Associating Places:

Strategies for Live, Site Specific,

Sound Art Performance

Tansy Spinks

PhD submission

CRiSAP, London College of Communication,

University of the Arts, London

2014

Abstract

Claims for originality in this thesis lie in bringing together many different disciplines in art, music, sound studies and performance. The methodology, contextually indebted to the dialogues of site specific art, performance, and sound improvisation, has emerged as a multi-disciplinary one, informed in part by the study of those artists from the 1960s onwards who actively sought to resist the gallery system. The practice has driven the thesis in developing and continuously testing the requirement to respond uniquely to chosen sites. By using relevant references, instruments, and sonified materials, a compulsion to convey something of the particularity of the site's associations through sound, is performed on site.

In the course of considering the wider implications of a site through both the sound performances and the critical writing, I propose that there are essentially three aspects to identify when working with sound on site. I define these as:

the *actual*,
the *activated*
the *associative*

The first aspect describes what is essentially inherent to the place, the second what can be encouraged to be 'sounded' through physical intervention, and the third outlines and forms what I have coined as the wider *material of the site*. This term draws on any relevant aspects of the social, physical, historical, anecdotal, and aural associations that a site may proffer.

However, it is the notion of the *associative* that primarily informs the research by providing a methodology for the practice and in proposing a new paradigm of a live, site specific, performed, sound art work. The twenty or so works in the portfolio undertaken hitherto have existed not only as live performances but also in virtual and physical documentation, critical

analyses, and in the potential possibilities brought to the form by the response of others.

By addressing this new taxonomy of approach in defining the *actual*, the *activated* and the *associative* as a kind of aural ground to the site (borrowing a term from painting), significant live sound art works have been developed to temporarily inhabit a space by exploring this latent *material of the site*.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

Chapter Three: Associations and evocation

Chapter Four: Sound, method and form

Chapter Five: Method, process and presence

Conclusions

Introduction to appendix

Bibliography

Preface

In commencing the research and practice for this study, I have undertaken a comprehensive journey through the histories and theories of an area wholly new to me. It is not art, nor music, but instead a fascinating synthesis of both that draws on many forms and discourses. It encompasses listening, as both a sense and a discipline of awareness, sound production, performance, a greater sense of place, and has the elusive and constantly shifting definition of - for now - Sound Art.

The many people I have come across over the six-year period have naturally formed a valuable part of this process. This includes the wide-ranging spread of interests and expertise across the six London art schools of the University of the Arts PhD community, and the greater and more unexpected personal journey of the research, along with the many diverse conversations this has engendered. I have had encounters with geographers, sociologists, librarians, writers, local historians, local site regenerators, software designers, other artists, art historians, seamen, pirate radio operators, drawing campaigners, masons, conference organisers, caretakers, archivists, educationalists, aestheticists, curators, live music improvisers, composers, sound historians, sound art students, sound engineers, musicologists, ecologists, philosophers and social commentators. In addition, there have been the happenstance encounters with unsuspecting public audiences in markets, libraries, galleries, lifts, corridors, windmills, canteens, parade grounds, staircases…

How did it begin – this interest in sound? How did a visual artist using photography come to stand on top of a windmill or in a darkened masonic chamber, on a platform out at sea or in the middle of a market arcade – making sounds? What prompted this shift of sense and attention? How can the similar but separated creative disciplines of art and music come together on an individual level in the studio?

In combination with an artist's education and way of thinking, making images as objects that inhabit a space or appear on a page, I also play a musical instrument. From an early age, this has taken my interests into a

parallel creative field with a very different set of rules, skills, and expectations. I came to recognise that the freedom the study of art brings to the creative process was in contrast to the way that classical musical training seems to deny. Music was subject to the acquisition of sufficient skills in theory and technique and these seemed a prerequisite to interpretation before creativity (as a composer) could even be acknowledged − if indeed at all. I decided, therefore, to go to art school and my consequent double life at the music college next door went mostly unnoticed by my tutors.

At Leeds I experienced Steve Reich's energetic *Music for Eighteen Musicians* and Gavin Bryars's baffling Portsmouth Sinfonia, as well as Ligeti's unique sound world, and Trevor Wishart's sonic performances in a York scrapyard. These two interests of art and music continued to exist in parallel for many years only tentatively coinciding as a multi-projector, audio-visual tape-slide show for my final M.A. exhibition at the Royal College of Art.

The freedom of art school can be daunting however, since so much is possible and too much has been done before (or so it seems). A discipline cannot flourish without at least an awareness of some of the parameters of the conceptual, the material, and of the processes and skills required. It is difficult to establish a 'voice' and to have the confidence to express ideas in a meaningful way. "What are you trying to say? How will you convey it?" are the questions often asked of the art student. But if we negotiate these parameters and discover what they have to offer by bringing a "what if?" sensibility to the task, the creative person within a supportive art context will be able to feed a greater sense of curiosity and potential realisation. Attempts to investigate and frame a line of enquiry can then encompass and push the expectations of *all* the senses: the visual, the tactile, the textual, the performed, and of course, particularly for the purpose of this thesis, the aural.

Whilst devising the twenty or so sound art works covered in this submission, (identified as six core and a number of further works) there have been many stages of incubation. Ideas were contemplated, solutions considered and dismissed, initial responses to a place and its characteristics noted, strategies and scenarios developed and experiments undertaken in

the studio. Using photographs, objects, the internet, architectural plans and recordings, a vague notion became a firm idea simplified down to something that could be delivered live. Elements that might have been overly theatrical were avoided and above all, sound was kept at the core.

In the process, many questions were raised: exactly how much should be planned and what should be left as a spontaneous, on-site response? How interesting will it be to listen to? How will duration be determined? Other, less expected inspirations have also occurred - for example, a live improvisation session with PhD student colleague and sound artist Iris Garrelfs - which gave me the confidence to allow for an unrehearsed improvisatory element in the works. Similarly, I became intrigued by the physical properties of objects in relation to the sonic properties they may reveal once activated by the magic of the contact microphone.

I also came to recognise the value of what has become a developing series of accompanying ring-bound project files. Each discreet file gives some authority to a new project idea whilst providing a small potential archive for what is evolving. Within this physical file may rest the open call for submission or an invitation to devise a site specific sound work, copies of email correspondence and notes from conversations, images and plans of the space, photographs, initial material culled from the internet, sketches and hand-written notes, a copy of the 'programme note' for the event, fledgling instructional scores for myself to follow, links to documentation of the works, a reflexive analysis after each event, and vitally, print-outs of any anecdotal responses gathered. Moreover, an inventory and images of instruments, objects and technical equipment will often feature. Not just a repository, the files have acted as an on-going thought process, providing tangible evidence and reminders of actual and potential research and documentation. Brief extracts from these files feature in the separately bound appendix as a catalogue of the sound art works. Each original file provides an insight, as a kind of charting; of initial, abandoned and teased-out ideas, of false starts and eureka moments.

I am indebted to many people over the past few years who have supported me in my investigations and manifestations of what I hope may be

considered a branch of a new art form. Brandon LaBelle was the author who first aroused my curiosity about sound as an art form in his 2006 book, *Background Noise, Perspectives on Sound Art*. In the absence of literature dedicated to site specific sound practice, the book proved invaluable. Building on his foundations, my contextual survey serves as a preparation for my own particular approaches in identifying contextually thematic approaches to the notion and value of site specificity in live sound art.

Practice contents page

The documentation varies in format – some works only exist as audio files, others give a better sense of the event and place through video. Some are represented by both to allow for a choice in how they can be experienced. Excerpts are given from longer performances. All track numbers cited in the main body of the thesis are shown by the symbol ⊙.

Enclosed DVD

⊙ DVD – high-lighted sound works

Track 1   *Sonic Triangle*, 2009 (8:47)

Track 2   *Seafort*, 2010 (16:38)

Track 3   *Floor Zero*, 2011 (3:04)

Track 4   *Silent Zone*, 2012 (4:03)

Track 5   *Sonic Ritual*, 2013 (5:30)

Track 6   *The Laboratory of Sonic Possibilities*, 2014 (6:43)

⊙ DVD – Further works

Track 7   *Henry's Ballad At Harold's Wharf*, 2008 (5:54)

Track 8   *Brixton Market/Arcades*, 2010 (1:51)

Track 9   *Hoop*, 2010 (12:27)

Track 10   *Take A Space, Make A Sound In It*, 2011 (4:21)

Track 11   *Windmill*, 2010, 2011, 2012 (6:09)

Track 12   *Four Full Stops*, 2013 (4:17)

⊙ DVD – Extended instruments

Track 13   *Seven Bridges,* 2014 version (6:50)

Track 14   *Seven Bows*, 2014 (6:50)

Enclosed CDS

Alternative documentation as audio only files

CD1

Track 1   *Sonic Triangle,* 2009 (13:47)

Track 2   *House*, 2009 (5:52)

Track 3   *Feral Glissando 2, Wolves,* 2010 (8:10)

Track 4   *Seafort*, 2010, Part 1 (17:01)

Track 5   *Seafort*, 2010, Part 2 (11:26)

Track 6   *Hoop*, 2010 (4:05)

Track 7   *Dropped Violin*, 2010, studio experiment/MAX patch (0:29)

CD2

Track 1   *Take A Space, Make A Sound In It*, 2011 (13:50)

Track 2   *Floor Zero*, 2011 (10:07)

Track 3   *Activated Ballroom*, 2012 (9:03)

Track 4   *Windmill*, 2012 version (10:06)

Track 5   *Sounding the Portal*, 2013 (5:15)

Track 6   *Leeds! Leeds Leeds*, 2013 (7:40)

Track 7   *Echo Lake*, 2013 (3:25)

Chronology of works

Listed below is a chronology of all the sound art works, tests, papers and publications undertaken between 2008 and 2014, presented here in support of the thesis *Associating Places: Strategies for Live, Site Specific, Sound Art Performance.* This chronology is also included at the back of the separately bound appendix catalogue.

The Practice, 2008-2014

Henry's Ballad at Harold's Wharf (September, 2008), at APT, Deptford as part of the *Concrete Dreams* exhibition curated by Liz Harrison and Fran Cottell, DVD track 7, appendix p. 58.

House (March, 2009) [test work], London SE24, CD1 track 2, appendix p.58.

Sonic Triangle (November, 2009) Chelsea College of Art, as part of the *Uncharted Stories* exhibition, DVD track 1 & CD1 track 1, appendix p.7.

Brixton Market/Arcade (February, 2010), three performances for 'artinavan' under the auspices of Spacemakers.org, DVD track 8, appendix p.60.

Hoop at Beaconsfield (April, 2010), for *Rella*, curated and commissioned by artists Michael Curran and Lucy Gunning, DVD track 9, CD1 track 6, appendix p. 60.

Feral Glissando 1 and 2, Edinburgh University (May, 2010), http://12gatestothecity.com/2010/05/17/experimenting-with-geography/ and Wolverhampton University, (July, 2010). *Wolves* version, CD1 track 3, no dedicated appendix entry.

Seafort (June, 2010) at Redsands Seaforts off the North Kent coast, as part of the Whitstable Biennale satellite programme. DVD track 2, CD1 tracks 4 & 5, appendix p.15.

Reveal (September, 2010), [exhibition] devised by Brian Lobel at www.funwithcancerpatients.com. Photographs, drawings and videos shown at the Pierhouse, Tower Bridge including the *Tormented Matter* video, now in the Wellcome Collection's Moving Image Library. The video incorporates the LCC studio experiment with MAX patch, *Dropped Violin* [test work] on CD1 track 7.

Chronology of works

Windmill I, II and *III* (October 2010, 2011, 2012). 2011 version (with live processing in collaboration with Jan Hendricks), on DVD track 11. 2012 version on CD 2, track 4, appendix p.62.

Corridor (2010), *Swansong* (2011), *Sound-Off*! (2012, 2013, 2014), Middlesex University. Collaborative performances at Cathill and Hendon for the annual February 'Events Day'. No documentation or appendix entries.

Seven Bridges (2011, 2014), and *Seven Bows* (2014) [videos] using a violin found in a skip as an 'extended' instrument, in collaboration with the artist Klega. 2011 video shown at the LCC *Research in Progress* exhibition, 2014 version, shown at *Acts Re-Acts* festival, 2014. DVD tracks 13 & 14. No appendix entry.

Floor Zero (February, 2011), in the lift at Camberwell College of Art, as part of the *Elusive* exhibition, curated by Sian Bonnell and Martin Newth, DVD track 3, CD2 track 2, appendix p. 23.

Take a Space, Make a Sound In It (December, 2011) refectory space at Morley College, as part of *The Engine Room*, Cornelius Cardew festival, DVD track 10, appendix p.64.

Restraint (February, 2012), the street space at CSM, a collaboration with PhD student Carali McCall (running as drawing/drawing with sound and first use of radio transmitter microphone to enable musician to have movement across a space). No documentation submitted.

Silent Zone (March, 2012), Chelsea Old College Library, Chelsea College of Art, as part of the *Contested Sights/Sites* exhibition, DVD track 4, appendix p.31.

Beyond the Bookshelves, (May, 2012), exhibition curated by Kate Ross, as part two of the involvement with the same library site. (All the items used in the creation of *Silent Zone* above and documentary evidence of the event were shown back within a library vitrine as a 'new' archive of evidence). Photograph in appendix p. 36.

Activated Ballroom (September, 2012), sound recording made on a wildlife recording workshop with Chris Watson and Jez Riley French, Whitwell Hall, North Norfolk, CD2, track 3, appendix p.64.

dsh (December, 2012) event at the South London Gallery as part of the laptop ensemble, *Unknown Devices* with David Toop. No documentation submitted.

Sonic Ritual (April, 2013), Grand Connaught Rooms, Masonic Lodge, as part of the Goldsmiths' Visual Sociology department stream, *Engaging Tactics, Revealing Secrets* at the British Sociology Association annual conference, DVD track 5, appendix p.39.

Four Full Stops, (April, 2013), The Parasol Unit, for the CSM seminar, *Sensingsite* devised by Susan Trangmar, Stephen Bull and Duncan White, responding to the Navid Nuur exhibition*,* DVD track 12, appendix p.66.

Sounding the Portal (June, 2013)*,* at The Sound Portal, Chelsea Parade Ground, assisted by Emanuele Cendron, Sunil Chandy and Aurélie Mermod, edited by Emanuele Cendron, CD2 track 5, appendix p.68.

Leeds! Leeds! Leeds! (August, 2013), at http://blipblipblip.co.uk, East Street Arts, St Mary's Lane, Leeds, a 45 minute soundwork commission recorded and edited by Emanuele Cendron, curated by Hayley Dixon, dwellerforward.tumblr.com/, CD2 track 6, appendix p.70.

Echo Lake (September, 2013), Snowdonia, for voice and Cym Buchan Lake (with reference to the Dr Who episode filmed there in 1983), edited by Emanuele Cendron, CD2 track 7, appendix p.70.

The Laboratory of Sonic Possibilities (March, 2014), interactive installation for the *Acts Re-acts* festival of performance and residency with collaborator Iris Garrelfs, Wimbledon Space, Wimbledon College of Art, London, DVD track 6, appendix p.47.

Improvisation (April, 2014). A Sound Advice UK Acoustic Sunday event at St. Peter's Church, De Beauvoir, performance by the Mary Ward sound art class, devised by Graham Dunning. (Using my invented metal box instrument with strings, objects and water, contact microphones and series of small amps). No documentation submitted.

Activations of the Rake (September, 2014), performance event curated by Marcus Orlandi for *Prop and Proposition, the Body as Sculpture* at Pitzhanger Manor. The performer responded to Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* series using objects and a pochette. No documentation submitted.

All video footage edited by Fran Ross.

Conference papers and publications

Sound as an Object in Space; Interpreting Space through Sound and Performance (July, 2010) given at Wolverhampton University and subsequently published in the online peer reviewed Journal http://desearch.co.uk (May, 2011)

Sounds Leaving and Lasting; exploring the work of Max Neuhaus (May, 2011), given at Aarhus University, Denmark, in the Aesthetics Department.

Take a Space, Make a Sound in It (2), proposal for a performance for Tate Modern, Tate Tanks*, published in the print-on-demand *Impossible Schoolbook,* 2012, p.102, for Fiveyears.org viewable at: http://www.fiveyears.org.uk/archive2/pages/164/school_projects/164.1.html

How site-specific sound artworks can act as a compositional interface between experiencer and place: developing performative strategies (July, 2012), Darmstadt, Dieburg conference paper, published in the Darmstadt conference proceedings, *The Global Composition, Conference on Sound, Media and the Environment*, edited by Sabine Breitsmeter and Claudia Söller-Eckert Media Campus Dieburg, Hochschule Darmstadt, 2012, ISBN 978-3-00-038817-0, p.434.

On Process (March 2013), presentation for Susan Pui Lok at ADRI, Middlesex University Art and Design Research Institute, Hendon.

Thinking Aurally and Visually about Process, essay published in Iris Garrelfs' online journal, *Reflections on Process in Sound*, volume 2, summer 2013, http://irisgarrelfs.com/reflections-on-process-in-sound

What constitutes the research? A reflection on how live, site specific sound work projects have evolved in the practice, from idea to realisation*, for the LCC PhD publication, (submitted April 2013, never published).

Sounding the Portal (June, 2013) Chelsea College of Art, *Sounding Space* symposium, www.soundportal.wordpress.com/tansy-spinks/. A paper on the devising of the work heard in the Sound Portal.

Figures of Speech (June, 2013), in the On Scenography issue of the Performance Research Journal, editors Sodja Lotker and Richard Gough, volume 18, No.3, p.198, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, Aberystwyth University, UK.

Listen (June, 2014). A wordless and imageless sound presentation using objects and contact microphones for the Art and Design Research Institute staff 'snap' symposium at Middlesex University, Hendon.

Chronology of works

Outline of chapters

Chapter One introduces sound artists who have devised site specific works and considers how they approach place, spaces, installation and narrative. I address the works of Neuhaus, Vostell, Fontana and Cardiff, particularly in relation to the formulation of my own practice regarding place and sound.

Chapter Two covers theories of site specific art practice since the 1960s. Reference is made to a number of my sound works in exploring these new conditions and expectations of site. How we respond aurally to architectural spaces in contemporary sound art practices, is also explored.

In Chapter Three, I describe the development of one of my site specific sound works and the strategies involved in choosing aspects of research into place in *The Material of the Site*, highlighting the work *Silent Zone* for analysis. Most importantly, I introduce my three terms of association: the *actual,* the *activated,* and the *associative,* as new ways to identify sound in approaching sites for live sound-making. In *Evocation and the Mimetic Tendency*, I consider how a sound as an equivalent, might be made in situ, drawing on theories of audio mimesis as the method.

The central act of the performance is explored in *Transcription*, which opens Chapter Four, giving sample inventories of materials, places and sounds. Explored in *Perpetuation as a Compositional Device: Defining the Loop,* is the role of the device used consistently throughout the sound art works*.* Meanwhile, a wider reflection on rhythm in the works uses Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* as a starting point, culminating in a reflection of the sound work *Take a Space, Make a Sound in It*.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis with an overview of the compositional methods, instruments and objects that have been developed, exploring 'activations' and materiality. Performing space, disrupting space, and extending space, are concepts considered in conjunction with improvisation and the importance of liveness in enhancing the engagement between sound, performer, experiencer and place.

Outline of chapters

An introduction to my own practice and the significance of site specificity

> It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories[1]

What is the significance of site specificity for art practices, and to what extent does this open up new opportunities especially for the making and experiencing of sound art in alternative spaces? This question forms the central part of my research.

In what follows, I address histories and theories of site specific artworks situated in alternative spaces. Moreover, I introduce those exponents of the sonic as an art form in order to question the basis of my own art practice using sound. Few theorists or art historians it seems, have addressed the concept of site specific sound as a separate genre, nor more particularly my own unique area of practice, that of *live, associative*, site specific sound performance. Therefore I hope to introduce another element into these histories by presenting my own practice in this thesis as a means of extending current debate. The body of works presented throughout the thesis serves as the basis for an interrogative approach in order to reinforce the research question and to highlight particular aspects of the methodology.

Within the contextual and literature review, I place less emphasis on covering works that take place in the white cube gallery space, or in a 'concert' based context. Rather, the sites I refer to are those in the main without prior expectation from an audience; ideally everyday places in which sounds are stumbled on as a 'discovered' performance.

These everyday spaces may be functional or liminal. They may be places of transit, transportation or trade: a six storey staircase, a lift, a market arcade, or the provisional, non-spaces of the redundant, post-industrial site, suggesting, as Judith Rugg[2] observes: "sites for the

---

[1] J. Meyer, 'The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity' in E. Suderburg (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 25.

[2] J. Rugg, *Exploring Site Specific Art: Issues of Space and Internationalism*, London and New York, I.B.Tauris, 2010.

performance of a continual state of becoming, un-becoming and re-becoming." They are often atmospheric, culturally loaded spaces, beyond the confines of the gallery system.

By taking the sounds into alternative spaces, other forces come into play. Since the site itself becomes a part of the work, expectations of the space will consequently be questioned, by both performer and listener. How might space be approached in relation to the site specific, given that any space, (physical and non-physical) can never be seen as a neutral container? Henri Lefebvre is influential to the thesis as he suggests that considerations of space will always involve a kind of inventory: that which exists within the space, the existing knowledge of it, a discourse upon it and the architectural or pictorial qualities of it. Space is thus reduced to the status of the message, whether "geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global."[3]

It is in the company of these shifting definitions of space that I have chosen to locate the practice. That is, as works that consciously have their genesis in a selected aspect of Lefebvre's inventory. However, this is not so much a message, but as a mirror held up to an aspect of the condition of the space-site.

Performances have taken the practice into many different situations with differing audiences and passers-by. From the vaulted galleries of the V&A cast court to a domestic bedroom, a stone staircase in Edinburgh University, a gantry overlooking a creek in Deptford, a hidden Masonic chamber, a university corridor, a bustling market arcade in Brixton, a space in an old ragged schoolroom, a silent library, a working lift, the roof of a windmill and a structure on an old parade ground. Every site has required a unique approach but shares an obligation to allow the sounds to be prompted by the specific nature and subtexts of each place.

My methodology aims to interrogate a space whilst contributing sounds to it, and is fed by the many associations of the place itself. I define *associative* in this thesis in terms of how value can be added through the

---

[3] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford and Cambridge, Blackwell, 1991, p.7.

exploration and sonification of connotations triggered by the space. These connotations may include elements suggested by the physical properties, the conditions of place as a public arena, historical, literary references, anecdotal narrative, memory, art and popular culture, and related musical allusions.

Inspiration can be drawn from listening to features of the site as phenomenological properties; for example the hums, creaks, whistles, drones and voices that are particular to, and discernible in, the space and beyond. In many of the earlier works a process of improvisatory mimesis then adds another associative sonic layer to the actual sounds. This new element is created on an instrument, or by activating a part of the site with live, in situ, recording. My role as archivist-performer, in fleetingly playing the site, is to 'listen' and 'conjure.'[4]

Initially undertaken on a violin, this act of 'conjuring' has moved on to a wider interpretation of the instrument as the works have progressed, by either extending the instrument or replacing it with objects. Extensive use has been made of a form of multi-iterative or digital looping device that records and replays sound live, thereby layering and perpetuating the just-recorded sounds indefinitely. The work has also developed partly through the necessary deconstruction of a hitherto trained approach to expectations of technique. This has included questioning conventional tuning, the use of a bow, the exploration of 'rehearsed' improvisation and embracing the lack of a need for formal notation or a score as prop, known to endanger spontaneity.

To elaborate briefly here on the transcription or means of 'conjuring', a number of relevant objects have been used to 'prepare' or 'activate' the instrument in performances including a hacksaw frame, pieces of metal piping, a school playground hoop, a piece of string, a feather, animal bones and steel cables. Latterly, the use of a contact microphone (one that can be physically attached to an object) has enabled me to activate physical objects and spaces more directly, allowing them to have their own voice. The

---

[4] Commenting in response to my presentation of the work: M. Bradfield, UAL PhD student, 'Sites and Interventions', *The Practice Exchange seminar*, Chelsea College of Art. http://thepracticeexchange.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/wednesday-2-march-2011-sites-and.html, (accessed 02.03.11).

performance becomes something of a live duet between performer and associations, and performer and place.

These actions, as the performances could also be described, tend to vary according to the given physical site: as an intervention, a planned happening, or a performed or interactive installation. Using Barry Curtis[5] as a guide, the approach to the practice could be described as sudden, (transient), animated methods and signs, that engage (evocatively, through sound) with everyday spaces. In devising sounds that are potentially both abstract and representational, I seek to rethink how an artist-performer can be an effective intermediary in a specific space.

How have the sites been determined? I developed a broad approach that could react to commissions to devise sound works, but which also allowed for opportunities to test the method elsewhere. Some were self-initiated, lone events, or involved negotiating spaces with other artists. Others simply failed to happen. Failure was down to either lack of preparatory time, an unrealistic expectation towards access to a site on my part, inadequate consideration of ideas, or the awareness of an impending formulaic solution.

I have presented the works under two headings - main and further works - although every work has served to progress ideas and methods. The six primary works listed have provided defining moments, however, in the use of place, method, approach, duration or interactive potential, each serve to reinforce a foundation for the next.

One particular example of a fleeting, almost guerrilla-like intervention is *Seaforts* 2010, which took place on the gun platform roof of a World War II seafort, six nautical miles out to sea. The press release stated:

> The performer will be responding to the site activated by using live recordings and an electric violin to layer sound in the haunting atmosphere of the derelict fort. Ideally this will 'give to the location a voice' through found vibrations and activated acoustics. Sounding the fort with a violin, walking

---

[5] B. Curtis, 'Introduction', in J. Rugg (ed.), *Exploring Site Specific Art: Issues of Space and Internationalism*, I.B.Tauris, London and New York, 2010, p.xiii

around the space to discover what it has to reveal from hidden secrets of the derelict interior to the immensity of the sea outside.[6]

In this setting we were able to both activate and play aspects of the site, a substantial tripod-like structure of iron, whilst fulfilling the brief (to myself and to the organisers) to find and draw attention to a place of dereliction using sound.

What is the role of the site? It could be argued that the site simultaneously becomes an impromptu studio space, a ready-made place of contemplation, research, action, interaction, production and event. Sound can legitimately be considered as an evolving object within that space, just as any other artistic practice involving planning and execution might produce a physical three-dimensional object. The sounds experienced could also be a prompt for memory 'images,' as originally described by Henri Bergson,[7] in the way the sonic can provide a powerful signifier for the evocation of the imagined visual.

During a seminar in my second year of research, artist and lecturer Susan Trangmar[8] described one of the sound performances as akin to 'sculptures in space.' This prompted reflection on the tangibility of sound, of the meaning and associations in a space experienced through sound, and whether these can be identified and exploited. Similarly, John Baldessari[9] muses on his ability to tap into what he calls other people's built-in 'image banks,' formed through experience and memory. Could such an equivalent in sound be said to exist as a kind of 'audio bank' I wondered, beyond the notion of a communal 'earcon?' Could a hypothetical audio reservoir be as easily tapped as the 'image bank?' This led me to address the value of audio mimesis in its various forms as a vital aspect of my methodology, drawing particularly on the theories of Allan Weiss. The power of evocation as a

---

[6] A. Bertin (assistant, collaborator and sound artist), *Seaforts,* published in press material for Whitstable Biennale link, www.thewhitstablesatellite.com/seminar, (accessed 18.07.10).

[7] H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, New York, Zone Books, 1990.

[8] S. Trangmar, unpublished seminar notes in response to my work presented at Central St Martins College of Art seminar, spring 2010.

[9] J. Morgan, 'Somebody to Talk to: Interview with John Baldessari', *Tate etc.*, 17, Autumn, 2009, London, p. 83.

means of being a part of a place therefore became an important component for the making of sound.

Deeper analyses of individual works are integrated throughout the document, adding to the conversations on the theoretical frameworks in place. These include Duchamp and the everyday, Henri Lefebvre and everyday rhythm, Neuhaus and sound inserted into the everyday situation, Bachelard and his theory of roundness in relation to my use of multi-iteration, Weiss and the value of audio mimesis, LaBelle and conditions of site, Nick Kaye's theory of performing site, and Auslander's notion of liveness as engagement.

What of reactions to the sound art works? Since the practice remains at the core of the thesis, I have chosen not to subject the work to any form of reception analysis. Instead, I have highlighted the more spontaneous, anecdotal responses that have come my way. Each work cited and described in the appendix catalogue includes an entry headed 'evaluation and response.' Responses have often proved invaluable as an insight into what really occurred in the performances and have acted as a pause, to reassess whether I am achieving what I set out to do.

The sound art works were undertaken between September 2008 and March 2014 and are presented in a separately bound appendix as a catalogue or portfolio of works. A DVD of video documentation and two additional audio CDs are included. The performance footage can also be accessed through my website at: http://www.tansyspinks.com.

Chapter One: Sounds and sites

I like to make shapes in the head and in the ears, and I also like to make them in the room.

Maryanne Amacher [10]

Fontana and musical shadows

In this chapter, I introduce an overview of artists using sound in alternative spaces, particularly those who transform a space in some way through their actions. I will be addressing the site specific sound works of Bill Fontana, Wolf Vostell, Max Neuhaus, Janet Cardiff, Susan Philipsz and several others.

As an example of one who takes the site, its contexts and conditions as his starting point, American sound artist Bill Fontana seems to inhabit spaces not once, but twice.[11] Firstly, at the time of listening, recording and collecting sounds, and secondly, at the point of playing back those recordings as the material of the installation. His work occupies one or more spaces, highlights the processes put in place *between* the public, social and institutional spaces, and provides a phenomenological experience. A well-documented trace of activity is reached via a comprehensive website,[12] thus allowing a wider audience to experience the work when not 'in situ.' It could be conceived that the live element of the work exists in the act of both real time recording, and in real time playing back.

As a significant figure at least within the sound art world, surely Fontana is deemed as an accepted resident of the most important of white cubes, yet the roots of his practice still lie in the humble origins of the acts of listening, recording, displacing and relaying.

Fontana makes explicit reference to Marcel Duchamp and the concept of the found object as a starting point in relation to his own approach to

---

[10] M. Amacher on site specific sounds as referenced in E. Stefani & K. Lauke, 'Music, Space and Theatre: Site specific approaches to multi channel spatialisation', *Organised Sound*, vol.15, no. 3, 2010, p.251.

[11] B. Fontana, The Sound Sculptures, Acoustical Visions and Ideas of Bill Fontana, http://www.resoundings.org, (accessed 29.10.2014).

[12] M. Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors Even*, New York, Jaap Rietman, 1976.

found sounds. He argues that ambient sounds belong to a particular place by being 'sculptural' and explains that Duchamp's method of appropriation (usually of a physical object) and deliberate re-presentation elsewhere, is a basis for his own working methods. This change of context, and sometimes of site, changes both the object's meaning and its status. Fontana consequently considers his work to be sound 'sculpture', (perhaps a reassuring reference to a traditional physical art object) with each project being informed by a specific site or location, often relying on a built urban structure or environment as a starting point, and the notion of dislocated contexts, as his artistic device.

Carrying around a tape recorder (much as he might a sketchbook or a camera) from the mid-1970s, Fontana began to appreciate the value of these recorded found sounds as a kind of musical form. In doing so, following Pierre Schaeffer's lead, the act of recording realised the potential of the acousmatic, or the value of the found sound to become something else. Fontana chose to appropriate or harness such ambient sounds and like Duchamp, to alter their expected meaning by questioning and enhancing their properties whilst, in some cases, relocating them to another site.

Examples of this practice include *Entfernte Züge,*[13] a sound piece made in 1984 for the site of the demolished railway station in central Berlin for which he recorded sounds occurring in the conversely busy hub of Cologne station. These sounds were subsequently relayed into the Berlin site, using rows of buried speakers beneath the grounds of the abandoned station. Simultaneously, both loss and a new presence seem to have been suggested in this work, according to the online documentation; a poetic and poignant gesture at a time of division within the city (and indeed the country), by the Berlin Wall and an apt example of what Miwon Kwon refers to as a discursive site or one of de-territorialisation.

---

[13] B. Fontana, *Distant Trains or Entfernte Züge*, [online video], 1984, http://echosounddesign.com/media/Berlin.mov, (accessed 29.10.2014).

In the *Harmonic Bridge* [14] piece made for Tate Modern in 2006, Fontana made use of the Millennium footbridge across the Thames. Situated outside the gallery, sounds activated by movements on, and of the bridge, were relayed and picked up by transducers and microphones. The resulting hums and whistles blended with the drone of the electricity substation and were clearly heard within the gallery's Turbine Hall, making for an inventive mix of existing and re-directed sounds. This caused the listeners to question not only the origins and locations of what they were experiencing, but also the implications of this new blend. By relocating one sound to the place of another sound (recorded steps and vibrations from outside, transmitted into the gallery), the heard traces of unsuspecting footsteps hung in the air like stolen reportage photographs, the original subjects unaware of their unwitting contribution.

In relation to displacement, a third piece entitled *River Sounding,* (2010),[15] used river-water-sound recordings made along the length of the Thames. These were re-located and played out in the subterranean spaces beneath Somerset House, London, providing the curious audience with a new layer of information about a familiar city. Thus, many scattered outdoor locations brought together one common space for the act of listening to occur.

As a slight digression, nearly ten years earlier, the photographic artist Roni Horn drew our attention to the countless visual aspects that the river can present in her series of photographs titled *Still Water, River Thames* (1999).[16] These photographic images, embedded with texts, are ostensibly highly rendered prints of water surfaces taken of the Thames in many states and in many places along its length. However, upon close inspection they have small 'footnote' numbers printed beneath them. Each refers, dispassionately, in small type to a historical incident or fact that may, or may

---

[14] B. Fontana, *Harmonic Bridge* for Tate Modern, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Harmonic_Bridge1.htm, 2006, (accessed 29.10.2014).

[15] Ibid., 'Interview about *River Sounding',* www.somersethouse.org, (accessed 29.10.2014) and in Guardian website article, www.guardian.org, (accessed 15.04.2010).

[16] R. Horn, *Still Water, River Thames, 1999*, reproduced in R. Horn, *Another Water*, Scalo, Zurich, 2000.

not have occurred at any particular point along the river. This could be a violent death, for example, or a particular location described by Dickens. What starts as a familiar, innocuous or even mundane image, becomes imbued with new histories and significance once this information has been assimilated. Horn has successfully taken many sites and presented them as generic ones, which then become particular again once the poignancy of the content is revealed. In a similar way, Fontana takes the supposedly known quantity of the sound of water (albeit in many guises), and re-acquaints us with its mysteries and threats in his chosen manner of re-presenting and relaying the material sonically.

'Liveness' of presence is less of an issue for Fontana who relinquishes himself as a physical entity in the work. As he puts it, he "keeps out of the way," having set in motion the chain of events that lead to the sounds and their wider effects. His sounds therefore appear to take on an autonomous character, almost 'sounding' themselves (bridges, clocks, rivers) as live, self-recording acousmatic phenomena (i.e. sounds without visual clues as to the source), gaining unique voices independent of the artist in the process, and allowing the audience to provide their own framework for the experience. In the case of the temporary sound work, *Speeds of Time* (London, 2005) however, the live recordings from accelerometers (a form of vibration tracing contact microphone) attached directly to the clock mechanism of Big Ben, were relayed in real time within the nearby Palace Yard colonnade. Given that sound is by definition durational, this meant that the sounds were then experienced in parallel to the 'real' sounds of Big Ben, adding an authenticity to both the sonic and the societal marking of time.

Fontana's piece *Sound Island* (1994), installed in the Arc De Triomphe, Paris, also makes use of live transmissions of acousmatic sounds; of waves crashing onto a Normandy beach, as a form of white noise, that then compete with the relentless traffic encircling the monument. Further precedents to the use of water sounds in sonic art practice might include Fluxus artist George Brecht's *Drip Music* (1962), John Cage's *Water Walk* (1960) seen on a TV game show, and Annea Lockwood's site-led *River Archive,* also dating from the 1960s.

Another work by Fontana entitled *Panoramic Echoes,*[17] seems to demonstrate in particular, the notion of framing by each individual experiencer. Elevated parabolic loud speakers designed to 'focus' sounds directionally were installed in Madison Square, New York in 2007 making use of the high surrounding towers. This technical configuration encouraged layered sounds to 'float' between the buildings and over the square throwing the recorded calls of exotic birds and bells across the space. Here, the artistic site represents not so much the built environment, but that of the ephemeral, no-mans-land airspace between buildings. According to the responses documented on Fontana's website, the resulting incongruity of sounds experienced out of their expected contexts, provides a moment of interruption and intrigue on behalf of each listener.

Taking this idea indoors, *Spiraling Echoes*[18] (devised for the rotunda of San Francisco City Hall, 2009) by contrast, explored the cavernous public space in which sounds of tram bells and trickling water could be discerned. Again, given the particular use of directional speakers, this was experienced as suspended and indefinable or un-locatable sounds. The real, the symbolic, and the imaginary are all given free rein in this work.

Fontana has also used re-located ambient sounds, taken from a site, as a means of 'exciting' objects in order to gain an aural insight into how an inanimate object can be heard. In *Objective Sound* (Western Bridge, Seattle, 2007),[19] he took recordings of planes and train whistles from the surrounding area and brought them back into an enclosed space to act as resonators for a large glass and metal tubes, a collection of objects bought at an army surplus store. This resonance was again picked up by the use of accelerometers detecting vibrations, thereby allowing the objects to emit their own activated sounds in real time alongside the original recorded ones.

---

[17] B. Fontana, *Panoramic Echoes*, New York, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Panoramic.html, 2007, (accessed 29.10.14).

[18] Ibid., *Spiraling Echoes*, San Francisco City Hall, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Spiraling_Echoes.html, 2009, (accessed 29.10.14).

[19] Ibid., *Objective Sound*, Seattle, [online video], 2006 http://resoundings.org/Pages/Objective%20Sound.html (accessed 29.10.14).

To return to the model of Duchamp, one could conclude here that an object, in this case a sound recording, has been plucked from its natural environment and inserted into a new one - an industrial building used as a gallery space in Seattle. Of the *Objective Sound* piece, Fontana himself elaborates:

> Excited by the acoustic energy of the surrounding noise field, these objects filtered this dynamic noise with harmonics and resonances, creating a musical shadow of the environment.[20]

John Cage and David Tudor's *Rainforest* installation of the late 1960s could be considered a precursor to this piece as an exploration of resonance, using objects situated and activated in a space.[21] Activated objects feature in a number of the sound work performances in my own practice, to be discussed in a later chapter.

All the works I have cited of Fontana's are prompted by, and dependent on the sites chosen, to some extent relying on our supposed familiarity with these places as either personally or generically known to us. Fontana then subtly re-presents these in order to question and undermine. Each piece requires something of its audience, not least a willing engagement, a physical walk, a leap of imagination, plus a suspension of disbelief in the disjuncture between what is expected, and what is actually heard.

Perhaps a further source of inspiration cited by Fontana, could be used to summarise the basis of all his sound pieces: a hand written note by Duchamp was found on a scrap of paper that had been kept in one of his green boxes, relating to the *Large Glass* work and given to John Cage in the late 1960s. On the paper, Duchamp had written the following:

---

[20] Ibid., http://resoundings.org/PDF/Objective_Sound.pdf, (accessed 29.10.14).

[21] M. Rogalsky, 'David Tudor's Rainforest: An Evolving Exploration of Resonance,' *Leonardo Music Journal*, vol. 14, 2004, pp. 25-30.

> Musical sculpture. Sounds lasting and leaving from different places and forming a sounding sculpture that lasts.[22]

In using the word 'sculpture', both Duchamp and Fontana acknowledge the wider role of a 'site' as both context and object. It is a place in which the temporality of this 'lasting' (in itself another object) will happen, and in which the effectiveness of the sonic conflation of 'different places' might occur.

I would like to deviate again slightly here in relation to Fontana's concept of the 'musical shadow', and draw attention to a parallel visual phenomenon in the form of the camera obscura. Artists have used this device for centuries as an aid to looking and drawing, and in its later incarnation, it became the pin-hole camera. The obscura allows visual shadows of the 'real' world to be seen within an enclosed chamber and remain 'fixed' – in the case of the pinhole camera – displaying an artistic shadow. (The diorama exemplifies this concept and is particularly poignant in the work of artist Abelardo Morell,[23] which concerns the questioning and perhaps equally, the undermining of how we see). Therefore, the notion of an equivalent to Fontana's 'musical shadow of the environment' could be an apt description of Fontana's experiments with sound sculptures from the 1970s onwards, (particularly those made for the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne). This in turn, could cause resonators to act as an equivalent 'aperture' of sorts by 'focusing' sound, drawing attention to material properties of the objects, and giving each a 'voice', as opposed to an eye, within a space.

In reflecting on Fontana's work, there is a sense that a community forms around the common listening experience of the pieces, whether deliberately sought out as at Somerset House, or 'stumbled on', as noted in Madison Square. In this sense, the so-called bureaucratic triangle described by Miwon Kwon (to be explored in Chapter Two), could be successfully weighted in favour of the receivers and the artist. To bring Kwon's site

---

[22] S. Lotringer, cited in '*Becoming Duchamp*', vol.1, Issue: 2, 2000, www.toutfait.com, (accessed 29.10.14) also cited in: http://resoundings.org/Pages/Spiraling_Echoes.html, (accessed 29.10.14).

[23] A. Morell, *Abelardo Morell,* www.abelardomorell.net, 2013, (accessed 29.10.14).

specific paradigms to Fontana's work, the pursuit of the *experiential or phenomenological* event - that of 'resonance' in Fontana's case - allows for a democratisation of this (*discursive*) experience, of a heightened sense of questioning and listening together, often within a specific (*social*) space. I will explore Kwon's theories of site specificity in relation to others' later in the thesis.

Neuhaus, Vostell and sound installation

> Our perception of space depends as much on what we hear as what we see
>
> Max Neuhaus[24]

The urban site has been an important one for Fontana for many reasons. For instance, the guarantee of passing audiences, whose expectations are challenged, the unlocking of the sonic properties of a built environment and the many questions presumed and asked of the site as a sonic vehicle.

He cites several influences in this respect including Wolf Vostell,[25] one of the German Fluxus founders who believed that art should not be confined to the rarified white spaces of the gallery but should be more widely available, even appearing on the streets. Vostell's *9-Nein Collagen* piece of 1963,[26] devised under the auspices of the Wuppertal gallery, entailed the ferrying of the audience by bus to nine different locations. In each, they were required to lie on the floor whilst his décollage film (or deconstructed footage; collected images taken from the television screen) *Sun in Your Head,*[27] was shown in situ. Thus, a multi-locus site had evolved with no

---

[24] M. Neuhaus, *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info/home.htm, (accessed 29.10.2014).

[25] W. Vostell, *Media Art Net*, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/suche/?qt=wolf+vostell, (accessed 29.10.2014) and http://www.e-flux.com, (accessed 29.10.2014)

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

central site as a base. Similarly, *The Airport as Concert Hall*,[28] a décollage 'happening' that took place at Ulm airport in 1964, was an early example of the use of a public transit space as a site for unexpected sound works.

Like Susan Philipsz forty-five years later, (as evidenced in her Glasgow bus station sound work), Vostell interrupts and interrogates a public space with his sound interventions. Drawing from the object trouvé concept of Duchamp, Vostell seems to take this idea a step further by bringing happenings onto the streets (or indeed, indoor streets or malls, as a wider reading of public spaces), to present what we might consider to be a 'vie trouvé'.[29] The concept of a vie trouvé provides perhaps another, more apposite term than site specific, together with the conceit that the intervention of a sound into a public space is in some small way an interruption which requires considered thought. This is an idea explored further by Janet Cardiff, another contemporary artist using sound, and will be discussed later.

Most relevantly however, the work of the American Max Neuhaus, in relation to sound works within cities, is an important precursor to Fontana's ideas of place and to Kwon's theories of site specificity. Neuhaus, a one-time professional percussionist specialising in new music, is probably one of the first artists to bring sound into the site specific realm by building a new perception of aural space. He constantly shaped sound by exploring innovative approaches and technologies and apparently inventing the term, 'sound installation.' This term can be defined as: non-visually dominant sound artworks which are duration-less (or at least which have no obvious beginnings or endings), designed predominantly to be situated in three dimensional spaces in galleries or museums. Neuhaus's premise here is that since our sense of place is just as dependent on the aural as on the visual, sound warrants a specific art practice definition. After all, he observed simply, in conversation on his website, sound is half of life.

---

[28] Ibid.

[29] W. Vostell, Source Texts, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de
http://www.e-flux.com, (accessed 29.10.2014)

Although Neuhaus was interested in two particular codified areas of sound as a medium – sound as music and sound as speech - he was also, more relevantly to this thesis, concerned with heightening the awareness and usage of everyday sounds and the contexts in which they are found.

