

**Live Intermediality:
A new mode of
intermedial praxis**

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Abstract

This Practice as Research thesis is a contribution to and intervention in the fields of intermedial performance studies and live media practice. Its arguments are formulated through *live intermediality*, a mode of practice whereby the solo performer activates image, sound, object and body in the presence of and sometimes with the 'experiencers' (Nelson 2010), in order to compose a series of shifting intermedial combinations.

The thesis interrogates current discourses around intermediality in performance, the role and actions of the live media performer and the generation of events in intermedial and live media practice, arguing that each can be productively re-viewed through live intermedial practice. In positioning the practice clearly within the various lineages from which it draws and positing the particular 'knowings' it produces, live intermediality is formulated as distinctive 'praxis' or 'doing-thinking' (Nelson 2013). In addition, the specific characteristics of live intermediality – the dualities, discourses and collisions it generates - are presented both as a form of new knowledge through practice and employed as the tools to pierce existing thinking from an 'insider' perspective.

Working from a Practice as Research methodology, live intermediality is placed in dialogue with resonant conceptual frameworks, such as the work of intermedial theorists, Kattenbelt (2008) and Lavender (2006), new media theorists, Bolter and Grusin (2000), as well as broader paradigms of presence (Power 2008), autopoiesis (Fischer-Lichte 2008, Maturana and Varela 1987) and event (Derrida 1978, Deleuze 2006). The praxis, through its dialogue with such frameworks, reconfigures current theories around the activation, operation and experience of intermediality in live media forms. In addition, through its distinctive features and the 'knowings' they generate, *live intermediality* is proposed as a new mode of praxis within these fields.

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Finally, this thesis is for Scott, who is never anything other than beautiful.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

PaR Practice as Research

RCSSD Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Preface: How to Approach this Thesis

This Practice as Research thesis comprises a written component, visual material and video footage, as well as live intermedial practice itself.

The written component, with accompanying video footage, is presented in two formats. Firstly, **DVD 1** offers the writing and videos in the form of an interactive pdf. In this electronic version, the video footage is embedded within the document at the appropriate points and can be experienced in relation to and alongside the writing. A hard copy is also present. In this version, the video clips are housed on **DVD 2** and can be played, as indicated through the writing. In addition, the video clips are available on a youtube playlist, which can be accessed through pasting the link below from the electronic version into a browser:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLU2MRyrxsNMy5BHReyXE3XR-c_hEPdD__

Throughout the writing, the reader is directed to various sections, which expand on, or link to, the point being made e.g. Chapter 3 or 1.4. In the electronic version on **DVD 1**, each section is bookmarked, allowing easy navigation between the different parts of the writing. In Adobe Reader, press the bookmark button to the left of the screen, to activate this navigational tool. Video footage is categorised according the same numerical system – Clip 1, 2 etc. - on **DVD 2**, in the electronic version of the writing and in the youtube playlist.

Please note that the pagination in the electronic version of the writing differs from that in the hard copy, due to the embedding of video material into the body of the text. This is reflected in an adjusted table of contents in the version on **DVD 1**.

Introduction

See **Clip 1: Video Text – ‘Live intermediality as research’**

This thesis explores the making, activation and experience of a mode of live intermedial practice, which I term *live intermediality*¹ and which comprises improvised interactions between live bodies and lively media to create a shifting intermedial space. In the thesis, new ‘knowings’² emerge from and exist in live intermedial practice, which is woven into this written document as well as articulated in its live activation. The writing seeks to position, clarify, expose and analyse the practice according to the ‘knowings’ and insights which have arisen by and through making work in this way, thus formulating live intermediality as a distinct mode of ‘doing-thinking’ or ‘praxis’ (Nelson 2013).

Such emergent knowings address the gap in current scholarship around the effect/affect of intermediality which is activated ‘live’, the processes and actions of the performer engaged in such activation, the nature of the intermedial space generated and how it is experienced. The ‘events’³ of live intermedial practice, which have been created as part of this doctoral project, hold the emergent knowledge and act as distinct prisms through which each of these aspects of live intermediality is addressed. The arguments pursued are necessarily exclusive in their nature – they do not attempt to condense and encompass all that is present within the work. Rather, they reveal my engagements, issues and fascinations with the practice I make, while also working towards its articulation as both new knowledge and affording new insights in the field.

¹ Live intermediality is the term I employ to describe the practice I make. Intermediality refers to the mixing of a range of media as part of the event, while the defining adjective ‘live’ addresses the practice as one where such elements are mixed in real time and in the presence of the experiencers. Further interrogation of intermediality in live intermedial practice is located in Chapter 3.

² Nelson suggests that the term ‘knowing’ is more appropriate than knowledge in a practice as research context, as it ‘acknowledges a subject engaged in the act indicated and perhaps engaged in a processual relationship spatially more proximal to the object to be understood’ (2013: 20).

³ When referring to ‘events’, I am addressing specific instances of sharing the practice and the conditions which constitute such events, including configurations of space and time, as well as the positioning of the performer-activator and experiencers. The specific events which comprise this project are outlined in Chapter 2 and further discussion of event and live intermediality is positioned in Chapter 5.

As the maker of live intermediality and the author of this writing, my dual positioning also allows me to speak distinctly to the processes and actions of generating practice in this mode, with such practice-based knowings forming part of the substantial new insights presented. To counteract an overly subjective and solipsistic account however, and following its primary Practice as Research methodology, this writing draws a range of voices, modes and perspectives into productive discourse towards articulating the new insights, knowings and terminology emergent from this project.

This discourse includes journal reflections, documentation in the form of video and still images, blogs and audio recordings, the responses of those who have attended live intermedial events, as well as the voices and practices of theorists and practitioners whose ideas and work resonate with my own. In addition, 'video texts' are woven into the thesis, which have been created specifically to allow me to position the 'insider account'⁴ (Nelson 2013) of various aspects of the practice within an appropriately intermedial package of image, text and sound. These video texts are not, and should not be viewed as, the practice of live intermediality, which, as a live media mode, is constructed as it is received. Rather, they employ some of the tools of this practice – combinations of sound, image and text – in order to 'speak' to the arguments pursued in the written portion, providing a practice-based, insider perspective on the emerging ideas.

Structurally, the complementary writing opens with an outline of live intermediality, which is then placed in dialogue with a number of relevant practices, towards drawing out resonances and distinctions, positioning the practice within lineages from which it draws and in which it exists⁵. The next chapter sets out the Practice as Research methodology in more detail, particularly how it maps onto the chronological route taken through the project. This account of the events created

⁴ Nelson suggests that the value of an 'insider account' in PaR is that it provides 'a relatively new perspective valuable to practitioners in learning about other processes and compositional strategies' (2013: 89) and it is these processes and strategies which are the focus of many of the video texts within the thesis.

⁵ This writing does not include a traditional 'literature review' and rather works from a review of practice to place relevant ideas and writings directly in relation to the practice of live intermediality. This productive discourse between concepts and actions is at the heart of how new insights are produced.

and paths taken sets a foundation for the more discursive sections of the writing which follow, and which take up threads established in Chapters 1 and 2. The first of these dialogues centres on intermediality in live intermedial practice and interrogates current discursive formulations around intermediality, re-seen through the lens of live intermedial practice and particular live intermedial events. Chapter 4 moves on to address the role of performer-activator, positing it as a distinctive feature of this practice and also offering new insights into the acts and processes of the performer in live media forms. Chapter 5 addresses event-making in live intermedial practice, particularly analysing the autopoietic⁶ system of live intermediality, towards understanding how ‘singular’ events are constituted and concluding with outlining the features and properties of live intermedial events in all their forms. Finally, the conclusion draws together threads from all chapters towards a new formulation of live intermediality, thus marking the contribution this thesis offers to the field.

Within this thesis then, live intermedial practice itself is presented as new ‘knowing’, which simultaneously through its ‘doing’ affords substantial new insights in this field. Such insights are located in a number of positions within the thesis as a whole. For ease of reference, within the written element, I categorise and position them as follows:

- **Live intermedial practice** – this is distinctive practice, which through its doing produces insights, but is in itself a form of new ‘knowing’ in the field (see Chapter 1 for lineage, Chapter 5 for event-making and throughout the thesis/appendices for evidence of how live intermediality is generated and practised)
- **Live intermediality** – an intervention in the field of intermedial performance studies, providing new insights into the particular operation and effect/affect of intermediality in live forms where it is activated in real time by a present performer (see Chapters 3 and 5)
- **The live intermedial performer** – new conceptions/language to encompass the findings of the project as to the presence and processes of the performer, who is also the activator of onstage media elements (see Chapter 4)

⁶ The term autopoiesis means ‘self-producing’ (Maturana and Varela 1987: 43). Live intermediality, as an autopoietic or ‘self-producing’ system of event-making, is addressed in 5.3.

- **Insider insights** – new perspectives on the process of creating and performing in live media forms (see Chapters 2 and 5, plus video texts located throughout the writing).

Chapter 1: Live Intermedial Practice and its Lineage

See **Clip 2: Video Text – ‘What is live intermedial practice?’**

This chapter operates as a route into the central arguments pursued in the thesis, through firstly outlining and then positioning the practice of live intermediality. Addressing the nature of the practice and interrogating its features and operations, by way of comparison with resonant work in the field, allows the writing to move towards delineating the distinctive nature of live intermediality, which is presented as new knowledge through practice. Equally, this chapter, through such definitions, indicates and takes up the main threads of inquiry and reflection outlined in the introduction, which I continue to ‘hold’ and trace through the writing.

1.1 Live Intermedial Practice: An Overview

The subject of and vehicle for this thesis is live intermediality or live intermedial practice⁷. This is practice in which the performer is also the activator of technical mediums⁸ to generate intermediality⁹ in an improvisatory mode. It therefore always involves the ‘work’ of the performer, activating intermediality through interaction with various technical mediums, in one part of the space and the results of such activation, in the form of amplified sounds and projected images, in another (see Figure 1).

⁷ The broad term practice encompasses the various modes in which live intermediality can manifest - performance-installation, one-to-one encounter - and the distinct events generated through such modes (see Chapter 2)

⁸ A ‘technical medium’ is described by Lars Elleström as ‘the *actual* material medium, the ‘form’, that realizes and manifests the latent properties of the media, the ‘content’ (2010: 17). Within live intermedial practice, this term corresponds to the actual onstage technology, which enacts intermediality. A full discussion of Elleström’s theories of the modalities of media can be found in Chapter 3

⁹ Though intermediality can refer to ‘the interrelations between media as institutions in society’ (Jensen in Bay Cheng et al 2010: 16), as well as to work which falls ‘between media’ (Higgins 1966), in this writing it is employed specifically to refer to the discourse between mediums – sound, image, object and body – as part of the live intermedial event. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of mediums and intermediality in live intermedial practice.



Figure 1: A live intermedial event, with the performer-activator positioned opposite the projected images and the experiencers free to inhabit the space as they choose (Image taken by Matt Taylor at *re-cite*, CSSD, 6/10/12).

Live intermediality is constructed as it is received and indeed such construction is always part of the event generated. The primary mediums present are as follows, along with the ‘technical medium’ (**in bold**) which enables their activation:

- Live feed projected images – **live feed camera, laptop with VJ software¹⁰, projector**
- Pre-recorded projected images – **laptop with VJ software, projector**

¹⁰ The VJ software I employ, Modul8, is designed for ‘real time video mixing and compositing’ (garageCUBE 2014) and allows for pre-recorded and live footage to be activated, layered and manipulated in a variety of ways.

Both of the above mediums can be manipulated and merged in various ways with the aid of a vision mixer or through the VJ software itself

- The live voice; amplified, looped and layered – **microphone, loop pedal and speakers**
- Pre-recorded sound – **sampler, synthesiser and speakers**

The above media can be merged through the use of an onstage sound mixer

- Objects
- Bodies

Both the above can exist in relation to, fused with and/or within the mediums of image and sound created through the onstage technology.

The different ‘movements’ of a live intermedial event are created through combinations of the above mediums, which are generated by the performer in real time, in the presence of and sometimes with the ‘experiencers’¹¹, according to an improvisatory mode of construction.

1.2 Processes of Creation

In order further to delineate and define live intermedial practice, this section outlines the broad processes of creation which underpin the work. As is explored in Chapter 2, such processes are not stable and fixed, but have shifted throughout the project. However, certain features have remained in place and these will be highlighted, as indicative of what renders the work distinctive as a live media performance practice.

1.2.1 The Predetermined: Elements in Place Prior to a Live Intermedial Event

The two main groups of elements which are put in place prior to a live intermedial event are the onstage technical mediums and the samples, excerpts and fragments of sound, image, text and object which I bring to the event. The triangulation between performer, this pre-existing material, and its activation through the

¹¹ The term ‘experiencer’ was coined by Nelson, specifically in response to intermedial work and as an alternative to that of spectator. It indicates ‘a more immersive engagement in which the principles of composition of the piece create an environment designed to elicit a broadly visceral, sensual encounter’ (2010: 45).

technical mediums present, forms much of the action of the event, while simultaneously producing it. This is also augmented by the 'live' elements of sound, text and image which are generated in the moment, not through activating and combining existing material, but through generating new texts, sounds and images.

Though the technological kit has shifted and developed throughout the project, two key pieces of equipment – the live feed camera and loop pedal - have remained constant and are part of what makes the practice distinctive within the field of live media performance. Both these aspects of the kit inform the central ways in which this practice engages directly with an interrogation of liveness and mediatisation¹², the actual and virtual¹³, through producing a ***lively mediatised space***. Such interrogation through practice is part of how live intermediality 'thinks' and operates as 'praxis' or 'theory imbricated within practice' (Nelson 2013: 33). See Chapter 3 and 5.5.2 for further discussion of the 'lively media' in live intermedial practice.

The first vital and consistent tool employed is a live feed camera, positioned over a white base and upon which objects, paper, written text and the performer's hands can be placed and transformed into projected images. The base can also be lit from beneath, enabling play with silhouettes¹⁴ (see Figure 2).

¹² This thesis does not engage directly with historical debates around liveness and mediatisation (Phelan 1993, Auslander 2008). Rather, it focuses on the live activation of media and construction of intermediality, specifically in relation to the ***lively mediatised*** space this generates.

¹³ The terms actual and virtual are employed to make a distinction between the presence of an object or body in the 'actual' space of the event and its 'virtual' manifestations through image and sound.

¹⁴ The technical medium used to activate the live feed image has shifted through the project. Initially a book-reader was employed (see **Figure 2** a, b and c). This was replaced in later projects by a live feed camera, suspended over a light-box (see **Figure 2** d).

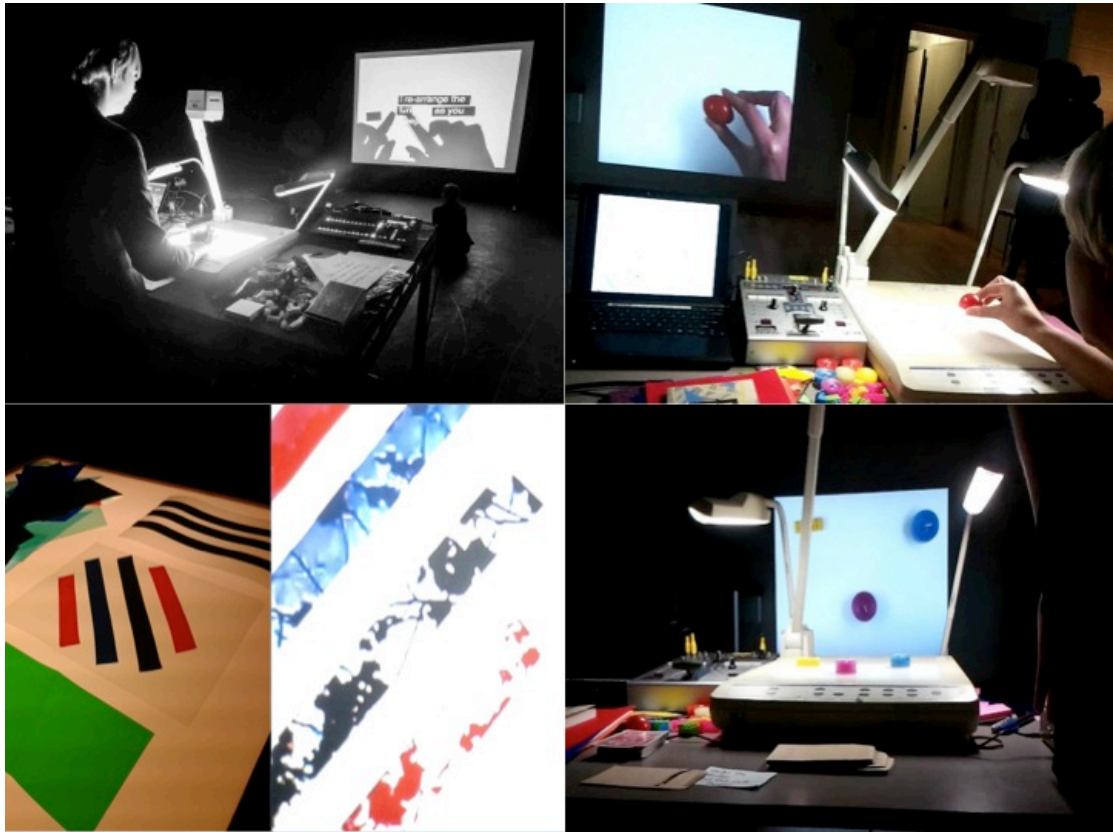


Figure 2: The live feed camera in practice – activating live feed images in a variety of ways (Images clockwise from top left – a) taken by Matt Taylor from *re-cite* 6/10/12, b) and c) taken from video footage of *Cover* 3/12/11 and d) from *auto-play* 2/10/13).

Though the ways in which I have employed the live feed camera have developed, particularly the more sophisticated mixing of its images with video footage seen in the images on the left, its presence consistently offsets some of the more complex possibilities offered by employing heavily processed video footage. This ‘cleaner’ representation of the live moment, and the contrast it forms with the video footage played out through the VJ software, is a defining feature of this practice. As I go on to argue in this chapter, it makes live intermedial work distinct from much VJing¹⁵ and live audio-visual performance, through its insistent focus on and examination of the actual and live in digital practice (see 1.3).

¹⁵ VJing is the practice of mixing projected visuals to accompany music, often in the context of a club or festival: ‘characteristics of VJing are the creation or manipulation of imagery in realtime through technological mediation and for an audience, in synchronization to music’ (375 Wikipedians 2010: 17). Connections and comparisons between this practice and that of live intermediality are positioned in Section 1.3.2.

The second and defining piece of kit I employ within live intermediality is a loop pedal, which enables me to generate a variety of vocal soundscapes live. In some cases, the loop pedal is augmented by a sampler and synthesiser containing fragments of sound which can be combined with that I generate vocally. As such, the sampler and synthesiser take on the equivalent positioning of the VJ software in relation to the live feed camera. Both develop the sonic and visual possibilities of this practice respectively and allow a counterpoint to the 'barer' and simpler manipulation of live voice and image.

Similarly to the live feed camera, the loop pedal was an original element of the practice and has remained consistently in place as part of the composite kit of technical mediums I employ, throughout its development. It has the capacity to generate simple looped lines of sound or complex choral pieces, all of which are constructed using my amplified voice (see **Clip 3**). Within this play between the live voice and its mediatisation is an examination again of the *lively mediatised* moment. This is explored in detail in Section 4.4.2.

Other key elements which are predetermined within a live intermedial set up, as already noted, are the video clips, sound samples, fragments of text, song lyrics and objects which I bring to an event (see **Figure 3**). These elements are present as raw material to be activated within the triangulation described above between the chosen elements, my response as performer and the onstage technical mediums through which they are activated or 'brought to life'.



Figure 3: Some of the elements – objects and texts – which are brought to a live intermedial event (Image taken from video footage of *Cover 3/12/11*).

1.2.2 The Mode of Practice

The business or ‘work’ of live intermedial practice is to merge and combine such elements and to ‘activate’ intermediality through these combinations. The mode of practice is broadly improvisatory, in that the activation is ‘something that happens in ‘real-time,’ on the fly, in the moment’ (Cooke 2011: 10). However, as acknowledged by Grayson Cooke and as I explore later in this chapter, the pre-existence of samples, objects and texts disturbs any notion of ‘pure’ improvisation and relates to Cooke’s term ‘comprovisation’, which is ‘a way of recognising the intricate interweaving of the com-posed with the improvised’ (2011: 11). Finally, and as noted above, live intermedial practice complicates even this hybrid notion, in that it also involves the live generation of text, sound and images, connecting it to Smith and Dean’s definition of musical improvisation as ‘the simultaneous conception and performance of a work’ (1997: 3).

Occupying a space between improvisation and comprovisation, I therefore identify the specific practice of generating live intermediality as ***intermedial improvisation***. Though it shares qualities and actions with both improvisation and comprovisation,

it is distinct in its demands and processes. In particular, the range of modes of activation and manifestation in intermedial improvisatory practice generate a productive problematic for the performer. The specific demands and implications of intermedial improvisation are addressed in 5.2 and the exploration of improvisation, as a line of inquiry throughout the project, is detailed in Chapter 2.

The actual space of a live intermedial event can be characterised as fluid, in that the experiencers are encouraged to inhabit it as they choose and to move around and within that area (see **Figure 1**). In many live intermedial events, experiencers are free to come and go from the space, so the practice functions in some ways as an on-going installation¹⁶. However, the activation and performance, which form part of all live intermedial events, question such a definition. Such features make the practice distinct in the live media field, as is explored below in section 1.3.

Another feature of this practice is an appeal to the experiencers to contribute to and interact with the live and developing intermedial event. Throughout the three years of this research project, as detailed in Chapter 2, I have tested different models of opening the work to the experiencers present. Through this experimentation, two distinct modes of interactivity have emerged, which can be broadly grouped and characterised as follows:

Secondary Interactions - experiencers are asked to offer prompts to the on-going construction of live intermediality in various forms e.g. words whispered in the performer's ear, song suggestions placed in a box, slips of paper bearing words and or/images which are placed in the technical area for the performer to encounter

Primary Interactions – experiencers' actions form part of the construction of intermediality in real time e.g. generating live feed images using the onstage webcam, placing themselves in the projected light to interact with the images

¹⁶ Claire Bishop defines installation art as the type of art into which the viewer physically enters, and which is often described as 'theatrical', 'immersive' or 'experiential' (2005: 6), which resonates with aspects of the live intermedial space.

created, singing into the microphone/loop pedal to contribute to the sonic aspect of the work.

In relation to my role, as a solo improvising performer I am also the activator of the different materials and mediums, as described above. This lends me diverse forms and levels of ‘presencing’¹⁷ in relation to the intermediality generated and the experiencers. In order to foreground the instability of the role, the term *performer-activator* is employed, as an acknowledgement of the shifting duality of the state of the performer within this practice. The nature of this dual role is explored initially through the lineage analysis in this chapter and then in further detail, as a defining feature of the practice, in Chapter 4.

The connections and relationships between the performer-activator, the material gathered, the technical mediums and the experiencers in space are also shifting ground, by their nature questioning singular definition. In the final chapter however, sustained and distinct features of live intermedial events are unpacked; namely the *lively mediatised space* and *distanced proximity* they generate.

1.3 Lineage and Analysis

In order further to delineate this work and position it clearly within the lineage of practice it draws on and exists within, the following section interrogates live intermediality in relation to a number of relevant and resonant examples of current and historical performance and art.

1.3.1 Live Audio-Visual Performance: Grayson Cooke

An umbrella term which incorporates VJing, live cinema and other live media practices within its broad parameters is that of live audio-visual performance or ‘the live and improvised performance of audio-visual media’ (Cooke 2010: 194), which is

¹⁷ Stanton B Garner employs the term ‘presencing’ to cast presence in performance as ‘multiply embodied, evoked in a variety of experiential registers, refracted through different (and sometimes divergent) phenomenal lenses’ (1994: 43). The notion of presencing in live intermediality is addressed in detail in 4.2.

practised, among others, by Grayson Cooke, an interdisciplinary scholar and media artist. He describes live audio-visual performance as:

An emerging area of new media arts practice that crosses between, and draws upon, multiple artistic traditions and trajectories. Under a range of nomenclatures – VJing, Live Cinema, Live Media, Expanded Cinema – artists work solo and collaboratively with sounds and images, and significantly, they do this in a performance context (2011: 9).

Cooke himself practises live audio-visual performance both collaboratively and as a solo performer using ‘a combination of hardware and software...to trigger or generate images and sounds together and in the same time and space and in some kind of relation’ (2010: 194), a description which resonates strongly with live intermediality.

In analysing his work, Cooke highlights a piece called *Diffuse* (2010), which involved the live collaborative improvisation of two musicians and two ‘visualists’, including Cooke himself, in order to create a singular ‘immersive audio-visual environment for the audience’ (2011: 19). The musicians and visualists had not previously worked together and all came to the event with a different set of equipment, facilitating the mix of pre-recorded and live sound as well as live and pre-recorded visuals, which could be triggered by sound or mixed and activated live by the visualists¹⁸.

Cooke argues that because live audio-visual performance is created as it is performed, with the aid of the technology and content that each performer brings, that it eschews the kind of intentionality whereby ‘intention is a way of understanding thought as a two-part linear and temporalized process of cogitation and action, formulating a thought and manifesting or acting upon it’ (2010: 199). Instead he states, citing Adrian Mackenzie, that a live audio-visual performance is a real time event, which ‘is structured by its processing’ (in Cooke 2010: 200), as there is ‘no temporal separation between its ‘conception’ and its occurrence’ (2010:200).

¹⁸ Within his writing Cooke acknowledges the ‘antecedents of contemporary live media’ in terms of its aleatoric practice, referencing Cage, Stockhausen and Kaprow’s happenings (2010).

This mode of performance-making can clearly be related to live intermedial practice on the terms suggested by Cooke in his own analysis. Similarly to live audio-visual performance, live intermedial practice is also 'structured by its processing' in that the intermedial combinations which comprise the performance are not predetermined and can be shifted and manipulated 'on the fly'. Like the performers in *Diffuse* and as outlined above, I also bring to the space a number of predetermined objects, texts, images, sounds and video clips. Also, similarly to Cooke's work, live intermedial practice is facilitated in its real time production by a combination of hardware and software, which allows the performer-activator to make decisions about how to combine the different elements mentioned in the moment and therefore, to a certain extent, to eschew the sort of intentionality cited by Cooke.

However, I contend that a different form of intentionality is at work within a live intermedial event than that evidenced in the collaborative 'comprovised' performance of *Diffuse*. In live intermedial practice, the intentionality is often centred in my processes, as the solo performer and activator, compiling intermedial configurations, which are ultimately *self-generating* in nature, in that they are a response to the intermedial space which has already been constructed¹⁹. Though in some cases (see Chapter 2), the experiencers are part of this system of generation, in many live intermedial events, all of the technical mediums are activated by me. Thus my intentionality, as an intermedial improviser, is heightened, rather than diminished (see Chapter 4 and 5.2).

In addition to this, the nature of the space created within a live intermedial event is distinct from much live media work, where the result rather than the processes of activation and creation is highlighted. Though I situate this practice within the broad

¹⁹ The self-generating or 'autopoietic' nature of live intermediality provides a key critical angle on the practice. In 5.3 I connect the theories of Maturana and Varela that 'the being and doing of an autopoietic unity are inseparable' (1987: 49) to how live intermedial events are made through the 'self-producing' act of intermedial improvisation.

field Cooke identifies as live audio-visual performance²⁰, its distinctions in form and practice are crucial to how it speaks back to and contributes to this field (see below).

1.3.2 VJing and VJ Theory

Live intermedial practice has a clear connection to DJ and VJ performance, in that the performer-activator is manipulating or ‘mixing’ the mediums of image and sound in the presence of the experiencers and this act of manipulation or ‘activation’ is foregrounded within the events of the practice. Marina Turco comments: ‘the VJ adjusts his performance to the atmosphere, the attitude of the crowd, the music, and the general concept of the party’ (2010: 59). Live intermediality offers a similar capacity to the performer-activator, in that the technical mediums employed involve a decision taken in the moment as to what to make manifest and how media can be combined.

However, a distinction between these two modes is that, rather than the VJ fitting the images to music produced from another source, usually a DJ, the performer-activator in a live intermedial event is also the producer of sound. Turco comments that ‘VJs are often hidden performers. Their bodies are not so much the bearers of signs (movements, dance, expressions) as tools for the production of visual texts’ (2010: 61). Again, though elements of this description can be applied to live intermedial practice in that the performer-activator’s body is indeed a ‘tool’ for the production of the intermedial ‘text’, the role, as suggested by the hybrid nature of the term, actively goes beyond this.

Within a live intermedial event, the performer-activator acts as both a ‘tool’ for the activation of technical mediums, but also explicitly, when singing and delivering text, as a performer and ‘bearer of signs’. Both roles are encapsulated within a single body, but the point of intersection, if indeed it exists, is a shifting and elusive one. This means that I am indeed both performer and activator, but the roles eschew

²⁰ Throughout the writing, the broader term ‘live media performance’ is employed, which allows for elements beyond the audio-visual to be encompassed and acknowledged, while still maintaining focus on modes of practice where media are activated and manipulated ‘on the fly’ to generate diverse experiences, events and environments.

singular definition, generating a fluidity, uncertainty and productive instability at the heart of this practice. The performer-activator role is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4, where it is presented as both a defining feature of live intermediality and affording substantial insights into the role of the performer in live media practice.

Returning to its positioning and lineage, though my actions relate strongly to those of a VJ, in that I mix and merge images live, my presence as a performer-activator contrasts with the 'interaction between the performer and screen' in a VJ performance which 'in many ways resembles the Wizard of Oz paradigm where the activities on screen can be disassociated from the performer' (Cinegraphic in VJ Theory 2008: 4). This effect is generated specifically because VJs are often hidden behind the screens onto which they project or are separated from the images they create within the club environment.

The space of a live intermedial event is distinct in that my presence as performer-activator, in relation to the images and sounds created, is a deliberately present part of the spatial set up (see **Figure 1**). It is more difficult to disassociate my actions from the on-screen activities and a defining feature of the practice is that the process of construction in tandem with the construct, in the form of the intermedial combinations generated, is highlighted as it is not typically within a VJ set. Indeed, my 'presencing' as solo performer-activator in the space connects the practice to a live art and solo performance tradition, as explored below.

On such terms, a performer-activator is not a VJ, though her actions may connect her to this lineage of practice. Equally, the practice generated, though activated through similar tools, does not manifest in the way a VJ set does. Its divergent practices, codes and conventions are addressed further in the next sections of the analysis/review, as well as through the account of specific live intermedial events in Chapter 2.

1.3.3 Live Cinema: D-Fuse

Another live media form which operates under Cooke's umbrella of live audio-visual performance is live cinema. This practice emerged directly from VJ culture, but shifted the intention and positioning of the live mixing of images from clubs to a 'cinematic' paradigm; 'live cinema describes work which is in essence artistic, to differentiate it from VJing, which can resemble visual DJing' (Makela 2008). My experience of the live cinema event, *Particle#2* (2012) by London based artist collective, D-Fuse, informs the parallels and distinctions I draw between live intermediality and live cinema.

In *Particle#2*, D-Fuse employed primarily 'processed urban imagery' (OUT HEAR programme 2012) and I also employ heavily processed video images, with the digital effects overlaid on the original footage often obscuring or deliberately shifting the actuality of what was filmed. In addition, my visual work, similarly to that of D-Fuse, is predicated on merging images in real time. However, in contrast to *Particle#2*, the images employed in live intermedial practice are live as well as pre-recorded, so that an image being generated in the space and time of the event is merged with that which has been filmed prior to it. This represents a crucial distinction between the practices. Though both live media modes employ the space of the video image as a site of play and improvisation, D-Fuse are always building from space which is pre-determined, in the form of recorded and edited footage. In contrast, I am also 'creating space' through projected live feed images. This space is a live and developing one, which is deliberately placed in relation to the pre-recorded video footage to create collision and disjuncture (see 3.3.4).

The set up of the two live media practices is also distinct; specifically the arrangement of performer, experiencer and image in space and how these function as part of the event. In the case of D-Fuse, the image manipulation was enacted by two seated performers, working from laptops. The performers were positioned between a backdrop and a front projection screen, effectively obscured for much of the performance, with the experiencers seated in rows in front of the screen, in a format similar to that in a cinema screening.

As an experiencer therefore, my focus was almost exclusively on the flow of images created by the performers on the screens in front of me. I was interested to glimpse some non-verbal communication between them behind the screen and equally engaged by the points when they were seemingly inactive, while the images around them continued to dance and shift. The correlations between the performers' actions and the images produced were not clear, not only because of their positioning, but also because of their tools. The obscured laptop screen and keyboard as well as my lack of understanding of how they were being employed, rendered such correlations both physically and conceptually inaccessible. Though I knew the combinations of images and sounds were being generated in real time, the signs of this liveness were not clear. On the contrary, though the performers were present, we, as experiencers, were being asked specifically to focus on the *result* of such manipulation rather than the manipulation itself, through the foregrounding of the image.

In contrast, the live intermedial set up highlights my presence as performer and my present activation of sound and image. Positioned with the images I create projected opposite me, the experiencers are often free to move around the space and to experience the generation of these images from a variety of perspectives. If they choose to do so, they can be party to which images are chosen, the interaction with technology which enacts that image and how it is merged with its counterpart in real time. The intermedial space in this practice is therefore interrupted by its construction and troubled by the actuality of the actions that bring it into being, in contrast with the hidden actions and primacy of the result of activation in live cinema. In addition, the lack of delineation in the space generates an experience of 'sensory immersion' (Klich and Scheer 2011: 131). The co-existence of these modes of experience, as a distinct property of live intermediality, is addressed in 3.3 and 3.4.

1.3.4 Video Art and Installation: Gary Hill

As already evidenced, live intermedial practice sits on the boundaries of a number of different modes of performance-making. The work connects to VJing, live cinema

and other forms of live audio-visual performance, where the focus is on the real time manipulation of sound and image. In addition, though this practice is often centred in and through a solo performer-activator, the intermediality generated can be viewed as an ever-changing installation of sound and image. As such, the lineage of video art is a useful way to explore and position live intermediality.

