

Looking away: Failure, Embarrassment and Mis-attention in a  
Performance-related Artistic Practice  
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## ABSTRACT

'Looking away' is centred on artistic practice that engages with the live and recorded body as an element of the work in a fine arts context. The project investigates looking away through three practical conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork. Practical and theoretical concepts and methods that emerge in the work are developed, applied to the research and evaluated to gain understandings of how looking away complicates, displaces or repositions those relations. The research is organized between three modalities of inquiry: failure, embarrassment and mis-attention operating as departure points while recognising they overlap and complicate each other. Overall, a multi-dimensional view of relations between viewer and artwork is revealed that is inherently unpredictable, affected by the contingency of the live body and relational operation of attention, representation, framing and intention.

Findings on looking away are drawn by testing the investigation against the practical concepts of layers and frames of attention, the live body and contract and the methods of improvisatory conditions, hiding the performer and varying the conditions. Key terms that pertain to the phenomenology of attention, the supplément, the parergon, embarrassment, self-consciousness, the comic, representation are transformed and applied to the practical concepts and methods, as a means of rethinking, extending and developing the practice. The thesis is contextualized through consideration of artworks that engage or allude to failure, embarrassment or mis-attention ranging between the rigorous materiality of Alvin Lucier, precise management of attention of Tino Seghal and the apparent falling out in the work of Tommy Cooper and Jütte Koether.

The thesis aims to contribute to discourses in the field of fine art in developing and re-thinking methodologies around fine art practice involving the live body that do not rely on the primacy of visual attention.

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## NAVIGATING THE THESIS

The thesis comprises a bound printed document and three media rich interactive PDF files. The PDF files are contained on the USB stick marked 'PRAC DOCS' ('the practical documents', and entitled individually, 'Shift 1: Failure' (PD1)', 'Shift 2: Embarrassment (PD2)' and 'Shift 3: Mis-attention (PD3)', or 'PD1', 'PD2' and 'PD3'. The research consists of three 'shifts' (Shift 1: Failure, Shift 2: Embarrassment and Shift 3: Mis-attention). The shifts operate like chapters, dividing the three modalities of inquiry of the research. Each shift is in two parts, with an interactive practical document and a corresponding written analysis in the printed document, intended to be read together.

The practical research arises from nine experimental artworks (also referred to as 'works' or 'work' in the thesis). Each work is referred to in the thesis either by its full or abbreviated title. The Chronological Index of works at pages 38-50 briefly introduces and describes each work. The images and videos presented in the practical documents refer to aspects of the works, which drive the thesis, in conjunction with the written analysis in the printed document. It is not relevant to present a live performance as part of this thesis, because it is self-contained. The practical documents are not intended to present documentation of whole works, but are selected aspects of the research corresponding to points made in the printed document. The theoretical and contextual analysis in the latter, is used in support of, or to inform conceptualizations and ideas that have developed in the research and drive the thesis' findings, rather than extend the original theorizations.

On commencing each shift in the printed document, the reader is asked to open the corresponding practical document on the USB stick on their computer screen to view the images and videos as they are referred to in the text. These are captioned and numbered and are referred to in the text.

The practical documents should be opened in Adobe Acrobat Reader DC on a computer screen to ensure all the interactive elements operate and can be viewed as intended. Adobe Reader is a free downloadable application from Adobe<sup>1</sup>. Some browsers may contain their own PDF reader applications, but these may not enable all the interactive elements to work. The practical documents will open with the option of 'Full Screen' mode and can also be viewed in other modes in the 'View' options menu of Adobe Reader, including 'Two Page View'.

The practical documents each have a contents page, and are divided into titled sections pertaining to a particular work. They also contain a set of embedded interactive elements or 'navigation buttons', which allow the reader to move around the practical document. There are also controls for the video players. The navigation buttons, and video controls operate by clicking on the mouse, and are embedded in the practical documents as follows:

- a) **Contents page:** the title of a work is a button that goes to the first page of the section relating to that work.
  
- b) **Bold titles of works:** appear on the first page of each section and go back to the contents page.
  
- c) **Triangle shaped icons:** at the bottom right-hand-side of each page go back to the contents page.
  
- d) **Triangle shaped icons:** on the side of each page and go to the next page or previous page (the right and left arrows on the computer keypad also have the same function).

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<sup>1</sup> Adobe Acrobat Reader DC can be downloaded free from the Adobe site:  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/uk/en/acrobat/pdf-reader.html> [accessed 23 January 2019].

e) **Video controls:** each video has its own control panel, which appears and disappears, when the mouse is rolled on and off and has 'play', 'stop' and volume functions, and the option to scroll through the video using the mouse on the cursor. On first use, the controller may need to be activated by clicking on the video. Function may be hampered if more than one video is running at the same time.

### **The relation of Appendices to the thesis**

The contents of the Appendices (A, B and C) do not form part of the thesis. The appendices comprise documentation that has supported, or contributed to the research indirectly, in ways that are indicated in the thesis.

**Appendix A:** comprises a paginated sample of notes, observations, descriptions and ideas and other draft writing on the works, which reflect how thought experiments emerged and were developed and applied to produce concepts and methods in the research (referred to in pages 1-18 of Introduction and pages 34-36 of Methodology).

**Appendix B:** comprises a paginated set of scripts, drafts and notes pertaining to the *Work, How Soon Is Now*, as presented to the Falmouth School of Art Research Group (referred to in page 33 Methodology and 175 onwards of Shift 3: Mis-attention).

**Appendix C:** comprises a 49-minute video of the presentation of *How Soon is Now* as presented to the dance and choreography research group (Dr@ft) (referred to in footnote 25, page 78, Shift 1: Failure).



## INTRODUCTION

This practice-based investigation extends aspects of my artistic practice, which has engaged with the live body in a fine arts context. In the course of undertaking a Fine Art MA, my practice developed using methods that included the live or recorded body of myself, sometimes with others. I refer to these practices as 'performance-related', and noticed, from my experience of being in and a part of these artworks, that they may evoke awkwardness and embarrassment in both performers and viewers, even though there has been no intention to provoke such responses. I have come to understand that this had something to do with the notion of looking away, which I associated with responses to embarrassment and failure. This seemed connected to the proximity of the live body and audience, its role in the work, and the way that attention is managed in the relations between viewer and artwork.

The visual culture theorist, Professor Irit Rogoff proposes 'looking away' as a diversion of attention from what we are supposed to be attending to, to 'free up a recognition that other manifestations are taking place that are often difficult to read, and which may be as significant as the designated objects on display' (2005:119). This opens a line of inquiry into the '*subject of the exhibition*' (italics in original), that is the viewer as the subject, and the 'possibilities' that exhibition spaces might provide to accommodate the proliferation of performative acts by which audiences shift themselves from being viewers to participants' (ibid.)

The role of looking away in artistic practice points to a wider problem, where time-based practices may be thought of as attracting, or capturing attention and engagement between viewer and artwork. There may be an implicit assumption of the primacy of vision, where the exchange of attention is presupposed, or expected in performance-related work. However, an approach centred on 'looking at' may miss the affective,

sensory and political realms of discomfort, uncertainty and awkwardness, that operate in the relations between viewer and artwork. Looking away is counter-intuitive to such expectations, suggesting a withdrawal from, or rejection of normal relations that seems to reposition, displace and/or complicate them. Looking away was considered as a potential productive line of inquiry, which might be otherwise overlooked where there are assumptions that the aim is to attract, or capture attention in some way. It was thought that a practical investigation might generate new understandings of performance-related artistic practice in a fine arts context.

The research therefore identifies a problem in the relations between viewer and artwork, which concerns spectatorship; the exchange of attention and commodification, where a binary relationship arises that conforms to expectations. The project aims to investigate this problem, by asking what kind of practice can confront the issue, and asks how artistic practice can provoke, or invoke, the unexpected or unintended, rather than affirming what is already known and expected. The research questions the role of looking away, in repositioning, displacing or complicating relations between the artwork and viewer, and seeks to articulate further dimensions, or understandings, of performance-related artistic practice in a fine arts context. An underlying aim and interest, as a practicing artist, is in rethinking and developing methodologies around the practice that enhance and transform it.

In order to progress the research and narrow the field, three approaches are taken to looking away, as modalities of this inquiry: failure, embarrassment and mis-attention (the 'modalities'). The modalities are organized into the three (independent) 'shifts' which reflect a shift or change of perspective in relations between viewer and artwork, and a departure point that generates a different conceptualization of the practical research. The term 'shift' refers to a change in perspective, and also indicates the shift in view, that occurs in looking away, where relations between viewer and artwork are complicated,

displaced or repositioned. At the same time, it is recognised that the three shifts overlap with each other.

The research will investigate looking away by developing a set of practical concepts and methods that offer a multi-dimensional view of relations between viewer and artwork. This approach will allow the relationship to be considered in objective terms, without impinging on its subjective nature. In developing an approach to this investigation, I considered that subjective methodologies would not necessarily allow for an objective analysis of the works and objective approaches may eschew subjective accounts. The aim is to consider the subjective provocation of looking away in artworks, in a practical way that might be applied more broadly, rather than the particularity of narratives or content in the works and the way they might be subjectively received by particular individuals or groups of viewers.

The research therefore departs from approaches based in subject/object relations of spectatorship, the gaze and objectification that use theoretical models that do not take subjective methodologies into account. The research also does not apply theories of embodiment, receptivity or affect to the practice nor is it based on a single subjective viewpoint. Through the practical concepts of frames (of attention, live body and contract), (see page 17 below) and the key terms used in this investigation (the parergon, attention, supplement, embarrassment, self-consciousness, the comic and representation), (see page 20 below) the research is able to account for the affective and subjective properties of artistic practice and the subjectivity of both the live body in the work and the viewer while referencing these aspects of the relations between viewer and artwork in objective framings.

The investigation reflects the current focus and diversity of performance-related practices found in the field of contemporary fine art practices, where the live or recorded body comprise an element in the work. There are multiple ways in which the body may be

utilized, sometimes borrowing from methods and elements found traditionally in other disciplines particularly theatre, including as actor, clown, comic, as representation, as delegate, as persona, as themselves, in performing identity, as artists, as participants, as activists, as viewers, as the site of the work, as its medium, in speech, writing and text as well as invoking presence and/or absence or disembodiment of the performer. This field is further diversified and complicated by performance-related artistic practices from disciplines of performance, theatre and choreography, using spaces and adopting methods traditionally associated with fine art contexts in the white cube gallery such as installation, performance and film.

The works are specifically performance-related in featuring the live or recorded body in some way and are situated in or associated with traditional spaces of fine art and its surrounding discourses and art histories. The works are contextualized further in the field of contemporary British performance-related artistic practice which has roots in the historical role of performance in fine art contexts from the early twentieth century avant-garde to performance related works in the 1960s. This thread of performance-related practices in fine art contexts, leading to the contemporary field, overlaps and interlinks with performance art also overlaps with fields of performance art, performance associated with theatre and the emergence of performance studies in the 1960s and 70s, a term that covered the converging field of 'traditional theatre studies, anthropology, and sociology' (Carlson, 2004:11).

The historical context is informed by performance theorist Marvin Carlson's history of both performance and performance art and their relationship with each other and with visual arts, as well as the influences of developments from the United States, Europe and Britain in *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (2004<sup>2</sup>) and of historian RoseLee Goldberg, who wrote the first history of performance in 1979 and issued a revised and expanded

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 4 '*Performance in its historical context*' (2004:83-109) and Chapter 5 '*Performance Art*' (2004:110-134).

history of 'performance art' in 1988 (2004:84). Goldberg describes the history of performance art in the twentieth century as: 'the history of a permissive, open-ended medium with endless variables, executed by artists impatient with the limitations of more established art forms' (Goldberg, 1988:9 cited at Carlson, 2004:84). The history is traced by Goldberg as 'revolt and experimentation' that begins with:

futurism, then proceeding to experimental theatre of the Russian Revolution, dada and surrealism, the Bauhaus, Cage and Cunningham, happenings, Anna Halprin and the new dance, Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, and Joseph Beuys, and to body art and modern performance (Carlson, 2004:84).

The earlier part of this history has been considered as reflecting the history of twentieth century avant-garde experimental theatre and has been viewed within that tradition (Carlson, 2004:84). Carlson refers to the European avant garde as providing a lineage for early performance art and performance work in the US in 1970s that came, not out of experimental theatre, but out of new approaches to the visual arts for example as envisioned by George Macunias and Fluxus, by Alan Kaprow and 'happenings', through environments and live and conceptual art (2004:111). Despite this connection to the visual arts, the continued associations with elements of theatre, such as the presence of the audience even if unconventionally organized and presented, meant that performance related discourses continued to be adopted (ibid.).

In parallel with early US performance art, early British performance art developed in the 1960s influenced by American happenings and a new interest in Dada and other avant-garde theatre experiments. Some of these practices were also influenced by the 'anarchic British comedy tradition' which incorporated popular entertainment materials such as street theatre, clown acts and vaudeville (Carlson, 2004:116). These artists included Jeff Nuttall and The People Show, The Welfare State, Anthony Howell and The Theatre of Mistakes and Bruce McLean and The Nice Style Pose Band (ibid.).

The investigation reflects the importance and diversity of performance-related practices in the field of contemporary fine art, where the live or recorded body comprise an element in genres that can be referred to as including performance art, video art, video performance, photography, online performance, multi-media performance, experimental theatre and hybrids of these approaches. There are multiple ways in which the body operates in contemporary fine art and rather than consider the genre of the performance-related practice, this research considers the role of the live body in the works (see particularly Shift 2: Embarrassment and the practical concept of 'live body').

Performance-related practices may borrow methods and elements found traditionally in other disciplines, for example in theatre or other fields entirely. Such roles in the work include as actor, clown, comic, as a delegate, as a collective body, as representative or representation, adopting a profession, as a persona, as performer, as themselves, in exploring space and exploring social and cultural space, in performing identity, as an artist, as participants, as activists, as viewers, as the site of the work, as its medium, in speech, writing and text as well as invoking presence and/or absence or disembodiment of the performer. The field of performance-related practices is further diversified and complicated by practices from disciplines of performance, theatre and choreography using spaces and adopting methods traditionally associated with fine art contexts in the white cube gallery such as installation, texts, speech, video performance and film.

The investigation seeks to contribute to knowledge that resides in the field of contemporary British performance-related practice research within a contemporary and historical fine art context and also to gaps where there is an overlap in discourses associated with performance studies and theatre. The research into 'looking away' aims to contribute to this field in a number of areas through an examination of the space between the spectator and performer in the performance-related fine art works that are produced in this study and to view those relations, focusing on where failure, embarrassment and mis-attention occur.

An aim in this study is to contribute to discourses in relation to the thinking between, on one hand theoretical and conceptual ideas and, on the other hand the practice in performance-related fine art research. Practice-based, and practice-led research in fine art may situate theory and practice in different ways and to varying degrees with each other, and the question of how theoretical or philosophical ideas relate to the practice have become increasingly nuanced, characterized by subtle and complex distinctions in research in performance-related fine art and performance studies. This investigation seeks to develop a novel and nuanced relationship of the thinking between theory and practice developed from processes of conceptual and theoretical ideas, questions and thought experiments emerging from doing the performance-related practice and feeding back into the practice.

Although the approach to the relationship between theory and practice that will be developed in this study will arise from, and relate to, this particular research practice, it is intended that this will add to discourses in fine art research more broadly by deepening and widening this field. In this respect the research will offer a further nuanced approach to this relationship, with new dimensions to previous methodologies of creative research concerning the space between theory and practice in practice-based or practice-led fine art research. In aid of this, the research will be taking a heuristic approach based on the experience of doing the practical works, which is aimed at giving rise to theoretical and philosophical questions that will be developed further in the research. The position of the researcher as performer in the works adds another dimension (of being in the work) to the emergence of conceptual ideas and thought experiments through practice.

The research will seek to add to discourses concerning spectatorship, embodiment and affect in the field of performance-related fine art practice by offering a novel practical and conceptual theory of those relations. A problem with notions of spectatorship and embodiment is to account for both aspects of objectivity and subjectivity in a theory of

the space between viewer and artwork. This research seeks to conceptualize the space between viewer and artwork from a new perspective that departs from previous approaches of spectatorship, reception studies and embodiment. This study will take the counter-intuitive approach of 'looking away' to seek to offer a novel approach to examine and consider the relationship between viewer and artwork. In this study the aim is to develop a practical theorisation of the practice that might be objectively applied more widely but will retain the integrity of the subjective element of those relations in the subjectivity of both viewer and performer and the affective qualities of that relationship.

The research also aims to contribute to gaps in knowledge in fine art contexts and overlapping fields. These areas primarily concern the modalities of failure, embarrassment and mis-attention and also the notion of 'looking away'. In this study, the notion of attention emerges in the interrogation of the idea of 'mis-attention' and the research will aim to add to discourses in relation to this area. In this respect, the field of performance studies has traditionally overlapped with discourses around the phenomenology of perception where the nature of, or what, the content of the perceptual experience is, in other words what is being conveyed to the viewer, is the primary question. Recent work in the field of the phenomenology of attention (Waldenfels, 2011) overlapping with the field of performance studies, has shifted and widened these discourses in considering attention as the 'how' of such perceptual experiences in performance. A further contribution of this research is to look at the phenomenology of attention and the viewers as 'attendants' as discussed by performance theorist Jon Foley (Sherman (2016:12) as a current field.

A further aim of the study is to add to discourses on failure and embarrassment in fine art contexts as an area that has been the subject of an anthology by curator Lisa Le Feuvre (2010). There is an overlap between performance-related fine art practices and theatre-based studies on failure in the work by Sara Jane Bailes in performance theatre and



poetics (2011), and in the work of artist and performance maker, Tim Etchells<sup>3</sup>. A further area where failure operates is in the notion of 'mis-performance' as discussed by performance theorists and dramaturgs, Marin Blažević and Lada Čale Feldman (2014)). Finally, the research will seek to add a practical approach to 'looking away' to theoretical notions of looking away which have political or philosophical implications, for example as expounded by Rogoff (2005).

To meet the aim of the investigation and address the research question, the objectives are to generate work and thought experiments in performance-related artistic practice from which a set of practical concepts and methods can be identified and developed, to inform and progress the investigation. Through this process, seven practical concepts emerge. Six of the practical concepts, 'contract', 'live body', 'frames of attention' (or 'frames'), 'white cube frame', 'theatre frame', 'narrative frame' have been conceptualized in terms of different kinds of 'frames of attention' (see further pages 35-36 Methodology). These are envisaged as rigid and complete structures, which organize how attention operates in particular ways. The practical research operates within, and against, these different kinds of frames. The seventh practical concept, 'layers' of attention reflects a heterogeneous medium of attention out of which different kinds of frames are formed in a 'scheme of attention' (see page 29 below). Three practical methods also emerge of 'varying the conditions', 'hiding the performer' and 'improvisatory conditions' (see pages 34-35 Methodology). The artistic research is interrogated through the pairing of a set of practical concepts and a method, which gives rise to three views, or conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork that align with each shift and modality (see pages 28-30 below).

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.institute-of-failure.com/catalogue.html](http://www.institute-of-failure.com/catalogue.html) (accessed 26 August 2019)

The investigation develops an approach analogous to the social psychologist, Erving Goffman's frame analysis developed in performance studies (1986). Goffman details the psychological notion of the frame as the principle organizing device of way humans organize experience and structure their perception of society (1986). The rationale for not directly adopting Goffman's approach was because the research was not positioned in the field of social, psychological or cognitive studies and was seeking its own practical theorizations of the performance-related practice. The methodology utilized themes and ideas that emerged from the works which resulted in a set of key terms (referred to below at pages 21-26) that were used in articulating the frame analysis in this research. I considered that utilizing Goffman's approach might overcomplicate the research and was unnecessary for the purposes of this investigation. The approach that was adopted would allow a synthesis of themes to emerge as concepts and key terms that may not have been identified otherwise, as well as a novel approach that would aid the contribution to knowledge.

The practical research comprises nine works, which consist of five initial studio-based practical experiments (the 'initial works') and four main experiments ('main works'), which were made under live performance and/or exhibition conditions, and as different configurations of performance-related artistic practice. The research develops from the body of practice, comprising the works, which interconnect and overlap over the course of the investigation. This is demonstrated in the case of two works that are examined twice, under different shifts<sup>4</sup>. This approach allows the three separate perspectives, set out in each shift, to combine overall, to form a multi-dimensional view of the body of practice, in terms of relations between viewer and artwork.

In all cases the works involved myself, as a live or recorded body, sometimes with other artists or collaborators, and as such, I was in the dual role of performer and researcher. As

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<sup>4</sup> See *Freeform* in Shift 2: Embarrassment and Shift 3: Mis-attention and *How Soon* in Shift 1: Failure and Shift 3: Mis-attention.

a performer in the work I was directly implicated and personally affected in the relations between viewer and artwork and was able to relay these experiences as thought experiments to myself in my other role as researcher. As a performer in the work, I experienced the complicated dual position the artist as performer has in the artwork, as both themselves and as the role they are playing (even to extent they are required to be 'themselves'). The realization of this relationship affecting the live body in the work, between the self and the role being played, stimulated the development of underlying themes in the research of framing and representation and is particularly discussed in the work *Confessions* (see page 92 onwards in Shift 2: Embarrassment)).

Additionally, as a performer in the work, my own subjectivity in the relations between viewer and artwork, including my unease, self-consciousness, nervousness and embarrassment in performing publicly, became part of the materials of the work and research and instigated the development of key terms used in the research of self-consciousness and embarrassment. First-hand accounts of my experiences, that capture some of these instances appear throughout the thesis (see further Methodology at page 32). As such, I was able to take these affective elements from my role as performer to my role as researcher and apply them in the development of practical concepts and methods in the research. Further, an aspect of being the researcher 'in' the work itself allowed me to view the relations between viewer and artwork from the perspective of the artwork. I was able to witness objectively and in real time the movements of the viewers around the artwork as well as interactions between the viewer and myself and apply these instances in the development of the research.

In each shift, one or more of the initial works, and associated thought experiments are used to develop a conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork using the practical concepts and methods referred to above. The initial works are tested against, and with, the practical concepts and methods to see what is happening in the work and to make initial findings. These conceptualizations are then applied to two main

works, in each shift, to evaluate how they operate, and to consider the role of looking away in the relations between viewer and artwork. The conceptualizations of the relations between viewer and artwork are probed and extended further through the main works. The practical investigations and findings are presented in still and moving images in the practical documents<sup>5</sup>. The printed document<sup>6</sup> shows how the practical concepts and methods have developed in the work and discusses and analyses how they are applied, to reveal research findings.

There are seven theoretical themes or ideas, referred to as 'key terms' or 'terms', that appear in this thesis and a particular set or combination of these key terms are discussed in each shift. The key terms, their provenance and their underlying theoretical support used in this research, are set out at pages 21-26. This investigation adopts a heuristic approach of 'learning through doing', and the key terms emerge from the 'doing' of the practical works and the associated conceptual thought experiments that arise through this experience. As theoretical and philosophical ideas, the key terms have a specific relationship to the practical research in that they emerge and are developed through doing the practice as a means of exploring the space between viewer and artwork. The key terms are transposed into the research as a way of rethinking and transforming the practice by articulating, describing and visualizing practical conceptualizations of the relations between viewer and artwork.

There are limits as to how the key terms, as theoretical ideas, are being used in this research. The research does not set out to extend or critique the key terms nor test the underlying theoretical support on a purely conceptual level. In this respect the key terms and their underlying theoretical support could be described as being 'borrowed' or 'adopted' in the research rather than being conceptually developed or extended in themselves. The rationale for this approach is because it is the research practice itself from

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<sup>5</sup> See 'Navigating the thesis' (pages 6 to 8).

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

which underlying theoretical and philosophical themes emerge which are then further developed. In other words, it is the practical experience that gives rise to theoretical and/or philosophical questions about primary issues in the research such as those concerning the relations between viewer and artwork and it is through this approach that the research is seeking to contribute to ongoing discourses in fine art research practice.

The provenance of each of the key terms are summarized as follows:

### **The parergon**

This key term adopts Jacques Derrida's theorizations and conceptualization of the '*parergon*' (italics in original) in his essay, *The Parergon* (1979)<sup>7</sup>. Derrida's project of deconstructing literary and philosophical texts and writings on art, critiques Western metaphysics, hierarchical and traditional systems that structure representation and notions of truth. Derrida's analysis reveals hidden biases that are attached to binary oppositions in the text for example, inside/outside, presence/absence, self/other, male/female, speech/writing and centre/margin. In hierarchical systems one of the terms, for example, self and centrality are always favoured over the other, resulting in fixed systems and an authority structure.

