LANDSCAPE PERFORMANCE:

The development of a performance philosophy practice

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Abstract

This practice-based thesis presents a body of work comprised of four performance projects conducted by the author. Each project occupies a separate chapter and is articulated in a manner appropriate to the specific nature of that project's activity and outcomes. Whilst the performances themselves are not part of this PhD submission, documentation of making and events has been included throughout to give the reader an indication of the type of work and context from which this thesis was written. Presentation of the four projects supports a critical dialogue around a lineage of Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape. The thesis is supported by appendixes, which include material from the development of each project as well as further documentation and a number of talks and publications relating to the author's body of work.

The research offers new insights into performance as a philosophical practice by looking specifically at how performance thinks in relation to landscape. The projects are understood as part of a developing 'landscape performance' practice situated within the field of performance philosophy, and defined in direct relation to the projects presented.

Within this practice-based research landscape is considered in relation to the staging of a performance event, as a geographical context in which performance is made, as a philosophical framework for the development of a performance practice, and as a performing agent in and of itself.

Each of the four projects employs an expanded practice of close reading to work with text, place, scenography and sound. Articulation of this close reading approach supports the thesis' discussion of phenomenological notions of landscape as follows:

Alice in Bed (2008-2013): a production of a play by Susan Sontag surrounded by a programme of talks, symposia, workshops, gallery installations and a photography

exhibition. The first project chapter is a reflexive account of how staging of the play was developed in relation to a close reading of Sontag's implied philosophy.

Project R-hythm (2013-14): a yearlong performance-led research process undertaken in partnership with a resident of a tidal island, which concluded with a daylong public walking performance. Presented here as a series of project narratives that offer an account of working with a landscape that was experienced as primarily temporal rather than spatial.

Sounds & Guts (2014-15): a studio performance written and directed by the author, which toured to arts and community venues around the UK. *Sounds & Guts* is presented as an annotated script, which reveals the philosophical bearing of the making process. The thesis' discussion of this project employs Heidegger's notion of 'things' as a framework for examining the phenomenological foundations of the work's landscape.

Time Passes (2008-2017): a performance project that takes Virginia Woolf's landscape writing as a starting point. The final project chapter is an articulation of how *Time Passes* is informed by the work that precedes it, and addresses broader philosophical implications of Woolf's writing in relation to phenomenology, landscape and Heidegger's notion of 'things'.

The central contributions of this thesis are as follows:

The research speaks to the growing field of performance philosophy in its consideration of the philosophical bearing of performance making. Focusing on the making process from the artist's perspective, each chapter presents a different relationship between performance and philosophy.

The thesis articulates how new understandings of landscape emerge out of philosophically oriented performance making. Articulation of the making process offers performance practitioners and researchers practical insights into how performance works with landscape, how a philosophical enquiry into the nature of landscapes can form the basis of a body of work, and the nature of performance as research.

The research's definition of 'landscape performance' offers new perspectives on performance practices that have an emphasised concern for space, place or landscape. Building upon established notions of 'site-specificity', the thesis reveals the workings of performance in relation to landscapes that are understood as *more-than-geographical* and *more-than-representational*.

This research has used performance practice to conduct an integrated and in-depth inquiry into a particular lineage of thinking on landscape. The inquiry is presented in this thesis through discussion on the philosophical framework of Sontag's theatrical landscape, phenomenological conceptions of landscape from a variety of disciplines, Heidegger's notion of 'things', and the landscape philosophy of Virginia Woolf's fiction writing. In its approach to articulating how that inquiry was conducted the thesis offers re-readings of various source materials and models of performance-led and practice-based research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is a performance-led articulation of a body of artistic work as well as a reflexive dialogue regarding the nature of landscape and experience. It shares aspects of an artistic practice motivated by philosophical enquiry that engages with a broad range of stimulus, which includes; a play by Susan Sontag, Martin Heidegger's notion of 'things' and the phenomenologies of landscape it has inspired, the use of radio technology within live performance, and the novels and diaries of Virginia Woolf. These central source materials are brought into a dialogue on the nature of landscape and our experience of it through performance practice. The eclecticism of this thesis reflects the idiosyncrasies of a working performance practice, and demonstrates how a diversity of materials is employed in the author's approach to doing philosophy through performance making.

This thesis includes a discussion of how the mechanics of theatrical staging are used to create landscape and choreograph audience experience, an account of performance making within the reality of a tidal landscape, an examination of how radio technology shapes performance landscapes, and a consideration of how performance making can reach beyond the anthropocentrism of phenomenological conceptions of landscape.

My research is directed at a readership that includes practitioners and researchers in theatre, performance, performance studies and performance philosophy, and site-specific art practice more broadly. To these fields it gives a new framework for reading and practically developing performance work through philosophical enquiry and in relation to a nuanced understanding of landscape as *more-than-geographical* and *more-than-representational*.

In this thesis, I share a performance-led perspective on what landscape is that contributes to phenomenological conceptions of landscape as experiential and temporal within cultural geography and social anthropology. My employment of Woolf

and Sontag's writings in the process of performance making opens up new readings of their work. My research provides the fields of literature and philosophy with new performance-led perspectives on the work of these significance female thinkers of the twentieth century, focusing specifically on the philosophical implications for understanding landscape within their texts.

As practice-based research the thesis also speaks to dialogues within academia around the working methods, models of articulation, value and ethics of artistic research. This thesis provides a model for sharing the understanding that emerges from practice-based and performance-led research, and in doing so questions the models of knowledge generation that shape understandings of artistic practice as research. In support of its contributions on the nature of practice-based research the thesis includes critical reflections on the strategies employed in the development of my own articulation of practice, and the understanding of landscape that emerged through performance making.

Whilst this thesis tells a story laid out in chronological order according to the development of my practice, the contents page has been structured as a tool for helping different readers navigate the diverse elements of my research. The projects included in this thesis stretch beyond the bounds of my doctoral research as defined by enrolment in a higher education institution. *Alice in Bed*, discussed in the first project chapter, began as an idea in 2010 and *Time Passes*, which I share in the final project chapter, continues beyond the examination process that concluded my PhD. It became apparent to me whilst reflecting upon *Project R-hythm* that many of that project's questions and my developing concern for landscape had emerged out of the making of *Alice in Bed*. My inclusion of *Alice in Bed* as the first project therefore introduces my research questions as they emerged out of an artistic practice. The chronology of the thesis is informed as such by the durations of thinking through performance making. The project chronology shows how themes and strata of artistic practice often resist definition within the limited timeframes of contemporary academia. The work I share from *Time Passes* concludes the line of thought and research narrative of this thesis, but is drawn from an unfinished project process. This final project chapter illustrates the continual movement of a self-reflexive and philosophically motivated artistic practice,

in which a single project or body of work does not contain a binary of question and resolution, but rather shapes the development of ongoing thought.

The thesis' introduction acts as an extended glossary of terms and provides the reader with a linguistic guide for situating 'landscape performance' practice in relation to existing understandings of space, place, landscape and site-specificity. Through the glossary I examine how well aligned existing understandings of space, place, landscape and site-specific practice are to my own working methods.

Landscape performance

Landscape performance is an artistic practice that has been defined through the reflexive process of this practice-based research and thus has emerged directly from the projects presented within this thesis. Landscape initially presented itself as a primary concern within my practice through the making of *Alice in Bed*. The three projects that proceed from *Alice in Bed* were motivated by a desire to understand and articulate the relationship between performance and landscape in my work. The following introductory review of landscape language lays a groundwork for the new understanding of how performance practice shapes landscape that I will articulate through each project chapter.

The thesis charts the emergence, interrogation and manifestation of certain ideas relating to what landscape is through four different approaches to making performance. Landscape is considered in relation to the staging of a performance event, as a geographical context in which performance is made, as a philosophical framework for the development of a performance practice, and as a performing agent in and of itself. Landscape performance is situated within the field of performance philosophy and offers new perspectives on the philosophical bearing of performance practices that have an emphasised concern for landscape.

As well as articulating landscape within my own practice, I have used the four performance projects to review a lineage of thinking on landscape that is grounded in European phenomenology. My discussion on phenomenological understandings of landscape is anchored in a close reading of the implied ontology of Susan Sontag's

writing for theatre, Heidegger's notion of 'things' and the phenomenologies of landscape his texts have inspired, and the landscape philosophy of Virginia Woolf. This in-depth inquiry into phenomenologies of landscape has been conducted through the practical activity of my performance making and is synonymous with the development of my work and practice.

A landscape glossary

Since the mid 1990's scholarly interest in historic definitions of the term 'landscape' has significantly increased. Accompanying this surge in concern for defining landscape is an increase in attention given to factors that affect personal experiences and cultural understandings of space, place and landscape. Tim Cresswell reflected upon a growth of enthusiasm for thinking about space, place and landscape in *Place: An Introduction*, suggesting that concern for the changing nature of landscape defines a field of study that spans multiple disciplines (Cresswell, 2015, p. 1). John Wylie observed that changing understandings of space, place and landscape have resulted in an "area of overlap between archeology, phenomenology and performance studies" (Wylie, 2007, p. 140). Thus, landscape is an interdisciplinary concern, and the disciplinary scope of this practice-based research reflects a far-reaching contemporary interest in what landscape is and how we experience it.

Creswell suggested that the increased interdisciplinary concern for landscape is a response to how rapidly environmental and technological developments are changing experience of place on a day-to-day basis (ibid. p. 3). From early twentieth century analogue technologies such as radio and photography, to twenty-first century mapping and surveillance technologies, mobile networked devices and self-driving cars, technology affects not only our everyday experience, but also our theoretical understanding of what landscape is. The affect that technology has on experience of landscape will be addressed in relation to *Sounds & Guts* (chapter four). In *Time Passes* (chapter five) I use radios in my performance making to look at Virginia Woolf's landscapes.

Despite the breadth of concern and increased attention paid to matters of landscape, definitions of the term are all but obvious or consistent. Reflecting upon the experience

of making *Sounds & Guts*, artist and collaborator in this research Tim Shaw suggested that landscape is such a broad term that "anything could be landscape in a sense" (Shaw, 2017, January 17th). This thesis tells the story of how the process of performance making defined 'landscape' for me and how that definition, in turn, steered the development of my work. My practice-based interrogation of what landscape is and how performance understands and shapes it offers practitioners and researchers working in relation to 'site-specific' practice a new language for considering how artists work with space, place, site and landscape as differently conceived contexts for performance.

The following review of landscape language has been conducted alongside development and reflection upon the four performance projects I present in proceeding project chapters. It spans cultural geography, landscape research and dialogues on site-specific performance and art practice. Clarification of my own terminology through this review provides a foundation for the definition of landscape performance that emerged through the four projects.

Space and Place

Yi-Fu Tuan argues that "what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it" (Tuan, 2011, p. 6). The term 'space' denotes an abstract, objective and measurable quality of place. Space is what a map represents, it describes the geometric relationships between things; space can thus be understood as *geometric*. Geometric space is not synonymous with 'place', which is particular rather than abstract; space is *A to B* whereas place is *here to there*. Jeff Malpas noted that historically "there has been a pervasive tendency for place to be understood in terms that are purely spatial" (Malpas, 2006, p. 28). Edward Casey described confusion regarding what place is as "the crushing monolith of space in the modern era" (Casey, 1993, p. 17). Purely spatial conceptions of place confuse space into a synonymous relationship to place, and as Malpas put it "place should be not be assumed to be identical with the "where" of a thing" (ibid.). Doreen Massey argued that despite the significant political implications of how we understand and articulate space, the very nature of space itself is thought about very little (Massey, 2005).

Creswell proposed that "space is turned into place" through the activity of "place-making" (ibid. p. 64). Creswell cites furnishing a room, creating a garden, and designing public space as examples of place-making activities. He also suggests that decorating stamps, flags and economic currency with national symbols is place-making activity carried out on a national scale (ibid.). Place-making imbues geometric space with personal and collective significance. Whist active, however, the activity of place-making is not necessarily conscious; it involves mnemonic processes as well as the aforementioned outward and physical pursuits. The building I live in is not simply the place I call home because I keep my belongings there, have decided where to put things or because I sleep there. It is my home because of the memories of events that have happened there, because of the people associated with the building – from friends who visit, to the landlord, and the people who sit on the doorstep. Place, as created through the activities of place-making, is not abstract, as geometric space is, it is particular; my furniture is particular, just as visitors to my home are particular to me, these things and events result in the particular memories and feelings that make a place my home. Place refers to a qualitative sense of locality, which is felt rather than measured, and which changes over time. Place, therefore, is *temporal* rather than spatial. Spatial conceptions of place fail to acknowledge the temporal nature of place. Failure to acknowledge the temporality of place, which is created through place-making activity, results in an idea of place as static. Massey put forward her notion of 'space-time' in an attempt to address purely spatial (mis)conceptions of place in *Space, Place and Gender* (1994). In the second project chapter on *Project R-hythm*, I will tell a story of realigning my own notion of landscape as a move from a spatial to a temporal understanding of the tidal island with which I was working. Massey's insistence on temporality is central to the growing interdisciplinary dialogue around space, place, and landscape that I have engaged with in my own performance practice. I will address other aspects of her 'socially-constructivist' argument in chapter five.

Although the physical staging of performance events will be discussed in the project chapters, the focus of this research is not the geometry of space. Rather it is with aspects of performance making more closely akin to Creswell and Massey's temporally conceived notions of place-making and space-time. Both terms acknowledge temporality whilst retaining their geographical specificity.

Instead of place or space-time I have adopted 'landscape' as a term that describes the non-located experience of the worlds that performances construct, whether or not they have been developed in relation to specific places. I will examine some nuances of the term 'landscape' after addressing issues relating to 'site-specific' as a description of particular artistic practices.

Site

The foregrounding of the particular context of a performance within a live event is often referred to as a 'site-specific practice'. Pearson defined site-specific performance as performance in which "the site becomes the dominant signifier rather than simply that which contains the performance" (Pearson, 2010, p. 19). Whilst my work shares some characteristics with site-specific performance, the landscape performance projects that constitute this research are not all concerned with the pre-existing context, or the physical location, in which the event takes place.

Site-specific performance is often applied as a catch all term to describe work that takes place outside of traditional theatre or performance venues. Kaye suggests that "'site-specificity' [...] occurs in a displacement of the viewer's attention toward the room which both she and the object occupy" (Kaye, 2000, p. 2). This research offers an alternative framework for making and reading work that does not occur in a theatre, gallery or otherwise established performance space, and which, whilst it is concerned with the dynamics of landscape is not necessarily foregrounding the physical place in which the work occurs.

The body of work that constitutes my research began with a conscious decision to move away from the role of 'theatre director' and to work outside of the auditorium. Within the traditional theatre auditorium the audience is trained *not* to attend to the specifics of place, to disregard the material particularities of the theatre building itself. The auditorium audience is primed to 'suspend disbelief' and attend only to that which is presented within the frame of the stage.

Alice in Bed was created in a non-traditional performance venue (a warehouse not purpose-built for arts events), which allowed for the rules of engagement, the relationship between audience, performance and context, to be rewritten. The shaping of the relational dynamics, between audience and performance, things and language, according to the philosophical enquiry into what landscape is defines my own landscape performance practice. In chapter two I will look at how *Alice in Bed* employed devices for heightening the audience's awareness of their own presence within a wider landscape that was not primarily shaped by the warehouse site in which it occurred. Miwon Kwon describes how, for site-specific practices:

"*The space of art* [is] *no longer perceived as a blank slate, a tabula rasa, but a real place. The art object or event in this context* [is] *to be singularly and multiply experienced in the here and now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensory immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration*" (Kwon, 2002, p. 11)

Since *Alice in Bed* could have taken place in any large, indoor space and did not depend upon the cultural significance or architectural specifics of the warehouse it was staged in for meaning, its claim to site-specificity is questionable. Rather than the specific site, the landscape of *Alice in Bed* is understood as shaped through staging rather than the specific physical location in which the event took place. In chapter two I will share some of the devices I used for shaping a landscape performance outside of an auditorium context. In doing so I will consider how the relationships between audience and performance are rewritten in landscape performances and how the philosophical conception of landscape within the work inheres in this dynamic.

Project R-hythm, discussed in chapter three, was developed and presented in a very real geographical place and involved devising strategies for supporting an audience to attend to their own sensory experience of that place. Following Kwon's description, *Project R-hythm* could be situated within the field of site-specific performance. Kwon states that that "site-specific art was initially based on a phenomenological or experiential understanding of the site" (ibid. p. 3). Kwon goes on to observe that a refashioned conception of site underpins later "site-oriented works [that] occupy hotels, city streets, housing projects, prisons, schools, hospitals, churches, zoos, supermarkets, and they infiltrate media spaces such as radio, newspapers, television,

and the Internet" (ibid.). Whilst *Sounds & Guts* (chapter four) and *Time Passes* (chapter five) do employ radio technology in the shaping of their performance landscapes, the spatial implications for how Kwon understands site are at odds with the non-located character of these projects. Whereas 'site-specific' has come to be associated with performances that take place in specific places, 'landscape performance' provides a broader definition of work that is primarily concerned with what landscape is and how we experience it, but which is not necessarily geographically located.

Landscape

'Landscape' is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it's meaning tends to "hover between a natural-science 'form of environment', and an art-historical concern with how the environment is represented" (Vergunst and Árnason, 2012, p. 148). Daniels and Cosgrove proposed that landscape, as an art historical term, refers to "a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings" (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988, p. 1). As a verb *to landscape* describes the reshaping and management of portions of land, generally referring to gardens, public spaces or agricultural areas. In its verb form landscaping can be understood in relation to Cresswell's place-making activities: furnishing a room, creating a garden, and designing public space; to landscape is to place-make.

Landscape performance practice incorporates both senses of the word 'landscape'. The performance making activity of landscape performance practice is thus conceived as a form of landscaping. Throughout the thesis I will look at how each project understands and shapes landscape differently.

It has become somewhat of a trope to frame discussions on landscape through recourse to etymology. John R. Stilgoe takes the etymological approach to its limits with *What is Landscape?* in which a series of etymological arguments define 'landscape' through language use alone (2016). The etymological argument has elsewhere been used to promote temporal and performative understandings of what landscape is. Tim Ingold has explained in detail how the English word 'landscape' is derived from the Dutch *landschap*, which morphed through an Anglicisation process that included the terms *landskip* and *landskap*. *Landschap* was originally used, like Daniels and Cosgrove's

'landscape', to refer to "a painterly depiction of a natural scene, or to the scenery itself" (Ingold, 2012, p. 197). Ingold's etymological work on landscape follows in the footsteps of Kenneth Olwig, who examined the political history of the term 'landscape' through its relationship to the Germanic *'landscaften'*. Olwig proposes that landscape, derived from *landscaften,* is the physical manifestation of the common laws of communities living within it (Olwig, cited in Ingold 2012, p. 198). Thus Olwig, like Ingold, defines landscape in terms of human activity and experience. Massey's space-time and Olwig and Ingold's notions of landscape offer socially-constructivist accounts of how we experience the world. Within these conceptual definitions social relations define what landscape is.

Ingold supposes that if the process of shaping is inherent to what landscape is, then landscape is itself processual; in a perpetual state of becoming rather than being. This is the essence of the notion that landscape is temporal rather than spatial. The notion that landscape is temporal and shaped through human engagement with the land will be shown as emerging within my own practice out of the experience of working with a tidal island in *Project R-hythm* (chapter three). In my presentation of *Time Passes* (chapter five), however, I go on to challenge the anthropocentric implications of Ingold and Olwig's phenomenological definitions of landscape.

In the first project chapter I will consider the staging of *Alice in Bed* in relation to postdramatic theatre and the role of landscape within that field of practice. Elinor Fuchs credited Gertrude Stein with the introduction a landscape language to theatrical practices that differed from the existing dramatic tradition. In Stein's 'landscape plays' theatrical "structures are arranged not in lines of conflict and resolution but on the multivalent spatial relationships" (Fuchs cited in Lehmann, 2006, p. 81). In response to a perceived disconnect between spectator and dramatic action in the theatre, Stein conceived of performances that the audience would experience in a similar fashion to landscapes. Hans-Thies Lehmann suggests that postdramatic theatre directors "Richard Foreman and Robert Wilson [...] carried a use of language inspired by Stein into the theatre" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 63). Stein's landscape plays were shaped by her use of what she called a "continuous present" (Stein, 1988, p. 98). The influence of Stein's continuous was evident in Foreman's theatrical works, in which "the presentation of a

stream or flow of concrete present moments, arrived at by beginning again and again, [creates] a continuous present" (Davy, 1978, p. 117). My discussion of the mechanics of *Alice in Bed* will look to Wilson's *Steinian* staging of multiplicity within a performance landscape. In chapters three, four and five I will relate my own compositional devices for shaping performance landscapes to Foreman's Steinian ontological-hysteric theatre

Massey presents her socially-constructivist notion of space-time as being in dialogue with Barbara Bender's, referring not only to Bender's publications but also to conversations they had in person and in writing (Massey, 2006, p. 4). Bender's work expands socially-constructivist notions of landscape to include non-human life. It also problematises the ideas of located-ness I myself have questioned in relation to site-specific practice. Bender's argument rests on a consideration of *non*-human duration in temporal conceptions of landscape. In her 1998 book *Stonehenge: Making Space* Bender argues that to understand landscape we must "engage with a temporality [...] that is of quite different dimensions [to the human]" (p. 149). In relation to the verb *to landscape*, Bender extends the activity of landscaping to non-human activity in a manner that resonates with my experience of creating work in the shifting landscape of a tidal island during *Project R-hythm*. In chapter three I describe how 'attention training activities' inspired by the work of Allan Kaprow supported my collaborator and I to engage with the non-human temporalities our context. Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca's reading of Kaprow's work, to which this research is hugely indebted, resonates with Bender's argument for attending to the non-human aspects of landscape (Cull, 2011).

Bender's acknowledgement of the non-human in landscape supports *Time Passes*' endeavor to question the anthropocentric paradigms set up in my first three research projects. In my final project, *Time Passes*, I am also guided by Caitlin DeSilvey's work on entropy and landscape. Like Bender, DeSilvey acknowledges that it is not only the activity of humans that defines a landscape. Whereas Bender's geological thinking addresses the temporality of landscape on a macro scale, DeSilvey considers non-human agency in the shaping of landscapes on a micro level.

Landscape and phenomenology

Wylie's review of landscape scholarship outlines how phenomenological thought has been influential in the fields of interpretive archaeology, cultural anthropology, cultural geography and performance studies. Wylie describes the widespread take up of phenomenology for understanding and defining landscape as "non-representational theory" or "the performative turn" (Wylie, 2007, p. 162).

In his 1945 book *Phenomenology of Perception* Maurice Merleau-Ponty credits the German philosopher Edmund Husserl with founding the phenomenological movement in the mid-nineteenth century (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. viii). Phenomenology, broadly speaking, is the belief that knowledge of the world is shaped by our subjective experience of it:

"*All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world*" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. xi)

Phenomenology asserts the role of the perceiving, feeling body in knowledge of the world and in doing so rejects the dualist mind/body split outlined by Descartes. In his review of the performative turn Wylie explains that through the work of Merleau-Ponty landscape becomes a "milieu of engagement and involvement", which "takes shape within the realms of human perception and imagination" (Wylie, 2007, p. 147). Ingold states his allegiance to phenomenology in The Temporality of Landscape when he rejects "the division between inner and outer worlds – respectively of mind and matter, meaning and substance – upon which [Cartesian models of landscape] rest" (Ingold, 1993, p. 154). Jo Vergunst suggests that phenomenology, in its rejection of dualistic conceptions of mind and matter, offers a "holistic approach to person-and-environment", which emphasises process and experience in defining what landscape is (Vergunst et al., 2012 p. 4). In chapter two I will look at how the performance landscape of *Alice in Bed* is shaped by a reading of the implied phenomenology of Sontag's play. I will go on to show how my work proceeding *Alice in Bed* has been developed in relation to an examination of phenomenologies of landscape, such as Ingold's, which draw specifically on Heidegger.

Of particular interest to this research is Ingold's use of Heidegger's notion of *things*, upon which he develops his idea of 'thing-places'. Heidegger lays out his notion of things as active presences in the world in The Thing, further elaborating in The Origin of the Work of Art and The Question Concerning Technology. In each of these texts Heidegger outlines the idea that we know the essence of things, their "thingness", because of their active presence in the world – their "thinging". In Heidegger's phenomenology things are active and therefore temporal and their activity shapes our experience. Ingold builds upon Heideggerian "thingness" to formulate thing-places (Ingold, 2012 p. 201). Thing-places offer a phenomenological system for organising a landscape understood as "milieu of engagement and involvement". I have drawn on Ingold's thing-places for thinking about the performance making strategies adopted to shape the landscape of *Project R-hythm* (chapter three). In chapter four I look in more depth at how things can be understood as shaping performance landscapes, using Heidegger's language as a lens to articulate the mechanics of *Sounds & Guts*.

Coastal landscapes

Each of the four projects within this research are, in some respect, concerned with the sea; from Sontag's stage directions which include the sound of the sea, to work with a tidal island in *Project R-hythm*, *Sounds & Guts'* use of things to create a non-located coastal landscape, and *Time Passes*' engagement with Virginia Woolf's "island story" (Beer, 1992, p. 140). As a result of my engagement with coastlines, a more-than-geographical definition of landscape has emerged from my work projects as 'coastal'. Throughout the project chapters I will articulate an expanded notion of landscape as coastal in relation to performance making.

My thinking around coastality is supported by an interdisciplinary review of research carried out with the sea and along geographical coastlines. As a diverse field of interest, study of the sea is closely related to the interdisciplinary performative turn and phenomenologies of landscape. Like the performative turn, interest in the sea has included attempts at defining what 'seascapes' are and assessing their influence or absence from our everyday experience of the world. Ingold himself calls on the reader to "consider that land from maritime perspective" in The Shape of the Land (Ingold, 2012, p. 199). Anita Maurstad observes that "in Norwegian the word 'seascape' does not even exist. We talk of landscapes – landskap – and even cultural landscapes –

kulturlanskap – but not its marine counterpart – *sjøskap*" (Maurstad, 2010 p. 37). I was initially attracted to Maurstad's research as offering a different perspective on the North Sea, a body of water that has shaped my own understanding of landscape, and which features in some way in each of my research projects. In Maurstad's own work within small-scale Norwegian fisheries she looks at relationships between the body and the sea, and considers how this relationship embodies knowledge of fluid places. Her work chimes with writing on kinesthetic sense that I draw on to describe our focus on movement in the landscape of *Project R-hythm*. The need to attend to embodied rather than objective knowledge of the sea is made evident to Maurstad through the fact that "seascapes [...] lack physical marks of human presence" and instead are "maintained almost exclusively via human activities, memories and the telling of stories, that is, via cultural modes of transmission" (ibid.). Maurstad's recognition that landscape can exist despite a lack of located and geometric coordinates is useful to this performance-led research's notion of landscape as more-than-geographical.

Phenomenology, in Mark Jackson's view, holds value for thinking about the sea because it supports a notion of landscape as having "fluid boundaries" rather than as a static and objectively knowable presence (Jackson, 2011 p. 437). For Jackson, the fluidity of landscape is true not only between body and place, as we have seen in Merleau-Ponty's version of phenomenology, but also between the multiple environmental phenomena that make up coastal places (Jackson, 2012 page). Jackson's consideration for the dynamic relationships between landscape elements resembles Heidegger's understanding of things as having a "gathering" affect upon the world (Heidegger, 2001, p. 170). In my consideration of how things were used to shape the landscape of *Sounds & Guts* I will show how my more-than-geographical understanding of landscape as aggregate is informed by previous work with particular coastal places.

Performance philosophy

I situate my practice within the diverse field of performance philosophy. This research set out to recognise the precise nature of the philosophical concern for landscape that motivates my performance making. Performance philosophy, in academic terms, is a relatively new discipline; my first project chapter was developed from a talk I gave to the inaugural performance philosophy conference *How Performance Thinks* in 2012. Following the trajectory of both the field and my own work, elements of this thesis appear in the *Routledge Guide to Performance Philosophy* (2018).

As a field of study performance philosophy works to highlight the philosophical nature of performance, it manifests in contemporary performance practice, performance-based research, and scholarly reflection thereon. Performance philosophy can be understood as a disciplinary relative to performance studies, which Schechner described as "the avant-garde's academic partner" (Schechner, 2010, p. 903). Schechner observed that many performance studies scholars, including himself, "are also practicing artists working in the avant-garde, in community-based performance, and elsewhere" (ibid.). Like performance studies, in performance philosophy "the relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral" (ibid.) to the nature of the field.

Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, who has been central to the growth of the performance philosophy network, as well as the development of my own practice, asserted that performance is "equally capable, as traditional forms of philosophy, of doing philosophical work" (Cull Ó Maoilearca, 2015, p. 1). Esa Kirkkopelto suggests that the aim of performance philosophy is "to recognise the genuine nature, in other words the philosophical bearing, of the questions practitioners present to their artistic and academic communities as well as to a wider society" (Kirkkopelto, 2015, p. 5). Recognition of the philosophical work that performance does and examination of how performance does philosophy defines this field of study.

Participation in an international community of performance philosophy research, which spans academia as well as theatre and art practice has provided this research with a language for reflecting on the philosophical concerns of my work. In my articulation of

practice I have focused on the mechanics of developing performance according to the philosophical concerns that motivate the work. According to Cull Ó Maoilearca performance philosophy addresses itself with "the myriad potential relationships that might be understood to exist between 'performance' and 'philosophy'" (ibid.). The projects presented in this thesis offer four different models for understanding the relationship between 'performance' and 'philosophy'.

Tony Fisher described performance philosophy as an attempt to "think through the possibility that performance is itself a kind of philosophical endeavour, that performance 'thinks'" (Fisher, 2015, p. 176). By revealing the mechanics and intentionality of my practice this thesis contributes to understandings of how performance thinks and, in particular, how performance thinks about landscape. The notion that performance thinks, and a consideration of how performance thinks, underpins the work that my research does to question the kinds of knowledge that are generated through performance-led and practice based research within academic contexts.

Configuring practice-based research

To do a practice-based PhD one must also work out what a practice-based PhD is, and assess which models of academic research do and don't fits one's practice. This is done through an experimental and iterative process, trying things on for size; working out how to affect change within one's practice, and how to do so in such a manner that it can be articulated within the contexts and formats of academia. In relation to *Project R-hythm*, I will describe the effect that experimenting with configurations of practice-based research had on the development of my own work during the progress of this PhD.

In *Artists with PhDs* James Elkins argues that

"*it is deeply problematic, if not aggressively obscurantist, to claim that a work of visual art should be understood as research and as producing new knowledge while at the same time insisting that the research and knowledge inhere in the paint, clay, pixels of the art itself and not in language*" (Elkins, 2009. p. 160)

I have not subscribed to the model of doctoral thesis that Elkins describes here, in which the work is seen to manifest the knowledge it generates. The primary indicator here is that, rather than the performance events themselves, this thesis constitutes the articulation of my doctoral research.

Within the field of performance Nicola Singh's doctoral project, which she describes as "unimpeded by a printed script" required its audience to attend to the ways in which knowledge inheres in "intimate, subjective relationship with the body, particularly the researcher's own body" (Singh, 2017, p. 1). In my own thesis, rather than the performance itself – the live events – manifesting "research and knowledge" as Elkins describes, I reveal how the mechanics of my working methods as an artist enact 'new knowledge' gained through practice.

On the subject of understanding how performance thinks, Cull Ó Maoilearca suggests that, like philosophical enquiry, rather than generating new knowledge, performance philosophy practice contributes to the development of new "models of relating to the world" (Cull Ó Maoilearca, 2015, p. 1). The articulation of how my working methods

have been affected by sustained enquiry into the nature of landscape that I give in this thesis reveals how philosophical research inheres in the making of my work, in the form of models of relating in the world. This can be seen most explicitly in *Project R-hythm* (chapter three) which required my collaborator and I to develop new ways of working with a tidal island. It is also evident in *Time Passes*, which looks for non-anthropocentric approaches to making performance with non-human agents. In the concluding chapter I will address how my understanding of performance philosophy practice as a research process relates to growing interest in the non-philosophy of François Laruelle.

On writing about his own performance work Allan Kaprow offered the following statement:

"*After all, who really wants to write on what he does? A whole career is devoted to imagining things and if the artist is to be at all interested in taking his pulse as though he were a patient to be examined, he must find some way to turn this procedure into an adventure, a form of life itself. He cannot be satisfied merely to translate in digest form what already has been completely expressed in his latest creative efforts.*" (Kaprow, 1967, p. 4)

What I share in this doctoral thesis is not completely expressed to the audiences of my performance work. The process of articulating my working methods and examining their philosophical bearing is been an iterative artistic development process: *a form of life itself*. An ongoing reflection upon *how* I am working shapes forthcoming projects and future practice. In the concluding chapter to this thesis I consider how this reflexive process is a performance philosophy practice of looking for blind spots in how my performance thinks. Understood within my own practice as an artistic development process this research accords with Elkins' suggestion that:

"*The artist positions her scholarship so that it variously supports, modifies, guides or enables her art practice [...] the student is an artist first and foremost, and she intends her doctorate to help her make more compelling artwork*" (Elkins, 2009, p. 147).

Unlike Elkins' description, which separates "scholarship" from "art practice", I consider the reflexive process articulated by this thesis as both central to and existing within my practice.

As well as offering different models for the relationship between performance and

philosophy, the following project chapters present strategies for articulating practice-based research. These strategies have been developed to fit the specific character, concerns and activity of each project. The relationship between theory and practice that underpins my research aligns with Irit Rogoff's notion of 'embodied criticality'. Rogoff explains that "in such a practice we aspire to experience the relations between the [theory and practice] as a form of embodiment which cannot be separated into their independent components" (Rogoff, 2006, online). Rogoff's description of embodied criticality echoes Cull Ó Maoilearca's assertion that performance does philosophy and Fisher's suggestion that performance thinks. Embodied criticality expresses the sense in which theory and practice, performance and philosophy are not mutually exclusive activities retroactively fused together in my own research, but occur as symbiotic in the doing of performance and the development of practice. The thinking that is articulated in this thesis in relation to landscape is the movement of my artistic practice.

As an example of embodied criticality this thesis has been developed through a writing process that is central to my artistic practice and its development. Writing is employed as a method for structuring and scaffolding performance events, but also, as is most evident in *Time Passes*, as a performance-led mechanism for the development of thought. The thesis thus presents a process of 'thinking through writing' that is intertwined with the development of new work, rather than simply a description of a collection of completed projects. The symbiotic relationship of making, performing and reflecting that occurs through writing is a practice of embodied criticality that should be read as a dynamic component of the practice itself rather than a document sitting outside of a completed and separate research activity. This configuration of practice-based research, in which the thesis is an integral part of the practice, resembles the art-based PhD model described by Elkins in which "the thesis is inextricably fused with the creative portion, so that the artwork is scholarly and the scholarship is creative" (Elkins, 2009, p. 159).

As well as a thinking process, the thesis acts as a strategy for expanding each project into the academic context of the research. In its writing, the thesis alters the work itself through the act of reflexive explication. Just as "theatre does not produce a tangible object which may enter into circulation as a marketable commodity" (Lehmann, 2006,

p. 16), the processes of performance making I have carried out did not result in fixed and self-sustaining objects that can exists alongside and at a distance from this text. Rather, this text, along with the visual and descriptive material contained within the appendixes, become the manifestation of those performances for the reader in the present moment. This is most explicitly the case for *Time Passes*, where the chapter included here is conceived as one iteration of an artwork that stylistically straddles academic scholarship and performance writing.

Following the project chapters I will consider the ways in which this thesis responds to Elkins' question: "Can [the arts-based PhD] provide models for bridging history, theory, criticism, and practice – models that might have meaning beyond the humanities?" (Elkins, 2009, p. 145). In my response to Elkins I will look at how the models of relating to the world that emerge out of my landscape performance practice have value beyond the development of my own artwork, for performance practitioners, performance studies, philosophy, cultural geography, social anthropology and literature.

Audiences

As Peggy Phelan explained in *Unmarked*:

"*Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance.*" (Phelan, 1993 p. 146)

According to Phelan then, it is unavoidable that the thesis presents a different work to that which audience members experience through the live events. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of performance documentation, which have been variously noted by Phelan, Auslander and O'Dell to name but a few, I have included photographs of performance events to support the reader's understanding of my research process. The images include both documentation of public performance events and photographs taken during and of making processes. These images suggest to the reader the aesthetic character of the works discussed and give indications of the spaces within which is was created and presented. In her 1997 discussion of performance documentation, O'Dell suggests that "viewers have to use their imaginations quite vigorously to get at what all might have taken place in and around

the split second pictured (sic)" (O'Dell, 1997, p. 73). The documentation images included in this thesis do not rest upon the notion that reader will be able to imagine what took place during any split second of the performance events. Rather they aim to offer visual reference points for the reading of the thesis' text and open up the possibility of the reader positioning the aesthetic quality of the works alongside contemporary and historical references they themselves bring to this document.

Whilst much of the documentation included falls under what Auslander catagorises as "*documentary*" (rather than "*theatrical*") (Auslander, 2006, p. 1), images included chapter three on *Project R-hythm* bear similarity to Vito Acconci's *Photo-Piece* (1969), also discussed by Auslander in relation to types of performance documentation (ibid., p. 4). The images included in chapter three were taken by audience-walkers during the event, using disposable cameras they were given as part of the performance. The quality and status of these images differs therefore to those in other chapters because they were generated by the activity of performing, rather than being performance documentation of the performance itself taking place. Despite this topographical difference to the other images in the thesis, however, they still serve to provide a record, however fragmentary, of the event and offer further insight into its aesthetic character.

This thesis does not present performance, rather it takes a performance-led and practice-based approach to discussing the relationships between performance, landscape and philosophy. As a component of my practice the thesis has a different audience to the public performance events I produced. Each chapter of the thesis reveals a seam in the work that may not have been explicitly available to event audiences. In each case this seam is concerned with the nature of landscape as shaped through performance, this concern does not necessarily correspond with the primary thematic focus of each project. In the case of *Sounds & Guts*, for instance, the public performances were thematically focused on personal experiences and cultural understandings of loneliness. Moreover, my performance events were not designed to convey ideas in the same way as this thesis is. Although I have included descriptions and photographs of events in order to contextualise the project chapters, the primary aim of this thesis is to share the inner workings and philosophical orientation of a performance practice, rather than to explain or represent historic performance events to the reader.

Rather than forming a core part of my doctoral submission, therefore, the documentation I have included is meant to aid the reader's understanding of the references I make to performance events throughout and to support their understanding of the wider context from which this text has been written.

In its sharing of the mechanics of my performance landscapes this thesis is focused on the making of performance and not on audience experience. It is for this reason that I include very little audience testimony within the thesis and do not rely on this material in my discussion of performance and landscape. My approach to writing about performance aligns with Sontag's opinion that "instead of relying so much on questions about what elements in a work of art mean, I thought we could rely more on questions about how they function – concretely" (Sontag, Marranca and Dasgupta, 2005, p. 80). It also corresponds with Umberto Eco's notion of the 'open work of art'.

Eco's recognition of the strategies employed within artworks to create ambiguity and allow for multiple possible meanings, such as "unorthodox uses of language" (Eco, 1989, p. 55) supports this research's resistance to the use of audience testimony in articulating how performance thinks. Eco's notion of the open work also aligns with the phenomenological frameworks through which I understand my work. To conceive of the meaning of the projects or performance events as that which can be articulated by audience members in interview scenarios is to remove the possibility of sustained ambiguity, which is key to my performance work. Furthermore, forcing the intentionality of the work into a corresponding relationship with audience testimony implies a scientific research model in which the latter proves or disproves the former. This empirical model of research is not an appropriate framework for articulating the complexities of either the making of this work or the experience of its audience. Moreover, it does not express the nuanced ways of relating to the world that my research has generated through performance making. I experienced the problematic nature of audience testimony within performance-led research during one interview I conducted with an audience member, in which, upon being asked to recall certain purposely indeterminate moments in the performance she returned questions regarding whether or not she had interpreted the meaning or reality of the work 'correctly' (Parr, 2017, January 17th).