Gary Hill, an intermedial artist, who has created a number of video-based installations, represents a fruitful point of comparison with live intermedial practice. Hill's work deals with the 'intertwining of 'real' and 'recorded' times articulated in video's replay...in relation to Hill's physical engagement in generating the work', resulting in a "visceral physicality' through dematerialized, mediated and fragmented images of the body' (Giannachi and Kaye 2011: 61). Already such a characterisation of Hill's work has resonance with live intermedial practice, where my 'physical engagement' with generating intermediality as performer-activator is key and where the intertwining of 'real' and 'recorded' is played out through the merging of live feed images and pre-recorded footage. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, I would argue that 'physicality' as 'dematerialized' and 'fragmented' is also a feature of live intermedial work.

However, the means by which this fragmentation is achieved represent significant points of divergence between the live intermedial practice I create and Hill's video installations. An example is his 1990 piece, *Inasmuch As it Is Already Taking Place*, which presented looped images of disembodied fragments of body parts on monitors of different sizes (see **Figure 4**). Hans Belting remarks that 'the images are like single syllables, out of which our consciousness assembles words and sentences. This body seems to exist 'between' the various images' (in Giannachi and Kaye 2011: 66).



Figure 4: Gary Hill (1990) *Inasmuch As It Is Already Taking Place*, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo: Mark B McLoughlin, Image reproduced with permission of the artist (*Ciel Variable*: 2010)

A parallel to this disruption of the body through its mediatised presentation can be found in live intermedial practice, in my merging of two live feed images of different parts of my body into a single, fused projected image (see **Clip 4** and **Figure 5**).

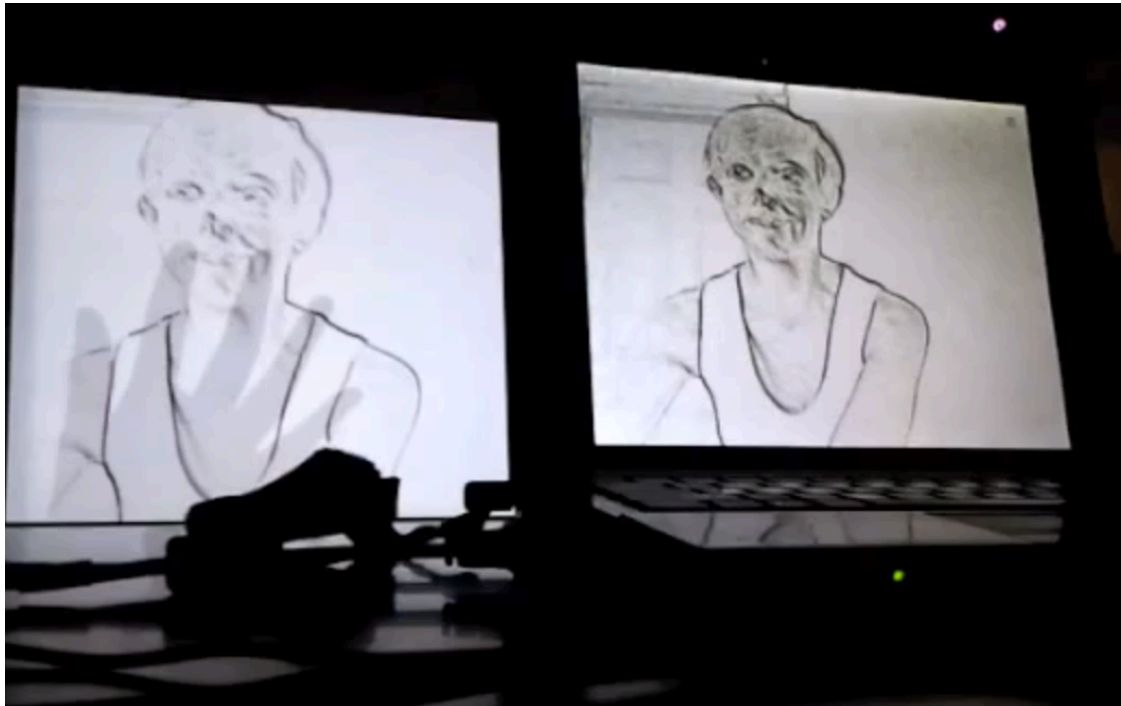


Figure 5: Merging two live feed images. The image on the right is the computer webcam view and that on the left is the projected merged images from the webcam and live feed camera (Image taken from footage of *Cover 3/12/11*).

In this instance, similarly to Hill's installation, the 'single syllables' of the two live images of the body are 'assembled' and crucially this assembling is enacted within the event by the performer-activator, whose body is the subject of the dual representation. Unlike Hill's installation, which allows itself to be assembled in 'our consciousness', this instance pushes together the 'syllable images' in a confrontation which is enacted through the simultaneous live actions of the performer-activator. Gary Hill may well be physically engaged in generating the installations he generates – it is his body which is presented in fragmentary form on the screens - but this representation remains distinct from that of my fragmented form in a number of ways. Firstly, my body is not recorded and looped; it is 'streamed' live through the laptop webcam and live feed camera respectively. In addition, the mediated representations of the body, though disjunctive and dislocated in a way which is similar to the effect of Hill's screened body parts, are further disrupted by the presence of the actual and whole body within the event. In addition, the performer-activator's body is not just represented through the projected images; it is also the activator of such images through the live manipulation of onstage technical mediums. This creates what I term the *live intermedial body* (see 4.1).

It is the live intermedial body and resultant co-presence of actual and virtual, of the act of construction and the merged and mediatised representation, which makes this practice distinct from a video installation. The 'visceral physicality' of Hill's dislocated and mediatised representation of himself in the space of installation is arguably lessened in the live intermedial space, by revealing the processes of how the disjunctive relationship between separate images of the body is achieved. In addition, my 'physical engagement' with what I create is a live engagement, where the actions of my body provide a counterpoint to its mediatised representation. Though a live intermedial event occupies space and time in a similar way to a video installation, the distinction is that the former is enacted and constructed as it is received by the experiencers. As such, it can also be usefully connected to a live art and solo performance tradition.

1.3.5 Live Art and Solo Performance: Laurie Anderson

In his introduction to *Live* (2004), Adrian Heathfield defines aspects of a live art tradition, commenting that 'the embodied event has been employed as a generative force' (7) in this work. He adds that in relation to a visual art tradition, 'performance has consistently replaced or qualified the material object with a temporal act' (8). Heathfield cites 'experimentation with time' as a feature of much live art, enacted through 'diminishing the 'known' and rehearsed dynamics of performance by opening it to improvisation and chance'. He also adds that 'performance tends to operate by means of displacement, subverting or usurping places' and that 'the artist's body, its adornments, its action and its residues are not just the subject, but also the material object of art' (11). Finally RoseLee Goldberg states that 'the reply to the question, "So what is performance art, really?" is frequently that it is live art by a single artist – an amalgam of many disciplines, including music, text, video, film, dance, sculpture, painting' (2000: 22).

There is clear and distinct resonance with a live art tradition and some of its prevailing features in live intermedial practice. Perhaps most obviously and prosaically, I am a solo performer and a 'single artist' and the practice I create is often, though not always, predicated on that dynamic of my creative response and

singular presence in relation to and played out through the technical mediums I employ. In addition, the 'diminishing' of the 'known' through 'improvisation' as noted above, has been a key and developing feature of live intermedial practice from its inception.

However, there are also many aspects of a live art lineage which sit uneasily with the manifestation and intention of a live intermedial event. Though my body is central to and subject of some of the actions of the practice – the two live feed images cited above is just one example of this – it is not the central signifier within the work, as it is in the work of artists cited in Heathfield's text, such as Oleg Kulik, La Ribot, Franko B and Stelarc. Rather, this practice diffuses and troubles my actual presence, both concealing and revealing the performing and activating body.

The personal and political edge to a lot of the work of live artists such as those mentioned above is also not present in the intention and conception of live intermedial practice. The work is not an intervention in a debate; it does not explore and take on current issues in politics or culture. Equally, it is not a revelation of self, or an attempt to politicise the body. It does not have the interventionist thrust of much live art, which uses the work and often the body of the artist to address, to interrogate and to reveal; to comment on contemporary society, culture and politics. Though I would not claim that the work in any way sits outside culture or politics, it is not made with the intention of interrogating or intervening directly in such discourses. Rather the work is disposed towards generating an affective²¹ experience for those who encounter it; towards opening up a space for contemplation, imagination and sometimes action.

In order to refine this argument and further the interrogation of where the practice sits in relation to a live art tradition, I am turning to a specific artist – Laurie Anderson – with whom I share both approaches to making work and performance-

²¹ In employing the term, affect, I am drawing on Claire Colebrook's reading of Deleuze, positing affect as 'what happens to us when we feel an event'. She goes on to say that 'affect is not the meaning of the experience but the response it prompts' (2002: xix). Further exploration of affective engagement in live intermediality is positioned in 3.4 and 5.5.

making tools. Laurie Anderson is a performance artist and musician who has been making work in a variety of modes since the 1970s. From drawing to music-making and from installations to large-scale multimedia performances, Anderson's work spans the variety of forms cited by Goldberg under the 'live art' umbrella. In comparing my own work with that of Anderson, I am focusing on a recent multimedia piece *Dirtday*, which I experienced at the Royal Festival Hall in August 2012.

Goldberg comments: 'always fearless in the face of technology, Anderson incorporated it into her work from the start' (2000: 14). The variety of technical mediums employed in her performance practice over the years has included computers and projectors, sound samplers, voice-altering microphones and a variety of modes of 'technologising' a violin. Anderson claims: 'I use technology as a way of amplifying or changing things' (in Goldberg 2000: 14), but that 'technology...is the least important thing about what I do' (15). As Goldberg comments, 'no matter how many electronic filters and computerized devices go into creating this material, the overall sensibility is fragile and fragmented' (2000: 15). Finally, Anderson engages in both politics and culture within her work, drawing material from a variety of sources to enact 'an intense cultural and political critique' (16), through a multi-layered narrative. Anderson herself comments, 'basically my work is storytelling, the world's most ancient art form' (in Goldberg 2000: 19).

In experiencing Anderson's performance of *Dirtday*, it was clear that live intermedial practice is strongly resonant with this type of performance. Like Anderson, as a solo performer, I am placed in the midst of technical mediums, with which I interact, constituting the event. Similarly to her, the modes and types of technical mediums I use, from a live feed camera to VJing software and from a loop pedal to a keyboard sampler, represent a spectrum of interfaces²², each of which 'amplify' and 'change' things in a distinct way. In addition, the work I create is also multi-layered in nature

²² An interface is described by Zerihan and Chatzichristodoulou as 'the boundary or shared space between two areas or systems' (in Chatzichristodoulou, Jefferies and Zerihan 2009: 1). In this case and in relation to this writing, this shared space is created between human and technical medium in the act of activation.

and draws on a variety of sources, with a focus on bringing such sources together in unusual or surprising ways. Like Anderson, I want ‘the viewer to pay attention to the way “things pull at each other”’ (Goldberg 2000: 17). This ‘pulling’ could be the way a technical medium tugs at the material it enacts – the effect of the loop pedal on the human voice for instance - or how an object is shifted through being simultaneously projected live and large in space. Equally, this can be how layered mediums pull at each other – the insistent tug of the soundscape generated on the image it overlays, or how the projected text on screen reflects back the actions of the performer and the image with which it is merged.

However, despite the strong tone of such resonance, witnessing *Dirtday* did also present revealing distinctions between Anderson’s multimedia performance and live intermedial practice. Firstly, *Dirtday* was arranged spatially in a way which was reminiscent of a live music performance, with Anderson positioned primarily behind her ‘instruments’ – a mixing desk, violin and microphone - with only a few forays into other parts of the large stage. As experiencers, we sat directly in front of the stage, ready to ‘receive’. This is not mirrored within a live intermedial event, where the experiencers choose how to inhabit the space. In addition, the displacing of the projected images from the space in which they are generated creates a disjunctive relationship between my performing presence and the intermediality it generates. Such a disjunctive spatial relationship was not present in *Dirtday*, where the microphone interface, which was a primary tool of Anderson’s communication, and the end-on staging, enabled a clear connection between the gestures of her performance and their results - words, sounds, notes. Anderson herself comments, ‘one of my jobs as an artist is to make contact with an audience, and it has to be immediate’ (in Goldberg 2000: 11).

Anderson’s performing presence or persona onstage in *Dirtday* was distinctive, with her mode of delivering text crucial to this. Somehow combining both a conversational and highly choreographed, clipped and measured vocal delivery, Anderson transformed and played with the spoken word. This delivery and the performing presence it enacted – neither warm nor distant, neither comforting nor

intimidating – were a vital feature of the performance. My performing presence is a lot less distinct, more reticent, more muted and malleable, forming a contrast with Anderson's, which I identified as fixed, precise and beautiful. I am shifted by, and subject to, the enactment of technical mediums (see Chapter 4) in a way which I feel is distinct from Anderson, whose control, both of the mediums she manipulates and how they are used to 'amplify' and 'change' the narrative she generates, is consummate.

Linked to this is the way *Dirtday* was constructed. Anderson worked from an onstage score and script, to which she openly referred throughout the piece and which connected her work more directly with a musical performance, than a theatrical one. My onstage 'score' is distinct in that I work from prompts, often in the form of single words (see Chapter 2), as well as from offerings from experiencers, in the form of song lyrics, images and phrases. Such prompts represent a mechanism by which I can enact an improvised response to the material I gather for performance. In this sense, the work differs from Laurie Anderson's performance of *Dirtday*, where certainly the words and the overall structure of the piece were predetermined. Such an approach reflects her interest and engagement as an artist with 'storytelling' and communicating her engaging and idiosyncratic view of the world in general, but specifically the country of her birth, the USA, which is evoked through the dream-like, sinuous, motif-laden narratives which bind the performance together. The prompt-based improvised approach I employ does not automatically catalyse a form of storytelling, as Anderson's work does²³. In addition, the more diffused spatial set up referenced above also militates against the 'immediate...contact with an audience' (in Goldberg 2000: 11) which she favours.

Finally Laurie Anderson's work, similarly to her performing presence and the structure of the performance, has a clearer thematic focus than live intermedial practice. Her insistent and consistent engagement with America as an idea and a

²³ The lack of focus on storytelling in live intermedial practice connects it with a postdramatic tradition, which 'deliberately negates, or at least relegates to the background, the possibility of developing a narrative' (Lehmann 2006: 68).

place, throughout her career, is continued in this work. Though the ideas and thoughts are always filtered through songs and dreams, through anecdotes and the mournful pull of the violin, the 'critique' referenced by Goldberg still emerges strongly through these means. In contrast, live intermedial practice has no such intention or focus. It would be fair to say that this work is more diffused and indirect, more obfuscated and uncertain, more experimental in structure and form and less defined in terms of the performing presence at its heart.

The resonance with Laurie Anderson, particularly her manipulation of text, voice and sound, is a strong one. Indeed, I recognise that the practice I generate is not a VJing performance, precisely because it links strongly to the lineage in which Anderson's work exists. The 'live art' aspects of what I do - experimenting with displacement, playing with my role as solo performer in space, disrupting time, through a focus on improvisation – help to make live intermediality distinct from the manipulation of images to accompany music in a club environment.

1.4 Distinctions and Defining Features

Live intermedial practice, as demonstrated above, resonates with and draws on the traditions of VJing, live cinema and live audio-visual work, of video installation and finally live art. However, the work does not sit comfortably or easily within any of these lineages for all the reasons expounded and is a 'precarious' practice, positioned productively on the borders between disciplines. Such positioning affords it the capacity to interrogate concepts associated with each.

In conclusion, I propose that the distinctive features of this practice to be explored further, are as follows:

- This practice, though highly mediatised, represents an insistent focus on the actual, as well as play with the notion of the 'real', in relation to that of the virtual or 'simulated', creating a *lively mediatised space* (see Chapters 3 and 5)
- The dual role of the *performer-activator* as simultaneously a 'tool' for generating intermediality and a 'bearer of signs' generates a distinct site of instability. This leads to varying levels of 'presencing', as well as to an

interrogation of her positioning, in relation to the technical mediums, experiencers and the developing event itself (see Chapter 4)

- The practice is based on ***intermedial improvisation***, combining the activation of pre-existing materials with the live and improvised generation of text, sound and image, leading to a self-generating or 'autopoietic' event, which is constructed as a response to itself (see Chapter 5)
- Though often manifesting as a durational intermedial installation, the insistent presence and actions of the performer-activator always shift how this intermedial space is experienced (see Chapters 3 and 4), rendering it distinct from video art.
- Though sharing processes and practices with live art practitioners, live intermediality lacks the interventionist thrust and focus of much work in this lineage. It also troubles and destabilises the act of live performance through the simultaneous construction of the intermedial space (see Chapters 3 and 4)

Chapter 2: Research Methodology and the Developing Praxis

See Clip 5: Video Text – ‘PaR and live intermediality’

The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the primary methodology which has informed and framed this research project – Practice as Research (PaR) - and to outline how this methodology maps on to the ways in which the praxis has developed over the last three years. As such, it will start with a consideration of PaR methodologies, positioning the research in relation to such frameworks. This will be followed by an account of the process, focusing specifically on the choices made at various key points as to how to develop the practice, as well as charting the growth of particular strands of the work and my role within it.

Each of these strands is woven together through reference to my reflections and journals, documentation of events and studio work and finally experiencers’ responses. The primary events generated as part of the project will act as staging posts in the account, charting chronologically the key shifts and moments of clarity, challenge and change. Through linking from such shifts and findings to other sections of the writing, the new knowledge and insights through practice at the heart of this thesis are positioned within the chronology of the project.

2.1 Practice as Research Methodology in Live Intermedial Practice

From the inception of this project, its planning and execution have been informed by Nelson’s invocation of PaR as a ‘multi-mode inquiry’ requiring a number of concurrent strands of exploration which are woven together, primarily through the practice. This approach acknowledges that though ‘numerous instabilities’ exist in a research inquiry enacted through practice, ‘different kinds of evidence’ counteract this through ‘confirm[ing] the findings of a consciously articulated research inquiry’ (Nelson 2013: 6). As such, critical reading and spectatorship (know that) have been undertaken alongside studio-based practice development (know how). The input of critical reflection (know what) in a range of modes allows the elements to be woven together and, as such, to further the inquiry. This triangulation of ‘knowing’ is used by Nelson to articulate the dialogical relations between ‘doing-reflecting-reading-

articulating-doing' towards 'praxis' or 'theory imbricated within practice' (2013: 32-33)

The 'dialogical' aspects of how the multi-mode inquiry has been formulated and furthered have been a crucial aspect of how I have worked over the past three years. Like the mediums which I mix live as part of my practice, the concepts, processes, responses and reflections which have been produced as part of this project have also been consciously brought into dialogue with one another. Similarly to live intermedial practice, such dialogue has shifted my understanding of and response to aspects of the inquiry, yielding new insights, imperatives and directions for the research. As a practitioner, I respond to these resonances between things and similarly, as a researcher, that response and shift has been crucial in tracing the overall inquiry. This condition of 'reflexivity' which is present both in the practice and the research process is, as Brad Haseman suggests, 'foundational and constituting' (in Smith and Dean 2009: 218) of a research project conducted through practice. The nature of such research is that it shifts, and in doing so it moves the researcher with it.

This inquiry was also undertaken on the understanding that the primary modes of knowing are located in the practice; it is my 'key method of inquiry' (Nelson 2013: 8). Further to this, significant findings were accessed through sharing the work with others and opening it up to their responses and interactions. As a 'live' and improvised form, the act of performance is always a site of discovery and emergence, where 'genuinely novel properties' (Beckerman in Barrett and Bolt 2010: 6) arise. This is not to say that there have been no discoveries through the process of practising and developing the work in the studio and as such, both aspects have been fully documented (see below). As Haseman notes 'practitioner-researchers do not merely "think" their way through or out of a problem, but rather they "practise" to a resolution' (2010: 147). I do not claim that I have reached any final resolution in this project. However, what is resonant about Haseman's claim is that, in each instance, I have addressed issues, reverberations, challenges and questions in the inquiry through doing, through practising, through making and sharing work.

As such, I characterise what I do as 'praxis' and crucially for this thesis, praxis which through its distinctive 'doing-thinking' affords substantial new insights in the fields of live media and intermedial performance. Janis Jefferies points out that 'artists' studios...can be significant places for the creation and critique of new knowledge' (2010: 31) and I also locate new 'knowings' in the doing of the work; the praxis affords insights into modes of live media creation and performance, which speak back to current discourses. Equally, it reformulates and responds to over-arching conceptions of what intermediality is and does in performance. Finally, it repositions the live media performer in the work, finding new vocabulary to articulate the particular 'doings' which form part of her practice. Therefore, following Bolt, I assert that 'practice becomes theory generating' (2010: 33).

To sum up, though I have followed and been informed by the theories around PaR noted above, the following account of process also charts the ways in which I have developed my own approaches to the business of 'doing-thinking'. Such approaches include modes of making and activating which are particular to the practice of live intermediality. Others sit in the forms and tools chosen for practising documentation and critical reflection within a practical research project. As stated in the conclusion, such developments and approaches form part of the contribution this thesis makes to the field of PaR in the performing arts.

2.1.1 Documentation

Each of the events of live intermedial practice cited below has been documented in a variety of ways. As in any long term project, the acres of writing, video footage, material culture and ephemera, still images and audio are both bewildering and ultimately unhelpful in their totality to articulate and evidence this particular inquiry. As such, in this chapter and throughout the writing, documentation is selectively employed to allow the reader/viewer to access the thread of the inquiry as it developed and also to mark significant moments of discovery and shift in the praxis.

Acknowledging that no mode of documentation can ever be a neutral or objective 'capturing' of the work²⁴, I have drawn on a range of strategies throughout the past three years in order to access different views of and perspectives on the practice as it is developed and shared. These are listed below:

- Video footage from fixed cameras in the space
- Video footage from a moving camera in the space
- Video footage from experiencers in the space
- Responses from experiencers via email, visitors' book, postcard and audio recorder
- In-studio writing and responses
- Critically reflective writing, within a process of creation
- Reflective writing in the wake of a particular event
- Audio responses generated from inside an event
- Video footage, stills and audio from studio-based processes
- Notes from contact with colleagues and supervisors within a process of creation
- A blog charting the process of creation, including stills, video footage, reflection and written documentation of the process

It is important methodologically to note that documentation has not just been captured for the purpose of articulating this inquiry. Rather, as a solo performer-activator, with no script and utterly imbricated in the doing of my own work, documentation is vital in revealing to me in retrospect, aspects of the work which I simply could not access in the real time of a studio session or performance. As such, the video recordings, images, experiencer responses and audio gathered from such events and sessions allow me to construct for myself what happened and place this in relation to my 'insider' account of the doing of the practice.

2.2 Origins: Triggers, Motivations and Somewhere to Begin

The practice of live intermediality emerged from my work on the MA in Performance Practices and Research at Central School²⁵. As part of my on-going inquiries within and through practice, two key elements came together; one was an exploration of

²⁴ As Reason notes the very notion of documenting or 'capturing' live practice is problematic in that in the documentation, 'the thing itself is always absent' (2006: 36) and therefore that to document is to engage with 'preserved traces' rather than 'complete presence' (37).

²⁵ Now the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (RCSSD)

the dislocation of affective content and the other was the discovery of digital media as tools to enact this exploration. Working from a Derridean conception of the sign substitution as indicating a 'lack' (1978) and further exploring the rupturing of a 'mark' from its origin (1977), I engaged in a process of re-contextualising and substituting my own and others' affective responses through positioning them in an intermedial space. The culmination of this project, *The Mark of Affect* (see **Clip 6**), is what I consider to be the first live intermedial event²⁶.

My primary interest arising from this initial work was the way in which the live intermedial space I generated as part of the practice enacted a play with, and dispersal/dislocation of, liveness. It also highlighted, through my choice to be present and to mix media elements live, a dual role in the space and time of performance as one who was both performing within and activating the intermedial space. From this point onwards, I have maintained the term performer-activator in order to capture an instability related to my positioning in live intermedial practice (see Chapter 4).

2.3 Cover: Eager and Experimental

The initial articulation of my inquiry through intermedial practice was as an investigation of 'new concepts of liveness in live intermedial performance'²⁷ and early studio work involved interrogating aspects of liveness within the work (see **Clip 7**). A key thread which emerged was developing the live element of the work through improvisatory practice within the live intermedial framework; not just mixing live but doing so without a predetermined structure in place, working from prompts to conceive and create in the moment. My reflections after one of the first improvisatory experiments were as follows: 'It's incredibly difficult to sustain belief

²⁶ The term 'event' is used throughout this account. Though live intermediality is 'iterable' (Derrida 1977) through its consistent features, this project also comprises a series of distinct and singular 'events'. See Chapter 5 for more on live intermedial events as 'singular iterations'.

²⁷ Though this project arose from an interest in exploring liveness in live intermediality, the focus on well worn arguments around liveness and mediatisation (Phelan 1993, Auslander 1999, Fischer-Lichte 2006, Power 2008) soon conceded to a more distinct emphasis on the practice as an interrogation of current conceptions/models of intermediality and live media performance.

more than anything else...in the interest of what is being created, as well as working without inhibitions' (Scott (a) 2011).

Such responses have continued into the present work; it is still difficult to sustain belief and still challenging to operate 'without inhibitions'. However, with regard to the latter, I am not sure that I now seek to perform with a 'lack of inhibitions' as I once did. In fact, conversely, I find value in the particular forms of inhibition which characterise my work and would cite these as part of what renders the practice distinctive (see 4.3 and 4.4).

Two months after starting the project and in the light of these studio-based experiments, I had the opportunity to present work as part of the Space for Change project in London, a multi-arts platform, where visual arts, film, performance and dance were all housed in two relatively small studio spaces in Kentish Town. I chose to perform twice, firstly presenting a re-staging of *The Mark of Affect* and secondly, experimenting with my newly found durational and improvisatory mode through an event called *Cover* (see **Figure 6** and **Clip 8**).

My feeling after presenting *The Mark of Affect* was that the piece felt 'stale'; my actions overly rehearsed and familiar. In contrast, my experience of *Cover* was both refreshing and illuminating. Working from my studio experiments, I set up the piece as a ninety-minute event (see Appendix A, Item 1). I invited those present to come and go from the space as they chose and to contribute to it through offering song titles, which I would then use as prompts for my improvisation through sound and image; essentially operating as a one (wo)man live intermedial cover band.

Cover

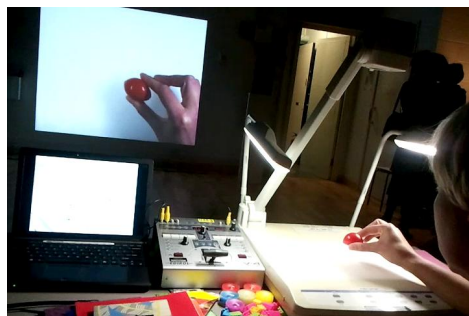
Date: 3/12/11

Space: small white wall studio

Duration: 90 minutes

Location: Space for Change Project, Kentish Town – an exhibition ‘featuring a diverse selection of work in a variety of media’ (Space for Change 2011)

Configuration: Performer-activator at one end, with images projected onto the white wall opposite. Experiencers sitting on cushions to the right of the performer-activator. Food and drink available and experiencers coming and going from the space.



Kit: Book-reader, vision mixer, loop pedal, laptop and cabling to speakers

Interactive strategies: audience asked to offer song titles through posting them into a box

Materials: lines from my favourite songs, text extracts (see Appendix A), videos taken from youtube of cars driving and scenes from the film ‘Control’ and a range of objects including lego, a red nose, coloured candles, playing cards and cut up birthday cards



All images taken from footage captured by Scott Millar at the Space for Change Project, 3/12/11

Figure 6: Cover (2011) information sheet

The event itself was characterised by a more interactive and outward positioning on my part as performer-activator. I conversed with those present, mixed up their songs irreverently, engaged in improvising monologues to the live feed camera and in the space of projection and experimented with my ability to respond in the moment to the conditions of the event. Though I composed elements in advance, including an order for the movements and possible combinations of elements (see Appendix A, Item 2), this was thoroughly dismantled in the doing through my desire to honour and respond to the contributions of the experiencers, which 'led' the work in directions I could not have anticipated.

2.4 re-cite: Reverence and Retreat

Gilbert Ryle points out that 'it is the essence of intelligent practices that one performance is modified by its predecessors' (in Nelson 2013: 61) and this has been my approach to developing live intermediality as praxis, with reflections and emergent interests from each event informing the movement towards the next. Following *Cover* for instance, I worked from the emergent improvisatory mode I had discovered, as well as towards addressing questions which had arisen about my role within the practice.

The research trajectory has also been enacted through testing and experimenting with different additions, augmentations and replacements to the technical kit outlined in Chapter 1. In developing the practice after *Cover*, I became aware of software which could be used to mix both music and video live; Ableton Live and Modul8 respectively. In investigating these two programmes, I was looking specifically at how the pre-recorded and 'sampled' sonic and visual elements could be mixed with live singing and live feed image work. Ultimately, I chose to use Modul8, but to invest in a keyboard sampler and audio mixer (see **Figure 7**) rather than Ableton, as I was able to work more effectively with Modul8 live. In addition, the choice of a sampler, with different sound samples attached to each key, in conjunction with an external sound mixer, was a way of exposing the sonic operations in the practice so that all my actions were not confined to a laptop. This contrasts with a lot of the work of a VJ or live cinema practitioner, whose operations

are typically contained in this way and which therefore cannot be as easily 'read' in relation to their outcome on the screen or through the speakers (see 1.3).



Figure 7: The keyboard sampler and audio mixer in action (Image taken by Matt Taylor at *re-cite*, 6/10/12).

An immediate effect of the addition of new technology was my positioning in generating the live intermedial space. I discovered that having more technological interfaces and affordances²⁸ at my disposal placed greater focus on my capacity to improvise with these effectively, which kept me firmly in my 'activating' position in the technical area.

In terms of the material I gathered in preparation for the studio-based process, some significant shifts took place. Firstly, I decided that I would employ only footage which

²⁸ In employing this term, I am drawing on Donald Norman's definition of affordance as 'the relationship between a physical object and a person...jointly determined by the qualities of the object and the abilities of the agent' (2013: 10-11). Affordance is discovered through repeated interaction with technical mediums and shifts according to that developing relationship.

I had created myself, rather than 'found' footage from online or other sources (see **Clip 9**). In contrast, the material I gathered for the sonic elements of the practice was all 'found' in that I was drawing on samples of existing songs, lyrics and snippets which I would also activate live through singing, looping and combining these in a variety of modes.

It was at this stage that the material which I was using started to operate according to certain, generally unacknowledged principles, as follows, which have persisted towards a distinct aesthetic in the practice:

- Video footage, which focuses on details, or close ups of fairly everyday, banal moments: rain on a pavement, a train door closing, a tap running, fireworks in the sky, water crashing on feet
- Snippets/refrains from folk songs, blues, country and more contemporary genres: generally plaintive, longing, melancholy
- Samples from songs, including synth and guitar riffs, drum beats and sustained sounds
- Simple, bright objects, such as lego, post-it notes and pieces of coloured card.

My delight in combining these materials in the studio was all about the ways in which they could inform and shift each other; in how the manipulation of objects, the human voice and live writing on Modul8 in combination could sometimes disrupt and destabilise meaning and, on other occasions, crystallise an affect (see **Clip 10**). I reflected on 'my 'naked' human voice, my bad writing and typing, placed in the midst of the media and tech which supports but which also bumps up against it' (Scott (a) 2012). The augmented kit was allowing me to view my human actions in relation to the media in new and distinct ways, where the slick transitioning from one clip to another in Modul8 would be in conversation with my hesitant and error strewn typing and where the smooth fading from one sonic source to another would be destabilised by the cracks in my voice, played out through the loop pedal.

Another counterpoint to any move towards a more slickly produced event, as noted above, was the objects that I chose to work with under the live feed, which, broadly speaking, were drawn from craft packs and children's toys, sourced from local pound

shops. I was drawn towards strong primary colours, but also to simple objects, such as lego blocks, felt and coloured paper (see **Figure 8**). The intersection of these objects with the video clips employed became a strongly developing aspect of the practice in this phase of the work and led to my characterisation of the practice as ***actually virtual*** in its deliberate colliding of elements in the merged projected image (see 3.4.4).



Figure 8: A selection of the objects employed in *re-cite* (Image taken by Matt Taylor at *re-cite*, 6/10/12).

Finally, other elements, generated in real time through the affordance of the Modul8 software, became part of the practice in this process. The most prominent of these were writing live through a text 'module', so that the words were typed instantly onto the screen and drawing live through a 'Paint' function, which allowed me to scrawl at will over existing images and generate blocks and circles of colour on the screen. Again, these elements, though 'technologically wrought', represent my move insistently towards the intersections between mediatised elements and their live creation and activation, as well as my commitment to a DIY aesthetic, where slick and virtuosic production is not paramount. In my studio reflections, I noted that the distinctive features of the practice as I viewed it were:

DIY/homemade/rough edges/the edges between the actual and the virtual/an exploration of the human in relation to and within technology/an exploration of an improvising mode of performance/the search for the affective response and state/a wish to be both seen and hidden (Scott (a) 2012).