*The Parergon* is an essay in the work, *The Truth In Painting* (1987), in which Derrida focuses on Kant's *Critique of Judgement* in relation to visual arts and aesthetics. Kant's philosophy on aesthetics is based in idealism, reason and universal notions of beauty and heavily influences the modern era. Derrida's critique attacks the subjective construction of Kant's thought (Richards, 2016:30). In doing this, Derrida expands the traditional understanding of the frame as a rigid and delimiting border by conceptualizing the parergon as a particular kind of frame that problematizes this structure. The parergon is

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<sup>7</sup> The translation of *The Parergon* referred to and quoted in this thesis is sourced from the first publication of the essay in *October*, 9 (Summer), 1979 at 3-41 (Derrida, 1979). The essay was later translated and published in his work, *The Truth In Painting* (1987).

conceived as an active, unstable and shifting device which sets up a tension between the inside and outside, and reveals the frame as permeable in considering how 'historical context, institutions, individual viewers, cultural ideals and other phenomena beyond the work come to frame the work of art' (2016:143). The terms *parergon*, *parerga* (plural) and *parergonal activity* are used in relation to this concept.

### **The supplement**

This key term adopts Derrida's conceptualization of the '*supplément*' (italics in original), explored particularly in *Of Grammatology* (1997) and his reading of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782). Rousseau addressed ideas of the Self and referred to the 'marginal' and 'dangerous' activity of masturbation as a 'supplement' to the 'natural' act of sexual intercourse (Richards, 2016:21). Derrida saw in this and other discourses, patterns of thought that repeat 'the same gesture of privileging values associated with Western metaphysics' and logocentrism by marginalizing anything that corrupts them (Richards, 2016:20). Such discourses operate as rigid structures and uphold and depend upon, for example, the idea of a pure origin, 'purity over impurity', the 'whole over the fragment', 'presence over absence', 'original over copy' and seriousness over frivolousness, Self over Other. The unprivileged opposition is considered 'dangerous' and is sought to be marginalized from awareness (2016:20).

Derrida's conception of the supplement disturbs or corrupts the construct that is the 'natural order' and operates in tension with these discourses (Richards, 2016:24). In Derrida's terms the supplement is an addition, or something that is added to a work, that is not 'considered as part of the original work' (2016:144). The supplement can appear in any place, in or around the work and 'adds to the original, transforming the work in the process' (ibid.). In so doing the supplement reveals a lack within the original work that requires supplementation where for example, the Self requires an Other', 'wholeness is defined only in relation to fragmentation', singularity arises only through repetition and

addition' and 'at the origin there is division' (2016:144). The terms supplement, supplementation, supplemental and supplementary are used in relation to this concept.

### **Embarrassment**

Embarrassment is an emotional state and an affect. In this respect, affect is the subjective experience of embarrassment and self-consciousness as an abstract non-conscious intensity felt through the body<sup>8</sup>. The affective properties of embarrassment and self-consciousness are important elements in this investigation which is driven by subjective experience in the practice. In psychological, cognitive and phenomenological studies the emotional state of embarrassment is referred to as a self-conscious emotion related to shame and involving self-reflection and a negative sense of self (Lewis, 2016).

The discussion of the affective properties of embarrassing situations in the research also adopts sociological studies on embarrassment by Goffman (referred to above at page 18). In his descriptive studies of face to face interactions, Goffman discusses the structural aspects of embarrassment and the tension between its anticipation in everyday life and its management in trying to avoid it (1967). Other theorizations concerning embarrassment, including in terms of ridicule, laughter and the comic are drawn upon to further conceptualize how the affective properties of embarrassment operate as an ambivalent and unstable state by social psychologist Michael Billig (2012) and philosopher Graham Harman and 'object-orientated' ontology (2005).

### **The comic**

The research adopts the French philosopher, Henri Bergson's conceptualizations of humour in terms of the comic and laughter in his work *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (2008). In this work, consisting of three essays, Bergson discusses

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<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of the key terms of embarrassment and self-consciousness in this thesis, affect refers to the subjective experience of an emotion or feeling. For further work on affect theory see Sedgewick and Adam, 1995 and Sedgewick, 2003.

the processes of the comic rather than an analysis of its effects as he was interested in why we laugh and what makes us laugh. Bergson characterized the comic as necessarily human and laughter as a detached attitude that has a social function. The comic effect, in Bergson's terms, is the 'momentary transformation' of a person into a thing, which is proposed as setting up a tension between the 'body' and the 'soul' or 'mechanization' and 'life' (2008:30). Work by the Harman (2005) and Billig (2012) also informs the relationship between the laughter, the comic and embarrassment.

### **Attention**

The key term of attention is informed by the phenomenologist Bernard Waldenfels' 'responsive' phenomenology of attention (2011), which draws on, amongst others, Edmund Husserl (1950) and Emmanuel Levinas (1999). Waldenfels provides a theoretical framework for our experience of the 'alien', that is, the strange or unfamiliar that, he says, disturbs existing orders and permeates our everyday life, and also has a particular relevance for the arts (2011:67). Waldenfels' consider attention in terms of 'originary' attention. Originary attention has affective properties, it is something that 'happens' to us passively, that is not expected (2011:65) and is able to break with habitual or expected ways of thinking and seeing to reveal the unexpected, unfamiliar or unintended. It is argued that this sets up a tension between our expectations and how the unexpected or unknown appears to us and is contrast to his notion of secondary attention which is fixed and confirms our expectations (2011).

### **Self-consciousness**

The key term self-consciousness is considered in this research in terms of an affect that occurs with the subjective experience of embarrassment (see above under 'Embarrassment'). The research takes an approach to self-consciousness that has been conceived in the phenomenological tradition of Maurice Merleau Ponty, Husserl and Jean Paul Sartre in order to discuss these affects. In this context self-consciousness is a 'peculiar relationship of the self to itself', described in terms of the states of the 'lived



body' and the 'corporeal body' (Brent Dean Robbins and Holly Parlavecchio, 2006:325). This conceptualization of self-consciousness is proposed as setting up a tension between these two states.

## **Representation**

The concept of representation is adopted from the philosophy of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze who wrote on philosophy, literature, film and fine art and Félix Guattari, a French psychoanalyst and philosopher who co-wrote a number of works with Deleuze. Deleuze's main metaphysical project written before his collaborations with Guattari upend traditional understandings of identity and difference (where the latter is considered as derivative of the former) and his concept of 'difference in itself' claims all identities are effects of difference. In this respect, his major work on his metaphysics *Difference and Repetition* (1994) critiques the dominance of representational systems that tend to establish fixed or rigid standards, norms and structures, as ways of seeing and thinking about the world (1994). This text provides support for an underlying feminist subtext in the research (see further pages 27-28) (Dorothea Olkowski, 1999:2).

The understanding of representation adopted in the research is informed further by work of artist and philosopher, Simon O'Sullivan, who engages between artistic practice and Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, in considering art 'beyond representation' (2007)<sup>9</sup>. Some of the concepts referred to by O'Sullivan have been adopted in the thesis including those he has assembled from a 'Deleuzian perspective', in his thinking about the 'expanded field of contemporary art', including methods used that reflect such perspectives (2007 and 2011:196). These concepts are referred to, in greater or lesser degrees throughout the thesis and include the notion of 'thought beyond representation', 'aesthetics',

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<sup>9</sup> Simon O'Sullivan works with David Burrows and others, in the collaborative performance practice, *Plastique Fantastique* and further information and works can be found at: <http://www.plastiquefantastique.org/> [accessed 18 October 2018].

'percepts', 'affect', 'the event', 'refrains' and 'mythopoeisis', as well as reference to absurdism and humour (2011).

The key terms, in different ways, could be said to operate as challenges to, or in tension with, traditional understandings of the frame as a rigid or whole structure. While looking away may be a physical gesture, an act or action of not looking, or a mode of not attending, it is also argued that it is manifested by a shift in the way we think about the world, or in the way it appears to us, or affects us, that it has more to do with attention that strikes us unexpectedly, than expectations inherent in perception. The key terms are developed from theorists, whose work, it could be said, resist grounded, habitual or expected ways in how we think or see the world.

Throughout the research there is an engagement with examples of other artists' work, initiated from insights or ideas arising from the practical works which relate to each modality of the investigation. These examples range between performance, film, installation, painting, multi-media and multi-disciplinary works and are used to develop a specific genealogy of performance-related fine art practices for this research. These works will provide an underlying contextual substrate in which I will situate my own practice (in terms of the works in this research), rather than providing either an in-depth analysis of any particular artwork referred to or a genealogy of performance-related practices generally. These artworks are used to compare or contrast the works and provide points of departure in the development and application of the practical concepts and methods in the research. This approach has been taken in order to widen the development and application of the practical concepts and methods and in so doing, inform, support and articulate how the conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork are envisaged as operating and to consider these findings discursively in the context of other artists' work.

There is a feminist subtext that underpins the whole project which manifests in two interconnecting ways. The majority of the works feature the female figure and it is contended that their appearance, performing, moving and speaking in a public space as an artwork is a political act, even where the appearance is quiet, modest or seemingly inconsequential and not overt. It is argued that this idea connects to Rogoff's writing on 'looking away' (introduced above at page 9) and her understanding of the German-American political philosopher and political theorist, Hannah Arendt's transitory and public 'space of appearance' (referred to further on at page 174) (1998:199). Rogoff finds that engaging with art provides a similar 'space of appearance' to that described by Arendt (2005:126). The contention in the research is that the female figure in the practical works is making a claim or assertion by appearing and participating in this 'space of appearance', as opposed to being hidden from view or not appearing at all, and consequentially instigates potentially alternative sets of responses in the relations between viewer and artwork.

The other strand that supports the underlying feminist sub-text manifests through the practical concepts of frames (i.e. 'frames of attention', frame of the 'live body' and 'contract') and key terms that are used to help articulate their operation. The proposition is that the frame is deemed synonymous with representation and dominant Western hierarchies and logocentrism that are based on binary oppositions and which privilege one side and enable and regulate patriarchal systems so that opposition always takes place within its own framing. Key terms, in particular the parergon, the supplement and representation are implicated in critiques of foundationalism, logocentrism and patriarchal systems. The parergon and supplement are adopted from concepts developed by Derrida and are active and unstable agents that challenge these systems (see above at pages 21-23). The key term 'representation' is established implicitly through Derrida's deconstruction of hierarchical systems and also through Deleuze's philosophy of difference and critique of representation (see above at pages 25). In particular as expounded in Dorothea Olkowski's feminist study *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of*

*Representation*' (1999) and in Simon O'Sullivan's 'thought beyond representation' in artistic practice (2007).

The thesis investigates the particularity of the works and brings to attention conceptualizations emerging in practical experiments that potentially provoke or allude to looking away. These experiments relate to the live body in a fine arts context, and to relations between viewer and artwork. A summary of each shift including the modality, the practical concepts, methods and key terms pertaining to each, are set out below:

- **Shift 1: Failure:** examines how the relations between viewer and artwork operate through the frame of attention that operates over duration ('contract'). This is paired with improvisatory methods and approaches to making the works, ('improvisatory conditions'). Failure is conceived as a breakdown in the conditions of the contract, arising through misalignments between expectations and intentions and/or failures in the exchange of attention, which may lead to a falling out of the viewer and artwork in their relations with each other.
- The method of improvisatory conditions sets up a way of opening up un-anticipated outcomes, which may have effects on the conditions in the contract. Through the key terms of the supplement and attention, the contract is envisaged as elastic. The shift proposes that the tension and elasticity between the contract and artistic practice, repositions relations between viewer and artwork by distorting and stretching the contract to its limits, even to the extent that it snaps. The contract breaks down and the parties fall out and are thrown from any relation altogether.
- **Shift 2: Embarrassment:** examines the relations between viewer and artwork through another kind of frame of attention, that of the live body ('live body'), in conjunction with the method that involves hiding the performer in the work

(‘hiding the performer’). This pairing discusses how the conceptualization of the live body in the work is affected by the interaction between attention, framing, intention and representation, and highlights how the management of attention is pivotal. It also analyzes how different modes of hiding the performer problematize that conceptualization.

- The shift proposes that tension between the live body, as a frame, and the artistic research, displaces the relations between viewer and artwork through provoking oscillations between different states. The key terms of the parergon, the comic, self-consciousness and embarrassment are used to articulate how ambivalence operates within these concepts, and forms a kind of skin between viewer and artwork, which is subject to continual momentary displacements.
- **Shift 3: Mis-attention:** introduces a practical scheme of attention (the ‘scheme of attention’) made up of the concepts of layers and frames, paired with the practical method of varying the conditions. The scheme of attention conceptualizes the relations between viewer and artwork as residing in multiple and heterogeneous layers of attention (‘layers’) out of which different kinds of frames (‘frames’) may form, depending on the conditions. The concept of frames proposes that attention is shaped or directed in particular ways, which may have overarching conceptual, constitutive and metaphorical effects in the relations between viewer and artwork. The shift considers frames and layers, as well as three specific kinds of frames of attention: the white cube frame, the theatre frame and the narrative frame.
- The method of setting up different or variable conditions in the work (‘varying the conditions’) is used as a way to compare works. The shift argues that the tension between layers and frames of attention and artistic practice, complicates the relations between viewer and artwork, through invoking conflicting, discordant

and disjunctive effects between different kinds of frames and layers. Through the key terms of the parergon, attention and representation, it is proposed that the artistic research operates by playing with, dissolving and 'trashing' frames of attention, to the extent that they can be thought of as irrelevant. (The term 'trashing' is used in the sense of wrecking, effacing, obliterating, damaging or tearing apart.)

The thesis will seek to present a multi-dimensional view of the relations between viewer and artwork, through a body of practical research that investigates the role of looking away in performance-related artistic practice. The artistic practice plays a primary role in the investigation. The practical concepts, methods and the conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork that drive the findings, have emerged during the investigation from, in and through the works and were not predetermined. The practical findings are critically expanded upon to propose the centrality of an interplay between attention, representation, framing and intention, and as a means of addressing the question of what kind of practice problematizes the assumptions and presuppositions that dominate relations between viewer and artwork.

## METHODOLOGY

Methodologically speaking the creative process forms the pathway (or part of it) through which new insights, understandings and products come into being (Henri Borgdorff, 2012:46).

The project utilizes two methods in order to conduct the research. One is artistic experimentation, presented in the thesis as a body of nine works with associated reflective ideas, observations and thought experiments. The other is an engagement with theoretical and contextual ideas, concepts and other artists' work initiated from insights or ideas arising from the works. The overall approach has been 'messy', where both methods progressed in non-linear, non-rational and intuitive ways that involved irregularity, distractions and digressions that have intertwined and informed each other as the investigation has progressed. Over the course of the project, this approach allowed the gradual build up and shaping of more concrete ideas out of which the research emerged, to form the thesis. The 'messiness' of the practical research has been embraced and was considered productive for this project because of the possibility of accidentally uncovering what might otherwise be overlooked.

The research draws methodologically on the messiness of practical research and artistic practice, and has adopted the positive approach to messiness that has been advocated by Tim Harford (2016). Harford argues for embracing mess, disorder, distraction and disruption in order to introduce new insights that may be missed using approaches that structure and order our world in planned and predictable ways (ibid.). He says:

But often we are so seduced by the blandishments of tidiness that we fail to appreciate the virtues of the messy—the untidy, un-quantified, uncoordinated, improvised, imperfect, incoherent, crude, cluttered, random, ambiguous, vague, difficult, diverse or even dirty (Harford, 2016:4).

The research also draws on aspects of heuristic inquiry as a means of learning, through the experience of doing itself (Clark Moustakas, 1990 and John Dewey, 2005). Ideas or aspects of the experience of the practical research, which might seem quite random and unplanned, have been noticed and developed in the initial works through thought experiments, from which further experiments have been generated. In these processes, practical concepts and methods have emerged that developed into the conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork and have subsequently been applied to the main works. The driving theme of the methodology has been to encapsulate the tension between the messiness of practical research, and the structuring of it in the thesis. This tension has been reflected in the arrangement of the thesis in three shifts, aligning with each modality. It is also reflected in the pairing of practical concepts and methods, which operate in tension with each other<sup>10</sup>.

The ideas in the research have arisen from different perspectives and voices, including my own, as researcher, artist and observer in the works. The introductory parts of the thesis and the conclusions have been written in the first person, reflecting my voice to some extent. The three shifts are presented in a formal academic, third person mode, which is reflective of a neutral and discursive probing. These are, interwoven with my first person perspectives, set out as indented text. These perspectives have been adapted, revised and re-adapted from a large number of draft notes and records, including observations, ideas and thought experiments, generated over the course of the investigation, and used to develop the practical concepts and methods. A sample of these notes is included in Appendix A (see pages 2-53 of Appendix A). This material is not part of the thesis but is included for the purpose of pointing to the kind of material generated over the course of

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<sup>10</sup> The pairings between practical concepts and methods in each shift are summarized at pages 28-30 Introduction.



the investigation that was used, developed and shaped to form the concrete conceptualizations presented in the thesis.

Another 'voice' in the thesis has come from responses of viewers, whether in attending to the work generally, and/or in their specific comments or thoughts. These have been very helpful and generated ideas for this research and there are references to some viewers' specific comments in the Shifts. One source of viewer responses arose from a particular presentation of the Work, *How Soon is Now*, before the Falmouth School of Art Research Group. Appendix B (pages 1-20) comprises scripts, drafts, notes and viewer responses pertaining to that. This material is not included as part of the thesis but its purpose is to show: some of the content of the speech segments of the work; that there was a range of different responses to the work; and the source of some of the specific comments that were useful to the research. Aspects of this are referred from page 175 of Shift 3: Mis-attention.

The practical research consists of nine works divided between five 'initial works' and four 'main works'. The initial works are titled: *Dancing in a Gallery*, 2013 ('Dancing'), *Confessions*, 2013 ('Confessions'), *tempting failure*, 2013 ('tempting'), *Mis-attentions*, 2013 ('Mis-attentions'), *Deirdre's Indecision*, 2014 ('Indecision'). The main works are titled: *The Anthea Turner Experience*, 2013 ('Anthea'), *Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation*, 2014 ('Freeform'), *Pond Lives*, 2014 ('Pond'), *How Soon is Now*, 2014-2015 ('How Soon'). (An introduction and summary in respect of each of the nine works is set out in the Chronological Index of works at pages 38-50)

The project proceeded with three modalities of looking away: failure, embarrassment and mis-attention investigated through the initial works. The notion of looking away was circumscribed in these modalities, but within each, there was left open a wide potential for interpretation. The modalities were used as departure points for the initial works, as well as for exploratory theoretical and contextual investigations that would generate

research material to be used to progress the investigation. Some of the initial works attempted to respond to the modalities directly<sup>11</sup>. Although this was helpful in generating practical research material, a direct approach to making work about failure, embarrassment or mis-attention, as content, was not progressed because it seemed more productive for this research to consider an indirect position, where there was no overt intention to provoke these themes.

As a result of considering the initial works indirectly, three practical methods emerged that appeared to be tangentially relevant to some, or all, of the modalities. These methods (varying the conditions, hiding the performer and improvisatory conditions) were identified, developed further and applied in the four main works. The methods are summarized as follows:

- **Improvisatory conditions:** this method incorporates particular approaches to the making of the works reflecting the embracing of messiness referred to earlier. These approaches included devising works, filming and editing in intuitive and improvisatory ways, using the first 'take', making decisions quickly, using ideas as and when they arose in the course of making, without thinking too much on them, making works that were unrehearsed and unrefined, using materials that were to hand and expedient, and using collaborative processes in making work where possible. The rationale behind this method was to allow, and even encourage, unpredictable outcomes, mistakes, accidents and unintended encounters to happen, and to avoid (as far as possible) intentional or teleological predetermining of the outcomes or the ways the work would be perceived, as well as to avert processes that might lead to recognisable or understandable framings or narratives. This method seemed relevant to the modality of failure, because it

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<sup>11</sup> For example, the initial works *Confessions*, *Mis-attentions* and *tempting*, could be said to respectively attempt to address the themes of failure, embarrassment and mis-attention directly.

provokes questions of the tension between intentional and unanticipated outcomes.

- **Hiding the performer:** it was noticed, in the works, that the degree to which the live body of the performer is hidden or concealed in some way, through costumes, props, acting or not acting or other means of distancing or diverting attention away from the self seemed applicable to embarrassment. This method provokes questions as to what extent the performer is hidden in the work, how this affects the relations between viewer and artwork and how the live body is being conceptualized.
- **Varying the conditions:** each work was made using a set of different conditions, where the only constant factor was the live body in the work. This method allows comparisons to be made between different works. This method seemed relevant to mis-attention because it provokes questions as to how attention is organized. Varying the conditions sets up a question of how changes in conditions affect the organization of attention in the relations between viewer and artwork.

As the three methods emerged in the initial works, a primary question developed on how these methods could be implemented in different ways in further work, and what effects they would have on the relations between viewer and artwork. In particular, the question arose about how these effects could be conceived and articulated and how to conceptualize the relations between viewer and artwork, so that findings on the role of looking away could be made. These questions initiated the development of practical concepts, emerging in the work. This involved the identification and development of the seven practical concepts that have been referred to at pages 17-18 of the Introduction, i.e. contract, live body, layers, frames, white cube frame, theatre frame and narrative frame.

Other than in the case of layers, the practical concepts are envisaged as different kinds of frames of attention. Frames are indicative of a rigid structure that delimits the inside from the outside and that is also considered whole or complete and against which the messy practical research, measured through the practical methods, operates in tension. The practical concepts were paired with a particular method, as set out below, that aligned with each modality. The practical concepts were thought of as devices, or foils, against which the methods could be examined. The tension between the concepts and methods is also reflective of the grey area between the binary of 'looking at'/'looking away' that is blurred in the relations between viewer and artwork. In this way, three conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork were established that were then probed and extended further, through the main works:

- **Failure:** conceptualizes the relations between viewer and artwork through the frame of attention of the contract between the viewer and artwork operating over duration, that comprises the viewer's expectations and the artwork's intentions. The method of improvisatory conditions is used to interrogate the practical research.
- **Embarrassment:** conceptualizes the relations between viewer and artwork through the frame of attention of the live body in the work and the method of hiding the performer is used to interrogate the practical research.
- **Mis-attention:** conceptualizes the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of frames and layers of attention. The method of varying the conditions is used to interrogate the practical research

The key terms that are referred to at pages 21-26 of the Introduction are used to inform and support the arguments, articulations and visual metaphors on how the

conceptualizations of the relations between viewer and artwork are envisaged as operating.

As previously noted, each shift operates as a change in the view of the conceptualizations of relations between viewer and artwork. The notion of 'Shift' facilitated a way of organizing the research into the three distinct modalities that aligned with the practical concepts and methods, as well as recognising that these areas overlap and complicate each other. Each Shift is organized in two sections. The first section addresses the practical concepts and methods relevant to the Shift's Modality, as they emerged in initial works. The second section examines two of the main works, probing and extending the conceptualizations further, and drawing on the fields of fine art and performance practice to make findings.

## CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX OF WORKS

This section is intended to provide the reader with a brief introduction to the works that are presented in the three practical documents. The index includes a brief overview and description of the works' content and distribution, and credits those who collaborated and/or provided opportunities in relation to particular works.

The method of improvisatory conditions (defined in the Methodology at page 34) was developed and implemented in respect of the practical research. Through this method, a number of common features appear particularly in the main works, which refer to objects and images outside the work (that is they are not its subject). For example, later experiments feature two performers, evoking an idea of the comedy double act. There is the use of garish colours and cartoonish costumes, as well as images, ideas, objects, music and female characters, from British television and popular culture, such as, 1990's celebrity *Anthea Turner*, the character *Deirdre Barlow*, 1980s aerobics icons and fitness classes, 1970s teenage magazines, *Pans People* and 1960s girl groups, as well as dancing (badly) in discos.

### Initial works

#### ***Dancing in a Gallery, 2013 ('Dancing')***

(This work is presented in Shift 3: Mis-attention and PD3: Mis-attention.)

*Dancing* comprises a series of experiments recorded on video that were developed at a residency at KARST, Plymouth in the white cube gallery space of the complex (see Figure 1). The residency was organized jointly by two Cornish arts organizations KARST, Plymouth (through directors Donna Howard and Carl Slater) and Back Lane West, Redruth (through directors Jane Lowry and Patrick Lowry). The artist, Lee McDonald, participated in some of these experiments. Aspects of this work have been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University and at the Plymouth

Art Gallery in association with the KARST residency. Some of the videos from the work have also been displayed at an exhibition held by Centre for Pedagogic Arts-based Research ('PEDARE') at Falmouth University in 2013.



Fig. 1: Williams, Frances (2013) *Dancing in a Gallery*. [film still]

The work came about during the residency when I was searching for material for the project and started from a spontaneous response of dancing around the white cube gallery space, where an exhibition had been installed. The exhibition, *Individual Order*<sup>12</sup>, curated by Marianna Garin (2013), was installed in the gallery at the time of the residency. The exhibition was partly inspired by Julia Kristeva's writing on 'revolt' and the works, though seemingly small interventions, conceptualized disturbances in the normal order of things (Kristeva, 2000 and Garin, 2013). This resonated with my research and the activity of dancing in the gallery, set up a train of thought about how attention is framed in the formality of the white cube gallery, and how embarrassment disturbs that order.