As Neuhaus asserts, "the sounds I create are in the large sound space around and in-between these sounds of everyday life."[30] The allusion of the use and displacement of everyday life, takes us back to Duchamp particularly when Neuhaus elaborates on his processes and how they evolve. Describing them as 'having no map', (in contrast to Fontana whose pieces are minutely preconceived and organised), his is an initially improvisational approach. The early sound walks, which he maintains he undertook before the term was invented, also adopt the inherent improvisational qualities that the experience of such compositions in 'ready-made' sites would suggest. For example, this is evidenced in *LISTEN,* 1966/76,[31] a sound walk that he led under and beyond Brooklyn Bridge, New York. He continues below in a conversational fashion:

> My place works are about creating a new place by transforming a given place. This idea of what 'place' means in English at least, that a place is not just a physical place. The idea of place carries many aspects: the people there, the people who use it, who own it, who does what in it, its visual character, its aural character – its character. A place has a character; a space doesn't have a character. So calling them 'sound spaces' didn't make sense. They are about building a place, a new place from my imagination, out of a specific place.[32]

Does Neuhaus also hope to tap into the audio-imagination of others? A 'place from his imagination' could very well refer to the theories of Henri

---

[30] M. Neuhaus, quoted as author in *Three to One,* Brussels, Encore, 1997, in association with La Lettre Volée., texts by Zsuzsanna Gahse, Max Neuhaus and Yehuda Safran. Excerpts also from *Evocare*, a conversation between Max Neuhaus and Gregory des Jardins, Ischia, Summer 1995: http://www.max-neuhaus.info, (accessed 29.10.14)

[31] M. Neuhaus*, LISTEN*, 1966-7, http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/list, (accessed 29.10.2014).
Ibid., 'In Conversation', interviewed by Brandon LaBelle, 2008, www.max-neuhaus.info/audio-video/LaBelle_Berlin.htm, (accessed 29.10.2014)

[32] Ibid., *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/permanent, (accessed 29.10.2014).
Ibid., 'Evocare' article, interview by Rory Logsdail, 2002, http://www.max-neuhaus.info/audio-video/, (accessed 29.10.2014).

Bergson in terms of memory and both remembered and proposed auditory images.

The sound piece, *Times Square*, 1977–92 (reinstated 2002),[33] provides a good demonstration of this transformation of site, located inside an air vent beneath a horizontal grating on a busy traffic island in Times Square, New York. The sounds, likened by listeners to the after-ring of a large bell, are emitted as a sound 'sculpture' or, as he describes it, a column of sound, disrupting the expected sounds of the place on the part of the passerby. Additionally, as he states, the sounds are for people who are 'ready to discover' his aural landscape:

> I never do a piece where I'm not sure that 50 percent of the people who come across it will walk right through it without hearing it. And that means its available without imposition, that people find it when they're ready to find it, and by making it anonymous, it means that they can claim it as their own...[34]

The 'place works' (Neuhaus's term) occurred in places of transit by the insertion of sounds within staircases and corridors, his aim being to 'get something to happen within the listeners.' Taking a staircase and calling it 'a big column of air' at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art in 1978-9,[35] for example, he filled the space with a thirty-channel speaker system playing discreet high-pitched sounds. This piece appears to have met with mixed success (or success as we learn from his anecdote). Some of the listeners were unaware of its presence until the piece was switched off, but sensed merely its absence.

The acoustic expectations of a particular place animated by insidious sounds that then cease, could therefore be proposed as a site (physical), minus another site (defined perhaps as phenomenological). This situation led in turn, to Neuhaus's further investigation of sound *absence* as a means of

---

[33] Ibid., quoted in A. Zuckerman, *Max Neuhaus's Times Square,* Arts Electric, 2002, http://www.arts-electric.org/articles0203/020530.neuhaus.html/info/bibliography, (accessed 29.10.2014)

[34] Ibid., http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/permanent,(accessed 29.10.2014).

[35] Ibid., http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/permanent, (accessed 29.10.2014).

highlighting sound presence, a concept explored far later by Francis Alÿs in his piece *One Minute of Silence,* mentioned later in the chapter.

The extended Minimalist concept of immersion and the denial of the visuality of the sound source were ideas explored by Neuhaus in the mid-1980s when he made a series of sonic explorations of gallery rooms, accompanied by drawings. In *Two Identical Rooms* of 1989, he presented two supposedly identical rooms with supposedly identical sounds but in one, the sounds shifted imperceptibly. In *Three Similar Rooms*, on the other hand, each space had a different sonic property so that the participant, on wandering from one room to another, experienced not so much a conscious change in sound quality, but more simply, a different sense, perhaps subconsciously, of immersion in the space. Neuhaus's work could be seen as analogous to the piece *Music for Sound Joined Rooms* (1980), by Maryanne Amacher,[36] an experimental composer and installation artist of the same generation who is succeeded by a number of sound artists involved in place-based works, particularly those of Bernard Leitner and Achim Wollscheid. Alvin Lucier, composer and maker of sound installations, is another major figure in the development of experiencing sound within spaces. His seminal work *I am Sitting in a Room* (1970), for voice and electromagnetic tape, deals with the perception of aural decay in an enclosed room.[37] Works such as *Four Rooms* (2005), by contemporary sound artist Jacob Kirkegaard, have explored sound in spaces as sites of unseen and inaudible trauma.[38] Louise K. Wilson[39] takes the histories and resonances of place to produce a wide-ranging series of sound works and installations. David Cunningham has experimented with the acoustic reflections of architectural space and with the use of the sounds made by visitors to a space, often the 'in-between' ones

---

[36] M. Amacher, *Maryanne Armacher,* http://maryanneamacher.org, (accessed 29.10.14) and http://ekhofemalesound.wordpress.com/2013/03/23/maryanne-amacher-music-for-sound-joined-rooms-1980/, (accessed 29.10.14).

[37] See list of works by A. Lucier, http://alucier.web.wesleyan.edu/, (accessed 29.10.14)

[38] J. Kirkegaard, *Four Rooms*, 2005, recorded at Chernobyl, http://www.touchmusic.org.uk/catalogue/jacob_kirkegaard_4_rooms_1.html, (accessed 29.10.14).

[39] L. Wilson, *Louise K. Wilson*, http://www.lkwilson.org/, (accessed 29.10.14).

of a corridor or lift.[40] My own sound works are usually located in such in-between spaces and I will describe these at greater length later in the thesis.

At a slight tangent, the role of Neuhaus's drawings is an interesting one. Do they reinforce ownership of his ephemeral sonic territory perhaps? Neither schematic nor pure reflection after the event, the drawings combine an ordered, almost architectural perspective alongside a brief description of how the piece is encountered. They are surely pieces of art in their own right, perhaps something akin to the way Christo has 'commodified' his ambitious projects such as the *Running Fence*, with saleable prints and drawings. But Neuhaus's works are more reflective and, ironically for a sound artist perhaps, silent. He considered these simple drawings to have the authority to be exhibited in their own right, both alongside and away from the more usual documentary photographic or recorded evidence expected of site specific sound pieces, which he himself actively resisted. There is little evidence of the sounds themselves since he rarely made recordings.

Neuhaus proposed a vector diagram of his site, and sound concerns emphasising his many approaches to the experience of sound in space under the headings: place, moment, performance, network, walks, passage, sensation and invention. In exploring everyday spaces and the relationship between the physical and the associative, Neuhaus could be seen, in one particular aspect, as an aural equivalent to Richard Serra, whose *Tilted Arc*, the latter maintained, should 'interrupt the flow' of people traversing a square. Unlike Serra however, the deliberate anonymity and transience of the work enacts an altogether different effect on the experiencer: an awareness of the effect of a sound on the self, as opposed to the awareness of the body in relation to an exterior object, acting as the 'voice' of a single artist.

The intention to bring this about is apparent in the following in which Neuhaus states

> The Passage works are situated in spaces where the physical movement of the listener through the space to reach a destination is inherent. They imply an

---

[40] D. Cunningham, *The Listening Room, Lift Corridor*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2003.

active role on the part of listeners, who set a static sound structure into
motion for themselves by passing through it. My first work with an aural
topography, *Drive-In Music* (1967–68) falls within this vector.[41]

Drive-in Music required drivers to pick up sounds from twenty radio
transmitters spaced out along a mile long route in Buffalo, New York. This
was his first semi-permanent sound work broadcast of electronic sounds,
which were picked up by passing car radios, the results varying according to
the weather conditions.

Phillipsz and everyday spaces

On a different scale, contemporary sound artist Susan Philipsz's recent sound
piece, *You are not Alone* (2010),[42] also used radio transmissions as a
democratic means of broadcasting sounds. Made for the Radcliffe
Observatory, Green Templeton College, re-creations of radio 'silences', were
played on a vibraphone and transmitted live from the gallery of Modern Art
Oxford, seemingly across the rooftops of the city. Visitors to the site
experienced this audio source as a series of pure and insistent tones when
they ascended the elliptical stone staircase into the observatory. Similarly,
Surround Me, *A Song Cycle for the City of London* (2010), an Artangel
commission, provided a static sound structure requiring an active role for
those passing through to be the negotiators of the sounds within the
designated sites.[43] The piece used six different outdoor locations at which
small speakers were mounted high up on office buildings playing recordings
at set intervals. Philipsz's own voice resonated through the empty streets,
alleys and spaces near the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange, picking
up on the Elizabethan street cries of London and making reference to the
romantic madrigals of the era. The sound work, a lone voice singing lyrics
alluding to mourning and loss during the years of the Great Plague, played at

---

[41] M. Neuhaus, *Soundworks,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info, (accessed 29.10.2014).

[42] S. Philipsz, *You are not Alone*, Modern Art Oxford, New York, E-Flux, http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/8191, (accessed 29.02.10).

[43] Ibid., *Surround Me: A Song Cycle for the City of London,* an Artangel commission, 2010, http://www.artangel.org.uk/surroundme, (accessed 29.02.10).

certain times at weekends when the City was almost empty, thus reinforcing a sense of desolation for the listener. As one waits for the recording to commence, "[t]he voice suddenly erupts," observed Iain Sinclair in his video made for the Tate Britain's Turner Prize programme.

> It is completely magical... suggesting that time in the City is plural, the Elizabethan voice can collide with the contemporary voice... we are in an acoustic bell jar. [44]

In this way, Philipsz created a piece which existed on two levels: as a timetabled, programmed series of sounds broadcasting across a physical space (for those who chose to visit the area specifically to listen), and also as a series of mysterious 'found' sounds within everyday spaces heard by passing listeners with no knowledge of the artist, her work, or indeed that the sounds constituted an art work. Both events were experienced in a 'space of resistance' (to the convention of the interior spaces of the concert hall or gallery), and one that has been inhabited over many centuries. The piece could therefore be considered as simultaneously a historical sound walk, an intervention, installation, performance and happening (given the progress of the listeners between the locations) which simply could not exist in this form on any other site.

It is debatable, however, just how well a work fares when it is conceived for a specific location, but becomes divorced from its original context when transferred to the environs of the gallery space. Philipsz's Turner prize-winning sound work, *Lowlands* (2010),[45] which was originally devised for a river walkway along the Clyde in Glasgow, struggles to provide the necessary atmosphere on which it depends, relying instead on the explanatory text as a prop. Rather than experience the work by walking through a working area to the accompaniment of water resonating under a stone bridge, the sound piece stagnates in the ever re-contextualising white cube of the empty Tate Britain gallery.

---

[44] Tate Shots: Iain Sinclair on Susan Phlipsz's *Surround Me*, [online video], 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISzXgoE7Dco, (accessed 21.01.2011).

[45] S. Philipsz, *Lowlands,* Turner Prize, Tate Britain, [online video], 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWeKzTDi-OA, (accessed 21.01.2011).

For the purposes of this thesis, Philipsz is cited for three main reasons: she is as an artist who has taken her sounds temporarily into everyday spaces, making use of the sonic properties of particular surfaces and architectures, for the sonification of historical references and for the active engagement required of her audience. (It is to be noted however, that the sounds themselves are often straightforward songs that do not tend to question or push the boundaries of expected sounds in public spaces).

My final example of her work demonstrates all three aspects. *Soundtest* (2011), was installed on the railway platform of Kassel's old Hauptbahnhof for Documenta 13, in 2012 as a set of seven speakers dotted around the end of several long platforms. The platform on which the audience stood had been the site of mass transportation. Based on the remaining fragments of Pavel Haas's *Study for Strings* of 1943 written whilst in camp Terezin, past atrocities and losses are recalled in a recording of a series of slowly building notes played on stringed instruments. Whilst leading in her historical references, Philipsz allows those without this prior knowledge to gain much from the experience of discovery by directing them to an isolated place to ask questions of the site. Unlike Neuhaus or Fontana, the nature of the human absence evoked in these musical fragments comes through the association with place as a historical site. Neuhaus's associations of presence and absence however, tend to come from the more phenomenological aspects that the site presents.

Something of a pioneer in his extension of sound into site and sound into artistic practice, Neuhaus has also extended the expectation of the listener in terms of sites, sounds and meaning, aiming to encourage the audience to discover the work for themselves, preferably by accident. He describes his site specificity and the way he collects and 'tunes' the sounds found and recorded on the site, much in the way a that painter may approach the blending of colours. Notably, he discovered the power of an absence, experienced in the projects entitled *Moment* (circa 2003), in which he

investigated the possibilities of inserting silence into the sound field; projects he called 'time pieces' that involved whole communities.[46]

In assessing the importance of Neuhaus to the site specific in sound art I will briefly introduce Miwon Kwon's three overlapping paradigms of the site specific as detailed in her book *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, (2004). She introduces these as the social-institutional, the phenomenological-experiential and the discursive. Neuhaus's works could therefore be analysed as follows:

The *social-institutional* as public places used communally and which Neuhaus then interrupts with sound.

The *phenomenonological* represents awareness of the sounds or, at its most extreme, the experiencers' failure to notice a sound piece at all.

The *discursive* ultimately draws our attention to the immersive and transformative nature of listening itself.

In conclusion, this new 'place', predicated on sound, is one of many contexts, architectures, territories and struggles, negotiated as a physical place, concept or mental construct. By highlighting, inserting or removing sound within a place, as interrupted airspace, psyche or referent, Neuhaus, Fontana, and to some extent Philipsz, have taken the notion of the site specific into hitherto uncharted territory: that of immersive, associative sound works made available to an audience outside of the gallery or concert hall. After all, as Neuhaus observed in his interview with Brandon LaBelle in Berlin (2008), the sound is not the work itself but sound is what he uses in order to make a work out of a place.

What of the role of a more *performative* approach to site specific sound however? Not so much one that demands considerable immersion, but one that brings a more personal content to the work? Although Neuhaus commenced his career as a performer he remained a presence behind the scenes in his sound works. Other artists have chimed with the more performative aspect of my practice however and a reflection on some of the narrative sound works by Janet Cardiff follows.

---

[46] M. Neuhaus, *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/vectors/moment, (accessed 29.10.2014).

Cardiff and narrative sound

Blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction in relation to sound, Canadian artist Janet Cardiff, working with George Bures Miller, undertakes many roles, acting as a self-appointed guide. For the Whitechapel audio walk, *The Missing Voice, Case Study B* (1999),[47] she acts as interpreter, narrator, ethnographer and social commentator, unpicking what is expected of sounds, particularly voices, in a specific location and makes sure she is patently 'in the way', as a presence, (as opposed to Fontana's stance of being 'out of the way'). Borrowing from conventions of cinema, sculpture, installation and science fiction, she is surely indebted to artist Sophie Calle in her quest to undermine the sense of our own psychological boundaries between reality and invention, detachment and engagement, the pursuer and the pursued.

Is she a sound artist who deals with site? In its very theatricality, the constructed interior works could be described as having an invented site specificity to them. For example, *Opera For a Small Room* of 2005[48] (the room is only viewable from the outside though a window), installed in Modern Art, Oxford (2008), is a room within a room suggestive of a 'reconstructed' space or tableau, rather akin to the static, 'recreated' rooms in the museum atmosphere of a house of a long-dead literary figure. This is perhaps very similar, at least in description, to Duchamp's curious last work, *Étant Donnés*.

In relation to this thesis, the site specific element most relevant to Cardiff's work is the engagement with associations of the space. Some works also demonstrate her interest in a more formal encounter with the architectural physicality of the space. These include the works *Pandemonium* (2005), devised for and installed in the Eastern State Penitentiary museum,[49]

---

[47] J. Cardiff, *The Missing Voice (Case Study B),* Art Angel commission, London, UK, http://www.artangel.org.uk//projects/1999/the_missing_voice_case_study_b/, (accessed 29.10.14).

[48] Ibid., *Opera for a Small Room, Pandemonium, Blue Hawaii Bar, Paradise Institute, The Muriel Lake Incident*, Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller site, http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/opera.htm, (accessed 29.10.14).

[49] Ibid., http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks, (accessed 29.10.14).

and *Blue Hawaii Bar* (2007),[50] installed in an atmospheric water reservoir beneath a museum building in Darmstadt. *Paradise Institute,*[51] originally made for the 2001 Venice Biennale but also installed at Modern Art, Oxford (2008), was an installation consisting of a re-creation of a small cinema on a doll's house scale, incorporating binaural microphones to recreate stereo hearing, thus playing back a narration experienced 'inside' the head, sounding a subconscious speaking voice. An earlier smaller version was entitled, *The Muriel Lake Incident*, (1999).[52] All these installations consider site, scale and the equivalent interiority of speaking as thinking, reflecting and remembering. The site, though viewed as a collection of materials, is one that is suggested and woven from narrated fragments that are then interiorised by the listener through headphones.

However, the concept of site and its associations, if not the actual use of site specificity, is certainly *referenced* within Cardiff's use of storytelling in recorded sound walks, with voices, accounts of dreams, narratives, and oblique allusions to the relationship between the unspecified male and female protagonists, played out through headphones whilst the listeners undertake a walk. [53] Two elements of performance are also suggested; the initial recorded scenario and the audience, walking to an instruction.

Cardiff also draws on theories of the history of memory as set out by Frances A. Yates in *The Art of Memory* (1966), and her interest in the "problems of the mental image, of the activation of images, of the grasp of reality through [imagined] images."[54] Against this backdrop, Cardiff creates new sites, using objects, images, and sounds together in rooms built like

---

[50] Ibid., http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks. (accessed 29.10.14).

[51] Ibid., http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks. (accessed 29.10.14).

[52] J. Cardiff, *Opera for a Small Room, Pandemonium, Blue Hawaii Bar, Paradise Institute, The Muriel Lake Incident*, Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller site, http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/opera.html, (accessed 29.10.14)

[53] C. Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff, a Survey of Works Including Collaborations with Georges Bures Miller*, exhibition catalogue, second ed., P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, MoMA, N.Y October, 2003.

[54] F. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Pimlico, London, Random House, 1988, p.14.

stage-sets, acting like mnemotechnic devices to jolt our own submerged memories. Yates describes this device of seeking to memorise (and memorialise?) as a much-prized skill prior to the invention of the printing press: "a technique of impressing 'places' and 'images' on memory."[55]

In particular, Cardiff's *Dark Pool* (1996),[56] a room installation showing detritus that suggests the result of a house clearance, is evocative of Yates's observation of a place once known, forgotten, and recalled. The audience can wander at will, triggering unexpected sounds with the shadows cast by their own hands. Small speakers are interspersed amongst old objects and mechanical apparatuses, embedded in 1950s style horns and in overturned paper cups. The everyday object, something with which we can all identify, is disturbed, once again taking centre stage.

Using convoluted narratives and encouraging the listener to 'inhabit' another persona in her sound walk recordings, provides another way for Cardiff to manipulate the narratives and experience of site. Similarly, she follows on the heels of Bill Fontana and Susan Phillipsz in her use of a railway station, this time in Kassel, as the location of a video tour. A more dramatic use of audio, also devised for Documenta 13,[57] occurs in *Forest, for a thousand years* (2012), in the clearing of a wood in Kassel's Aue park, in which a complex, time-based audio composition unfolds through thirty hidden speakers.

This use of controlled or guided sounds to navigate a space could be argued as being the complete antithesis to composer and sound ecologist, Hildegard Westerkamp's [58] approach to awareness of place through her

---

[55] F. Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[56] J. Cardiff, *Dark Pool*, http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/darkpool.html, Janet Cardiff, George Bures Miller site, also seen and heard by the author at Modern Art Oxford, 2008, (accessed 29.10.14).

[57] J. Cardiff and G. Miller, *Alter Bahnhof video walk* and *Forest, for a thousand years,* The guidebook, Documenta 13 catalogue, in C. Christov-Bakargiev (ed.), H. Cantz, Germany, 2012, p.334.

[58] The observations are based on the author's own experience of joining a soundwalk led by Hildegard Westerkamp in Darmstadt, July 2012.
See: H. Westerkamp, *Vancouver Soundwalk,* World Forum for Acoustic Ecology site, http://wfae.proscenia.net/library/index.html, (accessed 29.10.14).

'listening' sound walks and also those presented by Max Neuhaus. Whereas one might say that Cardiff devises or imposes her own stories of a place (adding herself to it), the accepted convention of a sound walk is to allow the listener to receive, but also to extrapolate their *own* semantic meaning from the sounds heard (taking something away from the situation for themselves) thereby becoming a more immersed listening participant. For Cardiff, the experience of place and listening is controlled by what is devised and delivered through the headphones, an approach owing much to theatre. For Westerkamp however, the very act of listening exercises its own control and results in a more meditative awareness of place. Both have validity in delivering sounds in a space in which individual and communal contexts, engagement and recognition, are constantly tested.

The success and popularity of Cardiff's site specific works may be due in part to the narrative based 'entertainment' aspect of the work, although many will question the compromises which have been made to accommodate the different, and often problematic approaches required to navigate alternative spaces. She is useful in this thesis however for raising the profile and public awareness of what can be achieved with site specific sound as an engaged art form, reaching wider audiences in both gallery, significantly non-gallery and outdoor spaces.

Space and geographies

In seeking additional overviews of artists working site specifically (particularly those using sound), Judith Rugg's *Exploring Site Specific Art, Issues of Space and Internationalism* (2010),[59] has been valuable. She considers the site specific from an international perspective but retains a U.K. focus citing many temporary projects, varying from the simple gesture to the grand statement. Women artists are also well represented in this study. Twenty different examples of temporary site specific projects located outside the conventional gallery space are given, of which I will cite four that

---

[59] J. Rugg, *Exploring Site Specific Art, Issues of Space and Internationalism*, London, I.B.Taurus, 2010.

feature sound. Echoing De Certeau, I suggest that Rugg refers to these works as 'texts,' reinforcing a distinction here that deals with the notion of the temporary as a *dissonant* element, yet one of value that contests the certainties of the construction of place. This is seen as being in opposition to the *affirmation* and *commodification* often generated by the relationship between public art and wider issues of urbanisation and regeneration.

There is a recognition of the shift in the debates relating to public art, architecture and public space when Rugg refers to Jane Rendall in *Art and Architecture, a Place Between* (2006).[60] Rendall's influential reflections on the boundaries between art and architecture highlight a particular place of critical spatial practice that moves from the *physical* object to the *discursive field* of the conditions of site. Within the context of the site specific, this flags up a more recent emphasis on the need to be informed by spatial theories in terms of the commissioning, locating, making and reception of such a contemporary art practice. These debates inform the politics of what Rugg calls a form of space consciousness in considering the "non spectacle of the transient, the short-lived and the site specific."[61]

Drawing on urban and social theories, critical geography, feminist, post-colonial, and cultural theories, as well as on the political and social dynamics within international spatial contexts of site specific art, Rugg highlights a number of categories under which to analyse these pieces. Her enquiries centre on the environment, cultural identity, displacement, migration, marginalisation, urbanism and tourism. This study seems somewhat detached and incomplete however as she rarely acknowledges the intentions for the works, neither on behalf of the artists, nor in terms of their critical reception, both of which are important components in advancing the debates of site specificity.

The potential of transient art is recognised in this study, which Rugg defines as "a site of critical engagement, fleeting intensity and intervention

---

[60] J. Rendell, *Art and Architecture: a Place Between*, London, I.B.Tauris, 2006.

[61] J. Rugg, *Exploring Site Specific Art, Issues of Space and Internationalism*, London, I.B.Taurus, 2010, p.2

that reveals the relationships in play within the spatial."[62] These further questions regarding inside/outside, public/private, identification/privation, reinforce once again, Lefebvre's notion that space is both psychologically and culturally positioned.[63]

An example of this psychic space is introduced in David Ward's *Nocturne* (from 2005/06),[64] an image of a star constellation projected at night onto the walls of the church of St Michael Paternoster Royal in London, EC4. This included the playback of summer birdsong heard in the adjacent churchyard gardens. Rugg describes this work as creating a new 'hallucinatory' space, at odds with the buildings themselves and transcending the materiality of place. She calls the experience (did she herself experience it?) *immersive* and, rather emotively, 'dream-like and magical' but also successfully confusing in the apparent collapse of spatial and aural orientation. The very title of a Nocturne, usually used in a musical sense, adroitly suggests a 'between' and a time when nocturnal sounds are heard but the source is not seen, perhaps promoting a kind of *longing* for an imagined 'elsewhere'. It is interesting to note that in my terms, this is a seafarers' church that may render the projection of the constellation, with its connection to early maritime navigation, more resonant and more 'associative'. Rugg references Susan Stewart's *On Longing* (2001),[65] in her evocation of longing as a refusal of the present. This is perhaps apparent in Ward's projections that make day-for-night references, in which one time of day is ousted by another, whilst the urban context is substituted for a celestial or Arcadian one. As a site specific piece, the work seems to be about displacement and the creation of a suggested (and desirable) yet temporary,

---

[62] J. Rugg, *op. cit.*, p.2.

[63] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Wiley Blackwell, 1991, p.28.

[64] D. Ward, *Nocturne*, [installation] (26 November 2005 – 29 January 2006), one of four artists' commissions undertaken in the City of London, from dusk until midnight commissioned by the Department of Planning & Transportation, Corporation of London, http://www.modusoperandi-art.com, (accessed 03.11).

[65] S. Stewart, *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2001.

new space. The intentions the artist brought to the piece are less clear in this text however.

A wider notion of the interruption of a public space is suggested in the work, *One Minute of Silence* (2003), by Francis Alÿs and Rafael Ortega set in Panama City.[66] In this piece, set within a busy restaurant in a busy street, a kind of Chinese whisper request is passed round, causing one minute of silence to be 'inserted' into the city. By using what Rugg calls "anti-spectacle," marking out a moment of "insight, surprise and reflection,"[67] she proposes Alÿs' idea of silence as a kind of simultaneous remembering and forgetting of Latin America's politically 'disappeared.' She concludes that the whilst the performativity of this work encompasses political, financial, and historical instability, it also highlights spaces of exclusion reminding us that "the contexts for belonging are always in flux."[68] Alÿs, it seems, is following the example of Max Neuhaus in recognising the powerful irony of absence, or enforced silences, in the politicised sonic environment.

The notion of the pleasure garden as an idealised place however, is presented in the sound work of Anna Best collaborating with composer Paul Whitty.[69] *Vauxhall Pleasure* (2004), was an event incorporating sound and music, staged in a single day at a busy gyratory traffic junction in South London. Fifty professional singers took part, performing re-arrangements of songs by the eighteenth century composer, Thomas Arne, one of the many in residence at the original Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. They sang in relays, as solos, duos, and groups, to drivers and passers-by, 'conducted' by the timings of the traffic lights. The car is interpreted as a site of public delusion here, that alienates in this context of dense, noisy traffic but which ironically offers status and the freedom of the road. Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, though long

---

[66] F. Alÿs and R. Ortega, *One Minute of Silence* [artwork], (2003), in J. Rugg, *Exploring Site Specific Art, Issues of Space and Internationalism*, London, I.B.Taurus, 2010, p.63.

[67] J. Rugg, *op. cit.,* p.66

[68] J. Rugg, *op. cit.,* p.66.

[69] A. Best and P. Whitty, *Vauxhall Pleasure*, [sound work], in partnership with Parabola, 2004.

gone, is alluded to in song as a kind of perfect 'gardenhood' and a place of illicit pleasures and escape.

How this piece was received is not discussed but it seems to have fulfilled many of the criteria that suggest a successful approach to temporary site specificity: that of incongruity, surprise, nomadic transience and sounds, songs (in this historic case), as a trigger for the displacement, replacement and the privileging of historical associations.

It seems that site specific art is at its most successful in approaches that embrace incongruity, displacement, antagonism, the highlighting and undermining of the everyday, and a certain immersive destabilisation of expectations of space, whether psychic or physical. The transient nature of most of the works cited is seen as advantageous in allowing the ephemeral, thought-based process of the framing and reception of the work to take precedence over the contemplation of a physical art object. Is the experience ultimately framed *for* the viewer or does the viewer frame the experience? Hopefully the engagement is a reciprocal one. Art, (in its widest interpretation) it seems, particularly when situated in an unfamiliar place, however, has the power to provoke, disturb and transform. Later chapters will take this further in relation to the integration of these ideas within my own practice.

My concern in this thesis is not with the debates of public space, art and architecture, nor with the notion of the over-arching artist statement as the wider intention for a work. It is rather an engagement with the disquieting effects that are produced when site specific sound works act as interventions and address these issues more obliquely on a smaller scale, experienced outside of their expected contexts. Indeed, there is a question at this relatively early stage in the development of sound art as to whether it can yet be said to have any 'expected' context? This is surely an advantage to us as practitioners, allowing for greater freedoms and collaborations. After all, it is in the interventionist works of Max Neuhaus that his listeners were most often stretched in questioning whether they were indeed, 'hearing things' at all.

Conclusions

In the analysis of what has effectively been six decades of site specific art, latterly giving emphasis to sound-led practices, what conclusions can be drawn from this study and how has it informed and advanced the practice?

We have encountered the notion of a *space* as a form of painterly ground for activity which is never neutral (according to Lefebvre) but which can be explored as a given (as Duchamp's 'readymade') and beyond this as a slice of real life (Vostell's vie trouvé). Taking the painting analogy further, the space or site can be considered as *absorbent ground*, or one which takes on the researches around it and activities within it: in this case sounds becoming one with the work, just as a painted ground is integral to the canvas.

As a *physical* space, the site specific is one inhabited by 'outlaws from many artistic disciplines' but could equally be a place where extended disciplines meet. It is a place of encounter, dissonance, displacement, incongruity, surprise and shifting expectations: a place of absence and presence and a psychological space, which questions the parameters of the public and private.

If the earlier stated definition of site specificity in the visual arts has been considered as: *an object*, *by an artist*, *in a space,* then a significant shift can be detected. This is seen from Meyer's description of the literal, locational site, to his more functional or discursive site (as operational), often situated in places of so-called resistance. The role of the artist now embraces a new set of expectations and practices to be considered as *a process* (as the research-based experiential)*, led by *an artist (*as a presence or performer*), in a space* (contextualised as socio-political and democratic), the results of which are seen today to be far more aware, engaged and widely disseminated. As an extension of the roles and practices of the artist, sound has come to the fore as an invaluable tool and a vital sense.

Penone, (in Kaye, 1996) asserted that an artist should attempt to find the form within the material, rather than use the material to find the form. The material in the context of the site specific practice under discussion is the place and its associations, whilst the form becomes the event. The 'site-

responsive artist' however (as McIver,[70] echoing Duchamp asserts), can only *take*, not *make*. I would argue, however, that the act of taking, and furthermore, of taking on in order to create something new, can encompass and generate many new ideas.

As established in the study, the importance of the everyday is another form of liberation for both artist and experiencer, given that in objects, as Proust once declared "the past is hidden somewhere outside the realm of the intellect, in material objects which we do not suspect".[71] Outside the realm of the intellect is perhaps where the experience of site specific sound aspires to be, and perhaps sound, as an intangible material in site specific practices, ultimately has the capacity to neither succumb to nor reject the visual in being able, as Pierre Schaeffer reflected, to dwell in all things.[72] Max Neuhaus's anonymous sound works may come close to this ideal.

The study has been valuable in providing a frame for the practice to suggest how and when to reflect and ways in which to progress. By building on this knowledge in my practice, I hope to demonstrate that sound belongs altogether in a wholly new site specific category.

---

[70] G. McIver, *Art/Site/Context*, Site Specific Art, http://sitespecificart.org.uk/6.htm, (accessed 04 April 2011).

[71] M. Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Gasset & Gallimard, 1927.

[72] P. Schaeffer, *In Search of Concrete Music,* transl. C. North and J. Dack, University of California press, 2012.

Chapter Two: Site specificity and hearing spaces

In the first section of Chapter Two, I reflect on the history, debates and significance of site specificity as a form of critique in which I situate my own sound art practice. I then address sound in relation to various histories and agendas of space and as an artistic medium.

Beyond the white cube: Duchamp's on-going legacy

Artist and writer Brian O' Doherty scrutinised the purpose of the gallery in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space,*[73] and questioned our modernistic acceptance of the space as a grand, quasi- religious gesture: a sealed off, white-painted, timeless space in which we absent ourselves within what he calls an "eternity of display," in favour of the disembodied "eyes of the spectator." Inside the white cube there are deliberately few distractions to this experience of reading the object, to the extent that even "the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your own body, seems superfluous, an intrusion." [74]

Latterly, a wider reading of the box has allowed for new situations to develop that provoke different readings of the art object, reaching other audiences for whom it constitutes perhaps a more desirable space of resistance or struggle.   We are thereby prompted to question how mental spaces are reconciled with the physical spaces of our own experience. I aim to question the role of this newer space and suggest other alternatives through the sound works under discussion later in the thesis.

Prior to O' Doherty, the convention of the picture frame as an isolating and editing device was interrogated by Marcel Duchamp who also led the way in challenging the authority of the private and the institutional gallery space, and what it is expected to contain. His work, for example, *Sixteen Miles of String* (1942), a gallery criss-crossed with string, is echoed by Yves Klein's

---

[73] B. O' Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, LA and London, University of California Press, 1999

[74] ibid. p.7

later work *The Void* (1958) (Le Vide), an empty gallery space. This piece was later answered by Arman's work *Le Plein* (1960), which consisted of a gallery filled with garbage. Contemporary artist Martin Creed for example, has continued in this vein with many of his pieces including *work no. 227: The lights going on and off* (2000). Each work sets out to challenge the assumptions of the white cube, the value of its contents, the validity of the art object, and the notion of a gesture providing an encounter with the spectator.

Site specificity as critique

In his introduction to Judith Rugg's *Exploring Site Specific Art: Issues of Space and Internationalism,* Barry Curtis notes that impermanent, transient, performative, interventionist, and non-spectacle driven artworks can operate in many ways.[75] For instance, they might draw attention to the overlooked, or as he says, to "suggest expressive possibilities that are latent in interactions between artists and environments."[76] Though short-lived, in highlighting other roles for these artworks, he observes they have the "capacity to animate and linger as catalysts for memory and debate," in the process, troubling the familiar organisation of public spaces.[77]

Site specific art works are therefore of significance in their potential to challenge the spaces in which art can be experienced, contesting not only the expectations of the white cube, but also traditional art world hierarchies, notions of authorship, inter-disciplinarity, and wider-reaching spatial theories. Daniel Buren's identification of the gap between the artist's studio and the gallery or museum space as a possible place for the ideal location of site specific artwork, is also an interesting one to examine, suggesting a valuable state between thought and commodity.[78] As the influential American artist Bruce Nauman came to declare publicly in the mid-1960s, if

---

[75] J. Rugg, *op. cit.,* p.xiii

[76] Ibid. p. xiii

[77] Ibid. p. xiii

[78] D. Buren, *Five Texts*, London, John Weber Gallery, 1973.
  Ibid., *The Function of the Studio*, transl. T. Repensek, Art Forum,1971.

you are an artist making work in a studio, however ephemeral, then what results must surely be art.

Therefore the artist, on her/his approach to devising a work for an 'alternative' space, may well consider some or all of the following issues:

- an interior or exterior space
- the physical and architectural characteristics and materials
- the nature of the acoustics
- place of transit, waiting or commerce
- domestic
- industrial
- educational or institutional
- the users of the space and whether they are to be involved as participants in some way, albeit perhaps unwittingly
- the histories and associations of a place

These associations, apparent or suggested by the site, wait to be uncovered, allowing the site specific sound artist to assume successively, many mantels: of amateur historian, researcher, ethnographer, deviser, director, acoustic technician, performer-improviser, documenter and also audience.

James Meyer in *The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity* (1995), makes an important distinction between two forms of site.[79] Acknowledging that site specificity has its origins predominately in 1960s and 1970s activist art and performance, conceptualism, and aspects of earth art and minimalism, he also recognises that the debates have moved on significantly since that period. Due largely to opportunities for virtual, global connections, a greater awareness of the role of the critique and reception of the artwork has arisen. Consequently, there has been a displacement in the concept of what can now constitute site specific art.

---

[79] J. Meyer, 'From the Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity', in E. Suderburg, (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p.25.

Meyer introduces a distinction between the *literal* site and what he calls the *functional* site, that is, according to Joseph Kosuth, moving from an actual location to a site that may or may not involve a physical place but is more a form of process, as a means of critique.[80] Meyer describes this as follows:

> It certainly does not privilege this place. Instead, it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations... an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places and things... an allegorical site... the functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity. It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories.[81]

Meyer draws on Douglas Crimp in 1986, whose writings on Richard Serra expand on the perceived threat of site specific art to the gallery system. Meyer quotes Crimp as follows: "Site specificity opposed that idealism – and unveiled the material system it obscured – by its refusal of circulatory mobility, its belongingness to a *specific* site."[82]

This shift in site is seen as the antithesis to the modernist ideal which still privileges the voice of the artist or, as Crimp puts it, the romantic myth of the artist as a unique producer. Changes of expectation of a site will inevitably change the relationship of viewer to an artwork and viewer to the artist.

Meyer notes that Crimp's claim (that the aim of site specificity, particularly in relation to Serra was interrogative) is now, twenty-five years on, contestable since the supporting evidence is not necessarily there. The immersive need to "render one conscious of one's body in this existing ambience," the need to 'be there' to experience the authenticity and 'actualness,' risked imposing, Meyer complained, "rigorous, even puritanical

---

[80] J. Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After, Collected Writings*, 1966-1990, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991, p.134.

[81] J. Meyer, 'From the Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity', in E. Suderburg, (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p.25.

[82] D. Crimp, *Redefining Site Specificity, On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1993.

demands: attendance at a particular site or performance; an extended, often excruciating duration."[83]

Meyer's opinion is that site specificity, rooted in 1960s happenings, has moved away from immersion, (and Merleau Ponty's phenomenology of the consciousness of the 'lived experience') and the aesthetics of minimalism, to the "modernist impulse of 'reflexivity' or critique."[84] Within this expanded functional site, therefore, is a new sense of what constitutes the art system. Meyer continues:

> Today, much practice explores an expanded site, enlarging its scope of enquiry into contingent spheres of interest, contingent locations. This expanded institutional critique is as much at home in natural history and anthropological collections, in zoos, parks, housing projects, and public bathrooms, as in the art gallery or museum; it may engage several sites, institutions and collaborators at once.[85]

In discussing the role of the 'function' *as* the artwork, Meyer acknowledges that the artist-producer will be instrumental in decisions made, and that whilst some artists have a *functional* understanding in approaching a site, others maintain a *literal* one. Place should not simply be experienced, but it should act as both a social and a discursive entity. This provides an interesting precursor to Miwon Kwon's emphasis on the discursive in relation to site specificity, which I will expand on later in this section.

As a physical site to be engaged with and moved on from, Robert Smithson writes about place as a 'tour,' in relation to his earthwork *Spiral Jetty* (1970).[86] Meyer reflects on the nature of the liminal spaces chosen as sites that are mobile, non-places, ruins or fringe spaces, wastelands, in-between spaces, described, he maintains, (alluding to Deleuze and Guattari

---

[83] J. Meyer, 'From the Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity', in E. Suderburg, (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p.26.

[84] M. Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, transl. C. Smith, London, Routledge, 1962.

[85] J. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p.27.

[86] R. Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, [sculpture], Salt Lake City, Utah, 1970.
 Ibid., *The collected Writings*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996.

reinforced by Jane Rendell,[87]), as principally nomadic. Meyer suggests such nomadic subjectivity can be seen in Gabriel Orozco's reframed found objects work, *Yellow Scooters* (1995). Here one also finds the practice of artists concerned with taxonomy such as Mark Dion, the human interactions made by Sophie Calle and Andrea Fraser's institutional critique of the art world through her enacted scenarios situated in museums and hotel rooms:

> The conditions of context-based work are hardly optimum. The artist must work within the parameters of often, unfocused curatorial concepts and is often not paid for his or her efforts. The interaction of the local community and art-world interlopers can range from hostile to indifferent.[88]

Combining easier, cheaper air travel with the removal or relaxing of borders, greater artist mobility has been achieved, effecting the displacement of the notion of a literal site. Meyer concludes:

> Thus the displacement from the literal site of the 1960s, grounded in the verities of phenomenological experience, to a mobile, mediated placement follows the global reach of capitalism itself… the culture that site specificity sought to resist.[89]

For Meyer a successful site-related work is difficult to achieve but ideally tackles this new mobility by offering a model of place that is both mobile *and* contingent. The interrogative role of the artist and the struggles that ensue are very current however, and much explored by contemporary exponents of site specificity for whom the literal site, a renewed interest in performance, and the advantages of the liveness of 'being there' (discussed further in Chapter Five), provide a rich source of investigation.

Framing theories of site specificity

One of the difficulties in locating sound art within site specificity is highlighted in Alan Licht's article covering some of the roots and aesthetics of

---

[87] J. Rendell, *op. cit.*

[88] J. Meyer, *op. cit.,* p.34.

[89] Ibid. p.34

sound art as primarily a problem. As he describes it, a discreet definition is lacking but he acknowledges the many complex overlaps with more established disciplines:

> Sound art's relationships to the '60s art movements earthworks, ambient music, sound by visual artists, architecture, sound sculpture, surveillance, sound design and sound ecology... contextualises its significance not only to different disciplines within the arts to but sound's place in contemporary society.[90]

Similarly, in her book, *One Place After Another: Site specific Art and Locational Identity,* Miwon Kwon acknowledges the great complexity in attempting to define the term site specificity. She describes it as "an intertextually co-ordinated, multiply located, discursive field of operation," in which the artist-installer no longer looks to a material object inhabiting a space but tends to engage more holistically with the selected site.[91] As an example, recent Turner Prize winner Susan Philipsz's commissioned sound piece *Surround Me,* required the audience to follow a specific map to walk between the designated sites in the city of London, causing the 'frame' of the listening experience to be determined both geographically and temporally by the listeners, giving them greater ownership of the experience.[92] Sound art continues to be problematic however since it can straddle, not only many disciplines and media, but also multiple modes of sensory engagement. If the notion of site specificity in itself came to be concerned with the questioning and exploring of the inseparability of the work and its broader contexts (for example, locations and identities), then the condition of the site specific as a new art practice certainly has much to offer the sound artwork.

There are three particular forms of site specificity proposed by Kwon.[93] Each relate to the different means of inhabiting and interacting with the

---

[90] A. Licht, 'Sound Art', Organised Sound, Vol,14, issue 1.

[91] M. Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2004, p.30.

[92] S. Philipsz, *Surround Me, A song Cycle for the City of London,* [sound work], Artangel commission, http://www.artangel.org.uk/surroundme, 2010 (accessed 29 February 2010). Also derived from author's direct experience of the work.

connotations of space previously discussed in relation to Meyer, and are expressed as the following paradigms:

- Phenomenological/experiential
- Social/Institutional
- Discursive

Kwon's forms are further drawn on and interpreted by Sylvie Fortin, in her writings on the site specific nature of the works of Janet Cardiff, as an echo of Jacques Lacan's concepts of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.[94]

Perhaps the roles suggested here are for the artist-performer operating within a site specific situation, to echo and expand on Kwon's paradigms by initially being a kind of conduit for the phenomenological, (the experience) via the social/institutional, (the physical site and users) culminating in providing a forum for the discursive, (as a form of dialogue). Additionally, the results and meanings, often experienced solely through documentary dissemination, can lead to a connection to a far wider audience.

However, this idea of a nomadic narrative, by which the "transformation of the site textualizes space and spatializes discourses"[95] is also in danger of becoming, 'unhinged' in the sense of being dislocated not only from the physicality of the actual site, but also from more traditional artistic values such as aesthetics, authenticity, originality or uniqueness. In other words, Kwon maintains that "[a]uthorship is relegated to the conditions of the site," and this 'unhinging' prompts the question as to how site specificity might now be considered, perhaps undesirably, as a commodity in place of the object.[96] Moreover, she asks: "What is the

---

[93] M. Kwon, *op. cit.,* p.30.

[94] S. Fortin, 'Journeys through Memory and other Impossible Homecomings', in J. Cardiff, *A Survey of Works including Collaborations with Georges Buren*, *C. Christov Bakargiev*, New York, PS1 Contemporary Art Centre, 2003.

[95] M. Kwon, *op.cit.*, p.29

[96] M. Kwon, *op. cit.,* p. 30

commodity status of anti-commodities, that is, immaterial, process-orientated, ephemeral, performative events?"[97]

Is this a form of resistance to the ideologies of the art world and the white cube, or a parallel to the capitalist tendencies of expansion? Put another way, exactly what role does the artist fulfil if we acknowledge that there has been a shift from 'producer of aesthetic objects' to 'cultural artistic service provider'?

Artist and writer Mary Kelly, notes the tendency for art practices to move away from medium specificity and observes that what she calls a new "debate specificity" has superseded it.[98] The term joins a list of many others I have collected during this research regarding the concerns and agendas of site specificity: site determined, site orientated, site referenced, site conscious, site associative, site related, site responsive, context specific, location specific, situation specific and audience specific. These terms suggest a dilemma for many of the theorists of site specificity: that the borders and instabilities in this area are related to the very concepts of the site specific artwork itself - essentially and ultimately a site of struggle in how it is defined, conceived, pursued and perceived.