As noted above, in tandem with developing the technological capacity of live intermedial practice and working with different materials, part of the movement between *Cover* and the next iteration, *re-cite*, was towards a mode of production which was improvisatory. In the studio, a strategy which emerged to facilitate the intermedial improvisation was to interact with the media and materials according to written prompts which I chose at random. The initial set of prompts I used were all single words which I described as 'affective states':

- Restless
- Joyful
- Conflicted
- Incandescent
- Grieving
- Open
- Isolated

In responding to these words in the moment of live generation, the effort was to configure an intermedial space which in some way corresponded to or resonated with that particular state. Though the words themselves shifted through the development process, the prompts I employed in *re-cite* still worked from these principles, in that they were single words or phrases which described an affective state. In this way the whole process of improvisation was 'affectively led'. This also resonates with the principles I employed in gathering material, particularly the snippets from songs, which were often the lines and moments which resonated with me on an affective level.

re-cite took the form of two 2-hour events in large black box studios. Experiencers could come and go from the space and were invited to move around at will (see **Figure 9**).

re-cite

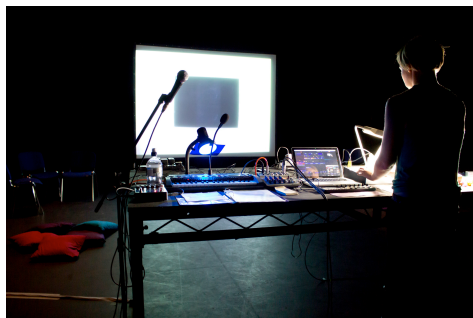
Date: 4/10/12 and 6/10/12

Space: large black box studios

Duration: 2 x 2 hour events

Location: Collisions - the annual festival, which showcases PaR at Central, allowing PhD candidates to 'collectively engage with what it means to be researching through practice and to share this with a wider academic audience' (Collisions 2013).

Configuration: Performer-activator in the centre of the studio, with images projected onto a large screen opposite. Experiencers sitting on chairs/cushions between the screen and technical area and invited to move around/come and go from the space as they chose. Low lighting in the studio



Kit: Book-reader, vision mixer, loop pedal, laptop with VJ software, keyboard sampler, audio mixer and cabling to speakers, free standing projection screen

Interactive strategies: experiencers asked at the beginning of each iteration to whisper words in the performer/activator's ear and offer prompts on paper respectively.

Materials: lyrics from a variety of songs (see Appendix A), video clips filmed by me on a phone camera and a range of objects, including coloured material, post it notes, lego and coloured paper



All images taken by Alex Murphy and Matt Taylor at Collisions, 4-6/10/12

Figure 9: *re-cite* (2013) information sheet

In reflecting on *re-cite*, it was my role and presence in the space, as well as the nature of the experiencers' responses and interactions which emerged as areas requiring further exploration and interrogation. Firstly, because of the size of the new kit, 'I and my equipment dominated the space' in a way which was completely distinct from my experience performing in *Cover*.

In addition, what I had not anticipated fully was the effect of improvising for two hours without a break, while simultaneously 'managing' a sizeable kit and the dynamics of the work. Because of these concurrent demands upon me, I reflected that 'I remained in a distanced and dislocated state throughout' and that:

I found it impossible in the moment, to break that, to speak directly to those in the space and to facilitate interaction in that way...I felt immersed in a very particular role...so much so that though I became aware of the desirability of more direct communication and at points, was on the verge of acting upon such urges, it never came to pass (Scott (a) 2012).

I also reflected that overall, 'those in the space were not mobilised by the practice and that by far the most common response was to sit and watch the images being generated on the screen and listen to the sounds' (Scott (a) 2012).

Despite my identification as being 'distanced, 'closed off' and the lack of direct interaction, I also noted that 'my awareness of others in the space was acute' and that 'the sharing felt exposing and hugely risky':

I feel that I am utterly putting myself on the line through this work, it is deeply personal in a totally indistinct and unanalysed way. I feel like it draws on the deepest parts of me and allows me to present them as I never could through any directly representational work, or indeed through a more direct live art performance (Scott (a) 2012).

This insider account of the work evidences the way in which the experience for me was characterised by a duality that I refer to as ***distanced proximity*** (see 5.5.1). Though dislocated by and through the operation of the work, I was acutely aware of the experiencers' presence. Though always displacing and re-positioning my improvised responses to each moment, those responses were 'deeply personal'.

This duality is also present as a thread running through the responses to *re-cite* (see Appendix B, Item 1), offered through a visitors' book, emails and postcards. While some experiencers characterised my presence as 'very comfortable and confident' and 'wished for more presence', others commented that the experience was 'intimate and personal', that 'you are there in there in every aspect'. In addition, though many people read into the shifting abstraction of the intermedial space, identifying distinct meanings, such as 'the contrast between body and mind' or 'the stages of life', others saw only an 'autobiographical deeply personal interior monologue'.

re-cite revealed that the practice has the capacity to 'immerse' and 'mesmerise', 'absorb' and 'captivate' experiencers, whose primarily sedentary occupation of the space in this event, focusing on the images and sounds, did not equate to a lack of engagement. Indeed, the feedback shows that those who attended were 'mobilised' by the experience if not to move and interact, then certainly to think, feel, imagine and contemplate.

2.5 Town: Dispersed and Disgruntled

The next stage in the project was characterised not as much by a shift in style, mode and kit as the last had been, but rather a distinct change in context. My application to a moving image festival called *Equations*, at the Kingsgate Gallery in Kilburn, was accepted and I was assigned a slot of one hour to present my practice, which I titled *Town* (see **Figure 10**).

In preparation for the event, which took place in January 2013, I did not shift the mode of the practice. Rather, I changed the materials I was working with and gathered video footage, song lyrics and snippets, texts and objects which loosely related to city living as I and others experienced it (see Appendix A, Item 4).

Town

Date: 24/01/13

Space: split level gallery space

Duration: 1 hour

Location: Equations – a moving image festival seeking 'to explore the commonalities in contemporary artists moving image, as well as the issues that arise in its screening' (Equations 2013). The evening of 24th was a live event with three live media performers on the bill

Configuration: Performer-activator on the lower level of the gallery, with images projected onto a white wall opposite. Experiencers mainly occupying the upper level space behind her, where other installations were present and drinks available.



Kit: Book-reader, vision mixer, loop pedal, laptop with VJ software, keyboard sampler, audio mixer and cabling to speakers, white wall for projections

Interactive strategies: none stated

Materials: lyrics from a variety of songs and text from T S Eliot's *Preludes*. (see Appendix A), video clips filmed by me on a phone camera and a range of objects, including foil, post it notes, lego and paper. All material loosely themed around the city.



All images taken from footage captured at the Equations event by Scott Millar, 24/01/13

Figure 10: *Town* (2013) information sheet

The work was positioned in a split-level gallery space, as part of programming which included live media performances and an installation of video art on the upper level of the gallery. The live space occupied the lower level and I was positioned with my back to most of those present on the upper level, facing the far wall of the gallery, where the images were projected (see **Figure 11**). Initially, this seemed ideal, as I was ‘sheltered in my positioning, yet also still present within the space’, which I identified as ‘a kind of modification of the centrality of my positioning in *re-cite*’ (Scott (a) 2013).

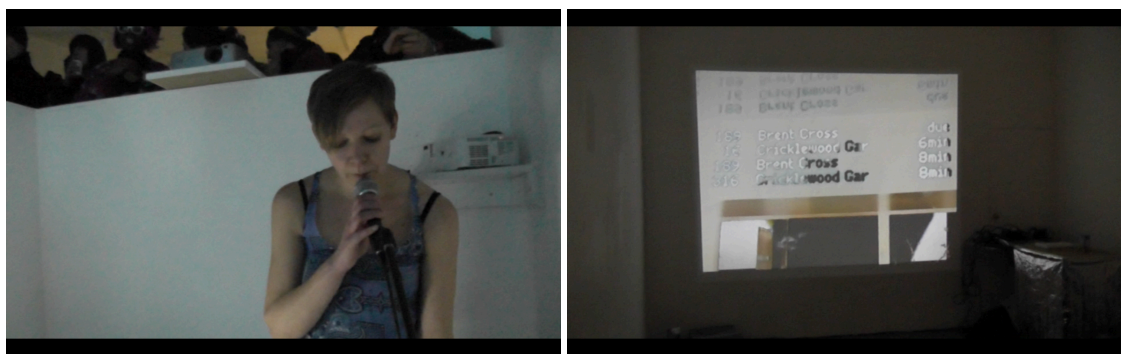


Figure 11: The performer-activator positioned below the experiencers (left) and the images projected opposite her (right) (Images taken from footage of *Town* captured by Scott Millar 24/01/13).

However, as the event progressed, certain aspects of the space started to impact upon me and therefore on the practice which was generated. Firstly, I was occupying a distinct area, which was not easily entered by experiencers, because of the light of the projector. Instead, they were mainly gathered behind and above me, which was unnerving and gave me little access to them. In addition, the sonic set-up comprised two large speakers which were placed in different areas, with one positioned behind me on the top level of the gallery. Because of this arrangement, as I sang:

My voice was split and part of it played out in this other space in a way which I immediately found, as a notion, disturbing. Something left my control at this point. People could listen to the vocals fairly intimately and not in relation to me. The sound was not immersive and surround, but rather distributed in the space. I was dispersed in a way that was beyond my knowledge – I really didn’t like that (Scott (a) 2013).

This response is indicative of how much of this practice operates as a system which is feeding back to and indeed *feeding* me as a component within it. My lack of access to aspects of the intermedial space I was creating destabilised my experience of the event as a whole which, in turn, impacted on the practice created, characterised, from my insider perspective, by an apologetic and uncertain quality.

The one hour installation involved around 15-20 minutes of experiencers giving attention to what was being generated, followed by another 40 minutes, where the majority were moving around, talking and generally disengaged, in marked contrast to *re-cite*. In addition, unlike *re-cite*, where I was able to set out the terms of engagement for the piece, in *Town* I found myself unable to do even that and therefore launched into the practice without a preamble or indication to the experiencers as to how they could or should treat the work. In reflecting on why the event operated in this way, the following were my primary thoughts:

My work, as it always is, was led by my feeling and responses to the space, becoming more diffident and centred in me and the material – it wasn't reaching out effectively...I respond to my own feelings, I get trapped inside a system. I am aware of others, but my work with the machines is not led by what they want – I am a brick wall in that sense (Scott (a) 2013).

Further reflection on and analysis of the 'system' produced within live intermedial practice is located in Section 5.3, where I address the autopoietic system which generates a live intermedial event.

Another finding emergent from my experience at Kingsgate Gallery was through comparing my work to live media practitioner and VJ, Morgan Hislop and Michael Speechley. They performed a live media set where Morgan mixed live and pre-recorded sounds, while video footage was projected over him and mixed live by Michael. This was followed by a VJ set by Michael, which enacted a visual response to the music played by a DJ. As part of this section of the evening, experiencers were prompted to occupy the lower gallery area, as they had not previously in my work,

and dance in response to the beats and moving images. I commented that in terms of the mixing of image and sound:

This is what happens in my practice too, but the source and manifestation of the words, the physicality and humanity of my bad writing or inaccurate typing is not present ... To be crude, this work doesn't think – it isn't constructed in that way – it loops continuously and it looks for reciprocity in the experiencers. It is there to build on their experience of being in a club with drinks and dancing (Scott (a) 2013).

In reflection, I would say that it is not that work such as this does not *think*, but that it thinks and knows in a very different way from the practice I generate, intersecting with experiencers in distinct modes and with different intentions. Part of live intermedial practice is about placing a rough graft or collision between the performer-activator and the mediatised space, interrogating that intersection and making the virtual and actual speak to each other, through employing live feed, live voice and live, improvised writing within the work. This form of practice revels in the edges and gaps and perceptual problems of such grafts, but as a result, does not and cannot manifest as a slickly produced sound/image combo, such as that generated by Michael and Morgan.

As a researcher, my previous theoretical identification of the liminal positioning of this work between practices and disciplines became at this juncture a hard reality. Situated in relation to work which was more in the realm of VJ culture, the practice of live intermediality was problematic, both for me as performer-activator and for those who experienced it and clearly wanted and expected live media work in this context to prompt their active experience of the event, through generating sounds and images to dance to. I was unable through this event, either to create a space which would operate in this way, or to 'offer' the practice to the experiencers: 'My work is too fragile, too spare, too slow and uncertain for this environment. It doesn't fill the space as they did, it doesn't enable movement and mobility' (Scott (a) 2013).

Despite such negative reflections, I was able to move forward with both a more refined understanding of live intermediality in relation to VJ culture and indeed a productive set of questions surrounding my response to this environment:

- Why was I not able to address those present and draw them into the practice?
- What was it about the system and my positioning within it, which stopped me opening the experience up to those present?
- Why and in what ways was I boundaried by my role within live intermedial practice?
- Is this practice as live, open and interactive as I think it is?

2.6 *Prelude: Exposed and Engaged*

An interim sharing of live intermedial practice, presented as part of a research day at the University of Surrey, was a significant moment within the project. This hour-long installation, located in one of the university's dance studios, was set up as a drop in/drop out lunchtime session. Titled *Prelude*, it drew on much of the material I had used for previous events, but differed in its technical set up (see **Figure 12**). For purely practical reasons, I travelled to Guildford without the heavy book-reader, which was replaced with a webcam. This operated in the same way, as a live feed input to the system, but plugged straight into the laptop, thus negating the need for a vision mixer. In addition, the speakers in the space were not working. I therefore had to work without the layered and amplified sound which had become so much a feature of the practice and this had profound implications on my operations and actions within the event. As I reflected immediately after *Prelude*:

Things change without that all-pervasive element of the practice. It feels very bare and lean and thin without it. I feel unmasked and vulnerable. However, does it mean that I have to open things up a little more? It could be argued that sound and the loop pedal in particular is the technical medium which immerses me most within the system, which operates on me in the strongest way during the practice in performance...without the ability to surround myself and others with the blanket of sound, the space between and around us arguably became more active or open – somewhere that needed to be filled with something (Scott (a) 2013).

Prelude

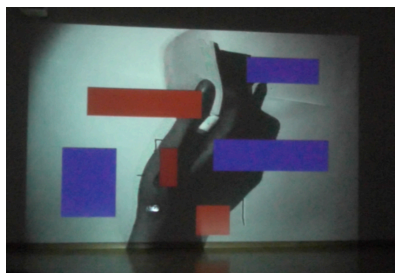
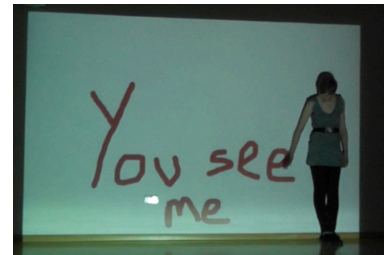
Date: 22/05/13

Space: medium sized, white wall dance studio

Duration: 1 hour

Location: A research day for PhD candidates at the University of Surrey, many of whom were involved in researching dance and choreographic practice

Configuration: Performer-activator positioned at one end of the studio, with images projected onto a white wall opposite. Experiencers mainly occupying the space adjacent, though some ventured into the projected images and interacted with the kit.



Kit: Live feed camera, loop pedal, laptop with VJ software, keyboard sampler, audio mixer and cabling to speakers, which were non-operational

Interactive strategies: I approached experiencers directly to encourage them to place objects under the live feed camera and write on post-its there

Materials: lyrics from a variety of songs, video clips filmed by me on a phone camera and objects, including lego, post its and paper. All material was recycled from previous events.



All images taken from footage captured at *Prelude* by a video camera positioned in the space, 22/05/13

Figure 12: *Prelude* (2013) information sheet

My response to the perceived gaps in the practice was to approach the experiencers directly and encourage them to interact with the space, particularly through the live feed camera and objects, post-its and pens I had placed under it. In addition, I sang without amplification and placed myself within the projected images I was creating. As I reflected, this was of great significance as:

It was the first time since 'Cover', over a year ago that my unamplified voice was heard and that I stepped away from the table to be part of the images I was generating. Again, the first time that I addressed people directly in the space and the first time that anyone has ever been asked to interact with the space and images...The clumsy attempts today to engage people in the act of creation certainly need work, but I was working hard to break something – an invisible barrier which I have erected and which was dismantled today through both accident (no sound) and intention (I knew I wanted to disrupt my format) (Scott (a) 2013).

This response was an emergent property of the practice in these conditions. Following Haseman, I 'practised' my way through the challenges in this event and as a result, new forms of knowing arose, furthering my understanding of the ways in which I could be positioned in the practice (see Chapters 4 and 5).

The final and crucial aspect was a moment towards the end of the session when only two experiencers were present in the space. Though I was not at this point directly addressing them as I had done previously, one of them started to move in, and in relation to, the projected images. At that point, I was generating shapes and colour using the 'paint' function in Modul8 and as such, was able to create reciprocal movement, through shifting the colours and shapes in relation to the movement and shape of her body in the space. This was a wordless exchange, which was led by her initial offer and sustained through our reciprocal engagement in the intermedial space. Though the camera had run out of disk space by that point, leaving no documentation of the moment in action, I deliberately saved the image which had been created in response to that moment on Modul8 (see **Figure 13**). It is an important 'mark' in the space of this developing project, as it represents the first moment that an experiencer interacted with the projected space of an event. It was

also a spur to my inquiry, which prompted me to move forward in investigating the interactive capacity of the practice.

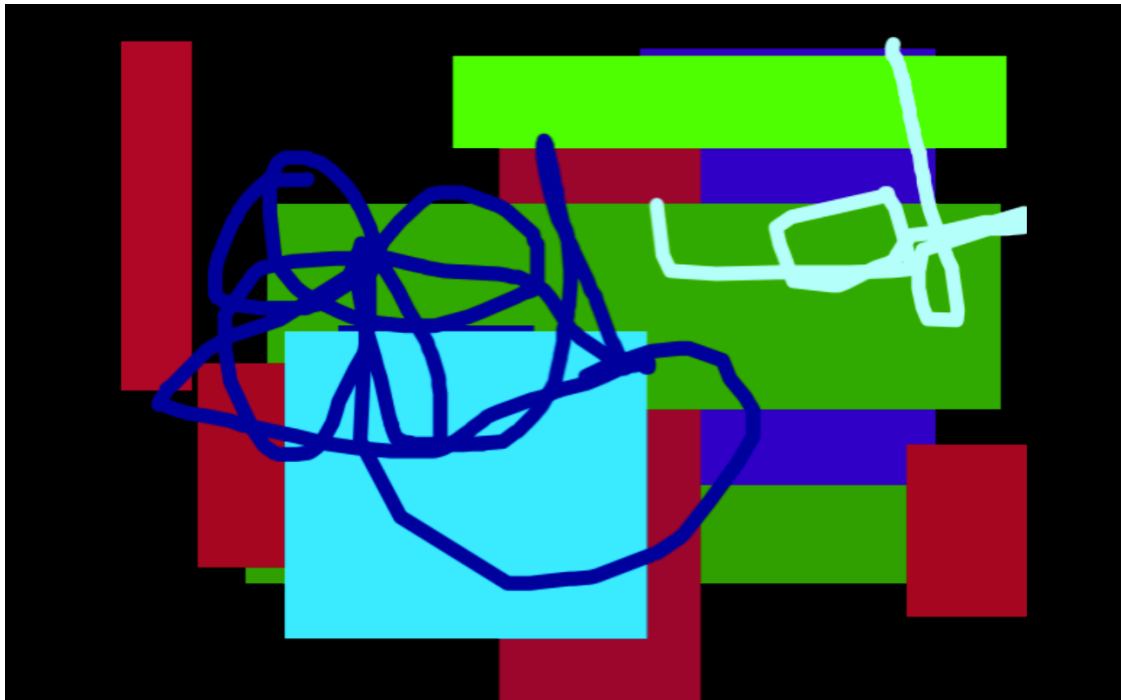


Figure 13: Screen capture of the image created through my ‘dance’ with the experienter in Surrey (22/05/13).

2.7 *auto-play*: Individuals and Interactivity

The next stage in this project represented a distinct shift in focus, led and prompted by the work created previously, as well as experiencers’ and my own responses to these events. Firstly, the openness and potential interactivity of live intermedial practice had become a present and pressing question. In response, I moved to explore and interrogate exactly how this aspect of the practice could be developed and framed. The complete process of research and development for this event was documented through regular blog entries (see Appendix C), where the practical and conceptual explorations in which I was engaged are charted.

Through actively opening up the practice, focus inevitably shifted back to my own role in facilitating and activating this. I was drawn back to feedback, offered by an experienter to *re-cite*, in which my claims to openness and playful improvisation as a performer-activator were questioned:

At the moment it seems to me that the practice is very controlled and organized, so as an audience I am not sure what is the level of improvisation that you are using and so a bit frustrating and confusing at a times. The good thing when improvising is that the audience is aware how vulnerable you are as a performer in that moment because you are making it for the first time with them...and I did not feel that yesterday....However I am not sure you want to achieve that... (Experiencer feedback to *re-cite* 4/10/12 – see Appendix B, Item 1)

There was something in what this experiencer said which was resonant with my current area of inquiry. To share my ‘vulnerability’ and the act of improvisation with others was a way of opening up that aspect of the practice so that we were making together.

This event also saw me shift the technical kit in two distinct ways. The book-reader was replaced by a live feed camera and light-box (see **Figure 14**), which, in practice, operated in a similar way, but without an external vision mixer. In addition, I added another source to my sonic armoury; a Korg ‘kaossilator’. This handheld pad synthesiser allows a number of predetermined sounds and beats to be manipulated. Such sounds can also be looped and sustained, so that they sit under the looped voice or in relation to song samples. The rationale for including this third sound source was twofold. Firstly, it allowed me to work with a range of beats, interrupting the often floating, mesmeric looped voice and song refrains; it had the potential to shift mood and make the sonic elements more lively. In addition, the kaossilator fed beautifully into some of my key inquiries, in that this device produces entirely synthetic sound, which is offset by its appeal to live play, improvisation and interaction. I also enjoyed placing my ‘bare’ human voice against and in relation to such synthetic sounds.

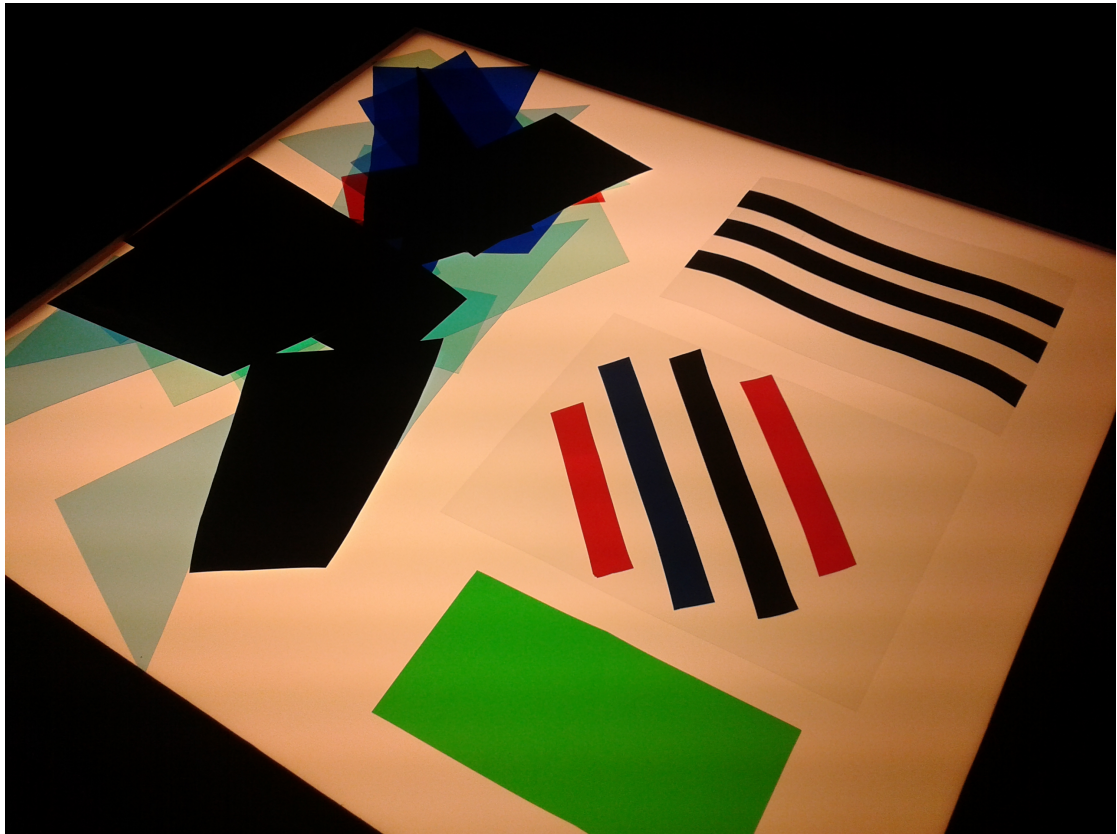


Figure 14: The light-box. A live feed camera suspended over this space transmits the image to the laptop, where it can be mixed with pre-recorded footage and then projected onto the screen/wall (Image taken by J Scott 2/10/13).

The initial studio process involved gathering material, adjusting to the augmented kit and also exploring different prompts for improvisation. Rather than working from affective words and phrases, as I had done in previous events, I instead used instructional prompts (see Appendix A, Item 5). These allowed me to build and shift a mood according to the material and my response to it, rather than predetermining the mood which I was attempting to capture through that work. This shift in practice was also key to my developing ideas around the importance of the processes of creation and the notion of *inter-construction*²⁹ (see 5.2).

The latter stages in the process were directed towards framing the space for experiencers, through areas of the system which could operate as interactive sites. The first and obvious choice, given the experience described above in *Prelude*, was to offer the experiencers the opportunity to interact with the projected images I was

²⁹ Inter-construction is the term I use to describe a method of generating live intermediality, which involves actively and deliberately moving between different technical mediums, so that the processes as well as the outcomes of those processes are interwoven.

creating within the work. The second was the live feed camera space, which was accessible and possibly less 'exposing' than the former.

A significant turning point in the form and nature of the event came through exploring the set-up with a colleague. In working with her, according to my interactive framing around the two sites referenced above, it became clear that our interacting through media without others present was both challenging and very special, generating a mode of intimacy between myself and the experiencer.

In response to this discovery, the event, now titled *auto-play*, was framed as a multi-mode experiment, where I would firstly invite single experiencers for ten minute one-to-one encounters, then pairs of experiencers, again for ten minutes in the space and finally, open up the space as I had initially planned for a thirty minute 'finale' (see **Figure 15**). This would allow me to test out these different models of experiencing and interacting with the live intermedial system and gather responses from those operating in these distinct contexts. Finally, I decided to add in a third interactive space – the microphone - which would allow those present to contribute to the sonic elements of the practice.

The 'auto-players' who attended were given written instructions before entering the space (see Appendix A, Item 6). I also configured a range of documentation methods to provide a 'multi-perspectival' record of this piece. These included two fixed cameras in the space, a mobile camera held by the experiencer to film if they wished, an audio recorder and visitors' book to capture experiencer responses as they left the space. Finally, I used a second audio recorder to respond to questions which I had devised in consultation with my supervisor (see Appendix A, Item 7) and which were devised to interrogate my immediate experience of interacting with the experiencer(s).

auto-play

Date: 2/10/13

Space: large black box studio

Duration: 2 hours 30 mins (1 hour of 10 min one-to-ones, 1 hour of 10 min pair experiences and ½ hour 'open space')

Location: Collisions – the annual festival, which showcases PaR at Central, allowing PhD candidates to 'collectively engage with what it means to be researching through practice and to share this with a wider academic audience' (Collisions 2013).

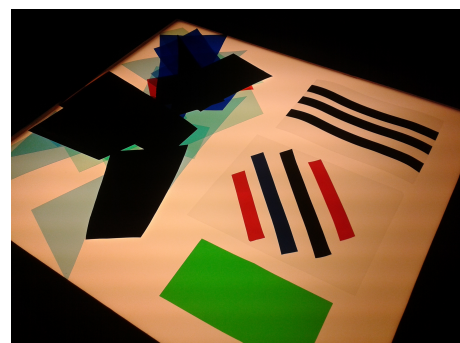
Configuration: Performer-activator on one side of the studio, with images projected onto a large, wide sheet of white material opposite. Experiencers entering the space according to assigned time slots and free to move around as they chose.



Kit: Lightbox and live feed camera, loop pedal, laptop with VJ software, keyboard sampler, kaossilator, audio mixer and cabling to speakers, projector and white material operating as projection screen

Interactive strategies: experiencers or 'auto-players' given written instructions as to three possible sites of play in the space – screen, lightbox and microphone (see Appendix A, Item 6)

Materials: Song excerpts, video clips filmed by me on a camera phone plus coloured gels and clear acetate to manipulate and write on under the live feed camera



All images taken by footage captured at Collisions by Alex Murphy, 2/10/13

Figure 15: *auto-play* (2013) information sheet

My perception of *auto-play* was that the one-to-one encounters were the most successful in that ‘there was a sense of collaboration towards the co-creation of a space’ and I found it ‘easier to engage with a single person’s wants and needs, to respond to their experience and generate a reciprocal engagement’ (Scott (a) 2013). This is not to say that all one-to-one experiences were characterised by this engagement. One encounter for instance, generated a distinct separation between the experiencer and me, where they chose to film, rather than directly engage with the sites of play offered. The response this ‘auto-player’ offered after the experience was that ‘the environment had a strange binocular quality, a bit like trying to write with two pens – I was both in and outside; a kind of gap opened up between the experience – you inserted me into this gap and there I remain’ (see Appendix B, Item 2). This articulate and insightful response reflects what I also experienced in our encounter, which was a sense of disjuncture and disconnection, of operating in parallel modes, which never resulted in exchange or reciprocity.

In contrast, other single experiencers expressed enjoyment and pleasure in the space which was offered through their bespoke event and what it allowed them to create:

- ‘it was very playful...I felt like a child entered a lunar park – there is so many things he can do’
- ‘You created an environment that made media so inviting’
- ‘The intermedial elements seem so much more alive and playful’
- ‘I love being allowed to play’
- ‘I loved playing WITH someone with no expectation’

(Single experiencer responses to *auto-play* 02/10/13 – see Appendix B, Item 2)

As can be seen from these responses, play and playfulness was a thread which ran through the one-to-one encounters and this was mirrored in my own experience and enjoyment of the reciprocity which our singular engagement through the live intermedial set-up allowed (see **Clip 11**). Interactivity and reciprocity in live intermedial practice are explored further in 5.4.2.

In the pair formulation of the event, the relationships between experiencers were influential, with some individuals playing very happily together through the sites

available, while others seemingly operated in parallel worlds, plotting a singular path through the space (see **Clip 12**). Overall, I engaged more in the management and facilitation of the play of each pair, rather than directly engaging with them through my own contributions. This was firstly more difficult, when dealing with multiple offerings in the space and secondly, it seemed less vital for me to be actively engaging with experiencers, who were interacting with each other and the space itself on their own terms. As I reflected after the event, 'it pushes me back to being in the VJ position in the space, where there is something about what I am doing which creates a space for others, as opposed to us collaborating and creating together' (Scott (a) 2013).

The final configuration was an open space which operated for thirty minutes. This section of *auto-play* was more bold and directly playful; experiencers deliberately crossed the parameters which had been set out and interacted with the sampler and VJ software. In addition, there was a concerted effort to oust me from my preferred position at the technical area. The work became messy, housing multiple contrasting elements at once, with little consideration as to form and dynamics and rather a focus on playful and anarchic exploration of the possibilities of the technology (see **Clip 13**).

In my reflections on this part of the event, I acknowledged that it had crossed a boundary for me and that I was dissatisfied by the experience generated in that last half hour:

I lost a sense of the 'work', by which I think I mean, what is produced by the processes within the space: the form of that, its aesthetic sense and to some extent then, the purpose of the actions within the space – that in some way they became play for the sake of play and not towards anything in particular (Scott (a) 2013).

Though it was fascinating as a practitioner-researcher to witness this process of disintegration, I also recognised what had been relinquished. There is something about the modes through which I generate the live intermedial space that I value as a practitioner and define the experience of live intermediality. This also leads towards the idea that the work requires certain skills, which are practised and

developed (see 5.2).

An emergent 'thread' from this event was the affective response of a number of experiencers, particularly those engaged in the one-to-one encounters. I noted that 'there are a few key bits of feedback to suggest...that the live intermedial space does not just dislocate and re-contextualise affect [as I had previously posited] but also that it reaches into the individual to find something inner' (Scott (a) 2013). Such experiencer responses are listed below:

- 'I was able to create the images that have resonated with me in a hidden place and put them somewhere public that still felt like they were my own'
- '...the space you offered the audience (and what does it mean to them)...I think that the intermedial encounter which you created has some potential in the area of 'fantasy, dreams and unconsciousness' (see Appendix B, Item 2)

I connected this 'reaching' capacity of the space with the way in which the present technical mediums operate:

The set up asks questions of the player in the moment as to what they want to do/what they don't want to do and at points, throw that all into stark relief – they [the media] bring to the surface something of who you are in that space and how you choose to inhabit it. There is a magnifying glass being turned on the person who enters that space, as opposed to it being turned on me, as I think it was in previous events – the content and form is less authored now, it opens up and reflects back the actions and indeed insecurities of those present (Scott (a) 2013).

This reflection also points to the final thread which was emergent in this event: 'I am no longer...performing *for* you – I am someone in the space who engages *with* you' (Scott (a) 2013). This resulted in more varied actions within the space on my part and also my occupation of a range of positions within the space (see 5.4.2).

2.8 Conclusions and Directions

Within this chapter, the 'doing-thinking' which is at the heart of the project has been laid out, giving access to the developing 'knowings' associated with this practice. Such knowings are, in the following chapters, placed distinctly in relation to relevant and resonant conceptual frameworks, which have also been part of the progression of the research. The dialogue between the practice and such frameworks serves further to delineate this work as distinct praxis, which interrogates contemporary discourses, resulting in substantial new insights in the fields of intermedial and live media performance.

It is also important to say that though this complementary writing marks a significant staging post in my project, live intermediality itself continues to grow and shift. As I move forward from the events outlined above, the following questions have emerged, which I expect to lead the next stage of the project:

- How can the interactive capacity of live intermediality as evidenced in *autoplay* be wedded to a more distinct aesthetic form, as in *re-cite*?
- How can the practice of inter-construction be employed in the next stage of the process in conjunction with experiencers?
- How could my experiments with the duration and population of live intermedial events be refined?