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<sup>12</sup> Containing works by artists: Francis Alÿs, Carlos Bunga, Graciela Carnevale, Karolina Erlingsson, Jiri Kovanda; Maider Lopez-Viga and Adrian Piper. Further information on *Individual Order* is available at: <http://karst.org.uk/exhibitions?=individual-order> [accessed 4 November 2018].

### *Confessions*, 2013 ('Confessions')

(This work is presented in Shift 2: Embarrassment and PD2: Embarrassment.)

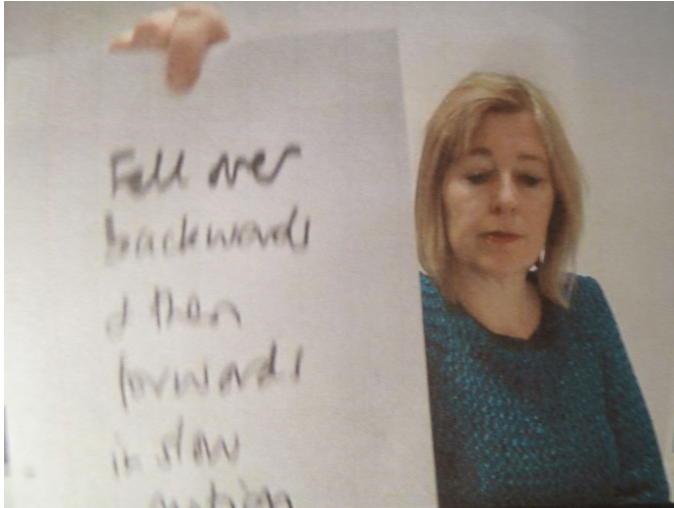


Fig. 2: Williams, Frances (2013) *Confessions*. [film still]

*Confessions* is a 4 minute video artwork made in the studio (see Figure 2). The idea for this work arose from an early attempt to experiment directly with the modality of embarrassment. The idea of a confession is connected to embarrassment and shame, and the content of this work was based on some actual embarrassing experiences. As it turned out, the direct approach was not successful, but a more nuanced approach to embarrassment and self-consciousness emerged that was productive for this project. The work was made quickly based on an initial idea, and with materials to hand, including pens, paper and video camera in an office-studio. The work has been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University.



*tempting failure, 2013 ('tempting')*

(This work is presented in Shift 1: Failure and PD1: Failure.)



Fig. 3: Williams, Frances (2013) *tempting failure*. [photograph]

*tempting* comprises a series of digital photographs taken at the live event, *Tempting Failure 2013*, at The Island, Bristol (see Figure 3). The event was curated by the artist Thomas John Bacon, and could be described as an immersive 'festival-like' event set over the course of an evening in the site of a disused police station, comprising multiple body and noise art practices (Bacon, 2013).<sup>13</sup> *tempting* has been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University. The individual photographs were taken intuitively and spontaneously at the event, using the conditions and materials to hand, without pre-planning, or using the preview function of the camera. The initial intention in making these works was to attempt to interrogate directly what was presented as 'failure' in terms of the performance practices presented in the exhibition. As it turned out, many of the images were of viewers looking at the works in the event with their backs to the camera.

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<sup>13</sup> *Tempting Failure* was set up by Thomas Bacon in 2012, and it has since become an international annual event of 'performance art and noise' and expanded as an arts organization. Further information about *Tempting Failure* is available at: <https://www.temptingfailure.com/about/> [accessed 16.3.18]

***Mis-attentions, 2013 ('Mis-attentions')***

(This Work is presented in Shift 1: Failure and PD1: Failure.)



Fig. 4: Williams, Frances (2013) *Mis-attentions*. [film still]

*Mis-attentions* are a series of three video artworks that were developed from the residency at KARST, Plymouth (referred to above), and made in the urban locations of Plymouth, Falmouth and Venice and in the studio (see Figure 4). Aspects of these works have been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University, and at Plymouth Art Gallery in an event associated with the KARST residency, and also displayed at an exhibition held by PEDARE at Falmouth University in 2013.

The intention behind these experiments was to consider different kinds of attention in terms of the performer's attention, inattention and the camera's attention. The videos were made with a simple point and shoot camera that had no preview function using the conditions to hand. I walked through urban locations and taking short 1-4 second video clips, using rough prompts, such as every two minutes, or every twenty steps or a

particular colour. Although the intention had been to approach 'attention' in this work, it was an indirect consideration of attention in that was productive for the project.

***Deirdre's indecision, 2013 ('Indecision')***

(This Work is presented in Shift 1: Failure and PD1: Failure.)



Fig. 5: Williams, Frances (2013) *Deirdre's Indecision*. [film still]

*Indecision* is a video work made in the studio and in the location of a fitness studio at a local sports centre (see Figure 5). The experiment has been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University. Isobel Haysom participated in making the video with me, playing the role of coach, where I played role of 'coachee'. The use of two performers in the video was intended to be suggestive of a comedy double act. In further experiments this feature appears repeatedly. I intended to make a comic work, and the content of the work was based on an idea for a running joke, derived from a commercial fitness video by the celebrity Anthea Turner, who, with her coach, was demonstrating 'step' aerobics using increasingly higher steps.

The work was quickly planned in a storyboard sketch that set up a rough sequence of camera shots (head shots and medium and long shots) that would make up the video. The work was unrehearsed and filmed within an hour at the fitness studio, based on this idea set out in the storyboard, using costumes and props that were to hand and that alluded

to images of 1980s fitness figures with brightly coloured accessories. The editing was quickly done with speed effects applied. The word 'indecision' in the title alludes to an aerobics step called 'indecision', and this seemed useful, as it reflected the idea of a hesitation between two states that was emerging in the research. The reference to 'Deirdre' is to the character Deirdre Barlow, played by Anne Kirkbride, a favourite in the British television soap opera, *Coronation Street* (*Coronation Street*, 1972-2014)

## Main works

### *The Anthea Turner Experience*, 2013 ('Anthea')

(This Work is presented in Shift 1: Failure and PD1: Failure.)



Fig. 6: Williams, Frances (2013) *The Anthea Turner Experience*. [film still]

*Anthea* was a live performance of 45 minutes that was recorded on video (see Figure 6). The experiment was performed in a seminar room in Falmouth University, as part of the *Performing Objects* Conference, 2013 (the 'conference') organized by Dr Carolyn Shapiro of the Falmouth School of Art<sup>14</sup>. Dr Andy Webster and his dog Alfie participated in

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<sup>14</sup> Further information about the *Performing Objects* Conference, Falmouth University is available at: <http://repository.falmouth.ac.uk/2155/> [accessed 22 July 2018].

making this work with me. Aspects of the experiment have also been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University. The content of the work is a repetitive sequence of movements based, loosely, on aerobics steps. The work was unrehearsed on the day it was performed and the props, objects and music used were to hand and in the studio. As referred to above in relation to *Indecision*, the work featured fitness themes, brightly coloured—particularly pink—costumes providing a cartoonish or comic appearance for the performers and allusions to celebrities of the 1990s (Anthea Turner). The work also evokes the idea of a comedy double act.

### ***Pond Lifes, 2014 ('Pond')***

(This Work is presented in Shift 2: Embarrassment and PD2: Embarrassment.)



Fig. 7: Williams, Frances (2014) *Pond Lifes*. [film still]

*Pond* is a multi-media installation comprising performance, video, text and images situated in the landscape (see Figure 7). The Work took place over four days in the grounds of Enys House, Penryn as part of an interdisciplinary art event entitled *Embedded*<sup>15</sup> curated by Kate Ogle and Tim Crowley. Isobel Haysom participated in

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<sup>15</sup> Further information on the *Embedded* exhibition is available at: <http://www.timothycrowley.org/enys.html> [accessed 12 August 2018].

making and performing this work. Support in loaning and transporting the props, including the boat that appears in the video, was provided by Dr Andy Webster and the Falmouth University caretakers. Aspects of the experiment have also been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University.

The content of the video includes the use of red material to cover the island and red costumes worn by the two performers that can be thought of as alluding, visually, to the works entitled *Surrounded Islands* (1983) by Christo and Jeanne-Claude<sup>16</sup>. The two performers wear duplicate red overalls, and the speed-up effect in the video and their seemingly pointless task allude to the idea of a comedy double-act.

***Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation, 2014 ('Freeform')***

(This Work is presented in Shift 2: Embarrassment and PD2: Embarrassment and in Shift 3: Mis-attention and PD3: Mis-attention.)



Fig. 8: Williams, Frances (2014) *Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation*. [photograph]

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<sup>16</sup> Images and plans of *Surrounded Islands* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude are available at their website at: <http://christojeanneclaude.net/projects/surrounded-islands> [Accessed 12 August 2018].

*Freeform* was a multi-media live performance, which took place at The Exchange, Penzance, Cornwall and aspects of which were recorded in photographs and video (see Figure 8). The work was developed from an opportunity that arose in conjunction with the touring exhibition of Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2014 at The Exchange, Penzance, in which the researcher's video work, *Ting and Tang: Anachronisms, 2012*<sup>17</sup> was exhibited. The work was organized through Blair Todd, Exhibitions Curator and Deputy Director and took place over the course of a morning. Ros Bason collaborated in making and performing this work, and Frank, Arthur and Della Bason helped in its production at the live event including Frank Bason taking on the role of 'technician'. Aspects of the work have been presented at postgraduate research and Fine Art research group events at Falmouth University.

The content of the work arose from the idea of transposing the notion of dancing in a gallery (from the initial work, *Dancing*) into a more developed and live work with two performers, again alluding to the idea of the comedy double act. The title is based on the 1970's dance troupe '*Pans People*' who appeared on television regularly on the BBC music programme, *Top of the Pops*, dancing to pop songs (*Top of the Pops*, 1968-1976). They seemed to 'literally' interpret the lyrics of songs through their choreography, using hand and body gestures. The notion of 'freeform' and 'freeform interpretation' that appears in the title comes from the expressive and literal interpretative dance steps and gestures of *Pans People*, as well as alluding to the idea of dancing in the gallery, uninhibited by the formality of the situation (discussed *Shift 2: Embarrassment*).

The notion of 'freeform' also reflects a passage in *Difference and Repetition* by Deleuze on his concept of difference (1994):

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<sup>17</sup> The work, *Ting and Tang: Anachronisms, 2012*, is available on the ICA published channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYxgNO0RpUE> [Accessed 12 August 2018].

What is most important, however, is that—between sensibility and imagination, between imagination and memory, between memory and thought—when each disjointed faculty communicates to another the violence which carries it to its own limit, every time it is a free form of difference which awakens the faculty, and awakens it as the different within that difference. So it is with difference in intensity, disparity in the phantasm, dissemblance in the form of time, the differential in thought. *Opposition, resemblance, identity and even analogy are only effects produced by these presentations of difference, rather than being conditions which subordinate difference and make it something represented (italics in original) (1994:145)*

This passage formed an element of the work in *How Soon*, referred to in Shift 1: Mis-attention (see Figures 66, 72-3 PD3 and Appendix B page 8 and 11).

The costumes worn by the performers were made from cardboard and gaffer tape and other low-fi materials that were close to hand in the studio and they were made through a collaborative process with Ros Bason. The shape of the costumes, based on the comical image of an oversized rectangular box, through which arms, legs and heads of the performers protrude is also derived from Gregor, in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, transformed into an insect, supine and unable to get up. A great deal of time was spent in making these costumes, particularly in adorning them using layers of architect's tracing paper and polystyrene, painting them and making the box feet and headdresses, overall producing a sculptural effect to the performers in the costumes. The style of the headdresses and box boots were borrowed from 1970s 'Jackie' annuals that were to hand at the time.



### *How Soon Is Now, 2015-16 ('How Soon')*

(This Work is presented in Shift 1: Failure and PD1: Failure and in Shift 3: Mis-attention and PD3: Mis-attention.)



Fig. 9: Williams, Frances (2015-2016). *How Soon Is Now*. [film still]

*How Soon* is a live multi-media performance of approximately 20 minutes' length comprising live performance, video, speech and text (see Figure 9). The Work was performed four times before different sets of viewers and in different spaces. The first performance was at an evening of artists' performance organized by The Independent School of Art at a public house, The Shipwrights in Falmouth ('ISA version'). The second version was performed in a seminar room in Falmouth University with the Fine Art research group, Falmouth University ('FARG version'). The third performance took place in a black box theatre space, as part of a group of three academic presentations at a conference for the Platform for Artistic Research Sweden, Gothenburg University, Sweden, ('PARSE version'). The fourth version took place at the University's dance and choreography research group (Dr@ft), in a seminar room ('Dr@ft version') and was filmed by Matthew Grocutt. I performed the work on my own in the FARG and PARSE versions, with Ros Bason, in the ISA version and with Katrina Brown in the Dr@ft version.

The visual content of the work, particularly for the dancing and video sequences, derives from the idea of the double act, and from gestures, props and objects that were to hand at the time of making the materials for the work in the studio. These included cardboard, paper, make-shift green-screens, fancy dress wigs, cartoonish or comical costumes in the form of black paper fringes and bobs and oversized green trousers, music on the radio, fashion and gestures of US girl groups of the 1960s, filming improvisatory actions and activities, the Ford Mondeo appearing in the video was a courtesy car from a garage where my car was being repaired at the time, Northern Soul YouTube clips and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd's choreographical methods, the collaborative process of working with Ros Bason in generating materials for this work and shared memories of these ideas and objects, as well as the over-use of, or playing with, special effects in the post-production editing of the video.

Other material in the work concerns speech and text, including quotations from *Difference and Repetition* by Deleuze (1994) and others, referred to further in Shift 3: Mis-attention and in Appendix B. The full title of the work (*How Soon Is Now*) is from a popular song by The Smiths and seemed to align with the theme of the PARSE conference on Time, towards which this work was developed, and was reflective of ideas of time as theorized by Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze that this work was attempting to engage with.

## SHIFT 1: FAILURE

Note to reader: please read in conjunction with the interactive practical document, Shift 1: Failure (PD1), on the USB stick.

### Introduction

This shift looks at failure through a kind of frame of attention where the relations between viewer and artwork are conceptualized as a contract ('contract'). The contract is envisaged as a frame of attention which operates over time. The contract comprises the viewer's expectations and the artwork's intentions, in an exchange of attention. The modality of failure is positioned, in this shift, as the failure of, or a failure in relation to, the contract. The concept is considered and tested against the method of improvisatory conditions, and this approach will address the question of how failure repositions the relations between viewer and artwork.

The first section of the shift shows the development of the practical concept of contract and the method of improvisatory conditions in the initial works, *tempting failure* ('tempting') and *Mis-attentions* ('Mis-attentions'). The section explains how these concepts are applied to the work, and introduces the key terms that help articulate how they operate. The second section applies this conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork, in an examination of two comparative configurations of performance-related artistic practice, *The Anthea Turner Experience* ('Anthea') and *How Soon is Now* ('How Soon').

Images and videos of the works referred to in this Shift are presented in the practical document, Shift 1: Failure (PD1).

## Practical concepts and methods: contract and improvisatory conditions

A practical approach to failure was developed in two initial works, *tempting* and *Mis-attentions*. Images and video of these works are presented as Figures 1-17 PD1 and Videos 1-3 PD1. Themes are drawn from the work, to show the practical conceptualization of contract, and how failure is positioned in relation to that concept. Practical approaches and the key terms of the supplement and attention are used to propose how the relations between viewer and artwork are repositioned as a result of failure in or of the contract. Failure, as 'misperformance', is considered in the method of improvisatory conditions, which is used to examine and test these concepts.

The first initial work, *tempting*, searched for ways to approach failure in the practice. The work comprises a series of photographs taken at the live event, *Tempting Failure 2013* (Figures 1-17 PD1). *Tempting Failure* was an immersive live art event set over the course of an evening, in the site of a disused police station. The artworks comprised many diverse body art practices (see archives of the event at Bacon, 2013); however the images in *tempting* simply show the backs of viewers, attending to artworks. The artworks are not shown, other than as glimpses behind their backs. Even so, the work was helpful in conceptualizing the contract, as a frame between viewer and artwork, as well as introducing the key term of the supplement.

Some notes and observations of *tempting* follow:

There were many performances taking place concurrently throughout the building, many viewers present and many distractions. The works I came across included tragicomic drunkenness, absurdist performances, very graphic body practices such as bloodletting, and loud shaman and noise works. The visit was a new experience for me and I knew little about this area of practice. In between gathering before individual works, viewers milled around, drinking

and chatting. The event was social, and had a quotidian quality. The practicalities of wearing scarves because it was cold was contrasted with disturbing images, and the theatrical staging of the event against the grimy backdrop of the concrete walls and cells of the old police station.

I used a basic 'point and shoot' digital camera to take images of the event. I was only able to view glimpses of the works because there were so many people already crowded around them. I took the images without using the viewfinder, by pointing the camera in front of me or above my head, since I had limited visual access. The lighting conditions were poor and I did not compose the images beforehand, or plan any particular outcome. Consequently, most of the images do not show the works themselves, although a few glimpses do appear. The images are mostly of the backs of other viewers at the event, viewing the works.

The second initial work is *Mis-attentions*, a series of three video works (Videos 1-3 PD1). An experimental process was used to make these works that aimed to approach Mis-attention, and concerned inattention, attention of the camera and performer. The experiments were initiated during the residency at KARST, and made in the studio, using material gathered from urban areas in Plymouth, Falmouth and Venice, Italy. Each experiment adopted the same method of gathering multiple, short video clips (with sound) of the environment, and editing them without changing the image as taken, or the sequence in which they were shot. Videos 1 and 2 PD1 have the clips interspersed between varying lengths of blank screen. Video 3 runs each clip consecutively, with no gaps. The resulting videos aided an approach to failure, through the key terms of the supplement and attention.

I wanted to experiment with both the video camera's frame of attention and my inattention to the surroundings. I gathered material from long walks using a

video camera that did not have a viewfinder. The clips were shot by applying rules around ideas of attention as selection, and inattention as distraction. For example, in terms of the selection of attention, I shot images that held a particular colour, or kind of object. In terms of inattention and distraction, I used a method of pointing the camera randomly, or selecting whatever was behind me, or to the side of me at time intervals of, for example, every 2 minutes or every 20 steps.

I built up a large bank of short video clips from each of the locations and edited some of them into short videos. I approached editing the clips without any particular intended outcome. The clips used were edited in the sequence in which they had been shot. In two of the videos, I inserted segments, which appear as a blank screen, of varying lengths. This work had been intended to be a performance-related approach to the performer's and camera's attention and inattention, in the walks around urban areas. However, for the purposes of this Shift, it is the works as video pieces, and how we attend to them that seemed more useful. In this respect, attending to the videos seemed to be problematized by the differences between the visual images and the blank segments and the repetition of playing the videos on a loop.

The blank segments, in Videos 1 and 2 PD1, seemed to cause a change in how I attended to the work, and reminded me of an incident at the Tate Triennial 2009: *Altermodern* exhibition. I was inside the structure of *Extramission 6 (Black Maria)* by Lindsay Seers (see Figure 10) viewing a video. The screen went blank, and I waited, expecting a visual image to reappear, but, after intently looking at a blank screen for ten minutes or so, I became more and more unsure. I queried this with an invigilator, who said they had already had queries on this and thought the video player was broken and were looking into it. Whether or not the video did have a technical issue, the effect of this period

of waiting, and not knowing what to expect, changed the relationship between the work and myself, as a viewer.



Fig. 10: Seers, Lindsay (2009) *Extramission 6 (Black Maria)*. [Installation]

A number of overlapping themes and questions emerged from the two initial works *tempting* and *Mis-attentions* divided between developing the practical concept of contract, in terms of the 'completeness' of an artwork, finding an approach to failure, in terms of the conditions of the contract, considering how the viewer's expectations and the artwork's intentions align, and how an equal exchange of attention might be a condition of the contract, considering what happens when the artwork does not fulfill the viewer's expectation, and at what point is what the viewer expects predetermined in the contract, how failure can be conceived as a misalignment between viewer's expectations and the artwork's intentions, and what happens when there is an unequal interrelation of attention. A further question introduces how the method of improvisatory conditions connects to failure in the contract, and how this can be examined and tested. The key terms of the supplement and attention help articulate how the contract operates, and how failure repositions the relations between viewer and artwork.

The images in *tempting*, of viewers attending to artworks is suggestive of a contractual arrangement, where there is a 'quid pro quo'. This is envisaged in the contract, as an exchange of attention, where one party attends, and the other party is being attended to. It is argued that, in the case of *tempting*, the contract holds an expectation that the artworks would in some way perform or represent failure, because that was what the *Tempting Failure* event was all about. There would be an alignment, where the artwork's intentions (and what it 'does') meets with the viewers' expectations, and the contract would be successful in those terms. This practical understanding of contract allowed a way to approach failure, as the misalignment between the hypothetical expectations of a viewer and what the artwork 'does'.

The contract, in the *tempting* images, is also proposed as including an expectation that the artwork is 'complete' in itself, in that it is framed or delimited from outside. However, this expectation is complicated by the multiple distractions that surround the relations between viewer and artwork. These relations unfold over time against the entire *Tempting Failure* event, the theatrical backdrop, the other artworks, the behaviours of viewers, and other multiple, quotidian and/or unpredicted events that occur. It is therefore difficult to isolate the individual artwork, in a singular contract, from its context. These factors seem to be extraneous to the contract, but also have effects on it. These extraneous factors could be termed supplementary to the contract, and it is argued, have effects in repositioning the viewer and artwork in relation to each other.

The classical understanding of the completeness of an artwork derives from Immanuel Kant's aesthetics, and is claimed by Michael Fried in his discussion of 'absorption' and 'presentness', applied to modernist works (1998). For Fried, the theatricality of literalist art presents the experience of 'endlessness', 'inexhaustibility' and 'indefinite duration' (1998:166). In contrast, the experience of modernist art, 'a picture by Noland or Olitski or a sculpture by David Smith or Caro', has no duration, 'because *at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest*' (italics in original) (1998:167). As Fried explains, there is no



question for him that a modernist work could only be partly present:

It is this continuous and entire *presentness*, amounting, as it were, to the perpetual creation of itself, that one experiences as a kind of *instantaneousness*, as though if only one were infinitely more acute, a single infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness, to be forever convinced by it (italics in original) (1998:167).

An artwork's 'presentness' or completeness is destroyed by theatricality. Theatricality encompasses the effects of the extraneous, supplemental factors referred to above in relation to *tempting*. When the contract is considered in this way, the relations between viewer and artwork can be thought of as being continually repositioned, into different and wider relations, which include, potentially, all the other aspects of the event. Where the expectations and intentions meet, the contract is envisaged as stretching, like an elastic band, to its extremes to accommodate some of the effects of supplementation, repositioning the relations between viewer and artwork in the process. Where the expectations and intentions do not meet, the elastic band becomes distorted, to the extent that it may snap, releasing the parties into configurations outside the contract and causing the contract to break down.

There is an analogy between the images in *tempting* and Thomas Struth's *Museum* photographs, for example *Pergamon Museum 1* (2001) (see Figure 11). Frances Guerin argues that Struth's photographs function as representations of the spectatorial practices of the audience, becoming entangled in cultural directives, invisibly imposed by the museum (2015:7). Struth's images 'do not look' at the iconic images, that are the object of the visit, but rather at the viewers' 'diegetic behavior' (meaning their internal narratives), which 'do not always accord with the museum's script' (ibid.). These reveal acts of looking and not looking at the object on display, and engaging with the museum's modes of distraction (ibid.). The idea of differences, between the external and internal scripts can be thought of in terms of the contract between viewer and artwork, continuously being

disrupted by the effects of the supplement, by extraneous events and entanglements, that are difficult to isolate from the viewer's relation to an individual artwork.



Fig. 11: Struth, Thomas (2001) *Pergamon Museum 1*. [photograph]

The other initial work, *Mis-attentions*, tests an expectation of the completeness of the work within a fixed temporality. The videos in *Mis-attentions* were displayed in a gallery on single monitors on a repeating loop with no titles. There was no sign in or around the work that marked their beginnings or endings. The blank segments and looping of the work suggest it is never complete. Consequently, the artwork fails to meet an expectation of temporality in the sense of a fixed time limit. This is subject to the recognition of the apparent predictability of the repetition, which gives rise to the question of how many times the video is 'supposed to' repeat.

The contract can be thought of as in tension between a fixed time and the possibility of its endlessness, that stretches it to its limits, until it becomes impossible to envisage and breaks down. This reflects duration, as understood by Deleuze, following Bergson. This is a different conception of time than the traditional understanding or experience of it as a

single, progressing line of homogeneous moments (Claire Colebrook, 2002:47).

Deleuze's conception of duration, refers to time as 'intensive', and locates a multiplicity of different, and diverging, human and inhuman durations within our own (2002:41). Failure, as the misalignment between the expectation of a fixed time limit and duration, forces the relations between viewer and artwork to be repositioned, ever wider and longer until it no longer holds, and breaks down, throwing the parties out of relations with each other.