The notion of the urban dominates her arguments as Kwon highlights the uncritical adoption of the term by art institutions and funding bodies applied indiscriminately and cynically as a sign of appearing to be progressive in addressing urban regeneration. The realm therefore becomes more public, the artist more nomadic, the site

> operating more like an itinerary than a map – the site can now be as various as a billboard, an artistic genre, a disenfranchised community, an institutional framework, a magazine page, a social cause, or a political debate. It can be literal, like a street corner, or virtual, like a theoretical concept.[99]

The artists' project risks becoming another commodity and will often require her/him to work alongside town planners, architects, sponsors and

---

[97] M. Kwon, *op. cit.,* p. 31

[98] Mary Kelly coined this term when interviewed by D. Crimp, in *Mary Kelly*, London, Phaidon Press, 1997,

[99] M. Kwon, *op.cit.,* p.3.

galleries as commissioning bodies and agents, all of whom are involved in the making, selling, collecting and 'distribution' of the site specific. This is considered by Kwon as "a betrayal of earlier aspirations […] presuming the humanizing influence of art over the inhumanity of urban architecture."[100] As Rosalyn Deutsche drily observed, art now had to be useful.[101] Kwon explores what she calls the 'uneven triangle' of artist, commissioning institution, and community group, and the dangers of an overly bureaucratic lopsided ness within this fragile relationship.

On what she calls the 'dynamics of deterritorialization,' Kwon deals with the subject, object and location relationship by touching on those theorists who have dwelt on this urge to rethink 'place' as one of resistance. She refers to Frederic Jameson's *cognitive mapping*, Lucy Lippard's *Lure of the Local*, Kenneth Frampton's *Critical Regionalism*, Michel de Certeau's *Walking in the City*, and of course, Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space*. Using the theories of French Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy to describe the community as an unstable and 'inoperative' spectre, community as phantom and not a 'common being' but a 'being in common',[102] Kwon finally proffers that the site should host not community based art but "collective artistic praxis."[103]

The resulting and very real dangers of compromised and diluted ideas, second-rate art and a disappointed community is a problem that is under-acknowledged in Kwon's thesis. Much of her material relates to known artists whose profile is international and well supported by the gallery and museum system. She is less willing however, to acknowledge that at a much less ambitious but more local, even guerrilla level, this 'usefulness' is apparent in the more ad hoc, barely-funded site specific events which can still, perhaps because of this independence, retain a sense of innovation,

---

[100] M. Kwon, *op.cit.,* p.3.

[101] R. Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996.

[102] J.L. Nancy, 'Of Being in Common', in Miami Theory Collective, (eds.), *Community at Loose Ends,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

[103] M. Kwon, *op.cit.,* p.3.

engagement and critique. Whatever their support from post-structuralist theory, the projection of work into a 'community' is never quite as simple as Kwon's reference to 'praxis' and 'phantoms' suggests. I suggest that this 'usage' can now be genuinely that of a disrupted *thought*, as opposed to the mere presence of an *object* or a laboured debate, and that a sound, inserted temporarily into a space has the potential to do this very effectively.

The recent preference for the temporary, over the permanent site specific work, is acknowledged by Kwon who draws on the example of *Culture in Action,* a community based public art exhibition in Chicago during which this notion of public art as a series of "process orientated actions" was explored.[104] In this case, Kwon offers a typology of four suggested communities: community of mythic unity, 'sited' communities, temporary communities and invented communities. She further states that these are on-going debates and that there is no trend here. Furthermore, as good examples, she cites Hal Foster's ethnographic methods of critique,[105] Grant Kester's warning comment about 'aesthetic evangelism,'[106] and the art group, Critical Art Ensemble.[107] In the latter's approach to favouring being outside of jurisdictions and institutions and rejecting power-based approaches in their practices, this group is akin to site specific sound pioneer Wolf Vostell, preferring instead the Situationist-inspired strategies that they deem to be more nomadic and physical. Kwon notes that they believe in the power of the small subversive act that can provide a momentary disruption in the everyday order of a society, making use of sharp humour and strident, if not militaristic language. In the U.K., a valuable contribution to both public awareness and access to contemporary site specific art has been made by the

---

[104] M. Jacob, M. Brenson, and E. Oldson, *Culture in Action*, *New Public Art in Chicago*, [exhibition catalogue], Bay Press, Seattle, 1995. M. Kwon, *op.cit.,* p. 190.

[105] H. Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, Cambridge, MIT press, 1996.

[106] G. Kester, 'Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art', *Afterimage*, vol. 22, no. 6, 1995, pp.5-11.

[107] Critical Art Ensemble, 'Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas', *Autonomedia,* 1996, http://www.critical-art.net/Installations.html, (accessed 11.11.14) pp. 43-44.

commissioning body Artangel. However, Artangel is in turn deemed problematic in being an institution with the power to shape the agendas of subversion.

The Critical Art Ensemble's site specific approach appears to be the outlook of realists, if not healthy sceptics, and I sense theirs poses a far stronger position to adopt in order to channel the resistance that urges us to push at the restrictions of public spaces. Aspects of the nature and form of such resistance are demonstrated in my sound practice portfolio in works such as *Sonic Ritual* (2013) and *Sounding the Portal* (2013) and will be discussed later.

LaBelle and the conditions of site

The description of site specific sound-making which most closely conforms to the approach taken in my own art practice is described by Brandon LaBelle, in *Background Noise, Perspectives on Sound Art* (2006). He states:

> Such practice draws upon the given parameters and situation[s] and incorporates them into the making and presentation of the work itself. In this way, it is contextually aware, producing not so much an object of attention but a set of conditions by which context is brought into focus.[108]

The notion of context in focus is a crucial element in my sound works since this is what informs the making of the work itself. LaBelle observes that since space is both a material and a mental construct, conditions take precedence over the object(s). I would contend moreover, that the very combination of condition and context then *becomes* the artwork, as perhaps another, virtual object. I will explore this concept in the later section *The Material of the Site.*

LaBelle's study covers many site specific sound installations particularly those championing ideas over skills and techniques. He describes these as characterised by "the presentation of sound in relation to

---

[108] B. LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, New York, Continuum, 2006, p.15.

existing conditions (aural and other), and the general belief in listening as a means *into* architecture and environmental understanding."[109]

John Cage can be considered an important precursor to the site specific element in sound art practice, particularly in his seminal work, *4'33"* (1952), [110] in which an awareness of the room is experienced in tandem with an awareness of sounds occurring outside the space. Although these 'extra' sounds (traffic, voices, planes, a dog barking perhaps) are those that are beyond the room in which the piece is performed, they are, in turn, a part of the experience of the piece itself. In other words, the awareness of the contexts *within* the space is augmented by the contexts of the 'inadvertent', but passively accepted sounds *without* the space. From my own perspective, the mind inevitably drifts to these outside sounds: imagining, conjuring images, driving the experience into the greater context of the expanded location.

In the room, vision too is imbued with a heightened meaning, since the so-called silence of Cage's piece brings other elements into focus; the deliberate preparatory gestures of the performer and the raising of the piano lid. Cage also places emphasis on the immersed 'experiencer' (my use of the term) who necessarily becomes a part of the conditions of the site by being there, with a more acute awareness of the presence of others, perhaps contributing a cough or the sound of a shifted chair, watching closely, listening, but also thinking *beyond* the walls of the space of the performance. This disorientation and dislocation of sonic material was later explored, of course, by Bill Fontana, who made the concept the basis of many of his pieces, achieving this by collecting the sounds from outside the location of his installations and replaying them back within the space.

Perhaps following on from Dennis Oppenheim's sound walk of 1969, a recent sound piece by LaBelle himself takes the audible traces of dancers' movements and represents them as recordings within a gallery context. The relocation of the aural trace links, yet displaces the original, creating another

---

[109] B. LaBelle, *op. cit.,* p.193.

[110] Cage, J., *A Year from Monday*, Marion Boyars, 1985, London and New York, p.154.

connection between the movement of the invisible dancers' bodies and our own in the gallery space.[111]

LaBelle highlights the lack of references made to sound artists in art historical and theoretical texts, particularly amongst higher profile artists concerned with the de-materialising of the art object explored in conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s. Sound artists such as Max Neuhaus[112] and Michael Brewster,[113] were working contemporaneously with the main exponents of this era for example, yet their importance in extending the boundaries of art practice into sound remains largely unacknowledged. LaBelle continues: "it is my argument, that the development of sound art should be addressed as contemporaneous with the developments of a critical practice as witnessed in Conceptual art,"[114] and he laments the under explored and under-represented dialogue between the visual and the sonic arts.

Those artists who are most successful, are using sound "at its most social, its most spatial, and within its most public moments, where it is brought self-consciously into play with the intention of performing with and through surrounding space, places, and the perceiving body, inside crowds and through acts of charged listening."[115]

In referencing the social spaces used by artists, LaBelle draws attention to Lefebvre's analysis of the space of the everyday giving an insight into the strategies of the Surrealists and later Fluxus artists for whom the everyday experience and object was at the centre of much of their creativity. LaBelle comments that

---

[111] B. LaBelle, *Notes Toward a Sketch of a Sonic Body*, [exhibition], IMT Gallery, London, April – May 2011. (Notes from author's own visit).

[112] M. Neuhaus, *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info (accessed 06.05.11).

[113] M. Brewster, Here, There or Where? In *Site of Sound: Of Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999.

[114] Ibid., p.181.

[115] Ibid., p.ix (introduction).

> ... everyday life features as a philosophical, political and aesthetical imperative[...] For it comes to stand as a site of enclosure and of liberation - it is the very material locus by which individuals enact agency and through which they are held in, [and] made susceptible to hegemonic forces.[116]

The conundrum of the banal yet 'chosen' object, the reassurance of familiarity yet the frustration of the everyday, the enclosed and the released in the use of the everyday space; all present many conflicting responses to which site specific artists respond in different ways. Sound as an artistic medium also provides a valuable means of emphasising the under-valued sense and commonality of listening. A heightened awareness of sound introduces a questioning and disruptive element to the everyday situation. It can feed the auditory imagination and unsettle expectations. Everyday objects are used as sonic tools in several of the sound works discussed later in this thesis. Used as a liberating, non-technical means of sound-making, they can bring an accessibility and an immediacy to a performance.

As stated, LaBelle characterises place-based sound installations as "the presentation of sound in relation to existing conditions (aural and other), and the general belief in listening as a means *into* architecture and environmental understanding."[117] He also singles out Hildegard Westerkamp for her importance in the field of environmental listening and development of the sound walk as an aid to a greater awareness of place and the sonic everyday.[118]

To conclude this section, LaBelle's significant statement on what constitutes site specific sound work for him, particularly using recordings, is worth quoting at length:

> It is my view that in place-based, site specific sound work, place paradoxically comes to life by being somewhat alien, other, and separate, removed and dislocated, rather than being thoroughly mimetically real. For the recording of environments gives definition to a specific place, revealing its inherent characteristics and events while operating to displace such specifics, to locate them elsewhere. That is to say, as a listener I hear just as much displacement

---

[116] M. Brewster, *op. cit.,* p.42.

[117] Ibid., p.193.

[118] H. Westerkamp, 'Say Something About Music', quoted in B. LaBelle and S. Roden (eds.), *Site of Sound: of Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999, pp.17-25.

> as placement, just as much placelessness as place, for the extraction of sound from its environment partially wields its power by being boundless, uprooted and distinct. Thus, difference and displacement form a backside to soundscape compositions' emphasis on immersion and origin. Here, we could propose that to listen deeply is to arrive at a place of alienation, not necessarily disheartening but rather productive […] knowing place is never complete […] for it always contains things beyond one's grasp, as instances of 'interference' which may, in the end, be part of what it teaches us. [119]

Many concepts will be taken up from this statement and explored further in Chapters Four and Five, including definitions of place, immersion through inhabiting and listening, the value of displacement, and the significance of the everyday, sonic reference in art practice.

Hearing spaces

The associative and metaphorical aspects of the sounds at a site, and my consequent strategies for sound-making (including the use of metaphor and mimesis in sound), are considered and introduced in the later sections: *The Material of the Site* and *Evocations and the Mimetic Tendency*.

In the following section however, I cover individual works from the portfolio and examine differing approaches and critical analyses of space according to thematic criteria such as contrasts between institutional and private spaces, the nature and properties of space, aural spatiality and the acoustic. I use some of the definitions and languages of aural architecture raised in *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening*? *Experiencing Aural Architecture*, by Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter (2007)[120] and reflect on the resonances of place in live performance.

Firstly, the very nature of the spaces we inhabit, and by extension, the spaces in which a work of art might be found will be explored further. As identified in the previous chapter, many contemporary artists and sound artists actively seek to operate outside the auspices and hierarchies of the gallery, museum, and concert hall. This allows for greater spontaneity for an

---

[119] B. LaBelle and S. Roden (eds.), *Site of Sound: of Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999, pp.17-25.

[120] B. Blesser and L.R Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007.

un-programmed event and an independent connection with wider audiences for whom the novelty of a temporary art encounter in an unexpected place can engage curiosity. Spaces may be sought out by artists or present themselves as an opportunity through a commission. This aspect of the practice will be examined in Chapter Five under *The Agency and Uses of Liveness*.

Historically, spaces have evolved to contain sound; some specifically, the evolving amphitheatre, auditorium or concert hall with differing needs for each successive era of music or oration, others socially, as places of community whilst many have developed organically in reaction to the particular acoustic needs and problems of the space.

According to Blesser and Salter, the concept of aural, as opposed to acoustic architecture used as a means of defining the properties of a space by simply by listening to it, is a developing area. It is one absorbed into many other disciplines encompassing acoustics, physics and engineering, music, sociology, psychology and more generally, visual architecture. Essentially, all sounds occur in a definable space, informed by its role. They summarise it as such: "[h]ow listeners experience reverberation depends on whether the environment is primarily a social, navigational, aesthetic, or musical space."[121] It would seem that we bring a cultural and personal agenda to our experience of all spaces and it is perhaps a reason why the unexpected sound artwork can be usefully disruptive.

Contemporary examples of artworks making use of functional, navigational spaces can be found in the work of U.K. artist and musician, Martin Creed.[122] In his exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, *Down Over Up* (2010), he created a staircase that sounded the notes of the scale as it was walked up. Also featured in the exhibition was his data-sonified singing glass lift piece, *work 409*, (2005) now permanently installed at London's Royal Festival Hall on the Southbank. Each level of the building is

---

[121] B. Blesser, *op. cit.*, p.127.

[122] M. Creed, *Down Over Up,* [installation], Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 2010. Ibid., *work 409*, [installation], Ikon gallery 2006, 2005, now permanently installed at London's Royal Festival Hall on the Southbank.

assigned a pitch in an octave scale and the recording sung by a choir in four-part harmony. The aural and the spatial are thereby directly linked.

Live and recorded

Contemporary sound artist Bernard Leitner has made extensive use of staircases, notably in the work *Kaskade [Projekt 2]* (2006).[123] In a six-storey stairwell, he installed a number of parabolic speakers emitting beams of sound that reflected off the complex surfaces of the structure. The experience of the sounds was different for each participant moving up and down the staircase. Henri Lefebvre admires the "… remarkable architecture of the stairway. A link between spaces, the stairway also ensures a link between times …"[124] acknowledging the poetry of transit within such an everyday, yet liminal space. Sound artist Jez Riley French has recorded the inner sounds of metal staircases such as those at Sheffield University. He makes use of contact microphones applied directly to the structure that then enables the sound of the material itself to be heard.[125]

In two of my own sound works from the portfolio, *Feral Glissando 1* and *2* (May and July 2010),[126] staircases are the settings for two collaborative pieces involving the voices of conference participants. The concept of ascending and descending is reflected by the rise and fall in pitch of an improvised vocal group glissando. The events took place in the utilitarian, navigational spaces of staircases in Edinburgh and Wolverhampton

---

[123] B. Leitner, *Kaskade,* 2006, http://www.sonambiente.net/en/04_artists/4M2lei_werk.html, (accessed 07.04.14).

[124] H. Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, *Space Time and Everyday Life*, transl. S. Elden and G. Moore, New York, Continuum, 2004, p.97.

[125] J. Riley French, *The Staircase*: http://soundcloud.com/jezrileyfrench/sheffield-staircase-resonating, (accessed 07.04.14) via http://www.jezrileyfrench.co.uk.

[126] T. Spinks, *Feral Glissando 1*, [sound piece devised for conference], *'*Experimenting with Geography, See-Hear-Make-Do Conference', Edinburgh University, May 2010. Can be experienced two minutes into the video of the events, edited by Jonathan Prior at: http://12gatestothecity.com/2010/05/17/experimenting-with-geography/.
 T. Spinks, *Feral Glissando 2 (Wolves),* **CD 1, track 3**, [sound piece devised for conference], 'Space: the Real and the Abstract Conference', Wolverhampton University, July, 2010. (The term 'feral' is borrowed from Phil Minton).

Universities respectively. The former consisted of a sweeping marble staircase reaching from the ground to the first floor, the latter, an enclosed, six-storey concrete structure. Each had a unique resonance and sonic property whilst the voices brought a disquieting vocal activation to the space led by the violin glissando. Reactions included a child-like enjoyment in making loud sounds whilst moving around overlooked, resonant spaces.

Acknowledging the experience of space subsequent to the advent of recording is also significant given that a space has an acoustic personality that is captured as part of a recording. Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969) provides a good example of this in which he takes the initial recording of his voice narrating a text, and re-records it many times over within the same room.[127] The final result is unrecognisable as a voice and deformed by the much re-recorded acoustic of the room. Conversely, no inherent spatial acoustic is usually discernible in a recording studio or, at its most extreme, in an anechoic chamber. The spatiality of sounds can now be extended algorithmically however, into the virtual realm as abstract, simulated spaces - perhaps site specific in a wholly different way.

In the context of the pieces in the portfolio of sound works I suggest that *both* the live and the recorded approaches can be discernible simultaneously in my performances. As a combination of live *and* recorded sounds (made in situ with the looping device and played out into the space), both are experienced within the distinctive acoustic spaces of the unique spaces of the chosen sites. Three stages of recognition are thus promoted in these works: the awareness of the live sounds, the awareness of the recently recorded sounds, and the amalgamation of both as an extended awareness of the performance experienced within the actual acoustic characteristics of the particular site.

The video footage of *Seaforts* (2010)[128] provides an example of this merging: in the reverberating properties of the iron structure accompanied

---

[127] A. Lucier, *I Am Sitting in a Room*, [sound performance], 1969.

[128] T. Spinks, *Seafort,* **DVD track 2, CD 1, tracks 4 & 5, appendix p.15,** [sound performance], under the auspices of the Whitstable Biennale Fringe, 2010. (The 'gun' sound can be heard at 7 mins 30).

by seagulls, in the liveness of the activations and the playing of the instrument and in the looped recordings playing back through a small portable amplifier across the space of the outdoor gun platform. Viewed and listened to as documentation the whole is experienced as a total event informed by the extraordinary location and the site's military connotations. At one point in the recording, the sound of an anti-aircraft gun can almost be imagined, according to one listener on experiencing the documentation. The occasional sound of the bell on a nearby buoy is also heard in the *Seaforts* documentation, signalling a potential hazard to boats.

The connotations of incidental or 'conjured' sounds are worth exploring here. Blesser and Salter draw our attention to the notion of specific sonic signifiers or the 'earcon'[129] in society's public spaces describing this as a sonic event that encompasses a particular symbolic meaning but which, unlike visual icons, quickly disappears once sounded. A church bell, sounding the hour, summoning a congregation or warning a community, is a typical, often quoted, example. The bell on the buoy warns of the dangers of the quickly rising tide reminding the performers that they have very limited time on the structure. As material for the artist, a modest earcon can be a device laden with useful and powerful symbolism.

Concepts of the earcon were also alluded to in the work, *Sonic Ritual* (2013),[130] in considering what might be heard within a closeted Masonic ritual, (albeit one ironically denied to the performer on this occasion for reasons of gender). Enacted in semi-darkness, a set of equivalent objects were assembled and activated sonically to present a hypothetical ritual. Significantly, this took place in a room set aside solely for Masonic ceremonies (above the door reads 'Masons Only' in gold lettering) within the Grand Connaught Rooms of Covent Garden. The performance was

---

[129] 'Earcon:' the term was coined by D. A. Sumikawa, in *Guidelines for the Integration of Audio Cues into Computer User Interfaces,* [technical report], Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 1985.

[130] T. Spinks, *Sonic Ritual,* **DVD track 5**, **appendix p.39,** [sound performance], devised for the 'British Sociology Association annual conference', *Engaging Tactics, Revealing Secrets,* 2013. Performed in the Masonic Lodge room in the Grand Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden, assisted by Greta Pistaceci, https://vimeo.com/70094978.

commissioned for the *Engaging Tactics, Revealing Secrets* strand devised by Goldsmiths' University Visual Sociology department, and provided an interlude to the British Sociology Association annual conference. Symbols such as the mason's skerrit (string used for measuring and defining the footprint of a potential building), a builder's trowel, a set-square, a wooden gavel, a ruler, and a silver goblet were used. Each was given a voice by the use of contact microphones and by the act of simply striking the object. The sounds; from the growl of the plucked length of string, the urgency of the bell-like sounding goblet and silver spoons, and the boom of the trowel, all served to underpin an ersatz Masonic ritual gesture. The formality and symmetry of the room lent the sounds an additional gravitas, whilst the two female performers silently went about their task of activation as interlopers. The sounds, acting perhaps as hypothetical earcons but on a domestic scale, took on a significance and menace once removed from the actuality of an authentic ritual.

Subversion was certainly an intention here, perhaps reinforced by the hallowed sense a carpeted room in a formal building can bring but also by the slight absurdity of the situation as an aside from a conference. The suggestion of transgression and trespass was noted in a seminar later in the day. So too, was an awareness of the information and meaning the ears can gain through the material sonification of the objects used within such an enclosed space.

Echo and affect

Blesser and Salter consider the affect of music within a space quoting writer and art historian Violet Paget from *Music and Its Lovers: An Empirical Study of Emotions and Imaginative Responses to Music* (1932). She states that "[m]usic and architecture have the common property of putting us inside a sensorial whole, different from that we ordinarily live in,"[131] acknowledging that the combination of sound and site will amount to far more than can merely be

---

[131] V. Paget, quoted in, B. Blesser and L.R. Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007, p.127.

seen and heard objectively. More formally, Jean-Jaques Nattiez, in *Music and Discourse, Towards a Semiology of Music* believes that "[t]he essence of a musical work is at once its genesis, its organisation and the way it is perceived." What he calls musical semiology he defines through practical, methodological and epistemological methods, maintaining there are three ways of describing *meaning* in music. Firstly in the word *'poietic,'* a term suggested by Paul Valéry as the symbolic dimension of the process of creation or the act of making – the labour. Secondly the *'esthesic'* dimension (coined by Valéry in the same lecture of 1945) that refers to the 'receivers' or those who assign or construct meaning. The third is the *'trace'* or symbolic form that is "embodied physically and materially in the form of a trace accessible to the five senses." [132] This concept can only be enhanced by adding a fourth aspect: that of the heightened and enhancing awareness of the place in which the sounds occur.

The discussion of space in relation to sound as a potential "real-time artistic activity,"[133] refers to the traditional spilt between performer (generally active) and listener (generally passive) who might share a common physical space and thereby, the experience. Acoustics play a part here and the phenomenological aspects of aural architecture (particularly useful to musicians) are described by Blesser and Salter as spatial and temporal spreading, or in terms of how the sound waves reach out from the sound source and rebound across a space within a particular time frame. In *Echo and Reverb* (2005) Peter Doyle recognises that "reverberation and echo simply *are* sonic attributes of physical space."[134]

---

[132] Nattiez, J-J., *Music and Discourse, Towards a Semiology of Music,* transl. Carolyn Abbate, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990, (page ix). (Nattiez is Professor of Musicology at the University of Montreal and bases his observations on Peircian concepts of the sign).

[133] B. Blesser and L.R. Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007, p.129.

[134] P. Doyle, *Echo and Reverb, Fabricating Space in Popular Music Recording*, 1900-1960, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2005, p.14.

This concept is taken to an extreme in one of the last sound works from the portfolio *Echo Lake* (2013),[135] in which a pure evocation of the echo divorced from its sources is attempted. A lone voice shouts words across a remote stretch of water, backed by a mountain acting as a sonic reflector. The phenomenon of the long echo is recorded and edited together with a crudely sung rendition of the music from *Doctor Who*. This is reference to the fact that Lake Cwmbuchan in Snowdonia National Park was used as a location for the filming of the *Doctor Who* T.V. series in 1983. The echo remains the most apparent feature of the live event, but was only really successful as an edited recording.

However, with no 'edges' to a space for the reverberations to encounter, a sound can quickly vanish. Anyone who has played an acoustic instrument outdoors will be aware of this phenomenon and have found the experience quite a dry, 'unrewarding' one. Sound works *Windmill I, II and III* (2010, 2011, 2012), represent an example of this disquieting dissipation as the sounds leave the amplified source situated on the roof of a nineteenth-century windmill, and travel outwards across many acres of common land.[136] Consequently, there is a sense that the relinquished sounds, now independent of their source, are surrendered to the surrounding scrubland. The acoustic 'edges' or boundaries in these works are extended indefinitely.

The possibility is suggested by Blesser and Salter and explored in the above works, that the merging of the space and the instrument could potentially develop into one new space-instrument which I suggest would require a wholly new definition: instrument as space-building, space-building as instrument. This is exemplified in David Byrne's piece *Playing the Building,* installed at the Roundhouse, Camden (2009) in which the metal structure of the building was connected to a series of small mallets, to be activated by the public by playing on an organ keyboard.[137] Each key

---

[135] T. Spinks, *Echo Lake*, [sound piece], 2013, **CD 2, track 7, appendix, p.70.**

[136] T. Spinks, *Windmill I, II & III, 2010, 2011, 2012*, **DVD track 11, CD2 track 4, appendix p. 62**, [sound piece], Wimbledon Common Windmill.

determined a particular configuration of sound activators, causing the participants to feel as if they were 'playing' the building.

My own sound work, *Sounding The Portal* (2013)[138] similarly attempted to make something musical out of a built structure by turning it into an instrument. Sounds were devised by stretching cables across the space that were 'played', recorded and played back into the space. Alluding to the site as a physical sounding box that not only housed but could become a transmitter of sounds through the custom built nine channel system, the space and sounds were to become synonymous and all encompassing, akin to being inside the very sounding box of an instrument when it is being played.

One audience member reacted as such: "I felt as if I were inside a giant double bass..."[139] which perhaps reinforces this notion of a new positioning of inhabited sound and recognises space-building as a new instrument, devised in and for the Sound Portal structure. Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* (1961)[140] is brought to mind here in the self-referential act of recording and playing back its own creation.

A fuller description and more immediate response from a visitor to the constructed portal space describes the sounds and picks up on the wider implications for the work as follows:

> ... *Sounding the Portal* [...] unleashed an unholy chorus of groaning, creaking and screeching. These sounds were made by variably tensioned steel cables (a nod towards Arup's methods of bridge construction), stretched across the interior of the portal and activated by bowing. The performance was recorded and then played back in situ, the portal resonating with the sound of its own playing. Sounding the Portal folded the inside back on itself, creating a sense of the space being pulled apart. Squealing and squeaking, the composition had

---

[137] D. Byrne, *Playing the Building,* the Roundhouse, Camden, [author's own notes from the event], 2009, www.davidbyrne.com/art/art_projects/playing_the_building, (accessed 25.11.13).

[138] T. Spinks, *Sounding the Portal*, 2013, **CD2 track 5, appendix p.68,** performers T. Spinks with E. Cendron, S. Chandy and A. Mermod.

[139] S. Emmerson, [audience response to *Sounding the Portal*, collected by the author at the event], Chelsea College of Art Parade Ground, 07.06.13.

[140] R. Morris, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, 1961, in R. Beil, P. Kraut, and H. Cantz (eds.), *A House Full of Music, Strategies in Music and Art,* [exhibition catalogue], in co-operation with the International Music Institute Darmstadt (IMD), Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, Germany, 2012.

a raw, hand-made quality that rubbed against the sleek interior, noisily evoking material fabric in a space whose materials were black-boxed and whited-out, hidden by smooth architecture and acoustic transparency. The portal began to feel flimsy. I imagined its fabric being torn open, starting to auto-destruct, collapsing in on itself. Tansy later told me that her original intention was to stretch the cables over the top of the whole structure, but this plan was ditched as the portal turned out to be less solid than it looked. It might have begun to collapse for real, and the artists were told in no uncertain terms that this was not an option. Tansy also wanted to perform the piece live, but this too was ruled out for bureaucratic reasons. Such compromises are a test to the limits of art's abilities to contest and rework urban space, and the conflicts that can arise between art and design. Strata [the sound piece by Mark Peter Wright] inserted its critique into the operation of the portal, playing with its surround sound system, but Tansy's initial ideas were clearly too oppositional. Confronted by the portal's institutional framework, she had to negotiate a more compliant solution.

Michael Gallagher[141]

Henri Lefebvre is again proved right in maintaining that no building or space is devoid of layers of political decision-making.

Dislocating sources

As Peter Doyle has established, if each sound-making device has its own resonating properties and abilities, reverberation and amplification will inevitably affect the experience of the place in which it is heard. Blesser and Salter investigate the artistic possibilities of this phenomenon by introducing the somewhat problematic terms of the 'primary' and 'slave' sonic events, that is to say, by identifying the difference between the initial sound made and another sound caused by it (the same term is used in photography regarding the syncing of a second 'slave' studio flashlight to a primary one). For an acoustic instrument, this can be considered as the note made and its reverberation. A unique sonic language is proposed; that of the primary versus the slave, the localised versus the diffused, and the fused versus the decoupled.

---

[141] M. Gallagher, *Environmental sound art and the production of urban space: the BE OPEN sound portal,* essay reflecting on Sounding the Portal sound work. http://www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/archives/1573, (accessed 24.04.14).

How space can be 'sounded out' using an amplified instrument however, is explored in two particular sound works from the portfolio: *Take a Space, Make a Sound In It* (2011)[142] performed in a working refectory, and *Fullstops* for the Sensingsite seminar (2013)[143] executed in a converted warehouse gallery. In both of these pieces, the performer moved towards and between the listeners causing them on occasion to step out of the way. The amplified loudspeaker however, remained static whilst the supposed sound-producing source (the performer, wearing a radio microphone) was a roving one amongst the audience, thus confusing the primary with the slave, the localised with the diffused (throughout the space), and the fused with the decoupled (or one sound dislocated from another). A more extreme example of primary, slave, and decoupled events can be heard in the sound work mentioned earlier, *Echo Lake*[144] in which the effect of the phenomenon of the lake's long reverberating echo on the voice, confuses sound and source, person and landscape, past and present.

There are of course many examples of sound experiments that have investigated these concepts through extreme diffusion of sound, and I will make a brief diversion here to introduce some better-known examples. In Francis Bacon's early description of 'sound houses', in *The New Atlantis* essay (1626) he seems to prophesise much that is innovative in contemporary sound manipulation:

> We have also diverse, strange and artificial echoes, reflecting the voice many times, and, as it were, tossing it... we have means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances...[145]

---

[142] T. Spinks, *Take a Space, Make a Sound in It,* **DVD track 10, appendix p.64,** [sound piece], 2011, Morley College Refectory.

[143] T.Spinks, *Four Full Stops,* **DVD track 12, appendix p.66** [sound piece], 2013, 'Sensingsite' seminar, Parasol Unit.

[144] T.Spinks, *Echo Lake*, [sound piece], 2013, ibid.

[145] F. Bacon, 'The New Atlantis', quoted in B. Blesser and R.L. Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007, p.164.

Twentieth-century composers such as Varèse at the Philips Pavilion in Brussels (1958)[146] used three hundred and fifty speakers to project sound into the auditorium space. More physically, Xenakis, in his piece *Terretektorh* (1965/6)[147] scattered eighty-eight musicians amidst the audience. In the latter piece, the sounds seemed to swirl around the audience when passed between the musicians. Stockhausen's spherical auditorium, which was devised for the German pavilion at the Osaka World Fair (1970)[148] housed fifty speakers and involved the construction of a platform suspended at the centre for the listeners. A description of the novel experience is as follows:

> … sound could make complete circles around people, not only horizontal circles but vertical circles[…] or spiral movements of all different loops […] multiple sound sources could be made to swirl along arbitrary trajectories, intersecting and interleaving each other. This polyphony of spatial movements and the speed of the sound, became as important as the pitch of the sound, the duration of the sound, or the timbre of the sound…[149]

This presumably demonstrates the perceived aural confusion in a complexity of multiple primary and slave sonic events and heralds an important acknowledgment, not only in terms of the value and effect of sound in tandem with the spatial experience (not unknown to the medieval cathedral builder of course), but also in regard to how the comparatively recent technologies could extend, enhance, and confuse the embodied aural-spatial encounter for the listener.

Max Neuhaus, (explored earlier), pioneered sound interruption and diffusion in *Placeworks* and *Passageworks,* in the late 1970s and early

---

[146] E. Varèse, *Poème électronique*, [music composition], Philips Pavilion, designed by Le Corbusier, Brussels, Expo'1958.

[147] I. Xenakis, *Terretektorh,* [music composition], 1965/6, http://www.allmusic.com/composition/terretektorh-for-88-musicians-scattered-among-the-audience-mc0002518360, (accessed 06.08.13).

[148] K. Stockhausen's spherical auditorium was devised for the German pavilion at the Osaka World Fair, 1970, http://www.stockhausen.org/video_jeita.html, (accessed 06.08.13).

[149] J. Cott, *Stockhausen, Conversations with the Composer*, New York, Simon and Shuster, 1973, Blesser, p.172.

1980s.[150] These concepts are taken further in works by Bernard Leitner,[151] installations by Maryanne Amacher,[152] and to some extent, the compositions devised for spaces by Benedict Mason in which sound source, dislocation, and distance are explored acoustically in how he positions the musicians. [153] The search nevertheless continues amongst performing practitioners for enclosed places with unique sonic qualities: caves, subterranean spaces, tombs, and grain silos. For example, Stockhausen used a vast cavern, the Grotto of Jeita in Lebanon for a concert in 1969 which allowed and encouraged the natural acoustics to take precedence over the composition, and featured echoes of up to eight seconds.[154]

An earlier sound work from the portfolio, *Sonic Triangle* (2009),[155] engaged with a particular space through sonic means by making use of a customised MAX MSP patch designed to pan the sounds at differing speeds around a triangular-shaped exhibition space. Using large speakers placed in each of the corners, the aim was to draw attention to the unusual shape of the space on the part of the listeners and to reinforce a sense of enclosure. This encouraged a more intense engagement with the associative material played by the live performer, who was ostensibly the locus of the actual sounds heard, whilst the decoupled sounds circled the listeners.

Without walls

In considering sounds devised for wall-less sites or natural environments, the notion of soundscape compositions is worth touching upon. Whilst it is

---

[150] M. Neuhaus, *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info, (accessed 14.04.14).

[151] B. Leitner, *Bernard Leitner,* http://www.bernhardleitner.at/works, (accessed 14.04.14).

[152] M. Amacher, *Ars Electronica lecture*, [online video], 1989, http://vimeo.com/30955464, (accessed 14.04.14).

[153] J. Allison, 'BBC Proms 2014: Benedict Mason première, review: 'breathtaking', *The Telegraph*, 17 August 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/, (accessed 20.08.14).

[154] K. Stockhausen. The Grotto of Jeita, Lebanon, was used for a concert in 1969, http://www.showcaves.com/english/misc/showcaves/Jeita.html, (accessed 14.04.14).

[155] T. Spinks, *Sonic Triangle*, **DVD track 1, CD1 track 1,** [sound piece], Chelsea College of Art, 2009.

not a particular focus for this thesis, it nevertheless allows a wider contextual view of sounds in site specific, and in particular, outdoor situations, to be discussed for (mostly indoor) listening. Alluding to R. Murray Schafer's composition *Wilderness Lake* (1979)[156] in which twelve trombones are placed at either end of a lake in Canada, Blesser and Salter enlarge on this concept:

> The essential idea of soundscape music is to enlarge acoustic boundaries, extending the space to the acoustic horizon. And within that expanded area, all sounds of life are included, not just those represented on the composer's score. Yet few of us are likely to travel to a lake in northern Canada or to the Amazon jungle to listen to music in a space without boundaries. As an art form, soundscape music attempts to bring that remote experience to urban listeners by including its three central components: environmental sounds, their location within the environment, and the acoustics of a natural, unenclosed space.[157]

Presumably, by 'soundscape music' the authors imply musical compositions that make use of field recordings as the core material. Notably, the performer is no longer to the fore in these compositions and the spirit of Cage is summoned in the realisation that all sounds are given equal validity.

Fellow Canadian acoustic ecologist and composer Hildegard Westerkamp, explores environmental sounds in *Cricket Voice* (1987)[158] for instance, in which insect sounds are recorded and processed, in terms of pitch, timbre, duration and reverberation. The acoustic context of the desert however, remains a crucial part.

Finally, I return to the wide-open expanses and sonic dissipation experienced on Wimbledon Common in the aforementioned performances *Windmill I, II,* and *III,* that took place over three successive years as part of

---

[156] R. Murray Schafer, *Wilderness Lake*, Concordia Archives 1979, http://archives.concordia.ca/schafer (accessed 11.12.13).

[157] B. Blesser and R. L. Salter, *op. cit,* p.177.

[158] H. Westerkamp, *Cricket Voice*, 1987, http://www.sfu.ca/~westerka/ (accessed 11.12.13).

the annual, national initiative, *The Big Draw*.[159] The works were an attempt to convey something, not so much about the immediate environment but of the associative nature of the place, to be broadcast across the landscape sonically to a 'drawing' public as an accompaniment to their workshop activities. The performer, and sometimes an assistant, were placed two stories above ground level on the roof of a working windmill. Improvised sounds were devised according to three sets of preconceived ideas:

> *Windmill I*, 2010: used the deconstruction of a popular song 'The Windmills of Your Mind' for the event.

> *Windmill II*, 2011: referenced a local folksong of 1905 'discovered' in Wimbledon and notated by Percy Grainger. This was explored alongside amplified breathing sounds, used as a metaphor for 'the wind.'

> *Windmill III*, 2012: four drawings by artist and violinist Paul Klee were chosen, each referring to musical terms. The performer played these as 'scores' from which to make live improvisations. A dance group led by Fumi Tomioka improvised to the sounds amongst the people whilst they drew.

In some respects, there were unresolved dilemmas regarding the commission for these sound works, related primarily to what they should be for. Problems arose in the differing expectations of what might constitute a sound artwork (on my part), and what might be desirable as accompanying entertainment in a public situation that encompassed all ages. Duration was one issue, repetition another. Consequently, on reflection the works were simply too melodic to explore what I wanted to convey, and conversely too long, repetitive, and 'mournful' to be simply entertaining. However, as a compromise they form a type of accompanying 'illustration' or even wallpaper to the days' events, acting as an accompaniment or soundtrack that had a surprisingly focussing effect for some of the drawing-listeners.

---

[159] T. Spinks, *Windmill I, II & III,* 2010, 2011, 2012, [sound piece], Wimbledon Common windmill, ibid. (**DVD track 11, CD2 track 4, appendix p. 62)**. (Anecdotal responses, October 2010 and 2012 to *Windmill I and III* were collected by the performer).

The following comments made by the public, refer to how they experienced the sounds embedded in this sense of place on the common. For *Windmill III* the observations included:

> The music really supported the event, I think for everyone. It felt to me that the music suited the place and landscape there well. I don't know how to explain this exactly, but it felt that the sound produced - perhaps the "shape" of the sound [...] had a connection to the windmill and the shape of the landscape. *Judith, (30)*

In relation to *Windmill I*:

> I was walking and heard the sound from a distance. I thought it sounded like the wind in the windmill, which was strange as I walk on the common regularly and hadn't heard it before. It drew me to the windmill and then I got involved in doing a drawing. Something I haven't done for an awfully long time. It made my day. Thank you. *Sheila, (64) from Wimbledon*

> The violin sound linked the space between the rangers, Cafe, Drawing room and Nature trail. Even in spaces where no drawing was taking place the sound could be heard. The sound carried far and into the woods. It brought people onto the common to investigate. The windmill has never in its 200 year history had someone performing from the roof. We will do it again as the effect was far reaching and extraordinary. *Susie, (48) organiser*

> Reactions to music on a windmill? Certainly memorable. Quite a comfortable movement, suitable for a Wimbledon Common freed of [...] highwaymen. Or perhaps evocative of the regular turning of the sails? Anyway, no violent gusts, or tempestuous elements? Mother Nature controlled! On a practical level audible from a distance. Very effective to hear a gradually increasing volume until the windmill was finally in view. *Chris, (65)*

The distances here ranged from hard sounds experienced by the large bass amplifier, to those heard by the museum volunteers (not always favourably) from within the building directly beneath the performer, and those heard at a great distance, becoming an integral part of the landscape as something beyond the exact control of the performer.

Simon Emmerson (1998) describes a similar approach to distance in maintaining that a conceptualised sonic space can be regarded as a series of expanding circles, from sonic event, through performance, as the 'living

presence' to the wider acoustic arena and soundscape.[160] The *Windmill* series of performances may be considered as having been successful in this respect, not least in providing a ripple of effect when heard at some distance.

To conclude, an awareness of aural spatiality must necessarily encompass the social, navigational, musical, aesthetic, and the symbolic, particularly in relation to the significance of the earcon. We locate ourselves aurally in space in relation to the sum of the sonic events around us, the places we inhabit, the expectations we have of spaces, and according to the events and times we spend in them.

My sound works have taken place in a wide variety of spaces; from the enclosed to the outdoor, the private to the public. Some locations have been chosen, others presented by invitation. Many have been selected for their potential as testing grounds for a new aspect of the practice. The pieces have utilised the voice of a lone performer on a windmill and beside a remote lake; explored the space through static sound sources and moving sound sources; used recreational public spaces; the everyday, navigational space, the domestic space and alluded to hidden rituals and hidden histories. In each work, a new parameter of expectation, and of sounds in space as an art practice, have been explored and extended. I acknowledge therefore, the crucial importance of aural architecture(s) in constructively extending the possibilities for manipulation in art practices and in particular, on behalf of those fleeting, performed, live, sound art practices that occur in a space, and then disappear.

---

[160] S. Emmerson, 'Acoustic/Electroacoustic: The relationship with instruments', *Journal of New Music Research,* 27, 1998, pp.146-164 and in *Living Electronic Music*, London, Ashgate, 2007.

Chapter Three: Associations and evocation

The material of the site

> Material [...] is the stuff the artist controls and manipulates: words, colours, sounds - all the way up to connections of any kind and to the highly developed methods of integration he might use. Material, then, is all that the artist is confronted by, all that he must make a decision about, and that includes forms as well, for forms too can become materials.[161]

<div align="right">Adorno</div>

> I must either be making something or making believe to make it.[162]

<div align="right">William Morris</div>

This section examines the notion of material as substance, as information and as a discursive tool in developing my sonic arts practice. I also introduce a case study of the sound work from the portfolio, *Silent Zone* (2012),[163] Chelsea College of Art, in which the instrument is forgone in place of the 'material' of books and writing. Although I define and describe what constitutes the physical fabric of the places concerned in my sound performances (and how this can affect the sounds heard within them), the acoustics are generally not my major concern in approaching a site for the purposes of the practice, since this starting point '*as* material and *for* material' can also be less tangible. It can be a distillation of approaches combining several aspects of the site; concepts derived from the initial stages where possible, of visiting, inhabiting, looking, reflecting, note-taking and of course, listening.

Material in this sense can be any aspect of the site revealed through these and subsequent research. It can encompass material as information or

---

[161] T. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p. 213.

[162] W. Morris, 'The Aims of Art', quoted in G.D.H. Cole (ed.), *Stories in Prose, Stories in Verse, Shorter Poems, Lectures and Essays*, London, Nonesuch Press, 1944.

[163] T.Spinks, *Silent Zone*, 2012, **DVD track 4, appendix p. 31** [sound piece], Chelsea College of Art

data, material as physical matter and material as a form of tool used to perform a task relevant to the definition of material, as "the substance of reasoning rather than the form it takes." [164] Material can be the matter, subject matter (as represented in an artistic work), and the subject, (echoing the musical sense of a principal melodic phrase), informing the form, fabric, fabrication, and sense of enquiry in an art work. In short material is anything used as an associative reference within the practice.

Returning briefly to the paradigms of the site specific as suggested by Kwon, cited previously, the concept of using the material of the site may be recognised in relation to the sound works under discussion, as it encompasses aspects of what she describes as (my comments in brackets): *the social/institutional*, (the space and its agendas), *the discursive* (using extra material) and *the phenomenological or experiential* (the awareness of being there, in the space).

Approaching a site specific sound work

On first visiting a site, the questions that arise in situ are initially very general: What is its purpose? How is it used now? Who has been in this space before? What aspect lends itself to some form of sonic interpretation? How can some of that previous existence or current usage be appropriated and transmitted in performance? The sound piece can never be an all-encompassing summation of what has gone before within the space. That is, it does not attempt a narrative interpretation or provide historical information. It can only hope to be slightly more than, in effect, (usually) one person with a set of sound-making devices inhabiting a space for a relatively short amount of time, and conveying something of the sense of this newly acquired knowledge of the site *back into* the space.