Chapter 3: Intermediality in Live Intermedial Practice: A Re-configuration

See **Clip 14: Video Text – ‘Intermediality in live intermedial practice’**

This chapter addresses thinking around the definition, operation and effect/affect of intermediality in performance, employing live intermedial practice as a tool both to address and reconfigure the existing language and conceptual models employed. This practical interrogation of the literature represents the approach of the thesis as a whole, in that it establishes a dialogue between conceptual frameworks and practice, with the understanding that the two are mutually informative. The analysis is therefore predicated on the notion that as praxis, the ‘doing-thinking’ of live intermediality can generate new knowledge and insights in the field of intermedial performance studies; that it can be ‘theory generating’ (Bolt 2010: 33).

3.1 Definitions of Intermediality in Performance

Intermediality is defined by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt as ‘a space where the boundaries soften – and we are in-between and within a mixing of spaces, media and realities’ (2006: 12). This suggests that intermediality is generated at the point mediums converge and that the ‘in-between’ space is therefore the crucial one. In a later essay, Kattenbelt (2008) goes on to say that intermediality ‘refers to the co-relation of media’ (20-21). He adds that it is ‘those co-relations between different media that result in a redefinition of the media that are influencing each other’ (26). Again, the intermedial is being placed firmly at the point of intersection between the different media at play; where they meet and converge is seen by Kattenbelt to be the focus of their operation and effect.

In another conception of the intermedial as a point of convergence, Andy Lavender comments that in performance the media ‘intermingle like liquids which colour each other’ (in Klich and Scheer 2012: 73). I do not follow Lavender’s notion that in their intermedial meeting, particular mediums lose their definition completely, generating a singular space of merged colour. Rather, this chapter argues that the practice of

live intermediality focuses attention on the intermedial space as a site of discourse³⁰ and exchange between the distinct mediums of which it is composed. In this on-going discourse, any shift in the configurations present does indeed redefine the operation and effect of the individual mediums. However, this discourse is not analogous to a convergence of those media in the moment; rather a layered, shifting and composite space is generated, which is characterised by movement, play and interaction.

I also argue that it is in live media practice in particular, where the configurations and combinations exist in a precarious state and where each 'movement' within the work represents a new iteration of intermediality, that the mediums themselves can be seen to be in a constant state of 'becoming'³¹ (see Chapters 4 and 5), while simultaneously generating discourse between such 'becomings' in the intermedial space.

Returning to Kattenbelt's definition of intermediality as 'in-between', I contend that this is, in practice, difficult to either exemplify or justify in relation to examples of intermediality in performance. In a live intermedial event for instance, at any given moment there are typically a number of different mediums in operation and combination, with their discourse creating the site of intermediality. An example of this is an instance from *Cover* (2011), when a live feed image of the performer-activator's face is merged with pre-recorded images of cars driving through the night to create a composite image, which is projected (see **Figure 16** and **Clip 15**).

³⁰ In employing this term, I am referencing a Derridean formation of discourse as a 'system of differences' (1978: 354). In live intermediality, such 'differences' exist as a layered, shifting site of 'play' and becoming. The term also speaks to and of the active 'conversation' between media in the practice.

³¹ In citing 'becoming' I am drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's employment of the term as an opposition and alternative to being, focusing on the act of movement rather than the points between which movement happens: 'the movement by which the line frees itself from the point, and renders points indiscernible' (1987: 294). This conception is resonant with live intermedial practice, as explored in Chapters 4 and 5.



Figure 16: Merged live and pre-recorded images, *Cover* (Image taken from footage captured by Scott Millar 3/12/11).

Within this configuration, I struggle to find the relevance of the 'in-between space'. On the contrary, the mediums present exist concurrently and though fused in the composite image, are not collapsed within the intermedial space. The body of the performer-activator is clearly transformed or indeed transposed by its simultaneous appearance as an actual presence and as the virtual, ghostly face, merged with moving vehicles. Similarly the pre-recorded footage of the cars driving takes on a new 'life' and effect when combined with that of the face. I concur that media do indeed redefine each other's operation within the space of intermediality, but contend with the notion that intermediality only ever operates in and as an in-between space. Rather, I conceive of intermediality in live intermedial practice as an active, lively, shifting discourse between mediums. It is also significant that in this 'lively' form, such discourse is enacted, not just between mediums, but also between the activation and manifestation of the intermedial space, as is analysed below.

Nelson recognises the difficulties with the 'in-between' definition of intermediality. He states that 'in-between' is 'now seen as unsatisfactory' in that it depends on 'a sort of negative definition (neither this nor that but something in the middle)'. In its

place, a definition of intermediality as 'both-and' (2010: 17) is posited. The development of terminology reflects a move towards recognising that intermediality does not operate only at the intersections of the different media employed. Discrete mediums within the intermedial space do operate in conjunction with each other, but such mediums, as evidenced above, also exist concurrently. The 'both-and' definition posited by Nelson allows for more developed analysis of the complexities at play, within discrete mediums and at their points of intersection, in both the space and time of performance.

Returning to the example already given from live intermedial practice (see **Figure 16** and **Clip 15**), in this context the performer-activator exists concurrently with the medium of the pre-recorded image. She is both a physical presence and a digitised projection of herself, both merged with the pre-recorded image and separate from it, both actual and virtual. The very construction of the phrase 'both-and' allows for analysis of the multiplicity and numerous tensions created by intermediality in performance. Also the grammatical balancing act of the phrasing places the mediums in a concurrent but not conflated form, allowing both to exist in that moment, similarly to the intermedial effect itself.

'Both-and' then, as a broad conceptual definition of intermediality, offers greater scope for analysis of a variety of forms of intermedial performance and their complexities. However, as I go on to argue, it does not encompass the *lively* nature of intermediality within live intermedial practice. Following Lavender, I contend that the enduring appeal of much intermedial work is its capacity to reveal the mechanisms of its own becoming, showing us 'the edge between the actual and the virtual' (2006: 65). Such edges are brought to the fore of the intermedial experience in live intermedial practice, where lively discourse between both actual activations and virtual manifestations comprises its events. Before moving on to develop this analysis, the notion of a medium within live intermediality is firstly addressed below.

3.2 The Medium

Marshall McLuhan defines a medium as ‘any extension of ourselves’ (1994: 7), claiming that ‘the “content” of any medium is always another medium’ (8) and that ‘all media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms’ (57). I concur that media engender new forms of experience due to the process of ‘translation’ which happens through their concurrent ‘modalities’ (Elleström 2010) and this is addressed below. However, the notion that the content of any medium is another medium is less helpful. As I go on to argue, when addressing Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) term, ‘remediation’, the conception that in this form of intermedial practice, the mediums are simply and easily contained or housed within each other does not encompass the range of different relations which are present. In live intermediality, media fuse with, intersect, fragment and sometimes complete each other; their operation cannot be satisfactorily analysed through seeing one as containing another.

A standard dictionary definition of the term medium as ‘an agency or means of doing something’ and ‘a means by which something is communicated or expressed’ (Oxford University Press 2014) is applicable to all the mediums in live intermedial practice, specifically with regard to what they *do* and how this doing communicates. Such a broad and deliberately non-specific definition of the mediums present does not preclude analysis of their particular nature and associations. For instance, I am aware that the singularity of my actual body, in relation to the technical mediums which surround me, can lead to either a heightened sense of my vulnerability, or indeed highlight the controlling aspect of my role in the practice. However, I would argue that this is what the discourse between mediums is doing within any intermedial moment and that my body as a medium is subject to redefinition, similarly to the object, whose live feed mediated double shifts how its actuality is perceived. In live intermedial practice, as explored in this chapter, it is the discourse between mediums within the immanent³² event and their *doing* which is central to their effect/affect.

³² The notion of immanence is another term drawn from the writings of Deleuze. Immanence, Colebrook argues, in a Deleuzian sense ‘has no outside and nothing other than itself’ (2002: xxiv). I

This argument can also be usefully related to Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinka's (2012) positing of mediation as a 'vital process'. Their study makes a case for a shift 'from thinking about "new media" as a set of discrete objects...to understanding media predominantly in terms of the processes of mediation', placing emphasis on 'the interlocking of technical and biological processes' (2012: xiii), as well as 'our relationality and our entanglement with nonhuman entities' (xv). Though analysis of the distinctions between the operations of 'distinct media' within live intermedial practice is still part of the work of my project, I follow Kember and Zylinka's interests in the processes of 'relationality' and 'entanglement' as they play out in live intermediality. This argument is pursued further in Chapter 4, where the 'entanglements' of the live intermedial performer-activator are analysed, and in Chapter 5, where the autopoietic processes of the live intermedial system are addressed.

3.3 The Operation of Media in Performance: How Live Intermediality Works

Moving on from definitions of what intermediality in performance is, this section considers how it operates. Again, the focus is to draw on discursive formations in the field and place these in relation to live intermediality to test what the praxis might offer to such concepts and ideas.

3.3.1 Remediation and Mediatization

A model employed in analysing the operation of intermediality in performance is that of remediation, which draws primarily on Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's (2000) theories of the operation of 'new media'³³. They highlight a phenomenon which they term 'remediation' and which is described as 'the representation of one medium in another' (2000: 45), with a medium defined as 'that which remediates' (65). They also posit that 'all media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other' (55).

employ the term to elucidate my argument that the practice of live intermediality centres attention, affect and meaning-making in the construction of the event and the immanent space it generates.

³³ Though this writing engages with new media theory and its intersections with performance studies, the intention is not to provide a survey of this field, but rather to place resonant concepts in dialogue with the practice of live intermediality.

Bolter and Grusin view this process historically, explaining both the development of new media and their relation to existing counterparts. This focus on a medium's reference to, and incorporation of, those which have preceded it departs from my argument. Rather than seeing the mediums present in a live intermedial event as part of a linear heritage and focusing on where within this heritage they sit, I instead place them on a horizontal axis of discourse and action, whereby each medium has the capacity to do and in doing, reconstitute and redefine both itself and its counterparts. This does not preclude analysis of the heritage of the medium and how this can affect how it is experienced. However, it does privilege its doing and discourse with other mediums in the live intermedial space.

Lavender, Kattenbelt and Boenisch (2006) all use the term remediation in analysing intermediality within performance. However, I contend that it is limiting in the analysis of more complex intermedial combinations. Within *Cover* (2011) for example, I experimented with the merging of a live feed image of a red nose projected onto a wall, as well as my body, placed within that image, so that the red nose was projected over my face (see **Figure 17** and **Clip 16**).



Figure 17: The performer-activator merged with a live feed image, *Cover* (Image taken from footage captured by Scott Millar 3/12/11).

Here the red nose, as an object, is not simply represented in this image; it is in discourse as an object in space with the technical medium which is being used to project the image, so that the two dialogically co-exist. The object is not subsumed within that combination; in this particular sequence, this is emphasised by the fact that the hand of the performer-activator is seen, removing the red nose after she has used her actual body as part of the composite image. I also argue against the performer-activator being remediated. Her body is certainly actively fused with the red nose, but it is also clearly existent in relation to, as well as being part of this image. This is emphasised when she moves around the projected space and plays with the ways in which her corporeality can disrupt or challenge the digital live feed image.

This whole sequence disrupts the notion of remediation - the relationships between media here cannot be encompassed in the notion of one representing another. Rather they engender discourse, where one medium 'speaks to' another and in doing so, affects the communication of both. For example, the hand reaches to touch the image of the red nose and as it does so, it becomes part of the image,

redefining the relationship between the image of the nose and the actual body of the performer-activator. This action shifts and complicates notions of scale and space, virtuality and actuality.

The mediums in play here are mutually affective and constitutive; each moment can undo another, so that the mediums and their 'relationality' are in a constant state of unrest. Though this instability can be present in much intermedial work, it is brought to the fore in live media practices and live intermedial practice in particular, where the present activation of discourse between mediums is itself in conversation with the manifestation of intermediality; the collision of performing, making and doing is a distinctive feature of the practice.

An alternative to the notion of remediation is the term 'mediatised', which is used in this writing to make a distinction between elements of the intermedial space which are 'technologically (digitally) wrought' (Nelson 2010: 15) and those which operate in relation to the digital media present. For instance, the live voice of the performer, though mediated by the act of performance and all the conditions whereby it is experienced, is only mediatised in its amplification through the microphone. The object which is moved under the live feed camera only becomes mediatised as a live feed image, projected onto a screen at the other end of the space. Such an argument assumes that 'all forms of communication are mediated by signs, but not mediatized by technology' (Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 22-23).

It is not my intention in using this term, to place it in direct opposition to the live. Indeed, much of the argument pursued in this study works actively to interrogate this binary. In doing so, the composite term ***lively media*** (see 5.5.2) is employed to signify the myriad ways in which live activation, presence and manifestation are in discourse with, and imbricated within, the fabric of mediatised forms in this practice.

3.3.2 The Hypermedium and "Signs of Signs"

Kattenbelt's notion of the 'hypermedium' also addresses the operation of media in performance. He posits that in the context of intermedial work, the 'media are not

just recordings on their own, but at the same time and above all theatrical signs', becoming "signs of signs" as opposed to "signs of objects" (2006: 37), because the media are themselves staged within the performance hypermedium.

This notion is problematic in that, as explored above, live intermedial practice questions the relationship between mediums as simply that which represents/stages and that which is represented/staged. In addition, through focusing on pre-recorded images, Kattenbelt does not acknowledge the complexity of a live feed image of that which is concurrently and actually present. In this context, to state that the image shown is a 'sign of sign' suggests that it removes focus from the present moment or obscures the action in layers of signification. However, if the action is simultaneously both staged itself and staged and screened in the projected image, I contend that this changes the trajectory of signification and the operation of the live feed image, rendering the notion of "signs of signs" obsolete.

An example from *Cover* serves as an active part of the critique I suggest of Kattenbelt's conception. In this instance, the performer-activator moves physical fragments of cards, while a live feed camera projects this action onto a screen at the opposite end of the space, with only a fraction of delay between the live action and its mediatised counterpart (see **Clip 17**). According to Kattenbelt, the action of the performer-activator as staged and screened in the projected image, can be seen as a "sign of sign", indicating that the action itself is obscured through its dually staged and mediatised presence. We see a theatrical sign, indicating another theatrical sign and actuality is lost.

On the contrary, and in opposition to Kattenbelt's contention, I suggest that the live feed images highlight and amplify the actuality of the hand's action, with mediatisation heightening and drawing attention to its materiality and movement. The actual hand mirrors attention back to its mediatised counterpart, creating a reflexive and dialogical signification, which is contained within that moment and where, rather than operating as a sign of a sign, the action of the hand and its mediatised counterpart enact a discourse and *signify each other*.

Through this claim, I am not trying to suggest that no reference can or will be made to anything beyond the images/objects on stage. A red nose or the images on the fragments of cards for instance, can signify any number of signifieds and such external referencing can and will be part of an individual's experience of encountering such objects. However, what I do contend is that its dual presence and positioning leads to a form of discourse which, as Lavender points out, 'enhances our experience of it as existing in the here-and-now' (2006: 65); the immanent space of the event.

3.3.3 Mediality and Modes of Immersion

Further to Kattenbelt's arguments in relation to the effect of staging as a hypermedium, Boenisch argues 'the medium and therefore mediality as such, is theatre's core message' (2006: 113). However, within a dramatic mode of performance, where the 'representation of a *fictive* cosmos' (Lehmann 2006: 30-31) is the aim, I suggest that mediality is certainly not the intended message. If mediality is directly related to the awareness of the presence of the medium, it is a barrier to the fictive cosmos, which the performance is attempting to evoke. This is what Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer (2012) refer to as 'cognitive immersion', positing that 'in dramatic theatre, immersion manifests as a cognitive experience, with the spectators projecting themselves into an imagined world' (2012: 129).

When applied to the workings of live intermedial practice however, Boenisch's notion has more resonance. In this sense, live intermediality can be connected to postdramatic practice whereby the mediality of performance is highlighted, questioned and disrupted. Hans-Thies Lehmann connects this tendency with Kandinsky's 'concrete art', which emphasises the 'immediately perceivable concreteness of colour, line and surface' and '*exposes itself* as an art' (2006: 98); the focus being on the surface, the art, the medium itself, rather than meaning beyond or beneath this. This is in turn reminiscent of Cormac Power's (2008) definition of performance and its distinction from representational forms of theatre:

If one can imagine "theatre" as a tapestry depicting a representational scene or narrative, then "performance" would be

that tapestry turned back to front; we no longer see the narrative but the very materiality of the interweaving stitching (2008: 105).

In relation to this, it is interesting to look at the group, The Paper Cinema, who describe their work as 'a unique blend of live animation and music' (The Paper Cinema 2012a). Within their piece *The Odyssey* (2012b) at Battersea Arts Centre, two puppeteer/performers manipulated a number of cut out puppets against various backdrops, with this action filmed live and the feed projected onto a large screen at the back of the stage. Another camera and vision mixer were also present on stage, offering the capacity to mix smoothly from one scene to another and also to merge the live images of the puppets together, resulting in a composite image being projected on screen. In addition, three further performers activated the live musical score for the piece, using a variety of traditional and non-traditional instruments, which were present on stage.

In a manner similar to a live intermedial event, the mechanics of creating the images and sounds were not just present on stage, but highlighted in this work. At any given point during the performance, I could focus my attention on the puppeteers' movement of the puppets in front of the camera, comparing this to the image created on the screen. In addition, I could focus on the instruments which each musician was choosing and how these were combined and timed with each other and with the puppeteers' action. Finally, the physical set up of the stage meant that all this could be apprehended within one look, with both the mechanics and results present within the space. Watching the performers construct the intermedial combinations engendered for me a heightened awareness of the discrete mediums which made up the intermedial space; I was very much aware of its live composition and constituent parts.

This militates against any kind of 'transportation' to another world, or indeed, a projection of myself as experiencer into the 'imagined world' of Odysseus, Telemachus and Penelope, whose story was being told through these means. Instead, the virtuosity of the puppeteers and musicians, as well as the 'mediality'

represented by seeing the composite parts of the intermedial discourse on stage, was a present and primary part of the experience. This resonates with live intermedial practice, where again, the mechanics of constructing intermediality in the moment are actively revealed to the experiencers.

The focus on mediality is also addressed in Bolter and Grusin's theories related to new media. In *Remediation* they identify what they refer to as a logic of hypermediacy in art and technology which 'acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible' and in turn 'makes us aware of the medium or media' (2000: 24). This is set up in relation to a logic of immediacy, which, they claim, can exist concurrently and in which the medium and mediality disappear in the act of representation in that 'the viewer is no longer aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of that medium' (2000: 23-24). Examples given of each of these 'logics' are a hypermediate computer screen, with multiple windows open, which heightens the user's awareness of the interface and the computer itself as a medium. Conversely, the tradition of linear perspective painting is presented as an example of transparent immediacy, in that the attempt on the part of the painter is to erase the surface of the painting, so that the viewer can look through it to the scene beyond and feel like they are in direct contact with this.

Klich and Scheer relate Bolter and Grusin's two 'logics' to forms of immersion, a comparison which provides a useful lens through which to view their operation in intermedial practice. The notion of immediacy is connected by Klich and Scheer to what they identify as cognitive immersion, with the transparency which Bolter and Grusin set up as a feature of immediacy related to Oliver Grau's theories of immersion, whereby 'a work of art and image apparatus converge, or when the message and the medium form an almost inseparable unit' (In Klich and Scheer 2012: 129).

Bolter and Grusin acknowledge, in relation to immediacy, that it is virtually impossible completely to erase awareness of a medium and therefore to be fully

‘cognitively immersed’. However they also posit that a form of immediacy can be achieved through hypermediacy, in that an immediate experience can be generated within a blatantly hypermediate environment, such as a rock concert, where ‘the excess of media becomes an authentic experience, not in the sense that it corresponds to an external reality, but rather precisely because it does not feel compelled to refer to anything beyond itself’ (2000: 53-54). Klich and Scheer connect this form of hypermediate immediacy to what they refer to as ‘sensory immersion’, whereby the experiencer is immersed ‘sensually, not in an artificial world, but within the immediate, real space of the performance’ (2012: 131). They argue that ‘performance and new media installation’ particularly have the potential to evoke this form of sensory immersion, in that such forms focus attention on ‘the spatial ‘here and now’’, leading to ‘an enhanced state of being in relation to the surrounding space and responding to immediate stimuli’ (2012: 131).

Connecting Paper Cinema’s *The Odyssey* with my own work, *Cover* (2011), a revealing analysis can be enacted in dialogue with Klich and Scheer’s categories of immersion. In *Cover*, the performer-activator merges a live feed image of blue gels with images of cars driving through the night, while a previously recorded soundscape plays (see **Clip 18**). This can be compared to a moment from *The Odyssey*, which involves the puppeteers’ manipulation of a paper cut out of Telemachus driving on a motorbike, while the musicians create a moody and evocative soundscape, using distorted guitar and keyboard sounds. The merging of images, through the vision mixer, facilitates the effect of Telemachus driving through a landscape on the large screen, with all the mechanics of creating such effects present.

In both examples, an appeal is made, through the intermedial combinations of moving image and sound, to the senses of the experiencers. The driving cars in *Cover* and moving figure of Telemachus in *The Odyssey*, combined with the continuous and hypnotic sound in both practices, create an absorbing experience, leading to a form of cognitive immersion in the intermediality. Sensory immersion is also applicable to both, in that an experiencer is just as likely to become immersed in the ‘immediate

stimuli' represented by the combinations of constructions and construct occurring in the 'real space', as they are of being 'cognitively immersed' through the effects created. In addition, I contend that something else happens in relation to the forms of live intermediality generated within *The Odyssey* and *Cover*.

In both, the absorption engendered through the intermedial combinations is balanced with a question posed through revealing the mechanics of creating such combinations, leading to an immersion in the 'here and now'. The experiencers are being asked, whether they choose to respond or not, to apprehend and compare the work of construction and the results of such work. They are asked to move in and out of the experience, as each event attempts both to engage on a sensory level and to pose a cognitive question related to the construction of intermediality.

Such a question and the discourse between the effect and its construction, as discussed above, is what centres the experience in the here and now and heightens actuality in that moment. In addition, there is an enjoyment in being cognisant of, and complicit in, the moment of creation. This in turn relates to the active discourse present within a live intermedial event; the focus on processes within and between media and the notion of a *lively* mediatised space, where mediums are rendered active and unstable, existing in complex, shifting co-relations, which encompass doing, making and becoming.

Finally, it is worth noting that within live intermedial practice, unlike Paper Cinema's work, the experiencer is allowed and indeed encouraged to inhabit the space of the event as she chooses and sometimes to interact with the becoming-intermedial space (see Chapter 2). In this context, rather than simply 'experiencing' the discourse between media, the 'experiencer' is herself in discourse with the intermedial space (see below and 5.4.2).

3.3.4 Elleström and the Modalities of Media

To further and deepen the analysis of the immanent operation of intermediality in live intermedial practice, the theories of Lars Elleström (2010) are both useful and

applicable. Elleström sets out what he calls the *'modalities of media'*, described as 'the essential cornerstones of all media' (2010: 15). In placing such theories in relation to live intermediality, the live feed image is employed, as an example of a medium which is at the heart of the visual aspect of the practice (see **Figure 18**).

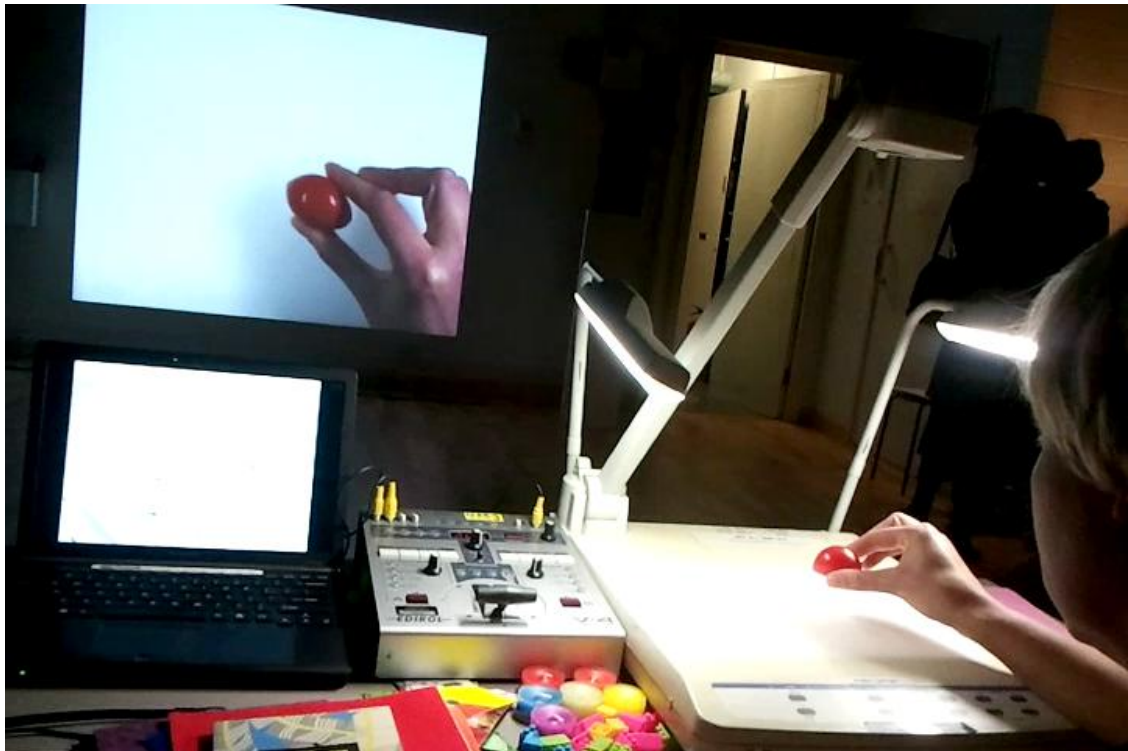


Figure 18: The medium of the live feed image in practice (Image taken from footage of *Cover*, 3/12/11).

Elleström firstly makes a distinction between the 'technical medium' that 'realizes and manifests the latent properties of the media' (2010: 17) and the 'modalities' which define such properties. In the case of the live feed image, the technical mediums are the live feed camera, laptop and projector. The first of the modalities is the *'material modality'*, which Elleström describes as 'the latent corporeal interface of the medium', giving the example of a TV's 'more or less flat surface of changing images...combined with sound waves' (17). Similarly, with a live feed image, the flat surface of the projected images is the material modality of this medium. However, crucially, this material modality also includes the materiality of the body and object (see above). Unlike a television screen, they are part of the 'corporeal interface' of the live feed image, and their concurrent presence in the live intermedial space shifts how this medium is experienced.

This can also be seen through Elleström's second modality, the '*sensory modality*' or 'the physical and mental acts of perceiving the present interface of the medium through the sense faculties' (17). He breaks such acts down into three levels; firstly the '*sense-data* that originate from objects, phenomena and occurrences' (17), secondly the '*receptors*' or 'cells that when stimulated cause nerve impulses that are transferred to a nervous system' and thirdly, the '*sensation*' or 'experienced effect of the stimulation' (18).

Working from the material modalities of the live feed image, a variety of sense-data is created, from the flat images to the three dimensional object, to the body manipulating that object to the projected light travelling through the air to generate the image. Elleström argues that sense-data 'cannot be conceived as *sensation*, unless it is given some sort of form'. In his analysis this is framed within the third '*spatiotemporal modality*' which 'covers the structuring of the sensorial perception of sense-data of the material interface into experiences and conceptions of space and time' (18). Elleström also acknowledges that 'virtual space and virtual time' can be enacted by a medium 'when what is taken to be the *represented* spatiotemporal state is not the same as the spatiotemporal state of the *representing* material modality' (21).

Within the live feed image, there is only a fraction of delay between the hand moving the object and the image of that movement being displayed on the screen. In this sense, there is no virtual time enacted through this medium; the time of the material modality is that enacted in the spatiotemporal modality. However, in terms of space, some clearer distinctions can be seen between the material modality and its spatiotemporal equivalent. The three dimensional space of the object and body is transformed through the technical medium of the live feed camera and projector into the 'less clearly demarcated' (17) materiality of light projection and finally manifests in two dimensional images. Though the light projection may not be primarily operative as sense-data to an experiencer who is standing apart from the image, it becomes immediately more present, as part of the multi-layered experience, if the experiencer herself or another person obstructs the passage of the

light to the screen. Moments such as these can be a present part of a live intermedial event, where experiencers are invited to move around and within the technical mediums and their material modalities, becoming part of how such media operate.

As noted above, the range of different material modalities in play, as part of the live feed medium, enacts a disruption of space. Not only is the three dimensional space of the hand and object translated into light projection; this light projection is then rendered flat and two-dimensional by hitting the projection screen or wall. The layering of different representations and manifestations of space simultaneously is key to the effect of the live feed image in live intermedial practice; the space of the act, the light projection in space and the flat space of the screened representation are not allowed to exist distinctly as 'sense-data' and instead, create a simultaneous and multi-layered impression on the experiencer.

This is rendered even more complex, when dealing with intermediality. Placing Elleström's analysis of the modalities of media in relation to the combining of media in the act of live intermediality reveals further significant features of the practice. An instance from *re-cite* (2012) is used to explore such combinations. In this moment, pre-recorded images of fireworks loop and are combined with the live feed silhouette of the performer-activator's hand, while a repeating pre-recorded sound sample plays (see **Clip 19**).

In terms of material modalities, there are sound waves, which exist in relation to the human body, the light projection and the flat screen, displaying both the live feed and pre-recorded images simultaneously. This is, in terms of the sense-data produced, a multimodal appeal to the senses of the experiencers. Equally, through their positioning in relation to the material interfaces, the experiencer can adjust the sense-data being received. A focus on the performer-activator's movements heightens the human aspect of the material modality, whereas if the experiencer stands between the projector and the screen, they highlight the presence of the light projection. A focus on the screen is to respond in a more direct way to the flat

representation and, in this instance, to the merged images from two separate technical mediums. This may also lead to a more distinct 'cognitive immersion' in their particular space of meaning, rather than opening out to the 'hypermediate' experience of the space as it is constructed and the numerous material modalities in play.

The physical set up of the space is always an invitation for such material modalities to be experienced, with the combination of sense-data key to this (see next section). In addition the material interface of the experiencers themselves in relation to the media is and can be a present part of the 'sense-data' produced (see 5.4.2). However, the aspect which the experiencer cannot choose to focus on or not, and which therefore arguably represents the most insistent, though less demarcated material modality, is sound. Through the four speakers positioned around the space, sound is both insistent and omnipresent; the material modality which constantly presents itself to the experiencers' receptors.

In terms of its spatiotemporal set up, there is a virtual aspect to the space produced by the live feed image medium, in that the hand is changed through being rendered two dimensional and increased in scale. In addition, in this instance, the virtual space is shifted and disrupted significantly through being merged with the space of the pre-recorded images of fireworks. The co-existence of the two mediums in a single material modality on the screen is not just an 'integration' or 'combination' of spatial modes – it is a deliberate clash; a jarring moment, where the sense-data being produced is contradictory, specifically in relation to how space is represented. The scale of the hand, shifted by the technical medium, is seen to 'hold' the images of the fireworks in a disjunctive spatial relationship. This space is rendered flat by the material modality of the screen, but crucially also exists in the light projection and material modality of the hand itself, offering further disturbance and disruption.

In this moment, virtual space and present material modalities in a number of different forms are brought together in real time through the act of *intermedial improvisation* (see 5.2). The collision of such modalities is a recurrent and distinct

feature of live intermediality, generating an *actually virtual* experience, where the virtual is filtered through the actual and vice versa; neither remains distinct and rather both exist in discourse, intersecting and disrupting each other.

Elleström's interrogation of the operation of media in performance is a useful tool in the analysis of live intermediality, highlighting the insistent material modality of sound within the live intermedial space and indicating how the activation of distinct spatial modalities simultaneously generates an actually virtual space in this practice. Elleström's modalities of media also highlight the distinctions present through experiencing the activating body as part of a medium's modalities and indeed the experiencer being an active and activating medium herself (see 5.4.2). However, what this analysis does not address is how such concurrent modalities impact on the experiencer - the effect/affect of live intermediality – which is addressed below.

3.4 Intermedial Effects/Affects: Sense and the Sensorial

This final section of the chapter focuses on the effects and affects associated with intermedial work, as filtered through the prism of live intermediality. Drawing on the findings expounded above - that live intermediality generates an immanent discourse between mediums in the space of the event, that it interrogates as well as immerses its experiencers and that its diverse modalities are characterised by simultaneous spatial disjuncture - the final part of this chapter seeks to connect such dispositions with the effect/affect of this work on the experiencer. This section deals distinctly with effect/affect through the lens of intermedial and live media studies and is furthered in Chapter 5, where the emergent affective properties of live intermedial practice, across its distinct events, are addressed.

There is much analysis of intermediality in performance which focuses on its sensory nature and appeal to the human sensorium. Lavender refers to this as the '*felt charge*', which operates in relation to and in addition to '*meaning-effects*' (2006: 64) to define the experience of a performance. Boenisch also refers to the '*sensorial layer*' (2006: 110) in intermedial work. Finally, Nelson contends that performance 'that deploys and manipulates multiple media *'live'* requires a response via "several

sensory modalities at once” and they may even demand modulations of the entire human sensorium.’ (2010: 16-17). This identification of the appeal to a multi-sensory response on the part of the spectator gives rise to Nelson’s coining of the term ‘experiencer’ in intermedial contexts, which ‘suggests a more immersive engagement in which the principles of composition of the piece create an environment designed to elicit a broadly visceral, sensual encounter’ (2010: 45). As noted above, this ‘immersive engagement’ in live intermediality can be shifted and interrupted by the discourse between construction and manifestation in the space and also by the positioning of the experiencer within the event (see Chapters 2 and 5).

To refine this a little further and to focus on the particular mode of event-making within this practice, Cooke claims that ‘live media performances make a new kind of perceptual sense’ (2010: 195), generating ‘an experience of a kind of expanded and materialized time...and the convergence of sense modalities’ (205). In relation to semiotic analysis, he further claims that ‘text-based ‘reading’ strategies will always experience a misfit when applied to a performance that unfolds in real time, a performance that is perceived as it is constructed’ (202). Instead Cooke focuses on ‘the shifting waves of affect and intensity that circulate in dense audio-visual environments’, positing that ‘what is important about live media...is that it asks to be appreciated in the moment’ (201).