The key term of the supplement is drawn from Derrida's writing on the '*supplément*' (italics in the original), which is also related to the parergon. The supplement suggests how the effects of supplementation are reflected in the practical approach to failure in the contract. The familiar understanding of the term 'supplement' is thought of as something extra in a newspaper or book for example. The term is expanded by Derrida to consider how key ideas in Western metaphysics and logocentrism are based on binaries that depend on the relations of supplementation (Malcolm K Richards, 2008:144). In "... *That Dangerous Supplement...*", (and in other works), Derrida explores readings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who, Derrida says, saw the term, as 'an inessential extra' that was added to something, already 'complete in itself' (Derrida, 1997:141-64). Derrida defamiliarizes the term to reflect the supplement as being that which is both part of and an addition to a work (Derrida, 1997).

The supplement is neither inside nor outside at the same time, and it forms part of something, without being a part of it (Nicholas Royle, 2003:49). According to Royle, Derrida refers to the supplement as: 'at once what is added on to something in order further to enrich it *and* what is added on as a mere extra' (italics in original) (2003:48). This suggests there is a tension between inside and outside, and this is maintained because the supplement is necessary to make up for a 'lack', or something that is missing. In Derrida's terms, the supplement is both, 'a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, and it makes up for something missing, as if there is a void to be filled up' (Derrida, 1997:144-5, cited in Royle, 2003:48-9). Derrida argues that what is complete in

itself, cannot be added to, and so a supplement can only occur where there is an originary lack within the work or structure (Richards, 2008:22). The idea of a pure work or 'pure origin' is therefore disrupted by the supplement, because there is always potentially more (2008:23).

The concept of contract can be thought of in terms of the 'natural order' or a structural arrangement that is confined or framed by previous understandings, experience and knowledge. It follows the logic of the supplement both in being produced by the framing of the contract, and as a production of the framing itself. Additions to the contract, such as extraneous events, reflect the effects of supplementation, and are disruptive to and cause failure in the contract, effectively repositioning the relations between viewer and artwork into different relationships within the contract or outside it. This is thought of as stretching or distorting the contract, like an elastic band, to attempt to accommodate the additions within a recognisable frame.

The effect of the supplement in the practical concept of contract is proposed in *tempting*, through the effects of the wider *Tempting Failure* event itself. These wider extraneous events seem to keep repositioning the relations between viewer and artwork into ever-wider relationships. This can be thought of as stretching the contract ever wider but maintaining it because expectations and intentions align. In *Mis-attentions*, the blank gaps and the endless looping of the videos provoke the effects of supplementation on the contract in relation to the temporality of the work as duration. This can be thought of as failure in the contract, which is stretched to its extremes to the extent that it may snap and break down, repositioning the relations between viewer and artwork by throwing them out of any relationship altogether.

A second theme that arose in the initial works, which also invokes the idea of a tension within the edges of the contract, concerns the expectation of an equal exchange of attention between viewer and artwork. In *tempting*, the images do not look at what the

viewers in the images are looking at (that is, the artworks) and this begins to suggest an imbalance in the idea of an equal exchange of attention. Guerin argues that Struth's photographs are 'not looking' because the object is unseen, and the distances created between the viewer of the image, the viewer in the image, and the object on display, reveal tensions and contradictions that arise 'because of the impetus to not look, due to 'the tour of distraction that we cannot resist' (2015:7). There is a dynamic interdependence between 'looking and not looking' as a 'self-consciousness that is crucial to agency' (ibid.). Images that do 'not look' force the viewer between acts of 'looking' and 'not looking', which provokes self-consciousness and therefore agency (2015:32). This idea suggests an imbalance in an expected equal exchange of attention in the conditions of the contract and a misalignment of the viewer's expectations.

In *Mis-attentions*, the continuous looping and the blank segments in the videos are also suggestive of images that do 'not look', in Guerin's terms, and also problematize the expectation of an equal exchange of attention. While the visual clips in *Mis-attentions* are representative of 'something' the blank segments are not. Waldenfels considers *Black Square* by Kazimir Malevich (see Figure 12) as invoking an 'extreme threshold of attention', which he describes as resembling 'a background painting, a not-seeing-something which ends in a not-seeing' (2011:67). A visual image or painting is suggestive of a 'window', but 'it becomes a black hole into which sinks the visible or from which it reemerges somewhat altered' (ibid.). The tension Waldenfels refers to, between 'not-seeing-something' and 'not-seeing', is proposed as a disruption in the expectation of an equal exchange of attention, giving rise to failure in the contract.

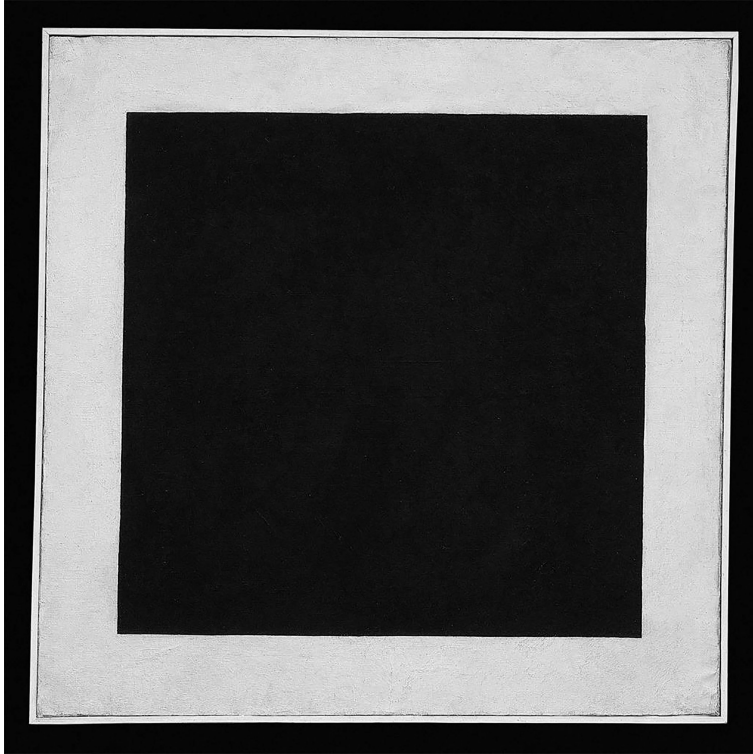


Fig. 12: Malevich, Kazimir (1923) *Black Square*. [painting]

Waldenfels has described attention in a way that reflects the idea of an unequal exchange of attention in the contract. Waldenfels distinguishes between attention that is intentional and 'expects something', and attention that is 'unexpected' (ibid.). This difference reflects two modes of attention, one that is consciously controlled, the other that simply happens to us passively. The Latin version of the word, from which attention derives, points to 'a certain tension (Lat. *tensio*) in the play of forces between the soul and the body' (2011:59). Waldenfels argues that 'it is intrinsic for attention that the senses can be controlled only to a limited extent' (2011:58). He argues that 'If the controls were perfect, life would be determined only by habit without allowing for anything of the alien' (ibid.). Attention is not therefore wholly controlled by consciousness; 'it is not initiated by objective stimuli, intentional acts or common rules' but wakes up when something strikes us, it comes towards us from elsewhere (Waldenfels, 2012).

Waldenfels refers to 'thresholds of attention', as limits between intentional and 'originary' attention, or between the expected and unexpected. Thresholds of attention '*separate the visible from the invisible, the audible from the inaudible*' (italics in original) (2011:67). For Waldenfels, thresholds of attention play a special role in audio and visual arts where 'gazes and sounds are never merely optical and acoustic phenomena' (ibid.). Waldenfels states that '*what is seen and what is heard* or what occurs in the world of vision and sound', 'are also occurrences of *becoming visible and audible*' (italics in original) (ibid.). The failure in the contract is envisaged as operating at the threshold or limits of attention, between the expected and unexpected, and visualized as stretching the contract to its extremes until it breaks down.

Waldenfels proposes that the thresholds of attention operate in 'the attentive kind of thinking, seeing, and hearing' that 'does not begin with itself but with something which touches our eyes and ears, affecting them, often unnoticed, by departing from the expected' (2011:68). It is proposed that the contract holds expectations of an exchange of attention and that the contract fails when this is disrupted. The consequences of contract and its failure, reposition the relations between viewer and artwork within the contract. Attention, that is conscious and intentional, expects something that is already there in the contract, bounded by the frame of the contract. Attention that is unexpected, and is not initiated by consciousness or intention, is not already there, forcing the contract to stretch to its limits and potentially break down.

The final theme in this section concerns the method of improvisatory conditions. Early in this research, this method was thought to be a possible way to approach failure in the work. Broadly, it is described as an artistic method comprising lateral processes in making and performing, including strategies that leave open the possibility of contingency and the unexpected. From another perspective, this approach could be thought of as incompetent, for example when compared to modes of film making that adopt film language in a narrative progression, or in terms of performance as the display

of skills. The method is evident in *Mis-attentions* where the approach to filming and editing was not calculated in advance but gathered with no end. In *tempting* the approach to taking images was contingent, to a degree, on what was within the camera frame at any particular time.

A review of failure, in the context of performance and theatre studies<sup>18</sup> helped position improvisatory conditions as an ongoing tension in the contract, rather than a completed failed outcome. Sara Jane Bailes has examined failure and poetics in the context of experimental theatre practices, which interrogate the representation of realism of mainstream theatre (2011:7). She suggests failure 'works', because the breakdown of traditional practices, where a particular outcome is intended, opens up alternative and indeterminate ways in 'not' achieving that outcome (2011:2). Bailes recognises failure as productive, as a resistance to dominant or mainstream values of 'stability, instrumental rationality, success, perfection and conventional standards of virtuosity' (ibid.)<sup>19</sup>. In this approach, failure is a constituent of a process and not an intended result and is a means to produce unanticipated outcomes (2011:1).

The term 'misperformance' is discussed by Marin Blažević and Lada Čale Feldman, who consider it as an ongoing failing process, rather than a completed outcome (2014:19). They suggest mis-performance, as a way of considering failure that does not necessarily depend upon encountering the discourses of performance studies<sup>20</sup>. The term misperformance is coined by them 'with reference to the crowning concept of performance studies on one side' and on the other 'every-day mis-prefixed notions' such

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<sup>18</sup> For further reading on failure in performance and theatre studies see also: *The Institute of Failure*, Tim Etchells and Matthew Ghoulish available at: <http://timetchells.com/projects/institute-of-failure/> [accessed 22 July 2018], *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (2001) by Jon McKenzie and *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (2004) by Marvin Carlson.

<sup>19</sup> See also *Failure*, edited by Lisa Le Feuvre (2010), concerning failure in a fine art context and also *The Queer Art of Failure* by Judith Halberstam (2011), who addresses failure in literary and popular cultural contexts.

<sup>20</sup> For example, as discussed, in the context of the paradox of failure and the 'liminoid norm', by Jon McKenzie (2001) (Blažević and Feldman, 2014:18).



as 'mistake, misunderstanding, misfit, misfire, misprision and the like (2014:17-18). Misperformance goes beyond the limits of failure, and reflects a process of 'failing-yet-performing actions' (2014:19). They point to a tension in misperformance, which risks 'balancing on the edge, in-between disaster and deliverance' (ibid.). The method of improvisatory conditions used in the research adopts the notion of misperformance, put forward by Blažević and Feldman of an 'ongoing failing process' that may result in unanticipated outcomes and balances, 'on the edge', as a means to examine failure in the contract.

Improvisatory conditions also reflect Simon O'Sullivan's consideration of event, affect and duration approaches to art practices, which have the potential to move away from systems of signification through 'indeterminacy', 'accident' or 'chance', where 'anything might happen', and where focus is placed on the affective experience (2011:197-203). He considers 'indeterminacy' as the 'operating logic' of performance, and suggests its potential in 'absurdist' performances, which 'stop making sense' (2011:202). Affects are 'moments of intensity' and are 'immanent to experience', and can be defined as 'the effect another body, an art object' has 'upon my own body and my body's duration', occurring on an 'asignifying register' that is 'not to do with knowledge or meaning'. Affects are always 'experienced *in time*, as duration' and are understood as the 'body's passage from one state of affection to another', (2007:41, 2011:197, and Maurizio Lazzarato, 2007). These factors may lead to a breakdown of the contract and are proposed as giving rise to different ways of experiencing an artwork, outside of the constraints of the contract.

In summary, *tempting* and *Mis-attentions*, propose an approach to failure using a practical conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork as a kind of frame termed 'contract'. The contract operates through its conditions, where the expectations of the viewer and the intentions of the artwork, and what it does, are supposed to align and where there is an equal exchange of attention in their relations. Where the expectations

of the viewer and intentions of the artwork, or what it does, do not meet and/or there are events of unequal exchange of attention, it is proposed that these constitute events of failure in the contract.

The event of failure in the contract has effects of shifting or repositioning relations between viewer and artwork. If failure is thought of as the operation of a tension between the inside and outside of the contract, where misalignment distorts it, causing it to snap and breakdown entirely, the viewer and artwork relations are repositioned in the process. The tension is articulated in the key terms of the supplement and attention. The method of improvisatory conditions, following the notion of misperformance, opens the possibility of the generation of tension, by encouraging unanticipated events that stretch and distort the contract. Two comparative works are examined in the next section through the concept of contract and failure using these themes.

## **Relations between viewer and artwork**

### ***The Anthea Turner Experience ('Anthea')***

The first comparative work examined is *Anthea*. The work was a live performance of 45 minutes that took place within the Performing Objects Conference 2013 ('the conference') at Falmouth University<sup>21</sup>. The experiment was a multi-media installation that included performance, a dog, two mannequins and other objects that were situated in a seminar room in the University complex. Aspects of *Anthea* were documented in photographs and video and these are presented as Figures 18-32 PD1 and Video 4-7 PD1.

*Anthea* was initiated both as a response to the theme of performing objects in the conference, and an approach to failure and embarrassment in the work. This approach suggested embarrassment, in terms of the objectification of the live body that has been

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<sup>21</sup> Further information about the Performing Objects Conference, Falmouth University is available at: <http://repository.falmouth.ac.uk/2155/> [accessed 22 July 2018].

discussed in Shift 2: Embarrassment, including considerations of Graham Harman's approach to embarrassment and humour in his object-orientated ontology and 'guerilla' metaphysics (2005). However, two tangential aspects of embarrassment and failure are considered as operating in *Anthea*, which approach failure in the contract in another way. The aims, in this experiment, were to resist attention as much as possible, and to use improvisatory conditions against, and within, a choreographic framework.

The work took place on a quiet Sunday morning in an anonymous seminar room. Viewers (who would be conference attendees) would only come across the work if they happened to be passing by the seminar room and notice that something was taking place inside. Although a nearby room was being used for a conference workshop, the whole area was quiet, with very few passers-by. Access to the work was limited through a single doorway into the seminar room. Within the room there was limited space for the viewer and inside there was no demarcated area to assemble to view the work. There was little in the way of announcing, advertising, or framing of the work, even in the context of the conference.

Over the course of the work, the performers repeated a short choreography, or patterned sequence of movements, based on familiar aerobic exercise steps for 45 minutes, shown in Videos 4, 6, 7 and Figures 20-27, 30-32 PD1. This sequence was repeated multiple times. Music and speech were used in a backing track for the choreography. An imposing video camera was positioned on a tripod in front of the performers and recorded the work. A poster and health and safety notice were placed outside the room and contained ambiguous information about the start time and the work itself. There was no other supporting or contextualizing material (Figures 18-19 PD1).

Some observations and thoughts on the work follow:

The choreography was unrehearsed and I only let Andy (Dr Webster) know what we were doing on the morning of the event. Andy had no experience of

fitness classes or aerobics and also kindly agreed to dress up to look ridiculous. The addition of the dog, Alfie, was intended to add further contingency to the work. In the event Alfie simply shifted around and dozed seemingly oblivious to everything. He was held on a lead throughout the performance by Andy because the health and safety appraisal had required that the dog should be kept under control at all times on the University premises and this was taken tongue in cheek literally by having him tied to Andy the whole time.

The work was hidden away in a seminar room and did not seek attention other than in relation to the Performing Objects event that held a number of other artworks and workshops across the campus. The work seemed to be constructed in ways that were attempting to resist attention. During the performance I was facing the doorframe and I could observe what was happening outside in the hallway. For the majority of the time there was little activity outside the room. There were no viewers and we were on our own in the room undertaking the repeated steps. At times, viewers walked past parallel to the doorframe, ignoring the work or seemingly oblivious to it. They may have heard the sound coming from the work escaping out of the room and into the corridor.

I heard loud chatter and laughter from the corridor, which awkwardly hushed at the doorframe before anyone appeared. Something had come to their attention from inside the room, which had changed their behaviour. Some viewers glanced aside, and veered away from the doorframe. Occasionally we caught each other's eyes through the doorframe. Some viewers used the doorframe to lean against. A small group stopped outside and peered in to watch for a while. There seemed to be hesitancy and uncertainty about what was happening and whether to come into the seminar room.

One viewer, a colleague, walked through the door towards me smiling and greeting me with my name and I could not help but grin back. There was an awkward moment when we neither of us seemed to know what to do, but then we resumed our activities as viewer and performer respectively. For my part, I tried to ignore the viewers but was aware they were in close proximity.

Viewers who had entered through the door stayed for a few seconds or a few minutes. Once inside the frame, there appeared to be a dilemma or uncertainty where to stand, how long to stay, how to leave and whether to be quiet. In leaving the room, some viewers deferentially backed up out of the doorframe others simply turned round and left. Some viewers realizing the video camera was recording, navigated themselves out of the camera's frame and others stood in front of the performers, in the view of the camera frame,

becoming part of, or framed, themselves, within the work (Figures 28-29 and Video 5 PD1).

*Anthea* gave rise to a number of overlapping questions and themes with regard to: how the contract operates in the work, what the conditions of the contract are in terms of expectations of the viewer, the completeness of the work and the exchange of attention, what the intentions of the artwork were and what it 'did', how the work captured or resisted attention, how the effects of resisting attention operated on the contract, how the method of improvisatory conditions impacted on the contract and how these factors operate as failure in the contract to reposition the relations between viewer and artwork. Further, how the key terms of the supplement and attention help articulate how the work operates in the relations between viewer and artwork.

It is proposed that *Anthea*, invokes a high level of tension between the inside and outside of the contract. (For these purposes, the fact that the work was framed in the context of an arts conference is ignored). The relations between viewers and the work were observed as hesitant, unsure or uncertain. The viewers could be observed physically repositioning themselves, shifting, in relation to the artwork. The performers were also involved in repositioning themselves, in relation to the viewers. An interpretation of this uncertainty could be that the viewer is attempting, but is unable to find, a stable relation or stable contract with the artwork. In their attempts to do so, they seem to be thwarted by the strategies in the work of resisting attention and the unintended and unpredicted events invoked, which seem to dynamize the contract, as the relation between viewer and artwork.

An explanation for these observations of dynamic relations is proposed as being caused by the effects of supplementation, provoked by the strategies of resisting attention, that are also implicated in the method of improvisatory conditions. These strategies seem to undermine the basic presuppositions inherent in a stable contract governing relations between viewer and artwork. A contractual relation is supposed to be already known in

advance, because it is an agreement about something, which sets out what is expected of either party. In other words, it is expected, or framed, within certain conditions. Derrida states that, 'all contracts and first of all the contract of painting presuppose a process of framing' (1979:33). The frame is 'summoned and assembled like a supplement because of the lack—a certain "internal" indetermination—in the very thing it enframes' (ibid.).

The strategies used to resist attention in *Anthea* are proposed as invoking the effects of supplementation. These strategies include the lack of framing and contextualization of the work, for example the lack of a temporal frame as an announced 'start' and 'end'. The poster and health and safety notice suggest ambiguous start times. The work was situated in a quiet area and unlikely to be seen by many viewers, in any event only those who were, by chance, passing. The access to the work was limited, requiring a viewer to notice it as they passed by from a hallway. There was a lack of a space for viewers to assemble in the seminar room. The recording video camera also forces the viewer out of place when they realize it is there and also places them as part of the work. All these factors question the completeness of the work because they problematize the frame of the contract and disrupt the exchange of attention between viewer and artwork.

The supplement has strange effects, in that it is essentially nothing, but at the same time it is everywhere and nowhere (Royle, 2003:49). Derrida refers to *the supplement in these terms:*

It is the strange essence of the *supplément* not to have essentiality: it may always not have taken place. Moreover, literally, it has never taken place: it is never present, here and now. If it were, it would not be what it is, a supplement, [...] Less than nothing and yet, to judge by its effects, much more than nothing. The *supplément* is neither a presence nor an absence. No ontology can think its operation (*italics in original*) (Derrida, 1967:314, cited in Royle, 2003:49-50).

The supplement is also 'dangerous' because it disrupts the foundational notion of a pure origin, defamiliarizing what seemed 'normal' (ibid.). The supplement can be placed

anywhere, and it transforms the work in the process. It disrupts the 'natural order', meaning constructs or ideas and understandings that have accrued over many years (Richards, 2008:24). The effects of the supplement can be applied to any 'work' and this reveals the need for supplementation existing in any concept of work. The universality of the supplement means that, potentially, any structural relation is bound to shift as additions are made to the original structure (Richards, 2008:23).

The improvisatory conditions implemented in the work are also suggested as creating supplemental effects. They leave open the possibility for unintended and unpredictable events to occur, which can be thought of as supplemental to the notion of a complete work. Examples of awkward unintended events include self-consciousness, eye-to-eye contact or the recognition of a colleague in encounters between viewer and performer and the awkwardness of viewers not knowing when and how to enter or leave the room, or realizing they are, in the frame of the video camera, which is recording. These events would not occur if the performers intended, and successfully implemented a 'stone face' throughout, and if attention in the work was deliberately managed, to allow for an equal exchange, which did not impinge outside a stable contract and the singular position of the viewer.

The unintended events are not all necessarily awkward. There are moments in the work where the two performers are momentarily in synchrony (for example in Figures 20-23 PD1 and in Videos 4 and 6 PD1, and highlighted in Video 7 PD1, which has a speed effect applied to emphasize this). These are surprising and unexpected, given the unrehearsed approach adopted in improvisatory conditions. These events can be considered as supplemental to the work as they are as equally unintended as the self-conscious and awkward moments. Overall, the strategy of resisting, rather than managing attention of the viewer, can be said to set up supplemental effects that problematize the notion of contract and its framing, and create an active tension between the artistic practice and the rigidity of the contract.

The effects of supplementation on the contract in *Anthea* can be thought of as the shifting or repositioning of the viewer and artwork in relation to each other in order to attempt to construct a contract from what is already known. There is a tension between the supplemental effects and the contract that creates multiple failures. These occur momentarily, and can be thought of as having effects on the contract by stretching it, like an elastic band, to its limits and being pulled back and distorted until the contract breaks down, throwing the viewer and artwork into a different kind of relation where the contract is irrelevant.

Another approach to explain the observed effects of the viewer in their relations to *Anthea* is proposed in terms of how the unfamiliar or strange comes to our attention. The strategies of resisting attention and implementing improvisatory conditions to cause unanticipated events are directly related to this idea. A viewer could be thought of as having no expectations of something that they do not yet know, that is hidden or unexpected. This raises an issue of how it is possible, if it is possible at all, to experience or recognise something that is unexpected and, by implication, where there is no contract already in place to frame that expectation.

Waldenfels' phenomenology of attention addresses how we encounter the unexpected, unfamiliar and strange, which he terms as an encounter with the 'alien' in everyday experience (2011). His interest is to meet a challenge of perception that does not render the alien as part of pre-existing experience or of recognition. Jon Foley Sherman refers to this as confirming 'the perceiving subject's primacy' (2016:103). The unfamiliar appears and disturbs an existing order, it 'interrupts the familiar formations of sense and rule, thus provoking the creation of new ones' (Waldenfels, 2011:36). When something unfamiliar comes to our attention, we don't know 'with what or whom' we are dealing and attending is itself 'the first response to the alien' (2011:58).



Waldenfels' understanding of attention and the unfamiliar is as something that 'happens' to us, passively, that is not expected (Waldenfels, 2011:65). The first part of the event of attention takes the form of 'something happening to me, of something touching or affecting me' (Waldenfels, undated). The second part is a response that we 'cannot help but be involved in', 'whether in the strong form of heightened attention or in a weaker form of diffused attention' (2011:64). Consequently 'we become what we are both by being affected and responding' (undated). Attention 'wakes up whenever something strikes (*auffallen*) stirring up our attention (*aufmerken*)' (Waldenfels, 2012). It is a '*double and intermediary event*' (italics in original) that crosses 'a threshold which simultaneously joints and separates, like a hyphen' (undated).

There is a 'coming to attention and attending to' (Waldenfels, 2011:58). This double event consists of 'pathos' and a response. The term pathos means something in which we are passively involved, and that 'has no one-sided origin in me', in the sense that it is not causal or intentional (2011:64). It does not mean that 'something is understood and interpreted as *something*' (italics in original) (2011:26). This kind of attention could be thought of as 'unexpected'. Waldenfels makes a distinction between attention that is expected, and attention that is unexpected. The former, in contrast, is referred to as a 'habitual secondary attention' or 'normal attention', which 'expects something that is not yet present' and 'that is what we already know to some extent' (2011:65).