In Against Interpretation Sontag argues that "interpretation makes art into an article of use, for an arrangement into a mental scheme of categories" (Sontag, 2009, p. 11). This thesis does not take an interpretative approach to the work discussed; it is not about the meaning of the work, and does not use an interpretative reading of that meaning to support an argument for or against a particular stance. Rather, it charts key elements in the making of particular performance works and reveals the philosophically oriented landscape concerns of that process. It does so in order to articulate to the reader how specific understandings of landscape emerged through the making of work, but makes no claim that these ideas were received or shared with audiences of the performance events. The reader of the thesis is not synonymous with the audience to the performance because they access the practice via a different language and within different contexts.

Close reading

An expanded approach to close reading is at the heart of my performance-led research. My expanded close reading practice has been developed through performance making and adopted as a consistent methodology throughout this research. The act of close reading is configured differently in each project according to the particular nuances of the performance making process and how the project addresses the research's concern for what is landscape and performance shapes it. In each project, close reading is conceived as a process of enquiry into the philosophical implications of a source text or performance making approach.

My approach to close reading originates in the roles of theatre director and dramaturge, which I occupied previous to this research. The practice of dramaturgy entails the analysis or development of a dramatic structure. Within the theatre profession a 'dramaturge' is responsible for supporting the translation of dramatic action from the page to the stage, attending to the implications and myriad potential significances of a script.[1] *Alice in Bed* involved a dramaturgical approach to close reading a script for

[1] This definition of dramaturgy has been formed through my own personal experience of theatre making and Tess Denman-Cleaver's professional experience in this role. As such it may differ from other

performance, attending to both the nuances of narrative structure and the philosophical implications of the play. In *Project R-hythm* a dramaturgical practice of structural, narrative analysis is applied to a reading of the landscape itself, and our experience of it. In each of my projects I move further away from the traditional roles of dramatic theatre within which I used to work, but I have retained the dramaturgical aspect of the role of director through my practice of close reading.

I have applied my expanded close reading practice to a range of source material that includes, but is not made up exclusively of texts written for performance. My method of close reading is expanded in the sense that it attends to the philosophical bearing not only of text but of the media and mechanics of performance practice as a whole. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observed that "as an art form performance lacks a distinctive medium (and hence uses any and all media)" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, cited in Schechner, 2013, p. 3). The method through which I have conducted my close reading reflects Kirshenblatt-Gimblett description of performance and also Lehmann's understanding of postdramatic theatre as a 'joint text':

"The theatre performance turns the behaviour on stage and in the auditorium into a joint text, a 'text' even if there is no spoken dialogue on stage or between actors and audience. Therefore, the adequate description of theatre is bound to the reading of this total text." (Lehmann, 2006, p. 17)

In A. O. Frank's study of Woolf's philosophy, which I draw on in relation to *Time Passes*, Frank describes the approach taken to reading Woolf as having an "hermeneutic spirit" (Frank, 2001, p. 14). Hermeneutics is understood by Frank as a practice that makes "all texts its subject matter but speaks the language of philosophy" (ibid. p. 14). In my own practice-based research I have adopted a methodology of a close reading which shares Frank's 'hermeneutic spirit' but addresses the diverse range of media involved in my performance process. In the case of *Sound & Guts*, for example, a close reading is given to the role that radios take in the performance landscape. The diversity of my source material echoes Woolf's declaration that fiction has "no method [...] everything is the

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definitions of the term. Useful further reading on the role and skill of a dramaturge can be found in Jonas, Proehl and Lupu, (1996) or Turner, C. and Behrndt, S. (2007).

proper stuff of fiction" (Woolf, 1979, p. 195). Close reading is employed throughout the making, production and reflection processes of this research. The way in which close reading has been conducted within each project shapes the particular models of performance philosophy practice they enact.

I applied my expanded approach to close reading in relation to *Project R-hythm* by applying our experience to working with a tidal island to a reading of the work of poet Basil Bunting. This can be seen in my journal paper entitled 'Then Is Diffused in Now: (Re)reading landscape in Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts* through performance practice and non-representational theory' (Denman-Cleaver and Vrieling van Tuijl, 2018), which is included in the appendixes of this thesis. Further developing this performance-led method for (re)reading literary works in *Stevie Knee Deep in the Sea: A Performance Enquiry into Stevie Smith's Sea Walkers*, I conducted a close reading of Smith's writing through the lens of my coastal performance making projects. This conference paper is also included in the appendixes. *Stevie Knee Deep in the Sea* was accompanied by a practical performance workshop, which used projectors, audio recordings and performance making techniques to invite alternative close readings of Smith's coastal landscapes. In relation to these examples of using performance making as a practice-based lens for close reading texts, the understanding of landscape revealed through *Sound & Guts*' offers a new practice-based and performance-led reading of Heideggerian landscape phenomenologies and Heidegger's things. This performance-led close reading practice is also the crux of my research's contribution to dialogues around Sontag and Woolf's landscapes. My reading of Woolf proposes a new positioning of her in relation to the history of phenomenological thought.

Though configured differently in each project, I have adopted a consistent hermeneutic approach to the close reading of the joint texts of performance throughout this research. My close reading practice offers dialogues around practice-based research and the field of performance philosophy a framework for looking at how performance thinks.

Ethics and omissions

At the outset of Frank's thesis on the philosophy of Virginia Woolf, Frank states that the discussion is focused on only one strata in the geology of Woolf's writing (Frank,

2001, p. 16). The ideas explored in my thesis are also only one strata of a body of work, one layer in a complex set of intertwining questions, lines of thought and accidental encounters that have occupied and disrupted my practice over a period of nine years. This thesis presents the seam in the work that is concerned with landscape and which, unlike other aspects of my practice, can be articulated to a reader through the particular format of a doctoral thesis. Other elements of the work may be visible or implied in the extracts and accounts of making that I share, but they will not be directly addressed. Working out which aspects of my practice can be productively situated as academic research has been an ethical consideration throughout the progress of my doctoral study. My approach to this dimension of the work has shaped my thinking on the nature and presentation of artistic and practice-based research.

Identifying the strata of my practice that can be articulated within academia entailed an assessment of which aspects of my work would benefit from the processes of examination and explication that such articulation entails. Upon beginning this period of doctoral study, I intended to include particular elements of my practice - namely questions around collaboration and the role of autobiography in the work - that I understand as central to what I do as a practitioner, but which will not be addressed here for reasons I will explain before moving onto the project chapters. In giving this explanation of why certain aspects of the work have and have not been directly addressed I will show how I have conceived and configured my own performance practice in relation to academic research. My explanation will reveal how this thesis operates to control the relationship between an artistic practice and an academic context, and in doing so expose the complex and delicate line that artistic and practice-based research walks. By making explicit how this thesis operates in relation to my artistic practice I offer a model of presentation that is purposely not holistic and protects those elements of a practice that are liable to be damaged when subjected to examination and explication with academic contexts.

I have decided not to talk about issues relating to collaboration in my work despite the central role that working alongside other people in the development of new work has within my practice. This decision is based upon my own experience that positioning collaboration as a central concern for my doctoral research required me to subject

intimate, complex, at times fragile relationships to observational and analytic processes that inhibited their development, and thus the development of my practice through those relationships. In acknowledgement of their role in the making of the performances I discuss in this thesis, I have however included descriptions of the nature of the collaborations in each project chapter.

The affect that certain methodologies have on the subject and relational dynamics of academic research is a substantial field of study in its own right. Careful consideration of the complex dynamics of collaborative practice and academic research informed my avoidance of the term 'case study' in preference for 'project', a linguistic strategy for avoiding holding the practice itself at the centre of the research enquiry. The thesis also makes manifest another strategy for protecting the collaborative and autobiographical element of my practice from the frameworks of academic research; it leaves the relational dynamics of my work outside of the research frame. In 'The Aesthetics of Silence' Sontag states that "silence is the artist's ultimate other worldly gesture: by silence, he frees himself from servile bondage to the world, which appears as patron, client, consumer, antagonist, arbiter and distorter of his work" (Sontag, 2009, p. 7). The decision to focus on the landscape strata of my practice is also a decision to remain silent on many other preoccupations, questions, and relationships that define my artistic practice.

Chapter 2: *Alice in Bed*

The project

Alice in Bed was a programme of workshops, symposia, talks and performances centred around a large-scale theatrical production of Susan Sontag's 1993 play *Alice in Bed*, which is based on the diaries of Alice James. The programme was developed and delivered between 2008 and 2013. It was produced by Tender Buttons, an independent performance company, which I established in 2010. Events took place in venues around Newcastle upon Tyne and the project was supported by a number of arts, health and academic partners, including; Launchpad (a North East England mental health charity), the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Trust, Culture Lab (Newcastle University), Newcastle City Council, The Mining Institute (Newcastle) and Silverlink Properties Limited. It was funded by Arts Council England and Newcastle City Council. Details of the full programme of *Alice in Bed* events can be found in the appendixes.

The production of Sontag's play, which was at the core of the project and programme of events, took place in February 2013 in The Stephenson Works, a large Victorian warehouse in Newcastle city centre. The play was performed six times to audiences of 50-60 people by a cast of 9 performers. In the development and production of *Alice in Bed* I took the role of artistic director. It was developed in collaboration with a creative team, which included visual artist Ben Jeans Houghton as set and costume designer, artist Tim Shaw as sound designer and composer, artist and stylist Neesha Tulsi Champaneeria as costume assistant, and Douglas Kuhrt as lighting designer. The production was supported by a technical team of six. Configurations of this team worked together over two weeks in 2011 to undertake initial practical research together. They met again in 2012 for one week of development, and finally for a five week rehearsal period immediately preceding the performances in February 2013. Throughout this making process I acted as the lead artists and primary author of the work, and the reflections presented in this thesis regarding Alice in Bed were developed and are articulated as the sole author of this doctoral thesis.

Over the course of the five-year development period I engaged with researchers in arts, health and medical humanities as well as specialists from health practice, to create an ongoing dialogue around the play's subject matter and the historical significance of Alice James' life and diaries. Development work was shared in work-in-progress performances and exhibitions that solicited public discussion in support of the making process. The project was further supported by a programme of workshops on subjectivity and landscape performance delivered in partnership with the Newcastle and North Tyneside NHS Early Intervention in Psychosis Service. This partnership led to a workshop performance in January 2013, in which people accessing the Early Intervention in Psychosis Service used hand held cameras to document their own experience of the performance and then reflect upon the play through facilitated conversation based on their footage. The programme of engagement activity and public work-in-progress performances was designed to support the performance making approach to *Alice in Bed*.

The following account of staging *Alice in Bed* has been written through a reflexive process that takes the text of a conference talk I delivered during the development of the production to the inaugural Performance Philosophy Conference, *How Performance Thinks* (Kingston University, 2012). Returning to notebooks, documentation, source material and performance ephemera I have rewritten the text of my 2012 talk, situating the project as the beginning of an emerging landscape performance practice. I have focused on how my staging emerged out of a philosophical engagement with the implied landscape of Sontag's play.

The production of *Alice in Bed* included the creation of a physical performance environment, which filled the Victorian warehouse venue. Artist Ben Jeans-Houghton designed the scenography, acting as set designer in collaboration with myself. A map and sketches of the set designs can be seen in the appendixes to this thesis. Within the warehouse no delineation was made between 'performance space' and areas occupied by audience members. People could move freely around the space throughout the performance and were encouraged to do so upon arrival at the venue. Moveable seating

was provided for those who wanted it, and scenes played out across the space, often amongst the audience or moving through them.

The warehouse was partially lit by large windows running along one side of the building. This natural light was incorporated into the performances, which took place at dusk.

Figure 1 *Alice in Bed* performance (2013). Image: Keith Pattison.

With an established interested in the work of Susan Sontag, as a director I was attracted to the play in part because of the challenges the text posed for staging, and the potential for realising it outside of an auditorium context. I had become bored by the limitations of the auditoriums I worked in as a theatre director and saw *Alice in Bed* as an opportunity to develop my approach to making performance beyond the bounds of dramatic theatre. I neither recognised nor had the vocabulary to conceive of the precise nature of the landscape-related challenges that creating the work would involve, or how those challenges would go on to define my practice thereafter.

Reflecting upon the approach I took to staging the play, I will outline the specific nature of the challenges the play presented in relation to landscape. I will show how a close

reading of Sontag's text was made manifest in particular staging devices, and examine the resultant philosophical underpinnings of the *Alice in Bed* performance landscape.

The projects that followed *Alice in Bed*, which are presented in subsequent chapters of this thesis, were motivated by a desire to address the issues of landscape that grew out of this first project. In *Alice in Bed* we see the emergence of a phenomenology of landscape that will go on to be refined through my future practice.

The play

Sontag's play is based on the posthumously published diaries of Alice James (1848-1892), lesser-known sister of novelist Henry James and philosopher and psychologist William James. Sontag fuses Alice James' own life and writings with elements of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland,* as well as including several figures from history, theatre and literature. The plot takes the shape of a disorientating sequence of scenes, through which apocryphal episodes in the diarist's biography are played out. It begins with the bed bound Alice trapped under ten mattresses, refusing to rise.

Figure 2 *Alice in Bed*: Alice's father (2013). Image: Keith Pattison.

Having introduced Alice's father in the second scene, with a dialogue that sees Alice request permission to kill herself, we are privilege to a cameo from her novelist brother Henry as an overweight, kaftan-sporting frustration. The play moves towards an absurdist climax of Carrollesque confusion with a tea party populated by women drawn from history. Sontag employs guests at the tea party "for the purpose of advising and consoling Alice" (Sontag, 1993, p. 115). In 'real life' Alice James suffered lifelong psychological problems, which at the time were diagnosed as 'neurasthenia' or 'hysteria'. Tea party attendees include; American woman of letters Margaret Fuller, who leads proceedings as an opium smoking feminist, poet Emily Dickinson, who offers obtuse words of wisdom whilst floating in and out with bunches of flowers, Myrtha 'Queen of the Wilis' from the ballet *Giselle*, and Kundry (of Wagner's *Parsifal*), who takes the role of Carroll's sleepy dormouse, periodically interrupting with violent solutions to patriarchal oppression. Following the tea party Alice delivers an extended monologue that leads us on a journey through an imagined Rome. The final scenes of the play involve an almost romantic encounter with a cockney burglar and a concluding 'death scene', in which Alice declares that she "did get up" (out of bed) (ibid. p. 107).

The text of Sontag's play is dense. Like Sontag's novels it appears at first as polemic; the usual furniture of a script adorns the page, but the characters don't seem to be fully aware of one another, their gazes never quite meet, their answers never quite match, their entrances and exits fall somewhere between passive aggressive and deranged. Or they are each the same Sontag, speaking in a series of appropriated guises, not so convincing caricatures adopted to illustrate an argument about how the world is.

In the postscript Sontag states that *Alice in Bed* is "a play about women, a play about women's anguish and women's consciousness of self: a free fantasy based on a real person, Alice James" (ibid. p. 114). A review of a 2007 staging of the play by Trap Door Theatre suggests that to produce "Sontag's stage essay on James's haunted life [which] pretends to be a play" is to attempt the impossible (Piatt, 2007). *Alice in Bed* is the shape of a play, it has eight scenes and a character list, but it reads as a series of abstract essays in dialogue form rather than a dramatic story. It was not until I was sitting in a room listening to actors reading the parts aloud that some moments in the script congealed as situated human encounters.

The beginning of a landscape performance practice

Within the development of my practice, producing and directing *Alice in Bed* represents a move away from inhabiting the traditionally conceived role of a theatre director staging plays in auditoriums, towards the creation of live work in repurposed or non-traditional performance contexts. I have come to understand this project as the beginning of my philosophically oriented landscape performance practice. Completed prior to my beginning my PhD, *Alice in Bed* is a prelude to my practice-based doctoral research and the beginning of this story.

The notion of landscape throughout the development of *Alice in Bed* remained closely tied to theatrical staging. In her essay on the life and work of Walter Benjamin Sontag suggests that Benjamin took a topographical approach to autobiography, which allowed him more freedom than a chronological ordering of his life story:

"*Time does not give one much leeway: it thrusts us forward from behind, blows us through the narrow funnel of the present into the future. But space is broad, teeming with possibilities, positions, intersections, passages, detours, U-turns, dead ends, one-way streets*" (Sontag, 1981, p. 177).

Sontag's "free fantasy based on a real person" acts as a theatrical biography of Alice James. Like Benjamin's topographical autobiography, I approached the play primarily spatially rather than chronologically. Returning to decisions I made during the development of *Alice in Bed* I have reflected on the making process through the lens of the postdramatic theatre movement, a movement that Sontag can be understood as contemporary to and which she has expressed significant interest in in interviews and essays (see Sontag, Marranca and Dasgupta, 2005, for example).

By sharing the thinking process behind how the landscape of *Alice in Bed* was created, and exposing the mechanics of my staging, I offer an account of 'thinking through making' in relation to performance, landscape and philosophy (on 'thinking through making' see, for example, Ingold, 2013). My account of making speaks to dialogues around 'thinking through making' that dominate practice-based research as well as performance philosophy's enquiry into how performance thinks. Rather than giving an interpretation of a work, including an analysis of audience testimony, through *Alice in*

Bed I provide practitioners and scholars of performance with a detailed account of how a particular philosophical enquiry played out in the making of a physical performance environment. By exposing the philosophical moves I make in the practical development of a performance I offer the 'thinking through making' dialogue an embodied, artist's perspective on the creation of an artwork as a process of in-depth philosophical enquiry. To related discussions concerning the status and form that artistic research adopts within academia, I offer a challenge to Elkins' comment that where the development of artistic practice is understood as primary to a PhD "the purpose of the candidate's forays into different disciplines is to mine them in order to further her artwork" (Elkins, 2009, p. 162). The making process I will share from *Alice in Bed* not only shows how certain ideas relating to performance making emerged, but that the making process was equally and in-turn a methodology for reading Sontag's phenomenology.

Figure 3 *Alice in Bed* research and development activity with performers Zoe Lambert, Tessa Parr and Rachel Gay (2012). Image: Ko Le Chen.

My account of making *Alice in Bed* begins with an outline of the close reading of the play that emerged through the development process and which underpinned my approach to staging. I present my reading of Sontag's phenomenology in this thesis not as a complete and coherent interpretation of the central meaning of Sontag's play; that would seem somewhat sacrilegious in light of the author's arguments against

interpretation[2]. Rather, my close reading of the text considers the implied philosophical foundations of the play as a framework for staging. As with the thesis itself, my reading of Sontag's play offers only one strata of a complex and open artwork. It is not presented in order to close down other possible readings or significances held within the text; many of which, despite being addressed in the 2013 production itself, do not fall within the scope of this research.

Sontag's postdramatic phenomenology

In *Under the Sign of Saturn* Sontag suggests

"*Benjamin's recurrent themes are, characteristically, means of spatialising the world: for example, his notion of ideas and experiences as ruins. To understand something is to understand its topography, to know how to chart it. And to know how to get lost*" (Sontag, 1981, p. 116).

In *Alice in Bed* Sontag spatialises her ideas and the experiences of her bed-bound protagonist, creating a theatrical and imagined topography. Topography, as a feature of the text, can be seen most vividly in Alice's journey around the ruins of Rome in scene six, which recalls the playwright's interest in Benjamin's biographical ruins. The process of translating her protagonist's inner life into a theatrical topography also makes manifest Sontag's own ideas about *how* Alice experiences the world.

Lehmann's definition of postdramatic theatre rests on the notion that rather than asking audiences to suspend their disbelief "postdramatic theatre [...] offers not a representation but an intentionally unmediated experience of the real (time, space, body)" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 134). Examining Sontag's theatrical topography, I approached the staging of her script through a philosophical consideration of what the particular character of 'the real' and the nature of experience are within the play. It was in this way that I, as director, came "to understand its topography, to know how to chart it".

[2] See Sontag, S. (2009) Against Interpretation. *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Penguin Books.

The movement of Alice's mind throughout the play is anchored to landscape. Sontag's use of landscape imagery within Alice's dialogue is an indicator to the prominence of topography in the play:

"*I think I've reached some singular peak from which all is clear and it turns out to be just one of the countless ways in which I "go off" as Father always called it.*" (ibid. p. 37)

The landscape language of Alice's character acts as an indicator of the symbiotic relationship between her mental states and the reality of the world she inhabits.

In her notes on the play Sontag explains that "changes in and perplexities about [Alice's] feelings are imagined as arbitrary changes in physical size and scale" (ibid. p. 115). As such, the relationship between landscape and subjective experience within the play is not only manifest as a poetic and expressive language, but also its material reality. The interrelationship between subjectivity and landscape is what makes Sontag's play implicitly phenomenological. In line with this phenomenological reading of the play Alice's father states the impossibility of objectivity with a Wittgensteinian declaration that he is "so far inside the way my life turned out, [he] can't see the edge" (ibid. p. 21). An examination of the nuances of Sontag's phenomenology informed how I staged the text.

As in Benjamin's autobiographical writings, the primacy of landscape in Sontag's play results in a disrupted chronology; the play moves backwards and forwards in the biography of Alice James. The non-linear nature of time is indicated in scene four, which features the character of Henry James. Dialogue between brother and sister is taken verbatim from different points in history. They move between fiction, quotes from biographical material, and lines taken from Alice James' posthumously published diary. Alice and Henry tie themselves in knots quoting lines they have not yet said or written, referencing events that have not yet happened, recalling statements made after Alice's death or from – chronologically speaking – future diary entries. In this confusion Sontag gives us a heads-up to the malleability of time within the play, which is also noted in Alice's observation that "tenses are strangely potent aren't they" (ibid. p. 30). The

potency of tenses and their role in shaping a performance landscape is something that I carried forward in my own writing of *Sounds & Guts* (see chapter four).

A traditionally dramatic reading of *Alice in Bed* might conceive of Alice's story as a series of fantastical flashbacks and visions of the future. The characters' self-conscious navigation of a world of erratic tenses and temporalities, however, suggests that this is not simply a non-linear narrative, but a feature of the play's reality. Within Sontag's landscape characters occupy multiple timeframes simultaneously.

Multiplicity and simultaneity

Informed by the multiple and synchronous temporalities of Sontag's play, throughout the performance of *Alice in Bed* a consistent multiplicity of activity was staged. Sometimes this would be the presence of performers, outside of the central action of a scene, conducting some discreet preparation or coda to a preceding or forthcoming event. In the warehouse space everything and everyone was visible at all times and there was no 'off-stage'. Lighting was used to focus or diffuse audience attention, but nothing was ever fully hidden from view; the presence of natural light meant that full black out was not possible. The multiplicity of activity in the action of the performance included the production team, who were always visible operating lights and sound, and moving props from their 'base' at the centre of the warehouse space. Performers too would be seen moving around between scenes, and their 'off-stage' movement was choreographed to varying degrees through the event.

Emily Dickinson, for example, could be seen slowly pacing up and down the space throughout the play, occasionally examining light and scenographic detail with a magnifying glass. According to the text, Emily features in only one scene, the tea party. However, inspired by her character's late arrival to that scene, her incredible attention to detail as a poet, and the pace of her speech as scripted by Sontag, Emily was given an extremely long and slow journey to the tea party. This journey required that she set off for her 'entrance' in scene five at the very start of scene one. So from 'curtains up' the actress Claire Barrett, who played Emily Dickinson, moved steadily from one end of the warehouse to the other over a period of thirty minutes. Emily's choreographed activity was simultaneous to the playing out of the first four scenes of the play. This meant that

her movement could potentially pull audience attention away from the dramatic development of scenes preceding her official entrance. The intention was that Emily would draw awareness out to the wider landscape of the performance, in which synchronous activity played out. A similar device was employed in my decision to give the character of the Nurse a series of household tasks to do within the warehouse space whenever she was 'off stage'.

The multiplicity of activity throughout the performance of *Alice in Bed* was designed to shape a reality in which multiple timeframes played out simultaneously, a landscape that enacted the multiple and contradictory truths of Sontag's text. The choreography of 'off-stage' movement, as well as the presence of the production team operating the show, meant that it was also always true that the audience were explicitly located within the timeframe of the live event, which was taking place in the reality of the warehouse over the course of 90 minutes in January 2013.

Subjectivity and scale

Because reality is subjective in Sontag's landscape, it is also relative. What is true for me is not necessarily true for you, what is true for the character of Emily Dickinson is rarely true for the character of Margaret Fuller, and so on. References to the relativity of truth run throughout the dialogue of *Alice in Bed*, such as Alice's statement: "I see big things very small and small things so big" (ibid. p. 102). An extended conversation regarding the relative size of the world plays out at the tea party (ibid. pp. 64-85). Sontag repeatedly impresses upon the audience that truth is subjective and knowledge of the real world is relative to personal experience; as Emily says, "it's a matter of scale" (ibid. p. 64).

Translated into the topographical reality of the play, relativity results in a reality in which not only is time malleable but size and scale are also contingent to individual subjectivities. Furthermore, the scale of things is not anchored to fixed identities, but affected by the perpetual movement of mental states, as Alice infers during her 'Rome' monologue: "I won't say how big or small anything is. My mind doesn't have a size" (ibid. p. 85).

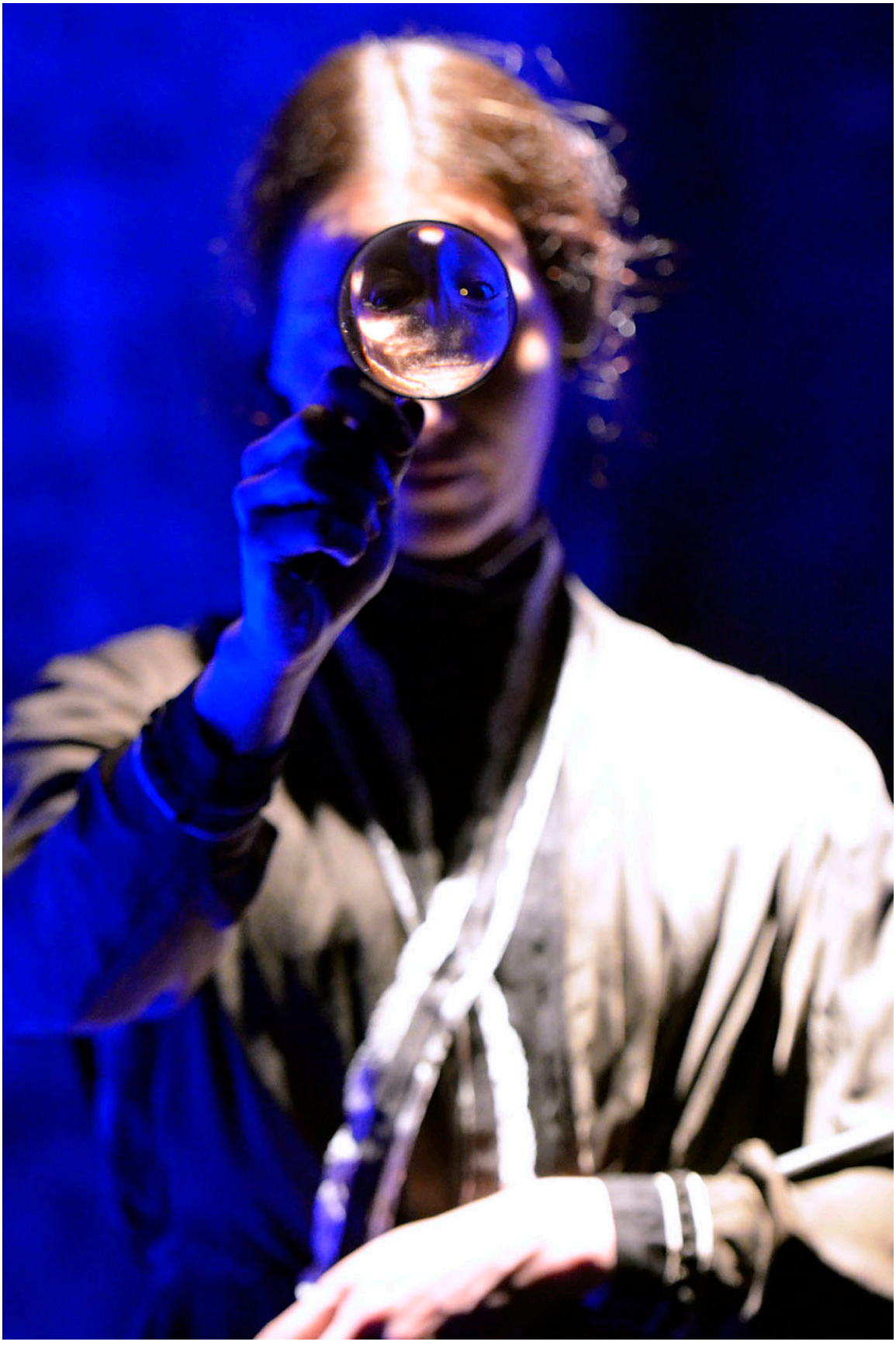

Figure 4 *Alice in Bed*: Emily Dickinson with magnifying glass (2013). Image: Keith Pattison.

Within the performance of *Alice in Bed* Emily Dickinson's magnifying glass was intended as a symbolic indicator of the role that scale plays in the reality of *Alice in Bed*. Scale was used throughout the performance as a mechanism for choreographing the movement of audience attention between intricate detail and the vastness of landscape. As Emily passed through the first scenes of the play, en route to the tea party, she occasionally paused and held up her magnifying glass in order that she and audience members around her could watch the performance through the lens. A magnifying glass held at a distance has the effect of miniaturising its subject, all the while suggesting its potential for enlargement. The magnifying glass is inherently a tool of scale, hence its inclusion in the staging of *Alice in Bed*.

In the third project chapter on *Sounds & Guts* I will address the role that particular things have in the shaping of performance landscapes through a close reading of Heidegger. The magnifying glass as an active and shaping thing in the performance landscape of *Alice in Bed* can also be understood in relation to that discussion, where its Heideggerian *thingness* is its simultaneous capacity for miniaturization and enlargement.

Smaller physical details were embedded in the scenography in order to encourage the movement of audience attention between differing the scales in the landscape. It is in this respect that the work sat between the theatrical staging of dramatic theatre and the installations Lehmann and Schechner include in their definitions of postdramatic theatre. A collection of objects, suggestive of personal affects, curated by designer Ben Jeans Houghton, for example, were stored in the head of Alice's bed. Like Emily with her magnifying glass, the roaming audiences were free to linger by the bed in order to get a closer look whilst the performance was ongoing. To look closely at a dramatic stage set is to reveal its nature as unreal and representational. The postdramatic, installation design of the performance landscape of *Alice in Bed*, however, was created as 'real' rather than representational, and the diversity of scales was key to its reality.

Sontag's interest in the affect that miniaturisation has on our experience of landscape is referred to in her work on Benjamin, in particular her note that "shortly before his death, Benjamin was planning an essay about miniaturization as a device of fantasy"

(Sontag, 1981, p. 125). In *Alice in Bed* Sontag herself uses scale and miniaturisation as a device for incorporating fantasy in the material reality of her theatrical world.

Imagination in reality

The structure of the play, which follows the imagination of Alice, mixes memories, fantasies and dreams with the real. The presence of imagination in the progress of the play suggests, along with a number of linguistic allusions, a parity between 'reality' and imagination in the phenomenological landscape.

In *One-Way Street* Benjamin describes the state of recounting dreams on an empty stomach. Without washing and eating, before engaging with society, one remains, according to Benjamin, "under the sway of one's dreams" (Benjamin, 1979, p. 45). This is the topography in which Benjamin writes his autobiographical text and also, seemingly, the space in which *Alice in Bed* is set. My decision to stage the play at twilight was informed by the combined imaginative and 'real' character of Sontag's landscape. As well as a time of day, 'twilight' also refers to a state of uncertainty, an in-between time where imagination and reality can become confused.

Promoting parity between the imagined and the real, during the tea party Margaret Fuller suggests that an imagined Rome is identical and interchangeable with a geographical Rome:

"ALICE: (*Sighing*) I've never seen Rome. And now I never shall.
MARGARET: It's just as you imagine. That beautiful. Are you imagining it?"

(Sontag, 1993, pp. 52-53)

The relationship between truth and imagination suggested by Margaret is made manifest in the following scene, where Alice's monologue presents a simultaneously real *and* imagined journey around Rome. In the phenomenological reality of Sontag's play Alice *does* go to Rome, in her mind. Just as, in the final scene, it is true that she *did* get up. The Rome monologue is made up almost entirely of statements of fact, the basis of which is imagination rather than empiricism: "I am in my mind, travelling, and the mind is the past, and the mind is Rome" (ibid. p. 83). In her notes on the script

Sontag describes this journey as one of the "triumphs of imagination" contained in the play (ibid. p. 117). In terms of the shape of the performance landscape imagination's greatest triumph is its influence on the material reality of the world. Sontag does note that Alice's triumph of imagination is one of the few victories allowed to women, particularly women born in the eighteen hundreds, and this sentiment is not absent from the tone of the monologue. Nonetheless, the relationship between imagination and subjective truth holds true for how we understand the nature of reality within the world of the play.

Staging audience experience

The postdramatic challenge that Sontag's implied phenomenology poses for staging is how to create an experience of the real in which time and scale are flexible, truth is subjective and relative, and the fabric of the world is simultaneously real and imagined. This challenge is at the heart of my production of the play. In an essay on performance philosophy and the work of 'artist-philosopher' Salomo Friedlaender, Alice Lagaay suggests that "art and writing do well to embody the content they convey" (Lagaay, 2015, p. 67). In terms of performance philosophy practice, staging *Alice in Bed* can be seen as an attempt to create a performance landscape that embodies the implied philosophy of Sontag's text.

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, my articulation of how *Alice in Bed*'s staging embodied Sontag's philosophy is not concerned with verifying affect via audience testimony. To do so would be to presume that the implicit philosophical structure of the play was commutated by the event in such a way that audience members could then re-articulate their experience back to me, in a language appropriate to the arguments I am making here. Rather than setting up an empirical dynamic between artistic decision making and audience experience, I have explored some of the structures, staging devices, objects and performance activities that I used to configure reality in *Alice in Bed*.

Brian Saner of Goat Island argued that "the proscenium stage makes things simpler" because everything that occurs on stage is experienced as "a two-dimensional cut-out designed to be seen only from the front" (Saner, 2007, p. 37). Sontag herself described

traditional proscenium staging as "frontality" (Sontag, 1966, p. 24). Frontality presents the audience with a representational world in which simple and singular truths exist. Belief in the representation is the 'suspension of disbelief' the dramatic auditorium requires of its audience. Underpinning my 2013 production of *Alice in Bed* is an attempt to stage a version of the real in which truth is experienced not as simple and singular but as multiple, contingent and flexible.

Despite the apparent frontality of some of Sontag's stage directions, to stage the real that I found in the text, I rejected the frontality of the proscenium stage. I required a performance context in which my staging could embody the particular character of Sontag's phenomenology. In this sense, my move away from the auditorium, which *Alice in Bed* facilitated was philosophically motivated by a desire to stage truth as multiple.

The staging of *Alice in Bed* incorporated strategies for choreographing the audience in such a way that they might become aware that their experience of the play was contingent on their subjectivity. We have already seen that multiplicity of activity and inclusion of different scales in the performance landscape was intended to disrupt attention on the dramatic action of the event. These strategies required audience members to make discreet yet conscious decisions about their position within the performance and their perspectives on events unfolding. The staging required audience members to dictate their own focal point.

Lehmann described how Robert Wilson's employment of simultaneity requires the audience to construct their own subjective understanding of situations presented:

"*Frequently Wilson's space is divided 'into stripes' parallel to the apron of the stage, so that actions taking place in different depths of the stage can either be synthesized by the spectator or be read as 'parallelograms', so to speak. It is thus already left to the constructing imagination of the viewer whether s/he considers the different figures on stages as existing within a shared context at all, or only as synchronically presented.*" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 79)

Note Lehmann's reference to the role of the imagination in 'constructing' the reality of Wilson's work. I experienced the use of simultaneity in Wilson's work that Lehmann

describes in a revival of his collaboration with Philip Glass, *Einstein on the Beach*, presented at the Barbican (London) in 2012. For several scenes of this opera the audience are presented with grids of up to 14 'boxes', stacked one on top of another, each containing a performer. Each performer enacts a choreographic sequence alongside lights, musical composition, and moving scenographic structures (*Einstein on the Beach*, 2012). The scene is not supported by a narrative framework or explicit meaning, and thus the audience dictate their own focal points and construct their own reading of the event.

Einstein on the Beach stages multiplicity according to the frontality of the proscenium stage. Within the frame of the stage there are multiple performances to observe. The promenade structure of the *Alice in Bed* landscape meant that as well as encouraging awareness within the audience of their own presence and subjectivity, people were also guided to become aware of other spectators; further to the performance, audience members could watch one other.

In the Marranca and Dasgupta interview Sontag questions "the value placed on consciousness conceived of as a wholly private activity", a misgiving she argues modernism perpetuated. In response to this misgiving Sontag posits an opposing social theory of consciousness (Sontag, Marranca and Dasgupta, 2005, p. 6). Sontag's notion of consciousness is concurrent with the subjective reality I read in *Alice in Bed*. Saner explains how, due to the staging devices employed in certain Goat Island performances "no one person sees everything and so audience members also find themselves having to collaborate with each other" (ibid. p. 40.). Saner's description of audience experience is collaborative due to the limitations of subjective viewpoints within their staging, and echoes my approach to staging audience experience as subjective and multiple in *Alice in Bed*.

Including the audience

In order to encourage a diversity of perspectives on the action, particular elements of the staging of *Alice in Bed* were designed to choreograph audience as well as performer movement. Reflecting upon this aspect of *Alice in Bed* I have drawn on the work of Luca

Ronconi and the devices he used for 'including the audience' in the action of his theatre and opera productions.

Ronconi (1933-2015) was a European theatre director and contemporary to the postdramatic theatre movement that Lehmann centres around American practioners. Many of Ronconi's productions, like those discussed in *Postdramatic Theatre*, took place outside of established theatre buildings and situated the audience within immersive scenographic structures. In The Spectator as Creator in Contemporary French Theatre Webb offers a discussion of Ronconi's work that focuses on the mechanics of staging. Rather than an account of what the audience experienced, Webb considers how landscape was configured and what the role of the audience was within the performance landscape. Webb's emphasis on directorial intention, rather than individual subjective accounts of the work, has supported my own examination of *Alice in Bed*'s performance landscape.

As with *Alice in Bed*, over the course of a performance Ronconi's audiences were encouraged to move around the space, encountering and negotiating dispersed moments of live performance. Webb explained how this worked in Ronconi's *XX* (1971):

"*The audience was divided into groups, each one moving according to a different itinerary through a series of rooms. In each room they were witnesses to bizarre performances. As they progressed, walls drew back to create larger rooms and groups. In the end, all walls were down and the whole audience were gathered in one space. The individual scenes coalesced*" (Webb, 1980, p. 209).

Webb's description of the walls drawing back to reveal a larger space resembles the transition between scenes one and two of *Alice in Bed*. Upon arrival to the warehouse the audience were held in a smaller, makeshift 'foyer' space, with black curtains at one end. When the performance began the black curtains revealed a small bedroom scene immediately in front of them, where scene one played out in a proscenium arch formation. At the end of scene one the furniture was drawn back on castors and the extent of the performance landscape as filling the warehouse was revealed. Scene two began at the end of the cavernous warehouse, pulling the audience into the larger space.

