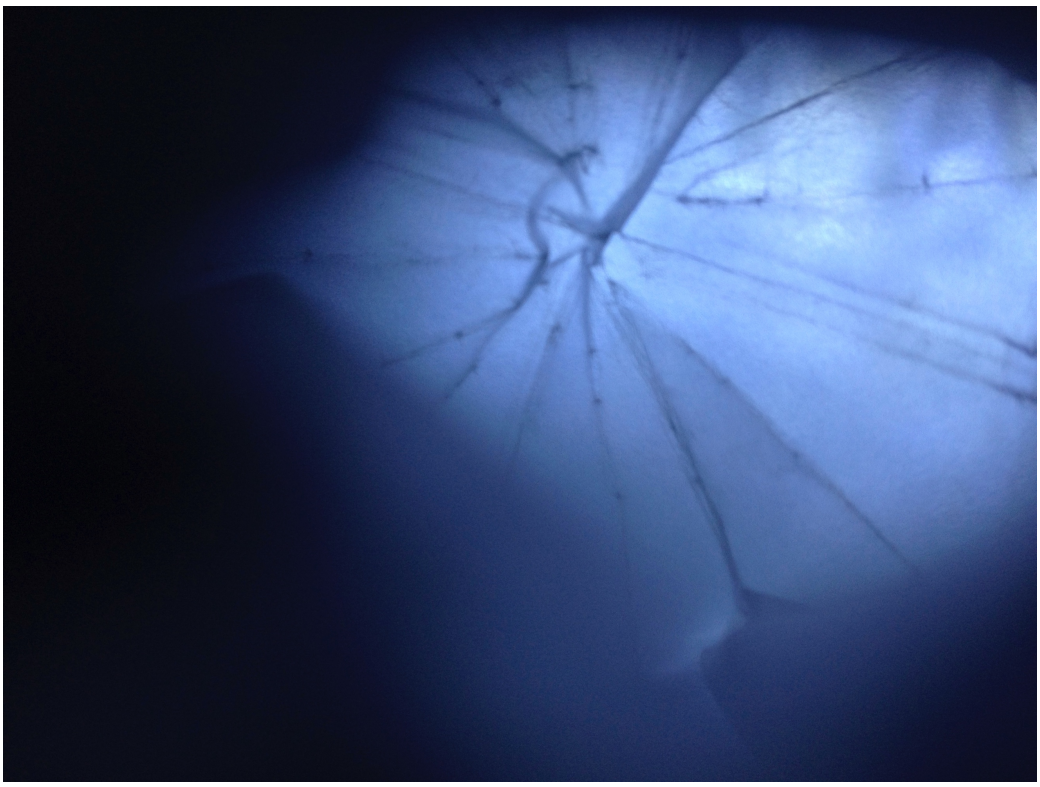
All photos of this work: Rosie Potter



*And so I met my Other's-Other* was also longlisted for the Aesthetica Art Prize in 2018 from 4000 entries down to the final 100 longlist and was exhibited in documentary form at York Art Gallery from May-September of the same year. https://aestheticamagazine.com/profile/julie-groves/

**REFERRED TO IN DEPTH IN THE THESIS:**

***Letters* (2014 - )**



***Letters*** is a work that began in 2014 and is open ended. The slow unfolding of the work is part of its identity. Based around correspondence by letter, it explores the status of audience-ship and performance as a reciprocal dialogue. It plays with the roles of both the sender and the receiver: the receiver/audience becomes the performer of the received and likewise becomes the performer of their projected response. In this way, *both* participants' roles are continually reversing and turning each time a letter-event takes place (I call this a flimmering of roles in the thesis).

*Letters* plays out ideas of entanglement and reciprocity and encompasses the looseness of form that allows for real reciprocal dialogue to take place. *Letters* also utilises a form of physical composition or scoring in that the majority of my own letters are objects with which one must physically engage, manifesting a type of physical limitation and composition to the items.

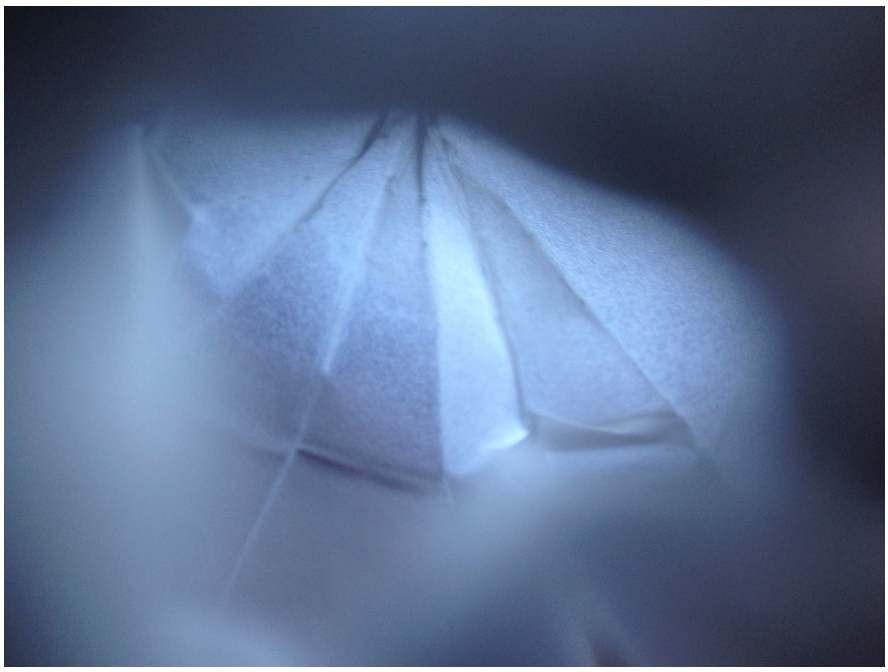
This is a work which began as a collaboration with poet Andrew Spragg and will probably evolve to be conducted with other practitioners. In the exchange so far, both artists have remained working in their own discipline, exploring the consequences of their work when it 'hits' the other paradigm.