The contract in *Anthea* can be understood as framed, at least to an extent, by an expectation of an exchange of attention. However, the effects of the strategy of resistance to attention, and unanticipated events caused through improvisatory conditions, disrupt the smooth exchange of attention. The contract fails, because the work invokes events that are unfamiliar or unexpected, as well as those that are familiar and expected, of which the former are not catered for in the existing contract. This creates tension in the contract between the two modes of attention, operating at its thresholds. This can be thought of as stretching the contract to its limits, until it breaks

down. In this tension, the relations between viewer and artwork can be thought of as constantly repositioning themselves, in relation to each other, in order to try and hold the contract together.

In *Anthea*, the improvisatory conditions are based in processes of failure, and could be argued as deliberate attempts to not complete the work, or as 'successful' attempts to fail. However, a problem countered with using improvisatory conditions as a way to directly approach failure in the contract, is the idea that failure requires a frame or judgment to determine it as such. Even if that frame or judgment determines something as failed, it may be rationalized by an informed viewer as ironic. This kind of framing can be seen in Tommy Cooper's work and the *Portsmouth Sinfonia*. While the unrehearsed aspect of the choreography in *Anthea* may not make a difference to an informed viewer, the actual contingent events of eye-to-eye contact, the movement of the people in and out of the room and out of the camera frame, create small, unanticipated events of failure in the contract. These have effects of shifting the relations with the artwork, until the viewer leaves the room, effectively forced out of the contract.

From the viewer's perspective, where judgment is based upon received notions of what the performance should conform to, there is no difference between deliberate incompetence and not performing very well. An informed audience may experience a flux between such received notions and a deliberately accidental or incompetent act as irony or comedy. *The Portsmouth Sinfonia* is made up of non-musicians and those that could not play the instruments assigned, many of whom could not read music. Their collective intention was to play to the best of their ability. An imaginary comparison between what it should be, what it is, and the audience's privileged knowledge of the work and its social and political contexts, sets up expectations built around those factors. In these terms there is no failure in the contract, although it may be stretched to its limits.

It is argued that the notion of failure, that causes the contract to stretch to its limits or thresholds, operates in the work of the comedian Tommy Cooper (Figure 13). Nicholas Ridout (2006) and Adrian Heathfield (2004 and 2007) have written about failure in his work. It is proposed that Cooper's work is framed by a contract between viewer and comedian that holds particular expectations and intentions of comedy and humour. The contract is therefore already presupposed to some extent. However, there is a sense of how Cooper skillfully stretches the contract to its limits. Cooper's act was based in failure, and failure is present from his 'disheveled appearance', 'failing magic tricks' and 'stumbling and aimless wandering' and 'the barrage of incomplete, unfunny jokes and bungled punch lines' (Ridout, 2006:149). However, his failure seems to be on the edge of intended failure and actual, nonintentional failure.



Fig. 13: Cooper, Tommy [television broadcast]

Cooper's 'signature' was to sustain this tension by teetering on the edge of failure, 'cracking up' or 'corpsing' (Heathfield, 2004:62). Heathfield refers to Cooper as 'playing'

in that 'complex space between the unintended and the intended mistake' (ibid.). Through appearing to be forgetful and inept, Cooper's body is always 'caught in oscillations between integrity and disarray,' where he played with 'the comic possibilities of temporal disjunction and disorder' (ibid.). The laughter of Cooper and the audience generates mutual, pre-emptive and imminent laughter, before any trick or joke was completed or even started (2004:63). The contract can be thought of as in a state of tension, constantly stretching and repositioning the relations between viewer and the artist, to the extent that, when Cooper 'plays' in the space between the 'unintended and the intended mistake' there is always the risk the parties may fall out of the contract altogether. The idea of stretching the contract to the extent it breaks down, is arguably seen in his final performance, described by Heathfield, where as he 'crumples to the floor', viewers continue laughing (2007:15).

In summary, this aspect of the research in *Anthea* assumes a contract based on the expectations of the viewer and intentions of the artwork and what it does; these expectations and intentions align in terms of the completeness of the artwork, and in an equal exchange of attention. The conditions of the work problematize the rigidity of the contract that presupposes a fixed frame and singular relation. *Anthea* proposes how a tension is developed between attention that is 'expected', and attention that is 'unexpected'. Failure is positioned in the contract as the misalignment between viewer expectations and what the artwork does, and the unequal exchange of attention. Failure in the contract, is envisaged as distorting the contract where it stretches or breaks down to accommodate these supplemental factors and forces the relations between viewer and artwork to be repositioned.

### *How Soon Is Now ('How Soon')*

The second comparative Work referred to in this Shift is *How Soon*, (also presented in Shift 3: Mis-attention).<sup>22</sup> This section examines aspects of the work that are relevant to the practical concepts of contract and failure in the contract. The shift is interested in examining comparisons between the different iterations of the work, in particular between the PARSE and Dr@ft versions. Images and a video of the Dr@ft version are presented as Figures 33-35 PD1 and Videos 8 PD1. The observations and notes below consider some of the distinctions between these versions.

I performed the PARSE version on my own, at a large academic conference in Gothenberg. The work took place in a 'black-box' theatre and was lit by spotlights, focused on me in the stage area. Aside from the video projection, everywhere else was darkened. The space was free of any marginal items, or clutter. The viewers were seated on raised tiered banks, and I was struck with nerves looking up at them. I was scheduled between two others making presentations in a traditional format of academic papers. I launched into the performance without any introduction, or giving any context. I felt extremely nervous and embarrassed<sup>23</sup> about what I was doing before all these people. At the end performance, there was a silence and then a small burst of applause.

There was a panel question and answer at the end of our presentations where I became even more embarrassed and near mortified, sitting between the other two speakers who were articulating their work. I felt I could not do this, and when I was asked questions, I stumbled through some answers, barely aware of what I was saying. I remained embarrassed about this for the rest of the conference. I felt I had nothing to support or contextualize this work, since I had simply performed it without any explanation. On the other hand, the lack of a narrative, perhaps underlines an idea of how an introduction and discussion are supplements, which change the work, and reposition relations between viewer and artwork to encompass the wider understanding and framing of it.

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<sup>22</sup> The evolution of this work, and its four iterations are discussed in detail in Shift 3: Mis-attention.

<sup>23</sup> Overall I felt extremely awkward in this performance and genuinely mortified, although a number of people came up and chatted to me about it afterwards and were very nice. It was interesting they seemed to be coming from a performance and theatre studies background.

The Dr@ft version took place in a seminar room, in between two other presentations of work by other researchers, to performance students. Dr Katrina Brown, at short notice, kindly joined me in one of the dancing segments, involving the green trousers. The Dr@ft version was documented on video and this is presented as Video 8 PD1<sup>24</sup>. The presentation included an introduction by me before performing *How Soon*, and there were questions afterwards. Unlike the PARSE version, this version therefore began with some contextualization, or framing. Viewers' responses seemed to range between curious and perplexed, and this was probably not resolved by my attempts at answering questions on the work.

The viewers, comprising students, post-graduates and academics, were seated at desks, roughly laid out in front of the performer, or else they were leaning against the walls at the back. From Video 8 PD1 and Figures 33-35 PD1, it can be seen how close the viewers were to the performer. Further, the seminar room was cluttered with all the paraphernalia and distractions of a working academic environment. The desks and chairs were strewn across the room, the walls were busy with noticeboards, posters, plants, shelves, the fire-door, books and papers and these elements were not separated from the performance space. The clutter gives rise to a key difference between the two versions, where the former has a clear separation between viewer and performance and the latter does not.

The second presentation was an improvisation work by choreographer Kuldip Singh-Barmi. For this work, the viewers moved to a formal black box space, with theatrical lighting focusing on the performers in the stage area, where the viewers sat in front. The third presentation was a more formal academic presentation in the seminar room by Rosie Enys. I was able to compare the differences between these presentations, in terms of the different expectations and attention invoked by each of the three presentations, including in the different spaces, which were reflected in the differences between the PARSE and Dr@ft versions of *How Soon*<sup>25</sup>.

The differences between the versions of *How Soon* gave rise to overlapping questions and themes as follows: How does the contract operate in the different versions? What are the expectations and intentions concerning the contract? How does attention and

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<sup>24</sup> Note that Video 8 PD1 is duplicated in Shift 3: Mis-attention (PD3) for ease of reference. Further, it only contains the performance itself, and not the accompanying introduction and discussion. The full-length presentation of 49 minutes including these items is in Appendix C.

<sup>25</sup> Dr Ric Allsopp pointed out these differences between the three presentations, in the discussion afterwards (Appendix C).

supplementation operate in these two versions and what effects do they have on the contract? How do improvisatory conditions have effects on the contract in the two versions and how do these factors operate as failure in the contract in repositioning the relations between viewer and artwork? Finally, how do the key terms of the supplement and attention help articulate this conceptualization?

A broad comparison can be made between the two versions of the work concerning the extent that the work was focused upon, by managing attention, through lighting and spatial arrangements. In PARSE the work was presented in a black box theatre space, where viewers sat in tiered banks of seats above this area. All extraneous material was excluded from the relations between viewer and artwork, and there was a clear demarcation between the viewer and artwork. In contrast, the performance at Dr@ft was set in an everyday academic space, with no clear separation of the work from all the clutter, blurring any demarcation between viewer and artwork.

The effect of the differences between the two versions, and how the contract is impacted upon, can be explained through the key terms of the supplement. The PARSE version reflects the completeness of an artwork, by the exclusion of all extraneous matter in the darkened spaces of the black box. In this respect, the everyday and backstage matter is relegated from the work, and their supplemental effects are hidden. The conditions of the contract are delimited and recognisable, and can be easily accepted by the viewer as representing a separation from everyday life, as a theatre stage, where lighting and proscenium allow the viewer to accept an illusion of reality that is represented.

In comparison, the effect of the clutter and distractions of the seminar room in Dr@ft weaken and blur the limits of the contract. There is no separation between the work and its conditions. The clutter can be thought of as additional to the work, but also part of it at the same time and not relegated out of the scene. The complication of clutter has supplemental effects on the contract, stretching it outwards to try and accommodate

everything at once. The differences between the PARSE and Dr@ft versions reflect the effects of supplementation on the contract, and how relations between viewer and artwork may be repositioned, dependent on the degree of the effects of supplementation.

Another difference between the two versions was the sandwiching of the work between introductions and discussions. There was an introduction and a discussion in Dr@ft, but only the latter in PARSE. The work was simply performed straight away, without any contextualization beforehand. This possibly explained the awkwardness felt by the performer at the time, reflecting the lack of framing of the work needed to fill the lack within. Introductions and discussions after the performance have supplemental effects, operating as additions, but also as part of the work; they can appear in any place and they transform the artwork, supplying what is missing from inside. Consequently, they will have effects on the limits of the contract.

The introduction before the performance started and the discussion after can be thought of in terms of the supplement as additional, but also part of the work. They have effects on the contract by filling a 'lack', or supplying something that is missing within the contract at that time and at the same time they change what is within the contract. If these supplements were not present, the 'lack' within the contract would not be revealed. The 'lack' in the work, suggested by the contract, only appears with the addition of the introduction, or the discussions after, that purport to complete what is missing. This idea reflects Derrida's conception that the supplement is everywhere, and nowhere at the same time, it transforms the work, adding to the tension in the contract and its elastic qualities.

As will be discussed in Shift 3: Mis-attention, *How Soon* appears in the format similar to an artist's lecture, performance lecture or lecture performance, the nature of which has, itself, supplemental effects. A lecture is suggestive of an addition to something that is



already known, and of imparting knowledge or information, but Robert Morris's *21.3* (1964) can also be considered a work of artistic practice. The format of both Morris's work and *How Soon* seems to problematize itself, complicating whether the lecture is a performance, whether it is a performance of a lecture, or whether there is something else that it is to be added to, such as an exhibition, thereby complicating the work even further, as in Jütte Koether's work discussed in Shift 2: Embarrassment. These ideas underline how problematic the artistic lecture performance is, and also how difficult it is to extrapolate a work, that is not intended to be a performance lecture from that understanding, when the format appears similar.

Another approach to the differences in the contract in the two versions of *How Soon* is considered through the key term of attention. The different versions can be thought of as operating within different fields of attention that reflect their particular conditions. The PARSE version was set up in formal black box theatre frame. Attention was focused on the work, in the lit 'stage area', relegating everything else out of the field. In the *Dr@ft* version, the field of attention extended to the entire room, including all its clutter. The difference between the potential fields of attention, one expansive, the other focused, is proposed as reflecting the differences in the management of the exchange of attention. It was much more tightly managed in the former than in the latter, where the clutter surrounding the work impinged upon it.

Foley Sherman proposes that viewers (as 'attendants') 'do more than attend performances—they attend to them' (italics in original), and this reveals an economy of attention at play (2016:12). The viewer pays attention and, in so doing, something is taken from them. At the same time, the performer hopes for attention to be given (2016:13). Perception, or how a performance is experienced, is organized through attention 'that creates, all at once, out of the constellation of givens, the sense that ties them together' (Merleau Ponty, 1945, cited in Foley Sherman, 2016:12). In Foley Sherman's view, performance 'comes to being' through 'different kinds of attention', which can be thought

of as a medium through which the experience of the performance is achieved (ibid.). He proposes that: 'Attendants experience a performance through the medium of attention' (ibid.).

A performance work can be thought of as involving many different kinds of layers and frames of attention<sup>26</sup>. A particular conceptual frame, that can be thought of as part of the contract, is 'a willingness of attendants to adhere to the signs of that economy offered by the performance' (2016:14). Performance works also 'propose' their own 'hierarchies of attention', which may or may not be intended and may be managed through methods, including lighting, timing and how the work is organized (2016:13). Foley Sherman compares how elements of performance can be managed with precision, emphasizing particular aspects of the work to achieve a particular effect. In contrast, where attention is not managed, there is 'a potentially disturbing lack of coherent pattern' (ibid.). However, even where the 'hierarchies of attention' are managed tightly, they are not determinative of 'where and how attendants engage a performance' (ibid.).

The management of attention is subject to an inequality in the distribution of attention. Foley Sherman refers to this inequality in terms of '*stage presence*' (italics in original), where the background, actors, technicians, the backstage, and so forth are relegated out of relations between the viewer and artwork (ibid.). This is exclusionary, but perhaps necessary for stage presence itself to be maintained. The implication of managing an economy of attention is that there is 'only so much attention to go around' (ibid.). When we attend to one thing 'whether an object; thought; quality; memory; or idea', by implication we are taking our attention away from something else: As Waldenfels puts it: 'Turning-toward and turning-away occur at the same time' (2011:64).

The PARSE and Dr@ft versions of *How Soon* can be considered in terms of the

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<sup>26</sup> As schematized in the Introduction as a 'scheme of attention' at page 29.

distribution of attention and supplementation. In the PARSE version the background was relegated out from the relations between viewer and artwork, providing an illusion of completeness. It is proposed that this has the effect of tightening the contract (if it is thought of as an elastic band), but also making it more rigid, so that attention operates in a limited field. There is a narrow distribution of attention, which limits what can be selected. In contrast, the cluttered seminar room, in which the Dr@ft version took place, as well as the supplemental effects of the improvisatory conditions that invoked unanticipated outcomes, lead to a much wider, potential field of attention. In the latter, the distribution of attention is more equal between one thing and another, that is, there is more to select from. The contract could be thought of as loosening its elasticity, to the point it breaks down and becomes irrelevant.

A further consideration proposed by *How Soon* concerns improvisatory conditions and the comment by a viewer that suggested they felt uncomfortable<sup>27</sup>. Improvisatory conditions operate in tension along the spectrum between success and failure. There could be a successful implementation of improvisatory conditions, bearing in mind the understanding that misperformance operates in a complicated area between 'disaster' and 'deliverance' (Blažević and Feldman, 2014:16). Failure in a work can be understood and rationalized through the contract, as a successful part of the work, taken as ironic or comedic. However, there may be instances where failure in the contract is so fundamental that it results in the breakdown of that relationship altogether.

A fundamental breakdown of the contract throws or forces the viewer out of any recognisable relation to the artwork; the parties fall out, and the feeling of discomfort may arise, because they are thrown into an unknown, or unframed, territory. There could be a number of explanations, but a particular line of enquiry considered conditions in artworks,

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<sup>27</sup> This comment was from Dr Andy Webster (from Appendix B and is considered in Shift 3: Mis-attention at pages 180 and 192.

which seem to break down the contract entirely, even though the same, or at least very similar, empirical conditions are in effect. In so doing, the relations between viewer and artwork are repositioned.

Graciela Carnevale's work, *Action for the Experimental Art Series* (1968) is suggestive of a process of a failure, or breakdown, in the contract from a misalignment of attention that results in a fundamental repositioning of the relations between viewer and artwork. The work set up an audience, who were expecting to be attending a gallery opening. However, the windows of the gallery were pasted over and the viewers were locked in the empty room, effectively incarcerated. They became angry<sup>28</sup> and escaped from the gallery. (Bishop reports that somebody on the outside eventually broke a window to let them out) (see Figure 14) (Claire Bishop and Boris Groys, 2009). Brian O'Doherty suggests the viewers, who were expecting to view objects in the gallery, instead 'transformed', to become the subject of the artwork (O'Doherty, 1999:99 and also Lucy Lippard, 1997). Another analysis is that attention, as the 'how' of perception, became wholly misaligned. It changed how the same empirical gallery space was perceived, causing the contract to break down and the parties to fall out, repositioning the viewer in a completely different relation, as a captive in a prison.

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<sup>28</sup> Note the comments in O'Doherty that the response of anger may have had more to do with the political resonance of the work, as it took place under the military dictatorship in Argentina (1999: 99).



Fig. 14: Carnevale, Graciela (1968) Action for Experimental Art Series. [action]

Andy Kaufman's work, within the genre of 1980's US comedy, presented his characters as real, using the framing of television and popular culture to stage his characters' confrontational appearances, for example, the obnoxious *Tony Clifton*, a terrible comedian and Las Vegas lounge singer (see Figure 15) who would insult and fight with the audience. This character and another example, *The Foreign Man*, were completely incompetent, botching their unfunny jokes and infuriating the audience who could not tell whether what they were seeing was really so terrible it was real or an act (Philip Auslander, 2000:142). These performances were staged as reality, and Kaufman took pains to maintain the illusion in behind-the-scenes and off-stage, off-camera activities<sup>29</sup>. Kaufman created a 'hall of mirrors' where 'no persona ever turned out to be a dependable representation' (Auslander, 2004:108).

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<sup>29</sup> Kaufman's approach to maintaining this illusion could be taken as another way of implementing the method of hiding the performer (discussed in Shift 2: Embarrassment) that operates in the tension of attempting to remove any trace of the 'real' performer from the public view.



Fig. 15: Kaufman, Andy (unknown) *Tony Clifton*. (performance]

Auslander has considered Kaufman's work in the context of a representational system that is reinforced by the traditional framing of popular entertainment and its associated social norms and audience expectations (2000 and 2004). Kaufman's work blurs reality and fiction, disrupting that representational system. Auslander argues that this level of simulation and the interplay between reality and performance puts the presence and authority of the performer, as performer, at risk and therefore the viewer at risk. He theorized that Kaufman's project deconstructed presence, and, in so doing, discovered strategies of resistance within mass cultural contexts (2000:148). Kaufman's deconstruction of presence and authority as a performer, the undermining of representation, and the complicity of the viewer, introduce 'discontinuities' in the relations between viewer and artwork (ibid.). He seems to strain the relationship to its limits, to the extent where the audience becomes unsure whether to laugh, and unsure what is happening, and the strategy of putting a viewer at risk, could be understood in terms of a contract that is stretched to its limits, and even snaps. The performer and viewer fall out of a recognisable relationship and the viewer is no longer sure what kind of contract they are—or thought they were—a party to.

The disruption of representation is also suggested in Shirley Clarke's work *The Connection* (1962) (see Figure 16), based on a stage play by Jack Gelber. The work is framed as a documentary about a film crew, who are filming a group of jazz musicians who are apparently drug addicts. They play music, talk to the camera, take drugs and riff between each other and the crew, over the course of the work. The film is driven by an anticipated and discussed 'drugs connection' where the musicians' dealer makes his daily visit to their flat. The film is shot in one room. Its editing, direction, acting and writing, operate in such a way that the apparent documentary becomes difficult and uncomfortable to watch, as the narrative seems to fall apart, with the musicians both 'hamming' up to the camera, and being affected by the drugs, to the extent that one of the film crew becomes involved in injecting drugs himself.

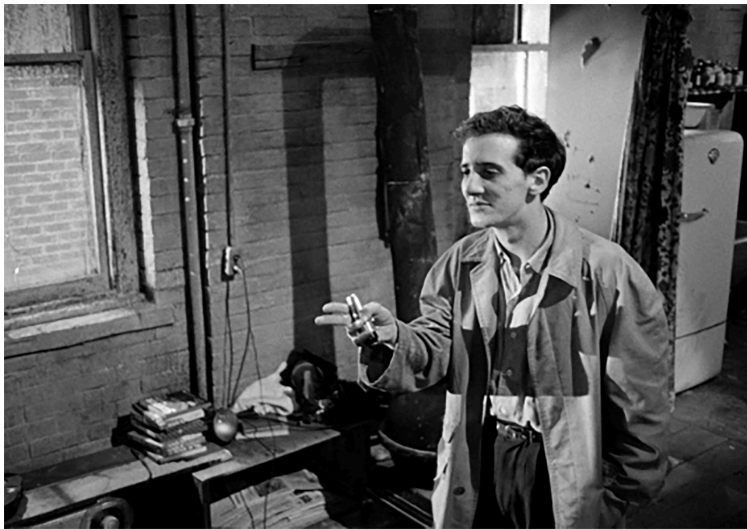


Fig. 16: Clarke, Shirley (1962) *The Connection*. [film still]

Another work by Clarke, *Portrait of Jason* appears, or at least starts, as an upbeat interview with the protagonist, Jason Halliday, set to talk directly to the camera about himself, with a drink in hand. The filming took place over 12 hours, for the 105-minute film. The film becomes disturbing as Jason talks with increasing frankness, about his tortured and complex past. As he bares himself to the viewer, he also laughs and regales the viewer with impressions and stories of famous people, to the point where he breaks

down (see Figure 17).

It is proposed that both Clarke's films reflect a contract between viewer and artwork that starts in a way that appears to meet expectations, but becomes increasingly stretched to its limits, until it breaks down. The initial expectations of the narrative documentary and interview become misaligned with what the work does, and it falls apart outside of that framing. Both films reveal the unexpected, and such is the tension that the reality of the documentary is put in doubt, stretching relations between viewer and artwork ever wider until they are potentially forced out of their initial relations, and repositioned elsewhere.

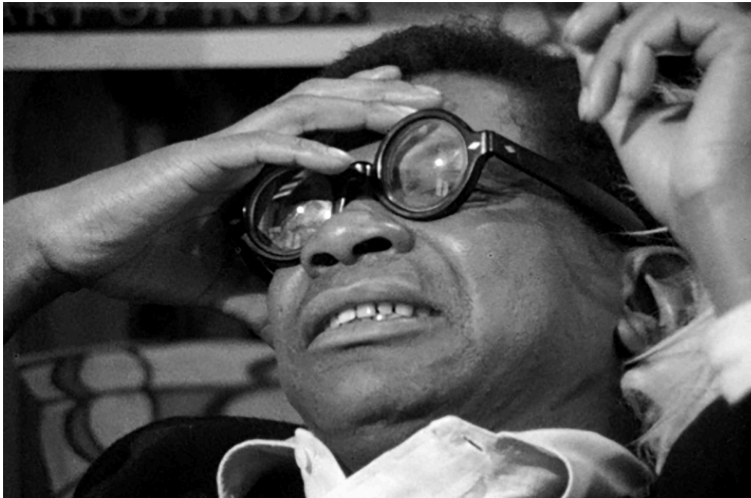


Fig. 17: Clarke, Shirley (1967) *Portrait of Jason*. [film still]

It is argued that the notion of stretching the contract, to the extent that it breaks down, throwing the viewer and artwork out of any relationship, is reflected by philosophical ideas on the disruption of representation. Jacques Lacan's concept of the 'Real' is the unknown, that exists at the limits of signification and beyond symbolic orders and which is not contingent on sense or perception (Charles Shepherdson, 2008). Slavoj Žižek refers to what we think of as 'reality', as implying 'the surplus of a fantasy space filling out a "black hole" of the real' (Žižek, 1991:viii). The real can be thought of as creeping in, or breaking through the symbolic order where everything is contained or controlled and is impossible to express in language.



In summary, *How Soon* considers the viewer's expectations and the artwork's intentions and what it 'does'. It is considered how misalignments between them lead to failure in the contract, and in the process set up a tension between the artistic practice and the rigid structure of the contract. In failing, the contract is distorted, stretched to its limits or loosened and in any event repositions the relations between viewer and artwork within the contract and in some instances breaks down altogether. The key terms of the supplement and attention are used as a way to develop and articulate how the relations between viewer and artwork are repositioned.