Webb describes the role of the audience in Ronconi's work as 'included' in a manner that reflects the role of the audience of *Alice in Bed*. Webb's discussion of Ronconi's work is a response to questions regarding participation that emerged out of the postdramatic theatre movement. Webb observed that as a result of under examination, the term "'participation' in [postdramatic] works becomes almost synonymous with physical activity" (ibid. p. 208). Webb suggests that in the case of Ronconi's productions "it would perhaps be clearer to use the phrase 'audience inclusion'" (ibid. p. 211). Like Ronconi's productions, my staging of the *Alice in Bed* included the audience in the action of the event, but did not engage them as participants in the creative realisation of the work.

In Ronconi's 1969 production entitled *1789* the audience, who formed a crowd within the performance, were cast as civilians in the revolution being staged (ibid. p. 208). Similarly, the audience of *Alice in Bed* would occasionally find themselves 'cast' within a scene or unwittingly becoming props for a performer's activity – a barre for a ballet dancer, a guest at a tea party, or mourners standing around a deathbed. These narrative roles were sometimes implied but not fundamental to the progress of the event. The narrative significance of the audience within *Alice in Bed* was secondary to my concern for how they experienced the reality of the performance landscape. In this sense, I did not cast the audience; rather I choreographed the work in such a way to encourage a heightened sense of the role of subjectivity on the material reality of the work.

One such technique within *Alice in Bed* included the use of performers' movement and scenographic elements as tools for crowd dispersal. During scene two, for example, Alice's father, seated upon a desk, was pushed at high speed across the full length of the warehouse, directly through the audience. The choreography of this moment was designed not only to physically move audience members around the space, but also to pull attention outwards from the two-person dialogue that preceded it, to the larger scale of landscape. This sequence accompanied a conversation in which Alice's father urged her to get some distance on the worries she had raised in their preceding conversation:

FATHER: Make an effort. See things differently. With more distance.
ALICE: Distance
(ALICE *starts to move to the rear of the stage*)

(ibid. p. 20)

The choreography of the desk replaced Sontag's stage direction, moving instead the world surrounding Alice, to leave her standing at a distance from her father. Following the disruption of the desk, scene two ended with Alice standing amongst the audience. The bed, to which Alice James was ostensibly 'bound', sat on castors and, like the desk, was also used as a choreographic vehicle throughout the performance, dispersing the audience and forcing them to reconfigure their perspective within a continually changing landscape. Ronconi's 1969 *Orlando Furioso* included what Webb described as the "living scenography" of the work (ibid. p. 209). Like *Alice in Bed*, the scenography of *Orlando Furioso* (designed by Umberto Betacca) shaped a space in which the boundary between performance and spectator was ambiguous and could be disrupted wherever it formed.

As well as the immediate threat of a large piece of scenery crashing into them, audience members in *Alice in Bed* were choreographed more discreetly through the use of physical distance in the staging. This technique was used to pull the audience from the 'foyer' space of scene one, into the larger warehouse space at the beginning of scene two. A scene beginning far away from the crowd or just out of sight has the effect or encouraging movement, since people naturally move to see or hear what's going on. Frequently a new scene would begin to play out at the far end of the space from where the audience had grouped themselves. A switch in focal point was designed to encourage audience members into a conscious decision regarding whether to move closer to the action or remain at a distance, and how to reposition their perspective.

For example, an intimate conversation between Alice and her brother Henry James that was staged close around the bed pulled the audience into a proximate relationship with performers, before being disrupted as the tea party began to get underway at the far end of the space, in advance of scene five. Margaret Fuller, seated at a long table at the far end of the warehouse began to demonstrate her impatience for the late arrival of

Emily Dickinson, moving between chairs and muttering to herself in an extravert fashion. The distance the audience found themselves from this emerging, simultaneous activity required them to reappraise where they were positioned in the performance landscape.

Figure 5 *Alice in Bed*: Myrtha (2013). Image: Keith Pattison.

The scale of the warehouse space allowed for staging that exaggerated distance and proximity. Choreographed movement of the character of Myrtha, for example, played with audience proximity throughout the dialogue and used varying distance from and proximity to audience members to disrupt group configurations during the tea party scene. In advance of her first lines in the play Myrtha appeared directly behind the audience at the far end of the warehouse and began a choreographed physical warm up. Lit in ultraviolet light and with a composition playing only from speakers at her end of the space, Myrtha slowly pulled focus away from the table as audience members turned to watch her movements in the distance. Only some members of the audience were immediately aware of Myrtha's activity, and gradually, as their attention shifted, others in the crowd followed their lead and began to turn around. In moments such as

this audience members might "collaborate with each other" to negotiate the fact that no one person could see everything that was happening (Saner, 2007, p. 40).

Proximity was also incorporated in the sound design, devised by artist Tim Shaw in collaboration with myself. The technical infrastructure of the performance included an eight-speaker system with the capacity for multi-channel sound diffusion. The sound was composed especially for this system, which was, in turn, designed and configured in response to the acoustic dynamics of the warehouse space. The use of eight outputs meant that complex multi-channel compositions could be played through the space in such a way that the audience's experience of sound was different according to their individual position in the performance. With each speaker often playing a different element of the composition, proximity to the individual speakers affected the audience experience of the auditory landscape. A traditional set up within a theatre auditorium with a proscenium stage, is a stereo system that faces the seated audience. This set up is designed to support frontality. Within this usual auditorium set up, depth of field is not supported within sound design. The eight-channel system used in *Alice in Bed* supported an immersive experience that placed the audience within the performance landscape.

Several explicit crossovers can be found between the development of postdramatic theatre, the growth of experimental composition and the work that Fluxus artists have made using sound. One obvious example of the relationship between these fields of practice is the collaboration between Robert Wilson and Philip Glass (as seen in *Einstein on the Beach*), as well as work that Merce Cunningham and John Cage made together, which Sontag refers to in the 1977 interview with Marranca and Dasgupta (ibid. p. 80). Of particular interest to my own reflection on *Alice in Bed* is the role of spatialisation in work by experimental composers working in proximity to postdramatic theatre.

One extreme example of spatialisation as a compositional element is Le Monte Young's "periodic composite sound waveform environment created from sine wave components generated digitally in real time on a custom-designed Rayna interval synthesizer", the full title of which is *The Base 9:7:4 Symmetry in Prime Time When Centred above and below The Lowest Term primes in The Range 288 to 244 with The Addition of 279 and 261*

in Which half of the Symmetric Division Mapped above and including 288 Consists of The Powers of 2 Multiplied by The Primes within The Primes within The Ranges of 144 to 128, 72 to 64 and 36 to 32 Which are Symmetric Division Mapped below and Including 244 within The Ranges 126 to 122, 63 to 56 and 31.5 to 28 with The Addition of 119. The piece, which was originally composed in 1969, is now presented within a permanent installation in New York called *Dream House. Dream House* was created with artist Marian Zazeela. Le Monte Young was a member of the Fluxus art movement and collaborated with George Maciunas, who is often referred to as the 'founder' of Fluxus. Within *Dream House* the audience are invited to move, stand, sit and lie in the single room in which Le Monte Young's composition plays. As they move around the space their experience of the continual composition changes according to their position in the room and their proximity to the sound sources. The particular frequencies of the sine waves mean that the sound is felt as well as heard. The result is a heightened awareness of the bodily and subjective experience of the composition.

During the development of *Alice in Bed*, we explored techniques for using sound as a medium for heightening the audience's tangible and conscious awareness of their subjective perspective within a performance landscape. It was not until after producing Sontag's play that I visited *Dream House* myself, and began to reflect upon how since the creation of *Alice in Bed* the sensory and subjective experience of sound has become central to my approach to staging audience experience. The use of proximity and movement within an immersive sound environment was further developed in *Sounds & Guts*, with the use of radios as mobile sound sources. And in the next chapter on *Project R-hythm,* I will describe performative 'attention training' activities that revolve around listening and the physical body in a landscape.

Ronconi explained that his production of *Orlando Furioso* was not designed to be observed, but experienced, and that the devices employed throughout were intended to invite the audience to enter into the action (Webb, 1980, p. 215). Ronconi's emphasis on experience rather than observation resonates with my own attention to how the staging of *Alice in Bed* was developed to support a particular experience of the real.

Experiential performance, as defined by Cull and Goulish, describes performance work that includes the audience and attends to the philosophical foundations of their experience (Cull and Goulish, 2007, p. 57). Experiential performance is concerned with *how* we experience performance and is defined by Cull and Goulish in relation to the performance philosophy field. In their description of how experiential performances employ strategies to disrupt, heighten or highlight the nature of experience Cull and Goulish reflect some of the ways in which the staging of *Alice in Bed* was philosophically oriented around experience rather than dramatic narrative. In Lehmann's terms, experiential performance is concerned with the particular nuances of the 'unmediated experience of the real' that a performance supports for its audience. Davy explains that in Foreman's works "Foreman will often sound a loud, harsh buzzer which interrupts the flow of thought in the perceiver-momentarily erasing the mind-allowing the spectator to "begin again" in contemplating the piece (Davy, 1974, p. 120). The disruptions in attention and continuity can be understood as a particular method for configuring audience experience that is informed by Foreman's Steinian philosophy and concern for a landscape experienced as a continuous present.

The devices I used for staging audience experience in *Alice in Bed* were developed in relation to my close reading of Sontag's phenomenology. The techniques I developed build upon Cull and Goulish's definition of experiential performance by attending to intentionality and the discreet mechanics of landscape within performance.

In 'The Aesthetics of Silence' Sontag discusses art forms that demand of their audience an attention akin to one's engagement with a landscape:

"*The spectator would approach art as he does a landscape. A landscape doesn't demand from the spectator his "understanding", his imputations of significance, his anxieties and sympathies; it demands, rather, his absence, it asks that he not add anything to it. Contemplation, strictly speaking, entails self-forgetfulness on the part of the spectator: an object worthy of contemplation is one which, in effect, annihilates the perceiving subject*" (Sontag, 2009, p. 16).

Despite being guided by a close reading of *Alice in Bed* the notion of landscape implicit in my staging of the play is the opposite of 'landscape' as described here by Sontag. Landscape in my own developing performance practice emerged from *Alice in Bed* as

the staging of consciously subjective experience; a heightened sense of *self-in-the-world* rather than *self-forgetfulness*. In the following chapters I show how I critically developed my phenomenological understanding of landscape through subsequent performance works.

Chapter 3: *Project R-hythm*

Project R-hythm was a collaborative performance project conducted with Martine Vreiling van Tuijl. Over the course of a year we used performance making as a method with which to explore and develop understandings of a particular place; for the purposes of this thesis I will refer to that place as 'The Island'.[3] *Project R-hythm* concluded with a live performance event that invited people to experience The Island through the framework of a loosely choreographed walk. The walk was structured around a set of five performance scores attached to thing-places, and drew on approaches to attention training in the work of Allan Kaprow. In this chapter I will explain how our approach to structuring the performance grew out of the ways of being that emerged from our performance making.

Project R-hythm came about through a confluence of the preoccupation with landscape that emerged out of *Alice in Bed,* and a chance invitation to conduct performance workshops on The Island in August 2013.[4] Seeking a way to better understand the role that landscape plays in my performance practice I took the opportunity of the workshops to address this concern through a performance-led dialogue with the academic researchers, artists and residents of The Island who might attend. In response to the invitation I planned four workshops, running over two days, each workshop having roughly the same structure. I anticipated that different people would attend each session, bringing different perspectives and understandings of landscape with them. The day of the workshops arrived and over the course of the two days just one

[3] Through experiments in writing about *Project R-hythm*, some of which are included in my academic publications, I have decided to refer to the geographical context of the project as 'The Island' in order to navigate away from particular social, cultural and historical connotations that distract from this thesis' focus on how performance practice shapes landscape as more-than-geographical.

[4] The workshops were part of a programme supported by the UK AHRC Northumbrian Exchanges project (project reference: AH/K002678/1), within which I was invited to contribute as an arts practitioner by Julie Crawshaw.

person attended every session: my soon-to-be collaborator Martine Vreiling van Tuijl. On the morning of the second day of workshops I no longer had a plan for what we would be doing, and as a participant, neither did Martine. I felt that after day one we had been left with a series of conundrums, which I suggested day two might be used to address through a more collaborative approach. Following the two days of workshops I then proposed that we continue our collaboration, meeting regularly on The Island, and working towards the creation of a new performance. We worked together on The Island, where Martine lives, from August 2013 to August 2014.

The following project narratives were originally written as a practice of autoethnographic reflection during the making process. They were collaboratively developed for a co-authored paper, which is included in full in the appendixes of this thesis (Denman-Cleaver and Vreiling van Tuijl, 2018). I subsequently refined the stories for a series of performance-talks at; *Further North* (Newcastle, 2014), *Walking Artists Symposium* (Falmouth, 2014), *Performance Philosophy Conference* (Chicago, 2015), and *Land Dialogues* (Australia, 2016). Whilst the collaboration with Vreiling van Tuijl was central to the performance process that underpins *Project R-hythm*, this reflexive chapter on the work has been authored solely by myself and separately to the development and presentation of the work.

The project narratives share a period in the development of my own practice in which my notion of performance landscape as staging was dismantled by the experience of working with The Island. The narratives tell a story of reconsidering what landscape is through performance making. They are supported by a dialogue that engages with phenomenological conceptions of landscape as temporal and experiential from the performative turn, which I outlined in the introduction of this thesis.

The Island

If you look at the maps you'll see a representation of the island's boundary at high tide, and also a large yellow patch surrounding it, which represents the approximate shape of the land at low tide.

On Google Maps the island is shown at high tide.

On Google Earth it's at low tide.

And on Google Street View it's at high tide – which is odd because the Google Car must have had to stay on the island for a good few hours (at high tide the causeway is flooded, and the island closed, for roughly 6 hours at a time), but still the driver hasn't bothered to drive down all of the half-a-dozen roads that make up the village.

There are a couple of nice pubs on The Island, they each do food.

Topography

In the early stages of *Project R-hythm* we enacted what might be described as a topographical approach to the task of performance making; we hoped to measure, define, map and *know* the island by traversing it extensively and repeatedly. We approached the task of performance making as that of topographer:

"*Who is concerned to map out a particular region and who has* [...] *the task of mapping out that region while located within it. Such a task can only be accomplished by looking to the interconnections among the features of that region and through a process of repeated triangulation and traverse—and a good deal of walking* [...] *Of course the topographer aims to arrive at a mapping of the region that will in some sense be "objective"—at least within a given set of cartographic parameters.*" (Malpas, 2006, p. 34)

The tools we set out with – windshields on our microphones, Ordinance Survey maps, cameras – as well as our (my) attire, betrayed a belief that there was a singular, static and 'true' Island, an objective knowledge to be found behind the inconvenience of the weather. This approach corresponds with the thinking of early site-specific work, as described by Kwon in *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*:

"*Initially* [site-specific art] *took the site as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; scale and proportion of plazas, buildings, or parks;*

existing conditions of lighting, ventilation, traffic patterns; distinctive topographical features, and so forth" (Kwon, 2002 p. 11)

Waterproofs and walking boots

There is no rehearsal room on the island.

I thought if we walked long enough, over and over again enough, then we'd find the constants, we'd be able to reduce it down to its essential measurable parts, we would be able to distil The Island, identifying a stability upon which to construct a performance.

Once in possession of this island essence we could select a series of sites. These sites would be places that make it clear what this place is, they would represent to us - to our audience - why this place is what it is. These sites would be our stage. It would be something like Pina Bausch performing in a Robert Wilson thing.

It would be totally derivative.
You have to start somewhere.

Because there is no rehearsal room we are always with the wind. Because we are always with the wind we close down our peripheral vision, try to distinguish - grasp shape in the noise and perpetual movement.

Hats.
Gloves.
Long johns and earplugs.
We wear headphones.
Are equipped with windshields.
We wear waterproofs and walking boots.

I wear waterproofs and walking boots,
She wears wet-look leggings and lace up shoes.

We use our shoulders and foreheads to fend off the rain.

Heads bowed into the wind we call to each other about how we will need more performers and where we will put them.

We were thwarted in our 'topographical' endeavours rather early on. Despite having a basic understanding of tidal movement from high school geography and an enthusiasm for swimming, we had not married the movement of the water with the reality of a tidal context for performance. As the ebb and flow of the tide submerged, washed away and shifted the parameters of our stage, not only did our plans float away, our tools for working and our conception of how to perform in this place dissolved.

The notion of planning became absurd; how do you plan an action when the place you imaged performing it in is constantly changing shape? When each low tide reveals a new and unfamiliar stage? I arrived on The Island with a general notion that performance is by its very nature unrepeatable, but with the experience of repeat performances as rehearsing, or doing it again differently on the same stage. This time it was not only the performance that couldn't be replicated, it was the stage that kept disappearing. The Island revealed itself to be very unlike the neat yellow ground plan offered by our maps.

In this early phase of *Project R-hythm*, as autumn then eventually winter set in, our repeated failures to measure The Island and therefore to know our performance space, left me longing for a rehearsal room; the traditional thinking space of the theatre director. In the rehearsal room, I imagined we would survey our findings, drink tea and make solid decisions about what was going to happen in our performance, on the stage we were yet to discover - in amongst all the wind and the rain and the never-ceasing tide.

Always outside, our notes, documentation, audio recordings and collected objects felt like they were disappearing behind us as we kept walking to keep warm, they fell out of our pockets, smudged in the rain, and were misheard as we shouted through a tireless wind.

I experienced the early stages of *Project R-hythm* as an undoing. Frustration with our inability to fix upon a space, a stage, a series of sites for our performance, leaked into my life and my practice beyond The Island. We couldn't locate a stable basis on which build. I had been imagining something like the spectacular structures of Robert Wilson's 2012 performance *Walking*, which had invited audiences to slow walk through a North Norfolk landscape dotted with scenographic constructions. But we could find no certainty on The Island through which to commit to such structures. During one conversation regarding what we should do my collaborator, lifelong resident of The Island, said that she felt like she'd never been to where we were before. The Island never stayed still long enough for us to grasp at an idea, never waited for our response, evaded arrival at any confident knowledge that might be shared with an audience.

Despite my phenomenological approach to understanding the performance landscape of *Alice in Bed*, with that preceding project there was a fixed and reliable scenographic plan. The warehouse and the structures we built remained where they were; they did not disappear overnight, they did not dissolve between scenes or wash away. Only performer's bodies and audience subjectivities were conceived as moveable in the landscape of *Alice in Bed*.

Without a rehearsal room, working in "the workshops of life" (Ingold, 2012, p. 207), The Island - all weather and wind and salt water - dictated our progress. The tides decided when I could arrive and when I could leave, trapping me behind the rising waves or holding me at bay on the wrong side of the causeway. The Island seeped cold into our hands so that we could no longer work. It hurled hailstones at our cheekbones so we could not see. My notion of what landscape is was unraveling and with it, I felt, my practice undoing. A period of exaggerated and emotional confusion ensued, during which time a performance still needed to be delivered.

Attention training

In Against Interpretation Sontag argues that "we must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more" (Sontag, 2009, p. 14). The Aesthetics of Silence offers a path to such heightened awareness through engagement with art: "in one of its aspects, art is a technique for focusing attention, for teaching skills of attention" (Sontag, 2009, p. 13).

Through *Alice in Bed*'s concern for staging experience rather than simply dramatic narrative, I had begun to consider the ways in which performance supported different and heightened modes of attention. I looked to Allan Kaprow's work as an example of a performance practice concerned with experience over the conveying of narrative or abstracted meaning. According to Cull, Kaprow's performances create an alternative to a "particular kind of disembodied watching (and indeed, of distracted or mindless doing)" that is supported by the configuration of traditional theatre auditoriums (Cull, 2011 p. 84). Cull describes Kaprow's later work, which he called Activities, as 'attention-training exercises', which "affirm our ontological participation in immanence, change and movement" (ibid. p. 91). During the progress of *Project R-hythm* I drew on Cull's reading of Kaprow's performances, which invite "immanent participation in the real as a changing 'whole'" (Cull, 2011, p. 80) to approaching work with The Island.

Kaprow explained that his Happenings, for which he is best known and which precede the Activities, were "performed according to plans but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life" (Kaprow, 1966, p. 5). Kaprow's plans often took the form of a 'score', a set of instructions for action. The following extract of Kaprow's performance score for *Soap* (1966) is particularly resonant to the experience of *Project R-hythm*:

Sheets of writing spread over a field
Rain washes away (Raining)

(Ibid. p. 14)

With our plans dissolving in weather and tides, we adopted a *Kaprow-ian* approach to creating scores that we enacted in specific parts of The Island. Our scores were devised as attention training exercises, which we hoped would support us to attend to, and therefore better understand, the landscape of perpetual change we were working with. The attention training activities we devised enabled us to "engage with a temporality [...] that is of quite different dimensions [to the human]", as Bender implored in *Stonehenge* (Bender, 1998, p. 149).

I did know about the sea

The second time we walked to St Cuthbert's beach it wasn't there.

The plan was to walk the route again to see what it is like without earplugs. Listening.

As we descended the gravel path I did not notice that the rocks below were now submerged – this is a clue I haven't learnt yet – and as we turn right from the steps the beach is not there.

I did know about the sea. I do know about the sea. How it rises and lowers and how this is the reason that people come here in the first place. I planned around this phenomenon, timed my driving. I've got the little book from the post office that lists all of the tide times for all of the year.

But this time we are repeating and not improvising so we know what we are doing – where we are going to go. As we turn away from the steps and the beach isn't there I imagine when it is all still sand and you are just floating through it.

She said she'd never been there before and we are coming to terms with the idea that we will never go there again.

We have set out to find some residue or essence of this remembered place, some evidence. We have been doing this for a year.

Figure 6 *Project R-hythm*: photograph taken by audience-walker during performance (2014).

Like the topographer, though increasingly less optimistic about our ability to procure an objective sense of The Island, we did a lot of walking. We housed our attention training activities within walks, we used walking "as a support system for the formulation, interpretation and exploration of ideas" (Massey, 2012, online). We walked to specific locations, we walked to listen, we walked with earplugs in, we failed to walk, we walked in the driving rain, we walked in disguise, we walked together and apart; like The Island, we kept moving. We used the experience of walking as a mode through which to experiment with our relationship to The Island, in this we were inspired by Kaprow as well as the practice of soundwalking. Prominent soundwalk practitioner Hildegard Westerkamp describes soundwalking as "any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment" (Westerkamp, 2007, p. 49). Listening in *Project R-hythm* was taken to mean sensory awareness in the broadest sense, and was enacted as an attention training activity. As John Hull explains, "you don't actually listen with your ears, you listen with your whole body" (Hull, 2001, p. 12).

Experimenting with our relationship to The Island we altered our sensory experience of place in various ways, sometimes by depriving ourselves of one sense in order to heighten another, or by consciously attending to particular movements, geographical or

meteorological phenomena that we encountered. Our use of earplugs, food and drink, our attention to temperature and the sensory experience of The Island echoed some of Kaprow's "bodily experiment works" such as *Meters* (1972), *Highs*, *Basic Thermal Units* (both 1973), *Affect* (1974) and *Air Condition* (1975) (cited in Cull, 2011, p. 84).

I further developed my approach to attention training and embodied listening as performance making devices in collaboration with Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca for a project entitled *The Sea, Lies Open* which used walking as a device to structure a participatory performance work that engaged with the landscapes of Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Sea, Lies Open* was presented at *Philosophy on Stage #4* (Vienna, 2015).

On other occasions during *Project R-hythm* we used the framework of the walk as a context in which to share material that carried associative, personal relevance to our relationship with The Island; as we wandered we told stories, played recorded music, placed objects in particular locations and exchanged images. In doing so we forged new relationships between ourselves, and the different materials and places we connected through walking. This forging of connections and associative meanings through walking shaped our experience of the place through a process of *bringing-near*. It is an approach to shaping performance landscapes that I went on to develop as a collage practice in *Sounds & Guts*, discussed in the following chapter alongside Heidegger's notion of things. It is another way in which performance making as a research process generates new understandings and ways of relating to the world through the bringing together of previously unconnected disciplines, things, places, materials and ideas.

In our walking we remained focused on attending to how we experienced change in or *as* the landscape of The Island. Through attempts to return to the sites of previous performed gestures we were learning that "place should not be assumed to be identical with the "where" of a thing" (Malpas, 2006 p. 28). As the sea changed the shape of the island and the weather held us back from connecting with what we believed to be a *real* place, The Island resisted any notion of repetition as rehearsal. It kept moving, and in its constant flux it showed us that "it is not a background, nor is it a stage" (Inglis, 1997, cited in Bender, 1998, p. 113). Defined by change all that was left of this place was our

experience of time passing, thus landscape came to be understood through *Project R-hythm* and our attention training activities as primarily temporal.

It did not occur to us in these terms, we were not fully aware while we were working that our notion of landscape was being fundamentally re-evaluated through our making process. That realisation came during reflective conversations and my re-writing of the project narratives as presented here. The progress of things at the time was more like "*I don't know what to do, let's just keep doing this until we think of something*", but in the keeping-doing that The Island encouraged us to enact we became absorbed in the *experience* of landscape, and less concerned with our initial – hopeless – topographical endeavour. The keeping-doing moved us towards a philosophical consideration of what landscape is as not simply spatial and more-than-geographical.

Project R-hythm was initially an attempt to better comprehend what had happened to my practice when it stepped outside of the theatre auditorium, to examine and develop ideas relating to landscape that grew out of *Alice in Bed*. Over the course of the year it became an attempt to comprehend a coastal landscape, a landscape that was experienced primarily as temporal, and in doing so come to a philosophical understanding of *what landscape is* that I could re-orientate my practice with. Through the act of revisiting and rewriting the journal narratives, reflecting upon the making experience alongside phenomenologies of landscape I came to understand our approach to performing with The Island as the development of a series of thing-places framed by the performance scores we created.

Thing-places

Ingold's notion of thing-places is indebted to Heidegger's notion of things. Ingold suggests that there is "an intrinsic connection between landscape and thing" and uses Heideggerian "thinginess" - which "lies [in the thing's] capacity to gather, to hold and give forth" - to formulate his own notion of thing-places (Ingold, 2012, p. 201). The thing-place, such as the mound, "gathers the lives of people who dwell in the land, it holds their collective memories and gives forth in the rulings and resolutions of unwritten law" (ibid.). The gathering that is affected by the mound-thing *is* the

landscape. Landscape, gathered by Ingold's thing-places is visible and felt, geographical and metaphorical, spatial and temporal, defined as action rather than spatiality, and as inherently aggregate. It is in connection to this understanding of landscape that I am re-reading the process of making *Project R-hythm*. In the following chapter on *Sounds & Guts* I will look in more detail at Heidegger's notion of things, which underpins Ingold's phenomenology of landscape.

Walking the Island, we began structuring our attention training activity around a series of thing-places, which included a large white Victorian beacon, an accessible pathway designed for tourists, a large boulder on the north shore, a gateway between farmland and conservation area, and a wall looking out over the tidal causeway. Our performance scores became increasing focused on gaining better understandings of these particular thing-places, in order that we could structure a walking performance around them.

Wet-look leggings

If we could float the hydrophone on the water then we'd be able to listen to the surface. Which is the bit we need to hear. That's the bit in the way. I don't think it's the bottom. We listened to that, that's just a load of seaweed and rocks and shit. That's a different world altogether – which isn't what we need. That's an underwater thing. When we got to the bottom of the steps, it was this surface – when it was all still sand and you were floating through it – if we can to listen to this grey surface, the thing that has stopped us from getting to the beach, then maybe we will be able to work out what this place is.

"Do you have any penny floaters? … Any of those cheap footballs that float?"

I think saying the word hydrophone makes me sound like I know what I'm doing.
Hydrophones make me look like I'm a specialist and I know what I am doing.

Neil knows what a hydrophone is.
Neil runs the island shop and he knows what a hydrophone is.
Everyone here knows what a hydrophone is.
It's a microphone for the sea.
So everyone here, on The Island, knows what a hydrophone is.

He does that sort of roll your eyes "you kids and your hair brained schemes I can only imagine what you are up to this time." When I'm with Ruth this is inflected with sexual innuendo. I'm glad that this can be inflected with sexual innuendo. It means that I can be a hair brained kid and a grown woman – according to Neil – who runs shop – who knows what a hydrophone is. I retain some flexibility.

"This one comes in a net so you can use that to put the hydrophone inside, and weight it with stones, so the microphone sits at the surface level, rather than under the ball."

Neil is also two steps ahead on the buoyancy front.

She throws the ball out and it floats. We hear a brief and general wateriness.

Then silence.

Maybe it will rebalance.

Silence. We are wearing headphones.

We wait.

We watch the sound and wait.

Day, dim laps at the shore
In petulant ripples.[5]
And our headphones remain silent.

Seaweed and rocks and the football keeps floating.

[5] Bunting, 2000, p. 79

As we pull at the hydrophone cord – hoping for a bit of splish – it slowly drags along the bottom of the sea scratching sand towards us.

(When I was small I lent my favourite doll to some filmmaker friends of my parents and later found out that they had filmed it floating out into the North Sea).

We agree that because she has wet-look leggings on she should go out and retrieve the ball, which has come loose from the hydrophone and is bobbing atop the surface of the sound. She seems to have convinced me of this logic and wades into the cold.

And she's right; you can't tell that her leggings are wet now that they actually are.

Taskscapes

The task-based nature of Kaprow's attention training Activities and our approach to developing a performance with a temporal landscape, also lend themselves to Ingold's definition of landscape as 'taskscape': "Just as the landscape is an array of related features, so – by analogy – the taskscape is an array of related activities" (Ingold, 1993, p. 158). Pearson, describing the relevance of Ingold's taskscapes to site-specific practice, suggests that a taskscape "a work in progress, perpetually under construction" (Pearson, 2010, p.15). This description accords with my own reading of Ingold's landscapes as in a perpetual state of becoming.

The notion of landscape as taskscape, follows on from Ingold and Olwig's idea of landscape as communal, experiential, shaped and defined by human activity. Our Kaprow-ian approach to working with The Island meant that we were coming to know it as a 'taskscape'. The principle that we could 'get to know' The Island through a series of attention training tasks is inherently phenomenological, and concurrent with the performative turn described by Wylie.

Wylie also termed the ideas within the performative turn "non-representational theory" (Wylie, 2007, p. 142), which resonates with my attempt to move away from the representative structures of the proscenium stage I enacted in the making of *Alice in Bed*. *Project R-hythm* was a move further away from the auditorium through

engagement with the reality of a very particular geographic place. Phenomenologies of landscape that define place temporally, through subjective experience rather than representations of space, helped us to understand the experience we had whilst working with The Island. They also supported my developing understanding of how my practice functioned beyond the auditorium, beyond dramatic representation.

Movement

> *"In the smooth space of the earth-sky world [...] the perception of things is overwhelmed by the experiences of light, sound and feelings to which they open up"*
> (Ingold, 2012, p. 207)

The performance we made grew out of a mobility enforced by a lack of indoor space, by constant changes in weather and land shape, and the need to keep warm in the wind. As the characteristics of the island emerged, our environment required us to create a performance that was itself defined by movement.

Ethnographers Vergunst & Árnason's suggest that "where contact between the body and the ground cannot be trusted, movement foregrounds itself as the very object and focus of concern" (Vergunst & Árnason, 2006, p. 148). Within the performative turn cultural geographers have turned to anthropological studies of human movement to understand the relationship between knowledge, body and landscape. Brenda Farnell suggests that "situated body action [is] at the heart of our being-in-the-world rather than merely as a means to mental representations *of* the world" (Farnell, 2003 p. 134). Wylie follows Farnell in his explanation of cultural geography's increased attention "to the embodied practice and performance of landscape" (ibid. p. 166). The mobile and task-based approach of *Project R-hythm* implied a conception of knowledge that is consistent with non-representational theory's notion of landscape and self as inextricably related through the moving body. Farnell's suggestion that situated movement generates new ways of being-in-the-world also aligns with Cull Ó Maoilearca's description of performance philosophy as a practice that generates "models of relating to the world" (Cull Ó Maoilearca, 2015, p. 1).

In our amended ambition to come to terms with change as the state of The Island, find a way to relate to the world of The Island, our focus had shifted from mapping to movement. Walking became a "state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together" (Solnit, 2014, p. 172). Accordingly, our approach to performance making shifted from creating rehearsed spectacles to the development of a framework through which the audience would be invited into our movement and supported to experience The Island's landscape themselves. The lack of rehearsal room for the development of *Project R-hythm* caused our process to echo Ingold's description of people working with landscape in The Shape of the Land:

"*This was work done close up, in an immediate, muscular and visceral engagement with wood, grass and soil – the very opposite of the distanced, contemplative and panoramic optic that the word 'landscape' conjures.*" (Ingold, 2012, p. 198)

On getting lost

I went to Robert Wilson's *Walking* piece at the Norfolk and Norwich Festival in 2012 with my mum. I booked the tickets well in advance, we were excited and we drove across the country to find a very wet and windy day. The winds were so strong and the rain so heavy that the people manning the performance were unsure whether to cancel proceedings. When we arrived they were deliberating with walkie-talkies. We had rainproof clothing and walking boots and we felt ready for a long walk, plus we were not going to get another chance to do the performance, so we joined the line of walkers.

We were instructed to walk at a slowed pace, a few meters apart and in single file. My mum was ahead of me as we set off over a number of fields. We were held in various ritualistic configurations along the way, and the route us led around a trail of monolithic scenography. I had seen a photograph of a huge black obelisk structure, which I was excited to encounter in person. As the walk progressed the weather got worse and I could see that the line was breaking up behind me. Maybe I heard a rumour that the performance had been called off and we were the last people who would be walking the route that day. Or maybe someone told me that when I eventually found the end.

At some point, whilst winding through a wooded landscape near the sea I lost sight of the person ahead of me. I tried to walk towards where I had last seen them, picked up the pace a bit and attempted second-guessing the route. My mum was ahead of me, still in the line I presumed, and - now disorientated - I was alone. It might be the only time I have ever felt entirely lost. I thought through what would happen: My mum would get to the end and I would not show up and the people running the event would come and find me - but for now I should probably find a path and walk towards where I think the village is.

Maybe an hour later I found a portacabin with the event branding and some kagooled people hanging around. We were the last people to walk the route, though I only walked half of it, finding my own way back to the end. I didn't get to see the pyramid.

I share this story of here, alongside *Project R-hythm*, because - without wanting to read too much into it - it feels prophetic. It is a story of wind and rain and landscape disrupting an event, and the experience of losing sight of a performance.

Kind of chaos

Standing in the wind and the rain with the sea and the earth at Spaniel's Head it felt as if we were finally there now. The memory is of turning. Of temperature and turning and the movement of colour.

It's kind of chaos

The flowers feel out of place. Washed out flowers guarding a small pile of damp ash – surrounding a small patch of heavy white noise in the periphery of the movement.

It is nothing.

It is weighted differently.

It is precisely nothing now and the bright white obelisk only emphasises the chaos of sound and colour shifting, so that it too, we too, flicker with.

Figure 7 *Project R-hythm*: photograph taken during research development (2013). Image: Tess Denman-Cleaver.

Figure 8 *Project R-hythm*: photograph taken by audience-walker during performance (2014)

In August 2014, we invited our audience into a performance landscape that was structured around scores to be enacted along the route of a walk around The Island. To construct the performance event we refined and rewrote the attention training activities we had been doing over the course of the year to create a set of five instructions (presented in full in the appendixes to this thesis). They were delivered and supported by three performer-guides on The Island: myself, Martine and Rachel Gay.

Each instruction was attached to a thing-place on The Island. The instructions we delivered along the route were invitations and strategies to support the audience's attention to the changing landscape.

The final performance event took place in the summer and 15 people joined my collaborators and myself on a walk around The Island. It took approximately 6 hours, which fitted with the duration of high tide, meaning that The Island was 'closed'. Walkers were aged between 9 and (an estimated) 70 years old. It was sunny. But not very warm.

As we walked, the three 'performers' - including myself - introduced the instructions to the audience. Each instruction was delivered differently and included ways of walking, consumption of food and drink, the wearing of particular clothes, readings of text, and moments of choreography. An early activity carried out by the audience-walkers involved walking, eating and drinking whilst wearing wax earplugs.

1.
Warm a pair of wax earplugs in your fingers to soften the wax.
Push the wax earplugs into both of your ears to create suction and silence.
Walk together.
Ginger beer.
When you get there remove the earplugs.
Chocolate and sea salt.

This attention training activity was intended to heighten the presence of one's own body within a situated experience, to highlight the body as a filter and material through

which one experiences landscape. It was based on our own experience of walking around the island with and without earplugs.

"I wasn't sure what the wax was for, but I took it as an invitation to look around more. I think I presumed for the most part that it was intended to be a 'sensory' experience... though I wasn't sure if the idea was to 'remove' the acoustic environment (so as to draw attention to the visual aspects of the landscape) or draw attention to it (as the sounds of my ears etc. became quite focused). In either case, it was enjoyable - it didn't matter that I didn't know. We walked down a path to the beach and then sat down and ate some chocolate." (Audience-walker)

This early episode in the *Project R-hythm* performance resembles a moment in Kaprow's *Household* (1964) in which "people eat silently and watch" (Kaprow, 1966, p. 10).

Later in the walk the group were invited to dress as tourists; donning cameras, sunglasses, and equipped with maps that caused them to blend into the busier parts of the island that swarm with day-trippers.

3.

Dress like a visitor in your home.

Pretend you have never been here before.

Take pictures.

Figure 9 *Project R-hythm*: photograph taken by audience-walker during performance (2014).

This instruction responded directly to Martine's experience of making performance in her own home, The Island, and played with notions of familiarity in a changing landscape.

The tasks the audience-walkers were invited to carry out, along with material read aloud, played through speakers and presented in text form, were intended to shape their engagement with The Island, and in doing so shape a landscape performance as taskscape.

The final episode of the *Project R-hythm* performance involved audience and performers sitting along a wall, facing the sound between The Island and mainland. It was translated into text form after the event as follows:

5.
Sit on a wall overlooking the edge of a place you feel attached to.
Play 'Slowly but Surely' by Elvis Presley on a loud speaker.
Look towards the horizon.

Its atmosphere again recalls Kaprow's *Household:* "everyone smokes silently and watches car until it's burned up. Then they leave quietly" (ibid. p. 11).

The Island is by definition is a coastal landscape. Its coastal nature is heightened by the fact that the tidal causeway is the only way to access it. The Island is ruled by the tides; it is a place in which people's lives are governed by the lunar calendar as well as the usual diurnal one that humans tend to live by. These geographical realities shaped how we came to understand landscape through our making process.

Project R-hythm left me with a 'coastal' notion of landscape as aggregate; land and sea, human and non-human, lunar and diurnal. The idea that a landscape is shaped by multiple timeframes continues the thinking I did through *Alice in Bed* on the multiplicity of landscape and staging synchronous timeframes of the play. The aggregate nature of The Island also informed my subsequent work using collage to shape performance landscapes.