Though I follow Cooke’s argument that ‘reading’ strategies, which focus on ‘making sense’ and a semiotic analysis, are sublimated in the charged simultaneous moment of intermedial improvisation, manifestation and experience, I depart from his centring of the experience in total sensory immersion. Indeed, what is interesting and distinct about live intermedial practice, as explored through the consideration of different modes of immersion and Elleström’s modalities, is that experience of, and absorption in, the ‘dense audio-visual environment’ is always troubled by the simultaneous construction of the intermedial combinations. Though the experiencer may choose not to focus on the actions of the performer-activator, her presence remains a question, about where and how attention can and should be directed and

indeed, where the interest and engagement is positioned in the experience. This is distinct from much live media work (see 1.3), where the presence of the activator is either not highlighted spatially or not bifurcated through diverse operations and positionings in relation to the present media (see also Chapter 4).

In combination, the space generated, the presence of the performer-activator and the constant re-routing of ideas and responses through media generate what, as previously noted, I refer to as a *distanced proximity* in the work. The thoughts of Tim Etchells on distance and distancing are useful here:

There is this extraordinary thing when there's distance involved, when your presence to other people is mediated via the phone or via text or by other means – because these things involve an investment on the part of the reader or participant – you can, in a strange way, be extraordinarily close and connected as well, despite or even because of, the distance (2012: 185 – 186).

This nuanced reading of how distance and proximity can operate is resonant with live intermediality. In this mode of practice, I am distanced by the modes of media and the operations they demand and yet I also generate the 'dense audio-visual environments' which, following Cooke, dispose the work to affective and sensorial engagement. In addition, the material chosen is part of my personal engagement with the practice (see Chapter 2). As such, live intermediality is predicated on a deliberate play between forms of distancing and proximity which relate to me as performer-activator, to the modes of mediated presentation and the relations with those who experience the work. An example of this type of play can again be seen in *re-cite* through a movement built around a fragment of the tune and lyrics of 'Diamonds and Rust', a song by Joan Baez (1975), which has always touched me in an indistinct, but powerful way (see **Clip 20**).

The controlled and focused manner in which I manipulate the sound and image in this movement, with the focus on timing and dynamics, belies a strong emotional response to the song itself. I am without doubt employing a form of distancing; playing out this response through the technical mediums. However, in this moment,

and following Etchells, the mediatised distance enacts a form of proximity between myself and the material, in that the use of images distinct and displaced from myself, in combination with the looped amplification of my voice, play out the 'close' response at a distance from me. For the experiencer, an audio-visual environment is generated from this interaction, which according to Elleström, produces a range of sense-data, impacting directly on their receptors. However, part of this sense-data is always the construction of that space and my presence and actions within it.

In relation to this, then, what is interesting is how varied the responses are to my presence within the event:

- 'Her calmness and care are beautiful'
 - 'revealing the mechanisms adds to the beauty, because it is human'
 - 'I would have only wished for more presence in terms of how you related to the audience.'
 - 'deeply personal interior monologue, somehow'
 - 'It is intimate and so personal the media equipment is just the small insignificant mediator. You are in there in every aspect communicating abstractly (?) with us.'
- (Extracts from experiencer responses to *re-cite*, see Appendix B, Item 1).

This is not a definitive survey of how my presence was experienced in *re-cite*. However, these responses do represent diverse readings of the performer-activator in the work and the presence generated, from a perception of intimacy and performance which is 'deeply personal' to that of a lack of presence, presumably because of the dearth of direct interaction with the experiencers. They indicate that the different relations between myself and the media I activate render a complex and destabilised sense of the personal or 'close' in the work, which by its nature is a distanced form of proximity.

In addition, though some responses from *re-cite* reveal experiencers focusing on interpreting or 'reading' semiotically the combinations of images and sounds which are presented – 'I saw the stages of life', 'the contrast between body and mind' - the

majority comment on the sensory nature of experiencing the intermedial space:

- it generates big waves and bubbles of sensations...It is very pleasant, relaxing and sensorial
- there are images, floatings, feelings, warmth, pleasure
- Drifting, repeating, remembering, re-verbing, slipping sensually under the spell of re-cite
- Drawn to the hands. A performance in itself. Real beauty in movement

(Extracts from experiencer responses to *re-cite*, see Appendix B, Item 1)

Within this space then, intermediality is insistent, present and immersive. However, my co-presence with what I am creating generates an experiential question and distancing is always a factor, in the re-routing of responses through mediatised modes, which is in discourse with the proximity and insistence of the audio-visual space and my own personal engagement with the material. Similarly, though an experiencer can sit looking at the images and focusing on interpreting their meaning, the immanent space of discourse between media and their live activation is always a present part of the experience.

Finally, it should be noted that the above analysis focuses on an event, *re-cite* (2013), where the experiencers were not directly part of generating the intermedial space. A further perspective, discussing affective engagement in relation to a more interactive mode of live intermediality is positioned in 5.5.1. Principles established here are maintained in that analysis; as I go on to argue, the media in live intermedial practice are always rendered lively and discursive, while any proximity engendered is filtered and cut with distancing.

3.5 Intermediality in Live Intermedial Practice: A Re-configuration

By way of conclusion to this chapter dealing with the definition, operation and effect/affect of live intermediality, I offer some conclusions as to what has been revealed, refuted and reconfigured through this analysis.

Firstly, in terms of a definition of intermediality in performance, this thesis works from Nelson's 'both-and' conception of the intermedial space and proposes that intermediality in practice is better characterised as layered, composite and concurrent than existing in Kattenbelt's 'in-between' space. Further to this, I propose that the shifting nature of a live intermedial event, which is always subject to change in the moment and through the actions of the performer-activator, means that the mediums in operation are constantly redefining each other, in a way which renders their state *lively* - one of perpetually 'becoming'.

I characterise the relations between media as a form of discourse. Rather than analysing such relations through Bolter and Grusin's concept of 'remediation', where one medium is always housed within or represented by another, this discourse encompasses a range of diverse interrelations, including fusion, intersection, fragmentation, completion, as well as disruption, displacement and disjuncture. Within this live intermedial form, where combinations are constructed in the moment by a present performer-activator, intermedial discourse is generated which focuses attention on the immanent space of the event. The discourse also enacts reflexive and dialogical signification, based on the presence of the act of construction, in the same time and space as the intermediality constructed. Following Lavender, this dialogical signification 'enhances our experience of it as existing in the here-and-now' (2006: 65).

Further to this, live intermediality, in its dialogue between action and representation, actuality and virtuality, also generates discourse on the part of the experiencer between a form of 'cognitive immersion' in the intermediality generated and a question or invitation to connect this to the simultaneous work of construction. This allows or invites the experiencer to move between immersion in the 'world' of the sound and images and a broader 'sensory immersion' in the immediate space and time of the event, as played out through the discourse between actual actions and mediatised representations.

Live intermediality, as with much intermedial performance, comprises multiple modes of material modality. However, it is particularly characterised by clashes and confrontations through contrasting spatial modalities, which form a questioning intersection with the material modalities of the media in play and create an **actually virtual** space. The invitation, noted above, which is offered to the experiencer in terms of what they choose to focus on within the live intermedial space and where they position themselves, also relates to how they experience and at points, affect the material modalities, from the flat surface of the images, to the actions of the body in space, to the light projection. Such actions and interactions can position the experiencer more distinctly as part of the discourse in the space. In addition, analysis of the medial modalities of the practice reveals that the sound medium is omnipresent and inescapable – an insistent aspect of the experience.

Finally, I propose that this form of live intermedial discourse is one which diminishes the semiotic modality of the practice. Though it can be read through the associations and indications of the signifiers within the represented content, this form of intermediality is disposed to be experienced through its sensory, material and spatiotemporal modalities, which are heightened through the present technical mediums and the interaction or discourse between the performer-activator, the construction of intermediality and its manifestation in space and time. The presence of the performer-activator is a disruption of the primary sensory qualities of the dense audio-visual space, but equally, can generate an affective register through her particular interactions with media in performance. Such interactions are a complex and nuanced play between a personal and affective engagement and a distinct and deliberate disruption of that.

In conclusion, I characterise live intermediality as:

- A layered, concurrent, shifting intermedial space, where mediums constantly redefine each other and as such, remain in an unstable state of becoming
- A discourse between mediums, as well as between the act of construction and the space of representation, between actuality and virtuality; a **lively mediatised** space

- An intermedial mode which enacts a form of dialogical or reflexive signification between the above dualities, focusing attention on the 'here and now' of the immanent space of performance
- A form of intermediality which is characterised by bringing spatial modalities into disjunctive confrontation with their material modalities in real time; ***actually virtual***
- A mode of practice which subjugates sense-making or a semiotic reading and heightens forms of both cognitive and sensory immersion. The construction of intermediality within the space is part of, but can also trouble, the sensory space of intermediality through simultaneously highlighting its mode of production
- Practice which deliberately plays with forms of distancing in relation to proximity – all actions and representations, as well as objects and the performer-activator herself, are framed and filtered in some way by their co-existence with or imbrication within the intermediality generated.

Chapter 4: The Performer-Activator in Live Intermedial Practice

See **Clip 21: Video Text – ‘A performer who activates - an activator who performs’**

At the conceptual and practical heart of this practice sits the role I play, which I have termed *performer-activator*, with the particular actions and processes associated with this role forming part of the new insights this thesis offers to the field of live media practice. As such, within this chapter, I build on the outline of the performer-activator in Chapter 1, specifically the point made there that ‘the roles eschew singular definition, representing a fluidity, uncertainty and productive instability at the heart of this practice’. As explicated in Chapter 2, this ‘fluidity’ is also present in the various manifestations of the performer-activator in the events undertaken as part of this project. While acknowledging that the role shifts and changes significantly, in this chapter I focus on its consistent and distinctive features.

In the first section, my understanding of the terms body and presence within live intermediality are established, informing the ensuing analysis. Following this, two conceptual models are placed in relation to the performer-activator role in order further to understand how the work is practised. Finally, specific practice examples are used as tools to interrogate and explore these theoretical models, resulting in a number of insights as to what the live intermedial performer-activator is and does.

It is the performer-activator’s interaction with technical mediums to generate intermediality which is the primary mode of doing within the events of this practice. As such, I contend that it is these specific and diverse actions which are operative in constructing distinct forms of the performing body and presence, which shift and change with each ensuing interaction. Crucially, such actions and interactions are tied up with the duality of the performer-activator role, as someone who both constructs herself and is constructed anew in each action, who creates the intermedial space and is also a primary part of that space. This live auto-

construction³⁴ enacts concurrent and contradictory modes of presence which emerge from the experience of the performer-activator and are distinctive and constitutive of this practice.

Finally, it is worth noting that as the writer of this chapter and the performer-activator who is its subject, I am, as in the practice, both the ‘activator’ in that I enact the analysis and also the one represented and framed through such activation. This tension exists throughout the chapter and is one which I acknowledge as a ‘productive instability’. In response, I weave together the three corners of Nelson’s (2013) triangulation of Practice as Research, noted in Chapter 2, with all lines of communication between the corners open and operative. This involves interrogating the ‘doing’ or ‘know how’ of the practice through my reflection or ‘know what’ and placing this in relation to conceptual models or ‘know that’. This triangulation is conducted in the understanding that the three work in combination to generate insights into my actions and processes within the practice.

4.1 The Live Intermedial Body

As addressed in Chapters 1 and 3, the presence of my actual body is a vital aspect of this practice. However, in addition to being actually present, it is also a dispersed and virtual presence within the images and sounds which are generated through the actions of the actual body and which often activate or represent aspects of that body in a variety of modalities. So what is the *live intermedial body* and how might we usefully characterise it in relation to other notions and theories of the body in performance?

Theorists such as Peggy Phelan and Erika Fischer-Lichte clearly demarcate ‘living bodies’ (Phelan 1993: 148) and ‘bodily co-presence’ (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 38) as essential to and constitutive of live performance. The distinction being drawn here is between the ‘actual’ body in space and, for example, any mediatised form or

³⁴ The term ‘auto-construction’ is one I employ to encompass the ‘self-making’ aspects of the practice. The felt experience of these encounters with my virtual self impacts directly on the practice, as explored in this chapter.

representation of that body. On the other hand, in the posthuman view, 'there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation' (Hayles 1999: 3). Indeed, according to Bernadette Wegenstein, 'there is no body as 'raw material'' (in Bay Cheng 2012: 66).

Somewhere between the divisions drawn by Fischer-Lichte and the posthuman view, sits a body which could be characterised as intermedial, integrating aspects of both. Sarah Bay-Cheng (2012) talks about the 'mediated body' or 'the body as it has evolved in media theory over the second half of the twentieth century – in contrast to the theatre's theoretically immediate body'. She explains that media theory 'fundamentally revises the role of the performing body on stage', resulting in an 'intermediate body' which 'engages media theory within the space of live interaction and, most importantly, physical vulnerability' (2012: 64).

Bay-Cheng's invocation of 'media theory' placed in relation to 'live interaction' and 'physical vulnerability' to generate the 'intermediate body' provides a useful starting point to begin exploring what constitutes a live intermedial body. If Bay-Cheng argues that 'media theory' - that is the preponderance of thinking around the impact of mediatised representations within contemporary society - 'fundamentally revises the role of the performing body on stage', then I argue that the live intermedial body does something quite different. The very particular 'live' positioning of the body within this practice questions prior inscriptions imposed by theorising of the mediatised body – not that these implications are eliminated within live intermediality, but that they are sublimated because of the nature of the practice. I contend that the live intermedial body has the capacity to be re-inscribed and re-constituted through its actions and specifically, interactions with the technical mediums and intermediality produced. Such a claim is not to the neutrality of the body in this practice, but rather to its mutability and malleability through the conditions within which it is placed and the interactions between its actual and virtual manifestations.

It is therefore not useful to centre the live intermedial body exclusively in my actual presence in the space, or to collapse this actual presence into its virtual manifestations. As referenced in Chapter 3, the live intermedial body exists, according to the ‘both-and’ (Nelson: 2010) conception of intermediality, both actually in space and virtually through its mediatised representations. Any conflation of these aspects does not allow for the analysis of the tensions and collisions between the actual body and its virtual counterpart, both in construction and manifestation.

To sum up, the live intermedial body is comprised of:

- The actual, physical presence of the performer-activator on stage: the ‘living body’
- AND
- The mediatised representations of the performer’s body through sound and image (see **Figure 19**).

These aspects are brought together into a concurrent and layered entity through the performer-activator’s interaction with technical mediums to generate intermediality in the presence of and sometimes with experiencers.



Figure 19: The actual (left) and virtual (right) manifestations of the live intermedial body (Images taken by Alex Murphy at *re-cite*, Collisions, RCSSD 04/10/12).

A number of theorists have addressed this human-media interface, and its capacity to modify the body. Kurt Vanhoutte claims that within digital performance, ‘the embodied self is extended, hybridised and delimited through technologies’ (2010: 46). New media theorist, Anna Munster, takes such concepts of extension further

through claiming that within a human-technology interface, 'embodiment is produced through the relations between the participants' bodily capacities and the operations and limitations of the particular information technologies' (In Klich and Scheer 2012: 100).

She does however reject the idea that this somehow engenders a 'flesh-machine fusion' and rather focuses on the 'graft' and 'mismatch', which she sees as characteristic of 'the extension of our corporeality out toward our informatics counterparts' (in Klich and Scheer 2012: 101), resonating with my identification of 'collisions' between the actual and virtual in live intermediality. Such theorising also links to N. Katherine Hayles' (1999) concept of posthuman subjectivity as 'an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction' (1999: 3) and Karen Barad's notion of 'intra-action' which '*signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies*' (2007: 33)

Though extension, amputation and delimitation are all concepts in play in this practice, following Munster and Hayles, it is the composite body which is 'produced' through the interaction between the actual body, technical mediums and intermediality which is of interest here. This includes the fact that it is a *lively* intermedial body, whose 'boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction' (Hayles 1999: 3). The improvised acts of construction exist in the same space as the mediated manifestations which are a result of those acts and as such, the live intermedial body does not exist prior to the event; it is constructed in response to the moment and iterated anew with each intermedial configuration.

The state of mutual affect between the actual body activating mediated forms of itself results in a contradictory status on the part of the performer-activator, who is both doing and done to, both whole and fragmented, both inscribing and inscribed. There is an inherent instability, noted in Chapters 1 and 3, which is played out through the contrasting and contradictory roles of the body. Such instability has resonance with Stanton B Garner's performance based reading of Merleau-Ponty's

'fleshed' phenomenology³⁵, which he claims 'oscillates between a discourse of belonging and an equally pronounced discourse of subversion and contingency' (1994: 31). As I go on to explore, drawing on Garner, Susan Kozel (2007) and Matthew Causey's (1999) writing in this area, the encounter with and construction of the live intermedial body in this practice occupies and generates a similarly oscillatory and 'precarious' positioning within the event.

It is worth noting here that such a body is not always my own and that in interactive formulations such as *auto-play* (2013), a number of live intermedial bodies are co-constituted through imbrication within the system of generating the event and may well experience similar positioning as a result. The particular implications of co-constituting the event with the experiencer are addressed in Section 5.4.2. Within this chapter though, the focus is specifically on the role that I consistently play within the practice, as indicative of how a performer-activator is situated within live intermediality, before attention is turned to the wider event.

For now, I posit that the live intermedial body encompasses both the actual body and the mediatised representations of that body. I also propose that the lively nature of the body leads to a contradictory but productive state of renewal, which in turn relates to the operation of dialogical signification between actual and virtual noted in Chapter 3. The live construction of the body in live intermedial practice is often an auto-construction, as the performer-activator responds to and assembles herself, constantly renewing and shifting the live intermedial body; an experience of precariousness and oscillation, which is a key constituent of the live intermedial event.

³⁵ A phenomenological lens is employed in this chapter to address my felt sense within the making of the practice. I am drawing particularly on both Garner (1994) and Kozel's (2007) reading of Merleau-Ponty's theories of the body's 'double belongingness' (1968: 137) and the experiential ambiguity of being both in and of the world (1962). Such concepts are particularly resonant with the precariousness of the performer-activator in the construction of her live intermedial body.

4.2 Presence and Presencing in Live Intermedial Practice

The points raised above in relation to the live intermedial body map onto questions of performing presence within this practice. My live interaction with technical mediums results in varying modes and levels of presence on my part as the performer-activator. Again, though this argument focuses on my experience as a solo performer-activator, such arguments can also be mapped onto experiencers who play an active role within the practice.

In recent years, the term presence has been interrogated and problematised, particularly the 'qualities' of live performance with which it is associated. Power names these as "'immediacy", spontaneity", "intimacy", "energy"' (2008: 1), echoing Philip Auslander's well charted arguments nearly a decade before about the "energy", "community" and the "magic of live theatre" (2008: 2). Such properties are not now necessarily seen as a given within live performance and rather, presence can be seen to be constructed through various means and in a number of forms. Power's text takes on the term as a whole through breaking it into three aspects: 'making present' or the 'fictional mode of presence', 'having presence' or 'the auratic mode of presence' and finally 'being present' or the 'literal mode of presence' (2008).

If live intermedial practice is connected to these notions of presence in performance, then certain aspects of its operation, specifically in relation to my presence as performer-activator, are highlighted. With regard to his first element, the 'making present' or fictional mode of presence, Power points out that 'a feature of much theatrical experience involves the *simultaneity* of imaginatively "seeing" a fictional world that has been conjured up, while *seeing* the theatrical means of creating the fiction' (2008: 9). Similarly, one of the features of experiencing live intermedial work, as expounded in Section 3.3.3, is to be immersed in the intermediality generated, while also being simultaneously confronted with the 'means' of creating that space, in the form of the actual presence of the performer-activator manipulating technical mediums.

However, unlike representational work, where the effort is often to close the gap between the 'work' of creating the fiction and its presentation so that the two are collapsed and the 'making' is sublimated, live intermedial work deliberately inhabits that space between and exploits both the consonance and dissonance between the making and manifestation of intermediality. In this sense, the mode more applicable to this work is not 'making present' but 'making *in the* present'; this practice does not just make intermediality present, but also makes it in and in response to the present moment.

Within Power's second category of presence in performance, 'having presence' or the 'auratic mode of presence', the first 'manifestation' has little application to live intermedial practice as it encompasses aura 'constructed through the fame or reputation of the actor, playwright or artwork' (2008: 47). However, Power also claims that 'the actor's (auratic) presence can be constructed through his manipulation of space and materials, including his own body and posture, as well as the way in which the actor confronts his audience and engages their attention' (49). Two aspects of this manifestation of auratic presence in performance resonate with live intermedial practice. Firstly, the notion that presence can be 'constructed' through the performer's 'manipulation of space and materials' and secondly that presence can also be constructed according to the 'way in which the actor confronts his audience and engages their attention'.

I argue that presence within live intermedial practice is defined and generated through interaction with specific technical mediums as part of the event. The interaction is constantly shifting, leading to varying levels of presence. Thus, rather than 'having' presence as a performer-activator within this practice, I create or in Power's terms, 'construct' presence, which I also dismantle and reconfigure with each new action. In addition, presence is constructed in relation to mediatised forms which 'flicker' and never remain within the space. This means that performer presence becomes a fluid and unstable notion, rendering the term 'presencing' more appropriate. 'Presencing' is used by Garner to evoke 'a variety of experiential registers' and 'theatrical phenomena' which are 'multiply embodied' (1994: 43), a

conception which resonates with the multiple aspects of the live intermedial body referenced earlier in the chapter, as well as the ‘variety of experiential registers’ generated through this practice.

Presencing is an active, constantly moving aspect of the work, which is made and undone in a moment, to be enacted anew in the next; it is constructed by the performer-activator, but it also constructs and performs upon her. Through Garner’s reading of Merleau-Ponty, the performing body is always ‘a site of irreducible *ambiguité*’ (1994: 50) and ‘hinges on a paradox of grounding and dispossession’ (32). In live intermedial practice, when that body is often actively constructing itself, it is generating the ‘variety of experiential registers’ referenced, not just in relation to experiencers but also is *self-presencing* through the reflexive capacities of the media, which insistently throw the body back at itself in the moment of construction.

Power’s final mode, the ‘literal mode of presence’ or ‘being present’ relates to a live and performance art tradition of ‘being-there’ as ‘a rejection of a transcendent stage “aura” and an eschewal of attempts to create theatrical “illusion”’ (2008: 12). He critiques Josette Feral’s conception of the performer as ‘neutral conduit rather than an active agent of representation’ (in Power 2008: 105) and instead points out that:

A performer...even in eschewing “narrativity” by refusing to dress up as someone else and enact a story – does not succeed in becoming unproblematically “present” as a result. As the semiotic analysis of theatre shows, stage “action” is always mediated by a pre-existent network of signs which constitute a given cultural space (2008: 109).

I fully acknowledge that I am never ‘unproblematically “present”’ in a live intermedial event, despite the lack of distinct or stable characterisation and the fact that part of my role is defined by activating, rather than performing. As Power points out, it is the ‘network’ of signs present within an event which constitute its ‘cultural space’. My body and presencing within this space are constituted by and through the ‘network’ of technical mediums, intermediality and experiencers and are generated through my interactions with these components of the live intermedial system.

My presencing is always filtered, complicated, sometimes even obfuscated by the live activation of and representation through the present media. There is also a phenomenological aspect to my encounter with the mediated versions of fragments of the body generated. Causey characterises the encounter with the digital self as ‘an uncanny experience, a making material of split subjectivity’ (1999: 385), while Kozel talks of ‘the powerful link between the body on the screen and the bundle of emotions, thoughts, and movement that make up my material body’ (2007: 94). My felt experience of this mode of presencing is threaded throughout the chapter, with productive oscillation enacted between a more critical mode and the insider perspective of the practice.

To sum up, the modes of presence which I propose are operative within live intermedial practice are as follows:

- Making *in the* present – exploiting the gap between the making and manifestation of intermediality and operating within this space
- **Presencing** – the multiple roles and forms of doing which form part of this mode of performance mean that presence is not just multiple, but an active mode, generated through the actions of the performer-activator – an auto-construct, which remains unstable
- **Beings** present – multiple modes of being present through actual and virtual means are at play within this performance practice. The collisions between them - their confrontations - and how they perform upon each other are of interest.

4.3 Conceptualising the Role of the Live Intermedial Performer-Activator

This section conceives of the performer-activator as both ‘precarious’ and ‘becoming’. Through placing the role in relation to such resonant concepts, its particular nature is highlighted and interrogated, while the ‘doing’ of the practice speaks back to and reconfigures the conceptual framing. Through this analysis, I also connect such theories specifically to the live intermedial body and the different forms of presence and presencing which are emergent. As ever, the navigation of theory is enacted through practice and in the latter part of the chapter, specific instances of live intermedial practice are used to interrogate theoretical models and

mark out this role as a distinctive feature of the practice, leading into the final chapter.

4.3.1 Precarity, Flickering and the Live Intermedial Performer-Activator

As indicated earlier in the writing, the dual role of performer-activator, which I have defined in response to my work within live intermediality, reflects a practical acknowledgement that the role I play is better summed up through placing the aspects of performance and activation in an interrogative relationship. Both are always present, though one may assert itself more forcibly at some points than others. A useful way to conceptualise this aspect of the composite within the work then, is to see these states as 'precarious' or constantly flickering in and on the live intermedial body, which also resonates with Garner's phenomenological reading, referenced earlier, of the 'oscillation' of the performing body.

Nicolas Bourriaud (2009) sets out conditions for what he refers to as 'precarious art' and the characteristics he employs to describe 'precarity' resonate strongly with the actions and processes of the performer-activator in live intermedial practice. Firstly, Bourriaud expounds on the etymology of the word precarious as 'that which only exists thanks to a reversible authorization', having 'no definitive status and an uncertain future or final destiny' (2009). On such terms, I claim to be occupying a 'precarious' positioning within a live intermedial event. 'Reversible authorization' is intrinsic to the dual role, in that my 'authority' is constantly shifting within and between that of activator/manipulator and a performer, who is framed within the work itself and specifically within the mediatised sounds and images which reflect back to my actual body in space. In addition, such mediatised fragments of myself shift, creating a felt sense of eliding control, as I attempt to gather and formulate the space which is generated around and through me.

Bourriaud cites three main patterns which he identifies within precarious artworks, two of which are examined here. The first is 'flickering' which he describes as 'the specific regime of the visible that is marked by intermittence' (Bourriaud 2009). This notion of intermittence represents an illuminating way of approaching the

performer-activator within the practice. Rather than simply seeing the two roles as consistently co-existing within the live intermedial body, the roles or 'states' of performer and activator can be seen to flicker, so that at various instances, one may be more 'visible' or present than the other. Neither is stable or fixed, generating intermittence or 'flickering' at the heart of the practice, which is vital to its effect/affect.

Bourriaud goes on to say that because of the flickering nature of the artwork, 'the present lags behind itself...we only perceive its shards' (2009). Again, this can be related to the performer-activator role. As I place images and sounds in the performance space - the 'making *in the* present' highlighted earlier in the chapter - such images and sounds loop and sustain, remaining present, yet 'lagging' behind me, as I move forward in the construction of intermediality. In this sense, as the live intermedial body is constructed, it is also temporally divided; the actual body moves forward to construct, while the instant archives of its mediated representations hang and sustain in the space. This mode of separation is an affective one, as those suspended fragments can form 'a trap for the gaze of the subject apprehending its doubling' (Causey 1999: 389), as is explored below.

Finally, Bourriaud also cites 'blurring' or the 'indiscernible' as characteristic of precarious artworks, in that they display 'different modalities of "making visible"' (2009). Though this may be directly applicable to the many different modalities of 'making visible' which are present in this practice, of more interest in analysing the role of the performer-activator, is the notion of the 'indiscernible'. As a solo performer-activator, utterly implicated in and at the centre of the 'system' (see 5.3) which generates an event in real time, the work itself is often inaccessible and 'indiscernible' to me, as I flicker between performing within and activating the intermedial space.

In order to examine the implications of all these terms in more detail, an example of practice from *re-cite* (2012) is used. In this instance, the focus is on the performer-

activator's real time construction of layered live feed images of the face, body and objects (see **Clip 22**).

In looking at this moment through the lens of Bourriaud's conditions of precarity, the 'reversible authorization', which is present within the role, is clear. Though in control of all technical mediums in tandem to create the composite image, the actual body is also very much trapped by the frame of the image which is being created. I have to remain still and position myself very carefully in space; I am controlled and defined in my movements by the image which I am creating and which is operating on me.

In addition, though the roles of activating and performing, of constructing an image and performing for and to a camera are concurrent, they 'flicker' in and out of focus. As soon as the live feed image of my face is present on the screen, my role as performer flickers into sharp focus through the heightened awareness that this image is a focal point within the space. When I start to play with the merged image, moving the cards under the live feed, my awareness of performing to camera flickers and the activation of this composite image comes to the fore. In these moments of intermittence, there is a productive instability at play, which is centred in the dual purpose of the live intermedial body to generate intermediality and also to be represented within that intermedial space. The roles are concurrent, but do not represent a stable dual state. Rather, they flicker and this is indicative of instability at the heart of the practice, which characterises and defines the experience for me, and links to its 'indiscernible' aspect.

The notion of the indiscernible is also applicable to this practice example. My eyes in the mediatised image rove, flicker and search both upwards and to each side. This is indicative of my search for myself on the screened image opposite and subsequently, to my hand, which is adjacent and manipulating the cards in relation to the image of my face. It also indicates wrestling for control within the complex configuration of my live intermedial body; keeping all the elements in play concurrently, while maintaining awareness of the image being generated. The flickering eyes search for but can never fully access the experience which is being generated. As an auto-

construct, the live intermedial body generated is a response to my own actions within the space, but it is also constantly eluding my control, slipping beyond my perception and operating, performing and activating without my volition.

Through operating in the 'gap' between making and being made, between activating and performing, the 'presencing' generated is not just unstable, but even uncertain in its manifestation. Such uncertainty is directly informed by the 'enfoldings or entwinements' (Kozel 2007: xvii) between my actual and virtual aspects, which I experience as I create them. This manifests as a felt ambiguity between 'the perceptual and the habitational' (Garner 1994: 4), where I perceive, shift and simultaneously experience and inhabit this bifurcated space.

'Precarity', ambiguity and uncertainty are resonant with the role of performer-activator, mapping directly onto the improvised nature of the practice. It is 'making *in the* present' which renders each moment 'indiscernible' and leads to the 'flickering' states described above. Though I construct with prior knowledge of the types of visual and sonic effects which can be generated, the ways in which they can be combined and the capacities of the technical mediums with which I work, there is still something 'precarious' about each moment of a live intermedial event. That precarity is centred in my felt experience, which impacts both on the manifestation of the live intermedial body and modes of presencing produced.

4.3.2 Becoming-Performer-Activator

The concept of the performer-activator as an unstable or 'precarious' state within this practice can be related to the notion of becoming, already noted in Section 3.3. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) claim that becoming 'lacks a subject distinct from itself', that it 'produces nothing other than itself' and that 'what is real is the becoming itself' (1987: 238). Becoming is not a unitary vision but a 'multiplicity' which is '*continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities*' (249). Claire Colebrook (2002) notes that in Deleuzian thinking, 'all life is a plane of becoming' and 'the perception of fixed beings ... is an effect of becoming' (2002: xx).

Such theories resonate with aspects of the live intermedial performer-activator. The 'live' construction of the intermedial body renders it a subject constantly in process, through a diverse set of actions and manifestations. Through the process of live intermedial activation and, as explored above, with regard to the notion of the 'precarious', nothing distinct or fixed is produced as a singular performing presence or body, with both remaining in play and process throughout the event.

However, an alternative viewpoint is that despite the shifting and transient manifestations of the live intermedial body generated, that the actual body, as a whole and present physical entity intersects with the notion of 'becoming'. Despite its diverse manifestations within the virtual space of the performance, which evolve and constantly flicker, the actual body always remains. Its whole and definite occupation of space and its activity within that space with the static technical kit are counterpoints to the perception that I, as performer-activator, am in a state of 'becoming'. Such positioning is in opposition to the Deleuzian view of 'fixed beings' as simply 'an effect of becoming' or Brian Massumi's (2011) reading of Deleuze that 'there is no essence or substance to things other than the novelty of their occurrence' (2011: 6). However, as I argue in Chapter 5, this is a productive departure, since though I draw on a Deleuzian view of the event, the practice itself is creatively in dialogue with this viewpoint.

Rather, it is more useful to think of the concurrent modes of presencing generated through my dual role as performer-activator as interrogative of each other; not that all is in process and there is nothing fixed within the event, but rather that the dialogue between the fixed and fluid enacts composite modes of presence and manifestations of the live intermedial body, which invite apprehension and contemplation of both (see **Clip 22**).

In viewing the documentation of this moment again, there is resonance with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming as lacking 'a subject distinct from itself' (1987: 238) and producing 'nothing other than itself'; that 'what is real is the becoming itself'. In this moment, through the flickering duality of performing and activating,

there does seem to be a mode of production which *is* itself, which is not distinct from itself and which is only real through *what* and *how* it becomes. Multiplicity is also present in my occupation of numerous positionings, presences and roles within that one moment.

However, though this fluid sequence of 'multiplicities' is clearly part of the intermedial space I generate, it is counteracted by the relatively sedentary, fixed and actual presence, not just of my actual body, but also of the range of technical mediums. Through revealing and highlighting the mode of production, in both form and act, the practice counteracts the notion of limitless and continuous 'becoming'. Indeed, the tensions between the fixed and fluid, the composed and improvised within live intermedial practice, are part of its generating distinctive events, as is explored in Chapter 5.

A review of the footage and memory of that experience does not reveal for me productive 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 237) or becoming-other, but rather my felt sense of being trapped in a web of my own weaving, reinforcing and maintaining this frame and construction. I experience fixity and rigidity in that moment, as well as movement. I am framed and defined and shift uncomfortably in that position and the demands it places on me in the moment of practice – to perceive and inhabit and act and respond. This manifests in the uncertain flickering between states and modes referenced above.