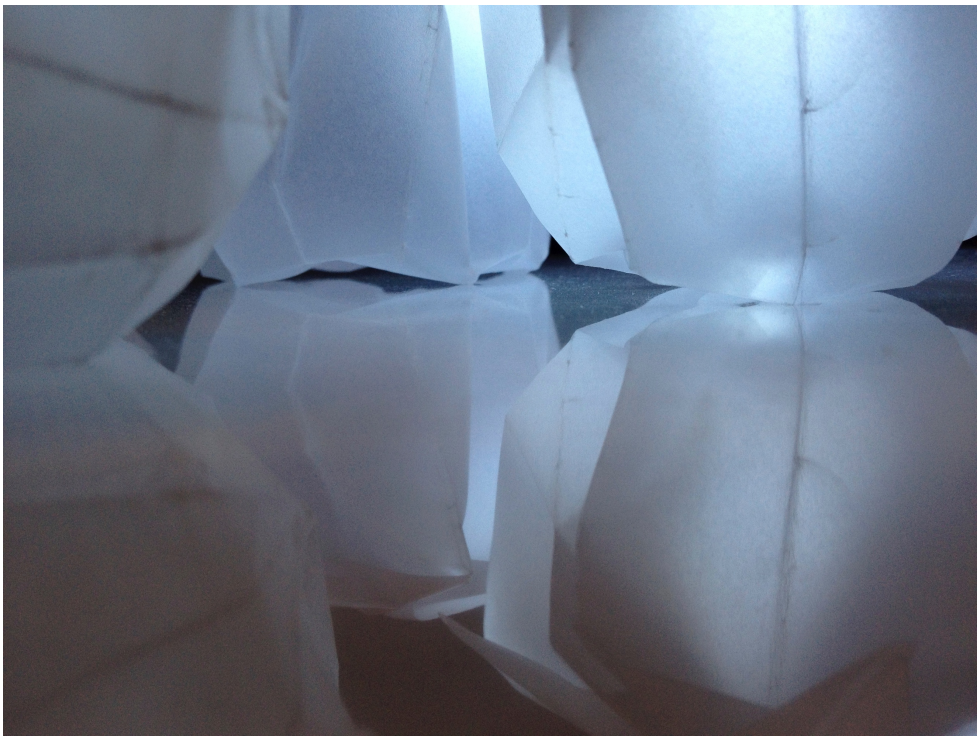
*Letters also* allowed me to explore my physical relationship with objects and materials as a form of reciprocity and dialogue. *Letters* stood for me at the time as a way to bridge the gap between my physical relationship with my instrument as a musician and the Other's Othering I was exploring as part of my research. In working with a resistant paper in a repetitive way and by working towards a perfection, I was able to translate my experiences from instrumental performance into my art practice. *Letters* served to allow me an

insight into how aspects of my other practices as a classical musician related directly to the type of intimacy and proximity I hoped to identify and describe in my sound art practice.

The first 'letter' sent by myself to my recipient was a balsa wood box I had made containing small origami shapes that contained various fillings. One could peer through the translucent paper or into an aperture at the top through which one could see the items inside. One could also pull apart the origami if desired.

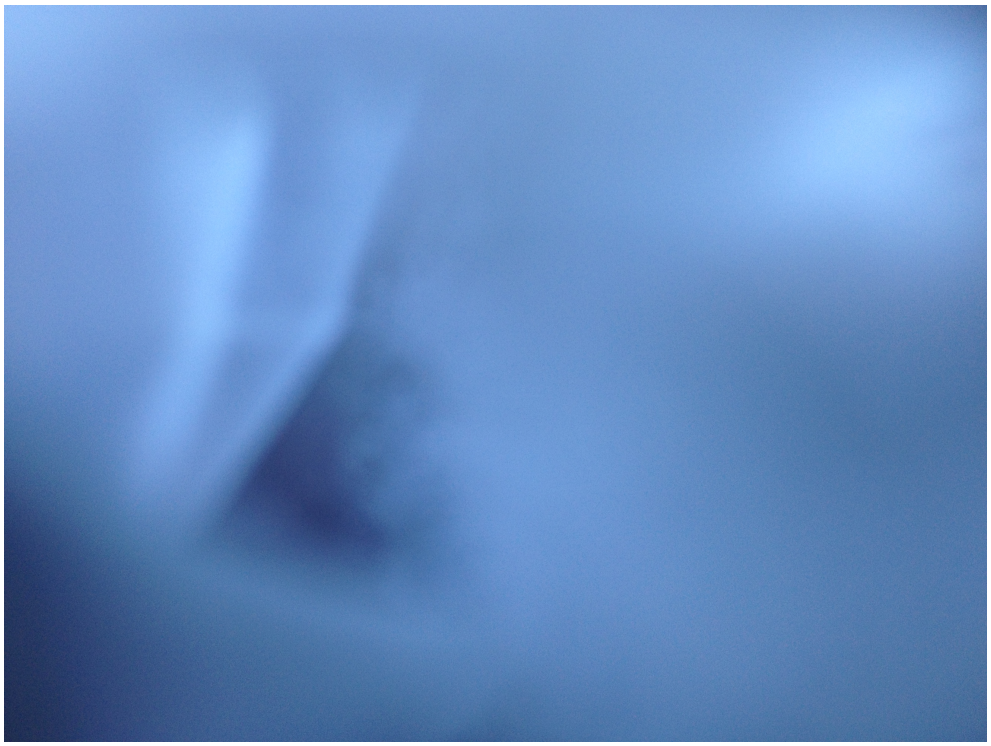
The origami shapes, made from tracing paper were translucent so that one could see that they contained other objects and enticed the viewer to look into them.