Ingold suggests that "the most exemplary form of smooth space is of course the ocean", a statement supported by an image of "the mariner ensconced in his vessel, feeling the waves as they lap the hull and catching the wind in his sails, all the while scanning the sky for the movement of birds by day and of the stars and other celestial bodies by night, is a point of rest in a world all around which is movement" (Ingold, 2012, p. 199). Massey criticised the nostalgia and romanticism that pervades Ingold's Heideggerian phenomenology of landscape, which this image of mariner 'at one' with the ocean is but one example (Massey, 1994, p. 139). On The Island we did not experience a smooth space, but rather a persistently disrupted and disruptive landscape, an exaggerated aggregate coastline that is at once land and sea. As such The Island did not offer the romantic idyll that thing-places provide Ingold's mariners and herdsmen, ploughmen and hunter-gathers. Rather, The Island presented itself as a fragmented and contradictory context in which to make performance, one that required me to consider the very foundations of my practice. Thing-places as developed through the activity of *Project R-hythm* did not support the harmonious convergence of elements, but rather a contradictory and confusing state of perpetual movement that we developed ways of working with and relating to through our attention training

approach to performance making. Foreman, cited in Davy, describes his ontological-hysteric theatre "a theatre that was true to [his] own mental experiences, that is, the world as being pieces of things, awkwardly present for a moment and then either re-presented by consciousness or dropped in favor of some other momentary presentation" (Davy, 1978, p. 114). Foreman's continuous and continuously disrupted present is reminiscent of the landscape we were working with on The Island.

The coastal nature of the island landscape I came to understand through *Project R-hythm* was carried forward into the shaping of *Sounds & Guts* (chapter four) and the approach to non-human landscapes that I developed in *Time Passes* (chapter five).

Chapter 4: *Sounds & Guts*

Heidegger's things

In this chapter I will be using the language of Heidegger's things as a framework for thinking about the performance landscape of *Sounds & Guts*.

In The Thing Heidegger explains that 'things', unlike objects, are active presences in the world. We are aware of the 'thingness' of things precisely due their being active; their 'presencing' or 'thinging' (Heidegger, 2001, p. 165). In other words, things are animate rather than *in*animate and we come to know them through their inherent activity rather than stasis. In a discussion of how Heidegger's things relate to theoretical conceptions of what landscape is, Vergunst explains that "a thing is present through its relations and associations in the world rather than as a neutral or free-floating entity" (Vergunst et al., 2012, p. 3). As well as being active, therefore, things are by definition also *situated*; their qualities are defined by their context and their relationships to other things. For Heidegger a "neutral and free-floating entity" Vergunst described would be an object rather than a thing. Heidegger defines an object as a thing that has been deprived of context. As he explains in The Origin of the Work of Art, objects are things that have been subject to "world-withdrawal and world-decay" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 40).

Heidegger uses the central example of a jug in The Thing to explain the nature of things' activity, and how their inherent activity affects the world in which they occur. In thinging, he argues, things 'gather' the world. The activity of gathering is by definition, what a thing is:

"*The jug presences as a thing* [...] *The giving of the outpouring* [from the jug] *can be drink. The outpouring gives water, it gives wine to drink. The spring stays on in the water of the gift. In the spring the rock dwells, and in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and the dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth. It stays in the wine given by the fruit of the vine, the fruit in which the earth's nourishment and the sky's sun are betrothed to one another. In the gift*

of the water, in the gift of wine, sky and earth dwell. But the gift of the outpouring is what makes the jug a jug. In the jugness of the jug, sky and earth dwell."
(ibid. p. 169)

Heidegger's jug-thing could be substituted with any other example of a thing, since all things *thing*, and in thinging they 'gather', 'hold', or 'stay' the world. A window-thing, for example, presences as a thing in its capacity to hold together the inside and outside in its transparency. In the glass of the window the sand from which it was made is stayed; the rocks – of which the sand is sediment – dwell in the window, and we already know that "*in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth*." So too the beaches, deserts and ocean beds in which those rocks once occurred, and from which the sand was mined, dwell in the window. These minerals, materials, and places are married to the glass-workers and factories, to the heat and the machines in which the glass was formed. This is the transhuman social life of the window-thing. In the following chapter we will look in greater detail at the 'social lives' of non-human things in relation to performance making. As I write, landscape is held by the sash window above me, dwells in the wobbly inconsistencies of Victorian glass. This landscape is shaped by the essential nature of the thing that gathers it together, the window; my experience of inside and out within this landscape is shaped by the bubbles and bumps, by the temperature of the glass. Landscape, which is experiential, is shaped by the particular thingness of the window-thing. In The Origin of the Work of Art "the stone in the road is a thing, as is the clod in the field" (ibid. p. 20). In Building Dwelling Thinking Heidegger uses the example of a bridge as a thing that holds and shapes landscape around a body of water (ibid. p. 177).

Nearness and knowledge
Heidegger's exploration of the nature of things is tied to his conception of knowledge as dependent on a state of 'nearness'. He begins The Thing as follows:

"*Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all. The germination and growth of plants, which remained hidden throughout the seasons, is now exhibited publicly in a minute, on film. Distant sites of the most ancient cultures are shown on film as if they stood this very moment amidst today's street traffic. Moreover, the film attests to what it shows by presenting also the camera and its operators at work. The peak of this abolition of every possibility of*

remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication" (ibid. p. 163).

Heidegger goes on to explain that, despite the abolition of distance, nearness and therefore knowledge are not achieved through the technological developments of the early twentieth century (ibid. p. 164). His exploration of what things are in The Thing is a direct response to a perceived shift in how distance is experienced in the early twentieth century as a result of technological developments. The Thing is a philosophical attempt to understand the endangered state of nearness, which, for Heidegger, is the basis of human knowledge of the world. Nearness is a state of knowing which emerges, for Heidegger, through dynamic relation to the essential essence, or thingness, of things. It is founded upon our subjective experience of things as active presences in the world. Heidegger's conception of knowledge is thus consistent with the phenomenological arguments of his European contemporaries, and has at its centre subjective human experience. In The Question Concerning Technology Heidegger expands upon his notion of things to further interrogate the thingness of technological things, including radios. In relation to Heidegger's conception of knowledge as nearness, my close reading of things and landscape in *Sounds & Guts* considers the underlying ontology of the work; in what way does the landscape of *Sounds & Guts* support nearness or knowledge and in what way do these possible states of knowing relate to the understanding of loneliness the work is thematically concerned with?

A non-located landscape performance

Sounds & Guts was a performance project concerned with the relationship between subjectivity and place, thematically focused on cultural understandings and personal experiences of loneliness. It was devised and delivered in collaboration with a number of other artists, including Tim Shaw (sound) and Taryn Edmonds (set and visuals). As in Alice in Bed, I acted as the lead artist and initiator of the *Sounds & Guts* process. The work was, in part, shaped by my experience of working with the landscape of The Island during *Project R-hythm*.

I performed *Sounds & Guts* as a 'solo' performer using a script that I had written. Over the course of the performance I moved in and out of a conversational dynamic with the

audience and more explicitly scripted and performed elements. As a performance that collaged together different and disparate materials, the event led the audience through a variety of different subjects, linguistic styles and mediums. It was performed using radios, televisions and an overhead projector and used a four-channel speaker system, which supported sound diffusion, as in *Alice in Bed*. The event told the stories of Joyce Carol Vincent, Travis Bickle and the performer, whose identity remained ambiguous but offered an account of loneliness, fear of singing and a decision to swim out into the sea, towards the horizon. The script is included within this chapter in full, and should be understood as somewhere between a play and a performance score due to the multiplicity of media used within the joint-text of the performance.

Sounds & Guts was not site-specific in the sense that *Project R-hythm* was because the performance was not created for a specific location. Instead *Sounds & Guts* was presented in various contexts including studios, galleries, universities, community halls and theatres across the UK. *Sounds & Guts* provides this thesis' definition of landscape performance with a model of working that is not attached to a specific geographical location. As a landscape performance *Sounds & Guts* explored similar challenges to Deirdre Heddon's *Tree: A Studio Performance* in its attempt to "retain [a] sense of site even when the performance [is] moved to a different site" (Heddon, 2009 p. 161). Like Heddon's work, *Sounds & Guts* challenges established notions of site-specific practice that depend upon idea that site – or landscape – is physically located. My reflection upon *Sounds & Guts* expands upon Heddon's descriptions of autotopographical performance through a close reading of the use of things to create landscapes that are non-located, and therefore more-than-geographical.

Sounds & Guts, as presented here, supports an interrogation of how things, understood according the writings of Heidegger's, shape landscape. Building upon the phenomenological notions of landscape discussed in relation to *Project R-hythm*, this chapter looks in-depth at how things can be used to shape performance landscapes. The annotations that surround the script within this thesis extend the text of the performance in order to expose the philosophical framework of the *Sounds & Guts* landscape by bringing it into a dialogue with Heidegger's things.

Through the process of close reading the performance landscape of *Sounds & Guts* I have considered key elements of the work in terms of Heideggerian things. In particular, I present a close reading of a letter and a set of long-wave radios through the lens of Heidegger's things. In The Thing Heidegger asks "how does the jug's void hold?" (ibid. p. 165). Reflecting upon *Sounds & Guts* through a dialogue with Heidegger's things I have asked: *how do these things hold, and in holding how do they shape this performance landscape?* As things, the letter and the radios do not present themselves in the script as self-explanatory. They were constructed in very particular ways and involve specific and eclectic combinations of materials. As such it is necessary to preface their appearance in the annotated script with a description of how they are constituted.

A letter

The letter is constructed from three materials, all of which are central elements of the project of *Sounds & Guts*; the character of Travis Bickle, taken from Martin Scorsese's 1974 film *Taxi Driver*, the life and death of Joyce Carol Vincent (1965-2003), and a quantity of post that was incorrectly delivered to the same address (my address) over a period of 6 years.

The text of the letter is spoken dialogue transcribed from a semi-improvised scene mid-way through *Taxi Driver*. In this scene Scorsese's protagonist, Travis Bickle (played by Robert De Niro) stands outside of an all-night diner with fellow taxi driver, Wizard. Travis attempts to communicate to Wizard that he is unhappy and that he is worried about what he might do as a result of his unhappiness. Prior to this scene we have heard Travis Bickle explain in a diary entry that he is lonely, describing himself as "god's lonely man" (*Taxi Driver*, 1976). Having transcribed the speech of the scene between Travis and Wizard, I deleted all but Travis' lines and attributed the authorship of the letter to Joyce Carol Vincent. Thus I transformed Travis Bickle's speech into a handwritten letter from Joyce.

Joyce Carol Vincent was a young woman who died alone in her flat in London in 2003 and was not found for a number of years due to the particular nature of her personal relationships. The life and death of Joyce Carol Vincent is depicted in a film by Carol Morley, entitled *Dreams of a Life* (2011), which, like *Sounds & Guts* considers the reasons why Joyce's body was not found, and why nobody noticed her death.

Having written and signed the letter 'Joyce', I posted it to myself, marking the envelope with my current address, which happens to be an old converted post office. Other features of the address, which is the third element of the letter, are described in the opening sequence of the script itself.

Radios

Sounds & Guts was performed using FM, or long wave, radios. Radios were used within the project as a performance medium for presenting audio content and creating live compositions. As with the letter, through my close reading of the radios I have considered how the particular thingness of long wave radios affected the nature of *Sounds & Guts'* performance landscape.

In order to play back pre-composed and collected material through multiple wireless radios we built four radio transmitters, which were positioned discreetly within the performance venue. Each transmitter had a range of approximately ten meters and the broadcasts could be received using regular FM radios. Pre-composed audio content - extracts of recorded conversations, readings of written accounts of loneliness, audio extracts of *Taxi Driver*, and sonic compositions by collaborator Tim Shaw - were broadcast into the performance venues using the dedicated *Sounds & Guts* transmitters. Each transmitter used a different bandwidth and using a selection of regular FM radios performer and audience members alike were able to tune into the broadcasts. The result was an auditory collage of the different broadcasts, which also included textures of interference and publicly available long wave radio stations that were present at any given venue. The way in which the radios were choreographed within the movement of the performance is described in the script.

Heidegger's language as reflexive tool

Throughout the chapter I draw on particular texts by Heidegger in which he addresses the nature of things. These texts are used as lenses through which to better understand the development and mechanisms at work within a performance. As such, this chapter does not offer a full analysis of the ideas presented within Heidegger's work, rather it reads selected aspects of his work in relation to specific performance making activities I have conducted. I have taken only those ideas from Heidegger that serve the reflexive

purpose of this thesis. I was led to these ideas through the phenomenologies of landscape discussed in relation to *Project R-hythm*. The ideas I have selected from Heidegger's work thus support this research's critical engagement with a particular lineage of phenomenological thinking on landscape. As such, I do not present here a comprehensive reading of Heidegger's writings, as might be found in a traditional scholarly analysis of his work. Furthermore, I do not present Heidegger's notion of things as a means of justifying *Sounds & Guts* through the retroactive application of a theoretical language. *Sounds & Guts*, like the other projects within this research, is a multifaceted artwork that employs strategies for engaging its audience in a thematic dialogue that is at once personal, political, and philosophical. It is not an educational tool designed to represent, demonstrate or illustrate Heidegger's work to its audience.

Heidegger's notion of things is employed within the context of this thesis as an instrument for sharing the nuances of how the landscape of *Sounds & Guts* functioned. Moreover, this chapter does not aim at using *Sounds & Guts* to prove or disprove any notion contained within Heidegger's writings. The positioning of *Sounds & Guts* in dialogue with Heidegger's things can be understood as having a "mirroring, lightening" affect" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 177) on both the performance and the conception of things put forward in Heidegger's texts. These considerations regarding the relationship between an existing body of philosophical writing and my own performance making define the model of performance philosophy practice enacted in this chapter.

In 2016, I convened a workshop at FACT Gallery in Liverpool as part of this research, at which the ideas I am adopting from Heidegger were shared with a group of practitioners and researchers. The group included individuals working across visual arts, performance, film, design and literature, some of whom are collaborators in the projects described in this thesis. In the workshop we considered Heidegger's texts within activities I designed as performance-led strategies for discussing the resonance of Heidegger's things for thinking about landscape across different artistic and research practices. The function of this workshop was, in part, to test out my own articulation of things with a group of people whose practices are related to mine. In doing so I explored the value of Heidegger's language for articulating practice beyond my own performance making.

As well as the elements that I designed, other artists led activities relating to their own practice, which included an augmented sound walk (with Tim Shaw) and a collective approach to using clay as a dialogic material (with Nicola Singh). The workshop supported the development of the articulation of practice that I present here, as well as extending my particular performance philosophy approach to a group practitioners from within and beyond academic.

AN ANNOTATED SCRIPT[6]

[6] The script of *Sounds & Guts* has been formatted according to traditional play texts, where italics denote stage directions. As there is only one performer delivering the text all dialogue is left unassigned. Recorded dialogue that is clearly distinguishable as speech has been transcribed and denoted as such. The script has been annotated in order to support the reader to view the landscape of *Sounds & Guts* through the lens of Heidegger's things. It is formatted as three columns over two sides of A4, with the script running continuously in the third column, in black. The surrounding columns second and fourth columns act as margins for the annotations, which appear in grey. The annotations disrupt the flow of the script, holding this research's focus on things and landscape performance always in mind. The disruptive reading format bears some semblance to the distraction and disorientation techniques I employed in the performance itself in order to shift audience attention between different elements of the work. If reading this document in digital format, this annotated script should be viewed two pages at a time, with page 89 lying alongside page 90 to create a 'double page spread' across the two.

Matthew Goulish described the relationship between the performance and the audience in Goat Island's work in terms of island geography, explaining that the performance is "surrounded by a "sea" of audience" (Goulish, 2007, p. 36). In a Goat Island performance "life on the island remains quite separate from the aquatic life" (Goulish, 2007, p. 36).

From *Project R-hythm* I gained an understanding of islands as defined by constantly shifting, aggregate indistinguishable elements. In *Sounds & Guts* the coastal boundary between performance and audience was made ambiguous based on my own understanding of island landscapes.

The lay out of the performance lends more accurately to Goulish's description of staging in which "you get the sense that the performance is happening in a kind of thoroughfare. Like a performance that has resulted by accident, within these pre-existing, crisscrossing grids" (Goulish, 2007, p. 31). This description of multiplicity and simultaneity of a performance landscape is close to the coastal landscapes I have become familiar with through my own work.

Various things are placed on the floor throughout the space. There is a small raised stage with a microphone at one corner, elsewhere a spotlight, an analogue overhead projector, a collection of radios dotted about the room, a copy of Women's Own *magazine; 1987, Margaret Thatcher on the cover, a bag of white powder, a square of Perspex, a television on a tall black stand, a coiled white ribbon.*

These things spill out over a central 4x4 metre of matt black flooring. The audience – of anywhere between 15 and 70 people - sit in 3 clusters. Each cluster at odd angle to the others, never in line with the square edge of the floor, as if each cluster were positioned to witness different activities, simultaneous, overlapping in the space.

As the audience enters, the opening titles of Martin Scorsese's 1976 film Taxi Driver *play on the TV screen. Nighttime in New York, steam, rain, legs, blurred neon signs and soft stop signals. A pair of eyes in close up flashing red – yellow – blue look out, Robert De Niro scans the space, stage left to stage right.*

During the development of *Sounds & Guts* I conducted an activity aimed at laying out the relationships between objects I had been collecting during my research for the project. The collected objects were deemed valuable or meaningful in relation to the project's thematic exploration of loneliness. I invited two collaborating artists, Tim Shaw and Tessa Parr, to use the objects I had gathered to build an island with me; an island constructed out of photographs, texts, audio recordings, written phrases, extracts of films, maps of particular geographical places, walks I had done, memories and half-forgotten stories (my own and other people's).

We began by placing objects on the floor according to their associative meaning, shaping the island through a conversation regarding which objects belong with which other objects and why.

We improvised tours of the aggregate island for one another and explained the formation of certain geographical phenomena; how this thing had come to be conjoined with this thing, why it was positioned thus as part of the geological formation of the island. The tours invited myth making into the project vocabulary and landscape.

The island lay out of final production design was developed with Taryn Edmunds, who collaborated with me to create the set and visuals for the project. A plan of the *Sounds & Guts* set can be seen in the appendixes.

Once the audience have settled, the film's soundtrack tails off and the image on the screen fades to shadows.

Seated amongst the audience the performer begins to speak, she says hello and thanks everyone for coming, she addresses the audience directly.

I live in the city centre, the street I live on has a confusing address; it's pedestrianised and all the buildings are different.

There are loads of flats, but no one really thinks that anyone actually lives there, it doesn't look like anyone would live there, it's mainly bars, cars, sidewalks, stores.

Because of the weird address I receive post that isn't for me all the time.

There's someone called David Sturridge who owes his dermatologist loads of money, and is now due in court because neither of us have been paying the bills.

I got a book about being a good manager, like a sort of self-help, teach yourself to be a leader thing, that someone called Martin Graham ordered from Amazon.

Following the introduction of the first component of the letter (Travis Bickle of *Taxi Driver*, seen on the television as audience enter) the situation of the incorrectly delivered post is introduced to the audience as part of this opening sequence.

The multiple possible identities presented in the form of addressees of the incorrectly delivered post, along with the reference to dressing up, open up the potential for the performers identity to be multiple. Multiplicity of the performers identity is directly attached to the particular quality of the place in which she lives.

I got a parcel from eBay that I kept it for about six months, before opening it and trying on the dark green satin playsuit that was inside. It had ruffles down the front and really short shorts on the bottom.

In the hallway at the moment there's a parcel from UK White Goods for someone called Ka Heng Li, it's a shelf for the door of a fridge freezer.

(*Pause*)

A few years ago I received a letter from someone I don't know.

I thought that one day I would take it to the post office and explain that it had come to the wrong place. I thought that the post office would be able to return it to the sender.

I put it in the hallway to take to the post office tomorrow.

Gradually, the moment when I forgot it on the way out and remembered it on

As an aggregate or conjoined thing, the letter holds together multiple timeframes as well as the material from which it is constituted. Tomorrow is simultaneously the tomorrow after the event of the performance and the tomorrow of the past in which we imagine this work was written. Past and future merge in the multiple present of the letter. The temporality of the landscape that coalesces around the letter is neither linear nor singular.

the way in got smaller, until eventually it was just another *thing* in the house.

When I did notice it, it made me feel kind of guilty. I thought about taking it to the post office, I imagined myself doing that, but actually, ultimately, I didn't really care enough to remember.

The address is handwritten so it looked personal, not a bill or anything, a proper letter.

Maybe it's a birthday card.

Maybe it's a really important message from someone.

Tenses become slippery in relation to the letter. As Sontag's Alice states: "tenses are strangely potent aren't they" (Sontag, 1993, p. 30).

Maybe it has money in it.

The letter said this...

Performer removes letter from pocket, opens envelope, reads:

I know you and I ain't talked too much you know, but y'know, I figure you been around a lot so you could

I got, it's just that I got a, I got a

Having been introduced separately to the audience in this opening sequence, each of the letter-thing's conjoined parts retains their distinctness. In the conjoined presencing of the letter they each also become more-than, other-than their original actuality outside of this performance landscape.

Yeah

Yeah, it got me real down, real,

I just wanna go out and and you know like really really really do something

Yeah well, no its.

I don't know

I just wanna go out.

I really y'know really wanna. I got some bad ideas in my head. I just

Folds letter and puts back in pocket.

It's from someone called Joyce and the address at the top is Wood Green, London.

The house lights dim.

Performer turns on angle poise lamp at the edge of the black floor. It illuminates a large glass bowl.

The peculiar sentence form and speech patterns of the letter highlight it as an aggregate, or at least constructed thing. The shift in style and form from the conversational opening is designed to flag up the status of the letter-thing as conjoined for the audience, heightening attention to the particular nature of the performance landscape in which it exists.

The letter conjoins the dialogue of Travis Bickle, the identity of Joyce Carol Vincent and the particular situation of receiving an unusual amount if incorrectly delivered post. This is the conjoined thingness of the letter.

It is the first thing introduced to the audience in the landscaping process of the *Sounds & Guts* performance.

In this landscape the boundaries between fiction and the 'real world' are emerging as ambiguous and uncertain. Timeframes and timescales slip around or are simultaneous. The landscape of this performance emerges as coastal.

I had wondering whether the North Sea, the body of water I am most familiar with, tastes the same as other seas. The question arises from a general ponderance on whether *this* sea is any different to other seas and if so, what makes it different; Why, when standing in front of the Mediterranean, the Pacific Ocean, do I not feel as if I am in the presence of 'The Sea'? This line of thinking emerged from the project's use of cold sea swimming as an embodied landscape language that relates to personal experiences of loneliness.

So I decided to recreate and taste a variety of salt waters; saline mixed according to the differing ratios of salt and water in seas around the world.

The North Sea saline mix does not only taste like The Sea, it *is* The Sea; Seascape configures as experience around the sensation of tasting the mixture.

The other saline mixes; the Red Sea, the Dead Sea, Atlantic and Baltic are just me sipping salt water in my living room.

Medical saline has 9 grams of salt in it for every litre of water.

Saline, with 9 grams of salt, is used for intravenous rehydration – so putting water directly into your blood.

If you add more salt to saline then you have an emetic – something that makes you vomit.

Really really really salty water creates a liquid that can cause *hypernatremia*, which is another word for dehydration. Which *can* be fatal if it's not dealt with quickly enough.

There are 34.5 grams of salt in every litre of water in the North Sea.

Fills the large glass bowl with a measure of salt and then pours the water in the jug from a height. Salt clouds into the space. We hear the sea. The light fades.

I know this sea. This is the real sea. This is The Sea.

I know where the bed suddenly drops to deep water and where you can walk for a mile and never get your jumper wet.

All other seas are variations of this sea.

Saline is by its very definition an aggregate: a conjoined and fluid thing, a combination of salt and water.

The combing of salt and water in this moment enacts the alchemical nature of the conjoined thing, the character of aggregates as more-than, other-than their original form. It was created in response to the experience of tasting the North Sea in my living room.

Figure 10 Sounds & Guts at SPILL Festival (2014). Image: Mafe Valen.

Figure 11 *Sounds & Guts* at SPILL Festival (2014). Image: Mafe Valen.

This sea is the temperature and colour of sea.

Knowledge of the landscape here is entirely reliant on bodily experience and movement.

I know how long it takes to feel warm in this sea and how you have to hold onto the memory of last time if you want to get in.

You have to know when the cutoff point is; when the sea reaches your bones, the cold becomes empty and you won't be able to get warm again and your lips will turn blue. If you get out before this, you can feel every tiny nerve and capillary fill with blood and electricity and a wave of warmth defines your outline underneath layers of clothes.

It's good for your immune system and your determination.

She raises her arms, fingers outstretched, and looks up.

It's best not to look down, instead it's nice to watch your hands, moving at arm's length, just underneath the surface, sliding through the top water.

Black out.

The spotlight shines onto the microphone. The performer speaks from the shadows, considers the empty stage.

I like it when they do that thing where the top and bottom lips sort of wrap around the teeth to make an ovoid sort of 'O' and they make that sound for ages, but it sounds really nice, like really good, people think "that sounds really good", like impressive.

They stand there, with their gold dresses and their hair and their eyelashes and their hips move around elegantly, like to one side, but their mouths make these shapes to make these sounds like...

You can say big things that you can't say when you are talking

You can say things like

I will always love you

Or

I'd do anything to get you into my world

Or

I will do anything for love

Or

I believe I can fly

Or

I'm Mr. Boombastic

Or

I'm too sexy for my car

Or

I would walk 500 miles

Or

I'm never gonna dance again

Or

I am a rock

Or

I am an island.

... which you can't really say when you
are talking because you don't really
mean it, you mean the feeling of it.

It's not about saying what you mean.
It's about saying what you feel.

When you're singing it's a different voice to when you're talking. It's just going to sound like what you sound like, and you can't sing like Barbara Streisand because you're not Barbara Streisand, you just have to sing like you. It has to be you. Singing.

When you talk, mostly other people are talking too, but when you sing people are looking. They look at your mouth making different shapes and maybe they can see inside your mouth.

Fade to black.

Taxi Driver reappears on the television; Travis is writing a letter. The Sea. The performer returns to sit with the audience. They listen to the following recorded voice:

"Well... erm, I recall being about eight or nine years old and er walking out into Morcambe Bay, alone. And there was a certain pleasure in that, but that's going back an awful long way, I was just there for a period of time, staying with relatives, and you didn't want to stay in the house so you just went out and

wandered around you knew nobody and it was quite exciting to walk out into the open sands there and, I must admit, I didn't realise the amount of danger I was putting myself in because the sea came in so quickly people would get trapped there and often drown.

But I can't think of any other circumstance specifically.

Er, although I do recall that particular occasion, I think it's one of the only times I think I can recall singing... because I find singing something which I just *can not do*.

Greensleeves.

I don't know why, dunno what went through my head to make me wanna do that. But that's *all* I ever did. All I'd ever sing. I didn't know any other songs I don't think.

And I didn't know the words to that, so I probably just sung one verse repeatedly. But it was strange, because you're out in the middle of nowhere, nobody can hear you, nobody *really* sees you, and that's the only level of isolation I can really recall. And there I was just

escaping the boredom of staying with relatives during a holiday.

Can't imagine that I sang quietly. I can only recall using my voice reasonably well.

But I can't sing! I can't stay in tune! I wouldn't even dream of singing in public even if it was in a choir or a group of people, cos I know my voice would just be dischordinate - stand out – so I would mime, I'd mimic singing.

Loneliness is the lack of companionship. It's... often an enforced isolation, through no choice of your own, and the inability to link with other people. Loneliness is... I think the absence of somebody around to er bounce ideas off, to ... receive constructive criticism. Well, loneliness is a bit of a put down word, erm people choose to be an 'isolate', people set out to be like a hermit because they find dealing with people too difficult, too emotionally distressing, erm interchange with them in dialogue is – is – is uncomfortable, they don't wanna pursue it, so they find themselves cutting themselves off and they're happy to do that.

A coincidental and surprise confluence of the project's positioning of singing in public, coastal landscapes and risk taking in relation to loneliness occurred during this interview with my Dad. His story conjoins three thematic languages of the work.

So, loneliness... erm, I dunno about loneliness in other terms."

When the recording has ended and the screen is fading the performer begins again, from seated within the audience:

A man standing on a rock once told me that you have to get in and out three times to acclimatise. He was naked and he had made his own tea, as in the actual leaves or spices or something, and he'd brought it down to the sea to drink with his friends from the village, after they'd been for a swim. He swam in the sea every day and he was very old.

I get in twice.

The second time all the blood has gone into your internal organs, and there's not so much left to get cold in your arms and legs. And I never get in from a rock. It's too quick. And if you scrape yourself it hurts more than if you scraped yourself and you were warm and fully clothed.

Walk in from the beach and keep breathing. Don't let the cold take your breath away.

After about 4 minutes, if you keep moving, you start to feel patches of warmer water. Your thighs warm up first and then the backs of your hands.

You can't really feel the sea with a wetsuit on; You can't really feel how this sea feels with a wetsuit on; It's not quite as, it's not quite as much this sea if you wear a wetsuit.

When you've warmed up a bit, and your breaststroke is in full swing, you can look back to see who's noticed how brave and strong you are.

Or how many people don't even know you're there, beyond the waves.

The spotlight shines on the empty stage. One is the Loneliest Number *by Harry Nilsson begins to play. Standing in front of the stage the performer speaks over the song:*

Yeah... cos it is important... I mean I really think it's, I know it, it's important to...

The bodily sensation of being in the sea, the nearness of skin and seawater is what defines not only knowledge of this sea, but the identity of the sea itself. Seascape exists as synonymous with subjective experience.

Yeah, well no,

Its...

I don't know... I just wanna go through...

Yeah, I think we should really work out how to...

Walk in from the beach and keep breathing

I don't think I can... It's not that I don't want to... I'm, I'm sort of looking forward to... I mean, I do want to know what it feels like... so... Everyone will be looking.

Do you think we should do it like this? I mean, what about... what about if I don't or... maybe let's just do the next bit... or if... I thought that you could, it's just that I've got a, I've got a.

Yeah, well. No, its.

You have to hold on to the...

A woman stands in the half-light as a silhouette; she turns and holds out her hand.

She has dark eyes and her hair is around her shoulders.

It's not about saying what you mean. It's about saying what you feel.

She is unexpected and holds a forearm too tight.

It's just that I've got a, I've got a.

Only the top half of her face and then her head and shoulders

Her hips move around elegantly, like to one side.

At some point she turns around and looks on towards the horizon.

The moment of turning – coming upon her and turning – is looping, this moment keeps repeating.

Black out. The Sea.

Performer stands with arms outstretched, hands held flat, palm down, at chest height.

Treading water the beach is a lot further away than I imagined, from here

everything looks small, small and slow, and maybe less... I want to know what it would feel like to not be able to get back, it's not that I don't want to go back, I'm looking forward to swimming back and putting my jeans and my jumper on, and getting some fish and chips. But I want to know what it feels like, just for a moment, to not be able to get back. So I push myself backwards with my legs. Facing the shoreline, I keep moving backwards, pushing my shoulders into the waves.

"Out and out we went, further and further, until at last one seems to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea." Lily Briscoe in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1966, p. 195).

Out here beyond the break waters its really smooth, the swell lifts me up and down but I don't go under. There are birds above me, oblivious I keep going.

At some point I turn around and look on towards the horizon. The pull of the sea has made me jump forward, away from the land, without noticing.

The largest of the radios is turned on by the performer and we hear the sea. The noise from the surrounding speakers fades out leaving only the radio playing; waves or white noise.

The following composition is played through all of the other radios in the room. As the performer turns them on

The practical value of radios as a performance medium for the shaping of this landscape is that they are mobile sound sources. Wireless radios can be freely moved around the space, held in the hands of performer and audience members. They offer the possibility of physically moving sound sources around the space and thus incorporating proximity – or *nearness* – into the sonic landscape of the event. This compositional device builds upon the play of proximity used within the eight-channel fixed sound system of *Alice in Bed*.

and begins to tune them she hands them to members of the audience who are invited to listen, retune them or pass them on.

The performer sits down among the audience with the last radio, tunes and retunes listening from within the audience.

Voices overlap and are only partially heard amongst one another. Stories of coastlines, of running to be alone or escape loneliness, people struggle to find the words, pop songs burst in, talk radio are running a panel discussion on cuts to healthcare in the UK, classical music and a man explaining that he has never felt lonely, he doesn't know what it is.

Other things become animated in the space, the TV presents a stream of images, footage of the sea, seaweed and Travis Bickle driving through New York, a woman sitting on a boat floats up chased by static, fizzy white noise. The overhead projector glows and the spotlight flickers.

The growing visual and auditory cacophony gradually dies down. One final voice is heard clearly through the speakers.

Audience members held the radios close to their ears, foregrounding one bandwidth above the others before passing it on for others to listen.

Radios allow for the chance occurrence of public broadcast material within the bounds of the performance itself. In turn pre-composed elements of the event leak into the radio waves of the 'real world', since anyone within the vicinity of the event can potentially tune into one of the dedicated *Sounds & Guts* broadcasts.

"It was disorientating [...] in a good way [...] it was difficult to decipher [...] you couldn't' really see what was happening [...] the texture of the activity was becoming more frantic" (Parr, 2017, January 17th).

"Loneliness is ... Erm... a loud – painful – panic? Erm... I find it really difficult to word what it is... (Intake of breath) Erm... (Sigh) Its its its mmm-more... phff... tragic than I imagine death. I think. I mean I could go on forever but, can't word it."

Performer turns off the last radio, the sea disappears.

Black Out.

A beam of light from the overhead projector.

I found a picture of Joyce sitting on the back of a boat. She's got a purple, sort of lilac jumper on with a collar and she's stroking a dog. She has dark eyes and her hair is around her shoulders.

As the performer holds up the rectangle of Perspex the image of a woman sitting on a boat is revealed, distorted, magnified.

The dog is looking up and away from the camera and Joyce is looking at the person taking the picture.

She's not posing. And she's not smiling.

Figure 12 *Sounds & Guts* at Live Theatre (2014). Image: Keith Pattison.

You can see the wake going out behind her in the water.

I tried to print it out but only the top of the picture kept coming out, only the top half of her face and then her head and shoulders.

It took 3 goes until the printer would print the whole thing.

You can't see her feet though.

It was impossible to establish the cause of death because her remains were "largely skeletal". Her body was so badly decomposed that the only way she could be identified was by comparing dental records with a holiday photo of her smiling

She was 10 years older than me. Than I am now.

Because the housing benefit was paying her rent, and because of her age, nobody suspected anything unusual had happened.

She told everyone at work that she was quitting her job so she could travel the world. They all said they just thought

she was somewhere else, with someone else, having a better time.

She was alone in her flat, above a shopping complex in Wood Green, London.

She was lying on the sofa when she died.

She was found three years later by bailiffs, in January 2006.

Her neighbor had been keeping his window closed to keep the bugs out.

She hadn't done the dishes and the all the food had gone off years ago.

Next to the sofa there were presents and letters that she hadn't sent.

Underneath there is the dark.

If you watch your hands for too long the dark gets bigger without you noticing, so you have to know how to swim in a way that means the tide keeps you hugging the shore line.

The TV is still flickering a stuttering blue light and there is a growing pile of unopened letters by the door.

She turns off the projector. Black out.

The television interrupts: Taxi Driver.

So now we're at the bit in the film where Travis Bickle is standing in the street outside the café where the taxi drivers meet at night. Wizard comes out and leans on the taxi and Travis...

Suggestion that the film has been running throughout, the title sequence begins the performance and now we have reached midway in both the time of the film and simultaneous time of the performance.

Travis goes to Wizard

I know you and I ain't talked too much you know, but y'know, I figure you been around a lot so you could

I got, it's just that I got a, I got a

Yeah

Yeah, it got me real down, real, I just wanna go out and and you know like really really really do something

Yeah well, no its...

I don't know

I just wanna go out...

I... I really y'know really wanna... I got some bad ideas in my head. I just

At this point we're about half way through the film, so it could go either way for Travis, who deep down is a good guy, a nice guy who just wants a better world for everyone, but he doesn't have anyone to talk to about it.

Travis demonstrates some classic symptoms of loneliness. For a start, Travis drives to parts of town that no other taxi drivers are willing to go to; risk taking is a common characteristic of loneliness. Throughout *Taxi Driver*, Travis takes a lot of risks.

He also eats some really bad food, for breakfast one day I saw him eat white bread, mixed up with some apricot liquor and loads of sugar. Which is not only disgusting, it is also another way we can tell he's really lonely – when you're lonely, you are more likely to binge eat, or not eat, eat food that is really bad for you, generally not care about the consequences of what you're eating, generally not care.

I think if I knew Travis I'd probably suggest that he go and see a doctor or get involved in some sort of community type hobbies, like maybe he could join a dance class or something, make some

These 'common characteristics of loneliness' were taken from the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which was published during the development of *Sounds & Guts*. Publication of the manual was surrounded by a critical discourse of the medicalisation of negative emotional experiences. I used the manual in the making of the work as one articulation of what loneliness is. Exploring the limits of this definition by applying it to various other articulations of loneliness from popular culture; conjoining it with figures from popular culture, testimonies given during interviews and the life and death of Joyce Carol Vincent.

friends, take some time out, do some dancing.

This is Wizard's advice:

(Reads from Women's Own*)*

I think we've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it: 'I have a problem, I'll get a grant.' 'I'm homeless, the government must house me.' They're casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It's our duty to look after ourselves, and then, also to look after our neighbour.

People have got the entitlements too much in mind, without the obligations. There's no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.

TRAVIS: *(on television) That's just about the dumbest thing I ever heard.*

Black out.

Spotlight on empty stage. Performer stand looking at the stage and speaks.

You will stand there with your gold dress and your hair and your eyelashes and your hips, and they won't be talking, they'll be looking, and you will make these shapes to make this noise, and the noise you make will be the dark, and the lights, and the cold soaking in, it will be the terror and the loud painful panic, and the TV still flickering a stuttering blue light, it will be the pile of unopened letters by the door, and the texts you never replied to, the invitations you declined, and the people you were rude to, and the lie about going around the world, and the quiet of the landing, and the staring out of the window for hours, it will be Travis Bickle in his taxi, in his bedroom writing letters, it will be the "they cannot touch her" and the running, the running alone and the running to get there faster, it will be the picture when you decided not to smile, and the day that you walked out and away from the house alone.

Everyone will be looking at your mouth and you can't tell them how to look at you and you can't tell them what to see, and it's not about what you look like, it's about how you sound, but everyone will be looking at you while you make this noise, and the noise you make will be how you feel and it will only sound like you.

Total blackout.

The sea.

In the dark, in the water, I have made a huge mistake.

The cold is soaking in and I feel empty. I can't feel my muscles to make them move.

I can see the lights of the mainland.

I think I can see which cluster is which but they are too far away and it's too dark to be sure.

I can see someone standing on the beach. They are standing quite still, alone, I can't tell if they are in the water or not. Someone else appears a little way away from the first. They are standing in the water, wading knee deep

in the evening tide. As I strain to see, the dark parts and shifts and there are millions of them. Are they looking for me? An enormous procession of people wading knee deep in the sea. They are all of them looking for something. I wave.

(*pause*)

In the dark in the lights it can be more difficult to see than without. Without the lights your eyes can adjust, but distance can still be a problem. If you are looking for something it can be better not to use a torch.

... Are they looking for Joyce? I'm waving. But they are all of them alone and all of them forgotten. They are too cold. It's too cold to be wading in the sea. It's getting into their bones. And none of them are looking far enough ahead to be looking for me. Some of them are up to their necks now, it's difficult to tell if they are moving in a particular direction or just being pushed about by the waves. The more they drift about the more aimless they seem.

I am too far away to tell them about how you have to get out before it's too late and you'll never warm up.

The performer undresses, standing in the centre of the space, the audience can just make out her form in the black out.

She picks up a bright white ribbon with a weight on one end, holds it, arms stretched, across her chest. A small light appears at the end of the white ribbon, as she speaks she slowly lowers the weight to the floor.

Fathom: noun.
Plural noun: fathoms.

A fathom is the measurement of outstretched arms *(illustrates gesture, holding a white line across body).*

This sea is 53 fathoms deep.

Fathom: verb.

To understand (a difficult problem or an enigmatic person) after much thought.