These references are sometimes tangential to the more conventional linear history of a site and selective in terms of that literary device, a 'back-story' that can in turn, lend itself to the act of being sonified. Thus, the resulting sounds may be the end product of a series of ideas which have been

---

[164] http://www.thefreedictionary.com/material, (accessed 31.10.14)

tried and dismissed as too complex, as not having sufficient aural clarity (in either the literal or metaphorical senses of the term) or as being too far removed from the idea of what the material of the site should constitute. It could be that the desired aspects are not received in the hoped-for manner at all. In this case the artist must either look to the methods employed, or be reconciled to the reception as being slightly other (but not necessarily lesser) than the one intended. The provision of some form of 'programme note' or 'press release' has often been an effective model in setting out the various prompts and intentions for the work.

Although the meaning of this material may not always be fully accessible to the receivers, it is through the filter and agency of the performer that this foreground to the 'ground' of the site itself is presented. This new foreground then perhaps becomes yet another part of the site, absorbed into it, and merging with the existing physical, acoustic, and connotative properties that constitute, for my purposes, the very material of the site itself.

I continue with an anecdotally written case study (taken as an extract from my artist's project file) of a sample sound performance, *Silent Zone, Site and Sound* (2012), which took place in the Chelsea Old Library, tracing its evolution from first ideas to finished performance. I will go into the detail of site visits and initial plans since an insight can be gained into the nature and potential pitfalls of working site specifically and highlight the various stages and machinations that the possible material (of the site) can go through.

Description and analysis of *Silent Zone*, 2012

The many plans as to what this project could constitute began as a response to a successful open bid submission in the form of a proposed sound piece, for the 'Contested Sites/Sights' cross UAL PhD conference in October 2011. I considered this a valuable opportunity to follow up a previously discussed sound piece, *Sonic Triangle* (2009),[165] performed at the Triangle Gallery,

---

[165] T. Spinks, *Sonic Triangle*, [sound piece], performed at the Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Art, as part of the *Uncharted Stories* exhibition, 2009, **DVD track 1, CD1 track 1, appendix p. 7**

Chelsea College of Art. In the previous performance, I had sonically alluded to aspects of the history of the site by using associated objects played on a prepared instrument.

Locations and site visits

During my first visit to the Chelsea site (21.10.11) to collect material for the new work, I pondered on potential communal and navigational locations for a possible sound piece:

- A ground floor walkway between the old building and the canteen perhaps?
- The grand staircase itself, leading up to the banqueting rooms (though heavily carpeted and therefore sonically muffled)?
- A very small stone spiral staircase behind the coffee bar by the main gate?
- The attic space accessed at the top of the grand staircase by climbing a metal ladder?

The last location appealed in terms of the space as a potential repository of forgotten or hidden material and a liminal space beyond the bounds of the normal usage of the building. This would have provided the means of making something of an 'event,' for the experiencers who would have had to ascend a ladder and put their heads through the trap door to access the devised sounds. The restricted access would have presented an audience with an element of invited participation (which in itself has been a continuing aspect of the practice), in order to encourage more than a passive encounter.

My second site visit (02.12.11) was towards the end of a Friday afternoon when few people were in the building. This allowed me to climb into the attic space, open a small window which accessed the outside roof valley and push on a further trap door which then opened onto the exposed

deck space of the flagpole turret. Initially, thoughts on how to treat the internal attic space involved the amplification of objects found in the space, or the idea of perhaps 'planting' objects that could feasibly have been abandoned previously within the space. The audience would then take it in turns to spend a few minutes looking at the shadowy figure of the performer, moving round and activating sounds within the rather grimy attic. On reflection, this use of imported objects as props did not seem true to the emphasis of the material of the site, and would have risked entering the difficult territory of, at best, window dressing, and at worst, over-theatricality; territory into which the works of Cardiff can often stray. However, for health and safety reasons, the attic proposal had to be abandoned and thus the decision about the location was made for me. This part of the building was deemed off-limits, even to staff, and no discussion was countenanced despite insistent email exchanges and a further meeting with the site manager, who then suggested the Old College Library as a possible location and took me on a tour.

The third visit (28.01.12) took place at the quietest time, on a Saturday morning. This enabled me to set up equipment in the Old Library and try out the ideas of amplifying paper surfaces whilst writing in a large room. The fourth and fifth visits (06.02.12 and 11.02.12), involved a meeting with a student from the MA Curation course[166] (who had double-booked the library for an exhibition during the time I required it), a meeting with a local historian about the previous uses of the site, and a further health and safety discussion about proposals, technical specifications, sound volume and timings. Finally, I had the chance to sit in the library space and simply listen for half an hour, noting down all the sounds I could hear within the room and beyond. This exercise led me to consider all the sounds in the space as one entity, even those deemed barely noticeable – a cough, a dropped pencil, a door banging in the distance – all needing to be acknowledged and logged.

---

[166] L. Hensser (curator), *Still*, [exhibition], February 23rd - March 30th 2012.
This exhibition included two of my large photographs from the *Unfolded Paper* series, 1998, as a result of Laura's research on my website.
http://blogs.arts.ac.uk/chelsea/2012/02/20/still-curated-by-laura-hensser-ma-curating/, (accessed 01.04.12).

Overall, the supposed 'silent study' room encompassed quite a conglomeration of heard, overheard, distant, and even imagined sounds.

The material

My contribution would be to identify an aspect of the wider context of the site that could then be realised as layers of new sounds. I hoped to evoke a continuum of an imagined sound that could have inhabited the library space for over a hundred years, one that would be deemed natural in this particular working environment: the sound of writing. The sound was to be an amplification of pen on paper but one which was not overly obvious to the passing library user, given the volume at which it would be heard. I hoped the text would evoke an addition to the library collection through the industry of writing and perhaps even suggest the sonification of silent reading. The notion of thoughts being heard and of the passing on of knowledge, implied by the simple recording of a written word as a kind of aural fingerprint, added to the sense of a continuity of readers and writers in the space. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to make use of texts already in the collection as source material, initially as a kind of prop and as a relevant means of directing the thinking and writing within the extant Old Library of what has recently become an art college, developing around it. The listening, logging, writing, and playing out of sound would exist as parallel actions, and as a further acknowledgement of the site's actual and imagined material.

A description of the event

The performance event was determined by the opening time of the library at 9.30am. I had the assistance of Kate Ross,[167] an intern and student curator at Chelsea Space Gallery, who stayed at the event all day helping with the installation. She also requested to blog about the event throughout the day, lending a curious liveness to what was otherwise static, and another layer of live writing as further documentation on the internet.

---

[167] K. Ross, 'Beyond the Bookshelves' exhibition at the Old College Library, Chelsea College of Art & Design, *Curatorial Curiosities,* [web blog], 31 May 2012, http://curatorialcuriosities.wordpress.com/category/music-soud/, (accessed 01.06.12).

The technical aspect was quite simple: two amplified speakers were placed on the metal balcony with cabling dropped through the grating floor to plug in beside the furthest window. I had been told that I could not access the balcony; however, on the day of the piece, I persuaded the other librarian on duty that it was far better to have any trip hazards out of the way (such as heavy speakers on stands) and to have the cables well secured beneath the balcony and out of sight. More crucially, this had the added advantage that the sound-emitting devices (the speakers) were not visually apparent. This became quite an important element of the piece it transpired, adding to the initial sense of slight confusion and the conundrum as to what was happening for those entering the old library unawares.

Further equipment included a rifle microphone, used for very close amplification of a small area (the pen and pencil scratching the paper), a looping device for layering the sounds (so as to have more than one iteration) and a mixing desk to control excess noise and to feed in page-turning and flicked paper sounds from a contact microphone. The two amplified speakers were positioned above me, some three metres up, but not obviously visible. I also had a large sketchpad to use as the logbook, two books by William Morris and John Ruskin to work from, and a collection of pencils and pen nibs (no ink was permitted). The action consisted of performing as a scribe by writing out texts from the chosen books, whilst recording and playing out the sounds and logging intermittently by hand, the times that all the other sounds in and beyond the library could be heard. The event became durational, lasting for six hours, until the library closed.

The initial idea had been to position myself up on the balcony out of sight, so as to be able to remove myself from being watchable or even noticeable, whilst activating the sounds. Due to the restrictions imposed on accessing the balcony however, this had to be re-thought. The new placing of the performer entailed a re-assessment of how to handle the performer's visibility. This was eventually achieved by performing, yet seeming not to perform; by maintaining a discreet, seated, presence, yet driving and managing the sounds whilst being visibly accessible as the actual sound-source.

The significance of the texts

The Old Library is a double height room approximately 15m by 10m, with an iron balcony running along three sides at first floor level. It houses the most valuable parts of the art college collection and was purpose built as a library as part of the Royal Army Medical College in the early twentieth century. Lined with formal bookshelves and display cases, it retains the hallowed atmosphere of a place of learning. Two of the prized collections, (mentioned specifically by the librarian on my first tour), are the collected writings of William Morris and John Ruskin. These are of significant value to the current library particularly in relation to theories of art education. The two chosen reference texts therefore were to be: 'The Mystery of Life and Its Arts' (1868) by John Ruskin,[168] and 'The Aims of Art' (1887), an essay by William Morris.[169]

What had Morris and Ruskin specifically to do with my act of writing? As thinkers, artists, and writers, both have had a profound influence on art education, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis. To inhabit the space as part of its fabric suggested inhabiting the writing too, albeit paying tribute as a scribe by recreating the words of Morris and Ruskin on paper.

Listening also became a crucial part of the piece, in my double role as scribe/performer and scribe/audio-observer. The act of listening to sounds in the moment and logging them as descriptions occurred alongside the copying out of sections from both of the texts, serving as an appropriate link between past and present, and between the material of the site and the site itself.

The sounds made

My aim to become a part of the fabric of the site required the sounds to begin and end surreptitiously. The sounds should simply be 'there' as a part of the

---

[168] J. Ruskin, 'The Mystery of Life and Its Arts', in George Allen, *Sesame and Lilies, Three Lectures by John Ruskin*, Charing Cross Road, 1900.

[169] W. Morris. 'The Aims of Art,' William Morris, Stories in *Prose, Stories in Verse, Shorter Poems, Lectures and Essays*, ed G.D.H Cole, Nonesuch, Bloomsbury Press, 1944.

subdued background noise of the room, quietly building a rhythm and becoming a kind of ground to all the other sounds. For this reason, there were no publicised performance times, the event becoming, by default, durational and a part of the everyday. A problem immediately arose, however. At too low a volume, the sounds were unnoticeable or very subtle. At too high a volume, the sounds altered in character, becoming too harsh and picking up extraneous noise. When too harsh, the sounds no longer sounded like a pen on paper. However, some alterations of the positioning and distance of the microphone, type of writing paper, implements, and EQ on the mixing desk, helped overcome the dilemma and things proceeded from a single stroke of the pen to several layers of simultaneous writing as a rustle of activity, the loops lengthening as the day progressed.

Throughout the day, perception also gradually shifted for the performer. Minimal sounds, observed aurally around me, assumed a much greater significance than before. Distant, repeated sounds became more apparent, and the everyday background of sound began to become intrusive so that the time spent in the library's silent zone was unsettled by the endless distant traffic and the descent of an aircraft, punctuated by the banging of an ill-closing door and the drone of a hand dryer through a wall.

Examples from the 'sounds heard' log

I decided to log these contemporaneous sounds alongside the devised ones of writing. By committing the descriptions to paper, they became another part of the material of the site that would otherwise have been forgotten. Viewer-listeners were able to access these pages by looking over my shoulder. At times, these logged sounds and the written copying of the texts of Morris and Ruskin coincided in completely unanticipated ways. Some synchronous moments logged for example were:

(Log, p.3) Heard:

12.52 p.m. car and motorbike pull away in Atterbury Street

12.53 p.m. door to w.c. squeaks

12.54 p.m. w.c. door bangs shut

Text: at which point I was writing the following text from William Morris: *"…and on the whole to satisfy my master, the mood [of idleness] I must either be making something or making believe to make it."*

(p.4) Heard:

1.58 p.m. someone shifts position on their seat, coat slipped off

1.00 p.m. lorry passes on Millbank

1.01 p.m. siren (two tones) in distance

Text (Morris): *".. this explains why [all men] have always, with more or less of toil, cherished and practised art."*

(p.5) Heard:

1.42 p.m. plane descending

1.45 p.m. bag rummage

1.47 p.m. helicopter approaching

Text (Ruskin): *"… I was not aware of a restriction to the topics of discussion which may be brought before this society (that no reference be made to religious questions)[…] [which] would necessarily have disabled me, think as I think…"*

At 6.30pm, with no one else in the library, I faded out the sounds for the last time. The resulting eighteen pages of texts and time-logged sounds remain as a document of the day, a testament to the six hours spent being an integral part of the Old Chelsea Library site and provided a new addition to the inherent material of the site, experienced on March 1st 2012.

Summarising the material of the site

Within the library, adding to the everyday sound elements in and beyond the room, was the awareness of the incongruity of the insistent motor engine and the electrical hand dryer; sounds alien of course to both Morris and Ruskin. Other people were also a part of this library soundscape: coughs, sniffs, sighs, someone clearing their throat, the rip of a Velcro pencil case, the

subdued clatter of a keyboard, the rustle of a coat being slipped off, a bag being rummaged through – all of these contributed. The action undertaken in the library acted as an interruption of sorts. Once discerned however, it became a backdrop to the environment and for some, a focus, for the users of the library space over the day to suggest an activity in keeping with the very purpose, industry, and history of the library space. This allowed aspects of the context and history of the building and the people, as another aspect of the site's material, to become, for a short time, a current sonic part of the site.

To conclude, I turn to the central Massey text quoted in the conference 'Contested Sights/Sites' of which this performance formed a part. It had been suggested that the sense of history in a place is, as Doreen Massey states in *Space, Place, Gender* (1994), "formed out of social interrelations at all scales, then one view of a place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings."[170] In relation to the library used for the *Silent Zone* performance, these networks encompass the interrelations of past and present, different histories of the site itself (marshy wasteland, panoptically designed penitentiary, military medical college and now art school), discussions and hurdles on behalf of the performer,[171] and the many eras of people, writing and understandings, brought to this unique location.

Evocation and the mimetic tendency

> Nature produces similarities; one need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man's. His gift for seeing similarity is nothing but a rudiment of the once powerful compulsion to become similar and to behave mimetically (like something else). There is

---

[170] D. Massey, *Space, Place, Gender,* Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1994, cited in TrAIN & CCW Graduate School, UAL, *Contested Sights/Sites* conference call for papers, 01 March 2012, http://www.transnational.org.uk/events/153-train-ccw-graduate-school-contested-sitessights-research-conference-, (accessed 01.04.12).

[171] The narrow interpretation and implementation of Health and Safety regulations, particularly within more 'corporate' art schools such as Chelsea College of Art, is seriously hampering ambition and creativity, particularly for those artists attempting to make site specific work and those working with sound. There is much debate to be had about this.

> perhaps not a single one of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role.
>
> Walter Benjamin in his essay On the Mimetic Faculty, 1933[172]

Having established at the start of Chapter Three the importance of acknowledging the aural architectures in which the sound works have taken place, and continued by elaborating on the associative material of the site and how it informs the sounds heard within them, I conclude this chapter by reflecting on one of the central tendencies of the sound works used to address associative interpretation: the concept of evocation. The following section considers theories of evocation, simulation, and mimetic sound-making and identifies and investigates processes used to achieve this in the portfolio of live, performed sound works made between 2008 and 2014.

Can a sound ever be completely abstract, in a performance? I suggest that every sound has a connotation and that the connotation becomes apparent and is conveyed, whether man or machine-made, solely through the agency of forms of audio mimesis. Wittgenstein describes mimicry as a form of 'seeing as.'[173] His implication is that seeing constitutes half seeing, half thought. The insights of my practice allow me to appreciate the mimetic tendency in performative contexts to be a form of what I would call 'hearing as,' or similarly, half hearing, half thought. Aspects of 'hearing as' will be identified in some of the sound works later in the chapter.

The Mimic, 12.09.12

Whilst sitting outdoors in the sunny garden of a faded country house in Norfolk (the venue for a wild-life sound recording course), making myself *invisible* by using remotely placed microphones on long cables, making myself *inaudible* by wearing a jacket which did not rustle, suppressing a

---

[172] W. Benjamin, 'On the Mimetic Faculty', in M. Jennings, H. Eiland, and G. Smith (eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol.2, Part 2,* Harvard, Belknap press, 2005, p.59.

[173] Wulf refers to Wittgenstein's mimetic re-interpretation as a form of 'seeing-as' or 'aspect-seeing' as described by W. Found, quoted in R. Allen and M. Turvey, *Wittgenstein, Theory and the Arts*, 2001, London & New York, Routledge, p. 274.

cough and becoming frustrated by having to walk painstakingly slowly to prevent extraneous noise, came a desire to mischievously intervene.

Known for being a convincing mimic as a child, I cupped my hands, blew between my thumbs, and became a wood pigeon, calling across the lawns to the nearby coppice in which real wood pigeons were calling to one another. A few minutes later, after some answering calls from these birds, I became an owl… I then became the focus of someone else's field recording, no longer on the fringes but as an irreverent participant, as something of a gamekeeper turned poacher perhaps. As Walter Benjamin noted, we have a compulsion from our earliest days to wish to become similar, with mimicry even providing the earliest form of assimilation into language.

This anecdotal experience highlighted the many rationales and types of mimicry that form the core of much creative practice. Audio mimicry in particular, will be discussed later in this chapter with regard to the theories expounded on by others including Walter Benjamin, Allen S. Weiss, and anthropologist, Christoph Wulf, but more specifically in relation to my own practice, and through questioning and building on the practice of other contemporary exponents.

'Mimesis' (as opposed to mimicry – a form of deception, according to Adorno), is defined in the Shorter Oxford English dictionary, 1980 as "a figure of speech whereby the words or actions of another are imitated" [174] but significantly involves making the self or thing *similar* to the other by going beyond mere imitation. Despite acknowledging the scepticism brought to the concept of mimesis by many including Plato, who saw it as preventing man from recognising the 'real', Michael Kelly contends that art provides a "a sensuous experience that is beyond reference to reality," and a "refuge for mimetic behaviour."[175]

The value and fascination of aural mimicry within art contexts, was highlighted for me by experiencing a sound work installed at the five-yearly international *Documenta* art event in Kassel, Germany (*Documenta 13*, 2012).

---

[174] Shorter Oxford English dictionary, 1980, p.1326.

[175] M. Kelly, 'Mimesis', in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, vol. 3*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.236-7.

Natascha Sadr Haghighian,[176] produced a witty reversal of roles in a work which only gradually revealed its deception and humour. Set as a hidden source sound work that was installed, almost invisibly amongst the scrubby vegetation of a sloping, wooded hillside above the Karlsaue grounds, listeners who had sought out the work from the catalogue had to undertake a scramble to experience it. Here and there, along a slippery, zig-zagging trail, a sound featured: a cat meowing, a bird calling, a goat bleating – but all, one realised after listening for a while, were mimicked versions made by different human voices. The 'field' recordings were in fact, people.

Relevant too, as a direct example of mimesis in an artwork is the 'birdsong' mimicry of the participants in artist Marcus Coates's video *Dawn Chorus* (2007),[177] highlighting perhaps a human need to be a part of the wider soundscape oneself, through this seemingly ridiculous exercise in imitation. In this piece, participants listened to, and were then asked to imitate, the slowed-down sounds of a bird. Their videoed contribution is played back in fast motion (in order to raise the pitch to a familiar avian one) thereby creating a comedic 'performance' as both recipient and contributor: bird as human, human as bird. The piece perhaps recalls the results of an earlier collaboration between John Baldessari and Pauline Oliveros with the instructional title: *Violin imitates Human Voice, Human voice imitates Violin, A Duet* (1970).[178]

Also of note in relation to birdsong is Mark Wallinger's film, *The Lark Ascending* (2004),[179] directly using the title of a piece for solo violin and string orchestra composed by Vaughan Williams of 1914/20. Over what transpires to be a 33-minute realisation, a much slowed-down recording of a

---

[176] N. Sadr Haghighian, 'untitled exhibition,' in H. Cantz, *Documenta* (13), [catalogue], volume 3/3, 2012, p.300.

[177] See M. Coates, *Dawn Chorus*, 2007 [video]. Additionally, his work *Cadences* (2008), used only final chords from existing musical works. This featured in *Waterlog*, the W.G. Sebald inspired group exhibition at Norwich City Art Gallery, 2007.

[178] J. Baldessari and P. Oliveros, *Violin imitates Human Voice, Human Voice Imitates Violin*, A Duet, [art work], 1970.

[179] M. Wallinger, *The Lark Ascending (2004)*, [film] screened at the Sonic Illuminations event, British Film Institute, London, 2008.

lark's song gradually rises in pitch and 'readability'. From the outset it is sensed as a low, barely audible bass rumble that ascends as it increases in playback speed to reach that of a recognisable lark's song. The projection on screen meanwhile, displays an imperceptible shift from complete blackness through to white light throughout the duration of the sounds ascending in pitch. The recorded and mimicked bird is rendered initially unrecognisable before being revealed in its natural state. So, here we have a composer, imitatively paying tribute to the lark (a symbol of hope in the skies of war threatened England), whose trope of escapism is appropriated by a contemporary artist who in turn, uses the possibilities of technology to subvert our expectation of the field recording. Moreover, this trope represents the bird as an ironically menacing presence, (the rumble, the darkness), yet itself threatened in numbers. The work perhaps stretches the boundaries as a convoluted form of 'hearing-as'.

Birdsong, it seems, represents the most admired and imitated of natural phenomena depicted in music over the centuries, with Olivier Messiaen being one of the best examples.[180] This particular programmatic element will not feature at length in the thesis, but serves as a useful way to unravel the need for, and use of mimicry in sound. Furthermore, in relation to my own sound works, it is valuable in considering how consciously imitative sounds are rendered.

To set the scene for the context of evocations in the portfolio of works in this thesis, I want to touch briefly on a slightly earlier work, titled *Sculpture Court* (2006), which was performed in the V&A in London.[181] In this piece, the prompts for sound-making were determined solely by the visual aspects of the many stone sculptures in the transverse gallery of the sculpture court. 'Evocations' were made of any carved features depicting a sound-making object in the live performances on the violin: a bagpipe, a hunter's horn, birds, the wind, thunder clouds, a shepherd's flute, and so on. Each sound evocation took up one looped layer of a live recording to form a

---

[180] Olivier Messiaen's *Oiseaux Exotiques* (1955-56) for piano and small orchestra of wind and percussion, is a good example.
[181] T. Spinks, *Sculpture Court*, [sound performance], 2006, Victoria & Albert Museum, London as part of the Fête de la Musique day, June 21st 2006.

tableau of sounds that gradually filled the long gallery, drawing attention to the sonic possibilities embedded in the sculptures for the passers-by. The piece was unashamedly a mimetic, sonic tribute to the visual associations of the objects in the space. Although effective to an extent, later works have sought to bring more depth to the references brought to the sounds.

Defining my Three Terms of Association

Prior to expanding more specifically on other works, I propose to introduce a series of my own terms to distinguish my art practice from other site related practices. These terms have been developed by considering space (how the materiality of it might be activated) and by reflecting on what might be brought to the space through other researches (the associative, material of the site). I will also elaborate on how these terms might be used to describe evocations in sound employing mimesis. Under the auspices of the material of the site, all these sound works acknowledge differing approaches to mimicry, which can be determined and led by identifying the three distinct sonic properties or potential sonic properties of any site - as being the:

- actual sounds
- activated sounds
- associative sounds

Elaborating on this, the term *actual* sounds is perhaps self-evident as being those particular to the site (but not always immediately audible) and can be defined differently of course according to how one listens. (An example here would be Christina Kubisch and the electro-magnetic elements she identifies in urban spaces that are only heard with the aid of special headphones). These sounds and their sources can be described (akin to Michel Chion's 'reduced' form of listening)[182] as having specific characteristics in the way of mechanical, natural, human, or animal elements with qualities which are continuous, intermittent and have a particular volume, pitch, grain, timbre and perhaps, a rhythmic pattern.

---

[182] M. Chion, *Audio Vision, Sound on Screen*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990

The notion of the *activated* deals more with allowing the objects of the site to have a sonic voice through manual activation by the performer and sometimes by the use of microphones in close contact with the physical material: for example, in *Seaforts* (2010)*,* and in this case more aptly, *Activated Ballroom* (2012). The sonic characteristic of an individual material, surface, or object consequently comes to the fore - a metal ordnance container in *Seaforts* betrays its rusty iron properties and the upholstery in *Activated Ballroom* emerges in the mind's eye as part of the faded opulence of the unseen room.

Associative is a more open-ended term but can encompass sounds that have come about through research into the site. These might be historical, sociological, musical, metaphorical, or indeed imagined sounds that may have occurred on the site in the past. Chion's 'semantic' listening is suggested here.

Below is an array (sub-dividing and combining the possibilities of the *associative*), presenting these approaches as actions that describe, address and manifest the sounds as:

- Actual
- Activated (as physical or mimetic act)
- Associative (as interpreted mimetic act)

  And within the latter can be found the:
- Associative-historical
- Associative-sociological
- Associative-musical
- Associative-metaphorical
- Associative-imagined

This model is one that can be usefully applied to all the sound works in the portfolio under discussion.

The first work listed provides an example of how this might be applied. In *Henry's Ballad at Harold's Wharf* (2008) (performed on a gantry above

Deptford Creek),[183] the imagined sounds of distressed, braying animals were conjured mimetically on the instrument (alluding to a slaughterhouse, previously on the site), and combined with the fragment of a rediscovered melody, composed by Henry VIII. Here *associative-imagined* mimesis evoked an *associative-historical* reference and was combined with an *associative-musical* one. Further layers of *actual* sounds at the site, were provided by passing docklands trains and boats on the creek.

Can the *associative-imagined* approach be feasible? Can one 'mimic' something imagined? If 'to mimic' suggests an attempt at mirroring, how can this be regarded as possible if the original is not tangible but only envisaged? Research, but also memory, must come into play here as a bank of images and sounds on which to draw on if the mimetic is to be considered in the wider sense as a form of evocation as simulation. The notion of audiation[184] or inner hearing is a useful field to draw on in this respect: "A sound imagined but not actually heard " is the description of the term phonomnesis, described by Augoyard, in *The Sonic Experience* as a mental activity recalling sounds from memory not through stimulation of the memory to prompt a past sonic event, but as a means of conjuring up internally heard sounds stimulated by the imagination. [185] This device of evocation forms an important part of my *associative-imagined* approach to a sound work that delves into the interpreted realms of the imagined historical.

However, it was in the piece *Sonic Triangle* (2009),[186] that the mimetic sounds were first fully related to the site in an *associative-historical* way, which in turn, prompted the use of the physical objects used in tandem with

---

[183] T. Spinks, *Henry's Ballad at Harold's Wharf*, **DVD track 7, appendix p.58,** [sound performance], Deptford Creek, 2008.

[184] Edwin Gordon defined 'audiation' as a term and as a process, in 1975. The concept is similar to composer and music educationalist Kodaly's 'inner hearing,' suggestive of a means of envisaging sounds internally.

[185] J.T. Augoyard and H.Torgue (eds.)*, Sonic Experience, A Guide to Everyday Sounds*, Montreal and London, McGill Queen's University Press, 2005, p.85.

[186] T. Spinks, *Sonic Triangle,* **DVD track 1, CD 1 track 1, appendix p.7,** [sound performance], Chelsea, 2009.

the instrument to suggest those references. In this context, real objects acted as both evocative, sonic sounding devices and as providers of a visual, associative focus.

Commencing with a fast trill on the instrument (played with a piece of string in place of a bow, held in a fretsaw frame) as an *associative-musical* shorthand for running water, the windy desolation of the marshy site on the bank of the Thames was further suggested by the 'scuffling' sound of a plastic pipe swept across the strings. The approach to *Sonic Triangle* was informed by the discovery that the original penitentiary building on the site (which preceded the present early twentieth-century building), was initially designed to incorporate Jeremy Bentham's proposed system of tubing in order to facilitate audio surveillance. However, the suggestion that a system of rudimentary communication between prisoners could also occur by the tapping of the pipes and that they, in turn, might listen in to their gaolers - caused the installation to be abandoned. The performer conjured up this reference by using pieces of copper plumbing pipe on the upper fingerboard of the instrument in the manner of a bottle neck on a slide guitar. Again, an *associative-historical/associative imagined* mimesis was employed and visually reinforced by the choices and activations of the objects used, and by the diffusion of the sounds around the space.

Seafort (2010), a performance eight nautical miles off the North Kent Coast,[187] took this idea in another associative direction by again combining mimetic, rhythmically activated sounds, which were made using contact microphones directly applied to the seafort's iron structure. The urgent, rhythmic sounds seemed to recall the noise of anti-aircraft guns, which the forts were built to deploy. Additional 'whistling' sounds featured on the instrument as long, held, bowed notes inspired by low murmurs of wind caught in the metal communication pylon. Deeper sounds made on the instrument, like drones of distant ship engines and remote siren calls, floated over the rhythmic activations initially put in place. A 'scurrying' sound,

---

[187] T. Spinks, *Seafort,* **DVD track 2, CD 1 tracks 4 & 5, appendix p. 15** [sound performance], 2010.

suggested by a jumble of fast, sotto voce notes, brought in a suggestion of past human activity. This form of mimetic sound-making aimed to underpin and reinforce the actual sounds experienced at the site. So here, the method acknowledged the '*actual-activated*' in combination with the '*associative-historical*' and the '*associative-imagined*', simultaneously attempting to form three layers of the real, the evoked, and the imagined.

Brixton Market (2010),[188] (performed live within the arcades of a large, multi-cultural south London market), set out to suggest once more, the bustling element of a site as an actual, not imagined one. That is, as a form of 'affrettando' perhaps, in combination with mimetically referenced sounds: the banter and cries of the street traders – the inflections of voices, the squeak of the trolleys, the chopping of meat and fish, distant beat-boxes, the drone of a forklift truck – all coalescing into one received soundscape. The emphasis here tended to feature more prominently as what I call *associative-sociological* mimesis, by which I mean a direct listening and evocation made in situ (on the instrument) of the many different human presences in the everyday situation of the market.

It is by imitating that we invent.[189]

In my search for a wider understanding of the implications of mimesis, I introduce the theories of Allen S. Weiss in his attempts to define the methods and processes germane to arts practice. I will go on to describe further instances of how mimesis has been an integral part of much of the practice.

Weiss's definition of mimesis is as both imitation and creation. He particularly credits Bachelard for the quote above in *Water and Dreams,* and elaborates in his book *Varieties of Audio Mimesis* (2008), on what constitutes the uses and values of mimesis in artistic production. This reads, I contend, as a blueprint or manifesto for all artistic production:

---

[188] T. Spinks, *Brixton Market*, 2010. DVD track 8, portfolio appendix p. 60

[189] G. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An essay on the Imagination of Matter*, Texas, The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1983, p. 35 (originally published in 1942 as L'eau et les Rêves: essai sur l' imagination de la matière).

> ... the hermeneutic key to all the arts entails the contradictory
> exigencies of mimesis, transposition, metaphor, correspondence and
> rupture, montage, metamorphosis, disintegration.[190]

One can deduce from this series of approaches that the processes of "enunciation, transmission, broadcast" will follow one another. In other words, mimesis is simultaneously seen as loss and gain whereby the shift from signifier to signified suggests a flow or journey, promoting newly made material with some value in its reception (as a loss of the original but a gain in the new interpretation). He asks if music, as a subdivision of sound-making, is a representational (mimetically driven) or an abstract art.

Weiss commences his essay by discussing the writings of Henry David Thoreau, whose observations of intense listening experiences to sounds in the natural world, prompts the observation: "For Thoreau, to listen, is already to think, to compose."[191] Thoreau describes the sound of the wind in the telegraph wires as a form of Aeolian harp, the bizarre mimicking abilities of the mocking bird, and the distant sounds of a train as a (then) very novel sound in the landscape. He further notes in his journal of 1852, that "the finest uses of things are accidental"[192] identifying thus both imitative and synthesised approaches to sound-making. Thoreau was a significant influence on John Cage who was inspired in particular by Thoreau's notion of the 'latent music of the earth.' Cage wrote his piece *Empty Words* (1974)[193] as a direct tribute to Thoreau.

---

[190] A. Weiss, *Varieties of Audio Mimesis, Musical Evocations of Landscape*, New York, Errant Bodies Press, 2008, p. 20.

[191] A. Weiss, ibid, p.9.

[192] A. Weiss, ibid, p.9 (taken from H. D. Thoreau, *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, Vol. 1 New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1906).

[191] J. Cage, *Empty Words (Parte III) Extract,* [online video], 1977, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGerrvq-UlI&feature=player_detailpage, (accessed 01.04.12).

Weiss refers to Bachelard again in relation to language as an important onomatopoeic precedent in the study of the relationship between sounds and meaning, words and images:

> The imagination is a sound effects technician (bruiteur) who must amplify or subdue. Once the imagination masters dynamic correspondences, the images *truly speak*.[194]

This reference to the imagination and sound recalls the appreciation of 'inner hearing' described earlier. Finally, Weiss produces a somewhat convoluted series of eight categories in varying combinations to describe existing sound works.[195] However, for simplicity, I have summarised these as three approaches that are not dissimilar to my own paradigms of sounds made in approaching performance, as the *actual, activated* and *associative.*

Weiss sets these out as follows:

S*ource*:

I interpret his term as concrete or recorded, the term derived from *musique concrète* and notated and performed, in its broadest sense. The optical soundtrack he mentions here is perhaps an example of the synthesis of notation and performance. (I suggest that the films of Guy Sherwin would be a good example of this).[196]

Modality: as hyper real/stylised.

Referentiality: evocative (simulation) /ambient (mood).

Weiss then concludes his introductory chapter in relation to audio mimesis with the reassuring statement that "[i]t is hoped that this study of the microstructures of audiophonic representation will serve as a sort of listening guide to reveal previously unheard dimensions of familiar music and to suggest unimagined forms of a future sound art."[197] One would hope so.

---

[194] A. Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[195] Ibid., p. 44.

[196] Guy Sherwin's optical films can be seen at: http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/guy_sherwin/, (accessed 20.01.4).

[197] A. Weiss, *op. cit.,* p. 20.

Weiss is a useful guide to the mimetic since he recognises the complex manner in which the creative process comes about. This is not always preplanned, but rather responsive to the many forces acting on our sensibilities and developments, not least in regards to the importance of the fundamental shaping of ideas acquired through the various acts of mimesis over the period of the germination and realisation of an artwork.

Besides applying to ourselves, however, mimesis is not just imitation or copying but a process acting as a means of relating to others. In his essay *Mimetic Learning*, anthropologist Christoph Wulf states that:

> [t]he mimetic process is a bridging process that on the one hand converts the exterior world into the interior world and on the other hand conveys the interior world into the exterior world…Mimetic processes represent an important condition for the emergence of vivid experience, but for it to develop, analysis and reflection are indispensable.[198]

He also suggests three stages: to identify, engage and emulate. I suggest that there could be a fourth assimilative stage here in order to highlight the 'become like' stage, and to understand the 'communicative intentions,' as not simply those for reproduction, but also for construction. Do these processes and 'images' extend to aural ones?

In furthering these ideas of social mimesis, Wulf also usefully refers to Walter Benjamin's writings on his inner childhood recollections in *Berlin Childhood* (*circa 1900*), and his:

> appropriation of the world[…]related to places, rooms, streets objects and events and how he made them part of his inner world of images, thereby individually 'appropriating' them[…]He views the world of things as something that is animated and responds to the child, is established in processes of making himself and the objects similar or

---

alike: the child 'reads' the world and 'creates' correspondences in the process.[199]

Benjamin gives the example of emulating a windmill, as a child with arms outstretched and rotated, making wind, breathing sounds: "In this childhood world it is not just images but sounds and noises as well as smells and the experience of touch, which play an important role."[200] Wulf continues to quote Benjamin in noticing "the intoxicating sound of the air" as an example of remembering mimetically. The act of remembering for Benjamin and the various acts of remembering mimetically are a gift, achieving what Wulf observes as the "most perfect archive of non-sensuous similarity"[201]

Returning again to the three paradigms of site specificity suggested by Kwon in Chapter Two − the social, discursive, and the phenomenological − and comparing them to Christoph Wulf's writing on mimesis, Weiss's three categories are again, not dissimilar, and I include my own terms in this table:

Weiss	Kwon	Wulf	Spinks
1 enunciation/ source (the space)	social, institutional	identify	actual
2 transmission/ modality	phenomenological/ experiential	engage	activated
3 broadcast/ referentiality	discursive	emulate	associative

Weiss concludes his essay by highlighting mimetic re-interpretation as a new kind of perception, a 'seeing as' (referring to Wittgenstein). I venture to suggest that one could deem the mimetic tendency in this context to be just as valid as a form of 'hearing-as', as a set of evocative, sonic equivalents. This can be heard particularly in the sound work *Sonic Ritual* (2013), mentioned previously and which will be elaborated on later.

---

[199] C. Wulf, ibid., p.59, (originally from W. Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006).

[200] Ibid., in C.Wulf, op.cit., p.59.

[201] Ibid., in C. Wulf, *op. cit.,* p. 60.

Compositional mimesis

Is music abstract or representational? Luke Windsor maintains that contrary to general assumptions, music is essentially self-referential and intrinsic.[202] The extrinsic nature of mimesis as metaphor, therefore, is valued because it draws attention to the sources of the sounds. Though at odds with the value of Schaeffer's 'sourceless' *musique concrète* (discussed later), this is a useful distinction to make when alluding associatively and in a discursive sense to an aspect of the site specific since it lends itself to the narrative elements inherent in this mimetic approach. Interestingly Thomas Gardner regards actual notation itself as a form of grounded mimesis in his document 'Sound Art, Music and the Rehabilitation of Schizophonia'.[203]

Similarly, in *Word Events, Perspectives on Verbal Notation* (2012),[204] John Lely and James Saunders give an example of a piece by G. Douglas Barrett, *A Few Silence* (2008),[205] that uses found objects played mimetically to recreate heard sounds. The timed sounds are played live in the context of an instructional score, as an event for the performing participants.

Returning to the portfolio of performances, if the *associative* is causing a recognition between performer and listener, thus providing subconscious participation, then the recording and looping device used is serving as both a literal mirroring and relaying mechanism. Where does this leave the performances in which no instrument is used, or which takes an aspect of the site itself to inform the sound-making such as in *Activated Ballroom* (2012),[206] *Floor Zero* (2011),[207] and *Silent Zone* (2012)?[208] In *Activated*

---

[202] L.W. Windsor, 'A Perceptual Approach to the Description and Analysis of Acousmatic Music', [PhD Thesis], City University, 1995, pp.46-7.

[203] T. Gardner, 'Sound Art, Music and the Rehabilitation of Schizophonia', [unpublished], 2012.

[204] J. Lely and J. Saunders, *Word Events: Perspectives on Verbal Notation*, Continuum, New York, 2012.

[205] D. Barrett, *A Few Silence*, [sound piece] 2008, http://www.gdouglasbarrett.com, (accessed 10.10.14).

[206] T. Spinks, *Activated Ballroom*, **CD2 track 3, appendix p. 64** [sound performance], Norfolk, 2012.

Ballroom (a purely audio work) it is perhaps more difficult to define, but the sounds are 'following' the objects, causing them to be evoked through the performers' simple interactions of activating by hitting, scraping, and scratching an inanimate object. How does the performer relate to the difference between the human and the mechanical approaches to mimicry? Using the sounds themselves as a kind of mimicking action within the lift, in the library, and without the instrument, one can argue it still involves an element of the mimetic if repetition forms a core act. In *Floor Zero*, in the Camberwell College of Art goods lift, the looping machine does the 'mimicking' through incessant, and gradually disintegrating, iteration. Unusually, the *associative* here is also the *actual* sonic material of the site; the authoritative voice in the lift that is subjected to the ridicule of its own repetition. In *Silent Zone*, at the Chelsea Library, the equivalence of a sound is created or staged in situ. This barely discernible, intimate sound of writing is looped and broadcast back into the space at a slightly greater volume than would be naturally heard as a kind of recreation of past activities in the library space, again as form of *associative-imagined* mimesis. Perhaps the repetition itself becomes a kind of mimetic metaphor?

So this equivalence, of one sound standing in for another, could perhaps be a more generous word for the concept of mimesis. As an associative, almost programmatic (in the musicological sense) evocation, equivalence assumes and forms a connection or a bridge, between player and listener. It allows the listener, no longer passive and crucially those without musical training, to bring an awareness of this commonality of sound-copying to the making of the sounds and the experience of listening. Moreover, that connection, as an active role of listening then forms another bridge: as a two way means of engaging. This then allows the listener to feel some commonality of experience and even ownership of the material. When the

---

[207] Ibid., *Floor Zero*, **DVD track 3, appendix p. 23** [sound performance], Camberwell College of Art goods lift, 2011.

[208] Ibid, *Silent Zone*, **DVD track 4, appendix p. 31** [sound performance], Chelsea Library, 2012.

need for the perceived lack of expertise in the understanding of musical language is removed, the value of the assimilative properties of the mimetic is highlighted. This new sonic material is less coded, it has no language barrier (in Western music theory terms), becoming a new hearing-and-experiencing in one, effectively conflating original sound and secondary sound material, rather better than Blesser's notion of the primary and slave events. The evoked, equivalent sound is in place, has been recognised, and is engaged with, and acknowledged as a seamless metaphor.

Chapter Four: Sound, method and form

Chapter Four commences with a reflection on the central act of transcription in the practice, and considers approaches that examine the newly introduced role of association in my means of determining production. I continue to break down the categories of sound making to include the creation and investigation of a new, discrete time element in Perpetuation as a Compositional Device. Henri Lefebvre is introduced as an influential figure in his interpretation of rhythm as a crucially central element in life, particularly in relation to music. His call for an analysis and appreciation of everyday rhythm is considered in The Role and Uses of Rhythm. These observations are linked to my own practice in asserting the wider significance of pulse within the resulting compositions covered in the section Rhythm and Implication.

I take the practice further by asking what becomes of the experience of a place when it is subject to an impromptu sound performance. I conclude the chapter with a more in-depth analysis of my sound work *Take a Space, Make a Sound in it*, 2011, that emphasises rhythm in sound, experienced in a working space. Further practice analyses are covered in the following, final chapter, in an overview of my parameters for sound making methods.

Transcription: the material of the site into sound

At the core of the practice is the act of turning one thing into another: information becoming sound, or featuring as sound. In attempting such a transformation, I endeavour to identify solutions towards what I call the 'sonification' of a place by employing some aspects of the site's wider, associative research material. This may be as simple an idea as taking an object, or a historical aspect of the place itself as a referent that can be dwelt upon and delivered through *live* sonification in order to be experienced in the moment of performance.

Transcription can be widely interpreted as the act of transferring information from one state to another, in order to form an equivalent and to perform the act of 'setting down' in a new way. Transcription is also a

commonly recognised musical term describing the arrangement of an existing motif for a different instrument, voice, or combination. Therefore, in terms of my sound works the existing motif here could be regarded as the physicality and the historiography of a site, whilst the 'arrangements' or the devised sounds heard lead to a different, or new understanding of place.

I have written at length in Chapter Three about what for me constitutes the wider material of the site, and how through research this can become an entity in itself (ripe for sonic development), establishing that in the case of the sound works described, it is sound which provides the conduit for channelling and disseminating the information that has been brought to the fore. What is proving more difficult to describe however, is just how this transcriptive act occurs and is imagined and conveyed. How can one convert fragments of archival history, biography, or ideas about the materiality of the objects and surfaces of a site, into abstract sounds without resorting to the conventions of a narrative voice, or to sounds that appear to be simply illustrative, in the programmatic sense? For example, a field recording tends, in this context, to bear witness only to what exists in situ without necessarily alluding to what has been (and what might be), historically, within the space. Can this conversion of material ever be more than a highly subjective and selective reading of a site, taking on the form of a never-quite-fulfilled quest?

An example of my approach in connecting specifically with a place as a site of social action can be experienced in the sound work *Sonic Ritual* (2013),[209] devised in response to an open call submission requesting an approach that investigated the notion of 'revealing secrets' in a given space. Initial research about the designated building revealed a longstanding link with the Masonic Lodge, whilst the Mason's library and nearby shop showcased the many and disparate objects still used in the course of formal Masonic ceremonies; the symbolism of these harking back to the original trade and skills of masonry. A number of these items were consequently identified for possible use in performance, not only for the potential in their obvious sonic properties, but also their metaphorical roles and the 'secrets' they might disclose. Equivalents to these objects were then found amongst

---

[209] T. Spinks, *Sonic Ritual*, **DVD track 5, appendix p.39,** [sound performance], 2013.

the performer's existing possessions, or sourced and purchased through the internet and charity shops.

To give an indication of the range of items used in this particular work, I list examples as follows:

> Two cheap metal goblets, an aluminium set square and stainless steel ruler, an antique dining knife and fork, a trowel, a small mallet (used as a gavel) and a length of coarse string, (the skerrit).