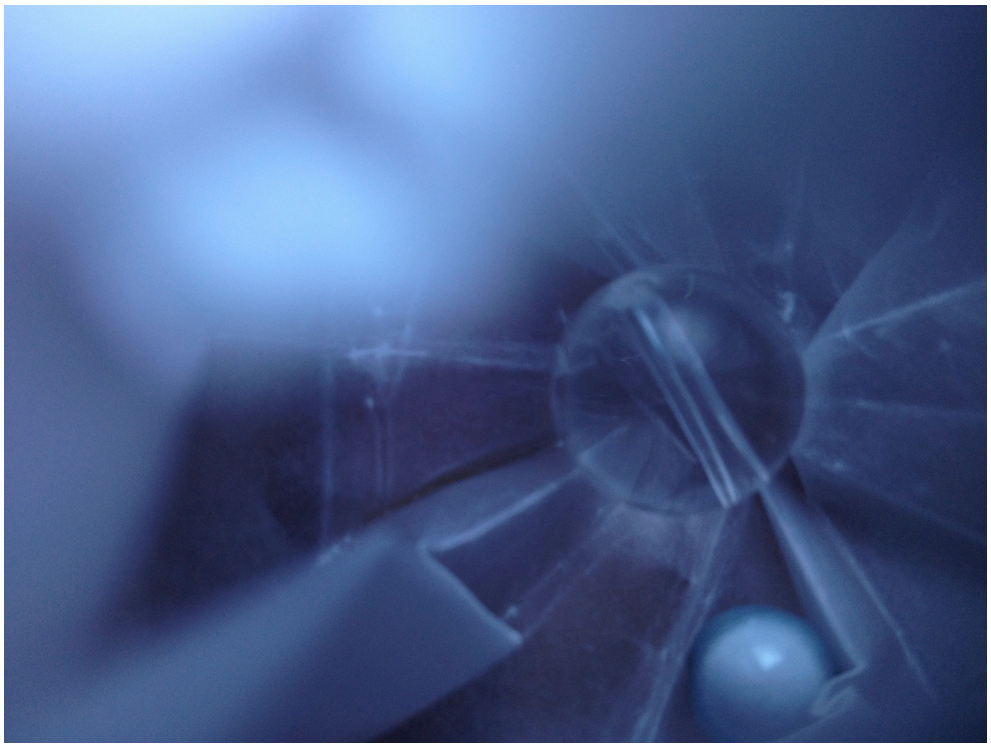




Looking into the origami shapes which contained respectively nothing at all; polyester toy stuffing (which appeared like a fog to the looker's eye); beads; and a strip of paper with the words "find in…." inscribed on it.

The tracing paper material - apart from resisting my actions during making also allowed in a large amount of light into its interior, making viewing possible.