Synonyms.
Search out. Make out. Perceive. Grasp. Catch. Follow. Penetrate. Divine. Get to the bottom of. Take in. Assimilate. Absorb. Work out. Make sense of. Decipher. Decode. Disentangle. Untangle. Unravel. Piece together. Get

Knowledge, implied by the term 'to fathom', emerges in this moment from an experience of simultaneous distance (from the mainland) and nearness (with the seawater). Knowledge is synonymous with a subjective experience of landscape

Knowledge, like the verb 'fathom' is more than quantitative measurement, it includes understanding, which is founded upon subjective experience. To fathom a landscape – or seascape – is also to surround and be enveloped by it.

the drift. Surround. Envelop.
Understand. Embrace.

To measure the depth of (water).

To plumb, to probe, to gauge, to sound.

Dropped, the ribbon lands in a luminescent pile.

As the spotlight comes up on the microphone, the performer is standing on the stage in a swimming costume. She puts on a swimming cap and readies herself.

One is the Loneliest Number *by Harry Nilsson begins to play. She sings…*

One is the loneliest number that you'll ever do
Two can be as bad as one

It's the loneliest number since the number one

No is the saddest experience you'll ever know
Yes it's the saddest experience you'll ever know
Because one is the loneliest number that you'll ever do
One is the loneliest number that you'll

ever know

It's just no good anymore since you
went away
Now I spend my time
Just making rhymes of yesterday

Because one is the loneliest number
That you'll ever do
One is the loneliest number

That you'll ever know

One is the loneliest number
One is the loneliest number
One is the loneliest number
That you'll ever do
One is the loneliest number
Much, much worse than two
One is the number divided by two
One...

One is the loneliest number

Blackout.

As the performer leaves the stage
she turns on the radio and
Everybody's Talkin' *by Harry*
Nilsson plays out into static.

Using Heidegger's things as a reflexive framework for thinking about the mechanics of *Sounds & Guts* I have identified a number of things and examined their role in shaping the performance landscape. I have looked specifically at a letter, introduced in the opening sequence of the performance, and a set of long wave radios used as devices for presenting and composing sound. In support of my focus on these things and their effect on the performance landscape I have also looked at other things within the performance that echo their characteristics, such as a bowl of salt water and an audio recording of my father telling a story.

Heidegger's notion of things has enabled me to conduct a close reading of how these things were made and what they did to the performance landscape. I was lead to Heidegger's things through my reflexive work on *Project R-hythm*'s phenomenological landscape. Heidegger's things provide this thesis with a language to articulate the nuances of how a performance landscape is shaped. As I will go on to explain, it has also laid groundwork for the development of *Time Passes*, which follows *Sounds & Guts* in this body of landscape performance works. In particular it has underlined the nature of things in *Sounds & Guts* as collaged or 'conjoined'.

Collage and knowledge

The things I have focused on in the landscape of *Sounds & Guts* all involve a process of collaging disparate elements together. The early development activity of building an island from collected materials was a process of collage directed at creating a landscape. The letter within the performance is formed of three key elements; Travis Bickle, Joyce Carol Vincent and a quantity of post delivered to a confusing address, conjoined during the making process. The radios act as devices for collaging multiple sounds in the event of the performance, as the performer and audience tune and retune to listen to different bandwidths played simultaneously. The elements brought together through collage processes can be understood as 'found things'.

The language of found material recalls Marcel Duchamp's 'ready-mades' and the Dadaist, surrealist and Fluxus art movements. I have already discussed, in relation to *Alice in Bed*, the proximity of the Fluxus movement to postdramatic theatre and the way in which artists moving between these fields of practice influenced and

collaborated with one other. The term 'found object' refers, in an art historical sense, to naturally occurring or man-made objects that are found, bought or collected by the artist(s) because they are perceived to be of some value to their art making activity. The materials brought together to create the letter, the radios and other things within the performance were perceived as having value for the work's attempt at a multi-vocal articulation of personal experiences and cultural understandings loneliness.

We can understand the found objects as *objects* rather than *things* in Heidegger's sense of "a neutral or free-floating entity" (Vergunst et al., 2012, p. 3) that has been detached from the context in which it was found. Having been subjected to world-withdrawal, the found object is re-situated within the context of the artist's practice. The found object may be used as inspiration for the creation of an artwork, presented in an exhibition context as a 'ready-made', or – as in the case of *Sounds & Guts* – the found object is collaged together with other elements to create a new aggregate *thing*. This new thing emerges out of and defines the work or practice in which it is created. This aggregate thing is a "self-sufficient" artwork, to borrow a term from Heidegger's The Origin of the Work of Art (Heidegger, 2001, p. 28). The performance of *Sounds & Guts* as a whole can be understood as a self-sufficient yet aggregate thing created through collage processes.

Artist Kurt Schwitters used found objects that ranged from the everyday debris of human activity to naturally occurring materials in his visual and sculptural collage practice. Schwitters described his practice as 'merz': "the combination, for artistic purposes of all conceivable materials" (Schwitters, cited in Greenstreet, 2013). Schwitters non-medium specific approach to creating objects echoes Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's observation that "as an art form performance lacks a distinctive medium (and hence uses any and all media)" (ibid.). Merz resonates with Bottoms' description of the ways in which "the same attitude of evenhanded enquiry is applied to whatever materials their working process leads [Goat Island] to" (Bottoms, 2007, p. 64). Foreman, cites in Davy, explains his in terms that can be read as collage or a combination of diverse elements:

"It's as if my writing were trying to define some "unseeable" object whose outline can only be traced through a one-step-removed method akin to the physicist's method of firing electrons at a particle and the catching the electron's patterns of deflection on a photographic plate. So I "fire" bursts of writing at an invisible particle (a certain state of being, a certain dreamed of, intuited, level of consciousness or attention) and the writing, some of it, hits the page" (Foreman, cited in Davy, 1978, p. 118)

A similarly eclectic, collage-like approach to composing performance is also evident in the "bricolage or collage situation[s]" created by The Wooster Group (Kate Valk interviewed in Bailey, 2017, p. 5). The Wooster Group's collage performances result in what Giles Bailey described as a "fractured and layered composition of culture" (Bailey, 2017, p. 1). The notion that technological things result in fractured or disrupted landscapes supports the reflection I have done on how 'distance abolishing' things are tools with which performance brings seemingly disparate disciplines, objects, places, materials and ideas into contact, and that this process of bringing-near is a collage practice.

In relation to the things of *Sounds & Guts* I have employed Heidegger's language to examine the nature of performance landscapes that are constructed through collaged things. In doing so I am considering the specific way in which collage has been used in the creation of performance, rather than objects.

Conjoining

Heidegger describes the holding effect of things on the world as "staying" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 169), "gathering" (ibid. p. 166) and "conjoining"; "Only what conjoins itself out of world becomes a thing" (ibid. p. 180). Conjoining, in Heidegger's terms, is a twofold activity, whereby thing and world are co-dependent. Things must conjoin out of world in order to be a thing in the world. In their conjoining, things hold together the world as subjective experience. Conjoining is the process by which a thing presences to us as a "thinging thing" in the "worlding world" (ibid. p. 178).

I have adopted Heidegger's definition of conjoining as a language for reflecting upon the collage approach through which I created the things that shape the performance landscape of *Sounds & Guts*. In the case of the letter, for example, I have considered the process of bringing together Travis Bickle, Joyce Carol Vincent and the situation of the

incorrectly delivered post as a process of creating a new thing through the act of conjoining. This new, aggregate, or conjoined thing has a particular thingness and through that thingness it shapes the landscape of the work in a particular fashion.

Conjoining provides this research with a language with which to think through how performance does collage, a practice usually associated with physical objects and the visual arts. Conjoin, according the Oxford English Dictionary means *to join* or *become joined together*, *to unite* or *combine in action or purpose.* As in the phrase "conjoined twins" offered as an example by the Oxford English Dictionary, conjoined elements retain their individual distinctness within the joined together whole (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002). Heidegger's "conjoining" things have the effect of creating a "simple oneness" that does not degrade the distinct qualities of that which is conjoined (ibid. p. 180). The landscape of *Sounds & Guts* was built with a collection of found things, and adopted a collage approach to landscaping.

Heidegger's notion of conjoining is a description of what things *do*, and how their inherent activity shapes our experience and knowledge of the world. In The Thing he explains that in conjoining the thing has the effect of 'unconcealing'. Unconcealing is a process of "mirroring, lightening" in which "each of the [thing's elements] plays to each of the others" and reveals their nature to us through their relationships (ibid. p. 177). As Vergunst explained, we therefore come to know things as inherently relational and situated according to those relations. The particular relationships between elements conjoined in a thing and the way in which those relationships *unconceal* that thing to us, shape our experience of the world. Through unconcealing things shape landscape and our knowledge of it.

In the case of the letter-thing, Travis reflects certain aspects of Joyce, and both colour our understanding of the incorrectly delivered post, and vice-versa. This effect of unconcealing through conjoining can also be seen when Travis' dialogue is collaged together with Margaret Thatcher's "no such thing as society" statement later in the performance. Unconcealing, for Heidegger, is the process by which we achieve nearness, and thus knowledge of the world. The conjoining of the three elements that form the letter supports a particular understanding not only of each individual found object, but

also of the world in which they are conjoined, the performance landscape of *Sounds & Guts*.

In The Origin of the Work of Art Heidegger states that "the unconcealedness of beings – this is never a merely existent state, but a happening." (ibid. p. 52). The explicit activity of Heidegger's understanding of how things conjoin, and in doing so cause unconcealedness, lends this research a framework for understanding the way that the time-based medium of performance does collage. It supports an understanding of collage within a performance practice as directed at the shaping of events – or happenings – and their landscape, rather than the construction of fixed art objects.

The different materials and mediums through which a collage performance is created will affect the particular character of that performance's landscape. The things that are created through collaging found elements together in *Sounds & Guts* shape a landscape that is both coastal and porous.

An island performance

The island structure of *Sounds & Guts* is founded on my own experience of working with the geographical landscape of a tidal island in *Project R-hythm*. Application of that experience began in *Sounds & Guts* with the creation of an island through collaging found elements in collaboration with artists Tim Shaw and Tessa Parr. During this process found objects were connected with other objects, audio and mnemonic elements, to create thing-places. These thing-places were organised as an island and gave the performance a landscape structure, which informed the staging and the choreography of the work, and supported the coastal language of the dialogue. This approach echoes the taskscape performance of *Project R-hythm,* which was organised around a set of thing-places.

Through *Project R-hythm* I experienced an island landscape as temporal and aggregate. The temporality of *Sounds & Guts* has been shown to involve a multiplicity of timeframes, which are slipped between and played with in the language of the performance. The delicacy with which tenses are employed in the dialogue of *Sounds & Guts* recall's Sontag's reference to the potency of tenses in *Alice in Bed* and her

movement between the timeframes of her play. We see this in the temporal slippages of the opening sequence of *Sounds & Guts*, and the performers dialogue surrounding the letter.

Running simultaneously to the real time of the performance is also the timeframe of *Taxi Driver*. This conceit is pulled into view half way through the event when, having shown the title sequence of the film at the very opening of the performance, the performer states half way through "*So now we're at the bit in the film where Travis Bickle is standing in the street outside the café where the taxi drivers meet at night [...] At this point we're about half way through the film*". The temporal structure of the film is simultaneous and parallel, in the moments that Travis Bickle is brought into the foreground he is conjoined with other elements of the work: Joyce, Margaret Thatcher, and twenty-first century diagnostics of loneliness. The multiplicity of timeframes in *Sounds & Guts* is a result of its aggregate nature as a performance created through collage and shaped by conjoined things. It builds upon the approach to multiplicity in the staging of *Alice in Bed*, which was informed by Sontag's notion of truth as multiple. The things that shape the island landscape of *Sounds & Guts* also reflect the disruptive and fragmented intermingling of land and sea, human and non-human, experienced in *Project R-hythm*.

Sounds & Guts' performance landscape is shaped by my experience that, unlike Goulish's description of Goat Island staging, islands do not have defined boundaries. As well as the physical staging of the performance, the disruption of the suggested boundary of the matt black performance space, the use of radios shapes a landscape that lacks fixed boundaries.

The thingness of radios

To understand what radios are doing as a performance medium I have considered how they shape the landscape of the work as Heideggerian things. Radios have been used within live performance in numerous ways over the twentieth and twenty-first century. *Sounds & Guts* did not draw directly on previous performances, or explicitly reference this lineage of work. However, in reflecting upon how radios shape a landscape without

defined boundaries it has been useful to look at some key works that also adopt radio as a live performance medium.

Stockhausen's *Kurzwellen* (*Shortwaves*) is a musical composition written specifically for short wave radios in 1968. Short wave radios, such as those used in Stockhausen's *Kurzwellen*, can pick up broadcasts being transmitted from further away than the wave radios we used in *Sounds & Guts*. Short wave radios (AM rather than FM) allow the listener to hear broadcasts from very distant locations around the globe. Examining the difference between the effect of short wave and long wave radios on a performance landscape provides a comparative lens with which to think about my own use of radios.

During a recorded conversation about how we made *Sounds & Guts*, Tim Shaw echoed Heidegger's discussion of technology and distance by suggesting that radios "compress distance" by "allowing an expanded sense of sound" (Shaw, 2017, January 17th). Sound is expanded via the radio due the simple fact that it can reach further than would be possible otherwise. This is the case both spatially and temporally; with radios we can listen to live broadcasts from miles away and, as with any recorded sound, we are able to hear sounds from the past. The huge distances that are compressed by the short-wave radios specified in the *Kurzwellen* score are a defining feature of that performance's landscape. The distances involved in the landscape of *Kurzwellen* are greater than those of *Sounds & Guts* because the radios being used can pick up signals from further away. Stockhausen is playing directly with the radio's capacity to "receive instant information [...] of events which he [the listener] formerly learned about only years later, if at all" that Heidegger describes in The Thing (ibid. p. 163), as well as with the sonic and textural quality of the short-wave frequency.

Whilst *Sounds & Guts* did not use short wave radios and so did not explicitly feature the global broadcasts of *Kurzwellen*, the use of radios, with their capacity to compress distance through expanding sound, meant that the landscape of the performance, like that of *Kurzwellen,* stretched beyond the immediate physical and temporal boundaries of the performance space. The room in which the performances occur does not contain the landscapes of performances that employ radios, rather the performance landscape that includes radio is porous.

The term 'porous' is generally used to describe materials that have minute interstices through which liquids or gasses can pass. The Oxford English Dictionary cites the example of "layers of porous limestone", offering the statement "some rocks are more porous than others" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002), meaning some rocks let more liquid or gas through than others. Other than the physical properties of materials, 'porous' can also describe formations, organisations of people, or structures that are "not retentive or secure", as in "he ran through a porous home defense to score easily" (ibid.). The use of radios in *Sounds & Guts* created interstices in the boundary between the performance and the world, through which pre-composed and incidental material could pass. By allowing for the passage of material in and out of the performance[1] the radios shape the landscapes as porous and as such multiple.

John Cage used live radio in a number of works created in the 1950's, including *Imaginary Landscape No. 4 (march No .2)* (1951), *Speech* (1955), *Radio Music* (1956) and *Music Walk* with Merce Cunningham (1958). The title of Cage's 1951 work for radios directly asks us to consider the performance as a landscape, offering this research an art historic example of a self-defining 'landscape performance'. The score for *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* states that 24 performers are to play 12 radios according to pre-composed "durations that are written in conventional notation, relating to notes placed on a 5-line staff". The score also explains "the rhythmic structure of the work is 2-1-3, and is expressed in changing tempo" (*Imaginary Landscape No. 4*, 1951). The notation for Cage's composition was generated through chance, with the tossing of coins. This process was also used in the creation of *Music of Changes,* written in the same year as *Imaginary Landscape No. 4*. However, whereas *Music of Changes* was composed for piano, it is specified that *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* should be played with radios. As such the score invites for an added element of indeterminacy beyond the compositional strategy of coin tossing compositional strategy. The radios invite a degree of unpredictability to the score because, as we found during the making of *Sounds & Guts*, the sound that they emit is dictated not only by the pre-prepared composition or the person playing the instrument, but by the broadcasts and interference present in any given performance venue, at any given performance time. A performance of *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* conducted in the morning in New York, for example, will differ greatly

from one conducted in the dead of night in a rural location. Radios are prone to interference and thus are affected by the physical dynamics of their given situation. As well as their geographical position and contingent available broadcasts, the physical materials present in the vicinity of a radio will affect the clarity of its reception; thick walls and metal structures can obscure broadcasts for example, whereas the presence of human bodies, being excellent aerials as they are, can amplify certain bandwidths depending on the proximity of the radio to the body. The porousness introduced by the thingness of radios is therefore dependent on the particular physical characteristics of a given space and results in a performance landscape that is unpredictable. In this sense, *Sounds & Guts* was site-*responsive* rather than site-specific. The site-responsive quality of radios is something I continued to work with in *Time Passes* (chapter five).

As Malpas points out, the developments that impacted Heidegger's understanding of time and space in the mid-twentieth century have been vastly exaggerated by "the Internet, [which] has achieved an even more radical abolition of 'remoteness', allowing us not merely to see and hear, but also to act in relation to things far removed from us in physical space" (Malpas, 2006, p. 128). The performance and installation works of Olia Lialina and Tim Shaw, for example, explore and exploit the nature of distance as experienced through twenty-first century technological things. In the concluding chapter of this thesis I will address the growing field of artistic practice that uses digital and networked technology to shape landscape experience.

The use of radios in *Sounds & Guts* and my understanding of how they function in a performance context was informed by a philosophical consideration of how we experience landscape. This line of enquiry within my practice has been followed up in subsequent work through an examination of how technological developments of the early twentieth century impacted upon the modernist literature of Heidegger's contemporaries. This will be addressed in the following chapter on *Time Passes*, which is shaped through a close reading of Virginia Woolf's landscapes.

Chapter 5: *Time Passes*

> *"Maggots seethed in tin washtubs full of papery cornhusks. Nests of bald baby mice writhed in bushel baskets. Technicolor moulds consumed magazines and documents. Repulsive odours escaped from the broken lids of ancient preserve jars. Rodents, moulds, insects and other organisms, long accustomed to being left alone, had colonized the excess matter. Packrat middens crowded attic corners with pyramids of shredded text and stolen spoons. Hoardings deposited by animals and humans mingled indistinguishably."*
>
> (DeSilvey, 2006, pp. 319-20)

Time Passes is a landscape performance project that takes as its starting point the central section of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. In response to the phenomenologies of landscape that have emerged through this research, it is an attempt to create a performance landscape that is absent of humans.

Beginning as it did in 2008, *Time Passes* sits as a discreet partner project to *Alice in Bed;* chronologically, *Alice in Bed* and *Time Passes* bookend the body of work that constitutes my doctoral research. In January 2017 I began a series of practical experiments that marked the beginning of realising *Time Passes*. As an ongoing project the work this chapter articulates is in motion as I write, and will continue to move and shift beyond the period of my doctoral study. *Time Passes* is not a conclusion; rather this final chapter is both the end of my thesis and

: a beginning

: a landing stage

: and a correspondence - between now and then

: a striving - between me and her, a striving outwards

: the first symptoms of the Lighthouse

: a recovery

: and a bridge between an institution and my future work

This final project chapter is taken from a talk I delivered at Dulwich Picture Gallery's *Making Women's Art Matter: New Approaches to the Careers and Legacies of Women Artists* conference, which was held at the Paul Mellon Centre (London) in conjunction with the opening of a retrospective of Vanessa Bell's work in February 2017.[7] The talk was constructed during an artistic residency at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in January 2017 and further developed for a performance at M_HKA gallery (Antwerp) in September 2017 as part of Nadia Hebson's *Alpha Adieux* 'Lodgers' program with Drop City. The full text of the M_HKA gallery performance can be found in the appendixes to this thesis. The text has been adapted here as an extract of the work that closes my doctoral research. This chapter is understood as one iteration of an ongoing practice, which has also previously been presented as academic talk and performance, and which will go on to be adapted for live events and publication in the future. It has been adapted here to suit the context of this doctoral thesis.

The chapter includes extracts of writing I have developed in relation to Woolf's novels and diaries. It weaves together a discussion of Woolf's role in the literary and philosophical canon with an articulation of the working methods that underpin the development of *Time Passes*. It positions Woolf in relation to Heidegger's notion of 'things', Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape and the performance landscapes of the work presented in previous chapters.

Passages from Woolf's diaries and novels have been incorporated throughout the chapter. They have been appropriated, edited and written into through my own

[7] Vanessa Bell (1879-1961) was a painter and the sister of Virginia Woolf. A retrospective of Bell's work, ran from February 8th – June 4th 2017 at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. The *Making Women's Art Matter: New Approaches to the Careers and Legacies of Women Artist* conference was organised by artist Nadia Hebson and researcher Hana Leaper.

performance writing. At times it will be very clear which words are hers and which are mine, but some sections retain a productive ambiguity that is central to this project and my approach to writing. The approach to writing will be familiar as it builds upon the way that the *Sounds & Guts* script was constructed. Where I have incorporated others' words within this process, source material is referenced via footnotes so as not to disturb the flow of reading.

Time Passes began with the central section of *To the Lighthouse*. Gillian Beer described *To the Lighthouse* as "Woolf's island story" (Beer, 1992, p. 140). The novel tells the story of the Ramsey family and a number of their close acquaintances through a series of visits made to a remote island residence. As with the landscape phenomenologies that emerge through *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts*, in *To the Lighthouse* Woolf "frets away the notion of stability in the island concept [...] The island is waves as well as earth: everything is in flux, land as much as sea, individual as well as whole culture" (ibid. p. 142).

In *The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf* Rosenbaum described *To the Lighthouse* as Woolf's "most overtly philosophical novel" (Rosenbaum, cited in Parkes, 1982, p. 35). In the talk delivered to the *Making Women's Art Matter* conference I suggest that two factors have contributed to neglect of the nuanced philosophical bearing of Woolf's writing: the fact that she is a woman and the fact that she is an artist. This is a sentiment echoed by Graham Parkes, who argues that male philosophers

"*Uncomfortable with a woman novelist's having disclosed some profound truths about human existence* [...] *suppose that if these truths are in any way philosophical, they must be due to the influence of professional* [mostly male] *philosophers within her range of acquaintance*" (Parkes, 1982, p. 33).

Unlike Rosenbaum, Parkes reads Woolf in relation to European Continental philosophy rather than the realism of G. E Moore, which she has been associated with. Patricia Waugh also situates Woolf in relation to the "anti-Cartesian turn in psychology, cognitive science, philosophy of mind, and social thought" to which, Waugh explains, William James was central (Waugh, 2017, p. 33). Although I am not reading Woolf in direct relation to the ideas and influence of William James, it is satisfying to note that

he plays a discreet role in both *Alice in Bed* (as Alice's brother), which began this research, and *Time Passes*, which concludes it.

To the Lighthouse, *The Waves*, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Jacob's Room* are at the centre of the handful of revisionist readings that position of Woolf as a European and anti-Cartesian thinker. A. O. Frank distances Woolf from Moore and the Pateresque school of thinking that her Bloomsbury peers occupied (Frank, 2001, p. 21), arguing that Woolf's relationship to European Continental philosophy has been neglected due to the historic dominance of narrative realism and biography within literary criticism (ibid. p. 12). Despite *To the Lighthouse* sitting at the heart of these anti-Cartesian readings of Woof, very little attention has been given to the novel's central section 'Time Passes', or the implications of that text for European Continental philosophy. In my own reading of Woolf, conducted through the performance making of *Time Passes*, I position her philosophy alongside the anthropocentrism of Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape.

Upon first encountering the novel in 2008, having dragged myself through the first part of Woolf's story with its dinner parties and outdoor footwear, marital discord and motherhood, I was finally enraptured by the central section of the novel entitled 'Time Passes'; reading and re-reading, I lost interest in the promised resolution of part three, which would undoubtedly see a return of humans to the narrative. The first and final parts of the novel, with the people and the parties and the painting, have now almost fallen off the spine, fallen by the wayside, rarely read as I greedily abstract only those passages that move most vividly.

In light of my selective and dismissive approach to reading Woolf, this chapter outlines an understanding of the text that has developed through my artistic practice. Whilst practice-based, counter to Elkins' aforementioned arts PhD models, my reading of Woolf rigorously engages with and contributes to literary discussions regarding the nature of her 'philosophy'. As well as serving as a framework for developing my own work and practice, the close reading of Woolf I am conducting offers insights into her work that are revealed precisely because of the process of making performance. Just as the conjoining processes of *Sounds & Guts* had a 'mirroring, lightening' affect within

that performance landscape, positioning Woolf in relation to the ideas and practical activity of my practice reveals aspects of the text that are not made available via sedentary forms of literary study.

In *The Common Reader*, Woolf advises that after reading a book one should "walk, talk, pull the dead petals from a rose, or fall asleep" in order that the "book will return, but differently" (Woolf, 1986, p. 266). Not only am I walking, talking and falling asleep with the book in mind (I haven't done any rose petal pulling), I am making performance, and through that process the text is returned, differently.

In 'Time Passes' Woolf tells the story of the Ramsey's island house, as it stands unoccupied for a number of years, during which WW1 begins and ends and keeps the family from returning. With the family gone Woolf "imagine[s] the world in the absence of the human eye" (Briggs, 2006, p. 146). We hear of distant marriages and the deaths of certain family members lost to war, age related illness, and childbirth, but news of the novel's absent human characters is relayed to the reader in the form of parentheses, reminiscent of the character-limited text of telegrams. The presence of people is contained within these brackets, while the movement of the story continues to occupy the empty house. The narrator remains with the landscape.

Woolf commented on the particular challenge of writing 'Time Passes' in her diary:

"*I cannot make it out—here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing—I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless & feature-less with nothing to cling to*" (Woolf, 1980, p. 75).

Woolf tells the story of the empty house through an account of the processes of dust and decay, the movement of light and shadow:

"Nothing stirred in the drawing-room or in the dining-room or on the staircase. Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all) crept round corners and ventured indoors. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room

questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wall-paper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall? Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly as if asking the red and yellow roses on the wall-paper whether they would fade, and questioning (gently, for there was time at their disposal) the torn letters in the wastepaper basket, the flowers, the books, all of which were now open to them and asking, Were they allies? Were they enemies? How long would they endure? So some random light directing them with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, from some uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors.
So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left - a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes - those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated; how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking- glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again.

[...] Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its sharp image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance on the wall, and for a moment darkened the pool in which light reflected itself; or birds, flying, made a soft spot flutter slowly across the bedroom floor." (Woolf, 1966, pp. 144-147)

And so activity occurs outside of the brackets with which Woolf notifies us of the fates of her human characters. The parentheses interrupt the atmosphere of the empty house and the flow of our reading, which is occupied by what the character of Bernhard describes in *The Waves* as "the world seen without a self" (Woolf, 1980, p. 204).

Consistent with the neglect for the significance of 'Time Passes' within Woolf's writing, Briggs dismisses the central section of *To the Lighthouse* as a "quasi-musical or

cinematic interlude" (ibid. p. 131). Despite describing 'Time Passes' as "a gratuitously obscure and eccentric piece of writing" Mark Hussey does acknowledge that the text contributes significantly to the "'philosophy' implicit in the novels" (Hussey, 1986, p. 107). As with my close reading of Sontag's *Alice in Bed*, The Island (*Project R-hythm*) and things in *Sounds & Guts*, my reading of 'Time Passes' is concerned with the implicit philosophy of Woolf's text.

The work of *Time Passes* as a project is not that of adaptation. Through my approach to close reading, 'Time Passes' becomes a proposition, a cue, a provocation, and a direct and formal challenge to make a performance that is absent of humans. In this sense the making of *Time Passes* resembles the development of *Alice in Bed*, which was as an attempt to embody the implied phenomenology of Sontag's writing. Fuchs observed that "postmodern theatre artists hint at the possibility of a post-anthropocentric stage" (cited in Lehmann, 2006, p. 81). Through *Time Passes* I have arrived at a reading of Woolf's work as a framework for challenging the inherent anthropocentrism of the Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape that have underpinned my previous projects. In 'Joints and Strings: Body and Object in Performance' Kirkkopelto frames a similar challenge in relation to object oriented ontology as "a question of the relationship between human bodies and various non-human factors: to what extent can they all be encountered and treated as equal entities, "things" or "objects"? (Kirkkopelto, 2016, p. 50) *Time Passes* attempts to go further than Kirkkopelto by banishing the human form from the performance entirely and attending to the performance of landscape.

Thinking with Woolf

As well as walking, talking, sleeping and picking at rose petals, Woolf also advises readers "not [to] dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice" (Woolf, 1986, p. 259). To respond to the proposition for performance making that is offered by Woolf's text I have been developing performative strategies for engaging in a dialogue with her writing. This writing practice is focused on - but not restricted to - 'Time Passes', and includes her diaries, from which I have borrowed the diaristic form of my performance writing with Woolf. The strategies I have adopted in my writing are designed as a means of inhabiting her texts as a landscape, and in doing

so revealing the philosophical framework of this landscape. My approach to close reading Woolf through the activity of writing is reminiscent of Sontag's suggestion (previously considered in relation to staging *Alice in Bed*) that "to understand something is to understand its topography, to know how to chart it" (ibid.). It also echoes Woolf's own description of the different worlds written by different authors:

"*Different as these worlds are* [in different novels], *each is consistent with itself. The maker of each is careful to observe the laws of his own perspective, and however great a strain they may put upon us they will never confuse us, as lesser writers so frequently do, by introducing two different kinds of reality in the same book.*" (Woolf, 1986, p. 260)

To get to know the topography of the worlds that Woolf writes, to understand the laws and the implicit philosophies that govern her reality, I am writing with Woolf, thinking alongside her as 'fellow-worker and accomplice'. Working within the landscape of Woolf's writing is a process of practical philosophical enquiry that engages with Woolf as a mentor or ally, and with her work as an enabling space for the development of my own thinking on landscape.

My companionship with Woolf through writing is not dissimilar to that which Singh takes in her thesis-by-performance for "copying, re-writing, writing into, punctuating, interrupting, translating and absorbing" appropriated text (Singh, 2017, p. 8). Celine Condorelli's body of work entitled *The Company She Keeps* (2013) also enacts processes of "thinking together" with Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy (amongst others). This thinking together is termed "friendship" by Condorelli. She describes the relationship she has with what might otherwise be called source material as

"*a way of doing things that creates close ties and connections between things, people and myself, and that is something that more often than not has the feel of a friendship of sorts*" (Condorelli, 2013, p. 14)

Condorelli's description of friendship could be applied to any one of the projects I have described in this thesis; through my research I have been thinking together with Sontag, The Island, Heidegger's things and, in *Time Passes*, with Woolf as well as Robert De Niro and Alice James. The implied social and intimate nature of Condorelli's friendship adds a personal tone to the descriptions I have given in this thesis of bringing things different things, people, places, materials and ideas together through performance making.

Waugh suggests that Woolf developed her metaphysics "through the experience of creating fictional worlds and characters, rather than thorough close study of logical atomism, and logical empiricism" (Waugh, 2017, p. 31). Following Woolf's lead, in conversation with her I am developing my own thinking, and thus my own landscape performance practice through diaristic writing and the practical making processes of *Time Passes*.

My writing with Woolf is a method for considering the inherent performativity of her landscapes; elements of her work that can form the basis of a performance work without humans. It is also a method for revealing the ways in which her fiction presents a version of thinking that reaches beyond human-centric conceptions of what landscape is. The challenge to anthropocentric phenomenologies of landscape posed by Woolf's fictional landscapes questions the very notion of thinking as a solely human activity. As such Woolf's landscapes reach beyond the European Continental and phenomenological movement that Parkes positions Woolf as "Diotima" to (Parkes, 1982, p. 43). [8]

Monday, 16th January 2017

We are a train of three vast cars plunging northwards. In my suitcase I have all of Virginia Woolf's diaries, novels and essays, a disappointing biography & some complete holes.

Moving backwards I wonder which other of us is you. I wonder if your luggage will be as substantial as mine. I ponder the patterns of work inhabited by our fellow passengers, maybe returning home to fill a space, half a bed, a hot bath, arms, which, stretched out the night before, have remained empty.

As we enter the Cairngorms it becomes grey and the wind on the water's surface turns to ice. We keep looking at the sky as it begins to fade: soft-fleecy.

[8] Diotima is the name of a 'seer' character referenced by Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* as a source of knowledge (Howatson, M., Sheffield, F., 2008)

On the first night we walked, close, in the dark. The tension of our new relationship stringing us together; anxiety concerning what the other wants, questions of whether one's own wishes will be inhibited by how the other imagines this situation will reveal itself. Your sleeve warm inches away from my arm.

Treading together, away from the streetlights, we fell silent. Maybe concentrating, maybe unsure, maybe taking in the gloaming snow or the blinding light of the house up ahead; into who's garden we could be about to trespass.

A front window & a light burning.

It's almost too dark to see.

Are you nervous? Am I nervous? Your nervousness encourages me.

Every step on the frozen earth is a dare, daring one another to move away from the lights, moving away from the orientation of a starting point, giving our weight to the potential of ice underfoot. Every step a question which, when asked, commits us to innumerable risks. It is an odd road to be walking. One can hardly tell which is the water and which is the land, when I am her and when I am me: who is leading. Not for the first time the possibility of turning back is aired.

Out and out we go, further and further, until at last we seem to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea.

In support of the development of *Time Passes* I held a reading group on the central section of *To the Lighthouse* at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop. Present for the session, held on Burns Night, were a group of seven artists and curators, working across various disciplines including visual art and sculpture, printmaking, performance and architecture. The reading group provided a group context in which my close reading of Woolf could be opened out to engage with others' practices and perspectives.

Wednesday, 25th January 1915

Your birthday.

I don't know when I have enjoyed a birthday so much – Sitting at tea we decided three things: In the first place to take Hogarth, if we can get it; in the second, to buy a printing press; in the third to buy a Bulldog - probably called John.

We acknowledged the local significance of the day with a Haggis and some whiskey, but decided to celebrate with you. We talked about the dark; the substance of your darkness, the presence of your absence, and the fullness of your nothing moving through the house.

Your nothing thinks.

Nothing stirs in the drawing room and certain airs undertake a years-long process of questioning – wondering – asking - nosing round doors - contemplating permanence and durability with the movement of light and the prying of the wind and the noise of the sea.

We asked one another, "does darkness move through your work and what is it made of?"

"What are you doing with time and how do 'inside' and 'out' relate in the things, in the events, in the structures that you create?"

Taking our cue from Woolf, we asked "where is, what are the bounds of consciousness in your practice?"

The reading group structure provides a model for how a close reading of text can be used to support critical dialogue and artistic development. Like the workshop on Heidegger's things I convened at FACT gallery, the Expanded Analogue workshop at Wilkinson Gallery and my work on Eliot at Turner Contemporary, the reading group I lead on Woolf's landscapes at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop demonstrates one of the ways in which my practice of expanded close reading operates in group contexts.

The reading group supported my developing understanding that Woolf's 'nothing' has substance, and is a presence rather than absence. My use of the term 'nothing' as a signifier of *something* rather than absence has been adopted from Woolf, and runs throughout this chapter as a linguistic borrowing from her philosophy.

Virginia Woolf's challenge to phenomenology

In *The Waves* Woolf expresses a Heideggerian desire for knowledge of the essence of things, a desire for 'nearness' as Heidegger would have it:

"*'Like' and 'like' and 'like' – but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing? Now that lightening has gashed the tree and the flowering branch has fallen* [...] *let me see the thing"* (Woolf, 1980, p. 116).

The elements of Woolf's writing that Frank identifies as having "a family resemblance" to Continental philosophy (Frank, 2001, p. 12) fall within what Waugh describes as Woolf's "project to revision the soul" (Waugh, 2017, p. 32). Waugh observes in Woolf's fiction a conception of the soul as free of the bounded and isolated notion of human selfhood that is asserted by dualism. Hussey concurs that central to Woolf's writing is an anti-Cartesian attempt to understand or reveal the nature of the 'soul' or 'self'; terms which Hussey argues are synonymous for Woolf (Hussey, 1986, p. xix). Woolf's distinctive use of free indirect discourse, in which the narrative voice moves fluidly through the interior lives of her characters, is one example of the way her fiction disrupts the Cartesian notion of bounded human consciousness. This is most obvious in her later novel *The Waves*, but can also be seen in the first and final sections of *To the Lighthouse*.

With her roving, multi-subjective narrative voice Woolf presents a version of consciousness that is, as in Sontag's writing, social – or at least not confined to one body or self. Waugh describes Woolf's souls as "slippery" and explains that in their slipperiness "what Woolf is defying in her inimically playful fashion, is the closed idea of consciousness and of thinking." (ibid. p. 39) As a starting point for performance making Woolf's unbounded narrative voice resembles that of *Alice in Bed* as a challenge to create a landscape in which consciousness is subjective and social. However, in 'Time Passes' consciousness is present in the absence of humans.

The premise of Heidegger's philosophical enquiry into the nature of things is that to know a thing, to know a thing's *thingness*, is to achieve nearness. Thus, Heideggerian things and the landscapes they shape have at their centre the human thought and knowledge gained through nearness to a human consciousness. When Heidegger explains, "staying appropriates. It brings the four into the light of their mutual belonging [...] they are unconcealed" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 171), implicit in his conception of things is that thingness is unconcealed to human consciousness; the unconcealedness of things is the basis of human knowledge of the world.

Within *Sounds & Guts* this formulation of knowledge as relative and human-centric is echoed in the sonic and physical compositions in which audience proximity is a key element; it shapes the performance landscape as human-centric. For Heidegger, the danger posed by technologies such as radios and air travel is the creation of distance between things and human consciousness. Heidegger's notion of things, and the phenomenologies of landscape that rest upon his thinking, are thus implicitly anthropocentric.

Woolf, however, imagines a landscape of "thing[s] that exist when we aren't there" (Woolf, 1980, p. 114), and in 'Time Passes' removes the human from the centre of a narrative that retains consciousness. When we reach 'Time Passes', consciousness in *To the Lighthouse* is sustained despite the absence of humans. Woolf's notion of self keeps moving towards the horizon until "not only [is] furniture confounded: there [is] scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say 'This is he' or 'This is she'" (ibid. p. 144). With no human characters to gain or hold knowledge, only the dark, the wind and Woolf's nothing have the capacity to undertake processes of contemplative thought, through which knowledge might be gained:

"*Questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wallpaper, asking would it hang much longer, when would it fall?*" (Woolf, 1966, p. 144)

Woolf's nothing engages in an enquiry regarding the nature of time and the effect of duration on things. Hussey described the non-human consciousness that moves

through Woolf's writing as "the strange notion of an absent presence" (Hussey, 1986, p. 39). I conducted an examination of Woolf's nothing through my diaristic writing practice, which I opened up through the reading group at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop. This artistic enquiry is directed at deciphering the nature of Woolf's nothing as the implied non-human consciousness in her writing. The writing practice functions to refine my previously Heideggerian employment of things according to a *Woolfian* notion of consciousness. In a group context, such as the reading group, it opens up a consideration of how nothing, absence, consciousness and duration are configured in the work of other practitioners.

In Parkes' celebration of Woolf as the Diotima of European Continental philosophy, he names in particular Heidegger and Nietzsche as unknowing Woolfians (ibid. p. 43). Through my own work within Woolf's landscapes, I posit that Woolf goes further than either Nietzsche or Heidegger by decentering the landscape in relation to anthropocentric notions of consciousness and thought. Like Mr. Ramsey, the character of the father-philosopher in *To the Lighthouse*, Heidegger, Nietzsche and others within the school of European phenomenology, return to the human as the centre of thinking. Woolf's notion of consciousness stretches beyond human selfhood towards the non-human landscape. And thus, it stretches beyond the anthropocentrism of European Continental philosophy.