The activation of each in performance caused the amplified accumulation of sounds to take on unexpectedly urgent qualities. The ringing, clanging and jangling of the metallic objects accompanied the thud of a gavel, and the looped sound of the rough growl of a taut, plucked piece of string acted as an ostinato motif. Dimmed lighting, seemingly formal gestures in the handling of the objects by the two female performers, and the relationship between the objects (suspended on invisible nylon thread), were united with the resultant sounds created over the course of the twelve to fifteen minute performances. The result conveyed a simultaneous sense of ritual yet also a (meaningless) non-ritual, since the implied 'genuine' ritual that this engendered was called into question as a mockery, for both performers and audience.

Audience responses tended to acknowledge the studied yet critical nature of a straight-faced ceremonial approach. One respondent, Marianne Markowski, quoted a term from *Approaches to Interactive Art Systems* in describing the interaction with the audience as a 'dynamic-passive' relationship.[210]

Part of the dilemma in using this particular site of course, is that women are not permitted to attend Freemason's ceremonies, even as invited observers. An alternative solution to the performance was therefore sought by searching Youtube for clandestinely shot footage. In one excerpt, a lone male figure walks solemnly around an altar-like table. This was used in turn,

---

[210] E. Edmonds, G. Turner, and L. Candy, 'Approaches to Interactive Art Systems', Proceedings of the 2nd international conference on Computer graphics and interactive techniques in Australasia and South East Asia, New York, ACM, 2007, pp. 113–117, quoted by M. Markowski (PhD candidate) anecdotally.

to inform what became quite a tangentially subversive take on the project. Transcription here involved a performed, hypothetical ritual homing in on the sonic properties of objects as carriers of pseudo significance and meaning: a subversive, exposed secret perhaps. In relation to the sound works overall, the act of transcription is often a simple one, enacted between the two elements of place and performance.

A pertinent contemporary example of sonic transcription can be experienced in the *Shadow-walks* of Viv Corringham.[211] These works seek to record other's memories of a sense of a particular place that has significance for them. Corringham's vocalisations are then made site specifically along the route of the original walk which she undertook alongside the participants. This is an associative-sociological approach perhaps, which leads to an informed improvisation as a transcription of place and memory into sound.

If the process of transcription is in danger of appearing a little obscure to the experiencer, in the sound works under discussion in this thesis, it is reinforced by the provision of written information divulging something of the associative reasoning involved. This one sheet explanatory text or programme note, for want of a better term, has served as an introduction to the background of each project without revealing too much about intent, and has been made available at most performances. It acts as an approximate, objective guide to what to expect for those with a prior knowledge of the existence of the event. It may arguably have provided too-leading an interpretation in the past however, and is consequently only offered optionally. An example can be found in the appendix catalogue, p.43. There is more discussion to be had about this.

Latterly the act of transcription has been extended to inform the structure for two more recent sound works, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds* (2013)[212] and *Echo Lake* (2013).[213] In triggering a specific memory, a bridge is formed

---

[211] V. Corringham, *Shadow Walks,* [sound recording], http://www.vivcorringham.org/shadow-walks, (accessed 01.04.14) and in conversation, in C. Lane, and A. Carlyle, *In the Field, The Art of Field Recording*, Devon, Uniformbooks, 2013.

[212] T. Spinks, *Leeds! Leeds! Leeds!* **CD2 track 6, appendix p. 70** [sound piece], 2013.

[213] T. Spinks, *Echo Lake*, **CD2 track 7, appendix p.70** [sound piece], 2013.

between the recollection of a particular remembered sonic event and the re-visited, re-enacted, contemporaneous version. This has involved the use of pre-recorded performed material for the first time, played into the space as if live, causing the act of transcription here to be temporally determined, loosely autobiographical and falling into my 'associative-imagined' category.

What of the significance of the physicality and materiality of the objects themselves used in the act of sonic transcription, described earlier? These objects undeniably help to provide a focus for more than one sense by encouraging a sympathetic recognition in their tangibility, not only visually, aurally and in a tactile sense, but also in terms of the connotations they suggest. For example, the metal objects activated in the sound work *Sonic Ritual* (2013) are made of familiar, mainly metallurgic materials which are definable as such by our ears, whilst taking on a new identity through their characteristics (and perhaps meaning) when manually sounded and heard through a loudspeaker. The goblet is heard as a bell for instance, and the gavel as a harsh percussive interruption. This is in contrast to the booming sounds resulting from the open air activation of the iron structure and the looped rattling of the bleached bones, found on site and activated in the work *Seafort* (2010),[214] which has both a starkness in connotation and a brittleness of timbre that reinforces the slight unease in their use.

The act of transcription then, can form links between many objects and states: between person and place, materiality and place, interior and exterior, past and present, fact and the fictionalised and between the visual and the aural.

The following two inventories attempt a summary of starting points in terms of physical objects, and their resultant transcribed states in relation to the sites and sonic solutions chosen over the PhD period between 2008 and 2014.

---

[214] T. Spinks, *Seafort*, **DVD track 2, CD1 tracks 4 & 5, appendix p.15** [sound piece], 2010.

List one: an inventory of materials

Elements, materials and objects variously employed in the portfolio of sound works for their sonic or activating properties as prompted by the needs of the research to date are as follows:

> concrete, iron, water, wood, string, wound gut, horsehair, Kevlar (DuPont™), metal, copper piping, plastic piping, galvanised nails, twine, hoop, feather, bones, goods lift, paper, pencil, billiard balls, radiator, upholstery fabric, grease-proof paper stretched over jam-jars pierced with tooth picks, knitting wool and needles, library table, scratchy pen, coarse-surfaced paper, rocks, bicycle pump, masking tape, metal goblets, set square and ruler, silver cutlery, egg, shallot, Lego, toy bus, leek, toilet roll, windscreen wiper, coat hanger, mobile phone, Brio toy bridge, bulldog clip, carrot, milk container, whisk, a lake, steel yachting cables, a mountain, twigs, stapler, hole punch.

More conventional and expected means of iteration and dissemination that aid in the manifestation of the sounds are variously:

> the instrument, (a violin), autoharp, voice(s), amplified speakers, vocal, binaural, rifle and contact microphones, hand held Zoom H4 digital recorder, a Boss Loop Station, Apple Mac laptop, MAX MSP software, audio interfaces, radio transmitter, small mixing desk, bass amp, Genelec, Roland Cube and portable, cheap amplifiers.

List two: an inventory of places and sounds

A significant sound work undertaken immediately prior to the PhD study period is worth briefly mentioning again here in helping to define an early example of a site specific sound approach through the use of objects. The performance that took place in the V&A museum in 2006[215] was inspired by several carved stone sculptures in the Sculpture Gallery that depicted a harp, hunting horn, and the wind. These 'mute' but suggested sounds were mimicked and layered on the violin, thereby establishing a combined method which allowed the transcribed act to be realised live, in an in situ performance.

Further sites used between 2008 and 2014 and a brief description of the resulting sounds have included:

---

[215] T. Spinks, *V&A Sculpture Court*, [sound performance], Fête de La Musique, 2006.

- A creek-side warehouse site having formerly housed a Tudor slaughterhouse - referred to by the mimetically rendered cry on the violin of an animal, combined with a song by Henry VIII.

- A gallery site which once housed a prison - the sounds of escape attempted on a 'prepared' violin, the emphasis on revealing the triangular space by manipulating the source of the sounds.

- A market arcade and the traders' cries - mimicked on the instrument alongside the sense of an ambling paced looped tempo.

- A Victorian former schoolroom building – use of a child's hoop and a feather used to create sounds in place of a bow on the violin.

- A stone university staircase - used to suggest a sonic ascender and descender with voices and collaborative glissandi within the existing acoustic.

- An isolated WWII seafort's military connotations - using percussive, sonic activations of the fabric of the iron structure and materials found on site such as a pile of bones followed by a quiet, layered response on the instrument suggesting a whistling wind.

- A windmill - three outdoor performances on common land, which respectively used: an early 20th century local folksong, the sense of the wind as breath, and the musically related drawings of the artist and trained violinist, Paul Klee.

- A lift - an overlaid (and subsequently undermined) authoritative female voice, looped within a working lift.

- A refectory - the dimensions of the space used to divide the string mathematically, as suggested by pacing out the space whilst playing.

- A nineteenth-century library, housing a collection of writings by William Morris and John Ruskin - brought to life for a day by amplifying and layering the sound of writing.

- An old country house ballroom - the activations of the few objects within the room giving a sense of walls, furniture and the acoustics of the space.

- A Masonic Lodge chamber – the setting for a 'ritual' as an outsider's view of Masonic ceremonies, using activated, sonified objects.
- An exhibition in an ex-warehouse gallery of another artist's work - parallelling the sense of a 'full stop' in music with pizzicato layering of perfect cadences.
- A constructed 'portal' – treating the site as its own simultaneous creator and broadcaster using amplified, activated taut cables, (bowed, plucked and blown) and the resultant intense, rumbling string sounds, in a temporary, purpose built structure.
- A football ground – suggesting the memory of a sonic event culminating in a 45 minute, 45 song layering of football chants, sung by a lone female voice played out in a gallery.
- A remote Snowdonian lake - from a childhood memory of reverberation and a ghostly voice echo, recorded across the water (a location also used to film an episode of Dr Who in 1983).

To summarise, for the purposes of this thesis, I am not interested in what might be considered a mathematical approach to the concept of sound transcription and conversion through data, for example in the relatively new artistic practice of turning image or information into audio digitally by using correlative data conversion software to generate new files. It is rather what can be presented through the *human* filter of the experiences brought via the site-related, investigative study and via the prompted and sonically realised ideas that are at stake here.

Moreover, factual information gleaned through research can provide a valuable raft of (objective) material just as the act of transcription or even transmutation then employs a (subjective) filter. Transcription, in these sound works, has therefore become what occurs once the investigative process is put into place and has converted material from one state to another. The resulting sounds stem from finding sonic revelations, equivalents, inventions and temporary, layered sonic resolutions to share live, in performance with the listener.

Perpetuation as a compositional and metaphorical device: defining the loop

At the still point of the turning world: the end is only a beginning.

T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*[216]

One of the tools of transcription that has become a fundamental part of the practice in performance is a looping device used to perpetuate sounds. Positioned between the performer and the space itself, it has acted as an interface, recording via a built in microphone or by direct input, and is used as a means of documenting the sounds produced whilst seamlessly and instantly relaying those digitally recorded sounds back into the space.

It also serves as a device that externalises and can make apparent the process of performance, whereby the iterative act of layered repetition has become a means or form of compositional process as a live event. The recording is made live, and played back live. It is an instant recording, both for the purposes of duplication and as a way of conveying the indefinite perpetuation of the recorded sounds.

Since digital technology allows the sounds heard to remain very faithful to the original, these recordings can become indistinguishable from the original when overlaid, presenting the listener with some confusion. Is the sound heard a recording, a recording just made, or a live sound being produced in the instant of hearing? Does the listener recognise the function of the device used, if it is indeed visible? As the recursive sounds build rhythmically and texturally (forming grains and patterns), whilst building also on the layering of connotation, the listener may remain slightly perplexed.

Recognition follows repetition in the emerging listening experience, however, to signify that these sounds, like an echo, have already been heard. Resembling an aural mirror, each moment of recorded sound retains a trace and a memory of the process of which it is a part, in a continuing, additive and layering procedure. The sounds, now multi-iterative, joined and

---

[216] T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*, Faber and Faber, London, 1976, p.18.

conjoined, fastened at each end in a circular shape like a kind of Möbius strip, no longer clearly demonstrate their origins or give an indication of a destination.

Thus the loop has been defined aurally. It is a form of palindromic pool, similar to its namesake in shape, as circular, self-reflexive, and with a completeness of itself. It conveys sounds without beginnings or endings; it is duration-less, becoming a 'lasting' (Duchamp's term) entity, no longer dependant on the act of its creation, whilst in its roundness, it suggests a whole, a new entity, carved out as a sealed disruption of the conventional experience of time.

In relation to Karl Jasper's statement "Das Dasein ist Rund," (being is round),[217] Bachelard (1958) muses on the phenomenon of isolation (in this case alluding to the image of a tree conjured by the poet Rilke), noting that "when a thing becomes isolated, it becomes round, assumes a figure of being that is concentrated upon itself."[218]

The implication of infinity within the loop as a kind of indefinite state of emergence implies that a generative process is in place. Or, as Herber (2011) recognises:

> … the concepts of process and algorithm are closely linked with those of dynamism and change, w*ith becoming.*[219]

Where does this perpetual immanence situate the conundrum of the looped sound in the performances? It seems, on the one hand, to be a complete and completed phenomenon and on the other, something still being created and occurring. The loop can also be regarded as a particular structure in time, however, which in its own right delivers sequences as a new structural form, in direct contrast to the formality of structure and

---

[217] G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, transl. M. Jolas, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 1994, p.232-241.

[218] Ibid.

[219] A. Dorin, 'Generative Processes and the Electronic Arts', *Organised Sound*, vol. 6, no 1., 2011, pp. 47-53, discussed by N. F. Herber, 'Amergent Music; Behavior and Becoming in Technoetic and Media Arts', PhD Thesis, 2011, http://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/pearl_jspui/bitstream/10026.1/2612/1/NORBERT%20F%20HERBER.PDF (accessed 01.12 11).

duration expected and experienced throughout much of the history of Classical, Western European music. Such historical precedents can of course be found in the form of the simple round, the canon, ostinato patterns, passacaglia, and to a certain extent, the notion of counterpoint. Sequences and reprises abound in such examples of Classical music. In the structure of sonata form particularly, the exposition (followed by the development with the reassurance of a recapitulation) presents a familiar device. Yet it is in the sense of the endlessness, the closing up of time that the loop most engages and succeeds; like a walk around the pool, the beginning and the ends blurring, roundness and repetitions are endless, yet simultaneously a disruption, of time.

What of the instigator of the loop in this context, the multi-functional role of the transcriber-performer? Beginning as an initiator then acting as performer, becoming a listener to the recordings and finally an audience, the performer performs alongside a version of herself, constantly in parallel to an earlier action. The performer thus has the option to leave the sounds fully formed and playing out in the space, to move away and be a part of the listeners' group. The looped sounds, seemingly independent of any maker, consequently shift in connotation and reception from that of performed to newly installed. Additionally, the performer takes on the risk that any disturbance in a missed cue, a lesser sound, or an extraneous noise will become an unedited part of the looped entity that will inevitably be heard over and over again.

The loop is thus a perpetuated, compositional and metaphorical device, set in motion through the agency of an instigator-performer, yet creating and maintaining an identity and an indefinite life – seemingly of its own making, and seemingly with its own allure. For musician and composer Matthew Herbert, the concept of looping is philosophically interesting and he observes that the process of isolating and repeating a fragment of sound allows us to "press pause on the world somehow and see what you can discover."[220] Nevertheless, this pause, a durational impossibility prior to recording, is in

---

[220] M. Herbert, *The Art of Looping*, BBC Radio 4, 27.02.14, [podcast], http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03wgpyg, (accessed 08.03.14).

itself another self-contained fragment, a looped entity where, as T.S. Eliot reflects, "[a]t the still point of the turning world: the end is only a beginning…"

Contexts of the loop

Any background to the conceptual and technical aspects of the loop, however defined and experienced, whether as repetition, additive layering, pattern, moiré, perpetuation, a simultaneity of 'livenesses', a perpetual attacca, or an extended echo, should identify and acknowledge aspects of the history of the phenomenon. This should include precedents such as Erik Satie and his *Vexations* for piano (1893) in which repetition took on a new, contemplative role that required the theme to be repeated 840 times.[221] David Cunningham usefully describes the later use of equipment to produce a repeated sound (rather than the composition and instructional means used by Satie), introducing what became known as tape delay:

> A tape delay is a process of recording a signal on an analogue tape and playing it back from the same piece of tape through the use of two different record and replay heads. The distance between the tape heads and the speed of the tape govern the length of delay. Recording on one tape recorder with the tape (rather than going to the take-up spool) fed to the heads of another recorder and onto that take-up spool can create a delay of 3 seconds upwards, maybe as much as 40 seconds (dependent on tape speed and the ability of the machines to cope with the weight and drag of the tape). If the replay signal is fed back to the record machine, a system of automatic repetition and layering builds up in cycles over the delay time.[222]

He maintains that it is Pauline Oliveros who should be acknowledged as the instigator of this technique, since as a student in the early 1960s, she collaged sound in what he describes a 'rhythmic grid'.[223] Terry Riley

---

[221] E. Satie, *Vexations* for piano, [musical composition], 1893.

[222] D. Cunningham, *Voiceworks*, tape delays text from http://www.stalk.net/piano/505delay.htm, (accessed 01.12.11).

[223] P. Oliveros: her pioneering use of tape delay was at the San Francisco Tape Center when she was a student at Mills College in San Francisco in the 1960s (alongside Terry Riley and Steve Reich).
Her early use of looping, in the piece I-IV, 1966, composed in the University of Toronto Electronic Music studio can be heard at
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpdwMcdBGwg, (accessed 01.12.11). Further

subsequently developed this method for his own use in many compositions such as the *Keyboard Studies* of 1964.[224] Cunningham notes that one of the earliest uses in the U.K. was probably by Brian Eno in his soundtrack to Malcolm LeGrice's film *Berlin Horse* (1970),[225] and his collaboration with Robert Fripp in the work *No Pussyfooting* (1973).[226] Cunningham's own extensive use of the technique stems from the mid-1970s onwards and includes *Voiceworks* and tracks on *The Secret Dub Life of the Flying Lizards*.[227]

A contemporary example within a gallery context may be found in a sound work by Ceal Floyer, installed at Documenta 13, 2012.[228] This consisted of a single sound work heard in an empty gallery within the imposing Fridericianum building in Kassel. By using a small part of an existing 2005 song: *"I'll just keep on, 'til I get it right,"* (amended 2012 version sung by Tammy Wynette), and through 'merciless repetition,' (a quote from the Documenta 13 guidebook) she minimised meaning whilst reinforcing futility. Floyer essentially appropriated the 'found object' of the song and used the act of mimicry through endless looping repetition to form her sound piece. Sounds were etched into the memory as an intriguing new object by this process of iteration/re-iteration experienced in the clinical, detached environs of the formal gallery space.

---

reference: T. Holmes, Electronic and Experimental Music: Pioneers in Technology and Composition, London & New York, Routledge, 2002.

[224] T. Riley, *Keyboard Studies*, [composition], 1964.

[225] M. LeGrice, *Berlin Horse*, [online video], 1970, http://lux.org.uk/collection/works/berlin-horse, (accessed 30.12.13).

[226] Robert Fripp, in his use of a reel-to-reel Revox tape system that came to be called 'Frippertronics' and with album collaboration with Eno, *No Pussyfooting* [album] (1973).

[227] D. Cunningham, 'Voiceworks', from the return to piano catalogue © david cunningham 1996, *The Secret Dub Life of The Flying Lizards*, listened on Itunes, (accessed 28.5.12). David Cunningham continues to cite: "Michael Nyman's *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) where, within the track 'An Eye for Optical Theory', the cumulative delay on John Harle's soprano saxophone is integrated into the rhythmic and harmonic structure of Nyman's modified Purcell piece, the process used mostly for textural reasons. There is a similar use on the title track of Nyman's CD *The Kiss*, [1990], allowing a texture resonant [*sic*] of a Mantovani string section to develop out of two violins." http://www.stalk.net/piano/505delay.htm, (accessed 01.12.11).

[228] C. Floyer, 'Untitled sound work', in H. Cantz, *Documenta* 13, [catalogue], vol. 3/3, 2012, p.62.

In his artist's statement cited in *Listening to Nothing in Particular*, American composer G. Douglas Barrett also describes the value of "processes that have to do with documenting, replicating, recording and repeating," [229] perhaps also appreciating the compositional benefits that such multiple aims and approaches can bring when combined in one work.

When it is words that are repeated however, a loss of context and meaning can ensue. The 2011 sound work *Floor Zero,* [230] in which the words in a lift were recorded and repeated back live, is an example of this. Repetition allowed for an initial sense of recognition to deteriorate into uncertainty as the familiar became unfamiliar. A quote by Gilberto Zorio regarding his sound piece of 1968/9 describes this phenomenon: "A word absorbed by a microphone and repeated over and over by a loudspeaker loses its literal significance and becomes a sound, incomprehensible but mentally and physically perceptible."[231]

Many other composers and sound artists have used the concept of repeated sections or looped sound, the study of which is a large field in its own right. Brief mention in this respect should therefore be made to Stockhausen, Xenakis, Lamonte Young, Daphne Oram, Yasunao Tone, Christine Kozlov, Roelof Louw, N.B. Aldrich, Stephen Vitiello, Alvin Lucier, Jeph Jerman, Maryanne Amacher, Evan Parker, John Surman, Philip Jeck, and others. John Cage described the rewarding effect of manipulating more than two magnetic tape recorders as producing a 'total sound space.'[232]

William Basinski, a recent exponent, has evoked the sense of loss with his use of the loop in *Disintegrated Loops* (2002), in which the re-playing of

---

[229] D. Barrett, 'artist's statement', cited in E. Priest, 'Listening to Nothing in Particular', *Project Muse,* vol. 21, no. 2, 2011, http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/postmodern_culture/v021/21.2.priest.html accessed 11.05.14).

[230] T. Spinks, *Floor Zero*, 2011, **DVD track 3, CD2 track 2, appendix p. 23**, [Sound Work]

[231] G. Celant, 'Gilberto Zorio', in N. Kaye, *Site Specific Art, Performance and Documentation*, London and New York, 2000*,* p. 144.

[232] J. Cage, *Silence, Lectures and Writings*, London, Marion Boyars publishers, 2009, p.9.

old magnetic tapes (played initially to be digitised, for the purpose of conservation) caused the material to decay and be unplayable.[233] A mournful sound is heard as the magnetic surface crumbles and disintegrates whilst erasing the sounds permanently. The concept of the loop shifts through technologies it seems but retains its fascination for what Augoyard refers to as the "nostalgia of the moment of return."[234]Augoyard emphasises the appeal of the repetition of a sound or motif, which returns as a form of reprise or "enrichment by accumulation" in the form of chains or cycles of sound, noting:

> The repetition/reprise then appears as a re-appropriation, a recovering, [...] The reprise integrates and condenses all that lead to it, like a recurrence, a sedimentation [...] repetition confers importance to unforeseen sound occurrences...[235]

Non-western influences regarding the use of the small motif (which is then repeated) are found in Oriental, Indonesian and African music in the repetition of what Augoyard calls 'short sound cells,' an accumulation of micro events resulting in what one might also describe as a kind of 'sonic wallpaper.' In relation to other genres, looping of course constitutes the basis for a significant amount of dance music, particularly techno and hip-hop.

The looping in *Floor Zero* captures the intrigue and confusion that can inform and strengthen an artwork, effectively demonstrating the insistent use of the looping device as a means of achieving this. A different example of a more mesmeric use of layered looped sounds can be heard in the first of the three 2010 *Windmill*s performances, the sounds lending a kind of live 'wild track' to the event on the expanse of common land. This tended to be experienced as background music rather than something to be specifically listened to. In *Seaforts* (2010), the repeated motifs added a reinforcing urgency to the building of the metallic sounds (listen for example, six

---

[233] William Basinki, [album review], http://www.pitchfork.com and http://www.nbaldrich.com, (accessed 01.04.14).

[234] Ibid., J.F. Augoyard and H. Torgue, (eds.), *op. cit.,* p.95.

[235] Ibid., p. 91-92

minutes into the *Seaforts* Part 1 sound recording, CD1 track 4), and the subsequent over layering of the stringed instrument. In each performance, time was manipulated through this usage; structures and durations were blurred whilst repetition, verging on the new state that 'boredom' can engender, confronted the listener with an insistent and compelling rhythmic perpetuation that had a momentum of its own as a new form of rolling encounter.

The role and uses of rhythm (with reference to Lefebvre)

> Early morning in Lyme Regis and the rhythms of the day start to become apparent. The tides, shifting sands and times daily, determining the pull of so much but for now a rhythmic, sonic wash, the central heating timer, influencing warmth and comfort, the dustbin lorry on its rounds, a dog barking on the beach, my own heartbeat [...] each sound independently and differently rhythmic but reassuringly moving things on as a continuation, a perpetuation, these repetitive daily rhythms acting as a means to structure time, organise necessities, mould plans, create order.[236]

Why is it of importance to identify rhythm as a particular aspect of the sound works? This section questions the value of pulse as introduced by the rhythmic repetitions and patterns set up by the structures of looping, using Henri Lefebvre as a particular guide in his identification of musical rhythm as an extension of life's every day (and wider), historical rhythms.

Whilst acknowledging that the sound works can only attempt to represent a fractional segment of these daily divisions of time, they seek to draw attention both to the fundamentals of rhythm and to its disruptions in the form of a parallel interlude or contemplative sound event. Like Storr's anomalous tread of the staircase,[237] a small yet unexpected shift in rhythmic and sonic normality can perhaps draw new attention to the given order of things, as a kind of imposed, oxymoronic 'time out'. Whilst suggesting a pause in these everyday rhythms, the sound works also reflect on and reinstate an element of the time just passed. By introducing a live, sonically

---

[236] T. Spinks, 'Early morning in Lyme Regis', [diary log, unpublished], 15.01.13.

[237] A. Storr, *Music and The Mind*, Harper Collins, London, 1997.

measured division in time (yet one which can be thought of ironically as a closed entity as we established in the previous section), a consequent diversion in attention from the everyday is created.

Brandon LaBelle for instance, recognises the everyday as a contested site, commenting that to move through a house, resituating domestic action onto acts of what he recognises as sonic improvisation, melds the performative with the mundane.[238]

In the early sound work *House* (March 2009),[239] a solitary performer moves around a family home reflecting on the surrounding objects and the traces of people that live there. She improvises to the associations suggested, recording live sounds made whilst in the space, 'copying' the sounds inherent to the space on the violin by picking up on the associative references of family paraphernalia, or by 'activating' the objects in the rooms. This was not a public but a private space; there is no audience but the performer herself. In one of the series of eight short pieces that constitute *House*, *Bedroom (track 1)*, the act of contemplation and sleeping is conveyed in, slow, measured, sleeping-breath length notes, layered accumulatively to form a lattice of shifting sounds, coinciding, drifting away and reassembling. Commencing with the incidental sound of a roofer's electric drill from a neighbouring house (as a kind of 'found' recording or obligatory wild track), the violin tentatively enters on the note B after which the E and D are gradually added. This is a room in which an invalid has convalesced, a place of retreat. *Bedroom (track 2)* commences with the sound of heavy rain on the window, again as a kind of enforced field recording but which expediently serves to enhance the sense of enclosure within the room. The rain is then accompanied by quiet, lightly brushed pizzicato notes, haphazardly chosen at all extremes of pitch on the five strings, perhaps subconsciously emulating this percussive scattering of water droplets. Once again, the notes B, E and D,

---

[238] B. LaBelle, *Background Noise, Perspectives on Sound Art*, New York, Continuum, 2006, p.39.

[239] T.Spinks, *House, Bedroom, (track 1)*, **CD1 track 2, appendix p.58,** 2009, London, [soundwork]. (*House Bedroom, track 2,* not available on appendix CD)

with their harmonic over-tones, are introduced as a measured pattern reinforcing the quiet ebb and flow of resting breath.

The element of liveness in this context, with no witness-as-listener other than the inhabitant-performer, is demonstrated as simply a matter of being-there – moving around and responding whilst a digital recorder monitors and picks up the sounds from the rooms' acoustics along with those of the violin emitted from a small amplified speaker in the corner of the room. As suggested by the activities within the house, these daily rhythms are layered in themselves but are also evocative of the passage of time in the photographs on display, of the people living and their interests, past and present in the space, as well as the acoustics of the site. The house's own sound-making is formed by the timely devices of the doorbell, cupboard door, washing machine, kettle, and those rhythms and sounds of the neighbouring house and the park beyond: dogs barking, owners calling, the rustling of leaves in the spring, the rumble of distant traffic, planes slowly descending overhead. Each layer adds a unique characteristic of place through objects, the implied human presences and significantly a sense of time, paused, yet passing to the rhythms spun out in sound.

Bachelard[240] can be brought in here to reinforce this notion of a domestic space defined and even configured by breath in introducing the writer William Goyen's poetic concept: "So this is why when often you came home to it, down the road in a mist of rain, it seemed as if the house were founded on the most fragile web of breath and you had blown it."[241]

The quiet intimacy of the *House* sound work performance has come to serve as the basis of many subsequent works that have happened in more public spaces. It has aided in the recognition that the research (into the material of the site) can encompass a more reflective mode, and although the non-dispassionate aspects of the sound works can never be fully defined, they can be valuably acknowledged, developed, and allowed to flourish.

---

[240] G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1994, p.56.

[241] G. Bachelard, ibid., p.59 (taken from W. Goyen, *House of Breath*, 1950, Fiftieth Anniversary edition, 1999, Tri-quarterly Books, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, USA.)

Given what is invested in the domestic space, it would seem that an inhabited space, of whatever type, transcends mere geometrical space and is energised by the routine scenarios and rhythms that occur within it.

Rhythm and implication

> Rhythm is an integrative-mimetic skill, related to both vocal and visuomotor mimesis [...] Rhythmic ability is supramodal; that is, once a rhythm is established, it may be played out with any motor modality, including the hands, feet, mouth, or the whole body. It is apparently self-reinforcing, in the way that perceptual exploration and motor play are self-reinforcing. Rhythmic games are widespread among human children, and there are few, if any, human cultures that have not employed rhythm as an expressive device.

Oliver Sachs[242]

Following on from the analysis of the concept of perpetuation using the loop, I continue exploring the role of this form of iteration and the use of measure and repetition within the sound works. This is undertaken particularly in relation to the site specific sound work *Take a Space, Make a Sound In It* (2011),[243] where I use Henri Lefebvre's thesis, *Rhythmanalysis*[244] as my reference. In this text, he proposes that musical rhythm is simply to be regarded as the extension of a greater context of daily rhythmic form. This is something I came to explore in *House*, above. I continue my engagement with Lefebvre's assertion in *The Production of Space*, that every space, domestic or public, will inevitably harbour some sort of agenda as a pre-determined context. Moreover, I reflect on his suggestion that all sounds are equally part of a wider notion of rhythmic form and that there is an overall unity in these sounds, of time and space.

---

[242] O. Sacks, *Musicophilia*, Picador, UK, 2007, p.247.
(In which he quotes Merlin Donald from *Origins of the Modern Mind*, 1991).

[243] T. Spinks, *Take a Space, Make a Sound in It*, **DVD track 10, appendix p. 64.** [sound performance], 2011. This piece was inspired by the 'Improvisation Rites' in the Nature Study Notes book of 1969 and was performed in the Morley College refectory as part of the Cornelius Cardew season *The Engine Room*, at Morley College, London, December 2011. The original instruction for the original 'Take a Space,' rite was co-written by Michael Chant.

[244] H. Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis, Space, Time and Everyday Life,* transl. S. Elden and G. Moore, London & New York, Continuum, 2004.

Taking sound as a time-based experience, he states:

Time and Space, cyclical and the linear exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another, each one makes itself and is made a measuring – measure. Everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions…Rhythm seems natural, spontaneous, with no other law other than its unfurling…yet rhythm, always particular, (music, poetry, dance, gymnastics, work etc) always implies a measure.[245]

Take a Space, Make a Sound In It

The sound work *Take a Space, Make a Sound In It*, 2011 (performed at Morley College), represented the first instance of the performer moving whilst making sounds, tracing each step taken across a space by sounding an individual note. The note acted as a tangible marker, as if the dimensions of the room were being measured with sound, serving to combine a reflection on the space with a reflection on the progression of the body of the performer crossing the space. The time taken to traverse the space was thus gauged aurally by these paced dimensions and the resulting sounds were recorded and played back as a new, fluid measure. The spatialisation of time (through the act of traversing and aural-mapping) aided in the comprehension of the space, its form and dimensions, and suggested to the listeners that a set of pre-determined instructions or, at least, an invisible floor-based chart, might be in place.

So, to restate: the sound work itself is a combination of the defined forces of space, time and an (agenda-driven) body-related action or, as Lefebvre puts it "everywhere where there is an interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm."[246]

In asking how this concept might be realised, Lefebvre himself poses the question: "would the spatialisation of time be a pre-conditional operation for its measurement?"[247] He provides a valuable pointer to the importance of the use of repetition and rhythm in the context of these particular site

---

[245] H. Lefebvre, *op.cit..*, p. 8.

[246] Ibid., p. 14.

[247] Ibid., p. 10.

specific sound works. Sonic rhythm acts as a device which sets out to measure, but also, when repeated, (since there is no rhythm without repetition), becomes an accumulation of that measure – a measure of itself, of the physical dimensions of the space, the time physically spent in it and of the sounds built up. These have then become new rhythms through the act of putting a process in place and allowing it to play out again within the space.

I will expand further on this work since, uniquely in the portfolio, it takes both the site and the associative element as the very same place, (the Morley College building), where the original performances would have occurred. For *Take a Space, Make a Sound In It* (2011), the initial prompt was an isolated section of the text, 'Improvisation Rites', from Cornelius Cardew's original Nature Study Notes of 1969.[248] Here, minimal directions were written to produce a sound in a space to measure length, breadth and height of room of performance. The chosen space in 2011 was also a working one, the refectory at Morley College, in which everyday, social acts were also taking place; in this case, the consumption of food and drink in the canteen.

Mapping whilst walking, at a comfortable body-related tempo, is of course, regulated to some extent by the heart's pulse and the body's level of fitness. Taking the cue by necessity from the performer's own body – the body described rather poetically by Lefebvre as a "neglected bundle of rhythms,"[249] these inherent measurements become another yardstick in defining and describing the nature of the chosen tempo.

There were three sections to the 2011 work – which lasted approximately 14 minutes:

1. Walking, 'measuring,' with one change of direction, playing one note at a time on the instrument using a bow on the string, each single note loop-recorded.

---

[248] C. Cardew, 'Nature Study Notes', [PDF], 1969, http://improarchive2.brinkster.net/sonsn.pdf, (accessed 31.12.13).
Text taken from the original handwritten copy of Cornelius Cardew's 'Nature Study Notes' held in the archive of Horace Cardew. Rites cited are referenced as TM40, MC11, A1, and CCSR18.

[249] H.Lefebvre, *op. cit.,* p. 19.

2. Walking, 'measuring', with one change of direction, playing one note at a time on the instrument using an object on the strings, (a treated small hoop, wound round with parcel tape) and loop-recorded.

3. Walking, 'measuring', with one change of direction, playing one note at a time on the instrument using an object on the strings, (a larger treated hoop, wound round with a duster) and loop-recorded.

The use of objects and how to use them was a prompt from another of the 'Improvisation Rites' that suggested: 'play an object in the room, play short loud bursts of sound'. Composer Michael Chant, performer and collaborator on Cornelius Cardew's original 1969 'Improvisation Rites', commented on the experience of listening live and observing the new *Take a Space, Make a Sound In It* sound work:

> My thoughts were that it is good that this particular rite seems to have stood the test of time. It is apparently infinitely adaptable, and it was an interesting interpretation that conflated the act of measurement and the sound production. Unlike one performance I remember undertaking when there was no audience whatsoever, and the interpretation was the measurement itself. [250]

A new mechanically and digitally layered set of rhythms was brought to the performance situation by the looping device used in *Take a Space* (2011). This repetition reasserts and reassures in its familiarity when the sounds are heard more than once. As Lefebvre continues:

> ... for there to be rhythm, there must be repetition in a movement [...] in differentiated time and qualified duration, rhythm presupposes a) temporal elements, b) an overall movement...[251]

and he further identifies:

---

[250] M. Chant, in brief conversion with the author, *Take a Space* [project file] 19.12.11.

[251] Ibid., p.78-79.

> ... its philosophical problematic: repetition and becoming, the relation of the <u>same</u> to the <u>other</u> [...] by including a measure, rhythm implies a certain memory[...] rhythm preserves both the measure that initiates the process and the re commencement of this process with modifications...[252]

Inherent in this approach for the performer, *Take a Space* conveys both the literal and the more metaphorical rhythms that inevitably overlap, conflict, and complement. A further consideration of these rhythms and how they impact on the contemporary version of the performance, (as opposed to earlier versions and renditions from the original text of 1969) prompted several observations. Notably, these include: that the time periods are separated by forty-three years (a rhythm in its own right); that the instructions were originally written for a particular set of performers and have now been interpreted and performed by a lone one; that what is available technologically has also developed extensively (use was made of a digital recorder, looping device and amplification in the 2011 work); that the listeners will have different expectations and reactions according to the era and contexts in which it is experienced.

The newly devised rhythms of 2011 were built up within the canteen space amidst diners socialising, buying and eating food and drink, who were interrupted unexpectedly by this action but continued to watch intently, casually, not at all, or found it something of an unwarranted intrusion. Conversations halted or continued despite the noise and each person will have experienced this particular disruption as an individual rhythm, concurrent with those daily common ones and as a sense of a suspension of time, within the everyday space. In both the 1969 and 2011 performances, however, the venue was the same (Morley College), the performer still a 'bundle of rhythms' from which to work outwards. The result therefore, was a new combination of a space and a time, of new and older instructions, of the acoustic and the amplified, of the single and the repeated (looped – as a response to a further instruction to repeat an action over and over again, in rite CCSR18). It was also an amalgamation of one era and a later one, each with its own peculiar political climate and of the difference in expectations

---

[252] Ibid., p. 79.

for an audience, of an artistic or a musical practice experienced in an unexpected location.

What of these other, more generally experienced rhythms, inherent or potentially inherent within this space, the rhythms of the wider material of the site, of the social (calendar, rites of passage, of memory, of the daily routine of a college), of the fictional, (the acquired, the imagined), and the dominating, historical rhythms that regulate the everyday?

Here, Lefebvre gives an interesting account of rhythms that he describes as 'dressage' or 'gestes'; gestures indicating how we live based on repetitive actions, daily ritual and the mediated day of radio and television. Taken further, this includes those which affect us in the longer term such as illness and aging, and beyond our immediate control, that of the on-going rhythms of history and politics. The effects of capitalism on our supposedly innocent, everyday temporality is given some considerable emphasis in his thesis and must surely be crucial to any study on the implications of rhythm for daily life. For the purposes of the analyses of my own performed sound works, however, I have to accept that these events will be taking place at a precise time when the influences of many, overlapping and, at times, conflicting rhythms are exerting an inevitable pressure (most of which are beyond the control of the performer). Awareness and recognition must be the first steps in acknowledging life's underlying rhythmic elements. That we are not wholly autonomous beings in how we operate but are merely part of a continuum of rhythms is indeed sobering, particularly given the on-going interruptions that technological advancements have brought. New rhythms of disruption (emails, texts, social media, unwanted phone calls) that can be necessary or welcome interventions, bring a new set of rhythms which again, must be negotiated. For Lefebvre, the importance of listening (for a potential rhythmanalyst), is to regard many different aspects of life simultaneously, reinforced by the need for just such awareness: "He [the rhythmanalyst] will come to listen to a house, a street, a town, as an audience listens to a symphony,"[253] and to a working canteen perhaps.

---

[253] Ibid., p. 22.

Several of the sound artworks in the portfolio address this continuum. For example, House and *Take a Space*, and to some extent, *Brixton Market Arcades* (2010),[254] achieve this by being integrated into everyday locations and situations and by linking the sounds with some aspects of the site's own rhythms, past and present. Perhaps this matrix of rhythms then, denoting the past, the socio-political, the communal, the personal and the artistic, and the attentiveness brought to each, results in a more coherent and engaged experience for the listener/experiencer.

Naturally, it is in relation to rhythm and music that Lefebvre is clear about the rich field which music has to offer his thesis. In chapter seven of *Rhythmanalysis, Music and Rhythms*, he outlines rhythmic connections within society, history, technology, and the genres and styles and roles of the sacred and profane in music development. He suggests that, more than a language or writing, music should be considered as a text:

> ... music gives itself above all else in return for a time: in return for a rhythm. Does musical time coincide with lived time? Or with imaginary (duration) time? Metaphorical?[...]sound occupies a space and the instruments of existence. Perhaps music presupposes a unity of time and space, an alliance. In and through rhythm?[255]

The quote underlines the over-riding consideration and significance of rhythm to music in considering the space-time-energy equation as an independent force. In many of the sound works, this alliance of time and space is an emerging one, built up throughout the duration of, for example, *Take a Space*. In the process, associative, historical, musical and daily rhythms are conflated with the sense of the dimensions of the space. *Take a Space* acquires a set rhythm and further layers of rhythm, as the performer-measurer progresses across the space, each step determined by the need to take the next breath, whilst the energy that instigates it becomes built in to the sounds heard. Time, however, dominates over melody and harmony as

---

[254] T.Spinks, *Brixton Market, Arcades,* **DVD track 8, appendix p. 60** [sound performance], 2010.

[255] H. Lefebvre, *op. cit.,* p.60.

the rhythm, whereas the sounds in this context have a more definable place within a particular pitch range, having specific tonal characteristics, determined by harmonics.

Following on from his reflection on the rise, and in his opinion, imposition of measurement (of meter) and scores in music, Lefebvre is against the slavish following of written music stating: "Writing? It obliges fidelity and does not favour inspiration or variation, however essential."[256]

Similarly, *Take a Space* features no written manuscript. The preference was instead to interpret a very loose series of instructions, beholden only to the ad libitum approach. Pitch, range and harmony were kept deliberately minimal so as to emphasise the movement and the build-up of the rhythmic. The musical note as marker used here was simply the 440hz 'A' used in tuning up an orchestra, with the addition of a small shift in pitch (439hz) denoting when there is a physical change of direction by the performer.

Lefebvre, in questioning whether there is a fundamental instinct of rhythm continues:

> Rhythm is easily grasped whenever the body makes a sign; but it is conceived with difficulty. Why? It is neither a substance, nor a matter, nor a thing. Nor is it a simple relation between two or more elements, for example, subject and object, or the relative and the absolute.[257]

This 'grasping' I suggest, is perhaps a more embodied reaction, a subconscious one that cannot be rationalised but simply felt. Or could it be a self-reinforcing element as identified by Sachs? Lefebvre's question as to how the effect of rhythm is rationalised, could be addressed as a synchronicity between the heard and the felt, in tune with our own bodily pulses, patterns, and movements, the comprehension of which may be ultimately impossible to quantify since the experience can never be objectively defined.

In *Take a Space*, the visual element of a figure gradually travelling across a space, turning, and changing direction whilst still moving and slowly 'marking' each step with an audible note, assists in the underpinning of this

---

[256] Ibid., p. 64.

[257] Ibid., p. 64.

rhythm as a kind of substance. It is a trace of a progression, a way of defining a space and a visualisation of the very rhythmic, gestural energy required to do so. The way it is perceived however, inevitably becomes more than this description suggests, since it is again framed by the many wider rhythms of humanity as detailed at length by Lefebvre.

The more recent sound work *Four Full Stops* (2013),[258] conceived for the Sensingsite conference at the Parasol Unit in response to the installed exhibition by Navid Nuur, explored this further in challenging the audience by moving amongst them whilst performing. Susan Trangmar remarked on how the onlookers and listeners in the space seemed to become the site to which the performer responded, whilst others felt the movement between them to be quite intimidating. Steven Ball highlighted the paradox that the fixed position of the amplifier as the source of sound in the space contrasted with the mobility of the performance. A further response from Idit Nathan was that:

> For me, one of the most striking things about your Sonic Lines and Full Stops was the combination of (lines of) walking and not knowing (linked somewhat inversely in my mind to the black hole that was Nuur's full stop). The way you walked seemed targeted and related to [Nuur's] artworks but as the audience around you, we were hesitant as to what was going to happen next so there was an element of not knowing which is also a more active way of engaging[…] it reminded me of Francis Alÿs' line about when you are walking you are not knowing...[259]

The concept of playing as mapping is extended further in the author's 2014 re-enactment of Bruce Nauman's *Playing a note on the violin whilst walking around the studio* (1967-8).[260]

---

[258] T. Spinks, (*Sonic Lines and) Four Full Stops,* **DVD track 12, appendix p. 66** was performed at the Sensingsite seminar, Parasol Unit gallery, London, April 15th, 2013, http://www.sensingsite.blogspot.co.uk/p/sensingsite-2013.html (accessed 31.10.14)**,** from which anecdotal responses from Susan Trangmar, Steven Ball and Idit Nathan were collected.

[259] I. Nathan, anecdotal response from author's notes.

[260] B. Nauman, *Playing a note on the violin whilst walking around the studio,* [sound performance], T. Spinks 2014 version as a re-enactment can be seen at: https://vimeo.com/95502791, (accessed 31.10.14).