### **Summary of shift**

This shift examined failure in *Anthea* and *How Soon*. The concept of the contract was envisaged as a particular frame, in the relations between viewer and artwork. Failure is positioned as the tension in the contract, between artistic practice and the rigidity of the contract. Failure arises where there is a misalignment between expectations set up in the contract and what the artwork does, or its intentions. *Anthea* and *How Soon* propose how failure, in the contract, distorts it by stretching it like an elastic band that is able to revert to its original shape, before stretching again, but also where it is extended to its limits and snaps, where the parties are thrown or fall out of relations altogether.

The tension that creates failure in the contract is invoked by the artistic practice and in particular the method of improvisatory conditions that allows for unanticipated events that border between intended and unintended mistakes, accidents and other unanticipated events. The key terms of the supplement and attention underline and reflect a tension between artistic practice and the rigid structure of the conceptual contract. The breakdown of the contract, and falling out of the parties, gives rise to different ways of experiencing artwork outside its constraints.

The next shift looks at the modality of embarrassment through a conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of a specific frame of attention of the live body to consider its effects on the relations between viewer and artwork.

## SHIFT 2: EMBARRASSMENT

Note to reader: please read in conjunction with the interactive practical document, Shift 2: Embarrassment (PD2), on the USB stick.

### Introduction

The previous shift examined failure through a particular view of the relations between viewer and artwork conceptualized through the concept of contract. This shift looks at embarrassment through another view of those relations, in terms of the frame of attention concerned with the live body, termed 'live body' in this research, which is considered in conjunction with the practical method of hiding the performer. This approach will address the question of how embarrassment displaces the relations between viewer and artwork.

The first section of the shift shows the development of the practical concept of Live Body and the method of hiding the performer in the initial works, *Confessions* ('*Confessions*') and *Deirdre's Indecision* ('*Indecision*'). The section explains how these concepts are applied to the work and introduces key terms that help articulate how they operate. The second section applies this conceptualization of relations between viewer and artwork, in an examination of two comparative configurations of performance-related artistic practice in *Pond Lifes* ('*Pond*') and *Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation* ('*Freeform*').

Images and videos of the works referred to in this shift are presented in the practical document, Shift 2: Embarrassment (PD2).

### Practical concepts and methods: live body and hiding the performer

A practical approach to embarrassment was developed in two initial works, *Confessions* and *Indecision*. Images and videos of these experiments are presented in Figures 1-13 PD2 and Videos 1-2 PD2. A number of themes are drawn from the work, to show the practical conceptualization of the live body, and how the method of hiding the performer

is used to test this concept. Practical approaches and the key terms, including the parergon<sup>30</sup>, embarrassment, self-consciousness and the comic, are used to propose how the relations between viewer and artwork are displaced.

The initial work, *Confessions*, searched for ideas and material to generate approaches to embarrassment in the research. The intention had been to re-present embarrassment, but the work failed to achieve that outcome. The experiment is an unedited video recording of a live experiment of approximately 4 minutes, made in the studio (Video 1 PD2 and Figures 1-7 PD2). Some thoughts on its development follow:

My aim was to find a way to approach the subject of embarrassment. An idea came from a conversation between a friend and I, where we had shared our recollections of some (minor) embarrassing things that had happened on a night out. We were a bit ashamed of ourselves but very much enjoyed sharing and embellishing our stories to make the embarrassment more excruciating. In this work, I intended to use the conversation to re-present the embarrassing incidents through texts held up to the camera. The texts were not scripted in advance and I would be using my 'live' recollection of the original events to write the texts as the camera recorded.

In the course of recording I noticed I became embarrassed by my recollections that were to be exposed to the camera. I wrote each text quickly providing as little information as possible before holding the paper up before the camera and the resulting texts are opaque. There seemed to be a resistance to exposing myself too much and the difficulty is suggested in my pained expression in the video and the seeming excruciating effort I experienced at the time in writing the texts. The resistance to 'confessing' obscured, to some extent, the initial intention of re-telling the embarrassing incidents.

There was a gap between what I was thinking and what I was representing through the texts in this process, that seemed to reflect my state of self-consciousness, where I was thinking about what others might think of me. The texts operated as a structure to hide behind. The video suggests a process between my 'self', and the representation of myself, where the camera's

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<sup>30</sup> The key term of the parergon, as conceptualized by Derrida (1979), is also referred to in Shift 3: Mis-attention.

attention was diverted away from me onto the texts as they were being produced.

The second initial work, *Indecision*, searched for ways to approach the connection between embarrassment and humour (Video 2 PD2 and Figures 8-13 PD2). The work was made in the studio and in the location of a local fitness studio and there was an intention to make the video comical. Two performers adopt personas of fitness coach and client, wearing bright lycra costumes, wigs and other props that allude to aspirational 1980s 'fitness' figures such as Jane Fonda. The narrative is a running joke, where the client attempts to step up on increasingly high steps. Video effects were applied to brighten the colours, and to speed up the video. A difference between this work and *Confessions*, is the degree to which the performers in each are hidden as personas in the video.

A number of overlapping themes and questions emerged from these two initial works divided between finding an initial approach to embarrassment in the work, developing the practical concept of the live body as another kind of frame of attention, considering the degree to which the performer was hidden in the work and developing this as a method of hiding the performer, conceptualizing how the live body operates in relation to this method and testing how the degree to which the performer is hidden has a direct effect on displacing relations between viewer and artwork. Further approaches were developed, in considering the experience of self-consciousness, and how humour and the comic inter-relate with embarrassment. Implicated in these themes are questions of how the relations between intention, attention, framing and representation affect the live body, in conjunction with hiding the performer, and how the key terms of the parergon, embarrassment, self-consciousness, and the comic inform propositions of how relations between viewer and artwork are displaced.

In searching for a practical approach to embarrassment, the theme of the performer hiding in the works emerged. In *Confessions*, the performer is in view, and they are not

playing any particular role. They are hidden, to some extent, by the strategy of diverting attention away and onto the texts, to present a more acceptable version of the performer to the camera. In *Indecision*, the performers are in view, but are more hidden behind the roles they are playing, or personas they have adopted. A gathering of effects and objects, such as the costumes, actions and video editing, constitutes their roles, or personas, as comical. This points away from the performers as 'themselves', to the representations of comic figures. There is a distinction in the degree of hiding, between the performer as a 'self' and as a representation.

The extent to which the performer is hidden (as themselves) seems to correlate with the ease of understanding how the live body (i.e. the person, figure or performer) in the work is being conceptualized, and thus, how the live body is framed (i.e. the live body as the frame of attention effected by that person). It is argued, that it is easier to conceptualize the performers in *Indecision* (as comic figures), than the figure in *Confessions*, whose role seems ambiguous. This sets up an argument that, the more the live body is hidden in the work, the more it becomes abstracted from the effects of embarrassment and exposure. Further, it becomes something other than the self of the performer, more a representation of something or someone. This understanding sets up the basis of approaching the parameters of the live body as a frame of attention.

The theme of hiding, and the method of hiding the performer are connected to the key term of embarrassment because they are suggestive of the strategies we use in presenting ourselves before others in social interactions in attempting to avoid embarrassment. Erving Goffman refers to the key aspect of embarrassment as: 'Whatever else, embarrassment has to do with the figure the individual cuts before others felt to be there at the time' (1967:98). He was interested in the 'flustering' of embarrassment that occurs in the relations with others, whether real or imagined, when an individual fails to present themselves before others in a way they would wish (1967:97-112). The individual takes a great deal of effort in 'face-work', where they perceive themselves, and the way

that others view them in an interaction, and take actions or 'lines' that are consistent with the 'face' they want to present (Goffman, 1967:5-45). In this respect, 'hiding' is proposed as analogous to the way we attempt to avoid the discomfiture of embarrassment, by presenting an acceptable (in our minds) representation of ourselves to others.

Attempts to avoid embarrassment extend beyond the embarrassed individual. Goffman noticed that embarrassment seems to be 'contagious, spreading, once started, in ever widening circles of discomfiture' (1967:106). He noticed how other participants in the interaction may be empathic and attempt to appease, or smooth over, the embarrassment, allowing the embarrassed individual to save their own 'face', and that of the others (1967:99-10 and Dacher Keltner and Brenda N. Buswell, 1997:262-265). In this way, embarrassment and the participants' responses are part of an orderly social response; as opposed to an irrational impulse that disrupts social order (Goffman, 1967:111). Goffman considered that embarrassment did not indicate a breakdown of social order, but contributed to its maintenance, where: 'Social structure gains elasticity; the individual merely loses composure' (1967:112).

Goffman's approach to embarrassment can be understood as reflecting a tension within the anticipation of embarrassment and its management. Thomas Scheff argues that Goffman's studies are not so much about the actual occurrence of embarrassment, but rather its anticipation and management in everyday social life (2016:44). The processes of anticipating and avoiding embarrassment appear to involve continual attempts at diverting attention away from the self, or away from the embarrassed individual, onto a more acceptable representation. This can be considered as a strategy of hiding behind the representation, which is reflected in the method of hiding the performer. The strategy opens a question of what is being represented by the live body, what is being hidden and to what extent, and what happens when (as in *Confessions*) the attempts to hide the performer are not successful.

Other theoretical accounts of embarrassment were considered in the formulation of the key term of embarrassment that invoke the notion of hiding, concealing and unwanted exposure. Psychological and phenomenological studies referred to by Michael Lewis have considered that embarrassment can arise due to simple public exposure that is not related to a negative evaluation, in being praised, observed or pointed to (2016:796). The term shame is often used interchangeably with embarrassment (for example see Scheff, 2016 and Lewis, 2016), but the former is associated with a much more intense and painful level of experience (2016:804). Norbert Elias's analysis of the 'civilizing process' traces changes in the onset of modern civilization, characterized by an increasing rationalization of shame and embarrassment (1998). Sigmund Freud discussed shame in terms of nakedness or sexual or exhibitional impulses that need to be kept in check Freud 1966, cited in Lewis, 2016:794). While the notion of unwanted exposure and concealment are heavily connected to shame, for the purposes of this research, the seemingly lighter dimension of embarrassment was focused upon, particularly as it takes place in public, whereas shame can also be very private.<sup>31</sup>

The practical concept of live body, as a frame of attention, was developed as a means to articulate how the live body is represented and conceptualized in a work, and to investigate the effects on that, of different approaches in the method of hiding the performer. The relations between the viewer and artwork are envisaged as surrounded by multiple potential frames formed from images, text, speech and sound that interact to form the conceptual live body. The viewer is thought of as creating conceptual frames of attention, which make up the live body, through their subjective experience, attention, perception and knowledge, based on a representational system that creates meaning. This is also affected by non-representational systems, which complicate meaning and

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<sup>31</sup> See also Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1969). Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (eds.) *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (1995).



signification, through affect and duration. The artist and/or artwork (and/or curator) also invoke conceptual frames, either intentionally or unintentionally, that may or may not determine how the viewer interprets or responds to the artwork.

In *Confessions* there was an intention to re-present embarrassment. There are images in the work that suggest embarrassment, such as the title 'Confessions', and the one-to-one relationship of the performer with the camera. However, the overall combination is suggested as failing to frame the live body sufficiently to make this clear. It is proposed that the difficulty in interpretation is because the live body shifts between different possibilities, and this complicates and creates displacements in the relations between viewer and artwork. In contrast, the live body in *Indecision* is more easily understood and recognised as a comic figure. The intention has been directly realized through framing the live body with objects and effects that represent a comic figure. This framing helps maintain a stable relation between viewer and artwork insofar as the conceptualization of the live body is concerned.

A way of explaining the practical complications in conceptualizing the Live Body in *Confessions* and *Indecision*, and the operation of the method of hiding the performer in relation to that frame, is aided by Derrida's theorization of the parergon (1979). As we will also see in Shift 3: Mis-attention<sup>32</sup>, the parergon, and its parergonal activity, can be characterized as a complex and active form, which is undecidable, and seemingly constantly shifting. There is a tension set up by the internal structural link between the inside and outside, which provides the interiority of meaning within the frame (ibid). It is proposed in this research that the conceptualization of the live body in the work is dependent on the live body (as a frame of attention) and the parergonal activity of its framing. This is problematized by the extent to which the live body is hidden (in different ways) through the method of hiding the performer.

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<sup>32</sup> See pages 144-146 of Shift 3: Mis-attention

In *Confessions*, it could be said that there is insufficient outer framing to support a representation of embarrassment within the live body. Derrida's understanding of the parergon means that framing supplies what is missing within the frame. If there is no, or insufficient, framing, what is missing would not appear (Derrida, 1979:24). Framing implicitly requires previous knowledge and experience, is intentional and sets up expectations. Consequently, in *Confessions* the live body shifts between different possibilities and is difficult to interpret and conceptualize. This difficulty ties in with the lack of hiddenness of the performer in that work. The method of, and the extent of hiding, in hiding the performer was unsuccessful, insofar as the performer was at risk of revealing themselves as 'themselves' rather than representations.

*Indecision* has sufficient outer frames to supply meaning within the live body, as a comical figure, and this correlates with the performers being hidden behind this representation, and the method of hiding the performer being successful. Where the live body is understandable, where it signifies something, it is proposed that a stable relation between viewer and artwork is created. Where the live body is unclear and messy, as is argued in relation to *Confessions*, interpretation and representation are problematic, and the live body is difficult to conceptualize. It is proposed that the effect of the Live Body shifting between different possibilities displaces the relations between viewer and artwork from a stable relation.

The conceptualization of live body and hiding the performer takes a different approach than may be found in art practices where the live body 'performs', or intentionally deals with, or represents, embarrassment. Examples might include artworks by Gilbert and George, who are known for images which provoke social, historical and cultural ideas of shame. Jennifer Doyle refers to the work of experimental body artist Ron Athey and others as 'difficult', working in a medium of feelings and emotion to evoke complex affective responses (2013). *The Office*, by Ricky Gervais, and the genre of 'cringe

comedy', involves the sharing of excruciating embarrassment for the enjoyment of the viewer (The Office, 2005-2013). In these kinds of examples, the live body can be said to successfully evoke affective responses that concern the ambivalence of shame and embarrassment, and that this is intended. The research did not pursue this aspect of practice (which is vast) and takes a more indirect approach to embarrassment through the conceptualization of relations between viewer and artwork in terms of the live body and hiding the performer.

The key term of self-consciousness is another aspect of embarrassment that arises in *Confessions*. The work gave rise to glimpses of the 'I' or 'self' of the performer, behind themselves, as represented, suggesting two different states. The phenomenological tradition of Merleau Ponty, Husserl and Sartre approaches self-conscious experience in embarrassment and shame as a 'peculiar relationship of the self to itself' (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:325). The body is distinguished between two states: the 'lived body' and the 'corporeal body', which have very different characteristics (Thomas Fuchs, 2003:224). Self-conscious emotions occur within the dynamics in which the lived body is reduced to the corporeal body in moments of 'disruption', which include clumsiness and exposure to judgments of others as well as illness (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:322). Self-consciousness and the effects of corporealization are experienced in shame and related phenomena, including embarrassment (Gary Cox, 2006:46).

The lived body faces the world and undertakes its important projects. We do not notice it or think about it (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:322). Sartre refers to the lived body in terms of 'being-in-the-world' and 'being-for-itself' (2003). These terms refer to how a person's 'being' causes there to be a world, by 'projecting itself beyond the world towards its own possibilities' (Cox, 2006:44). The lived body experiences temporality as spontaneous, and is projected forwards to future possibilities (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:322). The lived body's external relations with the world are constituted 'such that they can appear to a human reality present to being-in-itself and engaged in the world'

(Sartre, 2003:101). 'Being-for-itself' means a person is 'not a thing alongside other things'; they are not 'in being', but rather they 'are that which freely transcend[s] being towards the future' (Cox, 2006:44). The lived body's experience is as a 'transcendent subject', with 'a pure point of view on the world' (ibid.).

The experience of self-consciousness occurs in moments when there is a change of state, and the lived body becomes conspicuous to us, as the corporeal body. The lived body is turned towards itself from 'body-subject' to 'body-object' (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:322). It is 'thrown back on itself, reified or "corporealized"' (Fuchs, 2003:225). A person's presence in the world is as 'an object amongst other objects' where 'free' transcendence is 'transcended by the Other' (Cox, 2006:44 citing Sartre, 2003). The awareness of temporality shifts from being lived forwards to a truncated present and past (Robbins and Parlavecchio, 2006:322). The self-conscious person appears to themselves, 'through the gaze of the other as an object to be witnessed and evaluated' (ibid.). This change of state is not permanent, and there is an oscillation between the two, characterized by Fuchs as a dialectic relationship (Fuchs, 2003:225).

Self-consciousness is proposed as being implicated in relations between the viewer and artwork. Sartre refers to the corporeal body as the 'body for others' and, consequently, both viewer and performer in the artwork are susceptible to its effects (Sartre, 2003:362). The force of the change in state of self-consciousness, altered by perceiving another in their gaze, is reflected in Fuch's description:

I am torn out of the centrality of my lived-body and become an object inside another world. The other's gaze decentralizes my world (Fuchs, 2003:226).

Self-consciousness is proposed as creating displacements in the relations between viewer and artwork, as a consequence of the oscillation between the viewer's, and/or performer's, lived body and corporeal body.

It is proposed that where the method of hiding the performer is taken to an extent where the live body is an understandable representation in the work, in a non-troubling way, the viewer and artwork stand in relations that are stable, or mutually 'transcendent', and avoid the displacements created by self-consciousness. However, if hiding the performer is not successful, in the sense that the corporeal body of the viewer and/or performer appears or is exposed in some way, the relations between viewer and artwork become displaced, from being transcendent and stable, to a different set of relations where the viewer and/or performer become aware that they are the object of the other.

Another line of enquiry concerning embarrassment was its connection with laughter and humour in terms of the key term of the comic drawn from Henri Bergson's conception of the 'comic' (2008). The initial work, *Indecision*, attempted to approach the modality of embarrassment using comic effects. The link between embarrassment and humour can be seen in the anticipation and management of embarrassment. Humour operates to defuse embarrassing situations, and is a way of changing the situation, or attempting to avoid embarrassment. Goffman notes that 'joshing' and humour, associated with embarrassment, function as an appeasement in social interactions, releasing the tension of embarrassment or whatever caused it (1967:112 note 10). Humour reduces the seriousness of the conflict by saying it 'is not serious or real', and embarrassment and joking occur naturally together, because both contribute to a denial of the same reality (ibid.).

Embarrassment is also associated with the comic because it may be funny, comical and ridiculous to onlookers and invoke laughter (Billig, 2012:202 and 225). Goffman's sociological theory of embarrassment places it as a moderator of social order (1967). Billig extends this to a disciplinary function, where laughter and ridicule operate as ways of maintaining that order, by mocking and laughing at an individual who transgresses (ibid.).

The embarrassed individual may appear comical, in Bergson's terms, to onlookers and provoke laughter to the extent of ridicule (Billig, 2012:202).

The comic opens a further, indirect approach to embarrassment. The live body, in *Indecision*, can be considered through features that appear comical, such as the costumes and video effects. To some extent, these features are, or have become, comical through cultural framing, and there is a degree of expectation involved, but laughter can be a spontaneous and unexpected response. Bergson proposes that the central image of the comic is 'something mechanical encrusted on something living' (2008:33). The 'something mechanical' is 'a thing', and the 'momentary transformation of a person into a thing' or the 'blurred impression' of the 'outlines' of 'something mechanical' incites laughter (ibid.). Bergson writes: '*We laugh every time a person gives us the impression of being a thing*' (italics in original) (ibid.). Further, the more a human appears as a thing, the more we laugh: 'The attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine'<sup>33</sup> (2008:21).

Bergson discusses different forms of the comic, especially theatrical comedy, but also everyday misfortunes, in each of which the essential quality of the living body is a form of 'rigidness' (ibid.). The comic figure carries '*un effect de raideur*, a certain stiffness or inflexibility' (italics in original) (Bergson, 2008, cited in Simon Critchley, 2006:56). The rigidness is pronounced by 'absent-minded, almost unconscious mechanical repetitiveness' (italics in original) (ibid.). These features of the comic are seen in visual humour, including where there is a compulsion to repeat, such as cartoons of *Tom and Jerry* and *Road Runner* (ibid.). Critchley refers to Bergson's notion of the comic as actualized in early silent cinema comedies, for example in 'chase' films by Mack Sennett, admired by the Surrealists, and René Clair's *Ent'ract*, 1924. There are different ways that the 'mechanical or thingly encrusts itself onto the living', in particular, Critchley refers to

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<sup>33</sup> This quote is set out in capital letters in the original.

the 'mechanical rigidity of Charlie Chaplin's body', 'the person-become-thing' and 'tragically haggard' face of Buster Keaton 'staring impassively into the camera' in Samuel Beckett's *Film*, 1965, and the 'mute perversity' of Harpo Marx (2006:57).

Bergson's conceptualization of the comic, in terms of features of rigidity and 'absent-mindedness', reflects his 'anti-materialist' philosophy of experience, memory and time, and arguments against the view that humans were simply machines (Billig, 2012:129). Life was not just composed of material elements, and 'the spirit, or the intangible force of life' has 'equal reality' (ibid.). Bergson proposes that: 'Life presents itself to us as an evolution in time and complexity in space', as 'a continuous evolution', and a 'continual change of aspect', never repeating or going backwards (Bergson, 2008:46). Features of the comic, such as absent-mindedness, represent a failure to function in the world, and are contradictory to these ideas of multiplicity, duration and process.

The function of laughter is a corrective to 'inelasticity' in life (2008:17). Laughter occurs where there is a 'certain *mechanical elasticity*, just where one would expect to find the wide-awake adaptability and the living pliability of the human being' (italics in original) (2008:13). For Bergson 'inelasticity' is 'non-adapted' and reflects the 'automatism of acquired habits' when we ought to be 'shaping our conduct in accordance with the reality which is present' (2008:16). Bergson considers that we are required to be constantly alert, to discern the situation, and prepared to adapt ourselves in consequence 'with a certain elasticity of mind and body' (ibid.). The two mutually complementary forces of '*tension* and *elasticity*' (italics in original) bring 'life into play' and avoid 'inelasticity' (ibid.). The more machine-like or inelastic we appear to others, the more laughable we are, and laughter reflects the non-mechanized part of our life (Billig, 2012:129-130).

It is proposed that laughter, as a response to the comic in the work, displaces the relations between viewer and artwork. This is perhaps distinct from the recognition of representations of the comic which are expected through cultural associations. What

causes us to laugh, according to Bergson, draws from the external forces of society, mechanizing the individual (2008:11). Laughter occurs in the momentary removal of those forces or 'isolation' of all accompanying 'sentiment' (ibid.). The comic 'demands a momentary 'anaesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple' (ibid.). Bergson explains this in an example, where he asks the reader to imagine they are a 'disinterested spectator' in a room where dancing (or any human activity) is going on. If the music is shut down, the dancers will appear ridiculous (ibid.). He writes: 'Many a drama will turn into comedy', and pass from 'grave to gay, on isolating them from the accompanying music of sentiment' (ibid.). The displacement of the viewer occurs where the comic exposes the structure or system which imposes the mechanization on the performer, revealing them as a 'thing'.

In summary, *Confessions* and *Indecision* proposed ways to approach embarrassment, through the Live Body and the method of hiding the performer. The initial works aided the conceptualization of relations between viewer and artwork, in the terms of the live body, as a further kind of frame of attention, correlated to this method. The live body can be understood through the conception of parergonal activity which underlies the unstable and shifting nature of the frame. It is argued that the tension of parergonal activity in the live body can be understood as provoked through the inherent tensions and shifts in state in the inter-relating key terms of embarrassment, self-consciousness and the comic. In the former there is tension between embarrassment and it's the avoidance, in self-consciousness there is the dialectic between the lived and corporeal body and in the comic, there are shifting states of the comic, laughter, embarrassment and ridicule. These key terms are proposed as ways to articulate how changes in the state of viewer and/or performer may displace their relations between each other. Two comparative works are examined in the next section through the live body and method of hiding the performer, in relation to some or all of these themes.



## Relations between viewer and artwork

### *Pond Lives ('Pond')*

The first comparative work examined is *Pond*. The work was made for a group exhibition, entitled *Embedded*, that took place in the grounds of Enys House, Penryn. A group of nine artists, including artists from fine art and performance and theatre backgrounds, made work in response to the site. *Pond* was a live multi-media installation that included performance, video, text and image. The experiment was documented in photographs, and aspects are presented in Figures 14-41 PD2 and Video 3 PD2.

*Pond* started as an opportunity to consider the live body in relation to the landscape. The invitation to participate in the exhibition had arisen at a late stage, to replace another artist who had withdrawn. At that stage, there were limited sites available and modes of work that could be utilized. The site allocated was far away from the main exhibition, and situated next to a small lake surrounded by trees, in an expansive rural landscape (Figures 14-21 PD2). The site was accessible, with some difficulty, down a steep and stony path. There were a number of other performance works already set up for the exhibition, and a challenge in making this work, at the request of the curators, was not to present a performance work overtly, as there were a number already in place. However, these conditions allowed the testing of hiding the performer, in terms of the live body in the landscape.