In her reading of Kaprow's Activities Cull explains "we should not think in terms of immanence as that which is immanent to something else (such as phenomenological consciousness), but only of pure immanence" (Cull, 2011, p. 81). Woolf's fictional landscape is not *immanent to* human consciousness, and as such can be read as a version of reality as 'pure immanence'. As a Diotima to phenomenology then, Woolf 's 1927 novel anticipates the *post*-Continental philosophy of Bergson and Deleuze.

That non-human presences are granted consciousness and thoughtful agency within Woolf's landscape is the crux of the philosophical proposition that 'Time Passes' is for performance making. The challenge that Woolf's text poses is not only the creation of a live event without human performers, but also the development of a decentered notion

of consciousness. It is in this way that Woolf's fiction pushes my practice beyond the Heideggerian frameworks I have previously drawn on to understand landscape.

A non-human landscape

The diaristic writing practice I have described is conducted in parallel with a number of practical experiments. These experiments extend the use of things previously seen in *Sounds & Guts*. They are informed by the physicality of Woolf's fictional landscapes and draw upon DeSilvey's work on 'entropic heritage', which is read alongside *To the Lighthouse*. The experiments are an attempt to attend to performativity in non-human activity.

Entropy

Caitlin DeSilvey's 2006 essay Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things gives this chapter its epigraph and has become a central reference point for the development of *Time Passes*. DeSilvey's text serves to open up pathways between my performance practice, Woolf's landscapes, and the Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape discussed in this thesis. In Observed Decay DeSilvey proposes entropic heritage as an alternative to traditions of Western museum and memorial practices. Entropic heritage, also described as ephemeral memorial, offers my practice a language of materiality with which to realise a performance work that, like Woolf's writing, foregrounds the activity of non-human things.

DeSilvey outlines the principle of entropic heritage through a description of curatorial work carried out in a derelict homestead in Montana. She explains how the presence of non-human life within the homestead, entwined with the 'shifty materiality' of the building, presented her with a theoretical and practical conundrum; what to preserve as 'artifact' and what to categorise as 'waste'? (DeSilvey, 2006, p. 320) Out of this conundrum emerged the idea that museum and memorial practices might be reconceived to incorporate the non-human processes that shape sites and objects of remembrance. DeSilvey explains that

"*Instead of asking the artifact to speak to a singular (human) past, entropic heritage works with an ecology of memory, things decay and disappear, reform and regenerate,*

shift back and forth between different states - and always teeter on the edge of intelligibility." (DeSilvey, 2006, p. 318)

DeSilvey's observation that "the drive towards stabilising the thing was part of the problem" (ibid. p. 324) resonates with the challenges of *Project R-hythm*, during which the desire to find stability or to stage a stable version of The Island inhibited our work. Forman's work also challenged human-centeredness by addressing discontinuity. Davy explains that Stein and Foreman's work is underpinned by an understanding "that man is innately a "centerless" being striving for equilibrium and harmony to the point of entropy (Davies, 1978, p. 121). DeSilvey's entropic heritage offers a challenge and alternative to the cultural drive for stability by acknowledging the unstable, active and non-human materiality of landscapes and things. DeSilvey's account of the Montana homestead could also be a description of the empty house of 'Time Passes':

"*Century-old glass develops cloudy irregularities in its gradual recrystallization. Faded scraps of newspaper mingle with the husks of fallen leaves. Lichen grows on a standing building, a symbiotic association of fungus and algae breaking down milled clapboards to make them available for recycling into new saplings. A lump of soft coal, pulled from the nearby mine 70 years ago, recalls the organic matter of a 25-million-year-old forest.*" (ibid. p. 326)

This description of the coal, which manifests its thingness as having been pulled from the ground, as once having held a different forest form, recalls Heidegger's explanation of the way the jug's thingness holds:

"*The spring stays on in the water of the gift. In the spring the rock dwells, and in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and the dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth. It stays in the wine given by the fruit of the vine, the fruit in which the earth's nourishment and the sky's sun are betrothed to one another. In the gift of the water, in the gift of wine, sky and earth dwell.*" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 169)

In The Thing Heidegger is concerned with the nature and nearness of all things as active presences in the world. In Observed Decay, DeSilvey focuses on things that display their activity overtly: fungus and algae, moulds and lichens, crystals and the photosensitivity of inks.

As well as echoing the poetry of Heidegger's things and the 'Time Passes' house, DeSilvey's things provide physical stimulus for developing the performance landscape

of *Time Passes*. As well as extending my work with radios in *Sounds & Guts*, initial *Time Passes* development included growing crystals in different environments, growing and seeking out different types of fungi, and observing how light and the presence of "technicolour moulds" (ibid. p. 319) affect the interiors of derelict houses. Woolf and DeSilvey guided these experiments and observations, which were the beginning of realising a Woolfian performance landscape.

Recalling Fuchs observation of post-anthropocentric stages in postdramatic theatre, *Time Passes* draws on entropic heritage to consider the ways in which non-human activity can become the focus and make up of a performance landscape. Entropic heritage invites "other-than-human agencies to participate in the telling of stories about particular places" (ibid. p. 318). Within DeSilvey's notion of entropic heritage "decay reveals itself not (only) as erasure but as a process that can be generative of a different kind of knowledge" (ibid. p. 323). Woolf's text offers DeSilvey's homestead the suggestion that knowledge generated through processes of entropy is held by not only humans, but by the landscape itself.

In order to develop a post-anthropocentric landscape performance in response to Woolf's text I have begun inviting unstable, active and non-human presences to participate in the making of *Time Passes*. To do this I am taking my cue from DeSilvey, looking for shifty materials that echo elements of Woolf's fictional landscape.

Radios and crystals

A convergence of interests supported my use of radios in the development of *Time Passes*. DeSilvey's inclusion of crystalising substances suggested a line of practical enquiry into the properties of various crystals. Alongside descriptions of salt air and seawater in Woolf's island story I began growing salt-based crystals, experimenting with the character of different salts (rock, sea, Epsom and Rochelle salt) and the effects of various contextual factors on their growth; temperature, light levels, proximate materials such as copper (to alter colour), and the surfaces upon which the crystal is grown. My preexisting interest in how radios shape a performance landscape laid the groundwork for an attraction to the sonic and site-responsive nature of crystals, which sit at the heart of early radio technology. At the centre of Heidegger's distance

abolishing radio-thing is a crystal diode; crystal diodes are the defining feature of the 'crystal radio'. The crystals I began growing were therefore also intended for use in the creation of radios, extending my work with radios in performance from the use of found things to bespoke and hand-made listening devices that reveal their organic and mutable nature through ongoing processes of crystallisation.

One of the initial reference points for the creation of crystal radios that I drew on was a description of how soldiers in WW1 – the period during which Woolf's novel is set – created 'crystal radios' in the trenches using rusty razor blades and pencil lead. The interrupting brackets with which Woolf conveys news of the Ramsey family in her novel allude to early twentieth century communications systems and, set alongside the writings of Heidegger, open up a space for considering the influence that such technology had on Woolf's modernism and philosophy.

My work with radios led to the development of active performance landscapes that use found and bespoke radios, and which, like Woolf's house, are absent of human performers. At the Scottish Sculpture Workshop, I created a temporary installation that comprised of a number of analogue radios interconnected with copper wire, and configured as a performative sculptural landscape.

Figure 13 *Time Passes*: radio Installation at Scottish Sculpture Workshop (2017). Image: Tess Denman-Cleaver.

The copper wire strung between the radios acts as an extension to their aerials - as you might use a coat hanger to enhance the signal on an old FM radio. By extending the radio aerials I exaggerated their sensitivity to specific environmental qualities and change: factors such as wind, the thickness and material of proximate walls and the movement of bodies (human and non-human). These environmental factors impact on the strength of their reception and the clarity of the broadcasts and also shape the character of the interference that can be heard. As well as a dynamic physical structure the system resulted in a soundscape composed through interaction with a site; this is the crux of the radio installation's non-human performativity.

This sounding structure developed as part of *Time Passes* bears resemblance to Tetsuya Umeda's performance works, in which, over a sustained period of time, he assembles a collection of sound emitting objects and materials. Within this constructed space Umeda then continues to reconfigure and 'play' the assemblage throughout the performance.

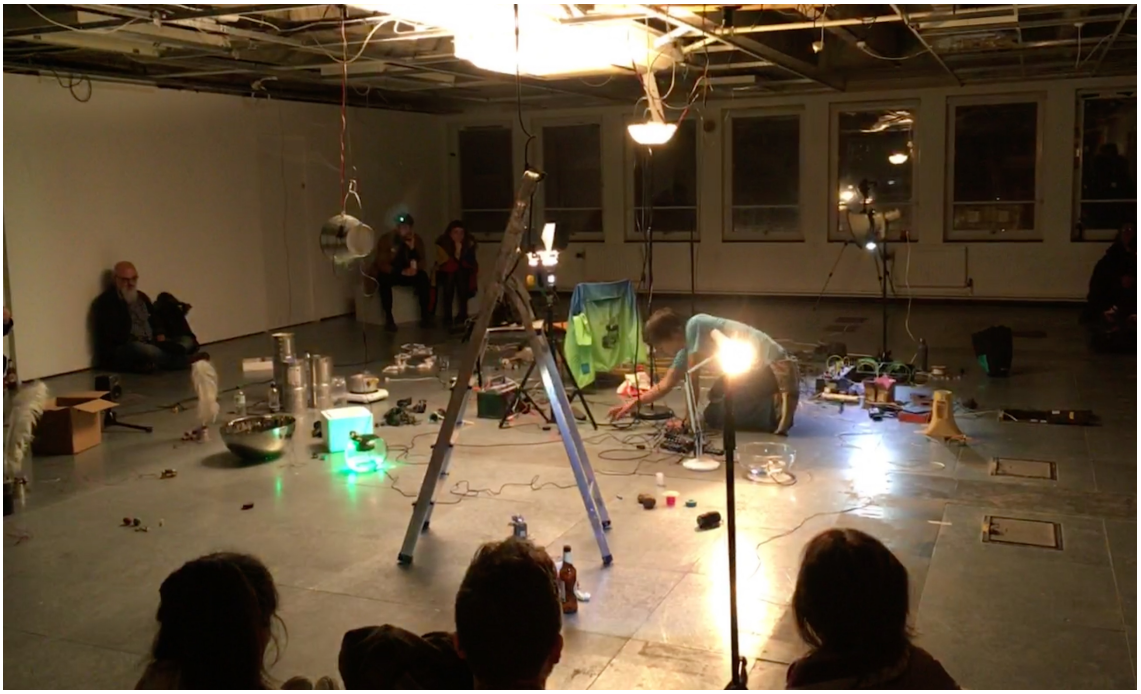

Figure 14 Tetsuya Umeda performing at The Northern Charter alongside Tim Shaw and John Richards (2018). Image: Tess Denman-Cleaver.

Umeda's performance installations and the *Time Passes* radio structure are performative works that reach towards ideas associated with installation art practice. Like the art historic lineage I connect to my own practice in this thesis, Julie Reiss connects the birth of installation art, as an art form and related critical language, to Allan Kaprow (Reiss, 1999, xii). Reiss cites in particular Kaprow's 'Environments' as early examples of what would become known as installation art (ibid.). Installation art, as described by Reiss in *From Margin to Center: the spaces of installation art*, is artwork created within in the presentation space itself, usually a gallery, which requires spectator participation or presence to be complete (ibid.). Kramer described installation art as work that contains "a multiplicity of agents that operate in relation as well as independently of each other" (Kramer, 2012, p. 84).

A number of works cited by Reiss span installation and performance practice, including Oldenburg's *The Store* (1967) and Nauman's *Performance Area* (1969). In both of these works the presentation context is shaped by the artist to frame the human activity of the performer or the audience. Reiss discusses the paradox of documentation surrounding installation art, which is characterised by photographs of gallery spaces

empty of humans. These images illustrate how, despite its performativity, installation art has remained bound by a focus on the static object (ibid., p. xvii).

Elmgreen and Dragset's more recent theatrical installation works, such as *Tomorrow* (2013) and *This is How We Bite Our Tongue* (2018) are in line with Reiss and Kramer's definitions of the form. In *Tomorrow* fictional human actors are framed as absent from an empty film set constructed in a wing of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The audience are invited to inspect the meticulously realised and realistic details of the film set, for which an accompanying film script is provided. *This is How We Bite Our Tongue* is a full-sized replica of a derelict swimming pool in the Whitechapel Gallery. The audience adopt a similar role as welcome intruder, the safety of the gallery context softening the feeling of trespassing that might usually be associated with exploration of derelict or abandoned sites. In both of these works, like *The Store* and *Performance Area*, the work is completed by the presence of the audience, and thus the installations configure human activity as central to the artwork.

The theatrical installation works I have cited can also be understood through a lens of scenographic practice closer to my own background as a theatre and performance practitioner:

"Scenography pertains to the creation of events, experiences and transformations; it generates dynamics by way of repetition, duplication, isolation, mixing and merging, foregrounding and camouflaging; it is sensitive to measure, depth, volume and scale. Both scenography and performative architecture might be regarded as dynamic strategies of structuring events and of positioning audiences" (Bosch et al., 2013, pp. 95-96)

Rather than installation art, I position my own practice more closely in relation to the scenographic tropes of post-dramatic theatre. Particular features of the scenographic installations I built as part of *Time Passes* were designed to create a diverse and dynamic, site-responsive system in which the human is not central, neither as performer or spectator. The inclusion of pendulums, for example, when moved by the wind or the passing of bodies resulted in a rhythmic quality to the landscape as they swung to and fro. Extending the system outside of the building also meant that the architecture as well as weather and animal life surrounding the installation became

part of the work. This aspect of the structural dynamic of the installation mirrored the blurring of the boundaries of inside and outside that occurs through Woolf's writing and DeSilvey's Montana homestead. It also builds on my understanding of performance landscapes as porous from *Sounds & Guts*. The radio installation acts as a structure for inviting "other-than-human agencies to participate" in the development and performance of *Time Passes*. This structure depends upon the inherently site-specific nature of analogue radios, as described by Tim Shaw in relation to the making of *Sounds & Guts* (see chapter four).

In May 2017, I shared a refined workshop version of the *Time Passes* radio landscape with a group of 50 participants. Artists and academics were invited to build the radio infrastructure for themselves as part of a programme of activity on 'The Expanded Analogue' at Wilkinson Gallery (London).[9]

Figure 15 *Expanded Analogue* workshop at Wilkinson Gallery (2017). Image: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca.

[9] The Expanded Analogue event was hosted by Kingston University. I was invited to deliver a series of workshops over the course of a day by John Ó Maoilearca, of which the radio workshop was one. Two other sessions used projection and writing technologies.

Further to this event and extending my investigation into the effect of early communications technology on modernist literature I also introduced the radio landscape in its workshop form to a project exploring T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* at Turner Contemporary gallery (Margate). At both Wilkinson Gallery and Turner Contemporary the radio installation was used to encourage a philosophically oriented dialogue around how radio technology – the thingness of radios – affects our experience of landscape. At Wilkinson Gallery this dialogue contributed to a wider discussion on the relationship between modes of thinking and analogue and digital technology. At Turner Contemporary it was used as a method for investigating the nature of Eliot's poetic landscapes. These workshops sit outside of my doctoral research, but are testament to the central role that radios as landscape-shaping things have come to occupy within my practice.

Like the radios, the activity of growing crystals is a method for opening up the process of performance making to a pre-existing environment, inviting the responsive and ever-changing movement of crystalising substances into a dialogue of mutability and flux with other things, including text. Translating fictional things from within Woolf's house into 'props' upon which to grow salt crystals, I began to imagine a house entirely encrusted with the patterns and peculiarities of various salts; a shawl, the skull of an animal, a dining table laid out with crockery, cutlery and candle sticks. The process of growing crystals on various props has enabled me to gain nearness with the material thing-ness of different crystals, which supports my inclusion of them in a wider Woolfian performance landscape.

Building upon my use of props from the novel and the radio installation, I created copper replicas of Woolf's fictional things that enhance the infrastructure of the radio landscape with domestic forms. As well as affecting the aerial structure of the installation the copper's process of oxidization colours the salt crystals growing in the environment.

Figure 16 *Time Passes*: copper cast candlestick made at Scottish Sculpture Workshop. Image: Tess Denman-Cleaver.

This landscape is gradually becoming a self-sustaining system, in which copper affects radio signals, picked up by crystals, coloured by copper, and so on. The forms and materials that make up the system mirror the activity of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. In addition to these experiments with crystals and radios, I also explored derelict houses, looking for naturally occurring processes that echo Woolf. Having discovered a series of wallpapers faded by light and patterned with moulds, I began looking at how crystals and moulds can be incorporated into the process of printing performative entropic wallpapers that draw on the designs of Woolf's contemporaries in the Omega Workshop.

Towards a Woolfian landscape performance practice

Within his definition of postdramatic theatre Lehmann acknowledges a vein of practice that decenters the human:

"Post-anthropocentric theatre would be a suitable name for an important (though not the only) form that postdramatic theatre can take. Under this heading one could assemble the theatre of objects entirely without human actors, theatre of technology and machinery (e.g. in the mechanized presentations by Survival Research Laboratories), and

theatre that integrates the human form mostly as an element in landscape-like spatial structures. They are aesthetic figurations that point utopically towards an alternative to the anthropocentric ideal of the subjection of nature. When human bodies join with objects, animals and energy lines into a single reality (as also seems to be the case in circus – thus the depth of the pleasure it causes), theatre makes it possible to imagine a reality other than that of man dominating nature." (Lehmann, 2006, p. 81)

Kirkkopelto considers the ethics of performance making with human and non-human elements in relation to object oriented ontology, asking:

"How can the performing human body be conceived of as a component—in other words, an element capable of connecting with other equal but not necessarily similar elements—and how can it become such a thing in practice without losing its ethical and political autonomy and artistic freedom of expression?" (Kirkkopelto, 2016, p. 50)

To develop *Time Passes* I have not only been looking for new practical strategies to invite non-human presences into the making process, but also developing a philosophical framework through which to do so. Woolf's writing opens up the possibility of a post-anthropocentric mode of thought that challenges the implicit ontologies of my previous performance practice.

The landscape of 'Time Passes' is not wholly uninhabited by humans, of course; it is inhabited by the author. The text holds her thoughts, just as she held it in her imagination. And it is inhabited by the reader, who becomes a presence moving through the house with Woolf, simultaneously occupying the atmosphere that they are occupied by. As sole author of the house, which is manifest in language and imagination only, it could not be said that Woolf invites the participation of "other-than-human" agencies into the act of storytelling. However, in focusing on non-human aspects of the narrative Woolf reminds us that stories are composites of human and non-human activity, with the later generally consigned to the margins. In my experiments with radios and crystals I have been positioning the other-than-human in the foreground of performance making.

Hussey asserts that "again and again, Woolf emphasises that apprehension of 'reality' is available only through effort" (Hussey, 1986, p. 115). Apprehension of 'reality' is seen in

To the Lighthouse the effort of striving beyond the human; beyond a bounded sense of selfhood, beyond anthropocentric perspectives, beyond land.

"*Out and out one went, further and further, until at last one seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea*." (Woolf. 1966, p. 195)

In its striving beyond 'Time Passes' becomes the artwork that it is, and the particular philosophical proposition for performance making.

The performance practice of *Time Passes* bears resemblances to Stein's modernist landscape plays. Stein's landscape plays were developed in response to a perceived disconnect between the action and the audience experience (Stein, 1965, p. 122). Her desire was for a form of theatre in which the audience's experience of the present moment is concurrent and coherent with the present moment of the performance. In Lehmann's terms, Stein was attempting to create "an intentionally unmediated experience of the real (time, space, body)" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 134). The intentionally unmediated experience of the real can also be described as "immanence", as in Cull's reading of Kaprow's Activities. As with Stein's plays, Hussey describes the effect of Woolf's fictional landscapes as immanent when he argues that "distance between perceiver and perceived is annihilated" in her writing (Hussey, 1986, p. 110).

Lead by Woolf and the challenges that her landscapes pose for performance, I have approached the practical development of *Time Passes* in a way that is unfamiliar to me as a performance maker. In this project I am working first with physical things, exploring the properties of materials, the tactility and tangibility of landscape, attending to affect in a way that seeks to avoid placing me – or my audience – at the centre of that which is affected. My attention to the inherent performativity of things is informed by my experience of working with the landscape of The Island and my reflection upon how things shaped the landscape of *Sounds & Guts*. My use of Woolf's text, as a provocation and guide, builds on my performance philosophy approach to the role of a theatre director close reading the ontological implications of a text in *Alice in Bed*. Each of these projects disrupted previously held notions of landscapes and

necessitated not only a reformulation of landscape but also a newly configured performance practice. *Time Passes* is

: an arrival

: a bright white obelisk, a flickering with

: a song sung in a swimming costume, fathoms deep

: Blackout.

Friday, 22nd December 2017

Standing in the house with the wind and the rain with the sea and the earth and setting up an echo which chimed in the air and made it full of vibration, it is clear to me that your things are not symbols: they are things, things that think, think with us, things without us or with their own centre from which they know and shape the world.

How once the looking glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, and went out again - this is not "the emptiness of death [...] *the transition from consciousness to unconsciousness, from life to death, from peace to war."*[10] *Our things do not perform a hierarchy, in which the human being sets the measure for the liveliness of all beings.*[11]

Certain airs have detached from the body; one fold of the shawl loosened, swings to and fro. I must still grope and experiment but this afternoon with the crystals, encouraging your dog away from a game of catch with a pendulum, I had a gleam of light.

Your nothing is weighted differently.

Looking back, nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which, creeping in at keyholes and confidence washed away preoccupations, stole days and returned nights, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow

[10] Briggs, 2006, p. 149.

[11] Kirkkopelto, 2016, p. 52.

dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers, a plan. These days have been water, ruffled by the wind into atoms of ice against the cheek.

Then your empty house, forming round us like a still pool.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

"To be a work means to set up a world"

(Heidegger, 2001, p. 43)

Beginning this research I set out to understand the role that landscape plays within my work and, in doing so, develop my performance philosophy practice. In this doctoral thesis I have told a story of how my practice evolved over a period of nine years, through four projects that manifest a philosophical enquiry into the nature of landscape and how we experience it. I described how my approach to working with landscape as a thematic, formal and contextual concern changed in response to the questions my work asked regarding landscape and performance. These questions were addressed through engagement with physical place, particular things and a lineage of philosophical thinking that understands landscape as non-representational, temporal, subjective, performative and eventually non-human.

Time Passes concludes the body of work by looking back on the frameworks and philosophical implications of the landscapes that I created in *Alice in Bed*, *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts*. My articulation of the projects reveals how learning generated through this research inheres in the workings of a practice that continually questions the nature of landscapes I shaped through performance making. If, as Sontag suggests, to know something is to know its topography, then this thesis demonstrates how knowledge of the topography of my own practice resulted in new ways of relating to the world. As a resolution to my doctoral research *Time Passes* reflects on the paradigms I set up through previous projects and introduces a new set of questions relating to the philosophical bearing of landscape performance practice.

Through an articulation of my own landscape performance practice I have outlined a new framework for making and reading performance work that is primarily concerned with landscape, but which is not necessarily geographically located. This framework, which I have called landscape performance, expands upon established definitions of

'site-specific' practice, providing performance practitioners and researchers with a new critical language for understanding how performance thinks about landscape.

In what follows I will review the work I have presented in relation to the future directions of my own practice and research, and address some of the "possibilities, positions, intersections, passages, detours, and U-turns" that this thesis has opened up in relation to performance, philosophy and landscape (Sontag, 1981, p. 177).

I have presented my performance-led enquiry into the nature of landscape as a series of close readings conducted within a body of work; *Alice in Bed* is founded on a close reading of Sontag's theatrical consciousness, *Project R-hythm* is a close reading of an island, *Sounds & Guts* shares a close reading of radios in relation to Heideggerian things and *Time Passes* mirrors *Alice in Bed* in its use of Woolf as a guide in the making of work. The process of conducting philosophically oriented close readings is central not only to my landscape performance practice, but also to the model of practice-based research this thesis offers. This methodology grew out of my previous work in the role of theatre director and can be understood as a practice of dramaturgy. By articulating the internal workings of my close readings this thesis offers researchers a model for considering the implied philosophical bearing of performance work, and gives practitioners a developmental approach to reflecting upon the paradigms they set up in their own performative worlds.

In order to reveal what my practice is doing in relation to landscape I have critically situated my work in relation to site-specific practice, postdramatic theatre, the work of Allan Kaprow and experimental sound composers attached to the Fluxus movement. Discussing the relationship between postdramatic and dramatic theatre, as well as between postmodernism and modernism, Lehmann observed that:

"*The prefix 'post' indicates that a culture or artistic practice has stepped out of the previously unquestioned horizon of modernity but still exists with some kind of reference to it. This may be a relation of negation, declaration of war, liberation, or perhaps only a deviation and playful exploration of what is possible beyond this horizon.*" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 27)

Lehmann's description of defining practice via negation and deviation reflects the movements I have made in the development of my own research; stepping away from the theatre auditorium to make *Alice in Bed*, questioning the applicability of existing definitions of site-specificity in relation to *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts*, and thinking alongside Woolf in order to challenge the anthropocentrism of my previous work. By articulating the cross overs and differences to existing performance practices that foreground space, place, landscape or site I have defined my own work as landscape performance by considering how well-established articulations of practice describe my own working methods.

In relation to Bowie's discussion of what performance philosophy does, my research might be understood as a making sense of landscape through performance making:

"The idea is to engage with the practices via which we make sense, not primarily as objects to be given a philosophical characterisation, but rather as ways in which the blind-spots in other practices, including in philosophy itself, can be made manifest." (Bowie, 2015, p. 54)

If, as Bowie asserts, "the practice of philosophy [is] making sense of making sense" (ibid. p. 52), this practice-based thesis reflects upon *how* I have made sense of landscape through my own performance making processes. The way in which I have questioned and developed the implied philosophical landscapes of the four projects is an artistic development strategy that looks for 'blind spots' within my own work, as well as in the source material I engage with and the fields of practice I move through. Telling the story of this interrogative and self-reflexive approach to thinking through performance is a way of revealing the rigour and value of performance making as a research process.

The focus of my close reading throughout the project chapters is shaped by an engagement with a particular lineage of phenomenological thinking. Moving on from the social character of consciousness read in the landscape of Sontag's *Alice in Bed*, I examined Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape through my work with physical place and things. My practice-based and performance-led consideration of phenomenologies of landscape ends with a dialogue on how my performance making

with Woolf challenges the implicit anthropocentrism of landscapes shaped by Heideggerian things.

Landscape Performance

The definition of practice that emerges through my work considers the philosophical bearing of engaging with landscape through performance making. I have engaged with historic performance work from within and around the postdramatic theatre movement in order to understand the development of my own work as a move away from the auditorium. I have also been nourished by the practices of my contemporaries creating work that I would describe as landscape performance. A review of landscape performance practice based on the definition my thesis offers might consider what the philosophical implications of work by artists such as; Nic Green, whose *Turn* (2016) used sound and biography to engage with the particular landscape of a decommissioned dock, Harriet Plewis' *Reading Room* (2017) which, like my own work, engages with philosophical material through an expanded practice of close reading, or Fevered Sleep's *An Open Field* (2014): a "participatory walking project and online text-based artwork" to which myself and my collaborator Martine Vreiling van Tuijl contributed. Each of these works employs different strategies for shaping their audience's experience of landscape. Whilst an in-depth review of such work falls beyond the scope and capacity of my own doctoral research, the definition of landscape performance that I have offered provides a lens for reading the nuances of performance which operates beyond the limitations of site-specific practice's concern for where a performance takes place. A review of landscape performance based on the framework I have presented would support a nuanced understanding of performance practice within a growing community of practitioners working with the myriad possibilities of what landscape is. The descriptions I have given here of how the practical development of my work is motivated by philosophical enquiry also offers landscape performance practitioners a frame of reference for considering the particular philosophical bearing of their own working methods.

In relation to Heidegger's epigraph to this chapter, in this thesis I have examined how each of my landscape performance works builds a world, and through this examination I have revealed the philosophical implications of my own artistic practice.

The first project chapter on *Alice in Bed* presents an approach to theatrical staging that is grounded in a close reading of the philosophical implications of a text. My close reading of Sontag's notion of consciousness as subjective and social resulted in a phenomenological staging of her play outside of an auditorium context. The staging of *Alice in Bed* was motivated by an attempt to shape a landscape that embodies Sontag's particular strain of phenomenology. My articulation of *Alice in Bed* offers an artist's perspective on how the mechanics of a live event are designed to shape landscape as experience. The approach I have taken speaks to theatre practice and performance studies by suggesting ways of reading the philosophical motivations and implications of postdramatic staging.

Project R-hythm responded to the emergent philosophical concern for landscape in *Alice in Bed* with a performance making project that engaged directly with a particular geographic landscape. *Project R-hythm*'s process demanded an understanding of landscape that questioned the implied stability of theatrical approaches to staging and existing definitions of site-specific performance. Chapter three on *Project R-hythm* shares a model of practice that involves the close reading of a landscape as an active performative agent within the making process. To a review of contemporary landscape performance work, *Project R-hythm* provides a methodology for examining the particular ways of being that emerge from performance practice in response to geographical landscape.

Sounds & Guts, presented in chapter four, looks in detail at how particular things are used to shape experiential performance landscapes. *Sounds & Guts* offers practitioners and researchers a language for thinking about what the thingness of things does to the worlds that are shaped by performance.

Landscape and technology

Sounds & Guts marks the beginning of my engagement with analogue technologies as things that shape landscape. My work with radios was has been carried forward into *Time Passes* with a consideration for how communications technologies shaped the literature and thinking of Woolf's modernist landscapes, as well as the European Continental school of philosophy from which Heidegger speaks. Having expanded upon this enquiry outside of my doctoral research through work on T. S. Eliot's poetry (Turner

Contemporary), and the idea of 'expanded analogue' (Wilkinson Gallery), my landscape performance practice continues to look at how technology affects landscape.

Extending my work with things beyond the scope of this thesis' focus on radios, during the course of this research I also programmed a series of events that invited practitioners, researchers and audiences to explore the use of projectors and projection devices in the shaping of performance landscapes. The programme of workshops and public events, entitled *Projection Club*, was hosted between Newcastle University and the artist-run organisation The Northern Charter. *Projection Club* supported development of the use of technology in my own work and engaged people in a dialogue around the motivations and implications of using certain things to shape landscapes within live events.

My ambition is to build upon the work I have done to date using technological things to shape performance landscapes through a performance-led engagement with literature that is shaped by the historical technological developments that have impacted experience and understanding of landscape. I have begun this work in relation to Virginia Woolf (*Time Passes*), Basil Bunting (Denman-Cleaver & Vreiling van Tuijl, 2018), Stevie Smith (Denman-Cleaver, 2016) and T. S Eliot (at Turner Contemporary, Margate). Through *Time Passes* I have also started to open up my enquiry to other art forms, such as the visual designs of the Omega Workshop. A continuation of the research I present here would result not only in a new body of performance works but also new insights into the philosophical orientation and significance of particular modernist landscapes.

There is growing body of work within the performative turn in landscape thinking that addresses how more recent technological developments have affected our experience of place. Michael Wilson, for example, discussing digital technology and storytelling observed that "the evolution of web based technologies and their increased affordability for the broader population, at least in Western capitalist democracies, has transformed both only our lives but our stories" (Wilson, 2014, p. 127). Malcolm McCullough's work on the "paradigm shift from virtual to ubiquitous computing" in the twenty-first century describes the effect of digital technology on our experience of landscape in terms of 'ambience' (McCullough, 2013). McCullough situates his notion of twenty-first

century landscape experience as ambience in relation to architecture and design, but it also resembles my own performance-led coastal notion of landscape as aggregate:

"*Instead of pulling us through the looking glass into some sterile, luminous world, digital technology now pours out beyond the screen, into our messy places, under our laws of physics; it is built into our rooms, embedded in our props and devices – everywhere.*" (McCullough, 2005, p. 9)

A review of contemporary landscape practice based on the framework I have set out with my research would build on my own work with radios by looking at how artists shape landscape through engagement with digital and networked technological things. Darsha Hewitt's *Personal Soundtrack Emitters* (2006) and Tim Shaw's *Ambulation* (2017), for example, use sound to disrupt audiences' landscape experience and, like the attention training activities of *Project R-hythm*, highlight the subjectivity of landscape through acts of listening. Shaw's *Ring Network* (2016) and Olia Lialina's *Summer* (2013) play with latency in networked technology, making distance tangible within our experience of connectivity in the twenty-first century. Their work resonates with the lens of Heidegger's distance abolishing technological things that I have employed to look at radio-things. An in-depth review of artists using digital and networked things to examine and shape landscapes would expand the definition and understanding of landscape performance that my research initiates.

Practice-based research

The research I have presented within this thesis is described as practice-based and performance-led. It has been guided and conducted within my own performance making and developed through public performance, public workshops as well as workshops with practitioners and researchers that I have convened around my work. I have shared and developed my thinking through the delivery of multiple conference papers, and elements of this thesis have been developed as peer reviewed academic publications for which I have been the lead or sole author.

The movement of my research is synonymous with the movement of my practice, but this thesis offers one very particular route into the work, one that is different from that

which the audience experience in the context of a live event. This approach to opening up the intentionality and philosophical bearing of my practice is a model of practice-based research developed through experimentation with how to affect change within my practice, and how to articulate that change in the format of a doctoral thesis. Just as I would select particular elements for sharing in a workshop context according to the dynamics of that environment, in the construction of this thesis I have selected elements of my practice that communicate to the academic communities that support my artistic development. I have done this with a consideration for how the act of communication will, in turn, impact on my own work. The purposely non-holistic model of practice-based research this thesis offers acknowledges that what I share here is only one strata in the geology of a practice.

Non-philosophy

In The Aesthetics of Silence Sontag presents Wittgenstein as a thinker for whom "philosophy [was] practiced as an art form" (Sontag, 2009, p. 6). My research is situated within the field of performance philosophy, which is concerned with examining the relationships and questioning the distinctions between performance and philosophy. In each of the project chapters I have revealed the processes of my performance making as a practical and artistic philosophy practice. In the mechanics of my making I have shown how performance thinks in relation to landscape.

Reflecting upon the development of the performance philosophy field Cull Ó Maoilearca et al. comment in their 2017 editorial that "it remains the case that most of the work undertaken within the field of performance philosophy follows that tradition described as 'continental' "(Cull Ó Maoilearca et al., 2016, p. 3). The body of work I have presented is, for the most part, also reliant on languages drawn from Continental philosophy to articulate and reflect upon practice.

In his inaugural lecture at Kingston University in 2015, John Ó Maoilearca explained that within Lauruelle's non-philosophy, philosophy is understood "a device for controlling what counts as thought" (Ó Maoilearca, 2015). This is the gesture that philosophy as a discipline enacts; to say what is and isn't thought. Ó Maoilearca's interest lies in how an equality of different modes of thinking, "humans and nonhumans, living and nonliving, thought and nonthought, philosophy and nonphilosophy", is established through

Lauruelle's non-philosophy or non-*standard*-philosophy. Non-philosophy refuses to define what it is to think and thus allows for all and every action, human or non-human, to be understood as thinking.

In the final project chapter on *Time Passes*, I consider modes of artistic practice that challenge the implicit anthropocentrism of continental philosophy. The attempt that *Time Passes* makes to move away from the human centre of my previous work occurs in conversation with dialogues in performance philosophy around non-human modes of thinking and the language and frameworks of *non*-philosophy.

Non-philosophy's assertion that the distinctions between philosophy and performance set up by traditional philosophical gestures are hierarchical resonates with my own attempt to understand how performance thinks and question what form knowledge generated via performance takes. In my research I have understood my performance-led and practice-based research as generating new ways of relating to the world that inhere in the mechanics of its making.

Eclecticism in performance-led research

I have shown that precisely because of the eclecticism and idiosyncratic nature of my practice my research speaks to a diverse range of academic and non-academic fields. With my definition of landscape performance I have given performance practitioners and researchers a framework for understanding of how performance shapes and understands landscape. My research contributes to the performative turn in cultural geography and social anthropology with a performance-led investigation of the underlying principles of phenomenologies of landscape. In my final project I question the implicit anthropocentrism of such conceptions of landscape. My description of performance making lends the performative turn a language of physicality and material engagement that testifies to embodied experience of working with human and non-human landscapes. Throughout this thesis I have also offered a critical commentary on understandings of performance-led and practice-based research, offering models for articulating arts-based research and the ways of relating to the world that it generates.

Reading Susan Sontag

The in-depth study of Sontag's phenomenology I conducted through *Alice in Bed* contributes to the relatively small number of texts that are dedicated to the

philosophical orientation of this significant thinker of the twentieth century. My reading of Sontag is concerned with the way in which she translated her notion of consciousness into theatrical form, and has also drawn on interviews and essays in which she implies philosophical allegiances. Whilst Sontag's readings of twentieth century philosophy, art and literature shape Western culture and our understandings of key figures such as Walter Benjamin, very little attention has been given to Sontag herself as a philosopher. Bringing performance philosophy's examination of how performance thinks into contact with Sontag's play opens up a conversation about how Sontag's writing thinks, philosophically. Sontag is a writer who practiced her thinking across fiction, essays, diaries, and work for theatre. A study of the nuances of her philosophy based on the phenomenology I have read in her work for theatre might look at the mechanics of her thinking across different forms of literature. Reflecting upon my own methods for thinking with Woolf and Sontag through performance making, I propose that Sontag practices her own philosophy through a process of 'thinking with' the many subjects of her writing, two of which are addressed in this these; Alice James and Walter Benjamin. I intend to develop my understanding of Sontag's philosophy as a practice of 'thinking with' through future practice-based research.

Performing with Virginia Woolf

Non-philosophy also suggests a way of developing my work in *Time Passes* beyond the human-centric modes of thinking that define the phenomenologies of landscape I have previously relied upon. Whereas in *Project R-hythm* I understood our experience of The Island through a lens of Heideggerian phenomenologies of landscape, with *Time Passes* I am approaching a notion of landscape that looks for equality of agency and thought between human and non-human presences. Moving on from the Continental frameworks that have defined my practice to date, *Time Passes* creates a bridge to a new decentred and non-anthropocentric language, supported through a dialogue with performance philosophy's growing concern for non-philosophy. I envisage this language will define the next phase of my artistic development.

In its scope, this thesis offers a model of practice-based research that acknowledges the variety of interests contained within the progress of an artistic practice. In answer Elkins' questions regarding the value of artistic research beyond the development of an individual's practice I offer an account of how my own artistic practice embodies

research on (among other subjects) Sontag's philosophy, Heidegger's things, and Woolf's landscapes. In relation to each of these subjects I have looked for the blind spots in both my own practice and existing scholarship. In relation to Woolf, for example, as with Sontag, I have attended to a relatively neglected aspect of her work, looking at how her thinking is manifest in the landscapes she writes rather than the people who populate her novels. This reading of Woolf will go on to sustain my future practice and further contribute to thinking around Woolf's role in twentieth century philosophical thought.

By exposing the mechanics of my practice I have shown how performance thinks in relation to a number of areas of academic interest, and in doing so how the eclecticism of performance practice creates hitherto un-forged relationships between disparate disciplines, things, places, materials and ideas.