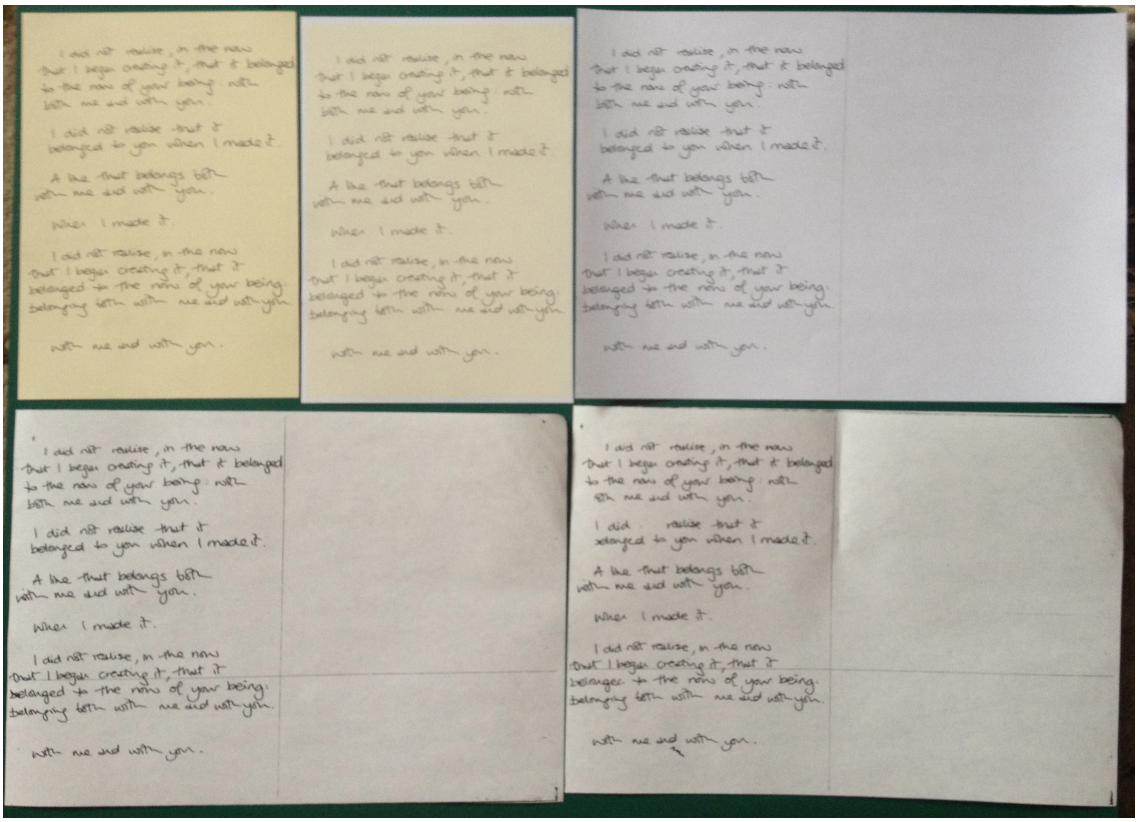


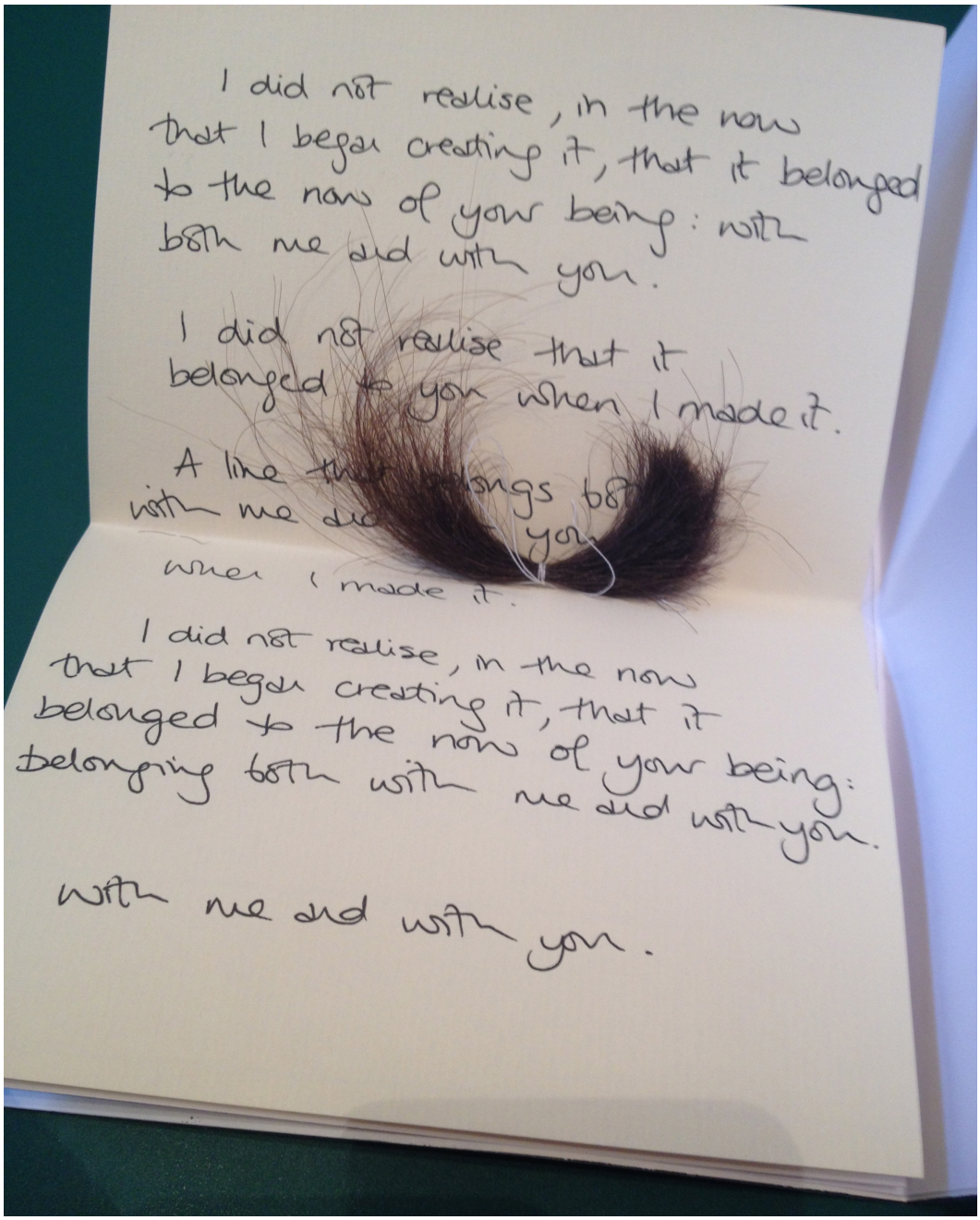


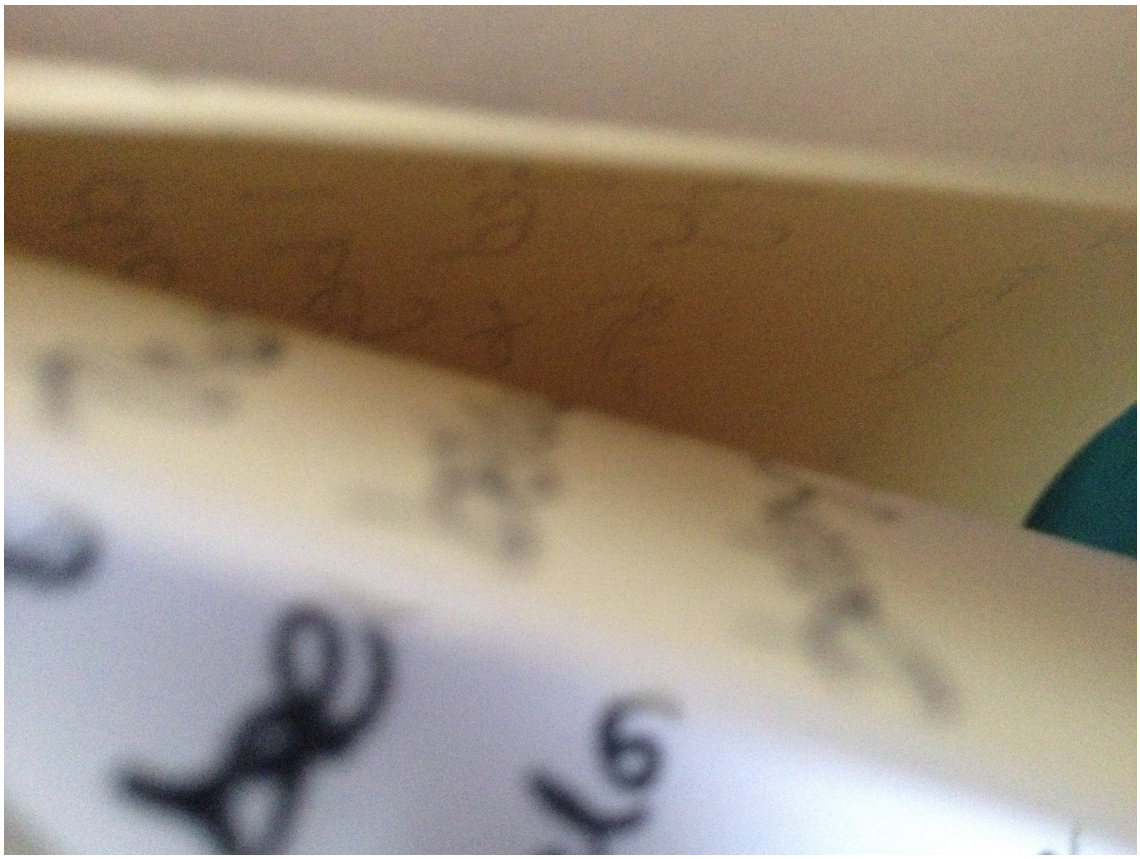
Although my collaborator only sent a couple of return letters (images unavailable) I progressed into sending a parcel that exploded beads and feathers on opening; also later sending a lock of my hair - the broken and time-worn split-end tips where age and time manifested in the discoloured frayed ends; and also a series of papers photocopied and faxed numerous times until the actions upon them began to show in their physical state. I folded these locks into a handwritten letter that I have sadly lost a copy of, although it appears in the photograph below. In this writing I spoke about