The installation was accessible over the course of the *Embedded* exhibition, when it was open to the public between 10am and 4pm. The work was organized as a gathering of objects and figures in the landscape, each of which was suggestive of an artwork and in particular a video performance made on the site (Video 3 PD2). The video work had been made in the week prior to the exhibition and was displayed on a tiny portable DVD player, placed by a bench along the path by the lake. The video was intended to be accessible via YouTube, by scanning a QR Code with a mobile device. Posters of the QR

Code were attached to the tree on the island in the lake, and on noticeboards that had been made for the installation (Figures 22-28 PD2). In the event, the network coverage over the site was so poor that that the video was, for these purposes, inaccessible.

The notice boards held images from the video and the QR code, but no text explaining the work. Text was introduced into the landscape in the format of (official) health and safety signs, which were put up around the lake (Figures 29-30 PD2). There was a short thumbnail description in the *Embedded* advertising materials, but other than that there were no artists' statement, guides or contextual statements about the work. Two performers were involved in the video, and were also present at the site over the course of the event as invigilators. The role of the invigilators was simply to attend on the site as if it were a job (one of the performers was the writer and the other was paid for her time doing this). It was not intended that they would explain the work to viewers, or identify themselves as being involved in the work, but simply be there, and see what was happening at the site.

Some thoughts and observations on the work follow:

Isobel or I, or both of us, were present at all times at the site in the area of the wooden bench by the lake, in our roles as invigilators, wearing our badges with the QR Code on. The weather was dry and sunny throughout. Over this time the site was often empty of viewers and for long periods I was alone. Over time, viewers sporadically appeared around the site individually, in pairs or small groups, and their frequency increased at times, then dissipated. The path along the lake was a dog-walking route, used by people unconnected with the exhibition. Sitting on the bench drew viewers to chat with me, or sit in silence, and enjoy the tranquility of the surroundings. Both of us read books and newspapers and chatted to viewers, friends and colleagues and new friends were made. These encounters directly arose, because the viewers were drawn to the site, expecting to see an artwork.

Viewers were drawn to the location of the work by the exhibition catalogue, and maps of the site, and there was a trail of artworks around the house and grounds. Having made the difficult walk to the site, I could see some viewers

inspect the noticeboards and appear perplexed, as if looking to find something else. The notice boards, health and safety signs, QR Codes, and ourselves as invigilators, suggested some kind of activity that was alien to the site, or that something had been added to the site, and seemed to point to something, but it was not clear what. The video was inaccessible by the QR Codes and I didn't notice any viewers attempt to connect. Occasionally a viewer would ask about the work or inspect the video DVD player, but it was mostly overlooked.

The location was very quiet and peaceful; there were no buildings in sight, and no other noticeable human activity, other than the appearance of occasional viewers. Being in the site for extended periods made me notice other activity as it unfolded over duration. A group of three ducks occasionally appeared, there was the low hum of activity of tiny aquatic insects, spiders, butterflies and bees and the sound of water trickling from the feeder streams. The site was surrounded by woods which opened onto the bluebell fields of Enys Gardens and beyond into an expansive landscape of fields and sky where birds of prey swooped over the tops of the trees. It could be said nothing much happened on the site over the course of the exhibition but all this was going on.

The tranquility of the site was in contrast to the site as experienced while making the video, in the week before the exhibition (Figures 37-41). This had involved frenetic activity. I was involved in numerous discussions with the gardener and owner of the house, getting permissions to go on the lake, many walks back and forth between the lake and car park along the steep path, as well as getting lost around the maze of walkways in the grounds. There was other activity, of negotiating the loan of a small wooden rowing boat and its transportation with the University caretakers, who kindly helped me pick up the boat from several miles away, and carry it down the steep path from the car park to the lake. There was also the last minute sourcing, from shops in Falmouth, of as much red material as possible, to be used to cover the island in the making of the video. Filming the video involved a great deal of activity and energy, including in rowing, steering and controlling the boat (neither of us were competent at this) and covering and uncovering the island with the red material.

*Pond* gave rise to a number of overlapping questions and themes about the role and conceptualization of the live body in the work, how the live body, in terms of the video, and performers as invigilators, was operating, the implications of different forms of hiding the performer in the work, how self-consciousness of the viewer and/or performer may

provoke instability in the live body. Further related themes concerned the relations of the live body in the landscape, how attention is managed in the work, if at all, and the consequences of that, the relationship between intention, attention, framing and representation, and how relations between viewer and artwork are displaced by these factors and what happens.

In *Pond*, two performers in the work are hidden in the work in different ways. They are hidden in the video where they represent comic figures. That the performance, and filming, had previously taken place on the site begins to suggest the performers are hidden, both in the past, as well as in the frame of the video. The video is introduced into the landscape, but it is also hidden, because it is not brought to the attention of viewers. This was partly due to the inaccessibility of the video online, caused by the unexpected lack of mobile coverage on the site. However, there was also no guidance or context pointing to the video. The alternate means to access the video was its display on a tiny portable DVD player, propped up on the path next to the lake, which seems to be an awkward or throw-away presentation of the video in the landscape, and likely to be overlooked.

The performers are also hidden in the work in their roles as invigilators. They were identifiable by badges that visually connected them with the work (Figures 31-32 PD2), and were both playing 'themselves', appearing and acting as they would in any comparable everyday social situation. Their role could be said to be distinct from performers playing a conceptual persona, or character, as part of an artwork, or offering a performative perspective of the work. The live body could be said to be indeterminate as to whether they were themselves, invigilators or playing a role, and raises questions as to whether they were part of the work or not. To the extent that they appear in the role of invigilators, the live body forms a recognisable framing that points to the invigilation of 'something'.

It is argued that factors and objects in and around the installation suggested conceptual frames that a viewer may create, as being associated with, or supporting, the object of an artwork. One of these factors was the context of the *Embedded* exhibition, further supported by the listing of the work in the catalogue handout. These factors may have drawn viewers to visit the site, with an expectation that there would be an artwork present, even before they enter the place where the work was situated. Objects, such as the notice boards, health and safety signs, QR Codes and the presence of the invigilators, form part of the installation, but also operate independently as framings for an artwork. These objects point to something on the site, by introducing text, images, and the live body into the landscape that would not normally be there and are suggestive of a framing of the work. Without these objects, the viewer would have no expectations about the site, other than the landscape itself. Whilst these objects seem to be pointing away to something bigger, that 'thing' does not appear to be there.

It is proposed that these are suggestive of frames of attention that would normally be expected to surround an artwork. However, these objects are suggestive of a framing of the work that is both part of the work itself and not part of the work. But whilst they point to an artwork, the artwork is difficult to conceptualize or even find. It is nebulous as to what the artwork 'is'. The presence of these factors impinges on the stability of frames of the artwork and live body and problematizes what it is that is supposed to be attended to, and whether the signs and text are the artwork itself.

It is proposed that the operation of the live body in the work can be explained through the conceptual activity of the parergon and its effects on the framing of the artwork. The human figures and objects introduced into the landscape could be said to be parerga, which, individually and together, set out in an attempt to delimit the surrounding landscape in order to support the framing of an artwork. Richards refers to such objects, for example labels, as '*parergonal agents*' (italics in original) (Richards, 2008:37). However,

the active and shifting nature of these objects as parerga does not allow a naturalization of any singular, or unified frame, for an artwork.

In *Pond*, there is insufficient outer framing to supply what is missing within the notional frame. The live body is difficult to conceptualize without the artwork being framed. Similarly the artwork is difficult to frame without the live body being stable. *Pond* presents difficulties because it is not possible for a viewer to find a frame to approach the artwork, or to view the artwork from. It is proposed that this difficulty in locating a frame for the artwork, whether through the live body or some other kind of framing, makes the viewer self-conscious of their position in the relations between viewer and artwork.

It is argued that the unstable and shifting nature of the parergon can be connected with self-consciousness as considered by Michel Foucault, in his lectures on Edouard Manet's paintings (2011). Foucault demonstrates how Manet's paintings, including *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882) (see Figure 18), question the 'very place of the viewer', who is not able to find an ideal fixed viewing position in relation to the work (2011:73). Foucault refers to the painting as rendering the viewer 'mobile' and argues that: 'The figure of the modern viewer' is 'questioned by a pictorial object which renders him conscious of his presence and of his position within a much larger system' (Nicolas Bourriard, cited in Foucault, 2011:17). In a similar way, the lack of clear framing in *Pond* invokes self-consciousness in the viewer, in attempting to find and determine the limits of the artwork and an ideal viewing position.



Fig. 18: Manet, Edouard (1882) *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. [painting].

The difficulty for a viewer in rationalizing an artwork that has no clear frame is described in Micheal Fried's account in *Art and Objecthood* of Tony Smith's description of a car ride, taken at night on the New Jersey Turnpike. Fried writes:

There was, he seems to have felt, no way to "frame" his experience on the road, no way to make sense of it in terms of art, to make art of it, at least as art then was. Rather, "you just have to experience it"—as it happens, as it merely is. (The experience alone is what matters.) (Fried, 1998:158).

The key term of the parergon can be used to explain how framing and the management of attention are connected. In *Pond*, attention has been managed to some extent, in setting up an expectation of an artwork on the site that is suggested by the catalogue and exhibition context. The viewer has been drawn into the landscape, to a place they may not have visited before. They have to make a cumbersome journey to the site and, once there, perhaps might be actively seeking a frame within which to engage with the work. However, there is a lack of management of attention at this point, because the artwork, as a singular object, does not materialize, despite objects around, seemingly pointing towards it. Instead, in the process of searching for the frame, other kinds of relations are

created that would not have happened otherwise, including social gatherings and encounters of viewers and invigilators and the enjoyment of the tranquility of the landscape. In this way, it is proposed that lack of management of attention can be said to displace relations between viewer and artwork.

An approach to considering the method of hiding the performer, and how the performer is 'hidden' in the work, and its conceptualization, is through ways in which the body carries meaning. In his essay *On Acting and Not Acting*, Michael Kirby suggests the live body carries meaning through a continuum of behaviours that range between not-acting and acting (1984:97-117). Acting is referred to in terms of 'to feign, to simulate, to represent', and 'to impersonate', while 'not-acting' is not representing or pretending to be in 'a time or place different from that of the spectator' (1984:98). Not-acting could be seen in the case of Happenings, where the performer tended 'to "be" nobody or nothing other than themselves' (ibid.).

While acting can be understood as carrying meaning through personification, there are other ways the live body carries meaning in place of acting. Kirby's continuum contains 'nonmatrixed performing, nonmatrixed representation, received acting, simple acting and complex acting', which he describes as "'colours", [...] in the spectrum of human performance' (1984:116). The 'artist may use whichever colour he prefers' (ibid.). Any point on the scale measures 'the amount or degree of representation, simulation, impersonation and so forth in performance behavior' (1984:107). Whereas acting is 'active' and done by the performer, 'not-acting' is passive and done or applied to the performer, and there are overlapping points between the two.

Nonmatrixed performing refers to performers who are merely themselves in an artwork, such as stage attendants in Kabuki and No theatre (1984:99). Performers who may not act, but represent something or someone through costume or other contextual signs applied to them (rather than 'acted by' them (*italics in original*)), are referred to in terms of



'nonmatrixed representation' (1984:100). Extras, who do not act, but are understood as part of the work, are referred to in terms of 'received acting', where the viewer does not distinguish them from actors in the work (1984:101). These modes suggest an increasing amount of simulation, representation and impersonation, but none are as yet actively 'acting' in some way. The invigilators in *Pond* seem to fall into the category of not acting, but carrying meaning by what they represent in the context of the event.

The notion of delegated performance is another approach to conceptualizing the live body in the work and considering the degree of hiding. Claire Bishop refers to the hiring of non-professionals, or specialists in other fields, to undertake the job of being present and performing at a particular time and place on behalf of the artist, as seen in works for example by Tino Sehgal (2012:219). Bishop positions her analysis of delegated performance in the frame of the white cube gallery and photographic and video documentation of such performances (ibid.). In Tino Sehgal's *This Progress*, 2012<sup>34</sup>, his interpreters act out choreographed gestures and instructions, in conversations with the viewers. This could be considered as an interaction between acting (on the part of the interpreters) and not acting (by viewers), on Kirby's scale. It seems to reflect a controlled management of attention between viewer and artwork, where the interpreters are hidden as 'themselves', and are able to be conceptualized as representative of something.

Hiding the performer could extend beyond representation, by disembodied speech. In Vito Acconci's *Seedbed*, 1972 (see Figure 19) the artist uses speech to 'reveal an alternative view of presence by staging the self at its most volatile' (Brandon Labelle, 2006:xiv). In this work, Acconci hid himself under the stairs of the Sonnabend Gallery in SoHo, New York, while masturbating and narrating a monologue based on his actions and the movements of viewers as they walked overhead. His voice was projected through speakers into the gallery (Gloria Moure, 2001). Gallery visitors entered to find an empty

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<sup>34</sup> Discussed in Shift 3: Mis-attention at pages 166-167.

space, other than the low wooden ramp where Acconci was hidden from view. It is argued that the extent of hiding means there is no live body, or representation, of the performer in the work. The unframed, disembodied voice, with its embarrassing content, seems to psychologically provoke and control the interplay of relations between viewer and artwork, and in so doing, displaces them.

The method of hiding the performer could extend to work where the live figure is absent. In Ilya Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew into Space from his Apartment* (1985) (see Figure 20), the installation contains multiple signs, objects, and clues as to the unfolding narrative of the protagonist, who is absent. The work is separated from its surroundings through a structure that houses, and manages, its own attentional system. Kabakov refers to this kind of work as a 'total installation' where the viewer is an 'actor' and each element of the work is wholly intended towards their perception and the impression it will make (Bishop, 2005:14). Bishop uses Freud's approach to the interpretation of dreams (1997), as an analogy for how the viewer projects themselves 'into an immersive 'scene' that requires creative free-association in order to articulate its meaning' (Bishop, 2005:16).



Fig. 19: Acconci, Vito (1972) *Seedbed*. [performance].



Fig. 20: Kabakov, Ilya, (1985) *The Man Who Flew into Space from his Apartment*. [installation].

A further approach to hiding the performer is seen in Jack Goldstein's 'burial' performances of the early 1970s, which involved the artist hiding his body in the landscape, so that it was physically concealed, to the extent the viewer might have been completely unaware it was there at all. Jean Fisher refers to these works as having 'no formal audience' (1985). Goldstein describes the work as follows: 'A man is enclosed in a box and buried overnight on the top of a hill. All that marks his presence above ground is a light pulsating to the rhythm of his heartbeat [...] an anonymous objective impulse' (Gordon Lebrecht, 1988:6).

The work could only be viewed as a series of pulsating lights, glimpsed by passing cars along the freeway below, as 'the sole marker of the man buried in a box beneath the earth' (Fisher, 1985). Fisher refers to the 'pulsating beacon' as a representation, indicating 'a presence' that is displaced from its 'putative point of origin' and remaining as a virtual presence (ibid.). The burial works, and the live body in the work, are brought to attention

in a conceptual space, driven by memory by framing, through the artist's, Fisher's (and others') writing on his work.

*Pond* introduces the live body into a relation with the landscape. Fine arts practices have a historical tradition concerned with the human figure in the landscape. The figure in the landscape sets up particular expectations that are different to where the body does not appear. Claude Lorrain was associated with the genre of history painting, where the landscape was the scene against which biblical and mythological narratives were represented by human figures, for example *Landscape with Narcissus and Echo* (1644) (see Figure 21). Pieter Brueghal The Elder was known for landscape and peasant scenes, where mythological narratives and parables were represented by the activities of the human figures, for example *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1560) (see Figure 22).



Fig. 21: Lorrain, Claude (1644) *Landscape with Narcissus and Echo*. [painting]



Fig. 22: Brueghal, Pieter The Elder (1560) *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. [painting]

The theatre group Wildworks, make immersive, site-specific works in the landscape with live figures. *100: The Day Our World Changed* (2014) (see Figure 23) took place in The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Cornwall, to share memories and stories of Remembrance Day. The work was made with the participation of many community performers and viewers, in re-enactments of historical narratives. Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) took place in the original landscape in which the historical events had taken place in 1984, where they were re-enacted with the participation of historical re-enactors and former miners and police who had been involved in the original conflict. Figure 24 depicts the 'battlefield', before the performance took place. Both these works are also supported through surrounding documentation, texts, video, and discussions that further frame them.



Fig. 23: Wildworks (2014). *100: The Day Our World Changed*. [performance]



Fig. 24: Deller, Jeremy (2001). *The Battle of Orgreave*. [performance]

The landscape in Lorrain and Brueghal's work becomes the scene or background against which historical narratives unfold through their relation to the human figures in the paintings. In the works by Wildworks and Jeremy Deller, the landscape is also the background in which the narratives unfold through the activities and participation of performers as well as viewers in that landscape. The works can be considered in terms of *parerga* that frame the work. The conceptualization of the human figures, or live body, in the works and landscape are framed by the title and surrounding discourses that initiate the narrative. The landscape frames the live body and equally the live body frames the landscape. The relation between the human figure and landscape is intertwined.

A different emphasis on attention to the live body in the landscape is seen in practices positioned in the experience of the landscape. Hamish Fulton refers to himself as a walking artist. In *Walk On Plymouth*<sup>35</sup>, the artist and facilitators gave instructions to volunteer performers, so that they formed a kinetic sculpture of multiple bodies moving in the urban landscape of the city (see Figure 25). Like Wildworks above, the work provides a multi-dimensional relationship to the landscape, ranging from the experience of viewers

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<sup>35</sup> The work was made for the British Art Show 2014 in Plymouth.

and volunteers as performers to the experience of the works in the gallery. The practice seems to be held through the central frame of the figure of the artist in the landscape, surrounded and supported by multiple outer frames, formed by the accumulation of previous works, documentation and texts.



Fig. 25: Fulton, Hamish (2014) *Walk On Plymouth*. [performance]

Richard Long and Robert Smithson are also associated with the landscape in ways in which the figure is hidden. Examples are Long's performative interventions into the landscape *A Line Made By Walking* (1967) (see Figure 26) and Smithson's essay, *Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey* (1996). The figure in a relation to the landscape is formed from surrounding framings that accumulate over time, through discourses, documentation, film, texts, the artists' reputations, and fame that supports and frames their practices. These are all framings, where the viewer's attention is already focusing on the hidden artist, before entering the artwork. Without the parergonal tension of frames outside, supporting the central figure of the artist within, the relations between viewer and artwork would be less stable, or there would be no clear frame with which to engage with the work. Attention between viewer and artwork could be understood as managed at one level, as focused on the artist and their relation in the landscape which produces the work even though the figure of the artist does not appear, or is hidden in the work.



Fig. 26: Long, Richard (1967) *A Line Made By Walking*. [performance]

The figure of the artist Keith Arnatt is set up in a relation to the landscape in *Self-Burial (Television Interference Project)* (1969) (see Figure 27). The artist was interested in making works in the landscape that leave no trace behind, and in this work he ‘hides’ by burying himself in the earth. The work is series of photographs that were broadcast on German television, where one photograph was shown each day, for about two seconds interrupting the programming. The work is framed by the title, operating as a visual pun. When first shown, the work was ‘neither announced or explained—viewers had to make what sense of them that they could’ (Tate, 2018). Although Arnatt’s work is now well known, at the time of first broadcast a viewer’s attention is ‘surprised’ by Arnatt’s intervention (Waldenfels, 2011:65).





Fig. 27: Arnatt, Keith (1969) (*Self-Burial (Television Interference Project)*) [sequence of photographs]

In summary, *Pond* and this aspect of the research underline the role of framing, representation and attention, in forming a stable relation between viewer and artwork through the live body as a frame of attention. It also considers how a lack of management of attention complicates those relations, creating potential displacements through self-consciousness, and the unpredictability of events that take place as a result. *Pond* also gave rise to ideas about how the live body may be hidden in the landscape, through representation, even where the live body is not present. The landscape, the live body and narrative, form inter-related frames of attention that depend on and support each other to provide a singular perspective. This aspect of the research also proposes different ways of hiding in the work, which produce both representational, and non-representational conceptualizations of the live body.

### *Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation ('Freeform')*

The second comparative work examined is *Freeform*. An overview of this work has been provided in Shift 3: Mis-attention<sup>36</sup> and it is examined in this Shift, with specific reference to the conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork, in terms of the Live Body and hiding the performer. Particular aspects of *Freeform* are presented below with references to images and videos in Figures 42-80 PD2 and Videos 4-6 PD2.

*Freeform* extended the method of hiding the performer in a performance work, within the white cube frame<sup>37</sup>. The two main performers were 'hidden' in sculptural costumes and make-up. The performers undertook a series of prescribed activities including walking around, entering the main gallery door, climbing stairs, sitting down and dancing in these costumes. There was no obvious purpose or narrative for these activities (Figures 49-55 PD2). They were unrehearsed, and it was only during the live performance that the performers discovered how the costumes constrained their movements. There was a contingency in the work where the performers would have to tackle these challenges when they arose, which led to some comical instances.

Some comments on the work follow:

The costumes were constructed using cardboard, glue, gaffer tape and string (Figures 45-48 PD2). Both Ros and I commented how ridiculous and self-conscious we felt in these costumes. As we moved around the gallery the costumes wobbled and rustled precariously, I noticed flakes of paint, paper and sellotape dislodging and fluttering away. The physical constraints of the costumes, and the requirement that we move together, as a single 'object', hindered movement in unexpected and comic ways. For example, as we came to the front door of the gallery together, we found it difficult to enter, since we were wider than the door (Figures 56-58 PD2). When we tried to sit down on a bench, as our bodies lowered to sit our heads began to disappear in the costumes (Figures 66-67 PD2).

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<sup>36</sup> *Freeform* is also discussed in Shift 3: Mis-attention in conceptualizing the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of the practical concepts of layers and frames of attention at page 153 onwards.

<sup>37</sup> The concept of the white cube frame is discussed in more detail in Shift 3: Mis-attention at pages 141-142.

The costumes constrained the movement of the torso and neck. In order to turn my head, I had to turn my whole body through my legs. The boxes on our feet hindered the upward and forward movement of the feet, and felt very unstable. My movements were tentative, as each step was negotiated, and I had to take small steps and shuffle for fear of tripping up. I did not think I would be able to get up again if I fell over. There was a moment when we were climbing the stairs that I had an awful feeling I was tipping over backwards, and it took all my effort to lurch myself forward to avoid falling (Figure 59-63 PD2).

Despite feeling ridiculous, the dancing segments were enjoyable and I felt less conspicuous. It was easy to forget how we appeared to the viewers while immersed in dancing to the music. In the dancing segments, I found I was able to adapt to the constraints of the costumes, using limited movements that avoided the risk of falling, for example, by dancing on the spot, shuffling sideways rather than forwards, and in particular spinning around, where the cardboard box costumes gathered momentum and seemed to take on a life of their own. Our arms poked sideways out of the holes on either side of the costumes, limited in horizontal range and flailing on either side of the body, but isolating the arms seemed to allow exaggerated expressive gestures of the hands (Videos 4-6 PD2). The latter video was speeded up, which seems to emphasize the comic in the work.

At times, over the course of our activities, I heard sporadic laughter and there was an awkward-sounding applause at the end of each of the dancing segments. There were also some awkward and uncomfortable encounters with viewers where I had difficulties in maintaining a 'stone-face' throughout. A viewer intently inspected me, close up for several minutes, looking directly into my eyes. I attempted to avoid this, but ended up blinking a lot and diverting my eyes away, implicitly acknowledging the eye-to-eye contact. In another instance while we were walking outside the gallery, two viewers tried to ask what we were doing and what was going on. We both initially kept stone-faced, but as they became insistent, I could not help myself in politely trying to silently gesticulate that we could not speak. This failed to assuage them and we then broke into smiles, to hurriedly explain we were to do with the gallery.

*Freeform* proposes a number of overlapping questions and themes including: what are the methods of hiding the performer in the work? How does this affect the frame of attention of the live body and its representation in the work? What is the relation of the live body and the comic? How is the live body conceptualized? What are the effects of

the live body in the white cube frame? How successful is the method of hiding the performer and what are the effects of failing to maintain a 'stone-face' and making eye-to-eye contact with viewers? Further issues concern the effects of self-consciousness, humour and embarrassment in the work, their effects in displacing relations between viewer and artwork and how the key terms of self-consciousness, embarrassment and the comic inform this.

Hiding the performer in *Freeform* gave rise to a suggestion of the live body as comical. The sculptural costumes, which are object-like, constrained the performers' movements, suggestive of 'rigidity' and 'something mechanical encrusted on something living' (Bergson, 2008:33). The live body as a skilled comic performer in visual humour, for example a clown, sets up a particular representational relation, where the viewer is a passive spectator. Harman describes the relationship between the viewer and clown in terms of an asymmetry, where one object is active and the other passive, or acted upon. The viewer is in contact with the clown, through 'a narrow film of visual and sonorous data', from prior familiarity with the circus genre (2005:219). The clown undergoes a 'nuclear fission', 'all surface and skin, no depth', while the spectator remains passive before them (2005:221).