Appendixes

Alice in Bed: Full cast list, creative and production team credits

Play by Susan Sontag

Produced by Tender Buttons

Creative team

Tess Denman-Cleaver (director)

Ben Jeans Houghton (set and costume design)

Tim Shaw (sound)

Neesha Tulsi Champaneeria (costume assistant)

Douglas Kuhrt (lighting design)

Adriana Rojas Viquez (publicity design)

Production team

Simon Henderson (production manager)

Paul Aziz (stage manager)

Chloe Ribbons (duty stage manager)

Graham Wilson (lighting assistant)

Nicola Morris (assistant stage manager),

Adam Johnston (assistant stage manager)

Cast

Tessa Parr (Alice James)

Abigail Walton (Kundry)

Thomas Walton (Father, Mother and Mattress Mover 2)

Claire Bennett (Emily Dickinson)

Joanna Holden (Nurse and Margaret Fuller)

Rachel Gay (Myrtha)

Zoe Lambert (Henry James and Mattress Mover 1)

Alice in Bed: Full programme of Events

2011

Public work-in-progress performance, Stephenson Works (Newcastle, UK)

World Building, exhibition of documentation by Kuba Ryniewicz with sound installation by Adam Parkinson (Culture Lab Off Site space, Newcastle, UK)

2012

Performing Diaries workshops, partnership with Newcastle and North Tyneside NHS Early Intervention in Psychosis Service (Culture Lab, Newcastle, UK)

Public work-in-progress performance, GIFT at Northern Stage (Newcastle, UK)

2013

Six public performances, Stephenson Works (Newcastle, UK)

LISTEN HERE: Symposium on arts, diaries in literature and mental health convened by Tess Denman-Cleaver (Tender Buttons) at The Mining Institute (Newcastle, UK). Including talks; from Dr Leigh Wetherall Dickson (Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Literature), writer and academic Lauren Elkin, Professor Guy Austin (Professor of French Studies), and a workshop with artist Aidan Moesby.
Full proceedings available from:
http://www.tenderbuttons.co.uk/project/participation/

Workshop performance of *Alice in Bed*, in partnership with Newcastle and North Tyneside NHS Early Intervention in Psychosis Service.

Alice in Bed: Venue and Staging Map

This plan for the scenography of Alice in Bed *was drawn onto a planning document provided by the venue owner.*

Figure 17 *Alice in Bed*: venue and staging map. Created by Ben Jeans Houghton.

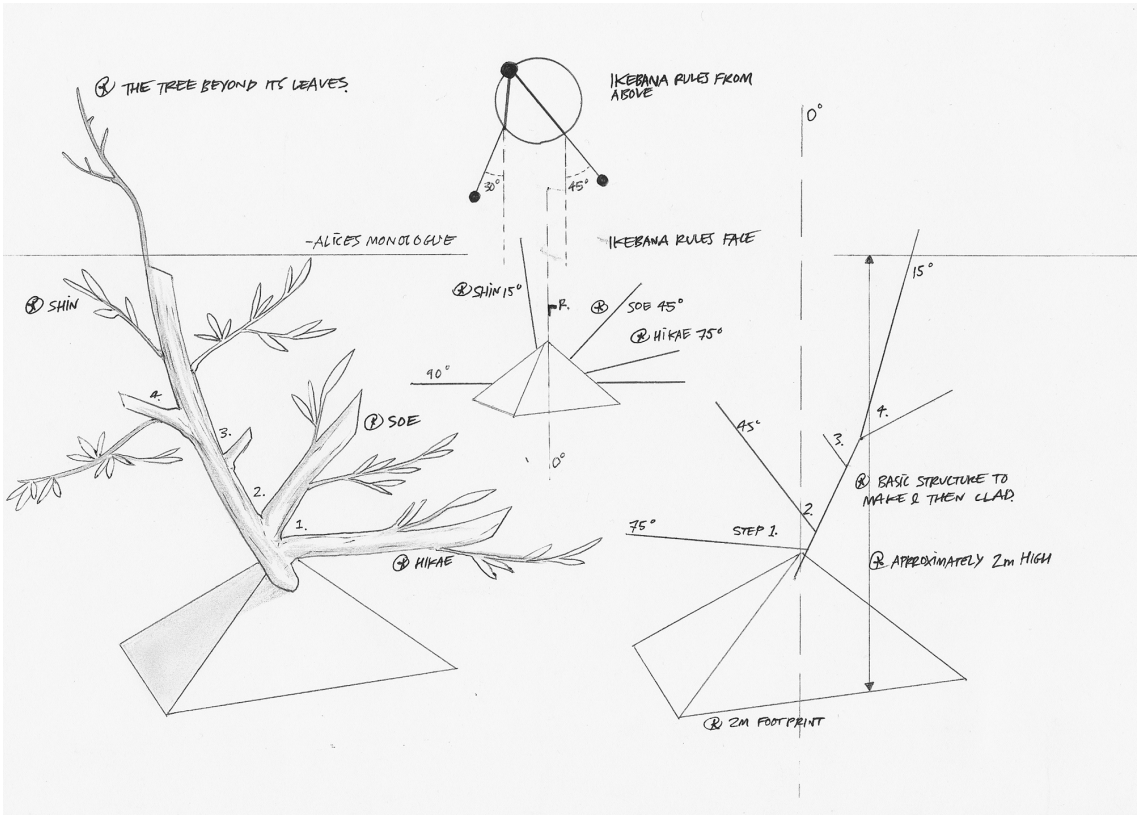

Figure 18 *Alice in Bed*: central tree structure. Drawing and design by Ben Jeans Houghton.

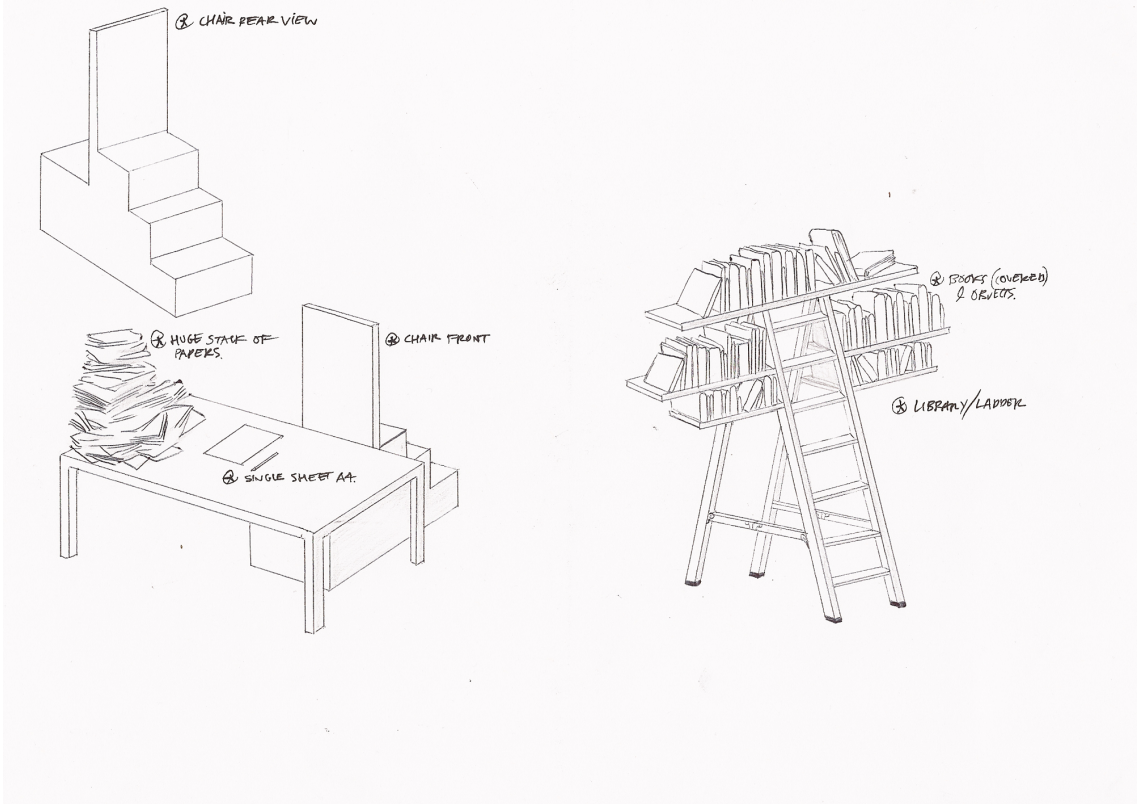

Figure 19 *Alice in Bed*: designs for Father's study. Drawing and designs by Ben Jeans Houghton.

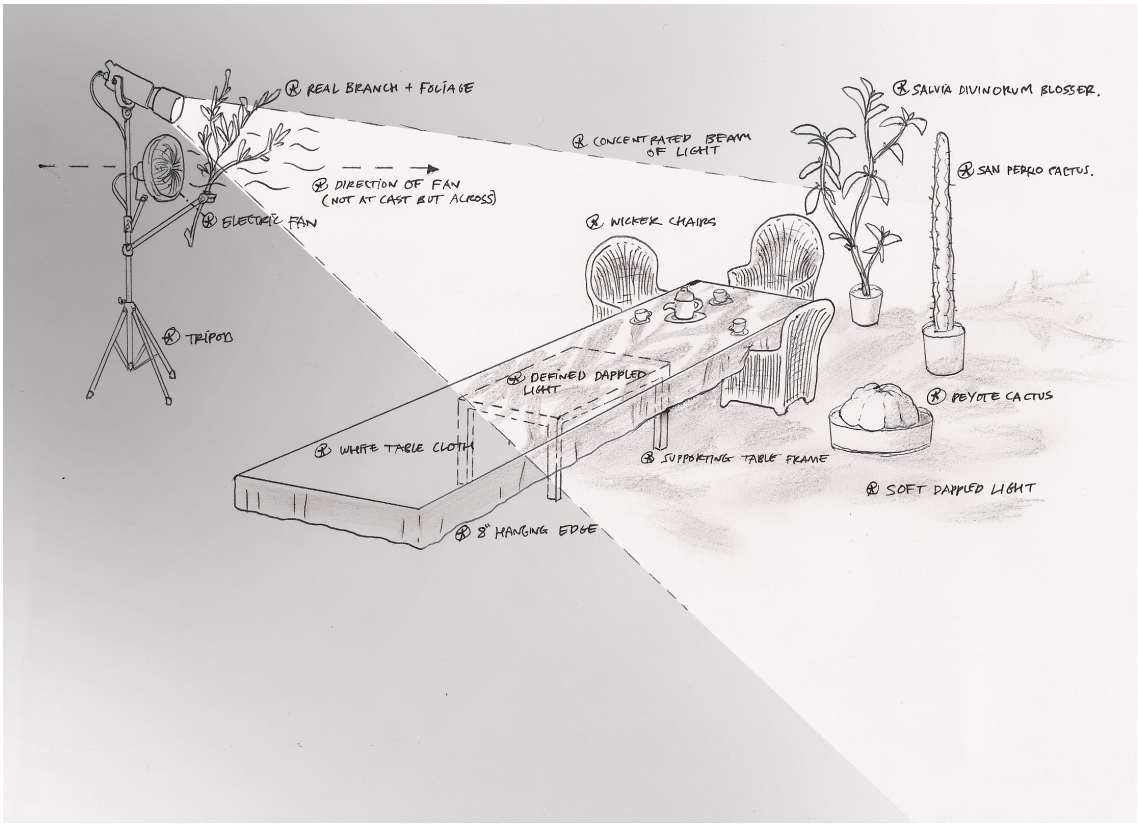

Figure 20 *Alice in Bed*: set for tea party scene. Drawing and designs by Ben Jeans Houghton.

Project R-hythm: Performance Instructions

The following written instructions were developed after the final performance event of Project R-hythm. *They translate the tasks used to structure the performance into text format.*

1.

Warm a pair of wax earplugs in your fingers to soften the wax.

Push the wax earplugs into both of your ears to create a suction and silence.

Walk together.

When you get there remove the earplugs.

2.

Say it slower.

Do it slower.

Slower than that.

That's not slow enough.

Do it slower.

Start again. Say it slower. From the beginning. Slower.

Slow down.

You have to do it slower than that.

Do it slower.

Slower than that.

Slower.

Start again from the beginning and go slower.

Slow down.

Slower.

3.

Create a loop with a 10 metre stretch of cloth.

Loop one end securely to an immoveable object in a place you feel attached to.

From within the loop pull the cloth away from the place you feel attached to.

4.

Dress like a visitor.

Pretend you have never been here before.

Take pictures.

5.

Sit on a wall overlooking the edge of a place.

Play 'Slowly but Surely' by Elvis Presley on a loud speaker.

Look towards the horizon.

Sounds & Guts: Creative and production team

Tess Denman-Cleaver (writer and performer)

Taryn Edmunds (set and visuals)

Tim Shaw (sound)

Paul Aziz (production manager)

Matthew Evans (associate director)

Sounds & Guts: Work-in-progress public performance dates

Live Theatre (Newcastle, UK): 18 November 2013

Ausform Festival (Cube Cinema, Bristol, UK): 22 November 2013

Culture Lab (Newcastle University, UK): 17 March 2014

Brighton Dome (Brighton, UK): 26 March 2014

Sounds & Guts: Full tour dates

Queens Hall Arts Centre (Hexham, UK): 16-19 September 2014

Live Theatre (Newcastle, UK): October 03 2014

Alnwick Playhouse (Northumberland, UK): October 04 2014

SPILL Festival of Performance (Ipswich, UK): 30 October – 03 November 2015

St Cuthbert's Church (Holy Island, UK): October 18 2014

Ivy Arts Centre (Surrey University, UK):

Sounds & Guts: Map of performance design

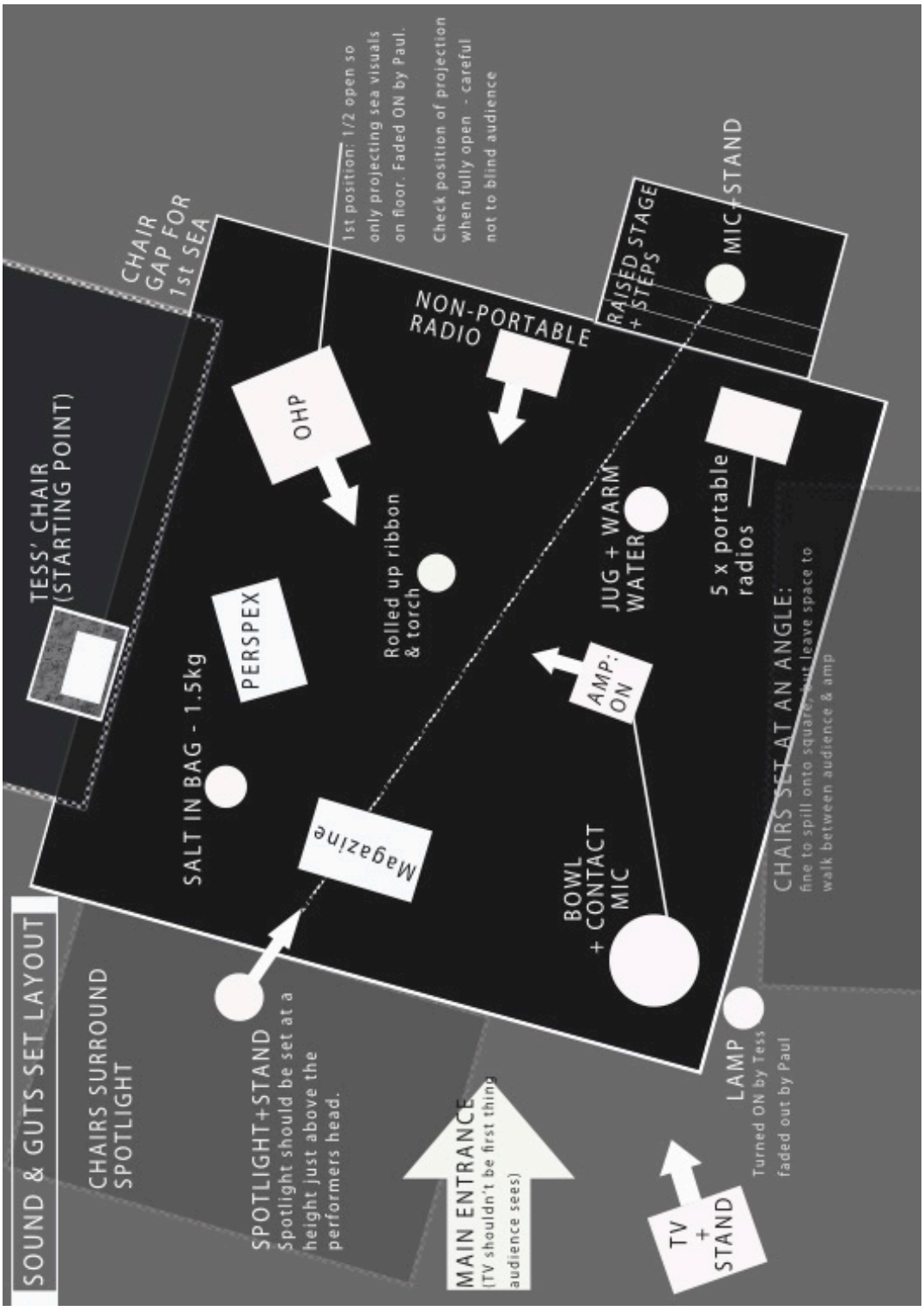

Figure 21 *Sounds & Guts*: map of performance lay out. Created by Taryn Edmunds.

Full list of academic and artistic publications

Lead author published papers

with Vrieling van Tuij, M.: (2018, forthcoming) Then Is Diffused In Now: (Re)reading landscape in Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts* through performance practice and non-representational theory. *Landscape Research Journal: Arts, Knowledge and Northern Landscapes Special Issue*.

(2017) Exhibition text for Hildigunnur Birgisdottir solo show. i8 Gallery, Reykjavik.

(2017) Heidegger's Thing and The Island. *Fusion Journal: Land Dialogues Special Issue.* Available at: http://www.fusion-journal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2016/11/11-Denman-Cleaver.pdf Full list of conference papers

Lead author conference papers

(2017) Time Passes: Making Performance in Virginia Woolf's Landscapes. *Making Women's Art Matter: New Approaches to the Careers and Legacies of Women Artist*. Dulwich Picture Gallery & Paul Mellon Centre. http://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/whats-on/forthcoming/making-womens-art-matter

(2016) Knee Deep in the Sea: A Performance Enquiry into Stevie Smith's Sea Walkers. *We All Have These Thought Sometimes: A Conference on Stevie Smith*. Oxford University. https://steviesmithconference.wordpress.com/

(2015) Land-Sea-Self: Practical and philosophical challenges of making performance with the North Sea. *A Perfect and Absolute Blank.* Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts & North East Maritime Trust. http://balticplus.uk/bxnu-symposium-a-perfect-and-absolute-blank-delegate-pack-c27510/

(2015) Project R-hythm: The role of landscape in informing experiences of temporality in performance research. *Performance Philosophy Conference*. School of the Arts, Institute of Chicago http://performancephilosophy.ning.com/page/chicago-2015

(2015) Project R-hythm: The landscape as performer in walking-based performance practice. *Where to? Steps Towards the Future of Walking Art*. Falmouth University. https://www.falmouth.ac.uk/whereto

(2014) Project R-hythm: Making Performance with The Island. *Further North Conference*. Northumbria University. https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/2014/08/further-north/

Co-authored conference papers

with Haslem, S.: (2015) Thesaurus: A Critical Thesaurus of Knowledge Exchange and Practice-based Research. *Culture @ Work Symposium* (Copenhagen). http://www.macba.cat/en/culturework-seminar

with Chen, K.: (2012) Alice in Bed. *How Performance Thinks*. Kingston University. *http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/activities/item.php?updatenum=2136*

Workshop and seminar papers

(2017) *This is not a party. It's a gathering*. FACT Liverpool. A workshop on the relevance of Heideggerian things and landscape phenomenologies to artistic practice, with invited researchers and arts practitioners, including; Dr. Sam Solnick, Dr. Nicola Singh, Tim Shaw, Taryn Edmunds, David Chatting, Susannah Haslem.

(2016) *Knee Deep: Reading Stevie Smith's Coastal Walkers*. Performance and poetry workshop at *We All Have These Thought Sometimes: A Conference on Stevie Smith*. (Oxford University).

(2015) *Land-Sea-Self: Practical and philosophical challenges of making performance with the North Sea*. Ecopoetics Seminar, Exeter University (Fine Art Dept.). http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/events/details/index.php?event=5032

(2014) Walking Towards Collaboration: Reconfiguring the Relational Dynamics of Socially Engaged Art Practice. Workshop paper. Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). Toronto.

Knee Deep in the Sea: A Performance Enquiry into Stevie Smith's Sea Walkers.

Presented at *We All Have These Thought Sometimes: A Conference on Stevie Smith*. (Oxford University, 11 March 2016).

I'm going to talk through a series of projects, that I have carried out over the last 3 years, that have constituted a practical, performance-based study of Stevie Smith's work. In particular the work I am going to share is specifically focused on the significance of standing knee deep in the sea in Stevie Smith's work.

I've become kind of obsessed with the reoccurring "coastal walkers" in her work, people standing on coastlines, walking into the sea, drowning or being drowned, or wishing to be carried away by the waves. These figures seem sort of lost along Smith's shorelines;

... The girl who types the letters in Deeply Morbid
... Happy Phil the coastal walker in Night Thoughts
... the figure of Despair who comes in on the evening tide to Mrs Cooper in The Sea-Widow
... the man standing "upon the brim of a deep sea" in Death's Ostracism
... the brilliant encounter with a transparent fish that takes place during a descent to the dark of the deep sea.
... the young children who are advised not to paddle too deeply.

Venus When Young Choosing Death (recording of Smith reading)

In sharing extracts from recent projects I have carried out around Stevie Smith, I hope to demonstrate different approaches I have taken to working with Stevie Smith's text, and also how my relationship to her work has changed through the artistic process.

A Lecture on Romance

The first *Stevie Smith project* was called A Lecture on Romance by Stevie Smith and Robert Walser - and it was performed at the Lit & Phil Library in Newcastle in April 2013. The performance imagined an encounter between Stevie Smith and Swiss German writer Robert Walser. And through this conceit explored some common concerns and

stylistic similarities of the two authors. A Lecture on Romance was performed by myself and actress Tessa Parr.
We had an overhead project and a script.

The script was made up of Stevie Smith's words. We chopped up and re-structured a collection of her work in order to draw out the figures of the coastal walkers, perform links between poems, build a world between the texts and suggest meaning. As such A Lecture on Romance was an explicit act of plagiarism – or appropriation – or collage – In this first experiment I was using Smith's words as material for making my own work. With this first endeavour I was particularly concerned with how performance could be used as an alternative form for sharing an in-depth study of a body literature, and how public performance used in this way could address the role of subjectivity in literary study.

In turn, I'm also interested in how explicitly subjective readings of literature can be smuggled into the faux-objectivity of academic dialogues - in the form of performance-lectures.

Project R-hythm
So, Lecture on Romance - (*which I'm not going share here as it kind of doesn't translate into smaller extracts*) - used Stevie Smith's work as material for making my own performance work.

The second project, Project R-hythm took the image of the figure standing knee deep in the sea as a departure point for generating action – I began to use Stevie Smith's poetry as texts for performance – or instructions for action. *Project R-hythm* took place on Holy Island in Northumberland and was a collaboration between myself and Martine Vrieling van Tuijl. With this project I was asking "what is the significance of standing knee deep in the sea?" and attempting to answer that via very literal means, by actually standing knee deep in the sea and using that gesture as the starting point for creating a performance.

(also walking and swimming, various coastal activities)

For those of you who don't know, Holy Island is a tidal island – which means that that it can be reached by foot, across land, at low tide, by a narrow causeway. So as a coastal location, it a place that is frequently half-submerged, and that felt like a good place to consider what it is to be knee deep.

Martine, my collaborator on this project, is a lifelong resident of the island. So as well as an exploration of the landscape of the island itself, as a peripheral place – it was also a reflection upon what it means to live on the periphery. The project as a whole resulted in a walking performance that combined text, participatory activity and theatrical spectacle. I want to read just a short extract of text generated by that project...

I did know about the sea.

I do know about the sea.

How it rises and lowers and how this is the reason that people come here in the first place.

But this time we were repeating not improvising so we knew what we were doing - where we were going to go.

As we turned away from the steps, the beach wasn't there, and I imagined when it was all still sand and you were just floating through it.

She said she'd never been there before and we are coming to terms with the idea that we will never go there again.

We set out to find some residue or essence of this remembered place, some evidence.

We have been doing this for a year.

Standing in the wind and the rain with the sea and the earth, at Spaniel's Head, it felt as if we were finally there now - as in finally there – and as in finally now.

The memory is of turning

Of temperature and turning and the movement of colour

It's kind of chaos

The flowers feel out of place

Washed out flowers guarding a small pile of damp ash - surrounding a small patch of heavy white noise in the periphery of the movement.

It is nothing.

It is weighted differently.

It is precisely nothing now and the bright white obelisk only emphasizes the chaos of sound and colour shifting - so that it too / we too / flicker with.

Sounds & Guts

The third project I want to talk about is Sounds and Guts.

Sounds & Guts was a touring theatre production that focused more on the language of landscape, or used landscape *as a language* to reflect upon experiences of isolation. I'm going to read one strand of the performance text of Sounds & Guts, there were various other fragmented narratives, and visual and audio material that made up the final production –

I know this sea. This is the real sea. This is The Sea.

I know where the bed suddenly drops to deep water and where you can walk for a mile and never get your jumper wet.

All other seas are variations of this sea.

This sea is the temperature and colour of sea.

I know how long it takes to feel warm in this sea and how you have to hold onto the memory of last time if you want to get in.

You have to know when the cutoff point is; when the sea reaches your bones, the cold becomes empty and you won't be able to get warm again and your lips will turn blue. If you get out before this, you can feel every tiny nerve and capillary fill with blood and electricity and a wave of warmth defines your outline underneath layers of clothes.

It's good for your immune system and your determination.

It's best not to look down, instead it's nice to watch your hands, moving at arm's length, just underneath the surface, sliding through the top water.

A man standing on a rock once told me that you have to get in and out 3 times to acclimatize. He was naked and he had made his own tea, as in the actual tea leaves or spices or something, and he'd brought it down to drink with his friends from the village after he'd been for a swim. He swam in the sea every day and he was 87.

I get in twice.

The second time all the blood has gone into your internal organs, and there's not so much left to get cold in your arms and legs. I never get in from a rock. It's too quick. And if you scrape yourself on the edge it hurts more than if you scraped yourself and you were warm and fully clothed.

Walk in from the beach and keep breathing. Don't let the cold take your breath away.

After about 4 minutes, if you keep moving, you start to feel patches of warmer water. Your thighs warm up first and the backs of your hands.

You can't really feel the sea with a wetsuit on; you can't really feel how this sea feels with a wetsuit on; it's not quite as, it's not quite as much this sea if you wear a wetsuit.

When you've warmed up a bit, and your breaststroke is in full swing, you can look back to see who's noticed how brave and strong you are.

Or how many people don't even know you're there, beyond the waves.

Treading water the beach is a lot further away than I imagined, from here everything looks small, small and slow, and maybe less … I want to know what it would feel like to not be able to get back, it's not that I don't want to go back, I'm looking forward to swimming back and putting my jeans and my jumper on, and getting some fish and chips. But I want to know what it feels like, just for a moment, to not be able to get back. So I push myself backwards with my legs. Facing the shoreline, I keep moving backwards, pushing my shoulders into the waves. Out here beyond the break waters its really smooth, the swell lifts me up and down but I don't go under. There are birds above me, oblivious.

I keep going.

At some point I turn around and look on towards the horizon. The pull of the sea has made me jump forward away from the land without noticing.

In the dark, in the water, I have made a huge mistake.

The cold is soaking in and I feel empty. I can't feel my muscles to make them move.

I can see the lights of the mainland.

I think I can see which cluster is which but they are too far away and it's too dark to be sure.

I can see someone standing on the beach. They are standing quite still, alone, I can't tell if they are in the water or not. Someone else appears a little way away from the first. They are standing in the water, wading knee deep in the evening tide. As I strain to see, the dark parts and shifts and there are millions of them. Are they looking for me? An enormous procession of people walking knee deep in the sea. They are all of them looking for something. I wave.

In the dark in the lights it can be more difficult to see than without. Without the lights your eyes can adjust, but distance can still be a problem. If you are looking for something it can be better not to use a torch.

Are they looking for her? I'm waving. But they are all of them alone and all of them forgotten. They are too cold. It's too cold to be wading in the sea. It's getting into their bones. And none of them are looking far enough ahead to be looking for me. Some of them are up to their necks now, it's difficult to tell if they are moving in a particular direction or just being pushed about by the waves. The more they drift about the more aimless they seem.

I am too far away to tell them about how you have to get out before it's too late and you'll never warm up.

To write that strand of *Sounds & Guts* I kind of imagined all of the people who stand knee deep in the sea in Stevie Smith's poems - all standing in the sea together - so a crowd of Smith's coastal walkers, all lost and alone together, along a shoreline. By the time I'd got to Sounds & Guts I'd moved on from the very direct, collage approach of the first project – *A Lecture on Romance* – and I was working more with a sense of Smith's coastal *atmospheres,* than with the material of her words themselves. And at this point - with Sounds & Guts - it becomes more difficult to tell where Smith's imagery ends and where my own words begin - but it's not quite appropriation, because I'm only very rarely using her exact phrasing – instead it's more like inhabiting the landscapes and the atmosphere of her work - as I had come to know them through previous projects.

The Sea, Lies Open

The Sea, Lies Open is an ongoing collaboration between myself and Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, of Surrey University.

It currently revolves around a series of letters that have been presented in the form of performance, programmes of walks and installations.

The project looks the role of the sea as a language, landscape or image in Western philosophical thought. In particular, we looked the correlation between early deep-sea exploration and use of the sea as a language for non-human thought or knowledge – for the unknown rather than the unknowable.

The sea contains 330 million cubic miles of water. The volume of all land above sea level is only one-eighteenth as great. Land's tallest peak, 29,028-foot-high Mount Everest, could be sunk without a trace in the ocean's greatest abyss, the 35,800-foot-deep Mariana Trench in the western Pacific.

How much more gloriously frightening to measure the world by these inhuman horizons than by the habits of our senses - which would have us believe that what we call large and small, near or far-distant, hard or soft is how things really are!

Dear L,

For fear of scalding myself there is too much cold water.

As we know, all deep knowledge flows cold, but this feels decidedly surface upon entering. I suspect I have failed to achieve your dissolving-of-self due to a lack of extremity. Or maybe this is an imaginative failure on my part.

Each time, upon immersion, I anticipate the blurring of inside and out, expect my skin into only a figure of my imagination, and each time, instead, I picture your calves as my calves dip into the milk-soft pool, and I sink up to my neck.

I'm writing this letter, I realize, not to you, but from and within your words, attending all the time, also, to the movement of my world…

Dear T,

I walked along the sea at twilight recently and felt its impassable difference to me, to my body – it is certainly not like our bath as far as I can sense - as the light faded, it shed its reflective quality to become something other, finally asserting its muscular presence in the twilight.

I need the shadows to know first where my body is before I can attend to the world beyond it.

The Sea, Lies Open is a process through which I'm trying to think through the ontological implications of Smith's landscapes by placing her amongst other philosophers who have used the sea to articulate modes of thought or being.

Necessarily this has involved looking at water more broadly in her work, and through this I've noticed that Stevie Smith's sea – like Nietzsche's – are always connected to the rivers and streams that feed the - and in her seas - as in Nietzsche's – there is always the possibility, *or maybe the inevitability* of going deeper, to the lightless depths.

… I don't really have time to go into the details of this enquiry but maybe that can be something we can talk about more if anyone else find that's kind of thing interesting. I just want to flag it up as a current line of thinking…

Knee Deep

Finally, I want to say that *Knee Deep*, which began officially in January this year, aims to bring together the various Stevie Smith stands of the projects I have mentioned

the collage, text-as-material approach of the Lecture on Romance
the literal, action-based approach of Project R-hythm
the inhabited atmospheres of Sounds & Guts

and the philosophical dimension of *The Sea, Lies Open*.

Then Is Diffused In Now: (Re)reading landscape in Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts* through performance practice and non-representational theory.

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Abstract

This essay presents a (re)reading of Basil Bunting's 1965 poem, *Briggflatts*, based upon the author's experience of making landscape-based performance in Northumberland, England. The (re)reading of *Briggflatts* explores how the performative expression of the Northumberland landscape in the poem resonates with cultural geography's 'non-representational theory'. In an experience based exploration of non-representational theories of landscape it examines how *Briggflatts,* as well as the author's performance work, uses the human body as a mechanism through which place is understood. The authors go on to consider how performance creates landscape within and outside of the geographical 'site' itself.

Introduction

Born in Newcastle in 1900, Basil Bunting is a 'Northumbrian poet'. He created what is widely understood to be his seminal work, *Briggflatts*, in 1965. *Briggflatts* is an epic poem in five parts, the primary subject and focus of which is the landscape of Northumberland, which is explored through an autobiographical narrative. The poem was written for print and performance. It concludes on the North East coast of England, at Holy Island. This essay (re)reads *Briggflatts* through the author's experience of making performance projects with, and in response to, the landscape of Northumberland. Examples of practice are drawn primarily from *Project R-hythm* (2013-14) and *Sounds & Guts* (2012-14). Critical reflection on the performance projects and the (re)reading of *Briggflatts* is supported by reference to phenomenological conceptions of landscape or 'non-representational theory'.

Our (re)reading of *Briggflatts* conducted through artistic practice resembles the work of Jeremy Millar (*A Firework for W. G. Sebald*, 2005), Tacita Dean (*Wandermund*, 2007), Phil Smith (*On Walking… And Stalking Sebald*, 2014) and Grant Gee (*Patience: After Sebald*, 2012). Each of these artists revisited the geographically specific work of novelist W. G. Sebald through their own contemporary art practice. Whereas these works explore the landscapes of Sebald through their intentionality, however, this essay returns to *Briggflatts* in retrospect, to consider how the authors' performative encounters with the Northumberland landscape generate previously overlooked meaning in the poem.

We begin our discussion by introducing *Briggflatts* and the projects through which the poem is being (re)read. We will go on to address three key issues which emerged from our practice-based analysis of the poem; 1) how *Briggflatts'* landscapes operate in accordance with 'non-representational theory', 2) the relationship between body and landscape and 3) the role of listening in performing landscapes 'out of context'.

Briggflatts

Briggflatts is a poem in five parts, plus coda, which introduces itself as an autobiography. The narrative of the poem is anchored in a journey from West to East across the North of England. This movement is woven together with geographically distributed autobiographical tales, and the poem's 'story' is also housed within a single cycle of seasons from Spring to Winter.

During his lifetime Bunting performed *Briggflatts* himself and explained that it is a poem written for the voice, for the meaning of the poem is carried as much by its sound when read aloud as by its content as text on a page [Mottram, 1978]. This sentiment is also alluded to in the poem itself:

It looks well on the page, but never
Well enough.

(Bunting, 2000)

Based on Bunting's statements regarding reading poetry aloud, we are reading *Briggflatts* here as a text for performance. To support this we have used recordings made of Bunting performing the work himself in order to enhance our understanding of the poem. As a text for performance, *Briggflatts* resembles Deirdre Heddon's *Tree: A Studio Performance,* which lies within her definition of 'autotopographical performance'. Autotopographical performance work weaves together landscape and autobiography the relationship between the two (Heddon, 2009).

Landscape Performance

As an artistic practice 'landscape performance' is understood in the context of this essay as the activity of performance making where landscape is the primary thematic or formal concern. This might also be considered 'site-specific performance'. Pearson defines site-specific performance as performance in which "the site becomes the dominant signifier rather than simply that which contains the performance" (Pearson, 2010). However, whereas 'site-specific' generally refers to performance that takes place at a specific site, 'landscape performance' provides us with a broader definition that includes performance primarily concerned with landscape, though not necessarily presented in specific locations.

We are drawing specifically on two landscape performance projects; *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts*. The authors' projects that have been drawn upon to (re)read *Briggflatts* used performance making as an exploratory and experimental landscape research process. Through the making process the projects aimed to develop new understandings of specific places in Northumberland. Understandings generated out of the research process informed new ways of performing – or *being* - within these places. Each project concluded by sharing this learning through their final, public performance events. This exploratory practice fits with Laura Cull's description of Performance Philosophy practice as being concerned with developing "models of relating to the world", rather than generated abstracted or generalizable forms of knowledge (Cull, 2015).

Project R-hythm (2013-14)

Project R-hythm is a performance project and collaboration between co-authors Tess Denman-Cleaver & Martine Vrieling van Tuijl. *Project R-hythm* used performance making as a research practice through which to explore and develop understandings of Holy Island. The project's yearlong development process resulted in the creation of a performance event that invited audiences to explore the island with the artists through the frame of a loosely choreographed walk.

Holy Island is a small tidal island on the North East coast of England, in the county of Northumberland. Holy Island is one of the Farne Islands, the same archipelago in which Bunting's poem *Briggflatts* ends. As a tidal island, Holy Island is only accessible from mainland Northumberland during low tide, via a causeway.

During the process of *Project R-hythm* we used a number of performance making activities designed to heighten awareness and develop understandings of our context. This practice draws upon Allan Kaprow's "attention training" techniques (Cull, 2011). Our attention training process during *Project R-hythm* was housed within the activity of walking. Walking was adopted as a practical solution to a lack of indoor, public space on the island and the need to keep warm in an exposed environment. It also enabled us to see as much of the island as possible over the course of a year. We developed ways of walking that highlighted different aspects of the island or our relationship to it; We walked with earplugs that blocked out all sound, we walked with music as soundtrack, with notebooks and cameras for recording thoughts and observations, we walked to specific places, and we wandered without a destination in mind. Walking was used as a framework through which to gather thoughts and generate audio, visual and physical material that could represent our or understanding of, and relationship to, the island.

Walking-based artwork has a strong history that includes artists such as Hamish Fulton, Robert Wilson, Janet Cardiff, Sophie Calle and more recently the work of British performance makers Fevered Sleep and Simone Kenyon. Many of these artists have used walking not only as a way of structuring a live event, but also as a method by which to research a particular geographical location or subject matter. There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the ways that artists have used walking historically,

typified by the success the 2013 touring exhibition entitled *Walk On: From Richard Long to Janet Cardiff - 40 years of Art Walking*.

During *Project R-hythm* we also referred to our perambulations as '*sound*walking'. Prominent soundwalk practitioner Hildegard Westerkamp, describes soundwalking as "any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment" (Westerkamp, 1974). 'Listening' in *Project R-hythm* was taken to mean sensory awareness in the broadest sense, as attending to the varied sensorial detail of our situated experience. As John Hull explains "you don't actually listen with your ears, you listen with your whole body" (John Hull, 2001)

Project R-hythm provides the (re)reading of *Briggflatts* presented here with a practical artistic process by which understandings of landscape developed through making.

Sounds & Guts (2013-15)

Sounds & Guts was a touring landscape performance informed by *Project R-hythm,* and provides this (re)reading with a practical experience of applying new understandings of landscape to the creation of a text-based performance concerned with the relationship between self and place. *Sounds & Guts* was devised by author Tess Denman-Cleaver and delivered in collaboration with a number artists, including Tim Shaw and Taryn Edmonds. *Sounds & Guts* was not 'site-specific' in the sense that *Project R-hythm* was, as the performance was not presented within a specific location. Instead *Sounds & Guts* was presented in various contexts including studios, galleries, universities, community halls and theatres across the UK. The performance explored similar challenges to Heddon's *Tree: A Studio Performance* in its attempt to "retain [a] sense of site even when the performance [is] moved to a different site" (Heddon, 2009).

Whereas *Project R-hythm* dealt with the landscape of Holy Island very literally, *Sounds & Guts* focused on how language performs landscape in which the audience are temporarily immersed.