To summarise, *Four Full Stops* and *Take a Space* are two examples from my portfolio of sound works exploring rhythmic sounds developed live whilst the performer moves around a space. Each has value in the way in which time, played out through repeated sounds made by the performer, negotiates the space, thereby allowing the experiencers (whether present by choice or co-incidentally) to reflect on both elements as a fundamental part of not just these sound artworks, but our choreographed routines and rhythms of daily life. In navigating the space in a series of sound punctuated rhythmic gestures, awareness of the space itself is enhanced, becoming a site specific action. Lefebvre aptly concludes this section with the following reflection:

> Musical rhythm does not only sublimate the aesthetic and a rule of art: it has an ethical function. In its relation to the body, to time, to the work, it illustrates real (everyday) life. It purifies it in the acceptance of catharsis. Finally, and above all, it brings compensation for the miseries of everydayness, for its deficiencies and failures. Music integrates the functions, the values of Rhythm...[261]

Chapter Four commenced with a quest - a form of enquiry as transcription, which seemed initially almost impossible to fulfill. From the research, sound had to be manifested, 'conjured' and teased into being. The newly discovered material then underwent a form of process, which assigned sounds to objects, objects to sounds, whilst the improvised results were layered and over layered. The inevitability and significance of rhythm then allowed the results to have a life of their own – but one rooted in the everyday space. Rhythm in and of space then made for a new awareness of place, to be experienced, extended, tested and even enjoyed, if Lefebvre's above comment is to be taken literally.

In Chapter Five I endeavour to get to the core of the sound - (and at times unashamedly music) - making by dissecting different aspects of the compositional process, some of them musical conventions and terms whilst others deal with the essence of what it is to perform and how this might form a valuable engagement with site specific practices.

---

[261] Lefebvre, *op. cit.,* p. 64.

Chapter Five: Method, process and presence

'How do you want it to sound?'

Jan Hendrickse[262]

Chapter Five investigates the parameters set out in the creative sound making decisions, the role, definitions and effectiveness of the instrument, the use of technologies and how the sounds (taken from both the implications of the site and using the instrument) are processed, as well as how the performances structured. Later, I reflect on the vital role the performer plays in the works under Uses of Liveness. I refer to the work of Max Neuhaus as an important example of influential practice in considering the notion of aural displacement, and the significance of the associative alongside the everyday reference.

In the first section of this chapter, I consider the compositional parameters and processes used in the sound works in relation to the site specific, reflecting on the strengths and fragilities of the approaches and performative strategies employed. I also briefly consider aspects of the main properties of sound phenomena, particularly in the context of music: this includes duration, which must encompass rhythm, pitch, timbre and intensity. In terms of the technologies involved, I reflect on those used in a selection of the twenty sound works presented, such as, for example, amplification, contact microphones, a recording and looping device and a Max MSP patch. I briefly discuss the instrument most frequently employed and the importance of the roles of consonance, dissonance, melody, scordatura, simulation and improvisation on the extended and prepared instrument. The role of materiality in the use of other sound making objects used as further devices with which to disrupt and develop the parameters of my practice, follows a brief reflection on the nuances of the terms *music, melody, experimental*, *composition* and *chance,* (in the sense of the unplanned), referring particularly to the writings of John Cage.

---

[262] J. Hendrickse, (co-collaborator) referring to *Windmill II*, 2011 [sound performance], anecdotally recorded comment in author's project file.

Overview of methods, sounds and compositional parameters

Does the establishment of pre-determined compositional parameters assist in devising a live sound performance that is essentially improvised? Should there be parameters at all for the sound making, or could they in essence be outlined by my earlier assertion that it is the site which brings its own material, and the performer who brings to the problem three ways to define and present the sound on site by recognising the significance of the *actual*, *activated,* and *associative* approaches? The connection made with the spaces, a mixture of public, working, and gallery spaces is an *associative* one made through the research, whilst the method used is mimetic and performative. In this way, sounds are developed through the processes that have been put in place. Controlled parameters for the actual sounds are therefore not preconceived prior to the research, nor are they necessarily desired. In other words, once the method is in place the sounds are simply a consequence and result of those actions, allowing also for chance elements to occur.

It would be disingenuous however, to maintain that a need has not been identified to put a limit in advance on what might be possible. Constants and tendencies in the practice have already been identified in the meta-narrative of the practice as both strictures and liberators. The restriction of means in the guise of limitation and constraint, in the making of an artwork, is a recognised form of inspiration perhaps, although a sensitivity to when tendencies might become habits should be in place, to guard against formulaic solutions to sound making.

"How do you want it to sound*?"* was a pivotal question posed by invited collaborator Jan Hendrickse during the performance *Windmill II* (2011), followed by: "and how will it be sounded?" Perhaps most crucially "does it sound any good?" is a question this thesis cannot fully answer since each project sets out with a different set of preparations and objectives. Inevitably, however, some performances have been deemed more successful than others, yet each has provided a valuable yardstick for successive performances.

148

Based on the experience and practical concerns of a number of the performances, Hendrickse's question, rather than being a problematic one (since it implied perhaps that pre-planning was lacking) became quite liberating. I realised my performance was not concerned with a predetermined form of prepared 'composition', but it would be the sum of the parts brought to the event in the form of the venue, reasoning, approach, and choice of devices used. Firmly located in an artist's sense of curiosity, an idea in this context could not, by definition, be preconceived until a certain amount of preparatory groundwork had been undertaken. As introduced earlier, Duchamp usefully asserted the idea that "the artist cannot *make*, but can only *take* what is already there," suggesting that outside sources should be instrumental in forming practice. [263] Similarly, Italian sculptor Giuseppe Penone exhorted artists to "find the form within the material, not to use the material to find the form."[264] Penone's quote could be read both ways, however, if I interpret 'material' as both associations of place yet also the 'stuff' of sculpture, as in his case. It also serves as a useful pointer to the workings of the creative process and the hierarchies of compositional parameters selected for the practice.

The material (of the site) has inevitably affected the form in all of these sound works. Decisions will have been determined and tempered not only by what has been revealed in terms of the research, but also by many other more practical considerations, down to restrictions of the space, others using the space, health and safety issues, and budgetary constraints. At each turn prior to the event, the outline of the work is moulded anew. What remain constant however, are the strategic stages involved:

- the application/commissioning/guerrilla procedures to perform at a site
- research into the site to gather background material

---

[263] M. Duchamp, cited in Kaye, N., *Site Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000, p.190

[264] G. Penone cited in Kaye, N., Ibid. p. 150

- decisions about appropriate sound making methods and the use of sound making devices as resonant bodies (violin, voice or objects) with activators (the bow or objects)
- the looping apparatus
- the human presence and element of liveness involved in the final performance (to be discussed more fully in the following section, Uses of Liveness)
- the compilation of both paper, A4 documentary files (housing all background material) and sound files, photographs and videos accessed online and highlighted in the appendix catalogue.

However incontrovertible this may appear, the creative process is still an unstable one that is open to the influences of chance elements. The many-folded aspects of these are astutely identified by Weiss who asserts these are complex and often conflicting in approach, intention, and result. His declaration, I re-state, is as follows:

> The hermeneutic key to all the arts entails the contradictory exigencies of mimesis, transposition, metaphor, correspondence and rupture, montage, metamorphosis, disintegration.[265]

In this statement, he seems to infer that the effectiveness of a work of art can only be fully identified in retrospect: that is, it is only after the event that the artist may, with some acuity, become aware of the many functions that the artwork has, or has not fulfilled. In some disciplines perhaps, this would be a disadvantage, but for the creative arts, those moments of uncertainty and risk are perhaps where the questions become most interesting since it is in these situations that potential beginnings or failures lie. He also acknowledges that we are indebted to many simultaneous modes of approach, some quite uncomfortable and problematic. Moreover, he suggests that this journey simply *must* be undertaken and invested in, regardless of the outcome.

---

[265] A. Weiss, *Varieties of Audio Mimesis: Musical Evocations of Landscape*, Berlin, Errant Bodies Press, 2008, p.20.

With this in mind, I return briefly to Max Neuhaus who also recognised this incompleteness in gauging the ultimate success of his own sound projects:

> After finishing a sound work, if time allows, I wait several months before listening to it again. This is the first time I can stand outside the work and see what it is that I have made.[266]

This admission inspires courage in my own selection and editing of the initial material, the practicing of the sound making, in tackling the improvisatory element of live performance, and in assessing the result with hindsight, through documentation and the anecdotal responses. In fact, each of the sound works has, in some way, taken on a new connotation over time. This development of understanding will be revisited in the conclusion.

To conclude this section on the parameters of sound making, each performance can be tested against the *actual, activated,* and *associative* scheme (devised and introduced earlier) in order to reinforce the sense of the 'constant' elements in the sound works. Neuhaus exemplifies all three examples by again, reflecting on the beginnings of his working process (my associative element is perhaps implied in the word 'survey' here):

> You can only acoustically illuminate a space with sound. The space is pitch black aurally when it's silent and I walk in. Many times as I'm doing a site survey I snap my fingers. That gives me a lot of information, it tells me a lot; but it doesn't start the sound idea, yet. I don't start thinking about what kind of sound I will make in there at this time. That happens when I'm in there with the final sound system installed and the means to build and try different sounds.[267]

Although his practice, unlike mine, generally involved recordings made from the *actual* sounds of the site and its acoustics, replayed back into the space, the sense that all is not fully mapped out or pre-determined, is an encouragement. Despite the assured and formidable site drawings by Neuhaus (made mostly after the event), he conveys a need to relinquish complete control as a necessary form of 'letting go' in the creative process.

---

[266] M. Neuhaus, *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info, (accessed 18.01.14).

[267] Ibid.

'Experimental'

The word *experimental* is perhaps a useful term to address here, given that it is frequently attached as a prefix in descriptions of works, as an attempt to define and label practice. This applies particularly to those mixed media practices regarded as unusual or 'avant-garde' (with often limited audiences). It is a word that suggests an emerging condition, not content with given definitions and boundaries of art practices, but one offering a non-mainstream approach in employing new ideas, approaches, materials and methods. It suggests something 'edgy' and in a state of constant flux in its conception. Is art not in any case, by definition, constantly experimental? Yet surely, something cannot in fact be perpetually experimental? How does 'experimental' as a condition or state relate to 'invention' and to 'failure' when the experiment is deemed unsuccessful? Does the term experimental risk forever justifying a form of restless limbo that can never quite formulate or resolve, or is there perhaps some artistic value in this impatient incompleteness?

Although stemming from the 1950s, the words of John Cage are still pertinent on this matter and he has much to say in *Silence, Lectures and Writings by John Cage:*

> Formerly, whenever anyone said the music I presented was experimental, I objected. It seemed to me that composers knew what they were doing, and that the experiments that had been made had taken place prior to the finished works, just as sketches are made before paintings and rehearsals precede performances [...] times have changed, music has changed; and I no longer object to the word "experimental." I use it in fact to describe all the music that especially interests me and to which I am devoted, whether someone else wrote it or I myself did. What has happened is that I have become a listener and the music has become something to hear. Many people, of course, have given up saying "experimental" about this new music. Instead, they either move to a halfway point and say "controversial" or depart to a greater distance and question whether this "music" is music at all[...] For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not. Those that are not notated appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment [...] there is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time.[268]

---

[268] J. Cage, *Silence, Lectures and Writings by John Cage*, London, Marion Boyars, 2009, pp.7-8.

Although this is now perhaps a redundant dilemma and certainly a separate subject for another thesis, the response "is it music?" is addressed briefly in this document since it has arisen anecdotally on a number of occasions. It also calls to question the extent to which a lifetime involvement with the formal traditions of playing an instrument affects and matters to the sound works in conception and outcome.

Brandon LaBelle disagrees to some extent with Cage's view of a seamless sliding scale of sound and music, noting that:

> To refer to sound *and* music in the same breath is to confront, right from the start, a semantic impasse or jag in the cognitive map. For how can I begin with "sound," which presupposes a relation to found phenomena, and "music," which operates in the domain of cultural production?[269]

I take issue with the term 'found' in what LaBelle writes here since it could equally be argued that sounds that are 'made' will not necessarily fall into a category of 'cultural production.' Nevertheless, this statement is a reminder that my sound works in question are to be firmly rooted in the context of the visual arts as an extension of a researched, performed, and sounded act rather than as a composed one stemming from Western musical traditions. In my own case, there is also a sense of gradual 'relinquishment' in the use of the unadulterated instrument that has taken place over the five-year period of the PhD practice. As a result, the sound works address two aspects in supplying both 'found' aural phenomena (for example, the voice in the lift) *and* cultural production, (in LaBelle's terms, where music falls), as a new manifestation within his declared cognitive map.

Following this recognition, the next section does offer a brief reflection and defence of those aural parameters in the practice that *are* suggestive of cultural production – of music. Notions of consonance, dissonance and the advised use of melody are addressed, acknowledging the contexts in which they were implemented.

---

[269] B. LaBelle, *op. cit.* p.3.
LaBelle also quotes Cage, (p.44) in countering the traditional framework of classical tonality, rhythm and structures saying: "to start from scratch: sound, silence, time activity" (taken from J. Cage*, A Year from Monday*, Marion Boyars, London 1985, p.154).

Melody?

The condition of consonance is all too easy to evoke and was often, by default, the first line of thought in planning the earlier performances using the tuned, melodic instrument. It became apparent that producing predictable sounds did not necessarily push the boundaries of expectation or indeed, interest. Conversely, the evocation of a deliberate dissonance and the tension it induced seemed similarly contrived. Even better in the context of these performances, was to use a series of methods and processes that allowed the resulting sounds to acquire their own qualities. By avoiding (or at least subverting), the obvious melodic properties of the instrument, an attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct other ways of creating and listening to sounds was made. This is to be found in the use of alternative tunings and in the works purely using objects (for example in *Sonic Ritual*, 2013).

However, melody, or a fragment of melody in disguise (employed for contextual reasons), has been revisited in several of the sound works including *Henry's Ballad* (2008)[270] using a short excerpt from Henry VIII's own composition, *Pastime With Good Company* in order to establish the place and era to which the research alluded. In both the first and second *Windmill* performances of 2010 and 2011, a well- known popular song from 1969 in the first instance (*Les Moulins de mon Coeur)* [271] and an obscure local folk melody of 1905 in the second (*The Merry King*),[272] were deconstructed and

---

[270] T. Spinks, *Henry's Ballad,* **DVD track 7, appendix p.58** [sound performance], 2008.

[271] *Les Moulins de mon Coeur,* 1969, by Michel Legrand, sung by Noel Harrison. http://www.thewindmillsofyourmind.com [accessed 11.11.14] a popular song acknowledging confusion after a romantic break-up, relating emotionally charged thoughts and memories to tortured circles. With its succession of similes ("like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel, carousel that's turning, clock whose hands are sweeping, ripples from a pebble, never ending or beginning in an ever spinning reel"), hypnotic rhythms and complex imagery, it is a song that can 'stick in your head.' The lyrics even refer to this phenomenon: among a collection of disjointed memories is "a fragment of a song," in the 1968 recording. Interestingly circles, wheels, reels, spirals, clock faces, 'never ending-ness,' relate to the use of the perpetuation and the loop, discussed previously.

[272] *The Merry King* was noted down directly by Percy A. Grainger from the singing voice of Alfred Hunt in Wimbledon, 1905, and can be found at: http://bardic-music.com (accessed 11.11.14).

re-presented using voice and instrument in different and virtually unrecognisable forms. The penultimate piece in the portfolio, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds* (2013)[273] uses melody to an extreme, by over layering forty-five short popular songs and football chants resulting in a textural conglomeration of indecipherable, sung utterances. In each work, however, the melodies are chosen not because of any specific harmonic content, but predominantly because of their recognisable connotations of place, time, and association.

Through various acts of subversion (for example overlaying, looping, extending, truncating, denying, activating and mimicking), the sounds often lose all sense of their starting point, even when melodic in origin or when commencing as recognisable notes on the instrument or voice. For example, in *Hoop* (2010),[274] which was performed in the old school room at Beaconsfield, a child's hoop covered in parcel tape, created a 'roaring' sound when pulled across the 'open' strings. This manipulation was also a visually compelling element that assisted in focusing attention.

Sounds have also taken on other characteristics altogether, often un-anticipated, unexpected in effect and innovative to the performer. Examples include the use of copper piping made to bounce across and to 'stop' the string (rather in the manner of a slide guitar) in *Sonic Triangle* (2010), and the brittle sound of bones manipulated and loop-recorded in *Seaforts* (2010). The performer is "making music out of ambient noise" as one observer notes in a recent unsolicited response to *Seaforts,* and to an earlier work, *Boiler Room* from 2007.[275] Whilst I do not wish to rehearse here the validity of, or unfavourable definitions attributed to the term 'ambient' (music), such an allusion to non-melody-driven terms, like 'ambient' and 'noise' can serve as a useful point of reference to reflect on the sounds themselves; as seemingly non consonant, timeless, live, site-related atmospheres.

---

[273] T. Spinks, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds,* **CD2 track 6, appendix p.70** [sound performance recording], East Street Arts gallery, Leeds, 2013.

[274] T. Spinks, *Hoop,* **DVD track 9, appendix p. 60** [sound performance], 2010.

[275] A recent response to *Seaforts* (and to an earlier work, *Boiler Room* from 2007, http://www.tansyspinks.com/perfomance_boiler-room.htm), feedback by one Juan Cubero who had found the work on Vimeo (response received 13.12.13).

However, the processes put in place can fail equally well and many potential performances were ultimately abandoned. For example, the background sound of hurtling water in the unrealised work *Shaldon Mill,* and the use of an air compressor as a potential activator of sound in *Windmill II,* were both deemed too noisy. In addition, the voice in *Windmill I* alluding to a sung melody was over literal. All three windmill works tended to suffer from an unspoken need to 'entertain.' A general lack of clarity of instruction in *Swansong for Cathill* (2011)*,* led to a meaningless cacophony whilst other works were under researched or simply deemed insufficiently interesting. A gradual shift away from notions of the melodic, however, has seen the performances gravitate towards allowing the spaces and their histories to speak whilst being activated, both literally and metaphorically, through the potential, sonic materiality of the objects and processes employed.

Challenging conventions

I retrace my steps briefly here to discuss how a further means of disruption to any semblance of consonance or melody on a tuned instrument can be effected through the interrogation of scordatura: that is, by retuning the given tunings of 'open' strings away from equal temperament to effect pitch. The accepted tunings for a stringed instrument and how these have come to be determined historically, is again, a study in its own right but essentially, most Western bowed stringed instruments have determined pitches for each string. These were arrived at for many reasons including ease of playing, ability to double-stop, the development of the physical capabilities of the instrument, and the requirements of successive composers and acoustics.

I suggest the term scordatura or cross-tuning can also be applied to describe an 'un-tuned' or 'de-tuned' instrument. The sense that it is unacceptable to play an instrument when it is 'wrongly' tuned, is challenged in a number of the sound performances. This is particularly the case in the sounds heard on the soundtrack for the video *Tormented Matter* (2010),[276] in

---

[276] T. Spinks, *Tormented Matter,* [video], 2010, was screened at the *Reveal* exhibition event, at the Pierhouse gallery in September 2010, as an initiative by Brian Lobel of www.funwithcancerpatients.com. The video is now in the collection of the Wellcome

which the accidentally 'dropped violin' (the pegs holding the strings were randomly jolted out of tune as a result) is heard through a custom made Max MSP patch. The pitches were lowered still further by the gradual slowing down of the sounds, becoming unrecognisable in terms of origin but chilling in effect as a truly disrupted and distrait instrument, both physically and aurally. In a number of the works, the peg of each of the five strings is twisted one turn up or down (randomly affecting pitch) prior to playing, in order to deliberately disorientate the performer by removing any sense of the terrain of melodic familiarity. Extremes of de-tuned or un-tuned strings can be seen and heard in *Seven Bridges* (2014) and *Seven Bows* (2014).[277]

A change to the string can also affect timbre and tonal colour. Lowered strings change in characteristic to become quieter, warmer but more texturally grainy. A higher one is harsher, whereas harmonics or overtones give a pure sound with no real body to the note. An example of harmonics or notes sounded via half depressed strings used mimetically to evoke a whistling sea wind, can be heard in *Seaforts* (2010). Other timbral aspects of texture and intensity have been explored by using differing forms of bow. Each object will affect the string differently, causing new sounds to emerge. Associations are made additionally by the many visual elements and connotations presented in performance. For example, a feather used in *Hoop* (2010) at Beaconsfield, is made to activate a sound on the violin string (prompting the response: "amazing that a feather can be made to make such a loud noise...").[278] Another object referenced in this way, was a ball of wool

---

Collection library. The five minute version can be seen at: https://vimeo.com/32149530 but is offered here only as an example of a short studio experiment with MAX MSP, found on **CD1, track 7**

[277] T. Spinks, with Klega, *Seven Bridges* (2014) and *Seven Bows* (2014) **DVD tracks 13&14** [Videos].

[278] T. Spinks, *Hoop,* **DVD track 9, appendix p. 60,** [sound performance], for RELLA, Beaconsfield, audience response to performance, 11.04.2010.
The use especially of the hoop, covered in brown parcel tape to disguise its plastic origins required an overstated gesture of grasping and pulling, encircling the instrument, the ridges of tape that were wrapped round it catching on the strings causing an unexpectedly percussive sound to be emitted and producing probably the most interesting sound and sight of all the objects used in the performance.

threaded with two knitting needles, used in a scene in the film projected within the exhibition space. It is doubtful that many audience members would have picked up on the allusion to the knitters in front of the gallows however,[279] and raises an important question about the success of layers and reception of readability in the intentions for the work. Perhaps planting a seed of recognition as a question is at least a beginning.

The development of the use of hoops as bows was taken further in the work *Take a Space* (2011), experienced in the Morley College refectory, causing a reviewer to observe:

> Spinks used hoops to bow her electric instrument, one wrapped in yellow dusters, another twisted with parcel tape. To ring round a violin, to circle the strings or to perpetuate a continual bow, this was the domestic and the parlour game, come together in the refectory. The sounds were a mixture of soft, grating, melodious string, and indeterminate noise, occasionally contributed to by sounds from the street (as John Cage taught us to appreciate), a police siren, traffic, a train, and the close by murmurings of audience and refectory staff. Spinks danced us, sounding through the refectory, measuring the space, hooping a game for us, the street and Cornelius Cardew.[280]

The many conventions and techniques for the bow present another consideration. From bow 'attack' and decay, the amount of pressure exerted, the grit of a bow which speaks, and the silk of a bow which glides, the speed, the tremelando, the huge arcs of notes in one bow; each approach will bring a new means of communication for the instrument, but is again a field beyond the reach of this study.

Sounds used successively on the strings as bow-like 'sounding' devices can also be found initially in *Sonic Triangle* (2009). This work utilised a saw, a length of twine, a nail, copper and plastic piping, such that the visual and metaphorical aspects of the 'bow' remained an important part of the event. A further development in the later work *Sonic Ritual* (2013) however, allows the (amplified) objects themselves to take centre stage, devoid of any conventional instrument at all.

---

[279] The scene, involving knitters or tricoteuse, sitting at the gallows during the French Revolution, is described by Charles Dickens in, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859.

[280] M. LeFoa, in response to *Take a Space*, [sound performance], unpublished review, 2011.

The instrument and amplification

> The violin is a folk instrument of four strings pegged to a box, played with a stick strung with horsehair. It is made for showing off – it can also sing a line so it simply hurts. It is also, I rather think, a graceful form of torture. The body is trained to do unnatural things. The precise fingering on four strings is tricky and the bowing hand needs to be soft and supple yet precisely poised to be able to both caress and command the instrument. Learning to do both takes forever.

> Christopher Hope[281]

Reflecting on the uses of the instrument (a mainstay of the earlier performances), it would have been impossible to predict the journey that both instrument and performer have taken, in terms of extending techniques, equipment, and most importantly for performer, in developing a more consolidated attitude to research and a greater sense of purpose in performance. Therefore, before concluding this section, I will devote a short segment to this core instrument, whilst acknowledging how the extensions to the means and methods have enhanced the practice, and reflect on what this may lead to in the future.

Ansuman Biswas gives an astute account of the embodied nature of violin playing, describing the reverberations from the instrument which can be felt, not just under the chin, but throughout the body and the constant two-way experience of reward and frustration that ensues:

> Taking up the violin, not with the aspiration of becoming a great violinist but in order to use it as a tool with which to chart the body-mind... My head is tight and heavy, thinking through every tiny motion, every detail of pressure, speed, angle, length. I grit my teeth and flail around on the edge of panic, trying to keep all the variables in mind, trying to keep all these pigeons in my basket. Meanwhile, intonation is a painful screech, slipping further and further away, fluttering and sliding through my desperate grasp. There is

---

[281] C. Hope, 'My son, the violinist', *The Guardian*, 08.08.09, http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2009/aug/08/violin-music-for-children, (accessed 11.11.14).

precious little music in this, but I soldier on, hoping it will come, trying to nail it down.[282]

The playing of a stringed instrument is considered one of the best examples of a non-human extension of the body, allowing the capability, dexterity, and co-ordination of both hands to be combined with mental dexterity. Essentially a melodic instrument, the violin can be used polyphonically, rhythmically and percussively, can address extremes of pitch, suggest colour through varieties of timbral range in combination with bow technique, can be voice-like in intensity or ambient in texturality, can be dense or spare, loud or quiet, and be suggestive of speed or stillness.

The instrument used in the performances under discussion is itself extended through the evolutionary development of amplification. Electrification takes this box (no longer necessarily of wood; in this case, of Kevlar) the pegs, the gut, the horse hair of the bow, the energy brought to it by the body of the performer, and amplifies the interaction of these components, via a built in piezo pick-up. A secondary and much larger box (the speaker) is connected as a broadcasting device. This allows for the manipulation of volume, direction, projection, placing, and quality of sounds emitted to be added to the lexicon of the instrument's capabilities. Though not any easier to play, it is far more versatile than an acoustic instrument, lending itself to the possibilities of immediate further digital processing without problems of feedback. The instrument can be extended again through the use of foot pedals. In this case, it is the looping pedal that has featured most prominently, enabling sounds to be built upon, one layer over another, making one instrument simultaneously into many.[283]

---

[282] A. Biswas, 'Listening as Feeling', in A. Carlyle and C. Lane, (eds.), *On Listening*, Uniformbooks, 2013, pp.192-194.

[283] The five-stringed Bridge Violin 'Lyra' is tuned to E, A, (at 440hz), D, G, C (one octave below middle C). Specifications: electric semi-acoustic violin made of Kevlar (http://www.bridgeinstruments.co.uk) with a semi cut-away body and ebony fingerboard, finished in 'Barrier Reef' blue. It has a built-in battery powered piezo pick-up. The signal from the instrument is directly outputted via an active surface mount pre-amp to the amplifier with a standard jack-to-jack cable. There are two control dials built into the body, one for tone (EQ), and the other for volume. The quality of tone production is still important and controllable, but the instrument allows for more noise, brightness, darkness of tone quality, and mid-range frequencies with overtones. Input gain, adding signals, like

The electric instrument is also capable of making quite different sounds from those on an acoustic one. For example, small, discreet sounds have a different meaning when amplified. Much of the bowing requires a less pressured stroke (used for example for *sul ponticello* and *tremolando* techniques), and the sounding of harmonics can be better projected since the amplification is doing the usual (projecting) job of the right, bowing arm. A further example of the difference is that a quiet, whistling bow sound (a sound only heard at close range, acoustically) becomes a more public one through amplification. We can also hear the sounds of the process of the making itself – the 'mechanics' of the sound of the bow travelling across the string, its grain and whistle. Usually something one is at pains to suppress with an acoustic instrument, this is an intriguing quality on an electric one, and of value in holding up a mirror to the artifice of the sound making. It is this reversal of what might be expected from the instrument as manifesting both intimate and public sounds that is a part of the intrigue of the electric one and which lends itself well to new forms of critical practice performed in less conventional spaces with less conventional means.

Many expert contemporary exponents have, or are exploring the further possibilities of string playing using electronics and processing techniques, investigating the limits and extensions to the instrument both physically and conceptually. The canon of such artists and musicians as for example George Macunias, Tony Conrad, Phil Waschmann, Laurie Andersen, Jean Luc Ponty, Hideaki Shimada, Jon Rose, Helmut Lachenmann, C. Spencer Yeh, Sylvia Hallett, Kaffe Matthews, Angharad Davies, Phil Durrant, Takehisa Kosugi, Malcolm Goldstein, Roger Redgate, and Lina Lapelyte would warrant again, a further, separate study.

Ellen Fullman takes one aspect of the resonating string and extrapolates the concept to an extreme by devising pieces for particular sites

---

'dams' for a signal, avoids distortion from clipping. The instrument can be used with a looping device, reverb (to give an impression of a space), delay (the impression of distance, for example, a half second delay equates to the impression of 560 feet in distance), chorus, flanger, phase shifters, pitch and octave shifters usually controlled using foot pedals. With a Boss RC20 Looping Station, (a combined digital recorder and playback system), the instrument can be used to play in canon or in layers with itself. Technical references are drawn from the electric violin string maker, DaDarrio on Youtube video via http://www.daddario.com/BowedViolin (accessed 20.10.12).

in her on-going works, *Long String Instrument.*[284] Strings spanning great distances are 'played' by her as she walks along and between them using her fingers coated in resin to activate the sounds. Bruce Nauman's violin experiments (undertaken as a studio activity), take place in an enclosed space. For example, in the aforementioned *Playing a Note on the Violin while I Walk Round the Studio* (1967–68), he plays two notes very closely pitched so that the 'beat' between them is apparent. In *Violin tuned D, E, A, D* of 1968, played with his back to the camera he demonstrates a witty use of scordatura and perhaps a comment on the future of the classical instrument itself.[285] Made as a document of a private performance, the viewer/listener must depend on the early video footage to access Nauman's innovative use of the (albeit, acoustic) violin as just another tool in his studio and as an extension of himself in a contemplative, temporal, mapping role.

    To take a wider perspective of amplification requires an acknowledgement of the role this phenomenon plays in extending the human body. If the body can inhabit what one might call an aural space much larger than the body's physical presence (taking the aural size or 'footprint' of sounds made by a body to be measured vocally), then those aural projections will obviously reach far beyond the limits of the physical human form. One of the most dramatic and extended examples of this is of course, the projection of the operatic voice - though perhaps ululation and yodelling may compete. With amplification, however, the voice or instrument can drastically increase in acoustic aural size again. Yet, this enhancement can be within the reach of anyone without the skills in how to project, simply with the assistance of a microphone and amplification. Amplification can thus be considered a democratic means by which sounds fill and extend spaces (and extend the individual voice) beyond their natural acoustic abilities and properties. By broadcasting over a greater physical distance, the body assumes a larger

---

[284] E. Fullman, *Long String Instrument*, [sound installation], 1981, http://www.ellenfullman.com/Biography1.html, (accessed 11.11.14).

[285] B. Nauman, *Playing a note on the violin while I walk round the studio*, [sound piece], 1967-68, 10 min, B&W, sound, 16 mm film on video, viewable at Electronic Arts Intermix, http://www.eai.org/title.htm?id=2787, and *Violin tuned D,E,A,D* of 1968, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teKo6HkyoqY, (both accessed 11.11.14).

presence than would be expected acoustically; the person behind the microphone as a 'projector' assumes a larger role than is achievable without amplification. The radio voice is another form of extension to this reach of course. How to explore and manipulate this powerful phenomenon (not without precedent, certainly in an outdoor, popular music context) and the affordances it brings to the instrument and voice, has become another important part of the sound practice addressed in different ways according to each site.

In relation to amplification and electronic music in particular, there is much discussion in musicological discourses over the value inherent in the visuality of the sound source. John Croft maintains, "[t]here is a fundamental difference between a sounding body whose physical properties transparently determine its sonic possibilities, and the loudspeaker, which can produce practically any sound at all."[286]

These physical properties, in this case of the violin, naturally have a tendency to affect the readings and expectations of the sounds heard, given the 'baggage' of musical connotations the instrument carries, whether acoustic or amplified. This has been a central element in my practice and occasioned much reflection on questioning the appropriate use of the violin for many of the performances and the extent to which elements of 'unlearning' and irreverence have been involved.

Writing on how electro acoustic mediation refers to situations in which the visual source of the electro acoustic sounds is denied (a possibility only, of course, since the advent of recording and amplification), Luke Windsor[287] reminds us that 'reduced' forms of listening, a key aspect for Pierre Schaeffer in *Traité des Objets Musicaux*, (1966), focussed attention on the valuable

---

[286] J. Croft, 'Theses on Liveness', *Organised Sound,* vol.12, issue 01, 2007, p.63
He in turn references J. D'Escrivan, 'To Sing the Body Electric', *Contemporary Music Review*, 25, (1/2), 2006, pp. 183-91 regarding instruments and effort in the performance of electronic music.

[287] L. Windsor, 'Through and Around the Acousmatic: the Interpretation of Electroacoustic Sounds,' in *Music, Electronic Media and Culture*, S. Emmerson, (ed.), Farnham, Ashgate, 2000, p.7.

dislocation between sound and source in acousmatic music.[288] Such dislocation is another evolutionary aspect of experiencing sound through recordings and amplification. This confusion between sound and source origins is a significant concept explored in some of my sound works. A hidden speaker, emitting sounds unseen, present in the previously discussed sound work situated in a library, *Silent Zone* (2012), causes the listener to question the siting and the reality of the real and recorded sounds. *Floor Zero* (2011), however, performed in the lift, similarly disrupts the expectations of given sounds but in a more functional public space and with the device of trickery in full view.

Extension, disruption, and materiality

> …there is no such thing as an unmusical sound-object.
>
> Trevor Wishart[289]

An inventory of other physical materials used in the sound works as extenders and activators was listed under the Transcription heading in the previous chapter. In the following section, however, I want to revisit the concept and implications of extending the space and the instrument in this way by reflecting on a number of precedents that have furthered the field, taking the sound work portfolio video, *Seven Bridges* (2011)[290] as an example, in which a number of objects are used as 'improvised' bridges.

In terms of musical possibility, Henry Balfour (1929), the first curator of the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford, advised anthropologists that "[a]ny object whether natural or artificial, and however simple, which is employed for the purpose of producing sound (whether 'musical' in an aesthetic sense

---

[288] P. Schaeffer, 'Traité des Objets Musicaux', in C. North and J. Dack, transl., *Pierre Schaeffer, In Search of Concrete Music*, New Jersey, University of California Press 2012.

[289] T. Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, a new and revised edition, S. Emmerson, (ed.), Harwood Academic Publishers, Netherlands, 1996.

[290] T. Spinks, *Seven Improvised Bridges*, [video], 2011, a collaboration with Klega, was shown at the exhibition Research In Progress, LCC, 2012. Also re-made in 2014, shown at the Act Reacts festival exhibition, Wimbledon Space, 2014, **DVD track 13.**

or not) should be included as a musical instrument".[291] It seems he was giving free reign long before the observations of John Cage to question the boundaries of what does and what does not constitute a valid property of music-making. Cornelius Cardew too, once observed that every sound has a note.

Inspired initially by the experiments of Henry Cowell, John Cage is well known for his development of the concept of a prepared piano, in which objects are inserted into the workings of a grand piano in order to interrupt the sounds heard when the piano is played, either by the striking of the keys or by the direct stroking or plucking of the strings.[292] In the 'skip' violin series (initially *Seven Bridges* video 2011 version, using a small violin found in a skip), it is with a similarly playful irony that objects are used to take the place of the traditional sound conducting apparatus of the violin bridge. The notion of a 'prepared' or extended instrument therefore, though not strictly site specific, treats the acoustic instrument as a kind of site in itself, visited by a series of disparate objects. The specific objects used in this work included whatever was to hand: a mobile phone, a piece of Lego, a toilet roll, a bull dog clip, a shallot, a toy train, and an egg. The use of found objects as a means to activate sounds randomly on the instrument was a continuation of the disruption of the conventions of musical objects and instrumental skills. I define 'random' here as being less discriminate and used by chance, essentially allowing the sounds that materialise to be a product of the processes put in place, which may quite simply be a decision to use what is immediately available and not to depend on a preconceived compositional approach. The companion video, *Seven Bows* (2014),[293] continues with this sense of absurdist displacement as enquiry.

These non 'musical' sound objects then are things with a physical presence that have definable, but not obviously musical properties (wood,

---

[291] H. Balfour, cited by the British Forum for Ethnomusicology conference call out document, Noel Lobley, 24.11.12.

[292] J. Cage, 'How the Piano came to be Prepared', http://johncage.org/prepared_piano_essay.html, 1972, (accessed 11.11.14).

[293] ◯ T. Spinks, *Seven Bows*, **DVD track 14**, [video], in collaboration with Klega

plastic, twine, feather, metal) and are brought to the performance often in place of a bow as both sonic activators and visual clues relevant to the wider site. It is not so much the intrinsic sonic property of the objects themselves that is of interest, but how they provide an interaction *with* the place or instrument (in this case, including the ability to successfully activate the violin strings) and what they can bring to the performance.

Since choice and usage are prompted and determined by the research into what constitutes the site, the objects could also be considered an integral part of the new material of the site itself. For example, in *Sonic Triangle* (2009), items used included a hacksaw haft stretched with rough twine, a series of pieces of copper and plastic piping, and a galvanized nail, all alluding to the history of the site as a penitentiary. Moreover, in *Hoop* (2010), a schoolroom hoop is played, circling around the instrument. In *Seaforts* (2010), the whole iron structure is considered an instrument with potential sonic activation properties enhanced by using contact microphones, and in *Silent Zone* (2012),[294] the recording and playback of the sound of writing recorded from a pencil and scratchy pen features in a library performance for six hours. *Floor Zero* (2011)[295] involves the lift itself as an instrument that then carries its own activator, the instructional voice within an enclosed metal space, subverted by multiple playback.

The potential for all such physical 'stuff' to have activate-able sonic properties could be argued here, and has been explored in a more recent piece, entitled *Activated Ballroom* (2012).[296] Indeed, such activations often feature and are made by a group leader when a soundwalk is undertaken. By simply using the hand (the knuckles, the flat of the hand, the fingernails) as a means of giving voice to an inanimate object or surface, the 'field of listening'

---

[294] T. Spinks, *Silent Zone,* **DVD track 4, appendix p.31** [sound performance], Chelsea Library, 2012.

[295] T. Spinks, *Floor Zero/I am Standing in a Lift,* **DVD track 3, appendix p. 23** [sound performance], Camberwell College of Art, 2011.

[296] T. Spinks, *Activated Ballroom*, **CD2 track 3** [sound performance], 2012.

and the participants' surprise, can be enhanced.[297] If extended as an exercise to the use of a stone, stick, or drumstick, the listening exercise is taken into another realm again; one that causes more conscious rhythmic patterns to be experienced, the value of which I have discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Activations

The performances have continued to develop to include not only objects as activators of and on the instrument, but the inclusion of the objects themselves as potential sound makers which have often taken centre stage. For example, both *Sonic Ritual* (2013) which uses amplified twine and metal, and *Sounding the Portal* (2013),[298] which requires the extensive amplification of tensioned cables, relinquished the use of the instrument altogether in favour of giving objects priority by using contact microphones. This brings my core term of *activated* to the fore as a means of steering the action. Several sound works have made use of *actual* material from the site also (for example 'inactive' items such as a concrete wall, water, brick, metal, sea, rust, bones, ironwork, wood) that have been amplified with contact microphones and made to release their sounds physically by the gestural acts of tapping, knocking, stroking, shaking, and scratching.

Unlike the ordinary microphone that detects sound waves in the air as our ears do, the contact microphone provides a means of recording solid materials by detecting sound waves activated within them. This, in effect, gives the materials a direct 'voice'. In other words, the microphones must be directly attached to the object or surface to allow the sound waves travelling through them to be converted into electrical audio signals that can then be amplified and recorded. As field recordist Chris Watson describes it, using

---

[297] This observation was made by the author when undertaking a sound walk led by Hildegard Westerkamp in Dieburg, Darmstadt, summer 2012.

[298] ○ T. Spinks, *Sounding the Portal,* **CD2 track 5, appendix p. 68** [sound performance] 2013.

contact microphones is essentially "putting mics where our ears can't go."[299] An apt example is given by geography researcher and sound artist Michael Gallagher[300] of artist and musician Lee Patterson and his use of contact microphones on sparklers which, when lit, emit clanking and spitting sounds whilst they burn. Contact microphones consist of a small piezo transducer attached to a cable, placed in close physical contact with a surface and are cheap and relatively easy to make for the amateur, offering an accessible and non technological way to appreciate the rewards of close listening. Jez Riley French, an educator, sound artist and maker of contact microphones, describes their use as allowing objects and surfaces to 'sing'. His intriguing recordings of long wire fences in Australia and of insect activity, such as an ant eating an apricot, are good examples of the extreme contexts in which contact microphones can operate.[301] With a hydrophone our listening can be extended again since recordings of hitherto unknown worlds can be made underwater.

Composers such as Hugh Davies[302] (an inventor of alternative instruments), were inspired initially by the collaboration between Dutch sound engineer and philosopher Jaap Spek and composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, whose experiments at the Westdeutscherundfunk in Cologne with microphones (actively used as instruments), led in turn to such works as Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie 1* performed in 1964. Similarly, on a smaller scale, contemporary exponent Adam Bohman[303] demonstrates the

---

[299] C. Watson, from the author's own Wildeye recording course notes, Whitwell Hall, Norfolk, September 2012 (unpublished), see appendix p.64

[300] M. Gallagher, 'Creative Practice Primer: Techniques and technologies: Contact microphones', *Experimental Research Network*, 2011, http://experimentalnetwork.wordpress.com/creative-practice-primer-2/creative-practice-primer-techniques-and-technologies-contact-microphones/, (accessed 15.01.14).

[301] J. Riley French, *Jez Riley French,* http://jezrileyfrench.co.uk/, (accessed 19.01.14).

[302] H. Davies, 'For Hugh Davies', Another Timbre [CD], 2008, http://anothertimbre.com/hughdaviestext.html, (accessed 19.01.14).

[303] Adam Bohman is an improvisor using objects and materials to make sounds, mostly acoustically. An inventory of the objects used for a performance observed by the author in the Fine Art department at Middlesex University (2013) for example, included: two trestle tables with piezo contact microphones attached to objects using blu-tac, a

extraordinary capabilities and inventive creativity such devices can lead to by the act of transcription from object into sound, in combination with the everyday object (in his case, discarded and even broken items), activated in live, improvised performances, frequently using these microphones as a fundamental tool.

The hidden properties and qualities of the physical environment surrounding us, is thus articulated anew through the sonic agency of activation, recording, and/or amplification. This presents what I suggest is a new activated materiality to be used extensively as a creative tool in sonic art practices, particularly when working site specifically. By demonstrating and conveying not only the hidden sonic potential of the physical, but also a visual clue, operating as a metaphor for the wider interpretation of what is being seen and heard, the possible activated materiality made with the use of the contact microphone can take us into other, unimagined domains.

There are, of course, several precedents in the use of objects in performance as extensions and interruptions of the conventional Western instrument. Notably John Cage acknowledged that for him, the prepared piano initially introduced a certain liberation: "The prepared piano[…]led me to the enjoyment of things as they come, as they happen, rather than as they are possessed or kept or forced to be." [304] However, subsequent exponents such as pianist John Tilbury have developed a more rigorous approach to the notion of exact preparation of the instrument in performance.

Could the sound making devices, in both natural and prepared states, be considered as simply another part of the space, as material in itself, brought in subsequent to the research, but as an extension of the overall

---

cheap Chinese violin used as a sound box which was attached to two coiled springs, several wooden clothes pegs, metal jelly moulds, G-clamps, a glass jar with nails, old biscuit tins (eg OXO, tobacco), small pieces of polystyrene as activators used to 'rub' objects, pieces of ceramic tile and marble, sandpaper sheets, sheets of metal, old singles (45rpm), record rack, ginger beer can, assorted violin bows, wooden board with metal wires, makeshift bridges, metal files, long screws, cutlery, plastic cutlery, a light bulb, metal ruler, wire brush, volume pedal and small mixing desk. (From unpublished notes by the author, 2013). Further reference at: www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/.../art-now-live-bohman-brothers, (accessed 11.11.14).

[304] J. Cage, 'How the piano came to be prepared' [online essay], http://johncage.org/prepared_piano_essay.html, (accessed 11.11.14).

materiality of the site, as previously discussed? Does this then make the site a newly endowed one in which both object and sound activator-performer become, albeit fleetingly, site specific elements too, within the scheme of this particular time frame as event?

Improvisations

> In the midst of performing you can only wait for the sounds to arrive. The momentum of playing takes control of the musician; for once committed to making music, he is no longer free. All thoughts about structure and emotional content become inadequate to the task of improvising once the first note is sounded. Thereafter the total being of the musician is involved; involuntary responses meld with overt technique; the mind scurries unsuccessfully to keep up with the unconscious. The musician, if he is lucky, is reduced/devolved to an observer, while the music flows. He can only watch hands move across keys-frets-skins. He is possessed.

Edwin Prévost[305]

It has taken six years of PhD study and the resulting journey through the twenty or so sound performances, to get to this juncture in acknowledging and addressing what is a crucial and intimidating part of the mesh of a performance. Whilst assuming the role of performer and attempting to play something new, I am aware that those many years invested in the acquisition of some form of 'command' on the instrument (as Hope, quoted earlier, sympathetically described the process his son went through) is in many ways irrelevant and certainly does not guarantee the success of what will emerge in that split second of the first note or sound heard in performance. Beyond this apprehension lies the reassurance, yet danger of the more formulaic approach, the reliable reiteration of previous approaches and methods used in earlier performances and any dependence on muscle memory. To improvise means to disrupt this familiarity, however, and to risk disappointment when it fails to 'work.'