To sum up, though 'becoming' reverberates in and with the practice, it is also interrogated through live intermediality. As performer-activator, through the fluid merging of media, I invoke my state as one of 'becoming', while counteracting such a state with a fixed and framed presence within the space. Though constantly generating 'lines of flight' through multiple aspects of my body and presence, I can never escape being enclosed and trapped by these.

4.4 Analysing the Actions and Processes of the Performer-Activator

Following on from defining terms and setting up theoretical models, in this section of the chapter specific practice examples are used to explore and interrogate the role of the performer-activator. In doing so, I am drawing on two recurrent interactions which are part of every live intermedial event and therefore represent acts which are constitutive of the role in practice - the merging of pre-recorded video footage with live digital text and the creation of live soundscape with voice, loop pedal and microphone.

In each case, the intention is to use these motifs or 'refrains' of the practice to examine the operation of the role of performer-activator, connecting this to the concepts introduced and focusing on the forms of live intermedial body and presencing which are produced. In the analysis, I make reference to the modes of engagement that such forms are disposed to create. However, the focus is not to analyse experiencers' response to my role in the space, but rather to examine the particular operations and manifestations of the performer-activator from a first person, 'felt' perspective, placing this in relation to the concepts already introduced. The functioning of the performance event as a whole, including consideration of experiencer positioning and responses, is addressed in Chapter 5.

4.4.1 Merging Pre-recorded Video Footage with Live Digital Writing

The first and reiterating instance is my use of the VJ software Modul8 to mix pre-recorded excerpts of video footage with live digital writing. This is enacted from what I refer to as the 'technical area' within the space, where all the technical mediums used to generate live intermediality are located (see **Figure 20**) and can be seen in action through a montage of instances from different events of live intermedial practice (see **Clip 23**).



Figure 20: The technical area in a live intermedial event (Image taken by Matt Taylor at *re-cite*, 6/10/12).

The affordance of the VJ software, firstly to mix pre-recorded images and secondly to allow me to write ‘on’ these images, prompts this specific interaction. In each case, the video footage has been captured by me prior to the event and then looped so that it runs continuously. The text which is written is an improvised response to that image and other elements in the space, which can include an experiencer’s prompt/action or the sonic elements which I have already put in place and which can be heard within the clips.

The laptop requires me to position myself close to the technical area and I focus my attention on both the keyboard and the screen opposite me, which shows how the

text is interacting with the image. I am compelled by this choice of activation to maintain a fixed positioning in the space as I write and to direct my attention to these two areas. As such, this example counteracts the notion of the performer-activator as 'precarious'; rather it would seem that I have full control over the merging of images and manifestation of intermediality. However, where there is resonance is in the act of writing itself, in that the improvised text is undetermined until my fingers hit the keys and produce it on screen. The precarity lies again in the 'making *in the* present'. As there is very little or no lag between activation and manifestation, the result is often mis-spelt words and awkward linguistic constructions, which have to be corrected, and exist as signs of the liveness of the act in the space.

All of these aspects, in terms of their spatial manifestation, also initially seem to sit in opposition to the idea of the performer-activator as 'becoming'. I occupy a singular and fixed position in space, my role is not multi-layered and I produce something other than and apart from myself, in the combined image of text and video footage. However, the becoming aspect of the work, as with its precarity, sits within the writing of the improvised text. The act of 'becoming' then, is not in the physical multiplicity of the live intermedial body, but rather in the live and fluid act of improvisation. Here, it is the text itself which is continually transforming itself, which is insistently multiple, existing in the movement of the performer-activator's fingers and the light from the projector, forming words on the screen. My felt experience of writing in this context is often that I feel a pull to generate text in response to the prompt of the space; that the words are led by such conditions, but generate in themselves creative 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 237) from that moment into the next section of the improvisation.

The form of embodiment produced by the 'extension' of my 'corporeality out toward' (Munster in Klich and Scheer 2012: 101) the technical medium I am employing and intermediality generated, is focused and contained, both within the temporal moment of creating the improvised text and in the specific spatial positioning required to enact this. As a 'material informational entity' though, in

Hayles' posthuman terms, embodiment is also produced and generated in the words appearing over the images on the screen, which is one of the 'heterogeneous components' (1999: 3) that make up the live intermedial body in this instance.

This act, as with all within live intermedial practice, represents making *in the* present and therefore occupying the gap between the making and manifestation of intermediality. In this instance, a physical gap is present, between activation in the technical area and the manifestation of intermediality on the screen opposite. The 'presencing' produced is dispersed across the 'close-up' action of the performer-activator in relation to the keyboard and the more 'open' result of such actions on the screen.

Someone typing on a keyboard does not construct a particularly heightened mode of performing presence. The act requires a focus on the technical mediums, rather than turning out to address or include the experiencer. However, the text itself contradicts this form of actual presence. The words, in many instances, are written in the second person, and constitute a direct address to the experiencers. As I type, the felt 'pull' I referenced earlier to 'presence' in this way is counteracted by the inevitable frustrations and overspilling of presence, when I try to confine my responses to the mechanisms of the keyboard. I always type too fast and the words become muddled and mis-spelt. What appears is surprising and sometimes contradictory to the urge which made it present in the space.

There are two distinct forms of 'presencing' generated here. One 'being present' is fixed, focused and turned inwards towards the machine and intermediality. The other, as made manifest in the text, is an address to those in the space, which counteracts and contradicts the first. Though the actions of the performer-activator can be connected in their effect to the intermediality generated, the forms of presence in this dispersed amalgamation are contradictory and work against each other to produce composite presencing, generating *distanced proximity* with those in the space (see Chapter 3 and 5.5.1).

The distinction between these ‘beings present’ is only highlighted by the fact that the mediated presence displays a more direct and personal address, while the actual body of the performer-activator in space, though present, is in practice, closed off and turned towards interaction with machines. It is a very deliberate re-routing of the modes in which presence can operate within multiple forms, modalities and spaces, as an intermedial composite. This is not a composite whose components slot into place in a complementary fashion. Rather, the different forms of presence generated through the live intermedial amalgam, operate in a divergent or interrogative way, where one interrupts or probes the other and neither ‘fit’ easily together. This mismatch is often centred in my felt sense and experience of the moment – as being stretched and scattered across the spaces of the event.

4.4.2 Interacting with the Loop Pedal

The second recurring interaction with a technical medium is the creation of live soundscape using a microphone and loop pedal to layer, mix and amplify my voice. Again, a montage of instances from different events of live intermedial practice demonstrates how this technical medium is employed (see **Clip 3**).

As can be seen from these clips, the loop pedal is used in a variety of ways to create diverse sonic effects within the practice. As a live interface, the pedal is one which ‘activates’ me; its capacity to perpetuate and tend towards layered sound has heavily influenced both the nature of the experience I create and how I structure the different ‘movements’ of a live intermedial event. Usually a movement will commence with me generating sound and allowing that sound to ‘cover’ the manipulation of image and object which follows. The subsequent actions are often heavily influenced by the sound I have put in place, as it feeds back to me and I respond to its tone, structure and rhythm.

Through singing into a microphone attached to the pedal, the equipment captures, ‘remembers’ and plays out that vocal phrase repeatedly. I can then ‘overdub’ this track with further layers of sound, which allows me to harmonise with and counterpoint my own voice. I can also play with and mutate this sound using effects

which the pedal offers, such as varying the pace, pitch and reversing the live composition.

The one shot nature of working with this technology requires a high level of concentration, as any errors in rhythm, pitch or the tone of my voice are instantly recorded and play out, persisting within the time and space of the event. The words and sounds I utter therefore seem to take on more weight in the knowledge that they will be instantly recorded and repeated continuously. This aspect of working with the loop pedal relates to my earlier identification, through the lens of Bourriaud's 'precarious art', that the elements of the practice which I put in place go on to elude my control. This is particularly operative in my use of the loop pedal, in that, as already noted, the insistent presence of the looping sound also performs upon me and influences aspects of how I do and make.

Through this technology, a moment in time is captured and instantly replayed beyond and outwith the actual body, while also reflecting back to that body. The sonic 'pieces' of my body exist and persist in the space, as an instant record of a live moment already past, while I move forward in the construction of the soundscape through layering it with further live moments. Though the activation and event progresses in a linear sense, it also constantly reiterates and reanimates all the previous moments and pieces which are present sonically through the loop pedal technology. As a mode of 'becoming', the building of soundscapes generates a 'multiplicity' of both layers of sound and aspects of the live intermedial body; a multiplicity which is '*continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 249), as the layers of sound develop and accrete.

Again however, the actual body in space constitutes a counterpoint to the notion of becoming through this act. In this reiterative interaction in particular, it is the play between the fluidity of this mode of constructing sound and the fixed aspects of the actual body and mechanisms of the technology which form part of the distinct way it operates on the live intermedial body and modes of presence constructed.

I create what Steve Connor refers to as the 'voice body', a secondary body which 'may contradict, compete with, replace or even re-shape the actual, visible body' (2000: 36). Connor argues that voice is 'not simply an emission of the body', but a 'body double' which is not 'inert', but 'tensed and braced with a kind of life' (2013). This secondary and, in Connor's terms, 'lively' sonic body can be experienced in relation to the actual body. However, as noted above, once 'released', it exists independently of me and constitutes a dislocated aspect of my presence, which sustains beyond the moment of its inscription, 're-shaping' the actuality of the body in space. The accretion of sound surrounds the experiencers and me in a bewildering number of 'voice bodies', each representing a distinct moment and a particular imprint of my actual body, yet experienced as a composite sonic totality through the speakers' amplification.

Through this particular 'making *in the* present' - defined by the demands of simultaneously producing sound and manipulating the loop pedal technology - I become an instrument, both of the pedal's capacity and of how it affects me to generate and respond to sound in real time. This aspect of the live interaction involves listening and 'feeling' for the right harmony and rhythm to join my voice with its looped counterpart, becoming engrossed in the growing layers of sound generated. Combining sounds 'on the fly' is a thrilling and precarious experience. The errors in pitch and mis-timing are felt, as is the harmony, which reverberates in the body as it is generated and then encountered. I inhabit the sound as it is emitted, but then oscillate from that inward trajectory to a perceptual mode, which informs the building. To adopt and shift Merleau-Ponty's (1962) seminal experiential experiment - my voice touches my voice and in the act of touching, both the 'grounding and dispossession' (Garner 1994: 32) of self is enacted.

This close and absorbed interaction could arguably lead to an exclusion of the experiencers. However, the microphone acts as a counterpoint to the pedal, just as my careful construction counterpoints my absorption in the act of creation. Using the microphone prompts a presencing, which in physical terms at least, is turned outwards. Singing into a microphone and constructing complex combinations of

sound encompasses both '*beings* present', where the outward motion of singing into the microphone is counterpointed by the intense focus and inhabitation needed to operate the loop pedal. The 'presencing' or 'active mode' of generating presence is a direct response to the doing and feeling I have described. I am present through the act and equally the nature of the act generates ambiguous modes of 'presencing', which 'flicker' as I move in and between the focus on the interface, listening to the sounds generated and performing/producing such sounds.

Finally, as noted above, this interaction generates multiple 'beings present', or amputated sonic parts of me, which are distributed in the space. The contrast and contradiction between the fixed actual presence of the body and technology and the dancing, shifting, constantly reconstructing presence of the 'voice bodies' in space, between the static present body and the mediatised, fluid modality of the sound which it has produced, generate productive collisions. In this live moment of creation, these modes of 'being present' are not drawn apart, but rather pushed insistently together, so they exist, not in conflated, but in concurrent, layered form, with each operative on the other.

4.5 Conclusions

By way of concluding this chapter, the distinctive features of the performer-activator emerging from this analysis, are collated below:

4.5.1 Fixity, Fluidity and Precarity

- The performer-activator in live intermedial practice enacts a play between the fixed and the fluid, the actual and the virtual, as well as elements of both representing and activating representation.
- The improvisational nature of the practice represents a significant mode of precarity – a deliberate instability at the heart of the practice - which is often counterpointed by the stable positioning of the performer-activator and her apparent control of the technical mediums.

4.5.2 Re-routing/Displacing Presence

- As in much live media performance, a heightened performing presence is not generated through the repeated interaction with the technical mediums. Rather, the presence of the actual performing body is often characterised by an absorbed, inward facing movement toward the technical medium in question.
- This is counterpointed by distinct and more open *presencing* through the intermediality generated, which often opens out and opens up the actual presence of the performer-activator.
- The performer-activator's actions and manifestations exist in insistent dialogue with each other, reflecting back to and filtering the presence of each. Presence exists as a mobile, composite entity, which intersects the apparent oppositions between the various forms and modalities present, pushing these presences together in the live moment of constructing intermediality.

4.5.3 Performer-Activator as Experiencer

- The live intermedial body exists as, and is activated through, different forms and modes e.g. the performer-activator's choice of images, improvised words, double exposure through virtual/actual bodies in space, 'voice bodies' drifting and accreting in space. All of these manifestations perform on the performer-activator. As an improvising performer, she is also an experiencer, responding to the elements present in space to construct intermediality (see 5.2).
- Each technical medium also has a distinct way in which it 'performs' upon the performer-activator in the moment of her constructing the performance, leading to recurrent actions, embodiments and modes of presence which are mobile and shift as she moves between them (*inter-construction* – see 5.2).
- The complexity and demands of the performer-activator's role in this practice 'charge' her actions, often leading to a 'flickering' of modes of presencing and to a stretched and ambiguous felt experience of the event.

Chapter 5: Event-making in Live Intermedial Practice

See **Clip 24: Video Text – ‘Event-making in live intermediality’**

In this final section, I set out the elements of the practice which, in combination, constitute a live intermedial event. In keeping with the praxis as a whole, this involves weaving together theory, reflection, documentation and responses in order both to interrogate and analyse the practice and in turn, pierce and puncture it with concepts, highlighting the ‘knowings’ and emergent insights produced. Structurally, the chapter moves from setting out resonant theories around event to inputting notions of autopoiesis, interactivity and the role of improvisatory practice in order to position event-making in this practice. Finally, the chapter shifts to the properties and features which are emergent in a live intermedial event, placing these in direct relation to claims around the effect/affect of the work in practice.

5.1 Live Intermediality and Event

In delineating the live intermedial event, I draw on theories posited by Derrida and Deleuze. Both theorists’ ideas have fed into my work during this project and following the primary Practice as Research methodology, I also assert the capacity of live intermediality to pierce and intersect their ideas productively in its ‘doing-thinking’³⁶.

Derrida (1978) talks of event as a ‘rupture’, which displaces the notion of ‘a central presence’. As a result of this ‘event’, ‘it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play’ (353-354). He goes on to say that ‘in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse’ (354). Simon Morgan Wortham also claims that for Derrida, ‘an event

³⁶ Though the practice of live intermediality is in discourse with notions of the event, it is not the intention of this writing, and is beyond the scope of this thesis, to offer a full outline of the thinking around event in Derrida and Deleuze. Rather, I draw on resonant concepts from their writings and place these in dialogue with the practice in order to illuminate and interrogate the operations of live intermediality.

must uncontainably overflow its own 'context' and representation' (2010: 48), yet is 'iterable as much as it is singular' (49).

This notion of event has been present in my thinking around live intermediality from its first development and such terms and ideas are still resonant, particularly the notion of the 'nonlocus' generated and the 'sign substitutions', which come into play in the absence of a 'center or origin'. In this sense, every action and movement within live intermedial practice constitutes an event or rupture, whereby the 'sign substitutions' in the form of sound, image, text and body are scattered and enter into 'discourse' with one another.

Identifying the work through its various 'functions' is equally resonant. A live intermedial event is constituted when the live body of the performer-activator and/or experiencer is in discourse with the technical mediums and materials to generate intermediality. Such actions are various and result in a range of states, spaces and affects which arise from each particular 'rupture' of the space through action (see Chapter 4). The site of the event is repeatedly reconstituted and ruptured through these distinct but reiterative actions, resonating with the duality of singularity and iterability referenced by Wortham.

A Deleuzian notion of event is a 'vibration with an infinity of harmonics or submultiples' (2006: 87). Deleuze describes it as 'at once public and private, potential and real, participating in the becoming of another event and the subject of its own becoming (88). This 'set of singularities' (1990: 52) he contends, 'eludes the present', as it 'does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future' (1), linking it to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'becoming', referenced in Section 4.3.2. They argue that 'a multiplicity is defined ... by the lines and dimensions it encompasses' (1987: 245) and for a 'pure plane of immanence, univocality, composition, upon which everything is given, upon which unformed elements and material dance' (255). The 'line' of becoming which characterises this multiple movement is 'not defined by points' but by 'the in-between, the border or

line of flight', having 'only a middle', which is 'not an average; it is fast motion, it is the absolute speed of movement' (293).

Such a conception of becoming as occurring on a plane of immanence through dance and continuous speed of movement, which is defined in its insistent multiplicity - its 'lines and dimensions' - can be mapped directly onto to the practice of live intermediality and the constitution of an event in this mode of practice. I have already argued that live intermediality both activates and responds to the present moment - the immanent space - through its insistent focus on the now of simultaneous construction and manifestation. The 'lines of flight' which run throughout the work can be linked to the improvised actions and interactions which constitute the event and which, through the lens of Derrida's theory of the event, comprise a series of continuing ruptures or singular iterations, creating ever-changing discourse between the elements in play; live bodies, the intermedial space, technical mediums and materials.

Equally the notion of such 'lines of activation' in the work being defined not by their end or beginning point but rather by the condition of being in the middle, as 'fast motion' is, as I go on to explore, also resonant with the improvisational practice which activates live intermediality. However, as already intimated, such notions of the event are interrogated through my own activation of this work and the responses of those who experience it. The constitution of a live intermedial event is not just defined by a condition of becoming or discourse, but also by and through the stasis of particular elements. It is the collisions, encounters and movements within and between the fluid and fixed elements of the work which constitute it as a distinct event and determine its particular emergent properties.

According to Deleuzian theory, fixed objects are in themselves events. 'The Great Pyramid is an event' (2006: 86) he argues, which 'signifies two things: a passage of Nature or a flux constantly gaining and losing molecules, but also an eternal object that remains the same over the succession of moments' (90) and on a molecular level, all present beings and objects could be characterised through this lens as

becoming-events. Massumi even goes as far as to say that this is a ‘fundamentally *nonobject philosophy*’ (2011: 6). However, in dialogue with this proposition, I maintain that this is not a ‘*nonobject*’ practice and that the becoming-objects within the event of live intermediality, along with the other predetermined aspects and iterative elements of the work (see 1.2), are not equivalent to the fluid actions, sounds and images which are in play. Rather, they are elements which productively counteract the notion of this work as exclusively an act of becoming and overflow.

To sum up, events are created through the practice of live intermediality. Though always singular, there are iterative aspects to such events, including the elements present and the processes and relations between them (see Chapter 2). Each event is a nexus of these relations, which are dynamic and shifting. However, live intermediality is also characterised by productive collisions, encounters and discourses between dynamic, fluid, overflowing aspects and those which remain static and fixed; certain modes of practice or ‘*way[s] of doing*’³⁷ (Bryon 2014: 42), the physical locus of the technical area and the sustained actual presence of the solo performer-activator in relation to the media, intermediality and experiencers.

There are events within each live intermedial event – each interaction between live body and technical medium constitutes a particular set of conditions and a distinct ‘line of flight’ in the space. In addition, live intermedial events always overflow their context, because the act of improvisation, as explored below is, in itself, an act of exceeding present possibilities; of reaching and discovering. The practice is set up to exceed its context, to constitute an act of emergence. However, this in turn is productively in dialogue with the iterative aspects of each event; the ‘*ways of doing*’ and recurrent features which characterise the practice and make it distinct from other work in the field.

³⁷ Experience Bryon, in outlining ‘integrative performance practice’, describes event as a ‘*shifting template*’ (2014: 212). The combination in this phrase of fluidity and fixity, of singularity and iteration, is resonant with my conception of how a live intermedial event is constituted.

Therefore, and in dialogue with the theories cited above, I posit the following elements or ‘singularities’ as key to the constitution of the live intermedial event:

- **The performer-activator, engaged in the act of improvisation** – this aspect relates directly to the fluid movement of becoming in the work and to the distinctive generation of the live intermedial event. The practice of intermedial improvisation in live intermediality, as an act of becoming-present, is explored in the next section.
- **A becoming-intermedial space** – in conjunction with the improvisatory practice, the space of intermediality generated through such actions can also be characterised as a site of becoming and an audio-visual space of dispersed and dislocated ‘sign substitutions’, overflowing its context. The ‘dance of elements’ on this particular plane of immanence, in combination with their improvisatory activation, focuses attention in the event on the now of simultaneous creation and manifestation.
- **Fixity, stasis and predetermined elements** – as intimated above, this space is not simply one of limitless becoming and movement. It is productively intersected by a series of fixities or points of stasis within the event-making; the sustained actual presence of the performer-activator, the fixed occupation of physical space by the technical mediums and the elements of the practice which prefigure and characterise its events (see 1.2).
- **Experiencers engaged in co-creating/interacting with the intermedial space on a range of levels and through different modes** – an ever-present, but always moving ‘singularity’ within a live intermedial event. The positioning of the experiencer is a primary means by which the operation of the system is shifted and the event constituted (see 5.4).
- **An autopoietic or self-generating system, whereby components and elements of the space feed into each other to constitute the event** - this relates to the improvisatory mode of practice, which results in the becoming-elements feeding into their own becoming and ruptures leading to further ruptures. See 5.3 for more rigorous analysis of the autopoietic system in operation and how it constitutes a live intermedial event.

In the next sections, two of the key elements above are explored in more detail. The first is the improvisatory practice, which is the mode in which live intermediality is generated. Linking strongly to the ‘becoming’ aspects of this practice, it is also the way in which this mode of practice operates as an autopoietic system. The nature of the autopoietic system generated through intermedial improvisation is addressed in the following section, through interrogating two contrasting live intermedial events.

Finally, I conclude by focusing on what is produced by such events, which in turn helps to formulate, in the conclusion, a new conception of live intermediality.

5.2 Improvisatory Practice, Becoming and the Live Intermedial Event

A vital aspect of this practice, and the events it generates, is the improvisatory mode within which I operate as performer-activator. This spontaneous way of creating links to the 'becoming' and autopoietic properties of a live intermedial event (see Chapter 4 and below). It is also at the heart of the 'knowings' which I have developed as a practitioner throughout the project and which form part of the new knowledge presented within this thesis. In order to highlight such practice-based knowings and to locate the role of improvisatory practice within a live intermedial event, in this section I weave together discourses around improvisation with my own reflections and experiences as an improvising live media performer, housed both in writing and video texts. The latter, as noted in the introduction, give access to an 'insider account' (Nelson 2013) of the work and express my 'personally situated knowledge' (Barrett 2010: 2) of intermedial improvisatory practice.

Stephen Nachmanovitch equates improvisation with 'the free play of consciousness as it draws, writes, paints, and plays the raw material emerging from the unconscious' (1990: 8) and characterises his 'totally improvised solo concerts on violin and viola' as 'like following, or taking dictation' (4). Smith and Dean on the other hand, posit improvisation as 'a largely conscious procedure which may, because of speed and lack of revision, also access ideas from the unconscious' (1997: 35).

In relation to the particular practice of *intermedial improvisation*, there are key distinctions with the conceptions cited above, particularly those of Nachmanovitch. Rather than viewing improvisation as a mode of 'spontaneous creation...from our deepest being', I locate the trajectory of intermedial improvisation in the 'pull' and 'reach' of the space, as it is created and made manifest. As an intermedial improviser, I am subject not just to the pull of the many sounds which a single instrument can produce. Rather, the affordance of a range of 'instruments' opens up

the improvisatory process to more conscious and present decision-making, such as that described above by Smith and Dean. I do not feel 'led' by the unconscious in the way that Nachmanovitch describes. Rather, intermedial improvisation manifests as a play between the push and pull of my ideas in relation to the mediums, materials, formations and combinations of elements available. This positioning equates the intermedial improviser more strongly with Smith and Dean's notion of the 'sensory' improviser who both perceives and responds to the 'external material' in the space (1997: 32).

See Clip 25: Video Text – 'Intermedial improviser as experiencer'

Smith and Dean posit that improvisation involves 'an attentiveness to the present moment' (1997: 26), whereas Nachmanovitch claims that 'for art to appear, we have to *disappear*' and that it is possible in 'free play', to '*become* what you are doing...You lose yourself in your own voice, the handling of your tools, in your feeling for the rules' (1990: 51-52). This is echoed in Mark Amerika's depiction of a VJ becoming lost in the process of 'hyperimprovising' (in Murphie 2009: 233).

In response to this, I posit that rather than a loss of self or disappearance in the moment, the act of intermedial improvisation and the process of developing this practice has been a movement *towards* a presentness and occupation of the moment; towards connecting with aspects external to the act of improvisation in order to respond to them.

See Clip 26 - Video Text: 'What have I got better at?'

The building and constructing of intermedial combinations requires a present attentiveness to their emergent properties as they are made manifest. It can be equated with the distinction between allowing your hand to draw a single line on paper, or free write across that paper (Nachmanovitch 1990: 25) and distinctly placing images and words in relation to each other to create a composite effect. In both cases the impetus might be similar in what leads the action, but the 'activating'

and 'combining' aspects of the latter require not an abandonment to the expressions of the unconscious, but rather an oscillation between acting and sensing and checking and thinking. The act of intermedial improvisation demands a constant oscillation on the part of the performer-activator, in and out of event-making and experiencing and judging what is being made, which in turn affects her 'presencing' (see 4.2). This oscillation is mirrored by the practice of inter-construction, which characterises my preferred process of creation in this mode.

See Clip 27: Video-Text – 'Inter-construction'

The play between presentness in, and the making of, the event links to a felt ambiguity and precariousness which arises from the conditions of intermedial improvisation and the attentiveness required (see 4.3.1). Though there are moments of 'loss', mostly in generating sound, the demands of image-building and the reflexive action of the live feed camera mean that an unstable positioning is built into the fabric of the system and the event. I am always in relation to the space and the action, as opposed to being fully in it, absorbed and enclosed.

Equally, the mediatisation and multiplicity of the act of improvisation within this mode means that any spontaneous acts are always troubled, contingent and re-positioned in their manifestation. The re-routing of responses, feelings, decisions and actions is crucial to how intermedial improvisation operates, as a play between singularity and complexity, immediacy and dispersal. This is also where I locate a becoming, as movement not just between the actual elements in space and the fluid audio-visual result, but also in the negotiation between the conception, composition and action of intermedial improvisation. The insistent 'flickerings' between ideas/thoughts/feelings, material/form and act/manifestation are utterly characteristic of the movement of the intermedial improviser.

See Clip 28: Video Text – 'The movement of the intermedial improviser'

Finally, Nachmanovitch cites the following as qualities of improvisation: ‘penetration, absorption, resonance, flow’ (1990: 172). In response to this and as a way of summing up this section, I present the terms below as the equivalent qualities of intermedial improvisation:

Penetration becomes...Reflexivity – the affordance of intermedial improvisation to reflect back aspects of the activator *in the act of activating* complicates notions of disappearance or loss and rather leads to the intermedial improviser being propelled towards an insistent instability, which in turn feeds into the nature of the practice and the event created. It can be conceived of as an oscillatory act of becoming in the work, where the points of appearance and disappearance are not present or fixed, and ‘presencing’ is characterised as a rather shaky ‘line between’.

Absorption becomes....Presencing/Presentness – a movement not towards loss and disappearance, but increased engagement with the present moment. Though there is oscillation between absorption in creation and responding to the present sensory stimuli, the practice of intermedial improvisation has developed through an insistent trajectory towards an increased ‘sensory’ stance (see Chapter 2).

Resonance becomes...Graft – the actions of the intermedial improviser as a constant search for distinctive grafts between the different elements in play within the system, often through a technique of counterpoint or juxtaposition; through deliberately creating collisions between the actual and virtual, the direct and indirect, the affective and banal, the action and the manifestation.

Flow becomes...Discourse – the amount of factors and elements in play in one moment of intermedial improvisation leads towards not just ‘multiplicity’ within the work, but constant discourse between such elements as they encounter one another. This discourse plays out not just in the layered moment of manifestation (intermediality), but also in the processes by which it is generated (inter-construction).

Improvisatory practice is at the heart of event-making in live intermedial practice. It is the singular, iterative action which sets an autopoietic system in motion and through which a live intermedial event is generated. It is a particular mode of improvisation, which, in its demands on the performer-activator, also impacts on her presencing and positioning within the event. The 'absence of a center' (Derrida 1978: 354) in live intermediality is activated through such practice, but is also productively counteracted by the iterative, sustained and fixed elements which are present and prefigure all events generated in this mode. In the next section, the act of improvisation in live intermediality is positioned both within and as constituting an autopoietic system of event-making.

5.3 Live Intermediality, Autopoiesis and Event

In this section, I focus on the autopoietic nature of live intermediality, linking this to its modes of event-making through improvisational practice. Fischer-Lichte describes an 'autopoietic feedback loop' in performance as 'the mutual interaction between actors and spectators' (2008: 163). She argues that such interaction requires 'two groups of people, one acting and the other observing, to gather at the same time and place for a given period of shared lifetime' (38). Such a gathering, according to Fischer-Lichte, automatically sets the feedback loop between performer and spectator in motion 'through the energy circulating between them' (59). The loop is therefore self-generating in that this energy feeds back into and constitutes the performance event.

Fischer-Lichte also argues that the autopoietic feedback loop has been invoked and induced directly in performance and live art since the 1960s, through practitioners adopting three main strategies: 'first, the *role reversal* of actors and spectators; second, the *creation of a community* between them; and third, the creation of various modes of mutual, physical *contact* that help explore the interplay between proximity and distance, public and private, or visual and tactile contact' (2008: 40).

As a concept and term, 'autopoiesis' arose from the work of scientists, Varela and Maturana (1987). According to Maturana and Varela, 'living beings are characterized

in that, literally, they are continually self-producing' with their 'molecular components...dynamically related in a network of on-going interactions'. Such interactions in turn 'produce...components which make up the network of transformations that produced them' (1987: 43-44). This means that 'their only product is themselves, with no separation between producer and product. The being and doing of an autopoietic unity are inseparable' (49).

Though Fischer-Lichte draws on the 'self-producing' aspects of autopoiesis in her conception of the feedback loop, she does not directly engage with some of the other implications of Maturana and Varela's theories when placed in relation to a system of event-making. In the analysis below, though I am in dialogue with Fischer-Lichte's conception of a feedback loop, I am also drawing on Maturana and Varela to gain a fuller understanding of how autopoiesis is in play in live intermediality and the events it creates.

Firstly, in a departure from Fischer-Lichte's description, I do not locate the autopoietic nature of live intermediality in the 'energy circulating' between the performer and spectators in their shared occupation of a space, but rather in the operation of the live intermedial system as a whole. This system incorporates a number of distinct components, whose on-going interactions both are and simultaneously are constructing the event, with the 'being and doing' or in this case 'doing and becoming' of this particular unity inseparable.

The components of the system are the performer-activator and experiencers – 'the live bodies', the technical mediums and materials brought to the event and finally the intermedial space generated through the network of on-going interactions between such elements. Crucially, as explored above, it is the improvisatory mode of creation within this system which renders it autopoietic or 'self-producing', in that the intermedial space is constantly impacting on the performer-activator and experiencers and thus feeding back into the actions which in turn generate the space anew. In this formulation, the interactions between all components of the system

are 'mutually constitutive' of the live intermedial event, with 'no separation between producer and product'.

Unlike Fischer-Lichte, who argues that mediatised performances 'sever' (2008: 68) the feedback loop between performer and spectator, in live intermedial practice the autopoietic system is built on interactions through mediatised forms and technical mediums. The 'energy' which circulates in this space, does so within and through such forms; it is channelled and re-routed and takes on a variety of configurations because of this. The presence and affordance of the technical mediums in the space is equally as significant in the operation of the system and engendering of the event as that of the 'live bodies'. The distinction between Fischer-Lichte's conception of the feedback loop which is always in operation in performance and my own adoption of the term, autopoiesis, in relation to the live intermedial system is that the autopoietic aspect of this practice is wedded to its particular functions, namely the improvised interactions between bodies and technical mediums to generate intermediality.

This can be seen when live intermediality is placed in relation to Fischer-Lichte's three strategies introduced above, which she cites as those employed to 'invoke' and induce the autopoietic feedback loop between performers and spectators. The first strategy is the role reversal of actors and spectators; moments where the spectator is invoked into action and performance which, she argues, 'transform...the conventional subject-object relationship...into a scintillating, ever elusive negotiation' (2008: 40), revealing that it is 'impossible to control or predict spectators' reactions in advance or gauge their effects on performers and other spectators' (43).

In the autopoietic system of live intermedial practice, the mutually constitutive interactions between components in the live intermedial system are indeed a mode of 'elusive negotiation'. However, the notion of role reversal does not encompass the complexity of these shifting relations. As intimated above and evidenced in the analysis below, the dynamic nature of the live intermedial event as it is generated

means that the roles of the performer-activator, experiencers and technical mediums are in constant dialogue and shift productively because of that dialogue. As Maturana and Varela might conceive of it, interactions between the components of a system, as a result of its 'internal dynamics', are what allow the system to develop without losing its 'organization' (1987: 74), which in this case relates to the iterative or distinctive elements of the practice.

The second strategy cited by Fischer-Lichte, as invoking or 'magnifying' the operation of the autopoietic feedback loop, is the *creation of a community*. She offers examples of work, which are underpinned by the principle of 'the creation of community through collective action and experience' (53). To do so, she argues, 'they merely required members of two otherwise clearly distinct groups – actors and spectators – to engage in common activities for the duration of the performance' (55). This principle of collective action and experience as engendering community between actors and spectators can only be troubled by the practice of live intermediality. As I go on to argue, the actions in the space of live intermediality generate a range of diverse modes and conditions of co-presence, rather than automatically creating a collective or 'community' experience. Such modes are complex, filtered and bifurcated by the nature of the lively mediatised space and modes of contact-making it offers between those present.