Our approach to (re)reading *Briggflatts*

Our (re)reading of *Briggflatts* is based upon a combination of close reading of the poem and related work on *Briggflatts*, alongside reflective analysis aimed at defining the knowledge generated by the authors' situated performance making. Reflection upon artistic practice draws on material gathered throughout the process of making, which is used in hindsight as an auto-ethnographic resource. Analysis of both *Briggflatts* and our own artistic practice is supported by reference to work from within cultural geography that is concerned with the phenomenological nature of landscape, or non-representational theory'.

This essay does not attempt to give a definitive or complete reading of *Briggflatts*, nor of the performance projects described. Rather it draws out some specific aesthetic concerns of the poem regarding language and landscape, which have been highlighted for us through the experience of making performance within the context of Northumberland. Reflection upon practice is being used here as resource through which lived experience can be drawn upon to (re)read Bunting's landscapes. Heddon remarks that "translating a creative practice into written text also necessitates a willful act of creativity" (Heddon, 2009) and in this essay the process of reflection and the (re)reading of *Briggflatts* has no doubt changed the shape and the meaning of the artistic projects themselves. In what follows we will focus on passages from *Briggflatts* that exemplify what landscape is for Bunting, paying particular attention to those parts of the poem that reference the Northumberland coastline, where our own work took place.

1. Non-Representational Theory

Night, float us.
Offshore wind, shout,
ask the sea
what's lost, what's left,
what horn sunk,
what crown adrift

Where we are who knows

(Bunting, 2000)

Briggflatts begins in the small hamlet on the Rawthey River in Cumbria from which the poem takes its title. It was in Briggflatts that Bunting spent time as an apprentice to the local stonemason, Mr. Greenbank (Burton, 2013). The poem starts by introducing a narrative that revolves around the creation of a marble headstone. The image of the headstone recurs throughout the piece and provides a framework for the poem's concern with how language relates to landscape:

A mason times his mallet
to a lark's twitter,
listening while the marble rests,
lays his rule
at a letter's edge,
fingertips checking,
till the stone spells a name
naming none,
a man abolished.
Painful lark, labouring to rise!
the solemn mallet says:
In the grave's slot
he lies. We rot.

(Bunting, 2000)

The poem goes on to follow the headstone as it is carried East by horse and cart, along with the poet and his young love, Peggy. They travel across Cumbria and into Northumberland. The poem in its entirety meanders through geographically distributed locations, referencing Bunting's travels to the Middle East, London and Italy. However, the central narrative starts here with the headstone in the North of England. We will focus on this central journey, for it is through the imagery of the headstone that Bunting most clearly outlines his aesthetic concern for the relationship between language and landscape.

Bunting's description of the stone mason's craft creates a distinction between the living landscape in which the headstone is created, and the inert language that is carved into the marble. The text of the headstone is not simply inert due to its referring a person deceased, "a man abolished", but because in doing so the symbol is devoid of a material subject; "a name naming none". The stone mason's text does exist in material relation

to the land on one sense as it is carved directly into the marble. However, as the narrative progresses, Bunting defines a desired poetic relationship to the materiality of the land that is living and physical and results not in the signification of an abstract – the naming of a nothing - but in the symbiosis of living subjects and objects. The linguistic distinction made in these first passages establishes the possibility of a "more than textual" (Lorimer, 2005) relationship between language and landscape. The multisensory, material quality of the poetic language of *Briggflatts* marks Bunting's poetic voice apart from the stone mason's symbolic headstone text. The challenge outlined by the poet in the opening moments of the poem is, therefore, to develop a language that is borne out of and refers back to the materiality of place. The poet-narrator seeks to articulate landscape and situated experience as processual, expressed through activity rather than abstraction. In the second and third part of this essay we will explore how Bunting achieves this aim through the writing together of body and place, and his use of the aural properties of language.

Briggflatts is a vast and varied artwork here we are focusing only on how the poem expresses its concerns regarding the relationship between language and landscape. Of course, the opening lines of the poem could be read in many other ways; as the beginning of a romantic eulogy, as a swansong, or a challenge to intertextual tropes of modernist poetry. Through the experience of making performance with the Northumberland Coastline, however, the aesthetic relationship between language and landscape in the poem emerged as a prominent thread in Bunting's work. The experience of working performatively with the same Northumberland that Bunting writes about opened up for us what the poem is as a performance text, what the poem's implied conception of place is, and what Bunting's language is doing in relation to landscape. Our understanding of Bunting's poetic language is informed by a practice-based sense of the textual and physical language of live performance, and as such is in keeping with Bunting's insistence that poetry should be written for the voice rather than simply the page:

"*Reading in silence is the source of half the misconceptions that have caused the public to distrust poetry. Without the sound the reader looks at the lines as he looks at prose, seeking a meaning*." (Bunting, cited in Mottram, 1975)

Upon (re)reading *Briggflatts,* we recognised in Bunting's narrative many of the aesthetic challenges that were posed to us by the performance making context of Holy Island during the development of *Project R-hythm*. In what follows we will outline how learning from *Project R-hythm* led to the (re)reading of *Briggflatts'* language as concurrent with recent phenomenologies of landscape.

As he demonstrates in the opening section of *Briggflatts*, Bunting seeks a language that moves with the changing materiality of place. The difficulty of this artistic task is told in the following lines:

Decay thrusts the blade,
wheat stands in excrement
trembling. Rawthey trembles.
Tongue stumbles, ears err
for fear of late spring.

(Bunting, 2000)

These lines bring us simultaneously *into* the body of the poet and *outwards* to the living landscape of the Rawthey valley. We will explore later the ways in which Bunting conflates the poet's body with the landscape in order to write self and place together. For now, it is sufficient to note that the bodily references in these lines present an artist unable to articulate his context, fearing slow progress. In this moment Bunting captures the challenge of making 'site-specific' artwork with(in) a changing landscape, and the fear that one does not have the tools or the appropriate language to do so. These lines resonated with our own experience of struggling to find a performative form through which to articulate our own encounters with a landscape in flux during *Project R-hythm*.

Project R-hythm set out to create a live performance in response to a particular - and particularly unique – landscape. During the course of the project our understanding of landscape altered dramatically. Whilst neither of us had explicitly asked 'what is landscape?', Holy Island confounded and surprised us, challenging the spatial presumptions with which we had begun the process. The new understanding of

landscape that eventually grew out of *Project R-hythm* has drastically altered how we (re)read the landscape and language of Bunting's *Briggflatts*. Our altered (re)reading is the focus of this essay. In what follows we will describe the performance making process through which arrived at a conception of landscape as defined by flux.

We began *Project R-hythm* with ideas of robust, large-scale performance spectacles, which would be framed for our audience by the grandeur of the landscape. The performance was initially intended to would represent a completed and coherent response to the island. We began the process, therefore, with a focus on the end result, the performance event. Our approach presumed a representative conception of performance, in which knowledge; either of the island itself or our experience would be represented to an audience.

I was going to stand in the sand dunes with a red dress on and sing a song. I was going to sing into a microphone in the sand dunes.

It was going to be like Pina Bausch performing in a Robert Wilson thing.

It was going to be totally derivative.

You have to start somewhere.

(*Project R-hythm*)

Without acknowledging it, we imposed upon our project a structure in which the making process is hidden from view and the audience witness the spectacle of our results. It was only in hindsight, part way through the process, that we realised our approach to making was out of step with the nature of our subject and performance context, the island.

The second time we walked to St Cuthbert's beach it wasn't there.

I did know about the sea. I do know about the sea. How it rises and lowers and how this is the reason that people come here in the first place but this time we are repeating not improvising so we know what we are doing - where we are going to go.

(*Project R-hythm*)

As the project progressed we moved towards a conception of both performance and landscape that focused on process rather than a fixed end point. As we will illustrate below, the challenge the island posed to our preconceived notions of what landscape is mirror Bunting's move away from the abstracted language of the headstone to a poetic voice anchored in the movement of self and place.

At the beginning of *Project R-hythm*, in order to create our final performance we first needed to get to know our subject, and in doing so we hoped to define the parameters of our performance space. We devised a plan for getting to know the island, an enquiry-through-performance-making. In other contexts, a performance making process may begin by carrying out a similar, thematic enquiry. For example, if we were making a performance of *King Lear* we might start by exploring what we already know about family, old age or conflict, thus providing a thematic foundation from which to develop. With a predefined interest in the landscape of Holy Island, *Project R-hythm* set out to establish what we knew about the landscape. To do this we employed the attention training techniques described in the introduction, housed within the activity of walking. The attention training activities aimed to enhance our awareness of the effect of the island upon us, as a multisensory experience. In our early explorations we attempted to use these activities interrogate our experience of the island in order to uncover some key defining characteristics.

I thought if we walked long enough, over and over again enough, then we'd find the constants, we'd be able to reduce it down to its essential, constant, measurable parts. We would be able to distil the island and identify its stability, upon which to build, these sites would make it clear to us why this place is what it is.

There is no rehearsal room on the island.

Because there is no rehearsal room we are always with the wind.
Because we are always with the wind we close down our peripheral vision.
We wear headphones.
We wear earplugs.
We wear waterproofs and walking boots

I wear waterproofs and walking boots
She wears wet-look leggings and lace up shoes.

We use our shoulders and foreheads to fend off the rain.

Heads bowed to the wind we talk about how we will need more performers and where we will put them. How they will wear brightly coloured artificial materials in order to stand out against the dunes and the waves. Polyester ball gowns.

(*Project R-hythm*)

A couple of months into *Project R-hythm* we were struggling to settle on any conclusive understanding of the island, and we had failed to identify fixed locations in which to perform. On several occasions we devised moments of performance, imagined gestures that we took out into the environment of the island. But these gestures were always founded upon a past understanding of place and no longer corresponded to the performance space we found ourselves in. We were increasingly aware that our mode of performance making did not fit the reality of the landscape we were working with. Our inclination towards planning for a final event was made impossible by the ever-changing nature of our performance space. Reflecting upon the process, our expectation that we could come to know the island as a fixed space implied a conception of knowledge also as fixed and generalizable, abstracted beyond the materiality of space like Bunting's headstone text. A shift towards creating a different type of performance also required a shift in the ontological foundations of the project.

And as I turned to [Martine] for some clues as to how to cope with this landscape, which she had been living with for over a decade, she too had no answers. Becoming more aware of the behaviour of the island she had begun to feel that every day we visited places that she felt she had never been to before.

As we turned away from the steps and the beach wasn't not there I imagined when it was all still sand and you were just floating through it.
(*Project R-hythm*)

Approaching midsummer, anticipating colder days and longer nights we needed to develop a different approach to working with the island. As a result of our repeated failures, we decided that we should to create an event that invited our audience into the process by which we had come to inhabit the landscape of the island. We shifted focus to creating a performative encounter with the island that would focus on negotiating the landscape's perpetual flux. The live event would highlight change as inherent in the landscape, and use performative activity to suggest the difficulty of living with a constantly shifting environment. Our process became, therefore, one of developing tools for *framing* rather than *representing* a landscape that we had come to inhabit as performers. As Bunting describes the challenge of developing a landscape language that articulates the material, sensory experience of place, we set out to invite our audience into a multisensory encounter with Holy Island that would be structured - but not limited to - our own experience of place. Rather than a final spectacle or event, our performance might be better understood through Pearson's description of 'site-specific' performance as "bracketed activity" (Pearson, 2010), which extended our situated performance-based inquiry to include the audience experience as well as our own. Both *Project R-hythm*'s and *Briggflatts'* performative landscapes are predicated on process and subjective experience rather than the representation of abstract objects or knowledge.

Our shift from attempting to create a coherent, predefined response to the island to the development of an immersive event for an audience can be seen as a shift from making *representational* to *experiential* performance. Experiential performance, as defined by Cull and Goulish, is explicitly immersive and participatory, placing emphasis

on the temporality or live-ness of the event; The fact that the performance is unrepeatable, and takes place over a set duration, in a specific place (Cull and Goulish, 2007). Experiential performance tends to emphasise the experience of the audience, who *participate in* rather than passively observe the spectacle of the live event. Whilst a representational performance may well make reference to the reality that the live performance will never be the same on any given night, unlike experiential performance, this fact will not generally be the focus or subject of the work. For example, you may attend a production of *King Lear* aware that the performance you see will be to some extent different to last night's, or tomorrow's performance, but it is unlikely that this unrepeatability will be the focus. It is more likely that the focus will be a representation of the historical time period in which it is set or the conveyance of a predetermined reading of the play. As we faced the heightened reality of unrepeatability within the context of our performance space, Holy Island, we were forced to make this very fact the focus of our work.

For final live event, *Project R-hythm* invited an audience of approximately 20 people to walk together with the artists, following a loosely choreographed route around the island. The walk was structured in 5 parts, each designed to heighten audience attention of specific characteristics of the island through a series of 'attention training' activities. These included walking with wax earplugs, consuming particular foods in particular places, disguising oneself as a tourist, and returning to landmarks in order to observe how the tides had altered the shape of the island. Our approach to framing an audience experience through 'attention training' activity could alternately be described as a process of "disattetending to other elements of the scene" (Pearson, 2010).

Bunting's search for a living landscape language and *Project R-hythm*'s shift from representational to experiential performance resembles what Wylie has described as cultural geography's "non-representational theory" (Wylie, 2007). Led by Nigel Thrift, Tim Ingold, and Doreen Massey, cultural geographers have drawn on the phenomenological thought of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to develop understandings of landscape as intrinsically linked to consciousness, subjectivity and identity. These recent phenomenologies of landscape define place through experience rather than cartographic or numerical abstraction. As with non-representational

theory, the implied conception of what landscape is in *Briggflatts* places emphasis on temporality and its being known subjectively through the body of the subject. Landscape for Bunting therefore is inherently relational. Hence, Bunting's dismissal of the headstone text, but his continued appreciation of the physical act of stone masonry:

Rub the stone with sand,
wet sandstone rending
roughness away. Fingers
ache on the rubbing stone.

(Bunting, 2000)

Our reading of *Briggflatts* landscapes as non-representational was arrived at through our own failure to create a representational performance with(in) Northumberland. It is shaped by our necessary shift to working towards an event in which audiences could encounter a landscape through their own 'bracketed activity'.

Of course, ultimately Bunting is *writing* the landscape, his poem is not a live event situated within the landscape, as *Project R-hythm*. As such his language *represents* a landscape to an audience situated outside of the place in question. However, Bunting falls into that category of non-representational thinking, which "takes representation seriously", as Dewsbury explains: "representation not as a code to be broken or as an illusion to be dispelled rather representations are apprehended as performative in themselves; as doings" (Dewsbury, 2002). This thinking is in line with Bunting's insistence on the poem's use of sound as an experiential medium through which he articulates landscape. We will explore the aural nature of the poem in more detail in the final section of this essay, as well as touching upon the 'live-ness' of performed landscapes. *Project R-hythm*'s performance was a 'doing' that framed encounters with(in) the island, its 'live-ness' lay in its focus on the audience's temporal experience of landscape. The process of *Project R-hythm* led us to an understanding of the way that *Briggflatts'* invites its audience into a live experience of place as landscape as performed through language. In the next section, we will discuss how Bunting's phenomenological landscape language writes self and place together to create this immersive, multisensory experience for reader or listener. To do this we will draw upon the creation and performance of *Sounds & Guts*. *Sounds & Guts* was informed by *Project*

R-hythm and, like *Briggflatts*, attempted to create an experience of landscape for audiences who were situated outside of the 'site'.

2. Embodied Knowledge of Landscape

"Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world" (Solnit, 2014)

Ethnographers Vergunst & Árnason's suggest that "where contact between the body and the ground cannot be trusted, movement foregrounds itself as the very object and focus of concern" (Vergunst & Árnason, 2012). Within the recent 'non-representational' or 'performative turn' cultural geographers have turned to anthropological studies of human movement to understand the relationship between knowledge, body and landscape. As Ingold proposes, from a phenomenological standpoint "place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there - to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience" (Ingold, 1993). Phenomenologies of landscape bind self to place, and in doing so imply a theory of knowledge inextricably woven into subjective experience and activity. In relation to situated action, Farnell suggests that "situated body action [is] at the heart of our being-in-the-world rather than merely as a means to mental representations *of* the world" (Farnell, 2003). Wylie follows this in his explanation of cultural geography's increased attention "to the embodied practice and performance of landscape" (Wylie, 2007). In this section, we will consider how *Briggflatts*, *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts* use performance and language in ways that imply ontological foundations consistent with non-representation theory's conception of landscape and self as inextricably related through the moving body.

As the tide moved the position of the land, landmarks and remembered places of Holy Island, our experience of creating a performance during *Project R-hythm* was dominated by the constantly changing shape of our performance space. Furthermore, the opening and closing of the causeway, which periodically connects the island to mainland Northumberland, meant that our access to the island - and to one another as collaborators - was different on any given day. Dictated by the lunar calendar, rather

than circadian rhythms, this movement to imposed a disorientating and at times frustrating pattern on our making process. Our performance grew out of a mobility enforced by a lack of indoor space, by constant changes in weather and land shape, and the need to keep warm in the wind. As the characteristics of the island emerged, our environment required us to create a performance that was itself defined by movement. Walking therefore became a structuring devise for the creation of the performance as well as the means by which we were coming to know the landscape. Pearson describes how in 'site-specific' performance "wayfinding, more clearly resembles story-telling than map using, as one situates one's position within the context of journeys previously made" (Pearson, 2010). In *Project R-hythm* the audience's journey during the final event not only recalled some of the experiences we had had moving around the island, it also extended and transformed the landscape of the performance through the experience of the audience.

As an experiential performance *Project R-hythm* shared some of the ways in which we had learnt to perform, or *be* with the island. The techniques, positions and movements we had learnt emerged from our movement with and within the movement of the island. The activities carried out during the final event manifested embodied knowledge of the island and shared ways of being with(in) this place.

Embodied knowledge is a recurring theme and underlying principle of non-representational theory. Recent understandings of landscape in cultural geography recognise knowledge that is inherent in action, in the present moment of doing, rather than that which is gained through "engaging in reflective, abstract, critical, propositional, or theoretical thought" (Farnell, 2003). Embodied knowledge is understanding anchored in the materiality of bodies and physical contexts. In her assessment of anthropology's adoption of phenomenological thought, Farnell observes that "dynamic embodiment, that is, body movements…[are] enacted forms of knowledge and understanding" (Farnell, 2003). Through the theoretical lens of embodied knowledge, as adopted by cultural geography's 'non-representational theory', and alongside our own experience of coming to know landscape through movement, our (re)reading of *Briggflatts* considers the way in which the body, for Bunting, is the means through which landscape is understood and articulated.

As the cart carrying the marble headstone travels east across the North of England, the narrator and his young love Peggy lie together "*bruised by their marble bed*" (Bunting, 2000). The passage that describes their journey brings bodies and landscape together, exemplifying the multisensory, kinaesthetic relationship between self and place in *Briggflatts*;

on a low lorry by night.
The moon sits on the fell
but it will rain.
Under sacks on the stone
two children lie,
hear the horse stale,
the mason whistle,
harness mutter to shaft,
felloe to axle squeak,
rut thud the rim
crushed the grit.

Stocking to stocking, jersey to jersey,
Head to a hard arm,
They kiss under the rain,
Bruised by their marble bed.

(Bunting, 2000)

As the journey continues, the textures and contours of the Northern landscape are felt through the bodies in the cart, leaving an impression of the shape of place formed in the interrelation of body-cart-land. Bunting's knowledge of the landscape of the poem is articulated through bodily experience. His use of the body as mechanism through which place is known correlates to conceptions of embodied knowledge from within the field of cultural geography's 'performative turn'.

Our experience of coming to know Holy Island through movement informed the making of a subsequent project *Sounds & Guts*. *Sounds & Guts* also drew upon personal accounts of sea swimming in the North Sea. *Sounds & Guts* final performance was scripted and the text of the performance collected together autobiographical narratives of the performance maker, Tess Denman-Cleaver, as well as collected accounts from others. Stories were collected through an informal interview process, which explored

the interrelation of landscape and emotional state. In the one hour live performance *Sounds & Guts* was combined the spoken word with immersive audio and visual elements. The language of the final *Sounds & Guts* performance, like the language of *Briggflatts*, folded landscape and body together to create a performed self that is woven together with place.

I know this sea. This is the real sea. This is The Sea.

I know where the bed suddenly drops to deep water and where you can walk for a mile and never get your jumper wet.

All other seas are variations of this sea.

This sea is the temperature and colour of sea.

I know how long it takes to feel warm in this sea and how you have to hold onto the memory of last time if you want to get in.

You have to know when the cutoff point is; when the sea reaches your bones, the cold becomes empty and you won't be able to get warm again and your lips will turn blue. If you get out before this, you can feel every tiny nerve and capillary fill with blood and electricity and a wave of warmth defines your outline underneath layers of clothes.

It's good for your immune system and your determination.

It's best not to look down, instead it's nice to watch your hands, moving at arm's length, just underneath the surface, sliding through the top water.

A man standing on a rock once told me that you have to get in and out 3 times to acclimatise. He was naked and he had made his own tea, as in the actual tea leaves or spices or something, and he'd brought it down to drink with his friends from the village after he'd been for a swim. He swam in the sea every day and he was 87.

I get in twice.

The second time all the blood has gone into your internal organs, and there's not so much left to get cold in your arms and legs. I never get in from a rock. It's too quick. And if you scrape yourself on the edge it hurts more than if you scraped yourself and you were warm and fully clothed.

Walk in from the beach and keep breathing. Don't let the cold take your breath away.

After about 4 minutes, if you keep moving, you start to feel patches of warmer water. Your thighs warm up first and the backs of your hands.

You can't really feel the sea with a wetsuit on; you can't really feel how this sea feels with a wetsuit on; it's not quite as, it's not quite as much this sea if you wear a wetsuit.

(*Sounds & Guts*)

Deirdre Heddon has termed performance work addressing or emerging from "the relationship between site and autobiography" 'autotopography' (Heddon, 2009). As examples of autotopographical performance, *Briggflatts*, *Project R-hythm* and *Sounds & Guts* all make manifest "the simultaneous and on-going shaping of self, body and landscape through practice and performance" (Wylie, 2007). *Project R-hythm* does this through action carried out in direct contact with place, its activity is performed *with*, and also *by* the audience and highlights the very nature of landscape as experiential and emergent. In both *Sounds & Guts* and *Briggflatts* language is used to invite readers and audiences into an encounter with landscape through the body of the artist, which makes manifest the contexts it has moved through. As landscape performances that are not tied literally to 'the site' *Sounds & Guts* and *Briggflatts* use written and spoken language to fold self and land together in order to "retain a sense of site" (Heddon, 2003). Both performance texts engender encounters with landscape through a bodily language that is predicated on an understanding that knowledge of place is embodied and acquired through situated action. In the following section, we will go on to focus

on the sonic properties of *Briggflatts* and propose an expanded understanding of landscape as enacted through performance.

3. Listening to Place and Performing Landscape

"*Start by listening to the sounds of your body while moving. They are closet to you and establish the first dialogue between you and the environment*" (Westerkamp, 2001)

Bunting described his writing as informed and inspired by the musical structures of Scarlatti's sonatas (Mottram, 1978). Bunting's use of musical composition as a structuring device can be seen in the shape of the poem as a whole, as well as in the sonic phenomena through which the landscape is experienced and articulated. In the opening of *Briggflatts* Bunting creates a landscape made up of various sounds, present in the imagery of the poem as well as mirrored in the rhythm of the language:

Brag, sweet tenor bull,
descant on Rawthey's madrigal,
each pebble it part
for the fell's late spring.
Dance, tiptoe, bull,
black against may.
Ridiculous and lovely
chase hurtling shadows
morning into noon.
May on the bull's hide
and through the dale
furrows fill with may,
paving the slowworm's way.

(Bunting, 2000)

Bunting employs music in *Briggflatts* in the sense of a linear musical score; as instructions for a series of sonic events. He noted to Mottram that "Poetry lies dead on the page, until some voice brings it to life, just as music on the stave is no more than instructions to the player" (Mottram, 1978). In his advice to young poets, Bunting recommends that one "Compose aloud; poetry is a sound" (Bunting, 1970). In the following lines one can see the detail with which Bunting combines the aural qualities of his subject matter with the sound of the words themselves to conjour a sonic landscape for reader or listener:

Drip – icicle's gone.
Slur, ratio, tone,
chime dilute what's done
as a flute clarifies song,
trembling phrase fading to pause
then glow. Solstice past,
years end crescendo.

(Bunting, 2000)

The prominence of sound in Bunting's work has been acknowledged not only by the poet himself but in various scholarly studies of the poem (see Mottram, 1975, and Burton, 2013). In the light of our own experience of creating performance work with the shifting Northumbrian landscape our own (re)reading of *Briggflatts* emphasises the experiential quality of Bunting's poem as a text for performance. In doing so one finds that the landscapes of *Briggflatts* exist not in the words as they are performed - in the context of the live event or recording - but in the act of listening itself, as place exists in the moment of encounter with a landscape. Bunting's landscapes are created for the listener through sound as a temporal unfolding.

As an experiential performance text, Bunting's poem is truly an "open work" as it a "gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood." (Eco, 1989). Peter Quartermaine suggested a similar reading of Bunting's aural poetry when he claimed that "Bunting has no vested interest in the outcome of his poem, no attachment to it; he recognises that the poem has an existence independent of its maker" (Quartermaine, 1995). This audience-centred approach to sound-based art work resembles John Cage's placing of the listener, rather than composer or musicians, at the centre of the act of meaning making:

"*My intention has been, often, to say what I had to say in a way that would exemplify it; that would, conceivably, permit the listener to experience what I had to say rather than just hear about it*" (John Cage, 1973)

Stocker explained that "our experience with sound unfolds in a continuous now" (Stocker, 2013). Bunting's performance-focused poem also conforms with the definition of performance as suggested by Peggy Phelan:

'*Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance.' (*Phelan, 1993*)*

An accommodation of temporality, and with that an emphasis on the performativity of language is in keeping with a phenomenological conception of what landscape is. *Briggflatts* landscapes exist, in full, in the present in which they are heard. It is in this sense that they are performative, or 'live'. Bunting's attention to the continuous now, which unfolds between listener and language, enables his poetry to exemplify the living, moving places from and about which they are written. Mottram, describing Bunting's relationship to the pure poetry movement, notes how some have argued that Bunting rejects *naming* as a function of language all together (Mottram, 1992). As Mottram goes on to argue, however, to dismiss language's function as a signifier entirely from readings of Bunting's work would be to neglect the skill with which sound and content are interrelated. However, if we look at those texts which feature *within* the narrative of the poem we see that Bunting is skeptical of the reduction of language to simply a system of signification. We have seen this in the case of the marble headstone in section one of this essay, and it is echoed in these lines from part four of *Briggflatts*:

The sheets are gathered and bound,
the volume indexed and shelved,
dust on its marbled leaves.

(Bunting, 2000)

The marble of the pages reminds us of the stone mason's marble headstone. Though here we find only a weak simulacrum of the material world articulated in the opening

of the poem; The poetry written for the page is yet more inert than the text of the headstone. The dusty texts are dead due to their not being married to the present moment through the act of reading aloud, or performing.

As well as the creative development of *Project R-hythm*, this reading of Bunting's performativity developed through the creative process of making the landscape performance *Sounds & Guts*. *Sounds & Guts* aimed to invite audiences into a landscape that was formed through performance, in the interrelation of textual, visual, and audio material. Despite being performed in several locations, as a touring production, *Sounds & Guts* adheres to Pearson's claim that "site [in the context of site-specific performance] may be produced through and in interaction, momentarily" (Pearson, 2010). *Briggflatts* and *Sounds & Guts* both draw upon the geographical 'site' of Northumberland, and have in common their being narratively directed towards the North East Coastline. Both works depend upon a conception of landscape as experiential and relational, and use spoken language to create place between the artist and audience in the moment of performance. If we understand landscape as temporal and experiential, *Briggflatts* and *Sounds & Guts* build upon Heddon's description of 'autotopographical' performance as working to "retain a sense of site" when performed 'out of context'. As performance works *Briggflatts* and *Sounds & Guts* do not translate a fixed geographical location to an audience situated elsewhere, however, rather they *create* site, in the moment of encounter between performer, audience and material. Following this argument to its logical conclusion, *Briggflatts* and *Sounds & Guts* do not perform the Northumbrian landscape, the place from which they are written, but conjour for their listening audience new and transitory landscapes each time they are enacted. In this sense, their landscapes are not situated and not complete until the moment of enactment.

Conclusion

Briggflatts and the performance projects through which we have (re)read the poem demonstrate embodied knowledge of landscape and imply a phenomenological conception of what landscape is. We have demonstrated the ways in which the understanding of landscape manifest in *Briggflatts* is consistent with non-representational theory's phenomenological definition of place. Our (re)reading of

Briggflatts through practice and theory has explored some of the ways in which self and place are interwoven through the body in Bunting's work. Furthermore, with a focus on listening and the creation of landscapes through language's aural properties we have considered how performance can create landscape or 'site'.

Our practice-based (re)reading of *Briggflatts* offers an experiential account of working with landscapes that are defined temporally and understood relationally through the body in motion. Further to this, our examination of Bunting's language provides an account of how the language performs landscape within or outside of geographically specific 'sites'.

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Time Passes: M_HKA performance text

Presented at M_HKA gallery (Antwerp), as part of Nadia Hebson's *Alpha Adieux* programme with Drop City on Saturday 9th September 2017.

Monday, 16th January 2017

We are a train of three vast cars plunging northwards.

In my suitcase I have all of Virginia Woolf's diaries, novels and essays, a disappointing biography by Quentin Bell & some complete holes.

Moving backwards I wonder which other of us is you.

I wonder if your luggage will be as substantial as mine.

I ponder the patterns of work inhabited by our fellow passengers. Maybe returning home - to fill a space: half a bed - a hot bath – arms, which, stretched out the night before, have remained empty.

As we enter the cairngorms it becomes grey and the wind on the water's surface turns to ice.

We keep looking at the sky as it begins to fade; soft-fleecy.

On the first night we walked – close - in the dark.

The tension of our new relationship stringing us together: anxiety concerning what the other wants, questions of whether one's own wishes will be inhibited - by how the other imagines this situation will reveal itself.

Your sleeve warm inches away from my arm.

Treading together, away from the streetlights, we fell silent. Maybe concentrating, maybe unsure, maybe taking in the glowing snow - or the blinding light of the house up ahead; Into who's garden we could be about to trespass.

A front window & a light burning.

She stands in the centre of the room wearing a blouse, gently looking, over her shoulder, and out of the window.

We watch her back - not knowing if our outlines are discernable in the cold.

It's almost too dark to see.

Are you nervous?

Am I nervous?

Your nervousness encourages me.

Every step on the frozen earth is a dare, daring one another to move away from the lights, moving away from the orientation of a starting point, giving our weight to the potential of ice underfoot.

Every step a question which, when asked, commits us to innumerable risks.

It is an odd road to be walking - One can hardly tell which is the water and which is the land - When I am her and when I am me - Who is leading.

Not for the first time the possibility of turning back is aired.

Out and out we go, further and further, until at last we seem to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea.

This is - what I am doing now - is

: the end of a thesis
: and the beginning of work

: it is a correspondence - between here and then

: a striving - between me and her

: it is a landscape maybe

: the first symptoms of the Lighthouse

: it is an undoing

: and a recovery

This started ten years ago with Woolf's novel, the story of a house that is uninhabited by humans for a number of years. Time Passes, this, - this 'project' as it were / was - started with a passage from To the Lighthouse.

The passage was to be realized as a structure, and event,
within which to perform the impossible.

The work I have been doing is not – has never been that of adaptation however.

Rather Woolf's text became a proposition, a cue.

: a provocation

one fold of the shawl [loosening] and [swinging] to and fro.

: a direct and formal challenge to make an impossible performance.

: the challenging of reaching the logical conclusion of a practice.

: I was going to build a house.

This is - what I am doing now – at this time, not entirely in control of its own obliqueness.

And for that, I do not apologise, but I ask for your generosity and your movement.

To respond to Woolf's writing I have been developing strategies for engaging in a dialogue with 'Time Passes' and related material, I was looking for ways of using performance making as a means of inhabiting her text as a landscape.

Maybe I was looking for a way of understanding her landscapes – but as we said over breakfast, the point of understanding is the point of boredom; Is not the point of practice.

Working within the landscape of Woolf's novel became a process of practical philosophical enquiry, one which engages with Woolf as a mentor or ally, and with her work as an enabling space for the development of my own thought – or as I realize now - my own ongoing thinking.

My engagement with Woolf through a practice of writing and performance making is also a strategy for addressing her role as an artist in the historical canon of philosophical writings.

A way to consider *how* her landscapes are inherently performative, and it has revealed to me the ways that her fiction presents a version of thinking that reaches beyond human-centric conceptions of what thinking is: what thought is.

Woolf developed her metaphysics: "through the experience of creating fictional worlds and characters, rather than thorough close study of logical atomism, and logical empiricism"

And I am developing my thinking, in conversation with Virginia Woolf.

A board sprung on the landing; once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture

She asks how - *as after centuries of quiescence, a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley -*

Wednesday 25th January 1915

Your birthday.

I don't know when I have enjoyed a birthday so much – Sitting at tea we decided three things:

in the first place to take Hogarth, if we can get it;

in the second, to buy a printing press;

in the third to buy a Bulldog - probably called John.

We acknowledged the local significance of the day with a Haggis and some whiskey, but decided to celebrate with you.

I was smoking a cigar.

We talked about the dark.

The substance of your darkness - the presence of your absence - and the fullness of your nothing moving through the empty house.

Your nothing thinks.

Nothing stirs in the drawing room and certain airs begin a years-long process of questioning – wondering – asking - nosing round doors - contemplating permanence and durability with the movement of light and the prying of the wind and the noise of the sea.

When Nadia asked me to present this work initially – at the Paul Mellon Centre in February – I had been working in the mountains in the depths of winter and I felt I had cracked some code – and I could tell you all the steps I took to do so, you can watch this impressive performance of clarity on the television here – I back up my arguments with explanations of how Heidegger was way behind her, and Nietzsche doesn't get it.

And all of this I still believe to be true; and I will say a little something about Woolf as a thinker who contemporary thinking across disciplines still struggles to keep up with - even in the most worthy quests for the most coherently structured, non-human, anti-human, version of non-philosophy, post-philosophical truth out there today.

I want to talk about this here, because I do think Woolf got there way before anyone else - and she got there by moving outside of the structures that would have validated and celebrated such advancement had they had the foresight or insight to do so.

But now, differently from February, my argument for a greater attention to Woolf's contribution to philosophical dialogue, is an aside - a fling – simply and only an articulation along the way.

In the central section of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf tells the story of a house that stands unoccupied for a number of years. During which time the people who previously populated it are affected by WW1 - and we hear of births, marriages and the deaths of certain family members – lost to war, maybe age-related illness, and childbirth. News of the novel's absent human characters is relayed in the form of parenthesis - reminiscent of the character-limited text of telegrams - which interrupt the atmosphere of the empty house - and the flow of our reading. The presence of people is contained within the brackets.

In Time Passes thinking occurs outside of the parentheses with which Woolf notifies us of the *births*, *marriages* and *deaths* of the human characters.

Thinking moves through the house, is undertaken by the dark and the nothing.

Of course Woolf's landscape is inhabited by human presences. It is inhabited by the author; the text of Time Passes holds her thoughts - just as she held it in her imagination.

And it is inhabited by the reader; who becomes a presence moving through the house - *with Woolf* - and in doing so, simultaneously occupies the atmosphere she is occupied by.

But it is in the act of striving beyond human presence that Woolf, with Time Passes, opens up the possibility of a de-centred mode of thinking.

how very on trend, how very 2017 for 1927 - etc.

Having moved through the house, and now having picked up Woolf's diaries, I continue to think alongside her, but I have somewhat lost my destination – and as such I am struggling to explain where I am right now.

By taking the next step, beyond the land, Lily completes her painting in the final section of To the Lighthouse.

I have never been that interested in the first and last parts of the novel – the parts with the people and the dinner party and the painting – they have almost fallen of the spine, fallen by the wayside, rarely read as I greedily abstract only those passages that move most vividly - the most enthusiasm for Lily's painting I could muster was an imagining that I would like the shade of violet in the shape.

Woolf's landscape – in Time Passes at least – is absent of humans but not devoid of thought – without humans her's remains a thinking and feeling landscape. One can

hardly tell which is the water and which is the land. Woolf's is a thought that avoids creating a hierarchy of modes of thinking –a hierarchy of who or what thinks. Maybe a thinking beyond the boundaries of human selfhood. Woolf's contribution / challenge to the mainstays of philosophy – probably those philosophies referred to as phenomenology – has been largely overlooked because she is a woman and because she is an artist. And maybe because she didn't explain it, she didn't articulate, she didn't make it convenient; she *did* it, made it so, kept moving.

In Woolf's landscapes thought becomes an extra- or non-human activity. Thinking is presented as a process that occurs beyond centred human selves, beyond selfhood, in the *Cartesian* sense of a bounded and coherent soul.

But by this point we are talking only about violet triangles and no longer the stuff of life, the stuff of nothing, the movement of thought.

It is in the striving beyond, beyond a bounded sense of selfhood, beyond human perspective, beyond land, beyond the project, beyond the anticipated destination - that Time Passes becomes the artwork that it is, and the invitation to practice.

"Out and out we went, further and further, until at last we seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea"

Moving through this package-able PhD-worthy epiphany – of Woolf as the unnamed crux of the twentieth century philosophical canon – 100 years ahead of the discipline bound fight against the Anthropocene - I have lost myself and I have lost my destination,

And "not only [is] furniture confounded: there [is] scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say 'This is he' or 'This is she'"

the house no longer needs building, it's all I can do to keep moving, filling, pushing my shoulders into the waves.

Upon being invited to come here and do this today I turned and *gently looked over my shoulder, I r*ealize that the pull of the sea has made me jump forward away from the land without noticing.

As I strain to see, the dark parts and shifts, the swell lifts my up and down, and I can see someone standing on the beach, but they are too far away to reach now.

Thursday 21st August 2017

We found ourselves very high, on a moor;

boggy, heathery, walking out to what seemed the highest point looking over. The ground gave way occasionally with soft green humps, defied definition as liquid or earth, became uneasy.

We could see by a golden spot where the sun was.

All the fields were aburn with June grasses & red tassled plants, none coloured as yet, all pale.

24 seconds were passing. Then one looked back again at the blue: & rapidly, very very quickly, all the colours faded; it became darker & darker as at the beginning of a violent storm; the light sank & sank: we kept saying this is the shadow; & we thought now it is over – this is the shadow when suddenly the light went out. We had fallen. It was extinct. There was no colour.

I had very strongly the feeling as the light went out of some vast obeisance; something kneeling down, all very low and powerful

I thought how we were like very old people, In the birth of the world

We had out our smoked glasses; and saw it crescent,

There were thin places in the cloud & some complete holes.

I wrapped myself in a blue striped blanket off a double bed, becoming incredibly vast & bedroomish

This is - what I am doing now – is a gluttony for words, for her words.

: is something like falling in love but for real.

Is something like the upstairs turned on of watching her gently looking, white blouse, turning over her shoulder, and out of the window, watching our cold shadow in the garden.

--

This is - what I am doing now – this is a practice, and maybe a practice is no longer a project,

: is an accidental resistance, this has no need for a house, it retains its impossibility by losing interest, by losing destination, by losing itself.

This is - what I am doing now – this is an in-joke with Virginia that doesn't have a punch line.

A fling with her words that fizzles on.

I am writing in her diary, re-writing her philosophy, her stuff of life, into my own movement.

She is my starting point and my audience.

Out and out we go, further and further.

Moments are passing, and we are bereft of an end.

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