The moment of putting the bow onto the string or of reaching to 'tap' an object to initiate a sound, is one of some trepidation. It is at this precise

---

[305] E. Prévost, No Sound is Innocent: AMM and the Practice of Self-Invention, meta-musical narratives and essays, Essex, Copula (imprint of Matchless Recordings), 1995, p. 123.

juncture of placing horse hair onto wire-covered gut or finger nail onto metal, that the unknown quantities of sound-making and improvising live come into being, operating alongside what should be the confidence and more known quantities provided by experience. Whilst aiming to relinquish the fear in not knowing quite what will happen next, the use of further objects alongside or instead of the instrument, can aid in taking the performer out of any form of 'comfort zone' and into a different way of stimulating sounds. The vital sense of risk is not diminished however, and can be harnessed to become a new motivator altogether.

Like a busker in the underground, the performances have at times provided a soundtrack to others' daily activities and this can be found in: *Windmill III,* overlooking the common, *Silent Zone* in a library, *Floor Zero* in a lift, and in *Brixton Markets*' arcades. The sounds can become an uncomfortable inconvenience (as demonstrated in *Take a Space, Floor Zero*), or a bucolic backdrop, (*Windmill, I, II & III*) at times seemingly acousmatic when no obvious sound source is at first detected. At the windmill venue, the performer is out of sight on a platform roof. In the silent reading area of a library, the performer seems to be just another occupant in the room. Once the method is perceived however, awareness moves to the sound-making presence, shifting to recognise the semblance of a modest spectacle and extending to an awareness of the creation of specific sounds happening in a particular, heightened sense of place.

On reflection, there have been many valuable episodes through just such disruptions described above, that have tipped the performances from tentative exploratory sounds into continuing, on-going moments of excitement through the use of repeated fragments of sound, informed by the research yet discovered in the moment. A particularly successful example of this perhaps can be found in the two sound files from *Seaforts* (2010).[306]

So to summarise, in exploring and transcending the sum of the parts (of place, time, human presence, associations, methods, processes, instrument, objects, sounds and experiencer), a new form of site specific art practice is

---

[306] T. Spinks, *Seaforts*, [sound performance], Kent Coast, 2010, **CD1, tracks 4 & 5**

indicated. This is one that operates as a kind of contextualised, improvised, composition-as-live-event, situated temporarily somewhere in and between art, music, performance, materiality, and within the modest spectacle of the everyday.

Performing place

As an introduction to liveness within the practice in the context of the site specific, I want to bring in the notion of a 'performance of place' as an incursive position and a form of encounter, as posited by drama theorist Nick Kaye.[307] It is in the happenstance nature of an encounter that much of my practice rests, since any unconventional site used in performance will have a tendency to undermine the expectations of an art practice and prove valuable as a provocation.

Kaye recognises that the word 'site' has two meanings: as noun and verb relating to both place and positioning. Place is seen as an ordering system, space as a practical location in which the positioning occurs. What occurs in a site specific work is therefore a hybrid; something situated between the arts disciplines that enhances the *awareness* of the theatricality of the experience of the art object or event for the beholder. This awareness extends to the use of what is already on site, and significantly, the presence of the body of the performer as another site in progress. The event takes precedence over the material or object by taking what is already there and making something of it through action, whilst leaning on the unconditioned response. This is not a theatre or a gallery – attention is displaced and expectations suspended in a place where the site informs the art and the art informs the site.

Kaye introduces Augé's notions of *non-place* (passed over), and the opposite, *anthropological space* (formulated through individual identity), arguing that site specific art can *trouble* the opposition between the site and the work in approach to spaces.[308] He states, "it is performance which

---

[307] N. Kaye, *Site Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000.

returns to define site specificity, not only as a set of critical terms and as a mode of work, but as a way of characterising *the place* these various site specific practices reflect upon."[309]

The realisation that the live element can act as a channel of attention is of particular relevance to the sound works in the portfolio. De Certeau gives a useful description in relation to this dilemma about use of place:

> Things *extra* and *other* (details and excesses coming form elsewhere) insert themselves into the accepted framework, the imposed order. One thus has the very relationship between spatial practices and the constructed order. The surface of this order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order.[310]

The image of the sieve provides an apposite analogy for many aspects of my practice. In relation to research for the material of the site, it is relevant when considering what to include and what to discard, but is particularly appropriate to the site specific practices that combine performance and place. Essentially the sieve can be considered as a means of separating, but selectively allowing through whilst disallowing, sorting, refining, and acting as a form of strainer that leaks meaning. It is simultaneously an evocative device of both capture and loss. Like a performer it also activates, whilst directing action and attention.

Kaye cites Welsh performance group Brith Gof as an example of taking architecture beyond its literal properties, as a performative action. He describes this as a 'host' site that comes about as a form of 'ghost' architecture. McLucas (artistic director of the group), notes that the site may offer:

> A particular and unavoidable history
> A particular use (a cinema, a slaughterhouse)
> A particular formality (shape, proportion, height, disposition of architectural elements etc.)

---

[308] M. Augé, Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity, London, Verso, 1995.

[309] Ibid., Kaye, p.12.

[310] J. De Certeau, cited by Kaye, *op. cit.* p.107.

A particular political, cultural or social context. [311]

The group's approach is described as a complex overlaying of narratives resulting in a kind of saturated space. This produces a field of activity with formal, thematic and narrative strands, but gives no single audience viewpoint or reading, thus 'dispersing' the site. McLucas defines this practice as a hybrid of place, audience and performance.

Examples of site specific sound performances within the sound portfolio that have taken place in significant 'host' buildings with a past history include: *Henry's Ballad* (2008), *Sonic Triangle* (2009), *Hoop* (2010), and *Sonic Ritual* (2013), featuring buildings which were originally sites of a slaughterhouse, a prison, a schoolroom, and a Masonic chamber, respectively. At each site, the audience could wander at will.

Kaye features twelve pages of instructions and guidelines to the Brith Gof performances that present an interesting 'incomplete' document, requiring the audience-reader to photocopy and self-assemble items in order to combine a time line with instructions, photographs, drawings, maps, and texts. This seems an effective alternative to a traditional programme, programme note, or exhibition guide by simultaneously presenting, questioning and reinforcing the incompleteness of the possibilities of documentation. Instead, a live, current and interactive archive of material is offered by McLucas as a guide to the interpretation of the live event. (The blog made by Kate Ross during *Silent Zone,* 2012 could be an example of this).

Dennis Oppenheim described his artworks from the 1970s onwards thus: "You can't see the art, you can't buy the art and you can't have the art." [312] Kaye cites Robert Smithson and Douglas Huebler in considering site as a place of acknowledged absences by focusing on its very elusiveness. He describes these sites as seemingly limitless encounters but also as material for 'non-sites' (Smithson and Wheeler (1996) in conversations with

[311] B. Gof, director Clifford McLucas, cited by Kaye, *op. cit.,* p.52.

[312] N. Kaye, *Art Into Theatre: Performance interviews and Documents*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Press, 1996, p. 213.

Oppenheim) whereby documentation is collected and contained, as fragments, "exposing the absence of a site in an exacerbation of the gallery's objectifying function."[313]

If non-site, by my interpretation, can be seen as the assembly of 'trophies' (for example, rocks and earth re-assembled as 'sculpture' in the gallery), could 'found' sounds such as field recordings and activations, collected, recorded, and replayed elsewhere (for instance in the work of Max Neuhaus and Bill Fontana), equally, constitute some form of non-site? And further, if site constitutes a sort of reflection, could non-site be a mirror, if the effect of the mirror is to turn the space back on itself? What becomes of the role of the encounter in this context?

Whilst other artists working outside the white cube such as Allan Kaprow and Claus Oldenburg could be described as approaching and questioning the location, limits, and stability of a site, Wolf Vostell, mentioned previously, went further in regarding his audience as an integral part of the site itself. He referred to them as 'participants and performers instead of spectators,' and even as an 'assemblage', or what might be seen as representing an 'un-sticking', 'un-pasting', a 'tearing off' of mobile fragments of reality. [314] Like Neuhaus and Fontana after him, Vostell's *de-coll/age happenings* of the early 1960s reflected on the relationship between place and practice as one of unpredictable exchanges, taking the viewer-listener's encounter as a central one. The event thus becomes a springboard in the imagination of the experiencer to the extent that the work may be left behind by the very act of engagement in engenders.

A notable figure of the 1960s onwards who used sound in site specific situations is American artist Meredith Monk,[315] a one-time collaborator with Fluxus artists, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles (known also for their innovative use of sound). Of note for me is her use of spaces: the institutional space of the ramp and staircases at the Guggenheim for example, and the

---

[313] Op cit., p. 213.

[314] Ibid., Kaye, p.91.

[315] M. Monk, *Notes for Juice*, programme note, 1969.

abandoned spaces of a former prison, poorhouse, and hospital in New York.
Referring to the latter work *American Archaeology no 1: Roosevelt Island,*
1994, Monk explains:

> I was inspired by a place that had always been designated as a site for
> outcasts and criminals, the outsiders of society. The notion of quarantine
> seemed to contain many contemporary resonances particularly with the
> outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Over the years, I have been exploring different
> ways layers of culture accumulate in and inform a particular place.[316]

Her teams of collaborators opened up these places with new activity,
and one can imagine that Augé's solitude of non-place in these abandoned
buildings was disturbed and briefly energised. The liveness of 'acting out'
was undoubtedly a part of the performative process for Monk, along with an
awareness of mapping space and the role of memory in the re-presentation
of material at one remove from its original location.

From my own perspective, her earlier pieces, although seemingly of
their time and defined perhaps more as over-theatricalised multi-media
spectacles, nevertheless broke interesting ground. That is, the events were
performed live in unconventional venues and required the engagement and
physical movement of the audience, often over a time period of some weeks.
Notably she used the specific associations of place as a prompt for the event
and her particular use of voice and sound as the means of experiencing and
extending it.

As a crucial point of intersection between visual art and performance
and between materials and events, Kaye explores the body itself as material.
He reinforces this notion by maintaining that performance is a privileging of
event over *object*. This is particularly evident in the work of Italian artist,
Gilberto Zorio,[317] whose works extend beyond the physicality of the object
into the realm of what may be deemed at times, hypothetically dangerous

---

[316] N. Kaye, *op.cit.,* p.212.

[317] G. Zorio, eg *Stella Incandescente* (*Incandescant Star)*, 1973, involving physical interaction
with the spectator's body, and *Rosa-Blu-Rosa,(pink-blue-pink)* 1967 in which their presence
alters the systems set up and directly effects the work.

interactions with his audience. Of particular note for this thesis however, is Zorio's work using the sounds of his audiences' voices. *Microfoni* (*Microphones)* of 1968-9, part of his series *Per purificare le parole* (*For the Purification of Words*), involved a series of microphones and speakers placed around a gallery as an installation that picked up the voices of gallery visitors. Of this piece he maintained, "a word absorbed by a microphone and repeated over and over by a loudspeaker loses its literal significance and becomes a sound, incomprehensible but mentally and physically perceptible."[318] Zorio successfully extended the site by inserting the inadvertent, yet stage-managed 'found' sounds of his audience, whilst allowing them to assume some ownership of the space by being an integral part of it. Taking the repetition of words beyond the semantic function of language, Zorio's work also seems to operate in the place where the circumstances of the site meet the materials and processes at work, and where performance is the only (possible) realisation of the work. Acknowledging the impossibility of resolution in this work, Kaye quotes Zorio in calling it a 'plastic event' in which the "tendencies and properties of ambient performed sound" become the work, as an order that is always *in performance.*[319] 'Ambient' and 'performed' seem intriguingly contradictory terms in this sentence since one relates to a place, the other to a person; however, this elusive combination is an important touchstone for my own practice.

Performance of site can be identified in the more extended works of Dennis Oppenheim and Vito Acconci whose notion of the performing body is simultaneously, place, means, and material. Oppenheim's sound piece, *Sound Enclosed Land Area* (1969), consists of a recording of his footsteps defining a walk around the selected area of a city. The recording is played back into the gallery as a form of both map and memory, positioning the body at the centre of the process of documentation. The trace of one site is therefore inserted into another. This process of recording an aural trace has been explored in some of the recent works of Brandon LaBelle and in some of the later pieces

---

[318] N.Kaye, op.cit p.144.

[319] N.Kaye, *op. cit,* p.145.

in the sound portfolio such as *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds* (2013) and *Echo Lake* (2013), both of which lean on the memory of place and displaced sounds to create new, site referencing works.

Kaye's final example of an artwork that pushes the boundaries of audience engagement with the performer in public spaces is by British artist Fiona Templeton, founder of Theatre of Mistakes. *YOU-The City*, initially sited in New York in 1998, entailed journeys led through obscure parts of the city as 1:1 'guided tours.' Tim Etchell's response to the work when it was realised in London is as follows:

> The old dialectical separations between inside and outside, fiction and reality, self and other, audience and performer, were here exploited and blurred, leaving the strange sense that the city and oneself were now almost the same thing, a shifting network of narratives, places, touches, voices, lost puns, myths and intimacies.[320]

The audio walks by Janet Cardiff can provoke similar responses, featuring recorded voices that question the listener's experience of place, particularly in relation to her gendered, 'internal dialogues.' Rather like a personalised sound walk, the approach is one that provides much scope, particularly for the immediacy of sound as an evocative and provoking element for the site specific art form.

The performing body as material, as site in progress, (or as process), as unstable site, and as a site of endurance, is a subject that this thesis can only begin to address. However, it is useful to reconsider the many roles the body can take on, discussed hitherto. As the encountered sculptural object, as O' Doherty's uncomfortable 'piece of furniture,' as Lefebvre's 'bundle of rhythms', as a container of memory, as a locus of sympathies and as a leading presence, it is never at rest within the context of the performed, site specific event.

This leads me on to the final and most difficult aspect of the practice – the performed element, which has come to form the core of the delivery of

---

[320] T. Etchells, 'Diverse Assembly, some Trends in Recent Performance', in T. Shank, (ed.), *Contemporary British Theatre*, London, Macmillan Press, 1994.

the act of transcription – that of conveying something of the site through sound: through liveness.

The uses of liveness

> ....the sense of live for me
> carries some risk
> that processes may and can change
> right there in the moment
> make plans in your head but be prepared to truly abandon
> in an instant, this is not improvisation though but instinct
> rehearsal is redundant
> repetition may be productive
> rounds and unseen rhythms are inherent...
>
> Nigel Rolfe, 2013[321]

In this final section, I continue from the presence of the body to consider the *effect* of liveness in the context of sound art performance. This is approached from the perspective of the performer, through observations made on reviewing the portfolio of practice-led sound works. I explore liveness here as the agent of identified sound sources, making brief reference to a number of theorists including Auslander's view of the live in relation to the recorded. Taking on percussionist Steve Noble's observation that "the audience listens in a different way if engaged visually,"[322] and his assertion that difficult sounds can thereby be less intimidating, I continue by considering the most relevant acts of liveness for my work. This will encompass liveness as encounter, as a form of inter-connection through gesture, as improvisation and as a possible condition of transgression and risk. Additionally, I consider liveness and the associative or referential aspects of place. Without the immediate presence of the performer, a recording played in situ presents a potential form of what I come to describe as a 'deferred' form of liveness.

---

[321] N. Rolfe, 'excerpt from *Doing and Being*', in the *RCA Sculpture MA Degree Show* [catalogue], 2013, 13.06.13.

[322] S. Noble, 'Improvising'. (Author's unpublished lecture notes from LCC talk, 11.11.09).

What is liveness?

The state or act of liveness directs attention, not just by providing visual and aural reference points, but by channelling an activity which is currently occurring in performance. In other words, a more engaged awareness of an event is gathered. As Salomé Voegelin describes it, the sounds are "unfolding in the present."[323]

Many aspects of liveness culminate in a unique performance that will acknowledge the presence of other people in a space, the physicality and communality of a direct, engaged experience for both parties inhabiting the same space, and a sense of transgression at times with its concurrent element of risk. All of this requires the performer to either embrace the unexpected and what is beyond their control, or to relinquish control to the playing out of systems previously put in place. In the sound works forming the practice, the listener anticipates an implied connection with the live performer, not just by listening but through the observation of her gestures and haptic engagement with the space, the instrument and the objects.

Liveness and the interruption of space

> Where is the 'music' being played? In the instrument, the listener, the sound system, the room? [324]

The above quote is a listener's reflection on experiencing the live sound work, a question that could continue in this vein: is it in the shifting acoustics of the space, the associative references of the site, the artist's mind, the further thoughts of the experiencers or in the documentation? How the sounds are located and interpreted are important aspects of the practice in identifying the additional value of liveness as an agent of interruption and engagement.

---

[323] S. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence, Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, New York, London, Continuum, 2010, (quote from author's notes at Voegelin lecture LCC, 17.09.14)

[324] D. Padfield, anecdotal response from listener/audience member reflecting on the soundwork *Sonic Triangle,* 2009.

As discussed in Chapter One, many sound artists' works can be considered 'interruptive' in the sense that they have taken place in unexpected places and on occasion at unexpected times. It has therefore been established that an artwork which occurs outside of any traditionally expected context (such as the displaced Western artwork no longer contained in a museum or white cube gallery and the sound performance no longer in a shoe box concert hall) can carry a new weight and meaning since it has inevitably become imbued with some aspect of the association of its surroundings. Lefebvre reminds us that no space should be considered devoid of an agenda.

Does this displacement then, as a departure from the norm, provide an expected, or even welcome interruption? When does such an action become a disruption? Although the word suggests a live intrusion as a disturbance, it could also imply an action as an event, an interlude, even suggestive of invisible theatre. The lift work *Floor Zero* (2011), is perhaps an example in providing an opportunity to stop, reflect, and bring new considerations to the experience of an artwork, if indeed it is recognised as such at all. In this respect, it is worth reflecting again on Max Neuhaus's successful efforts and particularly his 1977/1992 work, *Times Square*.

Surprise is a valuable element in any context that already provides a framework of expectation, however, and we have seen many artists since the 1960s seeking to undermine expectations of where and how their work is received. That said, how can we progress when this newer means of interruption becomes another form of orthodoxy, and in becoming so, what does it stand to lose?

The opening of the Tate Modern's *Tate Tanks* spaces in July 2012 was an interesting attempt to accommodate these new, transitory and more elusive aspects of contemporary performance art in a permanent home. Ironically, many past, seminal performance works can only be experienced through forms of either re-enactment (which brings in other interpretations), subjective anecdotal accounts, or through often inadequate documentation. Indeed, the existence of any potential documentation is often regarded as a barrier to truly experiencing the live event at the time.

If the element of surprise has become just another expectation of an artwork, then perhaps it is the very discomfort of the liveness of a performance that continues to provide a more immersive opportunity for the experiencer. By identifying with another human presence in the space as a locus of sympathies and a focus for sound and vision, there evolves a sense that the performance is exclusively there for the experiencer alone. This is not possible when viewing documentary evidence. For instance, *Full Stops* (2013)[325] plays with this discomfort by causing the audience to physically shift away from the performer, and in doing so, to question their own bodily position and role in the event.

To reiterate, the performances in the list of sound works under discussion have been variously and anecdotally described as 'happenings', 'interventions', 'activations', 'guerilla' events and an 'animation' or an 'excitement' of space. All of these essentially involve a sonic event occurring in a place not necessarily familiar with this phenomenon or action. The venues, as already identified, have included a corridor, staircase, canteen, lift, seafort, warehouse, market, windmill, a Freemason's meeting room, a remembered football ground; all places created and intended for other, usually more functional purposes. Each sound piece has assumed a life beyond the ideas, processes, methods, and people put in place. These inserted performances have in turn, interrogated, augmented, and even contributed to the given aural expectations of the sites. In those moments of liveness, the very location of reception (as in fact with any musical work) has shifted beyond its components to an event: an event, identified as a single point in space-time yet experienced as an ongoing encounter and an engagement in the realm of the spatial and the temporal with liveness.

Putting 'liveness' of site specific performance through the test bed of the three terms established earlier - the so-called *actual, activated* and *associative* approaches, previously discussed in identifying a site for the purposes of making a sonic artwork - I suggest that in this sense the following could apply:

---

[325] ○ T. Spinks, *Four Full Stops,* **DVD track 12, appendix p. 66** [sound performance], 2013,

The *actual*: to be recognised and acknowledged as a kind of pre-existent 'wild track' to the site as a form of liveness innate to the place.

The *activated*: involving both the physical material and a live engagement on the part of the performer in the space, as a form of enacted liveness.

The *associative*: involving a form of liveness that is subsequent to the research period undertaken concerning the site, but evident to some extent in the *newly* created sounds, experienced via deferral, as a form of 'referential' liveness.

I will elaborate on a particular example of these categories of liveness within the sound work, *Activated Ballroom* (2012).[326] In this case, the actual is essentially the given acoustic of the room (a large, sparsely furnished, country house reception room), which informs our acoustic perception of the space. Simultaneously, the activated/enacted is core in being what occurs physically and aurally in order to convey information about the materiality of the objects moved, dislodged and scraped. The associative or referential here, implies the wider semantic connotations brought by the recognition the ears bring to the recording (in this case made binaurally) of the objects heard: a hard floor, billiard balls, moquette upholstery, the sound of metal – it's a grand space, a place for games and observers, graced with formal seating and old-fashioned radiators. Ironically however, this activation can now only be heard as a recording.

'Referential' is a harder category to argue for in terms of an immediate liveness, but the notion of using the material of the site could be considered as simply a more poetically perceived, *deferred* form of liveness, or at least a live engagement over a particular time period on the part of the performer with the on-going research undertaken. This is then edited and transcribed as sonic material to be again experienced live, and folded back through a multi-channel recording as a new semblance of liveness.

---

[326] T. Spinks, *Activated Ballroom,* **CD2 track 3, appendix p. 64** [sound work], 2012.

On the other hand, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds* (2013)[327] is an exercise in a very delayed form of referential liveness, brought into the present by virtue of a form of re-enactment. Forty-five different football songs sung by a lone female voice are multi-layered. In this context, (although it might be stretching things a bit), the terms can be interpreted as follows: the 'actual' is the artist's memory of a sonic event and place from thirty years ago, the 'activated' is the act of the performance and task of recording in the sound studio, and the 'associative' is a combination of the research into the chants and songs and the complex meanings implied on listening to the recording playing out. Appropriately this took place within a gallery space in the city concerned, as another forty-five minute event.

Liveness and physical presence in performance

Returning to the observation made by Jane Collins in which performance art is "where the outlaws of other disciplines meet,"[328] more questions are prompted. For example, what does it bring to a situation and experience, for there to be a human presence within an artwork? Is the artwork perceived any differently when this live element is in place and does the sense of an outlaw's rebellion necessarily accompany it?

Sound art often relies on pre-recorded sounds made elsewhere, edited, processed, and re-presented into a space (*Leeds, Leeds, Leeds* falls into this category perhaps). Like a painting taken from the studio to the gallery, from the private to the public space this can, quite justifiably, represent time invested previously in thought, development and production. The recorded sound file can then be played out repeatedly in the space. Sound concerning liveness however, takes on a different position. Though undeniably a product of similar developmental considerations over time, liveness tends to bring in a unique reading of the time in which it is actually happening. As a viewer in front of a painting, the work can be revisited and pondered over, whereas

---

[327] T. Spinks, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds*, **CD2 track 6, appendix p.70** [sound work], 2013.

[328] J. Collins, in 'The Interface Between Performance Art and Art Performance'*,* lecture, Research Network University of the Arts London, (author's lecture notes, unpublished, 06.03.11).

live sound, experienced by the listener in the moment of liveness, passes and is gone in readiness for the next moment. The various threads of the works' development and the loss (of sounds past) are undoubtedly referred to as a part of this liveness, but seem to invent and replace themselves as the piece gradually unfolds in real time, forming a kind of live index made by the performer. As Jean-Luc Nancy writes in *Listening,* 2007, "[t]o be listening is always on the edge of meaning,"[329] thus emphasising the value of the on-going moment.

In my own sound works, the device of looping could be considered as liveness taken one step further, as a form of additive layering, and as both a revisiting of (a very recent) liveness, *seen* to be created live, and as a simultaneity of current and past liveness. Moreover, liveness is valuable in giving both the aural and visual additional agency by providing proof that the event occurred and is still occurring. Examples here might be found in the sound works *Sonic Triangle* (2009) and *Four Full Stops* (2013), in which the performer acts as a guide, respectively drawing attention to the movement of the sound sources; three large amplifiers and one small busker's amp.

Framing liveness through gesture develops this theory further and is introduced in John Croft's *Theses on Liveness* (2007).[330] A supporter of the live element in the use of instruments combined with electronic sounds, he introduces gesture as a valuable "...mapping of energy, actions and effort."[331] In addressing the perceived remoteness of some electronic music, he bemoans "the elimination of the labour of sound production from the experience of the musical work,"[332] which can deny any connection or means of identification for the listener. Croft writes of what he calls a "procedural liveness" as the transformation of aural material in real time identifying an on-going crisis in music "between the attempt to reassert the importance of bodily presence and performance, and the purgation of that presence in

---

[329] J-L. Nancy, *Listening*, trans. C. Mandell, New York, Forham University Press, 2007.

[330] J. Croft, 'Theses on Liveness', *Organised Sound,* vol. 12, no.1, 2007, pp. 59-66.

[331] Ibid., p. 61.

[332] Ibid., p. 60.

favour of a disembodied sound production in which, in principle, anything at all is possible."[333] This is part of a much larger musicological debate beyond the scope of this thesis, nevertheless it introduces the question of both the value and distraction of the bodily presence in performance, which has in turn, informed the planning of some of the later sound works.

Addressing this real dilemma of "anything is possible" in live performance has required the introduction of a restriction of means as another form of agency in the creative process of live performance. Every deliberate movement becomes a part of this.

The reading of gesture in performance could also be interpreted as a form of mapping, providing a visual correspondence to the sounds made. I suggest it could equally apply to how gesture (leading to sound-making) might be received as a form of *aural* mapping, as an aid to listening. Moreover, in a live, everyday situation (unmediated by a video camera), performed gestures can be perceived as strangely unfamiliar, if experienced in an unexpected situation, thus adding an element of surprise to the performer's lexicon. The artist Allan Kaprow (and in particular his 'activities' series) is a good example here.

Such an everyday context is used, for example, in the sound work *Take a Space* (2011) that took place in a refectory. It can also be found in *Brixton Market Arcades* (2010),[334] in which a non-art world public is present in the passageways of a working market arcade. What might the connotations of observing gestures be (of playing and strolling), in relation to the unexpected encounter of performed liveness in a working or a public space? When does one (the everydayness) become the other (a surprise, encountered liveness, as an art form) and is it necessary to differentiate between the two? Should liveness involve and include an acknowledgement that an 'other,' embodied presence (as a form of audience-onlooker) is in the same physical space, as Auslander suggests below?

---

[333] Ibid., p. 60.

[334] T. Spinks, *Take a Space*, **DVD track 10, appendix p.64** [sound performance], Morley College refectory, 2011, and *Brixton Market Arcades*, **DVD track 8, appendix p. 60** [sound performance], 2010.

In touching on a number of other theories of liveness, John Dack reinforces this notion of presence when referring more specifically to music, declaring that "recording removes the immediacy, the 'is-ness' of music and it displaces it."[335] Nothing can quite be a substitute for being there, it seems. He elaborates on forms of liveness and the circumambulatory body within the particular context of the sound installations by artists Sabine Schäfer and Joachim Krebs, describing the different ways of perceiving site specific sound installations and the actions of audiences according to the artists' own unique typology. Dack also details the degrees of immersiveness required of an audience to facilitate the engagement with liveness in these installations.[336]

Similarly, in her essay 'Sound Art and Performativity' (2012),[337] Kersten Glandien proposes a number of discreet forms of sound art categories involving an element of performance: self built instruments, performed sounds using movement, sound installations, interactive works, explorative activities and communal interactions, each of which involves an element of liveness through movement, gesture, or audience engagement. As a way of reassessing the relationship between artist and artwork, Linda Weinraub, in *Art on the Edge and Over* (1996), cites Arthur C. Danto who suggests the less passive term 'encounterer' (analogous to my use of the word 'experiencer,' to suggest a participatory element) as a more apposite term than audience, listener or viewer, in defining the phenomenon of live engagement. He states:

> One must set forth to encounter the works, to meet them on their own terms, one at a time to see what they are trying to say and what they are trying to

[335] J. Dack, 'Live and Recorded,' [lecture], Middlesex University, (author's unpublished notes, 12.04.11).

[336] R. Nuhn and J. Dack, 'Sound-Time-Space-Movement', *Organised Sound,* vol. 8, issue 2, 2004, pp 213-225.

[337] K. Glandien, 'Sound Art and Performativity,' in A. Brown (ed.), *Sound Musicianship: Understanding The Craft of Music*, Newcastle on Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, pp. 264-276.

bring about as a consequence of the encounter. The experience of art becomes a moral adventure rather than merely an aesthetic interlude.[338]

Allan Kaprow takes engagement and liveness to the limits in *The Blurring of Art and Everyday Life*, by regarding art not so much as a set of conventions, but as an interactive life experience.[339] The many happenings that he introduced in the 1960s as impromptu, improvised events have more to do with spontaneity than planning, or the conscious 'framing' of what he devised as an art practice. Though making no such claims for the sound works in the portfolio under discussion, there is an element of the happening about each event in that the venue is not an expectant one and the liveness is never completely pre-planned, thus allowing for both Danto's 'encounterer' and Kaprow's 'accidental passerby'[340] to engage at will.

A contemporary definition of what constitutes live art is to be found on the website of the Live Art Development Agency which states, (echoing Jane Collins), that "Live Art is a framing device for a catalogue of approaches to the possibilities of liveness by artists who choose to work across, in between and at the edges of more traditional artistic forms."[341] Performance artist and writer Joshua Sofaer, in his crucial differentiation between Performance Art and Live Art, elaborates on this point by stating:

> Live Art may incorporate many other elements than performance but is founded in a conceptual framework where the performer, the director, the 'doer,' is the artist. The physical body, even if present in the same space as the

---

[338] L. Weintraub, A. C. Danto, and T. McEvilley, *Art on the Edge and Over, Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society, 1970s-1990s*, Texas, Art Insights Inc., 1996. (The term 'encounterer' was originally coined by Arthur C Danto in the essay 'Why Does Art Need to be explained?' *Hegel, Biedermeier, and the Intractably Avant-Garde',* (Weintraub, 1996) p.16).

[339] A. Kaprow, *Essays on the The Blurring of Art and Everyday Life*, J. Kelley, (ed.), University of California Press, 2003.

[340] Ibid., p. xxvii.

[341] Live Art Development Agency, 'What is Live Art?' http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk, (accessed 12.12.13).

audience, is not necessarily 'performing'; certainly not in the theatrical sense of 'pretending to be someone else'.[342]

Liveness then, can be anything that the author-artist 'doer' chooses, acting as a contemporaneous "unfolding in the present" (as Voegelin observed earlier).

In *Tate* magazine 2012, regarding the curatorial agenda for the new Tate Tanks spaces, Sally O'Reilly expands on the dilemma of the presence of the performing body, how it is regarded, and how the experience can be disseminated:

> The second theme of the [Tate] Tanks programme spotlights the fragmentary, irrational, disparate and evasive histories interlaced through contemporary performance. The art form is notoriously difficult to 'capture' phenomenologically, since descriptions of an event, whether image-based or linguistic cannot relate absolutely everything. Consequently the established line on the live event is that it is particular to the specific time and space in which it occurred and can never be fully represented elsewhere. While this may be the case where precise reconstitution is the aim, there are other modes of filtration and dispersal through which a live event persists, not whole and intact but as a haunting, perhaps in the form of influence or stylistic flavouring.[343]

The deliberateness of such gestures-as-liveness, past and present, poses many questions in the 'encounterer' about person, place, contexts, acts, and implied content. What might be occurring and what is engendered through this unwitting engagement with the real time mapping of performed sounds? As a test that one of the author's sound works could exist without the artist present therefore, a proposal for a performed work for Tate Tanks was submitted in the form of a 'delegated' or instructional performance. This was subsequently published by Fiveyears.org.[344]

---

[342] J. Sofaer, *What is Live Art?,* http://www.joshuasofaer.com/2011/06/what-is-live-art/ (accessed 12.12.13).

[343] S. O'Reilly, 'Tate Tanks', *Tate magazine*, summer issue, 2012, pp.66-71.
Ibid., [lecture], *The Jester Curator symposium*, UCA, Canterbury, 20.05.11 (from unpublished lecture notes, TS notebook vol. 4).

[344] T. Spinks, 'Take a Space, Make a Sound in It *(2)'* a written proposal for Tate Tanks*,* in the print-on-demand *Impossible Schoolbook, As Found,* Appendix, 2012, p.102, for Fiveyears.org viewable at:

Liveness in relation to recording

From the point of view of sound and immersion, Nick Collins maintains that liveness can now only ever be framed, ironically, by acknowledging the impact of recording on sound. The same can be said perhaps of theatre after the advent of film. In relation to the music industry and the rise in touring bands, he approvingly observes:

> It seems as though the isolation of ear-buds and the ephemerality of digital files have actually served to highlight the social significance and sweaty substantiality of live performance[...] there is something about live performance [...] its unpredictability, its physical discomfort, its exclusivity [...] that makes it fundamentally different from any other way of hearing music. Technology used in live performance is technology devoted to an experience, not a sound track; unavailable for reshuffle or back-up or exchange or duplication. It is a risk-taker's cultural consumption. [345]

A live experience, the memory of the experience, O'Reilly's 'haunting' as lasting aspects of the experience are reinforced here as valid and more valuable when not mediated by recording.

Philip Auslander, a performance theorist and critic, also considers the notion of liveness from the perspective of the duality of the recorded and the live.[346] It is only since the comparatively recent advent of recording (for the ear as opposed to in notated form) that this lens of liveness has brought such a concept into focus. Prior to recordings of course, there was no concept of 'live' in what he describes as a perceptual category. Each musical, theatrical, or spoken performance was an event to be experienced only in 'real' time (another relatively recent term in this context). Early recording means and quality ensured that there could be no confusion between the real and the

---

http://www.fiveyears.org.uk/archive2/pages/164/school_projects/164.1.html, (accessed 11.11.14).

[345] N. Collins, 'Why Live? Performance in the Age of Digital Reproduction', *Leonardo Music Journal*, vol. 18, July 2009, http://www.leonardo.info/lmj/lmj18intro.html, (accessed 22.06.10).

[346] P. Auslander, 'Digital Liveness in Historical, Philosophical Perspective'*, Transmedial Conference,* Berlin, March 2011, http://vimeo.com/20473967, (accessed 05.05.13). Further reference to P. Auslander in, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, [google e-book], London, Routledge, 2012.

recorded since the process and means of reproduction were apparent when heard as scratchy, indistinct qualities betraying their provenance. However, due to the evolution of recording techniques, playback systems, and digital devices over the last one hundred and fifty years or so, the distinction between the live and the recorded has reached such sophistication as to be at times, indistinguishable.

I aim to unpack what Auslander maintains is in binary opposition here; that of the live and the recorded and to suggest that both could inhabit a space simultaneously. Indeed the term 'live recording' is an oxymoron that would repay a visit as a key to a different way of thinking about this conundrum. In this context, it is interesting to hear Aleks Kolkowski describe the experience of playing a vintage Stroh stringed instrument (one that comes with an attached amplification horn), as "a bit like playing a recording of itself," in that the sound heard already has the strangulated quality of an early recording.[347] Conversely my sound work *Four Full Stops* (2013)[348] provides an example of the contrast in a mobile performer playing a sound (wearing a radio microphone) whilst moving towards and then away from an amplifier; a static source of amplification supposedly playing out the 'live' recordings. This is described by an audience member as an intriguing kind of dislocation of site and he remarked

> that stretching of sound and source - I really liked it. For me you were the site, one that was nomadic but at the same time anchored by the start point.[349]

An additional example of the converse of this duality of site and sound source, can be found in the six-hour library performance *Silent Zone* (2012),[350] in which the recorded and the live are intertwined. The barely audible sound of writing, is detected by an observant listener, who notices

---

[347] A. Kolkowski, *Hearing Artefacts,* [author's unpublished lecture notes from LCC talk, 06.11.13]. See also: www.phonographies.org.

[348] T. Spinks, *Four Full Stops*, **DVD track 12, appendix p. 66** [sound performance], *CSM Sensingsite* seminar, Parasol Unit, 2013.

[349] M. Peter Wright, anecdotal audience response [in email correspondence, 23.04.13].

[350] T. Spinks, *Silent Zone*, **DVD track 4, appendix p.31** [sound piece], 2012.

that it is not necessarily 'in sync' with the writing action taking place in front of them. This is simply due to the (hidden) recording/looping device that is relaying a kind of 'ground' soundtrack (recorded moments before) to the 'figure' of the current, and the easily witnessed, sound of writing.

It is in the strength of this seeming contradiction that the power of Auslander's so-called binary opposition now becomes a merged entity in this sound work. I borrow Blesser's term here to suggest that the hitherto decoupled sounds (in this case, of writing now and writing heard in a just recorded recording, and more historically, of writer past and writer present) are becoming fused. I would contend then that there is much to be gained through the investigation of the possibilities inherent in the mediation of sound and temporality by combining the recorded *and* the live in performance, since this continues to enhance the enquiry as to where the elements of liveness can be situated and experienced.

Liveness as engagement

How do we then reassess the relevance and desirability of liveness, particularly in sound art today, long after the invention of recording? Both Blesser and Auslander maintain that it is the concept of *interconnection* that liveness brings to a situation which is the key to understanding its value, agreeing moreover, that there are indeed many extended forms of liveness. This can encompass virtual and group liveness with other online communities, or liveness in our interaction with technology and the machine when only one party might be physically present. Auslander describes the live radio broadcast as when "both performers and audience are physically and temporally co-present, but not spatially."[351] Furthermore, it seems this more remote liveness can take on a perverse, non-human element. In our connection with the technology, the response elicited by us gives the machine what I would call a quasi agency of liveness since the feedback is

---

[351] P. Auslander, 'Digital Liveness – Realtime Desire and Sociability, in Historical, Philosophical Perspective', [public lecture], *Transmedial* conference, Berlin, 03.02.11, http://vimeo.com/20473967, (accessed 05.05.13).

almost instantaneous. Websites 'go live' for example, yet seem at one remove from direct human input.

Auslander's second version of liveness takes the experiential as key in what he calls "the audience experience as the locus of liveness."[352] He acknowledges "technologies are causal agents in the construction of liveness"[353] and takes this a step further by implying that this two way call and response initiates a kind of feedback loop in real time – perhaps a form of 'reassurance' liveness, I suggest? This very act of typing which I undertake now and see appear on the screen could constitute an immediate, emerging, materialising liveness – but by now experienced as a deferred, (or other's) liveness as you, the reader, actively read it.

It seems therefore, that it is not the work of art so much as the engagement with the work of art in which the sense of liveness is of value and to which we are required to bring full 'presence.' It could be argued that there is a kind of generosity of liveness at work here. As Auslander continues, "bridging a gap between self and other by rendering the other 'familiar,'" gives us a real time reaction. Or, as he says in his lecture, the aim is to "hold on to it until it becomes contemporaneous," as an audience's act of consciousness.[354] Auslander refers to actor and academic Steve Dixon who introduces different modes of attention (of an audience) and concepts of mindful and mindlessness.[355] Liveness is therefore considered by Auslander to be an engagement, a willingness, or as he puts it "spectatorial determinism [...] in grasping virtual entities as live in response to the claims they make on us."[356] Or, as I would describe it in relation to live performance, it is a sense of the not-yet-recorded in the act of being there.

---

[352] Ibid.

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid.

[355] S. Dixon, *Digital Performance, A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007.

[356] P. Auslander, Ibid. [online lecture]

Liveness as improvisation

Whilst the bodily and live recorded presence can reinforce and contribute a uniqueness of spontaneity to such occasions in terms of the sounds made and heard, the inherent element of risk, as identified by both Nigel Rolfe and Nick Collins is another factor which can characterise a live event. In *No Sound Is Innocent* (1995), Edwin Prévost examines the meanings of improvised sounds experienced within the AMM group, describing the problem:

> Nothing could be more courageous, in artistic activity, than to risk a performance with no foreknowledge of the outcome and no certainty of personal and collective responses. It takes a rare kind of foolhardiness to risk all in this way.[357]

As with Kaprow's 'happenings,' the unpredictability, and indeed potential benefits of risk, are part of the creative process that can only be exacerbated when the event is a live one.

The following section offers a brief description of the role of live, improvised sound-making in the sound works, taking encouragement from artist Marsha Bradfield's anecdotal response on experiencing the sound work *Seaforts* (2010) (seen by her on video), that the performer appears to "listen and conjure" improvisational sounds. To 'conjure' suggests a live act of invoking here, a reaction I was pleased to have provoked.

In *Search and Reflect,*[358] John Stevens observes the two-fold experience involved in introducing his approach to live improvisation – that of *listening* and that of *responding*. The gap between the two words and states is an interesting and problematic one, since the level of a response can be subliminal and is constantly shifting and alternating between the role of receiver (as performer/listener) and giver (as performer/respondent).

Within a group improvisatory situation, the process and sounds made are interdependent, evolving to find their own form and 'result'. It is not a preconceived sound but one that emerges from the process put in place. In

---

[357] E. Prévost, *No Sound is Innocent: AMM and the Practice of Self Invention, Meta-musical Narratives and Essays*, Essex, Copula (imprint of Matchless Recordings), 1995 p. 123.

[358] J. Stevens, *Search and Reflect, a music workshop handbook*, Rockschool Community Music Ltd., 2007.

the case of a lone performer, however, the giver/receiver role becomes one, the build-up of sounds bearing witness to this duality whilst the process then becomes less easy to distinguish on the part of a general listener.

In a sonic improvising situation, the placing of a sound may be determined in several ways: by acknowledgement of a previous sound, by a perceived gap between sounds, by the impetus of a rhythmic or dynamic flow, or by the stimulation of long held sounds. In Stevens' *Click* piece for example, the instruction is to make only the shortest, most precise sounds possible.[359]

This act of responding, or manifesting Stevens' concept of reflecting is an interesting one that can be interpreted in many ways. To literally reflect as in a mirror, would suggest just such an act of mirroring, using sound as a respondent, inevitably involving an element of interpretation on behalf of the individual performer. At its most extreme, it is a form of conscious audio mimesis. At the level of the least aware or mindful, it suggests simply a need to join in, to make a contribution, regardless of skill and experience; to recognise and to respond communally. For the committed individual improviser however, the act is an equivalent, an assimilation, prompted by the combination of a nascent thought process and a fleeting physical need to respond to a set of conditions in a specific place with some form of contributory sound.

To understand this sense of contribution and the ensuing layers of contribution (and with a lone performer it is ironic that they can be one and the same) requires the recognition of initial reasons and impetus for the sound making in a particular situation. If the sound is now independent of the maker 'out there' as an utterance and iteration, no longer connected to the maker but materialising in my case from an instrument or the black box of an amplified speaker, this combination is a heady one. Like any creative act it excites, unnerves and promises, taking on a new and independent life that now exists in time as well as space. Making a sound requires the sound to leave the body/instrument/object and to become an extension and an independent entity, occupying the space in an entirely different manner to

---

[359] J. Stevens, *op. cit.,* p. 63.

that of the original bodily presence; the body with its physical boundaries, the space without physical boundaries defined by an 'aura' of sound. This sound now acts in turn, as something to which to respond, and so the process continues.

Of his free improvisation workshop piece *Search and Reflect* Stevens explains:

> 'Search' means listening for and identifying all the musical elements in the environment. 'Reflect' means attempting to reproduce as nearly as possible the form and sound quality of the identified figures ('sound-shapes'). This piece develops our skills at being able to listen to others playing at the same time. It is in several stages. Resist the temptation to move quickly from one stage to the next: each is self-contained and can be treated as a piece in its own right.[360]

Liveness and place

When performing site specifically, the relationship the live performer has to the immediate architectural environment and its wider contexts is all important, and to some extent, determines the role the performer takes on in how the site is approached and 'played.' Nick Kaye, whose approach to performance is from a more theatrical standpoint, takes a different view of liveness by privileging the place over the action.[361] The notion of acting out for him can only occur in relation to the place and in acknowledging how the performative action alters the perceptions of place. Considering the site specific artwork as a performative act, Kaye recognises works that seek to expose the nature of the chosen sites, whether gallery or other, whilst acknowledging that this undermining also threatens to "transform the very sites it acts as index to."[362] He highlights the restlessness that he considers to be very typical of site specific art as "unresolved exchanges and

---

[360] J. Stevens, *op. cit.,* p. 69.

[361] N. Kaye, *Site Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000.

[362] N. Kaye, *op. cit.,* p. 198.

processes."[363]According to Kaye, such irresolution is characteristic of site specificity, and naturally defers to live performance in the implication that the audience is involved in the location of their own parameters, and indeed, in a continual process of themselves 'acting out.' Like Auslander, he takes engagement to be a key to liveness but in two stages perhaps: firstly, between performer and space, and secondly between performer, space and the audience who themselves are subtly active participants.