the physical objects between us belonging both 'with me and with you' almost as a pivot of our remote intimacy.
I also came to make over a hundred of the original origami shapes for a paper I gave in Penryn as part of *Sensingsite* 2014. I scattered the objects all over the floor of the room for when I gave my paper.

not realise
that belongs

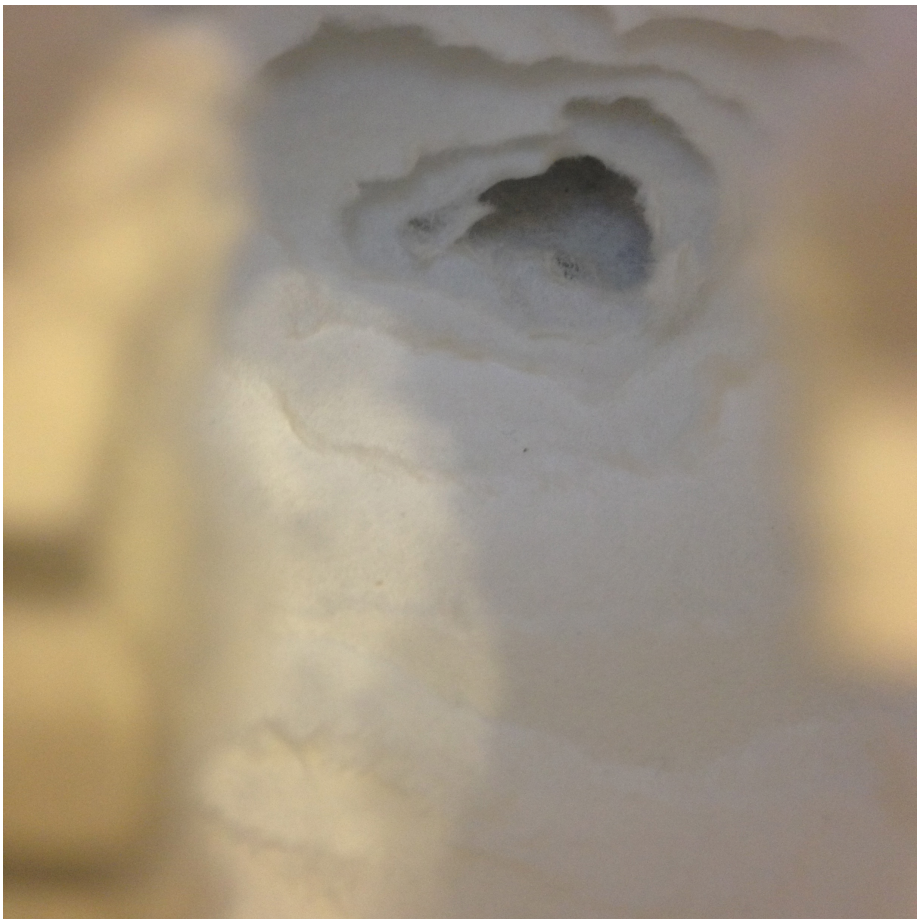
The repetitive nature of these letters enabled me to think about the body in relation to repetition and in relation to forms of presence and absence. This work also helped to formulate a presentation where I referred to these objects holding folded lines that belong with me and with you; as an exploration of a shared experience.