Indeed, Fischer-Lichte's final strategy is that of 'mutual physical contact'. She argues that 'the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators' (2008: 38) allows for 'the creation of various modes of mutual, physical *contact*' (40), which is seen as another way of highlighting and magnifying the operation of the autopoietic feedback loop between the bodies present in the space.

The modes of contact-making in live intermedial practice are again distinct in that the contact between live bodies in this space is characterised by a proximal distance or *distanced proximity*. Distancing is always present, in that responses are re-routed through mediatised forms and take on a displaced presence because of this. However, this interaction between live bodies and mediatised forms, enacted in real

time, simultaneously engenders modes of proximity and affective touch between those present, which can result in an intensely haptic space being generated.

An emergent property of this practice is that it allows for a range of mediated haptic modes through which those present can make contact. Though the modes of interaction between performer-activator and experiencer range according to the event, there is a common language present in all live intermedial practice, which is a language of simultaneous conception and action, of an interaction and its manifestation co-present within a space, of hands and their movement made large and present, but also of micro-movements, shifting the intermedial space in activation. Such contact creates the *lively mediated* space of the event and remains a persistent quality of how live intermediality operates in practice.

In summary, what is striking about the strategies Fischer-Lichte singles out as those which highlight and activate the autopoietic feedback loop, is that all are ways of diminishing the physical and conceptual distance between performing and spectating, generating proximity through shared space and action. In contrast, the autopoietic system in live intermedial practice enacts a distinct play between modes of proximity and distance. The performer-activator and experiencers share a fluid space, where physical proximity is possible, yet the system itself militates against 'closeness' in action, as the technical mediums and their operation are the focus of activation in the space. Conversely, modes of affective touch and haptic interactivity are enabled through such distancing and the affordances of the lively media at play in the space. This is not a performance event which is constituted by bodily co-presence, but through the interactions between components of a system, which are both live and mediated, both human and machine.

5.4 The Distinct Events of Live Intermediality: *Town* and *auto-play*

In order to ground and develop this analysis, I turn to two contrasting examples of live intermedial practice, through which I address the autopoietic system, intermedial improvisation, the role of the experiencer and the distinct nature of the live intermedial event produced in each case. The two practice examples are *Town*,

presented at Kingsgate Gallery in February 2012 and *auto-play*, which took place as part of the Collisions event at RCSSD in October 2013. For a fuller account of both events, see Chapter 2. Suffice to say, for the purposes of this analysis, the two represent contrasting modes in which the live intermedial system can operate to generate an event.

Such differences are activated specifically through the roles taken on by the performer-activator and offered to the experiencer. According to an autopoietic view of the live intermedial system, such roles, though they may to a degree be defined prior to the event in question, are also constituted by the conditions of that event and by the workings of the system, once the first interaction has set its autopoietic capacity in motion.

5.4.1 *Town*: The System Closes In...

In *Town*, I allowed the autopoietic system to manifest without any framing of its operations or the way both the experiencers and I could operate within it (see 2.5). In reflection, I noted, 'I...wonder why I didn't/couldn't though I had planned to, address the audience directly to state the terms of engagement' (Scott (a) 2013). The crucial language within this statement is the dual formulation of 'didn't/couldn't', which reflects the oscillation between the controlled and controlling elements of the system, on my part as performer-activator. Though I clearly made a decision not to frame the event explicitly, there was also something about the operation of that system which then impacted on my ability to shift it in practice.

At a certain point, people moved away from the immediate space of the event and started to chat and avail themselves of drinks. In response, I withdrew inside the 'system'; that is the technical mediums with which I interact, generating intermediality, which feeds back to me. The looping and self-generating capacity of live intermediality facilitated a withdrawal from a more expansive system drawing on experiencer responses. In effect, I tried to shut them out and the system afforded me this option, so that the most prevalent influences on my actions and processes were twofold; the focus required to activate the system, as well as the intermediality

I had already generated and which impacted on my further creation. This can be seen clearly when the camera documenting *Town* focuses on my operations in this piece (see **Clip 29**).

However, despite this focused actual presence and my perceived withdrawal into the system, the intermediality generated was 'presencing' in a very different mode (see **Clip 30**). Here it can be seen that some sort of appeal is made manifest, specifically through the improvised text. The phrases 'are you listening?' and 'I feel smothered' are directed to the experiencers. Equally, asking through the text 'are you there?' and stating 'I can't quite see you' is also indicative of an address to those in the space. In contrast to the focused performer-activator, 'trapped' in the system of doing shown in **Clip 29**, this evidences a human being reaching to others. Vulnerability, and the response which arises from that state, finds its place in the distanced and disconnected image/text, rather than manifesting in the body.

In the 'fast motion' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 293) of this event, I was unaware of any appeal or 'reaching' on my part towards those present. In contrast, my primary felt sense was of a need to sublimate my feelings of surprise, hurt and disappointment, in relation to the experiencers' responses (see **Clip 29**). I remember feeling a stoic determination to continue with the business of making the practice, and to focus on that, rather than the experiencers; this was the self-identified withdrawal, noted above. The fact that, in documentation, I can see that I could not or did not shut out those present, and that an appeal to them was made manifest in the intermedial space, is indicative of how such events 'overflow' their context.

Though all the elements cited in the first section of this chapter, as constituting a live intermedial event, were present here, this particular event was unlike any other I had experienced as performer-activator. Caught up in the 'fast motion' of improvisation and responding to the lack of engagement on the part of the experiencers, the system within which I was operating took on a rigid and fixed quality, raising barriers between us. The particular 'set of singularities' in play, including the nature of the space, expectations of the experiencers and the system

itself, cemented themselves around me, effectively blocking in my perception the ‘becoming’ capacity of the improvisatory practice to respond to its conditions and shift modes. However, the event also exceeded such perceptions and ‘overflowed’ through the mediatised presencing made manifest in the improvised digital text. Though I did not recognise it in the moment, I articulated a distinct appeal to those present and a line of becoming which belied my own self identified sedentary positioning in the development of the event.

Town evidences the play of fixity and fluidity within live intermedial practice and the way an event of this nature can hold proximity and distance in a single moment; also, that the work is often contradictory in its manifestation, interrogative of the roles and actions of those implicated within it. The insistent possibility to shift and ‘become’ productively, which is offered by intermedial improvisation, can be counteracted by a system of event-making which has the potential to enclose and exclude. Finally, the event exceeds its context at every turn, as the shifting intermedial elements make manifest emergent responses of which the performer-activator, in the moment of activation, can be unaware.

5.4.2 *auto-play*: Autopoiesis through Interactivity and Reciprocity

Though operating with a similar spatial set up and equivalent kit, made up of technical mediums with parallel affordances, the operation of the live intermedial system in *auto-play* differed in crucial ways, generating an event which was utterly distinct from that created in *Town*, though overarching features of the practice remained present. This particular example gives evidence of the capacity of the practice to incorporate experiencers as components within its system of creation, changing the nature of the event overall.

As with *Town*, a full outline of *auto-play* is offered in 2.7. The event was constructed as a series of timed intermedial encounters for single experiencers, pairs and finally as an open space for a number of experiencers. In each encounter, the experiencer was given instructions in advance (see Appendix A, Item 6). Here it was made clear that they were a ‘player’ with access to three ‘sites of play’ in the space; the light-

box, where coloured gels could be used and messages written and then instantly projected through the live feed camera, the microphone, which could be used to sing or speak and the space of the projected image, which could also be used as a site of interactive play.

This is a distinct shift from the lack of definition offered to experiencers in *Town* and in terms of the system generated, resulted in an opening up of the roles of both experiencer and performer-activator. Rather than occupying two distinct positions/roles, with the performer-activator imbricated in the system and the experiencer witnessing its operations, there was a fluidity and 'becoming' associated with our 'play' in the space through the mediatised forms and interfaces present. The autopoietic system did not operate as an invisible barrier between us, but became the way in which we interacted in the space. This did not just have an effect on their role, but also how I was positioned; no longer was the event dependent on my doing, but rather hinged on reciprocal activity between us.

In autopoietic terms, the incorporation of each experiencer into the system of live intermediality equates with the process of 'ontogeny' or 'the structural change in a unity without loss of organization in that unity' (Maturana and Varela 1987: 74). This means that 'if a cell interacts with molecule X and incorporates it in its processes, what takes place as a result of this interaction is determined not by the properties of molecule X but by the way in which that molecule is "seen" or taken by the cell as it incorporates the molecule in its autopoietic dynamics' (51-52).

The iterative 'ontogenic' process of new 'molecules' in the form of a series of distinct individuals being incorporated into the live intermedial system resulted in the generation of singular events. Their incorporation was indeed according to how they were 'constructed' or 'seen' by the system; how the space and offer and my presence operated upon them in the moment of their encounter with it. In turn, as part of the system in place, I then responded to their actions, resulting in what Maturana and Varela refer to as 'reciprocal perturbations' (75) between us.

The specific nature of these ‘perturbations’ in each case was what led to particular formulations of the live intermedial event, determined by and through the experiencer’s actions within the system according to its ‘internal dynamics’. Through their recurrent interactions, the experiencer became reflexively part of the system’s process of self-generation, contrasting with *Town*, where they were positioned outside of that system and effectively witnessed rather than took part in this process.

To develop this analysis of *auto-play*, I am focusing on a single one-to-one encounter, which is a particularly strong example of how the experiencer can be active within the system of live intermediality. The documentation of this event is woven together into a single audio-visual document, which brings together different angles of the experience, with my own and the experiencer’s responses (see **Clip 31**).

In contrast to *Town*, the configuration of the system in this event and the offer made to the experiencer, allowed for play between us through the affordances of the system. The ‘products’ of this system, in the shape of images and sounds and movements in space, reflexively fed back into our subsequent actions with the ‘being and doing’ of such properties ‘inseparable’ (Maturana and Varela 1987: 49). This links directly to the interactive and reciprocal potential of the live intermedial mode which, up until this point in the project, had not been fully explored or exploited.

Steve Dixon (2007) outlines four types of interactive art and performance, ‘ranked in ascending order in relation to the openness of the system and the consequent level and depth of user interaction’. The third category, ‘conversation’, where ‘a dialogue which is reciprocated and is subject to real interchange and exchange’ is generated through the work and ‘which is reliant on issues such as trust, cooperation and openness’ (2007: 585), is relevant to this discussion. Dixon claims that interactivity stays at this third level, ‘if the user is essentially interacting with the artwork on *its* pre-programmed terms...and the user’s input will never meaningfully alter the artwork itself, or build and construct “new art” in collaboration with the computer or other users’ (565). He equates the highest interactive capacity of a work,

‘collaboration’, with a situation whereby ‘the interactor becomes a major author or co-author of the artwork, experience, performance or narrative’ (2007: 595).

According to Dixon’s categorisation, this particular one-to-one event firmly occupies the fourth level of ‘collaboration’, but can also be connected to the third, ‘conversation’. Though I contend that the experiencer did meaningfully alter and build the work with me, the notion of what is ‘pre-programmed’ in the making of the event is a thorny one. As I outlined in Chapter 1, there are certain predetermined elements which constitute the site of live intermedial improvisation, and though these could not be described as being ‘programmed’ in advance, there is an element of determination attached to particular tools, materials and expectations. This links to the autopoietic view of a system as a unity which, though it changes through its interaction with and incorporation of other systems and elements, does so ‘without loss of organization in that unity’ (Maturana and Varela 1987: 74). Thus, though the live intermedial system produces ‘singular’ performance events, it also operates iteratively, through recurrent interactions between live bodies and technical mediums to generate intermediality. As I argue in the next section, this means certain properties emerge from the practice in all its forms.

Returning to the *auto-play* example, through our live engagement in this space, “new art” was generated because of the encounter between two present bodies through and in relation to media. This in turn links to the specific nature of reciprocity which the live intermedial space affords, and how that relates to the modes of contact it produces. Defined as ‘given, felt, or done in return’ (Oxford University Press 2014), a reading from the world of human-computer interaction offers a more radical view of reciprocity which insists that for an action to be reciprocal, ‘change needs to occur on both sides: The actions of one party trigger responses from the other, which lead in turn to changes in the first’ (Seel 2012: 1615).

With regard to the reciprocal nature of this iteration of *auto-play*, the documentation evidences the following exchanges, which triggered change on both sides:

- Experiencer references the sea in writing on the light-box and I respond, through making the sea appear on the screen, with the words 'You are the Sea'
- Experiencer responds through speaking those words into the microphone and using this site to describe a scene
- I respond through taking up a position in the projected light and allowing myself to be directed by the words of the experiencer
- Experiencer moves into the space of projected light and I respond by returning to the desk to shift the image and create a new space for her, through image, word and sound
- Experiencer responds through moving in and in relation to the space of projected light.

At each stage of the improvisation, we were responding directly to each other's presence and prompts. In doing so, change and shift occurred in the roles we played in the space, our positioning in relation to each other, the forms of communication/expression which were chosen and the tools with which we chose to engage; offers through the intermedial tools of sound, image, body and text were 'given, felt, or done in return'.

In addition, though the set up for the event was communicated to the experiencer before she entered, we never directly addressed what we were doing or discussed that in the space. Offers were made through the intermedial tools and responses similarly were housed within that system. A closeness and connection was clearly established and is evidenced through both our responses and the documentation of the event. However, there was no need for us to clarify our roles through direct verbal communication and the nature of our reciprocal exchange took on a distanced proximity.

This particular event was marked by the 'lines and dimensions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 245) it generated between the experiencer and I. It 'overflowed' in a number

of ways, which could not have been foreseen before the encounter, while also being facilitated in its making by the fixed and present media and objects in the space. As a mode of interactive discourse and becoming-present to each other, the exchanges and the ways they were housed within the live intermedial system, generated contact between us which was not 'physical', but was certainly intimate³⁸. The displaced and dispersed offerings in play, with the proximity of our live bodies and the 'exposure' of placing these in the intermedial space, generated ***distanced proximity***. This aspect is explored in further detail below, where it is cited as an emergent property of live intermedial practice.

To sum up this section, the improvised nature of the practice when placed in relation to the particular components of the system in play produces an autopoietic system, whose primary property is its present capacity to feed back into and produce itself. This capacity, as seen above, leads to events manifesting in diverse forms and remaining 'precarious' and to a certain extent unknown before they are made, which links to the dynamic and becoming aspect of this practice and the events it generates. However, as I argue below, there are also recurrent and iterative properties of live intermediality, which emerge from the specific '*ways of doing*' (Bryon 2014: 42) which characterise and constitute this mode of live media praxis.

5.5 Emergence³⁹: the properties of a live intermedial event

I have argued for the distinctiveness of this practice through its dualities, which emerge from the system of generation described above and are evident across the range of events which are produced. In this final section, I draw out such dualities, making particular reference to *auto-play*, as well as other events and experienter responses, to support the claims being made.

³⁸ Chatzichristodoulou and Zerihan describe intimacy as occurring through 'effective communication between people in some kind of relationship' which enables them to 'reveal something about themselves and connect in some form of meaningful exchange' (2012: 1).

³⁹ The term emergence is employed in complexity and systems theory: 'once a certain level of complexity is reached in any system, genuinely novel properties – those that have never been instantiated before – emerge. These emergent effects are not predictable before their first occurrence' (Beckerman in Barrett and Bolt 2010: 6).

5.5.1 Distanced Proximity: Affect and Engagement in Live Intermedial Practice

I have already argued that live intermediality generates simultaneously both affective engagement and a dislocated, dispersed and re-routed experience; distanced proximity (see 3.4). Through examining *auto-play*, further aspects are revealed; namely the capacity of the practice to hold affect and touch in a manner which, though always filtered, generates a close engagement with and on the part of the experiencer.

Previous events have already given evidence to this effect. Below, a selection of responses to *re-cite* (2012), show affective engagement with the work:

- ‘It was a gentle curious rambling as one strand going through my mind’
- ‘It is difficult to put words into the experience – there are images, floatings, feelings, warmth, pleasure and so many more. It is intimate and so personal’
- ‘It felt like a ride I left too soon. Like the melancholy the day after Christmas.’
- ‘Beautiful with a touch of melancholy. I saw the stages of life. The exuberance of children. The excitement of youth/teen years. The responsibility of adult years. The joy of giving birth –the pain when the children leave. Then old age – wisdom and infirmity. Then death. I don’t know what happens then. Will I still be me or will I be dust? Is there a cycle? I don’t know. I am not young. I cried.’
- ‘The swimming person! So captivating. And the tension...what it was he/she regretted to say. I will wonder all day.’
- ‘Really touched me weirdly and I don’t know why. Stayed for a lot longer than I intended to. Mesmerising.’
- ‘Like a time capsule of dreams’

(Experiencer responses to *re-cite* (2012). See Appendix B, Item 1)

Many of these responses evidence an affective engagement with the practice which is characterised by either interrogation as to why it should have such an affect and/or projecting specific affective readings onto the work; ‘the stages of life’ or ‘the melancholy the day after Christmas’. In addition, the responses express an ‘ineffability’ about the work’s affective quality – ‘it is difficult to put into words’ and ‘really touched me weirdly and I don’t know why’.

The space of live intermediality offers a collection of images, sounds and actions

which have the potential, through their live construction and deliberately abstract and non-narrative nature, to appeal to an affective sense. When the means of construction are offered to the experiencer, then the space becomes a more active affective question. As one 'auto-player' commented, 'you opened some space that might hold the audience/participants' fantasies' (see Appendix B, Item 2).

Distinct forms of affective reciprocity are also evidenced in the *auto-play* iteration considered above (see **Clip 31**). For example, I was able to respond to the experiencer's live feed words and images of the sea with a pre-recorded image of the sea, which I mixed with the live feed, so that both were present on the screen. Her delight at this exchange, and response to her offer, is clear in the documentation of the event and her responses to the experience. The ability to use media in that moment to respond very specifically and sensitively is key, with the live construction of the space allowing for fluidity on my part and that of the experiencer. As she expressed in her written response, 'I was able to create the images that have resonated with me in a hidden place and put them somewhere public that still felt like they were my own'. She also characterised the space created in live intermediality as 'open', 'freeing' and 'intense in unleashing the openmindedness and creativity of the participant' (see Appendix B, Item 2).

Live intermediality as a practice accesses the personal in an indirect way; not through an explicit address or appeal, but through offering a space where that personal response can be held and seen. Strong affective engagement with this space is apparent, from those experiencers who were physically present in the space to those offered the opportunity to engage directly in generating intermediality. This engagement also links to the operation and activation of media within the event.

5.5.2 Lively Media – Live Bodies: The Composite Nature of Live Intermediality

As evidenced above, I posit that live intermediality uses the distancing and dispersal of the media present to create intimacy and proximity; that the indirect modes of creation generated by the live activation of content through media allow for a direct and personal mode of engagement. Finally, I claim that in *auto-play*, where that

space was opened up to the experiencer, the possibilities and affordances of the media, along with the lack of a predetermined form for the experience, generated an interrogation of the experiencers, which led to them reaching into and addressing the personal through this mode.

In short, I characterise the presence of digital media in the event as *lively*, which is distinct from categorising the media I use in relation to their 'liveness' and rather is a way of putting into play the aspects of actual and virtual, liveness and mediatisation, which are brought into productive collision in the live intermedial encounter. These are listed below:

- Bringing content to life in different modes
- As an active and interrogative presence in the space
- Constantly renewing and 'becoming' through reflexive, dialogical meaning making within and between the construction and manifestation of intermediality (see Chapter 3 and 5.1)
- Insistent call and response between different media – media discourse generated in the moment of inter-construction (see Chapter 3)
- A lively play between actual and virtual, enacted through the collisions between the media (see 3.3.4)
- As creating a layered, concurrent, shifting space – remaining unstable and in play (see Chapters 3 and 4)
- As 'opening up' the presence of the performer-activator and experiencer in their doing, as well as forming connections between them (see Chapter 4 and above)

Within the *auto-play* event referenced above, a lively mediatised space was generated through our reciprocal interactions. Each 'call' offered in and through a particular medium was answered and reciprocated through a 'response' in another, with the intersections we created housing something of both, but also generating a meeting-point for our distinct thoughts and feelings. The contact and connection between us in the space was never physical, though our bodily co-presence was vital to the experience. Rather, the present media allowed us dispersed points of engagement and haptic connection in the moment of co-creation, generating a lively openness to which we both responded.

This is evidenced in **Clip 31** through our shifting through roles, states and actions and is enabled by the multiple technical mediums in the space. It is also prompted by media meeting, exchanging and coalescing in the moment of activation into the layered and composite intermedial space of sound, image and object; the lively discourse, which I claim always characterises live intermediality in performance.

The mediatised space is always a lively one in live intermedial practice – it is always on the edge of becoming something else and tipping into another state. There are always decisions to be made as to the nature of that change – where it will go and how it will get there. The possibility inherent in the practice and, as a result, in the media which generate it, renders them lively. Equally, as evidenced in this iteration, the lively media and live bodies are co-constituent. From the physical interaction with media, the lively space is constructed and through that construction of space, the live intermedial body is constituted and reconstituted within and in relation to that space. The live intermedial bodies we generated through this event, in all their guises, forms and combinations, were a direct result of the co-presence of live bodies and lively media in the space, which both prompted and housed this co-creation.

5.6 Conclusion: The Live Intermedial Event

In conclusion, the live intermedial event, though diverse in form, consistently manifests in the following ways:

- Through **distinct actions and interactions between live bodies and technical mediums to generate intermediality in real time**
- As an **autopoietic system of performance making** which constantly feeds back into and generates itself
- As producing an **affective mode of engagement** through its disposition towards a **distanced proximity** in activation and manifestation
- As generating a **lively mediatised** space, which prompts **actions and responses**, while also maintaining a **sensory and immersive** quality

Conclusion

The formulation of this complementary writing has involved placing concepts, practices and theories in relation to live intermediality. As such, it has functioned much as the practice does, through noting the insights, surprises and 'knowings' that emerge from such combinations. For example, placing the praxis in relation to modes of live media performance, live art and video art highlights the distinctive features of live intermediality. Thinking around intermediality in performance, when placed in relation to this praxis, also yields important insights around the particular operations and affects of *live* intermediality and its present constructions.

The distinct precariousness of the live intermedial performer-activator - her re-formulation through her actions and how her live intermedial body is constructed and presences in the space - emerges from discourse with ideas around body, presence, 'precarity' and becoming. Equally, insider insights into the act of intermedial improvisation position this practice productively in relation to broader ideas around artistic improvisation. Finally, notions of autopoiesis and event push the practice to reveal how it works as a distinct system which, though manifesting in a range of formats, also evidences consistent features and properties.

Having placed such elements in play, by way of conclusion, I offer three threads. The first details the new knowledge and insights which have emerged from this research project, through a set of terms and distinctions which outline ***live intermediality***. The second presents the applications such knowledge and insights have within the field of intermedial performance studies and intermedial/live media practice. Finally, the third outlines the emergent interests from this project, my thoughts as to how live intermediality will continue to develop and the current trajectory for the research.

Thread 1: A new mode of live intermedial praxis

Live intermedial practice

- Not live art, VJing or video art, but a live media mode which operates **between such traditions**, informed by, but equally interrogating all of those through its processes and the events it produces (see Chapter 1)
- An autopoietic or self generating system of event-making, which is neither fixed nor fluid, but enacts a **distinct play** between **elements which are always becoming** and those **which retain the 'unity' of the system**, through their fixed presence (see Chapters 1, 4 and 5)
- Not generating an entirely immersive or completely dislocated experience, but disposed to a play between **an affective sensory mode** and **an interrogative, displaced re-routing of presence; distanced proximity** (see Chapters 3 and 5)

Live intermediality

- Not liveness or mediatisation, but **an intersection between live bodies and lively media to generate intermediality** (see Chapter 5)
- Not in-between, remediated or a hypermedium, but **an immanent space of creation characterised by discourse and movement between act and manifestation** (See Chapter 3)
- Not actual or virtual, but **actually virtual**, characterised by putting these aspects of the space into collision with each other through **intersections between actual acts/objects and virtual manifestations** (See Chapter 3)

The live intermedial performer

- A **performer-activator**, not immersed in the act of creation or present in an uncomplicated way, but **generating multiple modes of presencing and beings present, through making in the present in a range of modes and forms** – precariously positioned and subject to the system in her doing through her present experience of it influencing further actions (See Chapter 4)

Insider insights

- A performer-activator not engaged in comprovisation or improvisation but **intermedial improvisation**, which is both composed and improvised, but distinct in its processes (**inter-construction**) and the demands it places upon her (See Chapter 5)

Thread 2: Applications in the Intermedial and live media fields

In terms of what this thesis offers to the fields in which it is positioned, the insights provided through its distinct strands contribute on a range of levels. The findings of this research arise unapologetically from my 'personally situated knowledge' (Barrett 2010: 2) of creating this practice; they are emergent properties from a very particular mode of event-making practised by one individual. However, such findings do have relevance and applications beyond this context.

Firstly, the tracing of the development of the praxis presents models of approaching this form of Practice as Research over a three year period, with key methods arising from this process (see Chapter 2). Such methods exist in the processes of making, activating, documenting and reflecting on the events. They are also present in the focus throughout the project on the ideas, issues and interests, which arise from the 'doing' of the practice. The subsequent use of this work, as an analytical tool to pierce discourses and conceptions within intermedial and live media performance studies, arises from positioning the practice as the key site of inquiry and 'knowing'. It is my hope that such an approach can contribute productively to the body of knowledge already present around Practice as Research in the performing arts and serve as an illustrative example of how a multi-mode PaR inquiry might be conducted, documented and articulated through mixed modes of knowing in dynamic interplay.

Secondly, this thesis is a contribution to the field of intermedial performance studies. Unlike much of the scholarship around the operation and effect of intermediality in performance, this study seeks to clearly align its findings with the live activation of media, viewing this aspect of the practice as crucial to an understanding of how intermediality can and does operate in live media contexts. Through its liminal positioning between live media forms, live art and intermedial work, the thesis brings together discourses within these fields to shed light on each and to cross-pollinate ideas towards a greater understanding of the operation and effect of *lively-mediated* modes of work, where the real time activation of media is a present part of the experience. In relation to this, the thesis also offers new insights into how we

experience such practice and how this experience differs from that of intermedial work without live activation present.

In addition, and in relation to these forms, this thesis presents an extensive study and analysis of the experience of live media performance from the perspective of the performer. This includes not only new ideas around the operation and particular manifestation of the live media performer, but also 'insider insights' as to the nature of media-based improvisation. These particular 'knowings', though arising from distinct practice, have applications and relevance across this field, with implications in terms of how performers might approach the business of live media work, making clear distinctions between this and the preparations a performer makes to work with media, which is predetermined in its structure or operated by someone separate from the action.

Finally and crucially, the presentation of this live intermedial practice as new knowledge makes a contribution to the field of live media performance. This articulated, interrogated and analysed model of developing and practising work has applications in the fields of intermedial and live media devising and performing, contributing both through new methods of combining performance elements into a system, but also in the articulation of how such methods operate, are practised and experienced.

This project represents a staging post in a continuing vein of research through practice. The praxis which I have developed, and which sprang from my particular approach to research and event-making, is constantly throwing back at its maker questions, properties and issues, only some of which can be contained here. Live intermediality constantly performs on me as a practitioner-researcher, as I hope it will in the future, providing many more opportunities for me to develop, learn and discover through its 'doing-thinking'.

See **Clip 32: Video Text: 'Live intermediality – where next?'**

Thread 3: Developing live intermediality

In conclusion, as a response to the question raised through this video text and the unfinished nature of the praxis expressed there, I offer the following as the emergent threads of research arising from this project.

Live intermediality as a 'lively' mode of intermedial event-making has the capacity, as evidenced throughout this project, to manifest in a range of temporal and spatial configurations, offering different roles and positionings to the experiencer and performer-activator. Having focused my attention in the past three years on developing and understanding further what this praxis is and does, my interests, moving forward, are to investigate how this mode can be employed or applied; what it is and can be *for*. This includes an interest in the praxis operating in and as a public space of encounter. Equally, I am drawn to its applications within diverse communities, as a mode of collective and individual expression and communication.

As the project has progressed, the work has become more outward-facing and interactive, more about public engagement and how people can be invited into and active within the events I create. As such, I am interested in developing this aspect of live intermediality and how it might operate in exploring the concerns, issues, thoughts and feelings of diverse groups, sectors and communities in a range of spaces and contexts.

Finally, I have developed through the project a strong interest in the intersections this praxis can have with other disciplines and modes of making work. As such, I hope to investigate the collaborative possibilities of working with musicians, authors, scientists, performers and others to generate 'lively' encounters and new ways in which live intermedial praxis can operate and manifest. In relation to all the above, live intermediality will continue to function as 'doing-thinking'; as a mode of research, a site of experimentation, a trigger to thought and a way of both interrogating and discovering.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Practice Documents

Item 1: *Cover* (2011), instruction sheet

Item 2: *Cover* (2011), planned structure and materials

Item 3: *re-cite* (2012), excerpts from lyrics and text extracts

Item 4: *Town* (2013), excerpts from text extracts and lyrics

Item 5: Instructional prompts used in the studio

Item 6: 'auto-player' instructions, *auto-play* (2013)

Item 7: *auto-play* (2013), performer-activator questions

Item 1: *Cover* (2011) Instruction Sheet

Cover

An Intermedial Installation

Cover is a durational intermedial installation. You are welcome to stay as long as you like in the space and to come and go as you please.

The installation will be constructed in real time, based on a number of prompts in the form of popular songs. If you would like to add your own input to the installation, write the name of a popular song and artist on the piece of paper in the little brown envelopes you will find in the space. Post your envelope in the box on stage and the performer/activator will incorporate your suggestion into the installation.

Thanks a lot and I hope you enjoy being part of *Cover*.

Jo

Item 2: *Cover* (2011), planned structure and materials

a) Plan and excerpts from text/lyric extracts brought to the event

Sound

- Breath and breathing as starting points
- Creating drones using the loop pedal, as a backdrop to live singing/talking
- Layered responses to songs
- Addressing the audience using the microphone
- Unison singing using loop pedal
- Silence – monologue delivered in space/from tech area

Objects

Red nose, playing cards, building blocks, coloured foam/felt sheets, post-its and paper to write on, necklace

Activities

- 2 live images – hand and face combinations
- Live feed image from computer – monologue to screen, empty space inhabited on stage, addressing audience from behind computer
- Speaking into camera, while recorded images play
- Standing on stage singing, while recorded images play
- Placing self in a collage placed on book-reader
- Objects appearing on stage, on book-reader, in live image, in text
- Improvised monologues from song prompts
- Shadow play on book-reader – face, hand, objects
- Repeated movements in different parts of the space
- Playing with objects on book-reader
- Writing on book-reader from prompts
- Darkness at book-reader end, with focus on sound – drone and live singing

Possible Monologues

- Description of final scene of 'Control'
- A woman running in the woods (Kate Bush)
- A man driving a car (Scrubs)
- Someone in a nightclub – 2nd person (I Feel Love)
- 3rd person description of someone under a bridge
- A one sided conversation about haircuts (Pavement)
- A description of William – 1st person (The Smiths)
- Description of Scotty listening to 'Higher Love' (on mike)
- Telling the story of 'The Trees They Do Grow High'

Lyrics to work with:

- 'We move like caged tigers, we couldn't get closer than this'
from 'Lovecats' (Smith 1983)
- 'Routine bites hard'
from 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' (Joy Division 1980)
- 'His little heart beat so fast'
from 'Hounds of Love' (Bush 1985)
- 'Did you see the drummer's hair?'
From 'Cut Your Hair' (Malkmus 1994)
- 'Her days of precious freedom, forfeited long before, to live such fruitless years
behind the guarded door, but those days will last no more'
From 'Fotheringay' (Denny 1969)
- 'Seasons don't fear the reaper'
From '(Don't Fear) The Reaper' (Roeser 1976)

Text Extracts

From *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

'I found I was standing before acres of ploughed earth. There was a fence keeping me from stepping into the field, with two lines of barbed wire, and I could see how this fence and the cluster of three or four trees above me were the only things breaking the wind for miles. All along the fence, especially along the lower line of wire, all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled. It was like the debris you get on a seashore: the wind must have carried some of it for miles and miles before finally coming up against these trees and these two lines of wire. Up in the branches of the trees, too, I could see, flapping about, torn plastic sheeting and bits of old carrier bags. That was the only time, as I stood there, looking at that strange rubbish, feeling the wind coming across those empty fields, that I started to imagine just a little fantasy thing, because this was Norfolk after all, and it was only a couple of weeks since I'd lost him. I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shoreline of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it' (Ishiguro 2005: 281-282).

b) Planned structure and possible movements

Movement 1

- Breath on loop pedal
- Movement of red nose on book-reader
- Body on stage positioned in relation to nose and live singing

Movement 2

- Soundscape based on song chosen
- Movement of coloured sheets and blocks on book-reader

Movement 3

- Drone created on loop pedal
- Song chosen from pile
- Lyrics written on post it notes and placed on bookreader
- Merge to driving images
- Monologue – description of final scene of Control

Movement 4

- Soundscape based on chosen song
- Live webcam image plus hand movements
- Merge to live webcam image – reading of 'Never Let Me Go'
- Body in live webcam image – slow movement or singing/talking

Movement 5

- Create bookreader image
- Fade soundscape and deliver monologue through mike based on chosen song

- Fade up soundscape over monologue

Movement 6

- New soundscape based on song
- Still image on computer
- Bookreader to base – face to bookreader
- Deliver monologue to camera (Scotty in car), then fade up soundscape and fade out images

Movement 7

- Silence
- Free writing based on song prompt
- Place self in book-reader image
- Song refrain – You're scaring me now
- Description of Bootylicious video

Movement 8

- Lordy, Save My Soul – build up!!
- Control ending – cutting to fragments of text/playing cards on book-reader
- Monologue delivered in space or through camera?
- Build up intensity of sound

Movement 9

- Go black – book-reader off and all images dark
- Create simple soundscape
- Someone running through the woods – 2nd person

Other movements = based on songs given

Item 3: re-cite (2012), excerpts from lyrics and text extracts

Song Lyrics

I lost you a while ago,
still I don't know why
I can't say your name
without a crow flying by

**From 'The Way it will Be'
(Rawlings and Welsh 2011)**

It's high time to make a move
Things might not get better –
there, I've said it
The last time you were feeling like this
You left with a light coat
and you froze to death

**From 'Why Don't you Stay Home'
(Nastasia 2006)**

I do as I please, and I'm on my knees
Your skin is something that
I stir into my tea
And I am watching you

And you are starry, starry, starry
**From 'Clam, Crab, Cockle, Cowrie'
(Newsom 2004)**

I'm dressed up for free drinks and family
greetings on your wedding,
your wedding, your wedding day.