In his 2010 lecture *Lifeworld Inc. and what to do about it*, social geographer Nigel Thrift comments on the complexities of belonging and on our newly acquired desire to both trace movement of people in and through physical and virtual space, yet interrogate power.[364] He concedes that as we virtually all now have a personal geographic 'co-ordinate,' maps have become "engines rather than cameras."[365] We require constant feedback and assurance of our *thereness*, an extension of liveness perhaps, which he sees more as a new form of surveillance than as theatricality.

Thrift maintains that entertainment, to which art can be aligned at times of course, is the quotidian element in life, but a new approach is required to address the new forms of media emerging. Until now (and Thrift mentions Rosalind Krauss here), older media required a kind of systematic working through, of thought and method.[366] However, this is no longer the case since we now exist in a "constant mix" which often precludes a full, methodical understanding. How to build on this fragility? Can there ever be durability? This question from sound artist Matt Rogalsky prompted an observation from Thrift that we can learn much from other, non-Western cultures which have a better awareness of "harvesting the moment," allowing

---

[363] N. Kaye, *op. cit.,* p. 198.

[364] N. Thrift, 'Lifeworld Inc. and what to do about It'*,* [keynote lecture], *Experimenting with Geography Conference*, Edinburgh University, 05.05.10, from author's own unpublished notes.

[365] M. Rogalsky, quoted at *Experimenting with Geography Conference*, Edinburgh University, 05.05.10.

[366] Thrift's exact reference was not made clear but is most likely to have been the essay by Krauss, Rosalind, *A View of Modernism*, Artforum, September, 1972.

us to operate by enhancing our improvisational abilities. Good advice perhaps, for a live, site specific sound artist.

A real-world element, by which I mean a more sociological approach to liveness, is identified in *Living Electronic Music,* by Simon Emmerson (albeit in relation to electronic music in performance).[367] His 'living presence' diagram elucidates on the relationship between the human music maker and other possible environmental, natural and man-made sounds. He acknowledges the diagram's indebtedness to *Musique Concrète* and teases out the different aspects of the 'search and response' approach of John Stevens, reflecting on the causes of live, improvised sound production, and the degrees of importance attached to being able to (visually) identify, the means employed. Emmerson alludes to Pierre Schaeffer who clearly felt this was not a necessary aspect of the experience and refers, in turn, to the acousmatic condition and the concept of reduced listening.[368] Michel Chion describes the former as indicating a noise heard without the cause being apparent, and the latter as listening to establish and describe the traits of the sounds themselves, and identifies both aspects as all-important in this process.[369] Chion himself however, sensed an irony in the tendency of the listener to try even harder to identify the possible sound sources when sight was denied. Liveness and sight (as a form of proof) are inextricably linked it seems.

As previously identified, a number of my sound works have evolved through this questioning of the nature of place and the visibility of the sound source. Sight could be regarded therefore, as adding another level to the reception of liveness, by offering a focus of attention for the purposes of reflection on the meaning of the sonic element.

In a recent sound work, the *Laboratory of Sonic Possibility* (2014), listening cones made of card were issued to the visitors to the space as a way of encouraging and facilitating engagement with the objects and their

---

[367] S. Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2007, p.3.

[368] P. Schaeffer, *In Search of a Concrete Music*, transl. C. North and J. Dack, University of California Press, 2012.

[369] M. Chion, *Audio Vision, Sound on Screen*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990.

sounds. This brought the audience in as active, strolling participants, (made strangely lop-sided by holding up black cones to the ear), navigating a work that became an on-going event of liveness and came to define itself on the night as an interactive sound installation. The experiencers devised their own methods and durations of engagement. Liveness here took on an exciting new momentum – as something pertaining equally to the performers, experiencers, objects and the time and space in which it occurred.

Concluding liveness

Space has an occupant: a presence that never rests, aspiring to a performance, introducing the role and narratives of association and seeking to put into place a process of uncovering, reassembling and sonically drawing out notable aspects of the site. As the wearer of many hats, the occupant is there as intruder, performer, catalyst, facilitator, activator, interventionist and conjuror, using de Certeau's sieve to sift through material, whilst simultaneously experiencing capture and loss. In a process of selection and elimination, the event is privileged over the object adding another collective, sonic memory layer to the space. Introducing this liveness as a medium and a condition of the site itself, a conversation is suggested between sound and space, space and performer, performer and experiencer. Liveness in sound art practices can bring the auditory imagination into an engagement with place, time and people, and to a greater awareness of our own live presence in a way few art disciplines can do.

Conclusions

The aim of this study has been to question and explore how strategies might be devised to create live, site specific, sound art works. The methodology was one of reflective practice during which time, twenty or so sound works were generated over a six-year period. One from each year has been highlighted to represent a particular advance in the thinking but every work proved a valuable testing ground and repository for the results of this quest: an unimaginable consequence at the outset of the project. Each work has been a springboard for the next and each has posed a further question about the boundaries and potential for my practice. The works, like an on-going conversation, have formed a resource, from which to draw for the purposes of reflective writing within both the main thesis and the appendix catalogue. This has provided a new set of findings about how sound art might be approached, devised and delivered live, site specifically, and in turn, has led to the formulation of a proposed tripartite framework which is offered as a strategic model for the development and evaluation of sound based, site specific works.

I set out to pursue the notion that sound could be performed in alternative spaces and to consider how sound, when informed by the site, might combine with place. These aspects have gradually come together – the site driving the research-led sound making and the improvisatory liveness forming a bridge of engagement – to herald a valid definition of a new art practice.

To summarise: the written component of this thesis set the scene contextually and historically in Chapters One and Two by identifying significant exponents of sound art, sound installation and sound intervention whilst drawing various parallels with my own practice. Agendas of place and spaces were considered in relation to site specific art practices and theorists have informed the critical thinking around what this might comprise, where a work of art might be expected and how it might be received. Sound theorists have helped me steer the sound making away from more conventional means (such as 'playing' instruments in a planned

composition), towards works which have been shaped by the methods and devices put in place and sounded by the actions of 'activating' and 'evoking.' Performance theory has also underpinned the potential in 'performing the site.'

Performance historian Roselee Goldberg is constructive in reinforcing this notion and summarising the values, dilemmas and developments in live art:

> Performance has been considered as a way of bringing to life the many formal and conceptual ideas on which the making of art is based. Live gestures have constantly been used as a weapon against the conventions of established art [...] Unlike theatre, the performer *is* the artist [...] its base has always been anarchic [...] Indeed, no other artistic form of expression has such a boundless manifesto, since each performer makes his or her own definition in the very process and manner of execution.[370]

How has this 'boundless manifesto' developed particularly in relation to performed sound art in my own practice? Although this question is part of a far greater discussion about what constitutes the parameters of performance (based in artistic, musical, dance, and theatrical discourses), interesting similarities abound across each discourse in their terminologies, boundaries of conformity and expectation, histories and appropriations, developing technologies and new platforms. Crucially, participation and collaboration, immersion and meaning and perhaps most significantly, the curiosity, trust, and engagement between live art performer and audience are constantly evolving, being tested and re-defined.

In the pivotal Chapter Three, I introduced my tripartite model as a method of identifying three notable elements when approaching and working with sound. This aims to provide a guide to how the artistic process might be initiated when working site specifically by adopting the terms: the *actual*, the *activated,* and the *associative*. The emphasis on the latter stemmed from the research prompted by and defined as, the *material of the site*. These definitions were in part inspired by Michel Chion's more passive modes of suggested listening: the causal, reduced and semantic in defining levels of

---

[370] R. Goldberg, 'Performance Art from Futurism to the Present,' in M. Huxley and N. White, (eds.), *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, London, Routledge, 1996, p.182.

engagement and understanding. My three terms work favourably alongside the definitions cited by Weiss, Kwon and Wulf, (detailed in the table in Chapter Three on page 114), to reinforce the value in identifying this as a strategic, artistic model. Further, it could even be argued that this approach may be pertinent to working site specifically more generally (regardless of whether or not sound is the focus of the art work), in that three common stages of identification (of place), action (of person) and meaning, have been established.

How the research might be translated into sound was introduced in the act of transcription (Chapter Four): ways of thinking about the researched site and the live manifestation of sounds using objects and mimetic, looped layering on the sound making devices, as ongoing improvisational responses. The parameters of site referenced sound making were further informed by Lefebvre's belief in recognising the empathetic value inherent in the everyday place, object, ritual, gesture, sound and rhythm. The sound making elements were examined in more detail in the final chapter, culminating in an investigation into the power and connectivity on site, of liveness.

What of the limitations of the research however? Any art form carries the risk of failure - an important counterpart to the creative process. The limitations of the research in this thesis have been flagged up in a number of unresolved sound works, mentioned briefly in the Introduction. As 'interventions' they did not always meet or connect with the proposed 'happenstance' audiences or convey what was intended. Individually, some works failed to materialise due to lack of preparation time for research, inadequate site access, lack of relevant support or equipment, and over ambition.

Most of the works discussed in this thesis have been ephemeral, transient, happening only once. Partly locked into the elitist fringes of the 'experimental' music, art and performance worlds, they have also been difficult to 'frame', ironically perhaps, a strength. At first, documentation of the works seemed emphatically too focused on the performer as the instigator of the action, whilst later examples dwelt more on the sound

making objects used. Recorded sound quality on the video footage was often inadequate but remained a more representative, edited sample of what occurred. Never at the forefront of the planning however, documentation often happened almost by default, or by the acquisition of others' images retrospectively. Several works exist only as sound files, perhaps a truer way of experiencing them.

The means used to document art works (photographs, video footage, sound recordings, use of editing, written analyses, collected responses) will all affect the reading of those works when experienced as secondary information. In order to be true to the essence of the experience of 'thereness' or liveness therefore, should there be any documentation at all? Like the legacy of Max Neuhaus, perhaps it should be left to others to remember? Supplying evidence for a practice-led PhD study would make this very difficult to argue however. The individual A4 archive files supporting each work (synthesised in the appendix catalogue with an accompanying DVD and two CDs) provide for now, an intermediary between the event and its documentary legacy.

How might this body of work and writing make a contribution to knowledge within the canons of art, sound art and performance? What is the potential for post-doctoral work and future research? Where might it lead? On a personal level, my practice will develop through post-doctoral activities including responses to relevant call outs, commissions for challenging sites, residencies, further re-enactments of seminal, site-related Fluxus works and the investigation of scores for sites as a way of opening up the practice.

An important aim is the dissemination of the tripartite model set out in the thesis and to emphasise the great potential it offers for art practices, to be informed by it. This model actively promotes the appreciation of sound in art practices and advances the awareness of sound as crucially both a sense *and* a medium: not least beyond the established routes of the academic conference, research group, published journal, gallery and website.

Future sound works could be developed by privileging the interactive experience of sound: the model would serve as the basis of an instructional score, creating a more democratically facilitated experience, the author

stepping back to allow the interpretation by others, the sound works taking on a life beyond that of the one-off, author-led performance. The model could underpin events in other spaces, at other times with other activators, site researchers, participants and experiencers. Future works could forge new interactive dialogues between sound and space and sound and listening. This could allow for immersion as an experientially collaborative engagement in social spaces, by the communal activity of moving into, and through a space, making sounds, activating sounds and listening to them.

In summarising how sound art is positioned to affectively feed the auditory imagination, I return finally to Brandon LaBelle who first reinforced for me, the territory that the practice has explored in this thesis by observing:

> ... sound art transgresses the hierarchy of the senses, seeking the dramas of the aural to make objects, create narrative, amplify or unsettle meaning, and invade space.[371]

I hope I have demonstrated throughout this thesis that live, site specific sound art can indeed unsettle meaning yet operate as a fully engaged, site responsive art form. In adopting the proposed tripartite *actual-activated-associative* strategic model of approach, site specific sound works represent a compelling, extended artistic practice and a new genre.

Sound has much to offer in challenging the hegemony of the visual, the theories and disciplines of accepted art fields and practices, and in re-assessing the aural as an undervalued sense, medium, and latent audio bank of memory, empathy and engagement.

---

[371] B. LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, New York, Continuum, 2006, p.151. LaBelle's own response to the work undertaken for this thesis appreciates "your experimental and very open inquisitive approach; there's so much adventure in your work, and I can sense that your doctoral studies were extremely generative. It seems like you took advantage of the time to extend and challenge your own practice in exciting ways." [Email correspondence, 24.03.15]

Conclusions

Introduction to appendix

There is a separately bound appendix presented as a catalogue of the sound art works made between 2008 and 2014. This decision was made in order to reinforce the role of the practice, not in a subsidiary role in support of the writing but as a driver of the thesis.

Video and sound file excerpts are supplied as inserts on a DVD and two CDs. Related track numbers and relevant appendix page numbers are flagged throughout the main thesis in the footnotes. Each work is referred to in the separate appendix, using this symbol:

The appendix also carries a 'snapshot' of material and photographs from a number of the A4 project files mentioned in the main text. This aims to give an insight into the working processes so crucial to practice-led PhDs and an indication of how some of the works were received. Short extracts from the artist's project file are given where appropriate. My three terms (*actual, activated, associative*) are reflected upon in relation to each work in order to consolidate my theory of how to identify a sonic approach to working site specifically.

Practice contents page, DVD and CD track lists.

These can be found both at the front of the document and at the front of the appendix catalogue. The documentation varies - some works deliberately only exist as audio files, others give a better sense of the event and place through video. Some are represented by both to allow for a choice in how they can be experienced. Excerpts are given from longer performances. Most of the works can also be accessed on the website http://www.tansyspinks.com.

List of images in the main text

The images used as chapters dividers are taken from the practice documentation and refer to sound works: *Hoop, Portal*, (cables) *Brixton Market Arcades*, *The Laboratory of Sonic Possibility*, (stapler), *Sonic Triangle* (MAX patch) and the *Laboratory of Sonic Possibility* (Toynbee's cones).

List of images in the main text

Bibliography

Tansy Spinks

Associating Places: Strategies for Live, Site Specific Sound Art Performance.

Adorno, T., *Aesthetic Theory*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

Allen, R. and M. Turvey, *Wittgenstein, Theory and the Arts*, 2001, London & New York, Routledge.

Almarcegui, L. *Wastelands,* [artwork], 1999.

Ãlys, F. and R. Ortega, *One Minute of Silence*, [artwork], 2003, set in Panama City.

Amacher, M.A., 'Maryanne Amacher', http://www.maryanneamacher.org, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, on site specific sounds, as referenced in Stefani E. & Lauke K., 'Music, Space and Theatre: Site specific approaches to multi channel spatialisation', *Organised Sound* vol. 15 no. 3, December 2010.

Atkinson, S., 'Interpretation and musical signification in acousmatic listening', *Organised Sound*, vol. 12, issue 2, 2007.

Augé, M., *Non places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, London, Verso, 1995.

Augoyard, J.F., and H. Torgue, *Sonic Experience, a Guide to Everyday Sounds*, Montreal and London, McGill Queen's University Press, 2005.

Auslander, P., 'Digital Liveness in Historical, Philosophical Perspective'*, Transmedial Conference,* Berlin, 03.02.11, http://vimeo.com/20473967 (accessed 05.05.13).

———, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, [e-book], Routledge, 2012.

Bachelard, G., *The Poetics of Space*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1994.

———, *Water and Dreams: An essay on the Imagination of Matter*, Texas, The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1983.

———, *The Poetics of Space*, transl. M. Jolas, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 1994.

Jardine, L. and M. Silverthorne, (eds.), *Francis Bacon: The New Organum* (Cambridge texts in the History of Philosophy)*,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

John Baldessari: Music, (2007), eds. Gronert, S. and Vegh, C., catalogue publication for Kunstmuseum Bonn & Bonner Kunstverein, Köln, Germany: Walther König.

Baldessari, J. and P. Oliveros, *Violin imitates Human Voice,* [sound piece], 1970.

Balfour, H., cited by Noel Lobley of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology conference in the call out document, Pitt Rivers, Oxford, November 24th 2012

Bibliography

Barthes, R., *Image, Music, Text*, transl. S. Heath, London, Fontana Press, 1991.

Basinki, W., 'Disintegrated Loops', [online review], http://www.pitchfork.com, July 13, 2013, (accessed 10.11.14).

Benjamin, W., *Illuminations*, H. Arendt, (ed.), Fontana Press, 1992.

———, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Cambridge & London, Harvard University Press, 2006.

Benjamin, W., 'On the Mimetic Faculty', (ed. Jennings, Eiland, Smith), from *Selected Writings, 1931-34*, Vol., 2, part 2, Belknap, Harvard, 2005.

Bergson, H., *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul & W.S Palmer, New York, Zone Books, 1990.

Bertin, A., press release for Whitstable Biennale, link: www.thewhitstablesatellite.com/seminar, 2010, (accessed 18.07.10).

Best, A. & P. Whitty, *Vauxhall Pleasure*, in partnership with Parabola, www.vauxhallpleasure.annabest.info/, 2004, (accessed 10.11.13).

Blesser, B. and R. Salter, *Spaces Speak, are you Listening?,* Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007.

Bohman, A., http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/.../art-now-live-bohman-brothers, (accessed 16.05.14)

Born, G., *Music, Sound and Space,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Bourdieu, P., *The Field of Cultural Production*, *Essays on Art and Literature*, Johnson, R. (ed.), Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993.

Bradfield, M., response to T. Spinks presentation, 'Sites and Interventions' at *The Practice Exchange* seminar, Chelsea College of Art, http://thepracticeexchange.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/wednesday-2-march-2011-sites-and.html, (accessed 02.03.11).

Brewster, M., 'Here, There or Where?' in B. LaBelle and S. Roden, (eds.), *Site of Sound: of Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999.

Brith Gof, http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/brithgof/Home, (accessed 10.11.14)

Buren, D., *Five Texts*, London, 1973, John Weber Gallery.

———, *The Function of the Studio*, trans. T. Repensek, Art Forum, 1971.

———, *The Square of the Flags*, Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991.

Byrne, D., *Playing the Building,* the Roundhouse, Camden, [installation], www.davidbyrne.com/art/art_projects/playing_the_building, 2009 (accessed 25.11.13).

Cabanne, P., *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1971.

Cage, J., *A Year from Monday*, London & New York, Marion Boyars, 1985.

———, *Silence: lectures and writings*, London & New York, Marion Boyars, 2004.

———, 'How the Piano Came to be Prepared', [online article], http://johncage.org/prepared_piano_essay.html, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, 'Empty Words', [online video], 1974, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGerrvq-UlI&feature=player_detailpage, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Everyday is a Good Day, The Visual Art of John Cage*, Hayward Touring exhibition catalogue, 2010, London, Hayward Publishing.

Cardew, C., *Nature Study Notes*, http://improarchive2.brinkster.net/sonsn.pdf, (accessed 31.12.13).

Cardiff, J.,*The Missing Voice*, [Art Angel commission], 1999/2001, http://www.artangel.org.uk//projects/1999/the_missing_voice_case_study_b/, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Murder of Crows,* [art installation], 2008, http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/murder_of_crows.html, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Dark Pool,* [art installation], 2008 http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/darkpool.html, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Opera for a Small Room*, [art installations], (2005), *Pandemonium,* (2005), *Blue Hawaii Bar*,(2007), *Paradise Institute*,(2001), *The Muriel Lake Incident*, (1999), *The Forty Part Motet,* (2001), http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/opera.html, (accessed 10.11.12).

Cardiff, J. and G. Bures Miller, 'Alter Bahnhof video walk' and 'Forest, for a thousand years'*,* in Christov-Bakargiev, C. (ed.), *Documenta 13* catalogue, Germany, Hatje Cantz, 2012.

Carlson, M. A., *Performance: a Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., London, Routledge, 2003.

Carlyle, A. and C. Lane, (eds.,) *On Listening*, Devon, Uniformbooks, 2013.

Carlyle, A., *Autumn Leaves: Sound and the Environment in Artistic Practic*e, Paris, Double Entendre, 2008.

Celant, G., *Gilberto Zorio*, *Stella Incandescente*, (*Incandescant Star),* Florence, Hopeful Monster, 1991.

Chion, M. *Audio Vision: Sound on Screen*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

Christov-Bakargiev, C., *Janet Cardiff, a Survey of Works Including Collaborations with Georges Bures Miller*, exhibition catalogue, second ed., P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, MoMA, N.Y October, 2003.

Coates M., *Dawn Chorus*, [video work], 2007 and *Cadences*, [video work], 2008.

Coles, A., *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn,* Vol. 4*,* London, Black Dog Publishing, 2000.

Collins, J., 'The Interface Between Performance Art and Art Performance', RNUAL lecture notes, (unpublished) 6.03.11.

Collins, N., 'Why Live? Performance in the Age of Digital Reproduction', *Leonardo Music Journal*, vol. 18, July 2009, http://www.leonardo.info/lmj/lmj18intro.html, (accessed 22.06.10).

Collins, S., *Underglow*, City of London, 2006 [art work].

Bibliography

Cott, J., *Stockhausen, Conversations with the Composer*, New York, Simon and Shuster, 1973.

Melanie Counsell, Artangel catalogue of her work, essay by Patricia Falguières, 1999.

Cox, C. & Warner, D., *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, New York, Continuum, 2004.
Crang, M.,*Thinking Space*, London, Routledge, 2000.

Creed, M., *Down Over Up,* [installation], Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 2010.

———, *work 409*, [installation], Ikon gallery 2006, now permanently installed at London's Royal Festival Hall on the Southbank.

Crimp, D.*, Redefining Site Specificity, On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1993.

———, *Mary Kelly*, London, Phaidon Press, 1997.

Critical Art Ensemble, 'Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas', *Autonomedia,* 1996, pp. 43-44.

Croft, J., 'Theses on Liveness', *Organised Sound,* vol.12, issue 01, 2007, p.63.

Culture in Action, *New Public Art in Chicago*, exhibition catalogue Seattle, Bay Press, 1995.

Cumming, N., *The Sonic Self, Musical Subjectivity and Signification*, Indiana University Press, 2000.

Cunningham, D., *The Listening Room, Lift, Corridor*, [installation], Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2003.

D' Escrivan, J.,'To Sing the Body Electric'*, Contemporary Music Review,* vol. 25, issue 1/2, 2006.

Daniels, D. & Neumann, S., *See This Sound, an Audiovisuology Compendium and Interdisciplinary Survey of Audiovisual Culture*, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Köln, Walter König, 2010, www.see-this-sound.at (accessed 09.10.11).

Davies, H., 'For Hugh Davies', http://anothertimbre.com/hughdaviestext.html, (accessed 20.01.14).

De Certeau, M., *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall, Berkley, University of California Press, 2002.

Debord, G., *The Society of the Spectacle*, Simon Sadler, MIT Press, 1967.

Deleuze G., & F. Guattari F., A *Thousand Plateau (Milles Plateau)*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Athlone Press, 1996.

Deutsche, R., *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996.

Dickens, C., *A Tale of Two Cities,* (1859), The Daily News Memorial Edition, 1900, Chapman and Hall, London.

Diederichsen, D., & C. Ruhm, (eds.), *Utopia of Sound: Immediacy and Non-Simultaneity*, vol. 10, Wien, Akademie der Bildenden Künste publications, 2010.

Dixon, S., Digital Performance, A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007.

Douglas B.G., *A Few Silence*, 2008, [performance score], http://www.gdouglasbarrett.com (accessed 20.01.14).

Doyle, P., *Echo and Reverb, Fabricating Space in Popular Music Recording, 1900-1960*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2005.

Duchamp, M., *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors Even*, trans. G.H. Hamilton, 3rd ed., New York, Jaap Rietman, 1976.

Edmonds, E, G. Turner, and L. Candy, 'Approaches to Interactive Art Systems', Proceedings of the 2nd international conference on Computer graphics and interactive techniques in Australasia and South East Asia, New York, ACM, 2007, pp. 113–117.

Eisenman, P., *Moving Arrows, Eros and Other Errors: an Architecture of Absence*, London, Architectural Association, 1986.

Eliot, T.S., *The Four Quartets*, London, Faber and Faber, 1976.

Emmerson, S., (ed.), *The Language of Electronic Music*, Harwood, N.Y., 1986

Emmerson, S., 'Acoustic/Electroacoustic: The relationship with instruments,' *Journal of New Music Research,* vol. 27, 1998.

———, (ed.), *Music, Electronic Media and Culture*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishers, 2000.

———, *Living Electronic Music*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishers, 2007.

Etchells, T., 'Diverse Assembly, some Trends in Recent Performance', in Shank, T. (ed.), *Contemporary British Theatre*, London, Macmillan Press, 1994.

Fisher, J., *Anne Tallentire,* [monograph], Dublin, Project Press, 1999.

Floyer, C., [soundwork], *Documenta 13*, catalogue, volume 3, Germany Hatje Cantz, 2012.

Fontana, B., *Distant Trains or Entfernte Züge*, [online video], 1984, http://echosounddesign.com/media/Berlin.mov, (accessed 15.04.10).

———, *Harmonic Bridge,* 2006, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Harmonic_Bridge1.htm, (accessed 15.04.10).

———, *Objective Sound*, [online video] 2006, http://echosounddesign.com/media/ObjectiveSound.mov, (accessed 15.04.10).

———, Ibid., http://resoundings.org/PDF/Objective_Sound.pdf, (accessed 15.04.10).

———, *Panoramic Echoes*, 2007, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Panoramic.html, (accessed 15.04.10).

——— *Spiraling Echoes*, 2009, http://resoundings.org/Pages/Spiraling_Echoes.html

———, *River Sounding*, [interview], www.somersethouse.org, (accessed 15.04.10) and in Guardian: www.guardian.org, (accessed 15.04.10).

———, *The Sound Sculptures, Acoustical Visions and Ideas of Bill Fontana*, http://www.resoundings.org, (accessed 15.04.10).

Forrester, J., *Sound works: for Those Who Have Ears*, [catalogue], Ireland Art Trail, 2004-5.

Bibliography

Fortin, S., 'Journeys Through Memory Gardens and other Impossible Homecomings', in Bakargiev, C.C., *Janet Cardiff, A Survey of Works including Collaborations with Georges Buren*, New York, PS1 Contemporary Art centre, 2001.

Foster, H., *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, Cambridge, MIT press, 1996.

Fried, M., *Art and Objecthood:essays and reviews*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Fripp, R., *No Pussyfooting*, [CD] showing 'Frippertronics' on the album collaboration with Eno, 1973.

Fullman, E., *Long String Instrument*, 1981, http://www.ellenfullman.com/Biography1.html, (accessed 20.01.14).

Gallagher, M., 'Creative Practice Primer: Techniques and technologies: Contact microphones', *Experimental Research Network*, 2011, http://experimentalnetwork.wordpress.com/creative-practice-primer-2/creative-practice-primer-techniques-and-technologies-contact-microphones/, (accessed 24.04.14)

———, Environmental sound art and the production of urban space: the BE OPEN sound portal, (reflecting on Sounding the Portal by Tansy Spinks), http://www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/archives/1573, (accessed 24.04.14).

Gardner,T., 'Sound Art, Music and the Rehabilitation of Schizophonia', (unpublished essay at 2012).

———, 'The effect of electronically mediated sound on group musical interaction: A case study of the practice and development of the Automatic Writing Circle', [PhD thesis], City University London, 2011.

Gibb, T., *The Fundamentals of Sonic Art and Sound Design*, Switzerland, AVA, 2007.

Glandien, K., 'Sound Art and Performativity'*, in A. Brown (ed.), *Sound Musicianship: Understanding The Craft of Music*, Newcastle on Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

Goldberg, R. 'Performance Art from Futurism to the Present,' in Huxley, M. and White, N. (eds.), *The Twentieth Century Performance reader*, London, Routledge, 1996, p.182.

Graham, G., *Philosophy of the Arts: an Introduction to Aesthetics*, London, Routledge, 2007.

Gray, J., *Action Art: a bibliography of artists' performance from Futurism to Fluxus and beyond*, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1993.

Griffiths, P., *A Concise History of Modern Music: from Debussy to Boulez,* London, Thames and Hudson, 1978.

Haghighian, N.S., [untitled soundwork], *Documenta (13)*, catalogue, Germany, Hatje Cantz, vol. 3, 2012.

Hamilton, A., *Aesthetics and Music*, London, New York, Continuum, 2008.

Harrison, J., BEAST, (Birmingham Electro Acoustic Sound Theatre), 1998, http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/BEAST/index.aspx, (accessed 14.04.14).

Hegarty, P., *Noise Music: a History*, New York, Continuum, 2007.

Helmholz, H., *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik,* trans. A. Ellis, New York, Dover Edition, 1954.

Herbert, M., *The Art of Looping*, [BBC Radio 4 broadcast], http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01t074z, accessed 27.02.14.

Higgins, H., *Fluxus Experience*, Berkley, University of California Press, 2002.

Hill, L. & H. Paris, *Performance and Place*, *from the series: Performance Interventions*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Holmes, T., *Electronic and Experimental Music: Pioneers in Technology and Composition*, London, New York, Routledge, 2002.

Hope, C., 'My Son the Violinist', article, Guardian, 08.08.09.

Horn, R., *Another Water*, [catalogue], Zurich, Scalo, 2000.

Jennings, M., H. Eiland, and G. Smith (eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol.2, Part 2,* Harvard, Belknap press, 2005.

Kahn, D. & G. Whitehead, *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio & the Avant-Garde*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1993.

Kahn, D., *Noise, Water, Meat*: *a History of Sound in the Arts*, Cambridge, MIT press, 1999.

Kandinsky, W., *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sadler, New York, Dover Publications, 1977.

Kaprow, A., *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Everyday Life*, Kelley, J. (ed.), Berkley, University of California Press, 2003.

———, 'The Shape of the Art Environment', in Kelley, J. (ed)., *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996.

Kaye, N., *Art Into Theatre: Performance interviews and Documents*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Press, 1996.

———, *Site Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation*, London & New York, Routledge, 2000.

Kelly, C., *Sound: Documents of Contemporary Art*, London , Cambridge, MIT Press, 2011.

Kelly, M., 'Mimesis,' *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics,* vol. 3, OUP, 1998.

Kester, G., 'Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art', *Afterimage*, January, 1995.

Kim-Cohen, S., *One Reason to Live: Conversations about Music with Julius Nil*, Berlin, Errant Bodies, 2006.

———, *In the Blink of an Ear: towards a non-cochlear Sonic Art*, New York & London, Continuum, 2009.

Bibliography

Kirkegaard, J., *Four Rooms*, 2005, [soundwork], http;//www.touchmusic.org.uk/catalogue/jacob_kirkegaard_4_rooms_1.html, (accessed 10.11.12).

Kolkowski, A., *Hearing Artefacts,* [unpublished lecture notes from LCC talk], 06.11.13. See also: www.phonographies.org.

——— , *The Exponential Horn,* [installation], 2014, at the Science Museum, London.

Kosuth, J., *Art After Philosophy and After, Collected Writings*, *1966-1990*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991.

Krauss, R., 'A View of Modernism', *Artforum*, September, 1972.

Kruip, G*., Point of View*, Amsterdam, [artwork], 2002.

Kwon, M., *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge, MIT press, 2004.

LaBelle, B., (ed.), *Site of Sound: Of Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999.

———, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, Continuum, New York, 2006.

———, *Notes Toward a Sketch of a Sonic Body*, [exhibition], IMT Gallery, London, April–May 2011.

———, (ed.), *Manual for the construction of a sound as a device to elaborate social connection***,** Surface Tension, Supplement No. 42009.

LaBelle, B. and S. Roden*,* 'Say Something About Music', in Labelle, B. (ed.), *Site of Sound: Architecture and the Ear*, Los Angeles, Errant Bodies Press, 1999.

Lacy, S., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Bay Press, 1995.

Lane, C. & A. Carlyle, *In the Field, The Art of Field Recording*, Devon, Uniformbooks, 2013.

Langlands and Bell, *Plunged in a Stream,* [art work], Coudenburg Palace, Brussels, 2005.

Lefebvre, H., *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, Oxford and Cambridge, Blackwell, 1991.

———, *Rhythmanalysis, Space Time and Everyday Life*, trans. S. Elden and G. Moore, New York, Continuum, 2004.

Leitner, B. *Kaskade,* 2006, [soundwork], http://www.sonambiente.net/en/04_artists/4M2lei_werk.html, (accessed 10.10,.12).

Lely, J. and J. Saunders, *Word Events, Perspectives on Verbal Notation*, New York, Continuum, 2012.

Licht, A., *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories*, New York, Rizzoli, 2007.

———, *Sound Art*, Organised Sound, vol. 14, issue 1, 2009.

Lippard, L., *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object*, *from 1966-1972,* Berkley, University of California Press, 1997.

Littlefield, D. and S. Lewis, *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, England, John Wiley and Sons, 2007.

Live Art Development Agency, *What is Live Art?* http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk, (accessed 18.05.14).

Logsdail, Rory, *Times Square*, (2002), [film and interview], http://www.max-neuhaus.info/audio-video/

Lotringer, S., '*Becoming Duchamp*', vol.1, Issue: 2, 2000, www.toutfait.com, Also cited: http://resoundings.org/Pages/Spiraling_Echoes.html, (accessed 01.12.12).

Louw, R., [artworks], http://www.roeloflouw.com, (accessed 20.01.11).

Lucier, A., *I am sitting in a room*, 1969, [sound work] http://alucier.web.wesleyan.edu/, (accessed 01.04.12).

Massey, D., *Space, Place, Gender*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1994.

McCluhan, M., *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* London, Sphere Books, 1967.

McIver, G., Canadian artist film-maker and co-founder of Site Specific group Luna Nera, http://sitespecificart.org.uk/6.htm, (accessed 04.04.2011).

Merleau-Ponty, M., *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith, London, Routledge, 1962.

Messiaen, O., *Oiseaux Exotiques*, for piano and small orchestra of wind and percussion. [musical composition] and *Quartet for the End of Time,* 1941 [musical composition].

Meyer, J., 'The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site Specificity' in Suderburg, E. (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 25.

Michel-Mension, J. and D. Nicholson Smith, *Situationists: The Tribe*, City Lights Publishers, 2001.

Monelle, R., *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2000.

Monk, M., *Notes for Juice*, [programme notes], New York Library archive, 1969, http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/musmonk.pdf, (accessed 01.04.14).

Morell, A., *Abelardo Morrell,* www.abelardomorell.net, (accessed 10.11.12).

Morgan, J., 'Somebody to Talk To: an interview with John Baldessari', *Tate etc.*, issue 17, Autumn, London, Tate Publishing, 2009.

Morris, R., 'Box with the Sound of its Own Making', in Beil, R., Kraut, P, and Cantz, H. (eds.), *A House Full of Music, Strategies in Music and Art,* [exhibition catalogue], Darmstadt, Germany, 2012.

———, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1993.

Morris, W., William Morris, Stories in Prose, Stories in Verse, Shorter Poems, Lectures and Essays, London, Nonesuch, Bloomsbury Press, 1944.

Bibliography

Murray Shafer, R., *Wilderness Lake* for twelve trombones, [composition], Concordia Archives 1979, http://archives.concordia.ca/schafer, (accessed 20.01.14).

Nancy, J-L., 'Of Being in Common', in Miami Theory Collective, (eds.), *Community at Loose Ends,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

———, *Listening*, trans. C. Mandell, Forham University Press, 2007.

Nattiez, J-J., *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. C. Abbate, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990.

Nauman, B., *Playing a Note on the Violin while I Walk Round the Studio*, Electronic Arts Intermix, http://www.eai.org/title.htm?id=2787, (accessed 11.11.14).

———, *Violin tuned D,E,A,D*, 1968, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teKo6HkyoqY, (accessed 11.11.14).

Neuhaus, M., *Max Neuhaus,* http://www.max-neuhaus.info (accessed 11.12.12).

———, *Max Neuhaus*, http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/permanent, (accessed 11.12.12).

Neuhaus, M., *Evocare l'udibile*. Texts by Ida Gianelli, Gregory des Jardins, Stuart Morgan, et al. Milan, Charta, 1995

———, *Times Square, Time Piece Beacon*, [sound work], New York: Dia Foundation, 2010

Newman, H., 'Locating Performance, Textual Identity and the Performance', PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 2001.

———, 'In conversation (unpublished)', *The Practice Exchange* seminar, in response to T.Spinks presentation, 'Sites and Interventions', 02.03.11, http://thepracticeexchange.blogspot.co.uk/2011_03_01_archive.html, (accessed 01.04.11).

Nuhn, R. and J. Dack, 'Sound-Time-Space-Movement'*, Organised Sound,* vol. 8, issue 2, Nyman, M., *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

O' Doherty, B., *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, University of California Press, 1999 (originally published in Art Forum, 1976).

O'Reilly, S., 'Actions Speak Louder', *Tate etc*. magazine, summer issue, 2012, London, Tate publishing, http://www.tate.org.uk/context -comment/articles/actions-speak-louder (accessed 17.11.14).

Oliveira, N., N. Oxley and M. Petry, *Installation Art in the New Millenium*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Oliveros, P., *I-IV,* [composition], http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpdwMcdBGwg, (accessed 20.01.14).

———, *The San Francisco Tape Music Center: 1960s Counterculture and the Avant-garde*, Bernstein, D.W., (ed.), University of California Press, 2008.

Paget, V., Music and Its Lovers: An Empirical Study of Emotions and Imaginative Responses to Music, Thomas Press, 2007.

Pearson, M., *Site-Specific Performance*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Penone, G., 'interview with Nick Kaye', in Kaye, N. *Site Specific Art, Performance, Place and Documentation*, London and New York, Routledge, p.150.

Philipsz, S., *Surround Me, A song Cycle for the City of London,* [sound work], Artangel commission, 2010, http://www.artangel.org.uk/surroundme, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *You are not Alone*, [sound work], Modern Art Oxford, 2010, http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/8191, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Lowlands,* [sound work], 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWeKzTDi-OA, (accessed 10.11.12).

Prévost, E., No Sound is Innocent: AMM and the Practice of Self-Invention, Meta-musical Narratives and Essays, Essex, Copula (imprint of Matchless Recordings), 1995.

Proust, M., *Remembrance of Things Past*, seven volumes, Gasset & Gallimard, 1927.

Reiss, J.H., *From Margin to Center: the Spaces of Installation Art*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1999.

Rendell, J., *Art and Architecture: a Place Between*, London, I.B.Tauris, 2006.

Riley French, J., *Resonating The Staircase,* Sheffield [sound recording]: http://soundcloud.com/jezrileyfrench/sheffield-staircase-resonating, (accessed 07.04.14).

Riley, T., *Keyboard Studies,* [composition], 1964.

Rogalsky, M., 'David Tudor's Rainforest: An Evolving Exploration of Resonance', *Leonardo Music Journal*, vol. 14, December, 2004, MIT press.

Rolfe, N., 'Doing and Being', *RCA, MA Sculpture Degree Show 2013 catalogue*, Guardian Print Centre, 2013.

Ross, A., *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, London, Fourth Estate, 2008.

Rugg, J., *Exploring Site Specific Art: Issues of Space and Internationalism*, London and New York, I.B.Tauris, 2010.

Ruskin, J., 'The Mystery of Life and Its Arts', in Allen, G., *Sesame and Lilies, Three Lectures by John Ruskin*, Charing Cross Road, 1900. Further writings at: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ruskin/ruskin/jr.htm

Sacks, O., *Musicophilia*: *Tales of Music and the Brain*, Picador, London, 2007.

Saïd, E. W., *Musical Elaborations*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1991.

Satie, E., *Vexations* for piano, 1893 [music composition].

Schaeffer, P., *In Search of Concrete Music,* transl. C. North and J. Dack, University of California press, 2012.

Schafer, R.M., *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment & the Tuning of the World*, Rochester, Destiny Books, 1994.

Schafer, R.M., *A Sound Education, 100 exercises in Listening*, Arcana Editions, Ontario, Canada, 1992.

Schimmel, P. & Stiles, K., *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Schulz, B., *Resonances, Aspects of Sound Art*, Heidelberg, Germany, Kehrer Verlag, 2002.

Scoates, C. (ed.,), *Brian Eno, Visual Music*, Chronicle Books, 2013.

Serra, R.,*Tilted Arc*, [artwork], a monumental steel wall, public square, New York, 1981.

Shaw-Miller, S., *Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music, from Wagner to Cage*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002.

Shepherd, S. and M. Wallis, *Drama, Theatre, Performance: The New Critical Idiom*, London and New York, Routledge, 2004.

Sherwin, G., *Optical Films*, http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/guy_sherwin/, (accessed 01.4.14).

Sinclair, I., presenter, on 'Susan Philipsz's Surround Me', *Tate Shots*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISzXgoE7Dc0, (accessed 21.01.11).

Smithson, R., *Robert Smithson: The collected Writings*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996.

Sofaer, J., *What is Live Art?*, [video and text], http://www.joshuasofaer.com/wp-content/gallery/what-is-live-art/what-is-live-art-2.jpg, (accessed 12.12.13).

Spinks, T. J., http://www.tansyspinks.com

Stevens, J., *Search and Reflect*, *A Music Workshop Handbook*, Community Music Ltd., (eds.), Rockschool, 2007.

Stewart, S., *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the souvenir, the Collection,* Durham, Duke University Press, 2001.

Stockhausen, K. [concert] in The Grotto of Jeita, Lebanon, 1969, http://www.showcaves.com/english/misc/showcaves/Jeita.html, (accessed 14.04.14).

———, spherical auditorium devised for the German pavilion at the Osaka World Fair, 1970, http://www.stockhausen.org/video_jeita.html, (accessed 06.08.13).

Storr, A., *Music and the Mind*, London, Harper Collins, 1997.

Suderburg, E. (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Sumikawa, D. A., in 'Guidelines for the integration of Audio Cues into Computer User Interfaces,' [Technical report], Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 1985.

Tamm, E., *Brian Eno: His Music and the Vertical Colour of Sound*, London and Boston, Faber and Faber, 1989.

Tamm, E., *Fripp: From King Crimson to Guitar Craft*, Faber and Faber, 1991.

TateShots: *Iain Sinclair on Susan Philipsz's Surround Me*.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISzXgoE7Dc0

Teerlinck, H., *Sound of Music*, [catalogue], Collection of FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, 2008.

Thoreau, H.D., *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, (1837), Vol. 1, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1906.

Thrift, N*., Spatial Formation*, London, Sage, 1996.

———, *Lifeworld Inc. and what to do about it*, keynote lecture at Experimenting With Geography conference, Edinburgh University, (from author's unpublished lecture notes 05.05.10).

Toop, D., *Haunted Weather*: *Music, Silence and Memory*, London, Serpent's Tail, 2004.

——— , *Sinister Resonance, The Mediumship of the Listener*, London, Continuum, 2010.

———, *Ocean of Sound*, London, Serpent's Tail, 1995.

Tschumi, B., *Architecture and Disjunction*, London, MIT Press, 1994.

Van Assche, C., *Sonic Process: a New Geography of Sounds,* Barcelona: ACTAR, 2002 and exhibition curator at the Pompidou Centre.

Varése, E., *Poème électronique*, [music composition], Philips Pavilion, designed by Le Corbusier, Brussels, Expo' 1958.

Voeglin, S., *Listening to Noise and Silence: towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, New York, London, Continuum, 2010.

Von Hausswolff, C., C.M. von Hausswolff, [sound work} http://www.cmvonhausswolff.net, (accessed 01.04.14).

Vostell, W., *de-coll/age happenings*, trans. L. Williams, New York, Something Else Press, 1966.

———, Vostell, W., *biography*, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de (accessed 01.11.14)

Wallinger, M., *The Lark Ascending*, [art work], film screened at the Sonic Illuminations event, 2008, BFI, London.

Ward, D., *Nocturne*, [installation], November 2005 – January 2006, http://www.modusoperandi-art.com, (accessed 10.11.12).

Weintraub, L., A. Danto, T. McEvilley, Art on the Edge and Over, Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society, 1970s-1990s, Texas, Art Insights Inc., 1996.

Weiss, A.S., *Varieties of Audio Mimesis: Musical Evocations of Landscape,* New York, Errant Bodies Press, 2008.

Westerkamp, H., *Cricket Voice,* [sound piece], 1987, http://www.sfu.ca/~westerka/, (accessed 10.11.12).

———, *Kit's beach Soundwalk,* Vancouver Soundwalk*, 1989, http://wfae.proscenia.net/library/index.html, (accessed 10.11.12).
Wilson, L.K., *Louise K Wilson* sound works, http://www.lkwilson.org/, (accessed 01.11.14).

Windsor, W.L., 'A Perceptual Approach to the Description and Analysis of Acousmatic Music' [PhD Thesis], City University, 1995.

Wishart, T., *On Sonic Art*, a new and revised edition, Emmerson, S. (ed)., Contemporary Music Studies, vol. 12, 1996, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers.

Worrall, D., *David Worrall,* 1989, http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/worrall-david, (accessed 14.04.14).

Wulf, C., 'Mimetische Ohr', ('Mimetic Learning'), [essay], *Designs for Learning,* Freie Universität, Berlin, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2008.

Xenakis, *Terretektorh*, James Harley, http://www.allmusic.com/composition/terretektorh-for-88-musicians-scattered-among-the-audience-mc0002518360, (accessed 06.08.13).

Yates, F., *The Art of Memory*, London, Pimlico, Random House, 1988.

Young, R., *Undercurrents: the Hidden Wiring of Modern Music*, London, The Wire, Continuum, 2002.

Zuckerman, A., *Max Neuhaus's Times Square,* Arts Electric, 2002, http://www.arts-electric.org/articles0203/020530.neuhaus.html, (accessed 10.11.12).