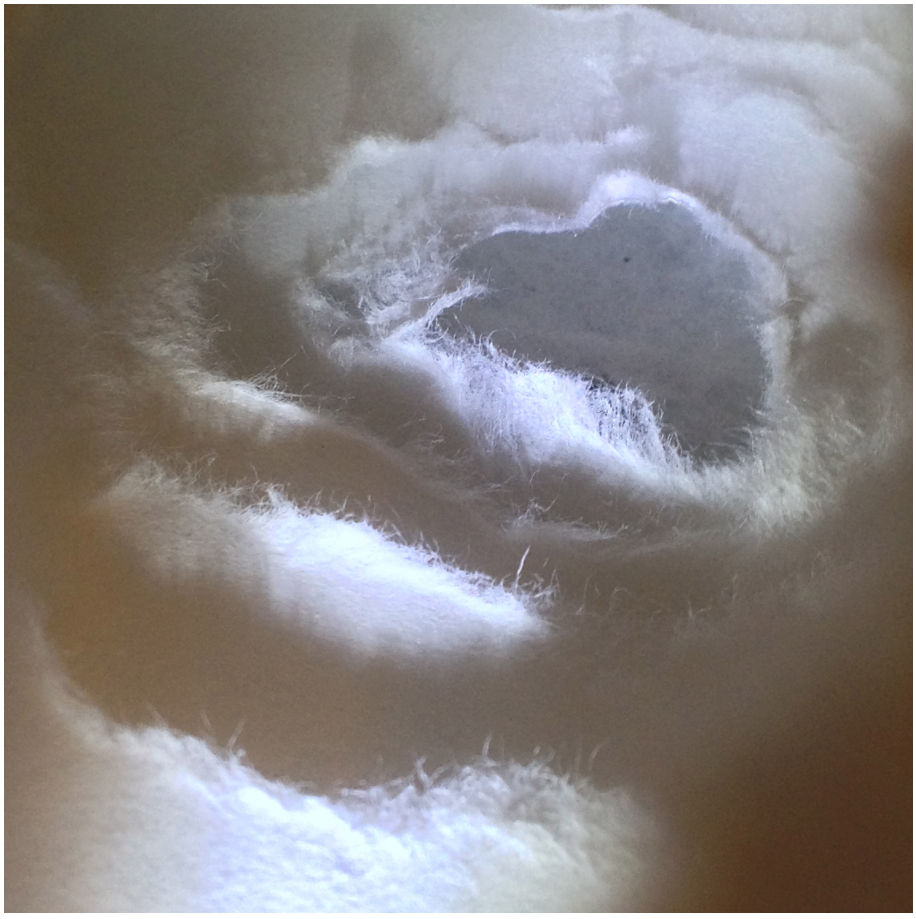



I did not realise, in the now
that I began creating it, that it belonged
to the now of your being: with
both me and with you.
I did not realise that it
belonged to you when I made it.
with me and with you
when I made it.
I did not realise, in the now
that I began creating it, that it
belonged to the now of your being:
belonging both with me and with you.
with me and with you.



The work undertaken as part of *Letters* also progressed into another piece, ***Torn Paper Project*** **(2015)** which was inspired by the work of artist Christoph Illing, with whom I had an email correspondence for a while about his work. The torn paper work has never quite reached the large scale model I intend to make and which will be a future project. The form will be a cocoon=like shape dangling from the ceiling rather like a bees or wasps nest. This shape has a hollow core into which one may insert their head to view the inside space. Made up of thousands of layers of paper. The inner space is formed by the torn inner edges of the paper layered by placing them on top of one another. During the research time of this project I so far made a few smaller prototypes. The work is incredibly time-consuming and surprisingly labour-intensive. Again, *Torn Paper* allowed me to explore my bodily relationship with the materials in terms of my intimacy with and proximity to it and the results actions upon it both on myself and the paper, alongside a building awareness of its resistance to me and my limitations.





***The Call* (2018)**

This work also has its roots in the repetitious origami work and tearing work I began with *Letters.* As a musician I have spent my life and relationship with sound by rehearsing for hours on end with repetitious actions in order to train my body to be able to complete music tasks that occur in the micr-second with absolute integrity and physical reliability. Much of the work for a flautist is about gaining absolute control of one's hands/digits and breath. I speculate that perhaps work that springs from the end of this research may branch out into breath.

*The Call* involved me making 777 origami birds from 80gsm coloured paper for a site specific installation at The Nave Gallery in Caterham - a gallery I have curated for a few years in the local ancient church St Lawrence's (built in 1095). This church is rarely used for services and is a very special place to visit and be in. These birds were strung up as though in flight towards the chancel window and altar space and were accompanied by the sound of a starling murmuration and song. Again, the extended repetitious action is related with the initial explorations I did through *Letters.*

The starling murmuration and starling song I edited together from library material can be found here: https://soundcloud.com/soundandmore/the-call-2018-julie-groves-sound-only/s-U65fGwVoYYP?si=f6b78756172049e3934f63487da585d6&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

***Caterham Memory Tree* (2015)**

The *Caterham Memory Tree* was a community funded project I ran in 2015. For this project I recorded and collected hundreds of memories of the local area from local residents of all ages. Caterham has had a diverse history and many of the institutions and local places that were central in its identity have now disappeared. I wanted to collect an archive of oral history - rather than the more museum-like documents we have access to and which do not impart a sense of the life of a town - from normal people and to present their voices from this archive publicly in an installation people could freely visit. In this way, local residents could participate by sharing their histories and also by engaging in the histories being shared by others in a live and interactive way. I collected numerous hours (around 33) of locals speaking about things such as the local mental asylum at which many people had worked for all of their lives, the barracks which had housed a number of guards such as the Irish and Coldstream Guards and the local pub that had been bombed by the IRA in the 70s due to its proximity to and use by the local soldiers. There are also caves at Caterham with associated stories and one lady who had a written documentary of 'Life in Caterham' form the 1800s written by the great-grandparent of a neighbour of hers read excerpts from this fascinating document. They also left memories of the 10 feet deep snow in the 1940s and again another occasion more recently. Caterham is also in very close proximity to Kenley Aerodrome which was pivotal in World War II. A large influx of Canadian soldiers were moved to the town and Kenley was one of the Luftwaffe's targets, with the local area suffering a lot of bombing from aircraft on their way to bomb Croydon airport. Many of the speakers had at the time been children watching the planes go over and had been shot at by gunners in ow flying planes, with a few enemy aeroplanes also being brought down in the area. A memory was also offered from an old man who had been taken up to a viewpoint in the neighbouring village of Chaldon to see the fire that happened at Crystal Palace in 1936. There is a direct view of all of London from this nearby hilltop where Wembley and even Alexandra Palace can be seen as the land rises away from the Thames floodplain on the opposite side.