The figures in plastic on the wedding cake
From 'Company Calls Epilogue'
(Gibbard 2000)

The trees they do grow high and the
leaves they do grow green
Many's the time my true love I've seen

**From 'The Trees They Do Grow High
(Traditional)**

Well I'll be damned,
here comes your ghost again
But that's not unusual, it's just that the
moon is full and you happened to call

From 'Diamonds and Rust' (Baez 1975)

The bed's so big the sheets are clean, your
girlfriend said you were 19

The Styrofoam icebucket's full of ice
Come up to my hotel room, treat me nice

From 'Motel Blues' (Wainwright 1971)

Drink up baby, stay up all night
With the things you could do,
you won't but you might

The potential you'll be that you'll never
see, promises you'll only make
Drink up with me now forget all about the
pressure of days

Do what I say and I'll make you ok,
drive them away –
the images stuck in your head

From 'Between the Bars' (Smith 1997)

Take this longing from my tongue, all the
useless things my hands have done

Let me see your beauty broken down,
like you would do for one you loved

From 'Take This Longing' (Cohen 1974)

My young love said to me,
my mother won't mind and my father
won't spite you for your lack of kind
and she laid her hands on me and this she
did say, oh it will not be long now til our
wedding day

**From 'She Moves through the Fair'
(Traditional)**

Text Extracts

From *There but for the* by Ali Smith

'he had simply typed the words *something beautiful* into the Google images box. Up came a picture of some leaves against the sun. A picture of a blonde photoshop-smooth woman and baby sleeping. A picture of a bird. A picture of Mother Teresa. A picture of a modernist building made of shiny metal. A picture of two people sticking knives into their own hands. Google is so strange. It promises everything, but everything isn't there. You type the words for what you need, and what you need becomes superfluous in an instant, shadowed instantaneously by the things you really need, and none of them answerable by Google' (Smith 2011: 158-159)

From *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

'All of it is now it is always now there will never be a time when I am not crouching and watching others who are crouching too I am always crouching the man on my face is dead his face is not mine his mouth smells sweet but his eyes are locked' (Morrison 1988: 210)

My writing

Your face perches above the others in the room – Scottnotben.

I watch you in the twisting constellation of lights - your irresistible and Unanswerable need to move, to dance

And when you don't want to dance anymore, you allow yourself to be led Outside into the chill of the end of the evening.

Wedged between buildings, the bricks are rough against my arms as I Stand on tiptoes in high-heeled shoes and taste you for the first time, While the party untangles on the other side.

And later, the whisper of your breath on my neck as we lie together.

Your body in my hotel bed, like you've always been there

And a right-ness in your position, length and occupation of empty space, Which I have no wish nor power to deny.

Your eyes after you shower are shards of blue, cut into your smile

And kissing you in the morning releases a rush of desire as I help you tie your tie

Then watch you over the breakfast table, with the hum of others around us,

One leg thrown casually over the other.

The effortless fall into loving you:

Like standing still and turning my palms to the sky to

Catch snow, which falls and nestles and melts there to form

Such pure and distilled and undiluted joy, that I have to scour for a

Sliver of unhappiness, which always fizzes to vapour in your arms.

Item 4: *Town* (2013), excerpts from text extracts and lyrics

Eliot, T S (1920), from 'Preludes'

'The winter evening settles down'
'The burnt-out ends of smoky days'
'broken blinds and chimney pots'
'all the hands that are raising dingy blinds in a thousand furnished rooms'
'such a vision of the street as the street hardly understands'
'his soul stretched tight across the skies'
'eyes assured of certain certainties'
'the notion of some infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing'
'wipe your hand across your mouth and laugh'

Trip advisor reviews for:

Supermarkets
Restaurants
Hotels

Song Excerpts

Shake a leg, it's a big rush
Can't find a taxi, can't find a bus
Bodies crammed in the underground,
Evacuating London town

From 'Taxi Grab' (Anderson 1976)

Come walk the streets of crime and the
coloured bright lit corners of low repute
See the dazzling nightlife glow beyond the
dawn and burning in the heart of Soho

From 'Soho' (Jansch 1966)

Is it the crack of the pool balls,
neon buzzing
Telephone ringing, it's your second cousin
The bar maid who smiles
with the corner of her eye
The magic of the melancholy
tear in your eye

**From 'Looking for the Heart of Saturday
Night' (Waits 1974)**

I'm walking in the city tonight,
I'm walking in the city at dark
Remembering, remember light
Thinking of nothing and the shooting stars

From 'The Sky Lit Up' (Harvey 1998)

I had seven faces
Thought I knew which one to wear
I'm sick of spending these lonely nights
Training myself not to care

From 'NYC' (Interpol 2002)

I was walking up the street,
I was thinking 'bout my dreams that might
come true with you
I was whispering in my sleep
All the secrets that I keep I told to you
I do, I do, I do

From 'For You' (Van Etten 2009)

Item 5: Instructional prompts used in the studio

a)

Establish live feed image
Counterpoint with sound
Disrupt the image
Build the sound
Make the images move
Cut the sound back
Shift the image
Shift the sound dynamic
Find an ending

b)

Open up a space with the image
Fill that space with sound
Make everything slower, then speed it up
Fragment and pull apart
A moment of unison
Finish on a fine line

c)

Establish a single sound
Add a contrasting sound
Introduce video footage
Add text
Underscore the sound with another
Make the image strange
Cur down to a single sound and build back up
Change the image to something completely different
Make it flicker/shift
Cut down sound and introduce new sound
Find a transition to something new

Item 6: 'auto-player' instructions, *auto-play* (2013)

Dear auto-player(s),

You are cordially invited to join me for 10 minutes of intermedial interactions. There will be a clear signal when we have exhausted our time together and until then you have 3 possible 'sites of play' in the space:

1. **the lightbox** - make pictures, play with the shapes, write a message
2. **the microphone** - talk, whisper, orate, sing, declaim...it's up to you
3. **the screened images** - place yourself in or in relation to the projected images

You will also be provided with a video camera to film the experience if you wish. However, you do not have to do this and can put the camera down at any point. Please hand it to Scott in the lobby area on your way out, where you will also be asked to offer a response to the experience before you leave.

Thanks a lot and see you in there,

Jo

Item 7: *auto-play* (2013), performer-activator questions

What did I experience in the first moments of them entering the space?

In what ways did things change and/or develop?

Did any patterns emerge? Who initiated these and in which ways did these patterns shift and change? Who or what initiated change?

What was my felt sense throughout? Did I experience discomfort or comfort? Where? When?

How would I characterise the way in which we exchanged?

Appendix B: **Experiencer Responses**

Item 1: *re-cite* (2012), experiencer responses

Item 2: *auto-play* (2013), experiencer responses

Item 1: *re-cite* (2012), experiencer responses

a) E mail responses to *re-cite* 04/10/12

'The overwhelming impression I took from the images/sound I saw/heard was the contrast between body and mind - between our base, biological physical desires/impulses and our conscious/not-always-successful attempts to live civilised, controlled lives and distance ourselves from the former despite the extremely powerful control nature has over us. This was the most apparent to me with the images of the swimmer moving from a human-hand backdrop to a blue background - our mind's attempt to move forward as we "evolve" and distance ourself from our roots? - and the blocks imposed over images of the sea. The latter symbolism to me was that while we are consciously in control, what is always a backdrop to our lives is nature and our fears/awareness concerning our own mortality - the sea is such a powerful force and stronger in many ways than we can ever be - its tides are a constant - and the bricks giving a further glimpse into this backdrop represent the cracks that can appear at any time in our "controlled" lives - we can be shocked into remembering how little control we ultimately have in some respects.'

'Although I am quite familiar with your general research I am not sure if you were trying to explore something more specific. For that reason I am afraid my feedback is mainly focused in ideas or things that I would have liked to happen meanwhile I was there. The time past very fast. I could not believe I spent an hour because it just felt like 20 min....However I have some issues with the general timing/rhythm of the structure of the installation. I am aware about the durational character that is needed but it seemed that more or less all the changes or sections were having the same length and I was wondering what would happen if the sections had different timings what would bring to the general experience...

As well, from the words that you said in the beginning I remember keeping the idea of 'improvisation of a performer'. It seems to me that you are very comfortable and confident with your medium now...and I thought because of the character of the word improvisation that I could see a bit of more playful attitude from you. For me improvising is about playing with the material and the media that you have in such a way that the audience can feel that you are making it now for the first time. Is this immediacy of instant composition that is so exciting and risky and just in the edge of everything...At the moment it seems to me that the practice is very controlled and organized, so as an audience I am not sure what is the level of improvisation that you are using and so a bit frustrating and confusing at a times. The good thing when improvising is that the audience is aware how vulnerable you are as a performer in that moment because you are making it for the first time with them...and I did not feel that yesterday....However I am not sure you want to achieve that...

I really love your voice so I would like you to explore more how you use your voice. It was nice when you started using different registers but I would like to see it even more... The images are all superb!! Fantastic! Really original! As an audience I get

surprises with how you manipulate them and that is great!! I really enjoy looking at them and how playful you get with them. I wonder if you could have the same level of playfulness with the sound.. I feel your practice has grown in texture and volume and I imagine that can do even more so that it generates big waves and bubbles of sensations...It is very pleasant, relaxing and sensorial at the moment mainly for the use that you give of images and sound...I wonder what will happen if you start playing with different intensities and rhythm...mmm...'

- '- I love the fact that it all happens in front of our eyes
- Her calmness and care are beautiful
- revealing the mechanisms adds to the beauty, because it is human.
- we are made aware that it can go wrong. it is fragile.
- What about breaking the harmony sometimes?
- Some explosions?
- Having to go to speak to her was strange. What about people leaving some notes? So their request can appear at any point. Not necessarily immediately...Otherwise you wait for an immediate response to your proposition as audience and you judge whether you are pleased and fulfilled with Jo's response or not. Once the response is given it feels like your job is done. If my proposal could appear at any point during the installation it would keep me alert. Also I was worried about interrupting Jo's course of thoughts by going to speak to her, and breaking the concentration.
- I love the idea that Jo is in constant control of her imagination and desires
- What about playing with chaos? with non-structure? with over-stimulation?
- A loop is so structured that I sometimes want another line of development.
- Build up. Adding layers. This is what happens in front of my eyes and ears.
- How to build up in a non-linear manner? Indirect routes?
- What about people giving material from their own body (voice?)'

'I attended for 30 mins of your performance this evening (the first half hour). This is a – highly subjective – response. Of particular note, therefore, was a prevailing sense of calm and pleasure in being 'in the dark' with someone else 'feeding' me (creatively and in terms of simply organising my time). I knew I had 30 mins of just relaxing into something else entirely – and that was key to my response. I felt completely confident in the work and at ease with it. This might be because I know you and have faith in your organisation and mind. It may be because you exuded calm and confidence – from when we first came in and when you first spoke.

I was intrigued to find out about the work – not really knowing much of your work except from a PhD Open Evening. So – confidence and intrigue were also part of the context...I felt myself configuring re-cite in several ways – but not in an oppressive way – not that I HAD to work out what it all meant. It was a gentle curious rambling as one strand going through my mind. More dominant was the enjoyment of the images and the technical workings. Your re-citing music gadget (sorry – don't know the name) featured in two or three Edinburgh shows this year and we remarked often on its aesthetic pleasure: the joy of harmony or multiple instruments; the sophistication of it;

our own ignorance of such contemporary technology. (There was a two person Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* up there. They made excellent use of the machine too!) This 'aesthetic pleasure' was additionally so as I didn't know you could sing so there was a 'personal pleasure' wrapped in somehow. Clearly, it articulated ideas of re-citing.

I was rested by the images - conjoined with the music. I am a leaves-kinda woman! I also felt relaxed by the choice of music style. The use of imagery, its repetition and flow, its superimpositions all intrigued and fascinated. Recited through the use of the image projector - the choice of tangible objects also intrigued and gave pleasure. The use of the book title film brought to the fore my own Kindle vs tangible book debates.'

b) Responses from *re-cite* 04/10/12, transcribed from visitors' book

'Nice voice. Loved the post-it sentences'

'A journey on one's space between his or her consciousness and unconsciousness'

'I find it interesting that I had impulses to build narratives between the video, objects, voice. It makes me curious how much I participate in the story with my own projections, how much was planned on the performer's part ahead of time, and how much was expressed in the moment of performance...'

'It was quite beautiful how the images played and sometimes spoke for themselves. The sound is also quite rich. I would have only wished for more presence in terms of how you related to the audience.'

'Lots of bits of recollections that no longer strive to unity, what writing and love had begun..'

'Drawn to the hands. A performance in itself. Real beauty in movement.'

'I think you can literally do anything you want, you are so knowledgeable and talented to form anything that you feel like. Great ideas! Wonderful for the future generation.'

'Beautiful and sensitive installation/performance. Language exposing and effacing, commenting about itself. Language in different mediums. The fragmented model, constituting multiplicity is an area I am exploring as well. Meaning being left open, contained within various speaking contexts. I could be in there the whole day. No imposition, invitation for the audience to participate or interpret through spectating. Beautiful piece, congratulations.'

'About itself? Or about her 'self' – autobiographical deeply personal interior monologue, somehow – in a dialogue between 'her' and 'her' subject – other – visceral somehow – who/what are we watching? So transported between the thing and the matter'

'It is difficult to put words into the experience – there are images, floatings, feelings, warmth, pleasure and so many more. It is intimate and so personal the media equipment is just the small insignificant mediator. You are in there in every aspect communicating abstractly (?) with us.'

'This was an absorbing experience for me – with powerful also beautiful images and strongly impactful sounds. I responded to images with human content more. I liked the manipulations and the combination of different effects to create something unique. Not like anything else I have seen.'

c) Responses from *re-cite* 06/10/12, transcribed from visitors' book

'I am thinking about absence – that although it is busy, I still felt something missing/empty – a lack...'

'Captivating! A beautiful voice'

'A hypnotic, disorienting, captivating experience. A journey of the senses and food for the imagination – Thank you!'

'Exastasi, tripping and trance...I wonder what sort of trip I was on. You should seriously consider working along some famous DJs and put your work forward. It's natural and on the SPOT which makes this exclusive! Do it please!'

'Mmmm – very stylish. Could have stayed for more...'

'Beautiful voice. Captivating images and fascinating balances between media explored. Questioning who or what is the 'performer' and where the 'narrative(s)' are being created. It felt like a ride I left too soon. Like the melancholy the day after Christmas. A postcard will follow...we'll see what I've processed by then. I like leaving with more questions than answers.'

'A peculiar experience. I didn't know what it was about; but I didn't feel like I needed to. I love the live writing element and use of voice. Really touched me weirdly and I don't know why. Stayed for a lot longer than I intended to. Mesmerising.'

'Beautiful with a touch of melancholy. I saw the stages of life. The exuberance of children. The excitement of youth/teen years. The responsibility of adult years. The joy of giving birth –the pain when the children leave. Then old age – wisdom and infirmity. Then death. I don't know what happens then. Will I still be me or will I be dust? Is there a cycle? I don't know. I am not young. I cried.'

'The swimming person! So captivating. And the tension...what it was he/she regretted to say. I will wonder all say. I can see why the "reverential" atmosphere for spectators...perhaps the looping brings to mind chanting rhythms? Lovely'

'Cannot fathom how immersive that experience was. You have such an incredible way of presenting the public and the private in tandem with one another. I was moved by both the beauty and the ugly and THE PARTY!!! So wonderful. Beautiful in all respects.'

'Evocative and very touching – I found myself using the stimulus on the projector to allow my thoughts to wander. I felt a very strong sense of the word site ie. the different materials and words provoked different spaces and places. Very clever idea of getting the audience itself to 're-site' by standing up, coming to the centre and allowing the materials/textures to change their bodies'

d) Response transcribed from postcard

'Drifting, repeating, remembering, re-verbing, slipping sensually under the spell of re-cite. Like a time capsule of dreams'

Item 2: *auto-play* (2013), experiencer responses

a) Responses transcribed from visitors' book

'I like it.

I felt frustrated and intrigued by my limited ability to control the media.

I'm glad you knew more words to Goodbye Blackberry Way than I did.

Felt very self conscious about using the mic so was tempted to make silly noises. Also it worried me how you would manipulate my voice.'

'I loved playing.

I loved being simple.

I loved being able to make things that gave me pleasure in really simple ways.

I liked the choice of colours and shapes, of being able to write simple things.

I loved responding simply to the music with my images.

I loved not making meaning.

I loved playing WITH someone with no expectation.

cos I know Jo to be 'open to outcomes'

I loved the play of images across my vision fields.

I was ready to use the laptop after a while and wished I knew how or had more time to figure it.'

'A lovely atmosphere and you are very friendly and open. I liked the San Francisco singing a lot, and our talk about Brent Cross and Oxford Street. I wasn't sure if the microphone picked up my voice but I liked using it – wasn't confident enough about my singing today! I loved the looping and shifting of material. I wondered about more materials on the table – felt very minimalist – wanted animals or small objects to become props.'

'I loved being allowed to play. It was freeing and I could do whatever I wanted to do. To explore so openly and express what I was feeling was great. I am not great at drawing but I was able to create the images that have resonated with me in a hidden place and put them somewhere public that still felt like they were my own. I was so surprised to see the image of the sea on the screen. So open, so beautifully freeing, intense in unleashing the open-mindedness and creativity of the participant. Thank you x'

'It is interesting and worth noting that I am usually someone who has no problem at all putting words on the page...but in this instance I am feeling a bit more comfortable with the tape recorder (not usually something I love or even like). But I'd like to make the point of saying that walking into a room of kit like this without you in it would terrify me and I would feel too 'unskilled' to touch, but you created an environment that made media so inviting. It is also interesting to note that we started by breaking all the rules...but ended in a old familiar place...'

'I'm going to say that for me the experience was quite different. The environment had

a strange binocular quality, a bit like trying to write with two pens – I was both in and outside; a kind of gap opened up between the experience – you inserted me into this gap and there I remain’

‘The play of light....
On a surface,
A membrane
Thin.... thin....
The fragility of light
Light of my life
In play
Like time pushing this way and that....
Light
of
my
Life
Remembered... Recorded... Played back
Light....
Without weight
Like air
Part portal, part weave..
Part magic
Light....’

b) Responses transcribed from audio recorder

‘I was in a space where I controlled the movement of the sea. The rhythms of my own voice matched with the images on the screen. The words that I wrote matched with my movements. I was at one in a space where I could play, visually and vocally. I love to play’

‘I decided to talk completely extemporaneously which is how I normally talk with you, rather than thinking or planning about my thoughts and feedback beforehand. I think there’s something oddly appropriate about that and the way that you work – I don’t know. Anyhow, that was really exciting and lovely. I’ve certainly been in your work before and obviously we collaborate together, but this was the very first time I’ve ever seen you really exist in the projection and play in the space to this extent or that I’ve had the opportunity to play with the equipment – I have to admit, before I went in, I was terrified a little bit. I knew that I loved playing and that I loved being in a space with you, but I also was worried that it might suddenly make it weird or stale or make one of us feel unnecessary and it was really exciting because if anything it felt like we were both more necessary. The freedom of being able to engage with the equipment and to talk and play so fully and openly with you really made – at least the way I understand sort of the activation of the practice - the intermedial elements seem so much more alive and playful and I think there is something to the fact that the time

flew that was really exciting and I'm really looking forward to coming back again in a little while and seeing how it engages with other people.'

'It was so fun, it was so nice. It was very nice, it was very playful and I felt that I was very much aware that for the opportunity, like that I have small amount of time, with huge opportunity. I don't know why but maybe because there is another performer, another person in the room – you – there is a beautiful screen – colours, shapes, sounds – so I felt like a child entered a lunar park – there is so many things he can do. I was excited – what should I do? How should I use the time? And it ran so fast, you know, I couldn't even understand at the end that it is already past 15 minutes, because for me it was totally playful and there are so many things. Even though, now I'm thinking, it was very simple elements. For me it was a load of opportunities to play, to perform in the space on the screen, on the table – I jumped between a lot of things. It was beautiful and the most interesting and joyful moment for me was when I left the screen and you came and you took the role and it was for me so nice – we shared. You were not only operator but you gave me the space and then you enter. It was surprising. This was the most interesting and playful and joyful moment for me when you took the place and I could offer you something similar to play with you and to paint the balloon and the flower which was very nice because for me this moment was a very exciting moment. What else? That's it for now. Thank you very much. I think we performed together.'

c) Responses via email

'Well done! I really loved and enjoyed your work and I think it has very interesting things within that. Especially the space you offered the audience (and what does it mean to them) and your place as a performer. Regarding the audience, I think that the intermedial encounter which you created has some potential in the area of 'fantasy, dreams and unconsciousness' and if it's interesting to you I can elaborate it more, but that was my main feeling about it, that you opened some space that might hold the audience/participates fantasies.(.?)

And regarding to your role as a performer (yes, I think you are a performer) I felt that the "weight" of the performance and the deep issues were hid/existed behind/within your presence. The most powerful moment for me was when you left the "operating table" and came close to the screen and I was activating the media equipment "for you" (and I don't think that it relates to the fact that I know how to use it etc) this exchange was very interesting.'

'I really, really loved your show - it was truly different and felt like a really free space. I felt like I was a kid again with very few inhibitions - you curated such a playful, fun & thoughtful space - we had an absolute ball together. What a wonderful experience!'

Appendix C:
Excerpts from Blog Documenting the
Process of Developing *auto-play* (2013)

The full blog can be accessed at www.jocollisions2013.blogspot.co.uk

Collisions 2013

Tuesday, 13 August 2013

Session 1: 13/08/2013

Aims for the session:

- Play with loop pedal in terms of its capacity and how it can be combined with other sound sources
- Get video footage onto Modul8 and play around with how this can be combined with 2 live feed images: make notes as to what works and record where appropriate
- Write more around autopeiosis and how it might be interrogated/applied within this mode of performance (see previous post)
- Reconfigure research questions
- Write and think about aesthetics for this experiment: Matisse/forms of sound and music/any parameters which I want to place?
- Planning for next session

Work with pre-recorded and live video: notes

Live feed on top (lightness - light 3/4) with video underneath = the image appears through the live objects. NB. light is very influential in revealing the video image underneath. Darker objects, with bright light across rather than on paper = nice revelation of image. When lightness is turned up to full the whole image becomes white and when low, the whole image is revealed. Great to reveal images like the tiles and lobster pots. NB. will be good to play with what happens with light from underneath

Also, must make sure that the blending mode is in ADD

Video image on top with lightness/light 3/4 and ADD mode with live feed underneath, the image is even more clearly revealed through the live feed objects. Better with contrast NORMAL on the live feed image for greater definition.

Lovely to see the man on the pole with contrast on and possibly boost, revealed by cut out paper. NB with contrast boost on, the man is not revealed but is always present

Video on top of live feed seems to offer more options

Quite nice to play with blurring of video image on top of live feed object - both fast x and box functions. Even better with more control of Nano controller. Also good to play with the z plane rotation (not the others), to rotate the image. Can be done as auto-rotate on the z plane

Fireworks auto-rotating on the z plane with contrast boost/inverse up to full = lots of fun! NB. doesn't necessarily need boost

Also, good to start to play with the transformer capacity of Modul8 - Matrix: numerous images (values can be set), Particles: Sends small images flying in different directions: good climactic potential. Really quite nice to see real things ie. grass flying around like that. It's the intersection between actual and virtual again...

Loop Pedal work

Lots of potential for bringing certain lines in and out of the mix, plus adding beats (though the beats aren't great) as these sync with the loop created. Right pedal to start and record, left to stop. Timing seems great 'My Donal' sounds lovely. Would be nice to work with other folk tunes too and contrast them with some of the more synth type sounds on the kaossilator.

Kaossilator

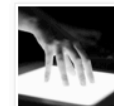
4 - Reverse Sine: quite nice for building up high fluttery synth sounds, using arpeggio
6 - Air spectrum: airy synth noises
13 - Syn decay: a bit annoying, but cuts through and can work
17 - Sine portamento: good for machine/electronic sounds
21 - Ambient lead: pretty ambient noise...

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- 30 - Piano: could be used for loops of piano notes - quite good
- 31 - Tape flute: quite good for drones underneath - easy to harmonise
- 41 - Slow bass: dirty sounding bass to create nasty undertones, with arpeggio
- 72 - Dream sine: dreamy sound...can build up backdrops
- 79 - Pad chord - can create backdrops easily
- 80 - Arpeggio down - showers of arpeggios can be created
- 83 - Side chain - creates a dirty sounding pulse
- 89 - Sine chord - good for bubbling low background (arpeggio)
- 91 - Pump noise - strange whooshing pulse
- 95 - Resonate - sounds like the wind
- 100 - Kaos drone - does what it says on the tin
- 102 - Noise filter - really good ominous sounding low background
- 126 - House 1 - single repeating bass drum
- 130 - Techno: good beat
- 131 - Minimal 1: beat with some synth
- 139 - Drum 'n' Bass: lively beat
- 142 - Disco: good retro beat
- 147 - Backbeat: very minimal
- 148 - No kick: also a minimal beat

NB. All of the above can be combined in a variety of ways

For next time:

- Write more around autopoiesis and how it might be interrogated/applied within this mode of performance (see previous post)
- Reflection on first session and reconfiguration of research questions
- Write and think about aesthetics for this experiment: *Matisse/forms of sound and music/any parameters which I want to place?*

Reflection

Much more ease with introducing of new pieces of kit. The loop pedal is a fairly straight replacement and the kaossilator seems to offer a strong complement sonically, in that it has both a looping/droning and improvisatory capacity, which I can play with.

The aspects which run through the experimentation are still the intersection of the analogue/live/actual/home-made and the digital/synthesised/virtual/crafted in and by the machine. I don't expect this will now be shifted at all.

In terms of interaction and spaces of play, the obvious one is that the live feed light box becomes the space where people can offer to the building of the piece, as well as prompting and interacting with images? They could be offered different ways of interacting with those images as well ie. material and large sheets of paper? How much do I really want to open it up? I think we have no cushions or chairs in the space unless there are those on the other side of the screen? Rather the space is opened up to intervention. Also, I need to be positioned a little closer to the back wall, so I'm not as dominant. In addition, a smaller technical area would help with this.

Still really need to work through the autopoiesis aspects and allow the terms to inform my thinking around the set up for the piece. Equally, I have to start asking what kind of aesthetic principles are both in play and at stake within this and how these operate within the system.

Technical notes:

- Need power source for kaossilator
- Need to look at the buzzing that is created through the loop pedal
- Nano-controller is needed to work properly with the images

Posted by Jo Scott at 05:05



No comments:

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Collisions 2013

Thursday, 29 August 2013

Session 7: 29/08/13

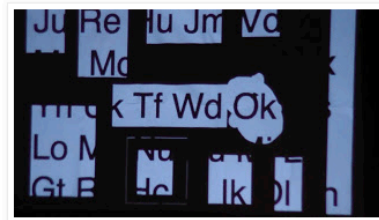
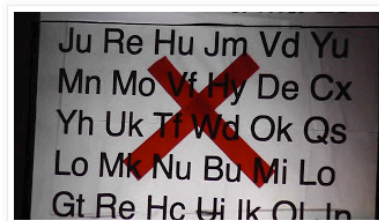
- Sustained work with the different song excerpts and the samples/sounds I have available
- Play with the different capacities of the visuals, in the interest of becoming comfortable/familiar with them

Focusing on these two today, with the aim to look more at modes of interconstruction tomorrow.

1 hour of visual work:

Quite tough to get going today. Could really do with the lightbox to play with, as it is becoming more and more difficult to negotiate the awkward live feed set up I currently have.

However, a couple of things start to arise. Playing with abstract text and the live feed image looked good. The multiple images of the waving grass.



The automaton video is really not working as well at the moment. I find it aesthetically without interesting, whereas the man on the pole from Nice, some of the landscape stuff and fireworks continue to provide rich visual stimuli. It is quite challenging to really get my head round how the Modul8 configuration of live feed and prerecorded can consistently work the way I want it to and it is insistently fiddly. However, worth spending time with it, as it still seems to operate as the core of the practice, such intersections. Probably just needs more sustained effort once the lightbox is in play which should open up more visual opportunities.

1 hour of audio work/play

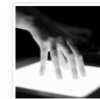
Some nice moments here, playing with the intersections between the different sound sources and indeed the different qualities of sound which they represent. I got a little tired though...found it difficult to harmonise and create positively at times. I think I probably need to play a little more with my voice and what it can produce, rather than just focusing on harmony and lyrics. The kaossilator still works pretty well in shifting the soundscape, particularly when it brings in a beat, though this is sometimes ill advised. To be really honest, though I quite liked how it was all starting to work, I didn't find a lot to get excited about.

In many ways I think, I need a shift here - new video material, working with the screen and

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the BIG image, getting the lightbox and playing with what that offers. Changes like that can really help to lift me within the work. There is a funny feel to this work overall, as I'm not sure I'm really breaking a lot of new ground and as such, there can be an uncomfortable feeling of going through the motions, on the understanding that when I open it up and others enter into this, that at that point, the 'magic', such as it is might occur.

It is still true that the dynamic shift I am offered through the mixing of sound is a positive aspect and once I get my head round the mixing of live and video on Modul8, I could well find that I find a new lease of life in the work.

For tomorrow, it seems sensible to work on the modes of inter-construction as follows:

- Establish live image, counterpoint with sound, disrupt the live image, build the sound, make the images move somehow, cut the sound back, shift the image in some way, shift the sound dynamic again, find an ending
- Establish a single sound, add another contrasting sound, introduce video footage, add text, underscore the sound with another, make the image strange, cut down to a single sound and build back up, change the image to something completely different, make it flicker and shift, cut down sound and introduce a new sound, find a transition to something new

The above represents an interesting approach to improvisation. Rather than working from a prompt, which tends towards the thematic, this focuses on instructions and actions - the technical modes of inter-construction, of building within and between sound and image. I think it's worth a try as it represents something new in the process and that is probably needed after today.

Posted by [Jo Scott](#) at 06:53



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Collisions 2013

Tuesday, 10 September 2013

Session 12: 10/09/13

Working with Jess

Plan for Session:

- Explain set up, aims and instructions which will be offered
- Ask Jess to respond to those possibilities for interaction and play off her where possible
- Get feedback about what works and how the provocation might be refined i.e.. should Jo be allowed to touch the live feed at all?
- Re-do the exercise if there is time
- Discussion and feedback

A breakthrough! Creating a duet, a live inrremedial experience for one, a test for my capacity to interact with that person in the moment, a lovely way of collecting data/feedback from those who attend

15 minutes? 10 mins in the space and then 5 responding?
8 - 12 participants only...which is fine. Maybe I could do 2.5 hours?
10 participants max.

How is the end of the 15 minutes signalled?
Responses should be given in the vestibule area, where people can also download footage?
Any kind of disclosure needed: yes!

Thoughts from our discussions:

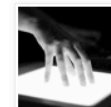
- Working in the studio to increase technical ability rather than for artistic reasons: what is the difference between the two for me?
- Where are lies that I am telling myself? ie. that I have no sense of aesthetics within the work or a sense of what is beautiful
- Is beauty what I create in the moment? It is not crafted in that way - there is always the aleatoric aspect
- An intense presence arises from that which is declared as not present
- What is the value of the work?
- Where is the ego positioned within this work?
- Presence is generated in and by the moment of creation and what that requires from me as a performer/activator
- The relationship between 'pure' improvisation and falling into patterns/habits which allow me to sustain this work over two hours +
- The nature of the invitation/offer - refining this so that the whole set up is doing what I need it to and is interrogating the work in the way which is required.
- Why do I want people to film the work? 1. It activates the experiencer in relation to the work, provoking them to film what is the most engaging aspect/angle on proceedings 2. To collect this footage as a record of how people have responded to the work and different angles on it NB. the one in, one out aspect allows me to provide the recording facility to each individual and therefore to collect that easily - use Scotty's iPod? Will have to speak to Alex again about documentation - may well have to be just a fixed camera in the space plus the documentation provided by experiencers
- The dichotomy between what people see in me as a performer - cleanliness/control/calm and what is happening within - fear/chaos
- Tensions between control and vulnerability - the nature of both in the work
- The 'magic' - the fact that people both want to know and do not want to know how this is done
- Both the gels and the electrical type are theatrical artefacts: interesting! The fragments of theatricality which are left OR the tools of theatricality ie. how beautiful lighting effects are created
- What is the participation offering the participant? I am very clear what it is

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offering me, but this is less distinct, though the notion of a duet makes it a lot more distinct

- The fact that I am testing and therefore learning about myself in the system: how I can free myself from my habits and positioning within it
- Jess placing the iPhone footage under the live feed: activates an echo and trace of the work
- The paint work in relation to Jess's movement: about intimacy and touch
- Conceiving of the work as a duet: an offer/gift/experience for an individual - an opportunity to create a biography/portrait
- Look up 'Hamlet in Pieces', Andy Lavender

This also shifts how I prepare for this piece. it becomes a lot less about trying to find moments of beauty and connection and much more with exercising my ability to be able to respond to another in the moment to create something between us. It means re-thinking my approach to the rest of the process leading up to Collisions.

It also takes it out of the realm of virtuosity and places much more in particular interactions which can happen between me and the other person in the space. I like the idea A LOT. Need to speak to Experience first and then reconfigure how the piece is marketed/booked and prepare accordingly

Posted by Jo Scott at 06:23



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