I gave no guidance for the subject-matter as a matter of principle, and locals shared whatever they felt was relevant to the identity and memory of Caterham as a place. The resulting archive had a vast range of subjects which I collated together into themes. I built a large tree from wood, wire and Modroc plaster under which listeners could wander and dip into certain tracks emitting from 8 'fruits' dangling from the tree. Through these sound-fruits were played the edited and compiled tracks which also included song and poetry. So that listeners could engage with a number of memories at a time, I collated the 3-hour long installation into themes and played interlocking memories out of perhaps two fruits at a time so that people might hear tales of being dug out of the snow in the 1940s and then be drawn to a similar story taking place the other side of the tree about more recent experiences of deep snow.

The archive will be sent to the British Library and the local museum. I still collect memories from local residents for it if they request to participate.

The tree was exhibited all day and into the evening every day for ten days so that the maximum amount of people might be able to engage with it.

It is very hard to upload the recordings to a platform in a way that depicts the final piece. A video snippet may be found in the link below, but until I submit the separate tracks to an institution, the tracks remain in the state for the tree installation exhibit which is too vast to upload. The editing of this piece was another very repetitive action that took place over a couple of weeks.
A video of me speaking about the project in depth can be found here: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/670368370
Further information and photographs can be found here: https://www.juliegroves.com/memory-tree

***Threshold Dip, Marked.* (2016)**

*Threshold Dip, Marked.* Is a site specific installation for the entrance of St Lawrence's Ancient Church in Caterham which has stood for nearly a thousand years. The wear of millions of feet that have crossed the threshold of the church doorway in that time has left the tiles and step deeply furrowed and dipped through the repetitive action of worshippers and visitors' footsteps. This installation focused on the visible and physical evidence of repetitive action with a track I created using various footsteps and shuffling recorded in the location then sent back into the location through speakers in the porch. This installation intended to give people a sense of a presence of others being there in the space with them and a sense of the route being well traversed and busy. The entrance porch itself is now mossy and cracked. Further images are available on the website: https://www.juliegroves.com/threshold-dip-marked

The sound that was sent into the space can be accessed here: https://soundcloud.com/soundandmore/threshold-dip-marked-2016-julie-groves/s-fo3hfpVMUsk?

si=03ab2aacb42c4fde97641d27724a485b&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

***Charadrius* (2017)**

Another site specific work made for St Lawrence's Ancient Church as part of the Nave Gallery is this small installation made for a nook in the church's wall near the doorway. The church space has gone through many permutations across the centuries, and this nook is created by the insertion of a newer wall inside an older Norman archway that once stood as access to another aisle that burned down. For many years, the church door was left ajar. In this time a robin would nest every year in this nook by the doorway. Within which a foot away is a medieval stone carving (of which there are many various ones on the masonry inside the church) of a goldfinch bird in flight. The following information appeared in the gallery's catalogue for that year:

*The medieval carving of a goldfinch seen at the top right of the doorway as you enter is a known symbol either of the soul or also as the bird which plucked a thorn from Jesus' crown of thorns and was splashed with blood. In the era of the carving it was also a symbol of a mystical bird called a Charadrius which would protect from plague.*

*Very nearby in a nook in the wall (at the bottom of the closed arch) is where a robin nested for many years in the days when the doors of the church could be left ajar. The robin's red breast is also associated with the splash of blood from the thorn crown.*

Birdsong and flight sound: https://soundcloud.com/soundandmore/charadrius-2017-julie-groves/s-rOFxji7QKvi?si=03ab2aacb42c4fde97641d27724a485b&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

*A New Heaven and a New Earth* **(2016)**

Also created for the inaugural exhibition of the Nave Gallery at St Lawrence's is this site-specific installation for the aumbry space next to the altar in the church. This recess in the wall was used for housing and storing sacred vessels and vestments. An aumbry would also house holy oil for ministry.

This installation in 2016 housed a handmade traditional Jewish oil lamp (made by the Jewish speaker who read passages from the Bible in the sound I recorded) filled with oil from the nearby active church's own aumbry and blessed by the local parish priest. This lamp was lit for the duration of the exhibition.

For this installation, I also played a recording I had made of three voices reading various passages from the Old and New Testaments. One voice, that of the maker of the clay lamp, Uzi Pinkerfeld, reads from the Jewish Torah in Hebrew - an original language of the Bible. Alongside and in English, reading from the Christian Bible's equivalent texts are the voices of myself and that of Hedi Pinkerfeld - Hedi is Uzi's son who speaks Hebrew but cannot read it and has grown up in the UK. My own voice has no links to Jewish at all as I do not have any Jewish genes and have not learned Hebrew. Another permutation of this work might include Latin and Greek (the truly original language of the written Bible), although these languages are not living spoken languages and felt less relevant.

Biblical passages
Exodus 12:2-11; Psalm 139:1-18; Isaiah 55:9-12; The Acts 2:2; John 6:49-50; Revelation 21:1
Hebrew Bible and St. James Bible.

Voices: English – Hedi Pinkerfeld & Julie Groves. Hebrew – Uzi Pinkerfeld.

Further images can be found here: https://juliegroves.com/a-new-heaven-and-a-new-earth

The track can be heard here:
https://soundcloud.com/soundandmore/a-new-heaven-and-a-new-earth-2016-julie-groves/s-8QGHQkhw1ZX?si=03ab2aacb42c4fde97641d27724a485b&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

**MA group origami - multiple dates**

As a PhD student at UAL I have been fortunate to have taken some Sound Arts Masters reading groups. For some of these, I have run an origami workshop which aims to contribute to the students' approach to thinking about, relating to and writing about their own work.

Some aims of these sessions are:

- think and write about your experience of practice and processes (whether your own or someone else's) which in the long term helps you to pinpoint the central elements of your own distinctly unique approaches to sound arts. Being able to articulate your own style of making - even if only to yourself - is indispensable in justifying your approaches to projects such as HerNoise and your final pieces.

- to think about location, especially in terms of the self: thinking about being located by our actions in our practices with and as part of colliding with other located objects and spaces

- process and practice as located

- location as a co-creative space and by default then thinking about boundaries and marks and actions that come to locate us.

After in introductory talk we launch into making origami which I instruct the through and they usually end up helping one another to do. The departure for the session is usually thinking about process, and writing about process, and especially about process as related to what we are doing as makers and how we are engaged with what we are doing. The sessions are also to explore what the repercussions of that awareness of our own processes and engagement are on the way that we write about or speak about what we make.
Whether the results are good or bad is besides the point. The process of making and articulating our experience is the aim of the activity. Some of the students are already origami 'officionados' and others will never have done it before. It doesn't matter which of these groups they fall into as the point is in having an experience and in then articulating it. The aim is to recalibrate their approach to writing and their expectations of processes and how they may relate the exercise to their usual work.
The session takes place alongside reading session working groups from set reading.

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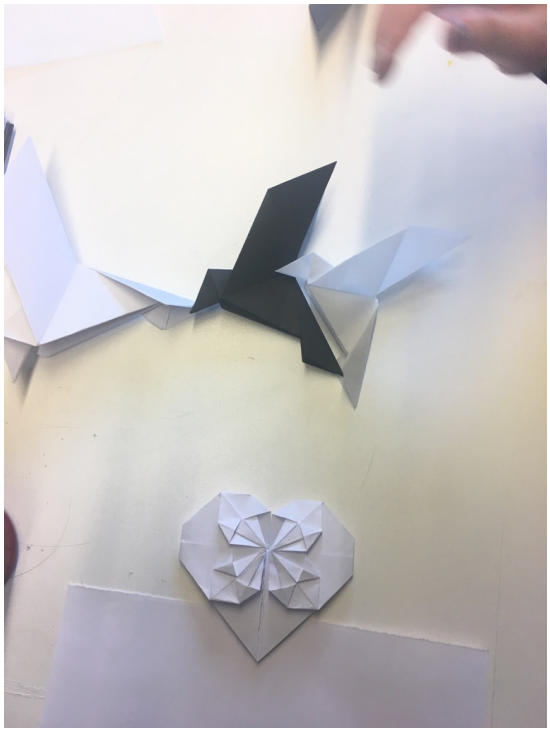

## Relevant Other Collaborative Work:

### *Acts Reacts residency 4th March 2014* with Katie Elliott at Wimbledon Space

In 2014 I took part in a number of experimental workshops with costume designer Katie Elliott who was taking her Masters at Wimbledon College of Art at the time. In these workshops she designed and had made us costumes which had attributes such as extremely long sleeves that would trail around and make moving incredibly difficult; flashing lights on outfits and costumes which were in other ways affecting our behaviour and movement. We were asked to improvise movement in these costumes which she documented. We gave a final performance to show the outcomes. Katie was using these workshops as *'an exploration of the extent to which costume can be critically distinguished from the body of the performer, and whether or not there are times when a spectator's attention is focused on the costume as object.'* (http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/3365/1/ACTS-RE-ACTS_Event-Timetable_FINAL.pdf)
I do not have any of my own documentation of the event and there appears to be none online.
This residency participation was contributory to my practice's ideas of the body and its connection to space and objects.

### *Parting* (2014)

The sound performance installation for Parting was a work made in collaboration with composers Litha and Effy Efthymiou in 2014 as part of a multi-event, multi-disciplinary show which created a 'living-through' experience of psychosis. Within the Efthymious' theme, each 'installation' lifted the main character (be it a dancer, musician or actor) out of their everyday life and examined the very nature of their hallucination or delusion. The performance took place at Hall Two, Kings Place, London on 16th March 2014 and constituted a number of 'vignettes' taking place in the performance space. Each vignette was created in collaboration between the performer and the composers. Some of the other performers involved were a brass quintet, a dancer, two singers, an actor and video artist.

I created my particular performance across a number of preparatory collaborative sessions with the composers. I was required to produce a series of three interlinked performances. The first of these began by my being required to improvise on my instrument, the flute, and act as though I could hear voices in my head. The second performance involved me creating the initial structure of a 'nest' and safe place for myself which acted as a symbol of a protective space resisting the final performance's upcoming psychotic episode. This second stage involved me building a network of tree-like structures in which I was enclosed. The final performance involved me surrounding myself in a protective nest of material and improvising against a score composed by the composers to portray having a psychotic episode through sound. The piece involved both acting and instrumental improvisation.

This collaboration involved my devising of a way to build a physical space that was interlinked with the narrative that I could build during the performance. In

*Parting* I explored both the performer's body, the physical surroundings of a self-created tactile score and the inter-relation between the sound and the physical towards an expression of a psychosis. This is the first work in which I had fused my practice as a classical and contemporary musician with my creative sound art practice. This work enabled me to use my notion of a *physical composition* or score within a performative theatre context.

Video and further information can be found at both: [http://juliegroves-soundart.com/collaboration/parting/](http://juliegroves-soundart.com/collaboration/parting/) and [https://www.efthymiou.co.uk/stage-work/parting/](https://www.efthymiou.co.uk/stage-work/parting/)

**End.**