The performers in *Freeform* did not display skills as comic performers, nor could they. The live body, as comic, was undermined by their failure to maintain a 'stone-face' in encounters with viewers, and in glimpses of 'themselves', as they tried to manage the precariousness of their condition in the costumes. The performers can be placed in Kirby's 'matrixial' range of 'not-acting', where the costumes and activities of the performers give meaning to the work, but it is unclear in this case what that could be. Harman's description in the previous paragraph of the relationship with the clown could be understood in the context of a circus. In *Freeform*, the work is framed as an artwork, because of its relation within a white cube frame. As discussed in Shift 3: Mis-attention, as a social, economic and ideological structure, particular ways of behaving and

expectations arise within this frame. This complicates the live body in the work, by imposing a further dominant, external representational system on it, which has to be considered in relation to the effects of the comic.

As discussed earlier in this shift, Bergson's understanding of the function of laughter is less to do with the appearance of the live body as comic, and more to do with the limits of perception and the operations of the social forces that mechanize life (Bergson, 2008). The function of laughter, he argues, is a corrective to the 'inelasticity in life', where inelasticity is 'automatism' 'imitating it' (2008:22). What might be comic, in *Freeform*, in Bergson's terms, is that the work attempts to be non-representational within the representational system of the white cube frame. What might incite laughter, as a response, is the futility of the task of seeking to overcome the representational system that is imposed externally on the artwork, by the powerful perceptual operations of the white cube frame. It could be argued that the viewer is laughing at the external system that imposes itself on the artwork, that mechanizes it, rather than the individual themselves, as a reminder that life is not mechanized.

The frame of the live body, as it relates to the comic, is also complicated by the ambivalence of laughter, which, as a response, may be tinged with ridicule. Ridicule arises in situations of embarrassment, where onlookers might enjoy the momentary release from social imperatives of empathy, by mocking, ridiculing and laughing at the embarrassed individual (Billig, 2012:228). Billig argues that embarrassment, laughter and ridicule play a central and necessary part in social life (2012:234). This calls into question the assumption that laughter is simply 'good' (2012:1). The ridicule of onlookers may be necessary to ensure that the mechanism of embarrassment acquires and retains its power to enforce the demands of social order (2012:234). It could be argued in respect of *Freeform* that laughter as ridicule is a response to a failure to either operate within, or circumvent successfully (i.e. ironically or knowingly), the white cube frame.

Enjoyment at the subversion of normally accepted social codes is a further complication in the response of laughter, in Billig's argument about the protection of everyday social behaviour. For example, the idea behind making *Confessions* (one of the initial works in this shift) arose from remembering past embarrassing incidents, which turned into the pleasurable, if excruciating, sharing and laughing at embarrassment. This could be explained as enjoyment at subversion of normal behavioural and social codes, experienced as embarrassing at the time. However, we may also laugh at others who befall embarrassment, as a way of mocking or deriding them. The former could be considered as 'rebellious humour', which mocks the social rules that made the incident embarrassing (2012:207). The latter, considered as 'disciplinary humour', mocks those who break social rules, and operates to achieve conservatism and conformity (2012:202). Whether a response is rebellious or disciplinary is also not straightforward and may be affected by 'denial, self-deceit and self-righteousness' and the ideological climate (2012:204).

Billig argues that there is tension, or ambivalence, between the disciplinary function of laughter and the rebelliousness (2012: 211). The tension is suggestive of why there are no uniform or objective understandings of the comic, or of what makes people laugh (2012:131). Laughter or ridicule, even though cruel, is a 'corrective' to discourage 'non-adapted' behaviour through holding a threat of mockery over the individual, because people dread being laughed at (2012:128). Humour and seriousness are 'inextricably linked', and there 'must be a continual movement between' them, each needs the other for its existence (2012:243). The relations between the comic, laughter, ridicule and embarrassment are therefore complex and ambivalent, perhaps explaining the awkwardness seen in responses to *Freeform*. Further, it is proposed that the ambivalence of the rebellious and corrective function of laughter further displaces the relations between viewer and artwork.

The experience of self-consciousness involved in eye-to-eye contact between viewer and

performer in *Freeform* impinges on the live body, through displacing viewer and/or performer, by changing their state from lived to corporeal bodies. As discussed earlier in this Shift, the corporeal body sees itself as an object in the gaze of the other. This relationship may become more complex in interpersonal interactions. A person may become the 'Other for the Other', by recovering their transcendence, when the other person is well disposed towards them (Cox, 2006:46, Sartre, 2003). This may be more aggressive, as Fuchs describes: when two people 'catch sight of each other a subtle fight of gazes for impact, power and rank begins' (Fuchs, 2003:225). This has been referred to in terms of conflict and as a struggle to dominate 'the transcendence of the Other' (Cox, 2006:46). Self-consciousness causes the lived body to be displaced by the corporeal body, temporality is interrupted, and our perspective is inverted onto ourselves. It is proposed that the complex and conflicting interpersonal interactions between the viewer and performer, in the dialectic between their lived and corporeal bodies interacting with each other, further displaces the relations between viewer and artwork.

Ridout has examined the self-consciousness experienced in embarrassment in terms of modern theatre. In *Stage Fright, Animals and Other Problems*, Ridout suggests that self-consciousness is a condition of theatre and performance-related works (2006). He makes an analogy between the condition of 'theatrical illusion', and Fried's claims of 'absorption and 'presentness' in modernist painting where the viewer has a transcendent relation to the 'self-sufficient' artwork (Ridout, 2006:10, and Fried, 1998). In a similar way, the 'theatrical set-up' is traditionally framed through a representation of reality, where there is suspension of disbelief, and the distinction between viewer and performer is also clear-cut. The actor, appears to the viewer in an 'untroubling' way (Ridout, 2006:93). Both projects 'seek to eliminate the spectator from the set up' and 'to hide the full extent of the 'entire situation'' (Fried, 1998:155, cited in Ridout, 2006:10).

In *Art and Objecthood* Fried argues that the experience of 'theatricality' disrupts the ideal relation between viewer and artwork (1998). Fried was concerned that 'literalist art', by

artists such as Donald Judd and Robert Morris, forces the viewer to acknowledge the 'entire situation', including the awareness of their own body and duration (1998:155). The viewer is subjectivized and turned into an 'audience that thinks too much of itself', that 'improperly' puts itself 'upon the stage' (Ridout, 2006:9). Ridout argues that theatricality 'functions here as a disturbance, almost uncanny, of the proper relations of the spectator to the art' (2006:8). Ridout applies Fried's notion of theatricality to the theatre, to examine how self-consciousness and embarrassment, experienced through stage fright of actors and self-consciousness of the viewer, disrupt the illusion of reality. In these cases, the 'theatre fails to manage itself properly', in an 'untroubling' way (i.e. where the binary relation between viewer and artwork is disturbed), for example the situation where the viewer and actor catch each others' eye (2006:93).

Ridout argues that in moments where the inappropriate, or inept, intervenes in the constructed reality of the theatrical experience, the viewer and/or performer may experience embarrassment because 'appearance emerges in its truth, as reality' (ibid.). In this situation, the actor and/or viewer appear 'not as authentic unproblematic and unified subjects, but doubled, in an appearance that is both truth and simulation' (ibid.). Ridout's use of the terms 'appearance' and 'truth' are derived from Giorgio Agamben's essay *The Face*, where the face is the location of truth but also of resemblance: 'the face uncovers only and precisely inasmuch as it hides, and hides to the extent to which it uncovers' (Agamben, 2000, cited in Ridout, 2006:92). Consequently, in being made to appear, there is 'the recognition that appearing is all you can do, that there is nothing else but appearing', and the experience of this reality is the discomfort of embarrassment (2006:93). In this way, the discomfort in 'appearing' by the viewer and/or performer displaces relations between viewer and artwork.

Harman contends that the root of all embarrassment is being 'recognized solely as a bare consciousness' (2005:213). He conceives the human figure as an agent that is 'encrusted' with 'numerous personal qualities and socially recognized achievements' and who would



rather be recognised in terms of those features, than as 'free and dignified rational agents' (ibid.). In Harman's terms, embarrassment is the 'separation of an agent from these qualities' (2005:212). The agent may be ourselves, or another who is sympathetic or empathic towards us. But embarrassment strips us of those features, and publicly exposes us as 'underlying nullities, or at least as much less than we claimed to be' (ibid.). In situations where we make a fool of ourselves we are 'reduced to a *bumbling cogito*' (italics in original) where our publicly recognised traits and achievements are ruptured (2005:213). The reduction of the viewer/performer as an 'underlying nullity', in a similar way to the preceding paragraph, displaces relations between viewer and artwork.

Self-consciousness, and the embarrassment of the viewer, is a key aspect of *The Staging of Restricted Means in the Landscape Redefines the Terms of Pleasure of Painting* (see Figure 28) by artist, musician and performance artist, Jütte Koether (2009) as analyzed by Eva Kenny (2011)<sup>38</sup>. The performance was presented in what appears to be the format of a performance lecture, and took place at the opening of the artist's exhibition, *Lux Interior*, at the Reena Spaulings Gallery in New York<sup>39</sup>. Kenny writes that Koether is 'dressed all in red with her long hair down, red gloves and multi-coloured glittering shoes, the artist's outfit was half Dorothy, half dominatrix, half teacher' (ibid.). Koether, holding a sheaf of papers in her hand and standing next to her painting, *Hot Rod (After Poussin)*, starts the performance saying she wants to 'have a conversation about painting' (ibid.).

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<sup>38</sup> This work came to my attention through Eva Kenny's online essay, *Existential Embarrassment* (Kenny, 2011), which provides a detailed examination and an analysis of embarrassment in this work by Koether.

<sup>39</sup> The exhibition page on the gallery website is available at: <http://www.reenaspaulings.com/JK.htm> [accessed 5.7.18], with accompanying essay *Painting Beside Itself*, by David Joselit (2009).



Fig. 28: Koether, Jütte (2009) *The Staging of Restricted Means in the Landscape Redefines the Terms of Pleasure of Painting*. [performance]

Parts of Kenny's description of Koether's work is set out in the following paragraph:

With T. J Clark's book *The Sight of Death* in hand and with a strong German accent Koether reads from her notes and quotes from the book. She tosses papers off the pile and onto the floor where already pages are lying, then lies down on the floor continuing her monologue on the subject red. [...] Koether stamps around the stage in her heavy-sounding shoes and goes to a flickering light machine, which she switches on. Then she stamps over to the main light switch, off the platform, and turns off the overhead lights. When she comes back to the stage she walks around and around the painting, gesturing at it vaguely while still reading from her sheaf of papers. She crouches on the platform to tidy some of her notes, stands up, and starts shouting the lyrics of a song by the Cramps, [...]. *Garbage Man*, the song Koether uses, has lyrics that go something like "You ain't no punk, you punk, you want to talk about the real junk?...You gotta live until you're dead, you've got to rock until you see red." (ibid.)

Kenny considers the performance as excruciatingly embarrassing for the viewer (ibid.).

Kenny describes the initial discomfort of the audience, seen in the video as they turn their

heads to each other in bemusement, increasing as the artist starts shouting. Kenny refers to the atmosphere getting 'even less comfortable', 'as this fifty year old German woman is not only unpredictable and confrontational but somehow, by sing-shouting this song, is embarrassing' (ibid.). She quotes from a review of the artist's other performances, which use the terms "'excruciating'", "'so horrible'", and says the 'cringe factor is generally high' (ibid.) Kenny's analysis of the work considers how Koether is instrumental in producing embarrassment through an 'unfashionable', or 'uncool' persona of an 'archetypal', 'eccentric' artist. The artist provokes ambivalent and nostalgic images of protest, as well as the co-option of the experiences of 'radical transgressive culture' 'served up in a gallery' 'which fall deliberately wide of the mark' and challenge the viewer's own ambivalent values and attitudes (ibid.).

In this research, it is proposed that Koether does not 'perform' embarrassment as such. The performance may not be intended to be about embarrassment, or to cause embarrassment, but it is embarrassing. The live body can be thought of as impinged on by the parergonal activity of multiple conflicting images, which force the viewer from a transcendent perspective into self-consciousness. Kenny suggests that Koether operates as an external object, onto which the viewer projects their anxieties, 'like an embarrassed patient blaming the causes of her embarrassment on their psychoanalyst' (ibid.). Not only does embarrassment suggest that the viewer is concerned about what others are thinking of them, but the changes in state, between lived and corporeal body, invert them into an object, with the 'imprint' of the ambivalent images. These imprints form a kind of surface of the work, between the artist and viewer, which displaces relations between viewer and artwork.

It is proposed that the displacements created by the dynamics between the corporeal body and the lived body suggest a way of understanding how artworks function between the self (of the performer/artist) and the self of the viewer, in performance-related work. LaBelle has referred to these dynamics as 'the oscillation between self and world' and that

art could be said to function as 'a body or skin caught between a self and an audience' (LaBelle, 2006:xvii). LaBelle refers to Gillian Wearing's video *Dancing in Peckham* (1994), which he considers captures this conceptualization (ibid.). In this work, the artist dances, while apparently listening to music through headphones, in the middle of a busy shopping arcade (see Figure 29). The music is unheard by the viewer. She seems to be in her own world, and oblivious of the surroundings while passers-by respond in different ways, including ignoring her, glancing at her or standing to watch.



Fig. 29: Wearing, Gillian (1994) *Dancing in Peckham*. [video]

LaBelle contends that Wearing's work 'figures the body caught between the flows of surroundings and its own inner drives'. He describes this as like 'a membrane whose fluctuations of movement and anxiety register in forms of creative negotiation' and 'art registers on its surfaces the forces from without against the forces from within' (ibid.). Adopting this idea, the concept of the live body, as a frame of attention, can be considered as a 'skin' that is subject to the momentary displacements between the self of

the performer and the self of the viewer. Different modes of hiding the performer have effects on this 'skin', or live body, between multiple momentary displacements, which impinge and destabilize the conceptualization of the live body in the work, to a stable relation between viewer and artwork.

In summary, this aspect of the research in *Freeform* argues that complex and dynamic interactions between embarrassment, self-consciousness, laughter, the comic and ridicule cause momentary displacements of both viewer and performer, which create unpredictable and unintended events. The parergonal activity of the live body, as a frame of attention, is constantly shifted moment to moment, in displacing the relations between viewer and artwork. The body is displaced from a 'lived' body into a 'corporeal' state, in embarrassment and self-consciousness. The body is also displaced by laughter as a 'raw state', and as the comic, as mechanized. There is displacement, within the ambivalence of laughter, between its functions as rebellious and disciplinary. There is also displacement in embarrassment, between the body as a representation, and its true state, stripped of all resemblance and features. In each of these conditions, there are displacements in the relations of viewer and artwork, where the live body in the artwork, and the live body of the viewer, oscillate between one state and another. The displacements between the self of the viewer and/or performer occur in the 'skin' of the artwork formed between the subjectivities of the artist/performer and viewer.

### **Summary of shift**

This shift investigated embarrassment in the relations between viewer and artwork. The live body was a basis for conceptualizing the relations between viewer and artwork, and examining embarrassment in the practice. The method of hiding the performer, provided a foil, against which the live body could be investigated. Hiding the performer, in practice may range from the representation of the live body as 'something' or 'someone', to its non-representational disembodiment, and in both cases the live body is abstracted from itself. It is argued there is a management of attention in relation to the live body in these

cases, that allows a conceptualization of the live body in the work. On the other hand, the lack of management of attention, proposed in *Pond* and *Freeform*, has effects on how the live body is conceptualized and, it is argued, leads to self-consciousness and displacement of the participants (i.e. viewer/performer) in the relations between viewer and artwork. The comic has a relation to embarrassment, laughter, and ridicule that also displaces the relations between viewer and artwork. There is an inter-relation between all these factors that leads to unpredictable and unexpected events.

The next shift looks at the modality of mis-attention through a conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of particular kinds of frames of attention (the white cube, theatre and narrative frame) and the concept of layers of attention to consider the effects on the relations between viewer and artwork.

## SHIFT 3: MIS-ATTENTION

Note to reader: please read this shift in conjunction with the interactive practical document, Shift 3: Mis-attention (PD3), on the USB stick.

### Introduction

The previous two shifts have examined the modalities of failure and embarrassment through two specific kinds of frames of attention in the relations between viewer and artwork, that is, contract and live body. This shift looks at mis-attention through a conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of particular kinds of frames of attention namely, the white cube, theatre and narrative frame and the concept of layers of attention. These practical concepts are considered in conjunction with the method of varying the conditions. This approach will be used to address the question of how mis-attention complicates the relations between viewer and artwork.

The first section of the shift shows the development of layers and frames of attention in an initial work, *Dancing in a Gallery ('Dancing')*, and explains how varying the conditions may be used to test them. The section discusses how these concepts are applied to the work, and introduces key terms that help articulate how they operate. The second section applies this conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork, in an examination of two comparative configurations of performance-related artistic practice: *Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation ('Freeform')* and *How Soon Is Now ('How Soon')*.

Images and videos of the works referred to in this shift are presented in the practical document, PD3: Mis-attention.

## Practical concepts and methods: layers and frames of attention, varying the conditions

A practical approach to mis-attention was developed in the initial work, *Dancing*. Images and videos of the work are presented as Figures 1-10 PD3 and Videos 1-9 PD3. A number of themes and questions are drawn from the work to envisage the scheme of attention, (referred to at page 29 of the Introduction) organized in terms of frames and layers. Within this scheme, mis-attention can be thought of as a disjunction, discord or conflict between layers and multiple different kinds of frames of attention, and as such, complicates the relations between viewer and artwork. Practical approaches and the key terms of the parergon and attention are used to articulate how layers and frames are envisaged as operating in the scheme of attention. The method of varying the conditions is introduced as a way to compare these practical concepts under different conditions.

*Dancing* searched for ideas and material to generate an approach to the research. The work is a series of experiments developed in a residency at KARST, Plymouth at the time the exhibition, *Individual Order*, curated by Marianna Garin, was installed in the white cube gallery space (Figures 1-3 PD3). The videos and images in PD3 arise from a number of live experiments in the gallery space, including dancing and interactions with the exhibits (Figures 8-10 PD3 and Videos 1-9 PD3) and a display of the work in a corridor in Falmouth University (Figures 4-7). At the start of these experiments the building was empty and no one was expected to attend the complex. The subsequent arrival of the gallery director gave rise to an embarrassing encounter that initiated an approach to mis-attention in the research.

Some observations and thoughts arising from the work follow:

The experiment began when I opened the gallery door and was immediately attracted by the vast white space of the empty gallery. I felt impelled to get into the space and dance around the gallery, while no one else was there, and in the course of this, I filmed some of my activities. I danced around the gallery



to music on my laptop covering as much of the space as I could. I also interacted with some of the exhibits for example by crawling underneath the trestle tables that were displaying work by Graciela Carnevale, playing imaginary netball with the work by Francis Alÿs (Video 5 PD3) and holding up Adrian Piper's calling cards to the camera. I was quite engrossed in my activities and felt animated by this unintended opportunity.

Suddenly, this pleasant activity was interrupted when I heard the noise of main door to the building unlock and footsteps entering the gallery. I came face to face with the gallery director. I was flustered as I admitted that I had been dancing in the gallery. I felt rather self-conscious and embarrassed to be 'caught-out' and concerned about what the director might be thinking of me—dancing in the gallery—as I tried to explain what I was up to, even though we both laughed about it, diverting our attention onto something else.

The animating activity of dancing in the gallery had become complicated and confused in my mind by the introduction of the formality of the white cube gallery represented by the gallery director, and the activity of dancing in the gallery seemed to be 'wrong', and in conflict with that somehow. I was interested in the way that these factors affected and changed my attention so I perceived the same white cube space differently. The complications seemed to arise from different forms of attention that were invoked between the white cube gallery and dancing, that did not fit together, and seemed to have a connection with the fluster of embarrassment.

Two further activities seem relevant to the research. One was Lee McDonald joining me, after the above incident, to make further experiments in the space (Videos 4 and 6 PD3). The other was experimenting with speed effects, on the videos (Videos 1-3). The idea of making work with others and also the comic effects of speeding up the video, appear throughout the research.

A number of overlapping themes and questions emerged from *Dancing* including: developing an approach to mis-attention, conceptualizing different forms of attention in terms of the practical concepts of layers and frames of attention, conceiving how the fluster of embarrassment might be articulated in terms of different kinds of frames of attention that come together, and considering how key terms may inform and reflect the practical conceptualizations as complicating the relations between viewer and artwork. A further approach was to formulate the method of varying the conditions in order to

compare the operation of the practical concepts and mis-attention in experiments that were set up under different conditions.

The idea of connecting mis-attention to the fluster of embarrassment arose from noting similarities in the well-known descriptions of attention by William James (2017), and of embarrassment by Goffman (1967). In *The Principles of Psychology*, first published in 1890, James refers to attention in these terms:

Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others, and is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatterbrained state which in French is called distraction, and Zerstreutheit in German (James, 2017:170).

There seemed to be common aspects to the idea of the distraction, referred to by James, and Goffman's descriptions of the discomfort of embarrassment (1967). The signs of embarrassment (which Goffman refers to as 'flusterings') include 'hesitating and vacillating movement, absent-mindedness, and malapropisms', 'stammering, with some incoherence of idea as expressed in speech' and 'a feeling of wobbliness' (1967:97). In Goffman's view, face-to-face interaction requires 'just those capacities that flustering seems guaranteed to destroy' (1967:101). The fluster of embarrassment, experienced in *Dancing*, was thought of as created by, or at least aligning with, ambivalent forms of attention that operated at the same time, and where it was not possible to select a singular object or train of thought as described by James (2017:170). This idea formed an approach to mis-attention in the investigation.

The scheme of attention was developed in order to visualize the fluster and distraction of mis-attention in *Dancing*, made up of the practical concepts of layers and frames of attention. The scheme envisages the relations between viewer and artwork as surrounded

by multiple, overlapping and heterogeneous layers and frames of attention that interact between each other. It is envisaged that different kinds of frames may form out of layers, depending on the conditions and that this scheme proposes that attention may be shaped or directed in particular ways that have overarching conceptual, constitutive and metaphorical effects in the relations between viewer and artwork.

The conceptualization of an artwork residing in layers and frames of attention is informed by Foley Sherman's consideration of perception, performance and the idea that attention is a kind of 'medium' where the viewer experiences performance 'through the medium of attention' (2016:12). He refers to the experience of the world as coming about through the combined attention of 'others and myself', where attention, 'thematizes the work of perception' (ibid.). Foley Sherman cites Merleau-Ponty in referring to attention as a process, 'that creates, all at once, out of the constellation of givens, the sense that ties them together' (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Foley Sherman, 2012). In Foley Sherman's view, performance 'does not exist before attendants so much as through them' and it 'comes to being through their different kinds of attention' (ibid.). In other words, it could be said, that attention (and different kinds of attention) provide the means of achieving experience and perception.

Layers of attention can be thought of as impressions or sensations that have not yet formed or virtualized as frames of attention. This idea is informed by Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of an artwork in terms of '*a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*' (italics in original) (1994:164). They refer to 'percepts', as distinct from perception, in that they exist independently of being experienced: 'Percepts are 'no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them' (1994:16). Similarly, affects are described as 'no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them' (1994:164). The artwork is 'a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself' and therefore operates independently of the 'viewer or hearer, who only experience it after' (ibid.). The concept

of layers can be thought of in terms of sensations, precepts and affects from which frames may form through the viewer.

The parergon, derived from Derrida's '*parergon*' (italics in original) was helpful in envisaging how frames and layers of attention may interact, how they may operate in tension with each other and how they may be thought of as being unstable (1979). In the essay *The Parergon* (1979), Derrida problematized Kant's thought and theory of aesthetics through Kant's use of the term in *Critique of Judgment* (2008). For Kant, the parergon is a frame that surrounds and delimits the artwork ('*ergon*') from its context and background. Derrida questioned what the parergon does, where it begins and ends and its limits. It was necessary in his view to reveal the parergon as not simply an extrinsic device or fixed boundary, but as an active and unstable agent, that operates between the inside and outside of the frame.

Frames of attention are thought of, for the purposes of this research, as forming or virtualizing from layers, through recognition, representation, intention and expectation that involves the viewer and their subjective knowledge and experience. Frames of attention confirm what we already know, because they derive from some previous subjective understanding that is necessary for the constitution of the frame, and it is argued, have effects in shaping and directing attention in that expectation. The parergon informs this understanding of frames because Derrida's concept allows consideration of framing as both a subjective process—of the way we view and experience the world—and also how we are framed already within it by institutions, experience and narratives that hold together the subject (Richards, 2008:34).

The scheme of attention proposes that particular frames of attention may have more dominant effects than others. For example, in this research the white cube, theatre and narrative frame are proposed as such particular dominant frames. Further, frames may overlap and conflict with each other, coming together and operating at the same time

and creating unexpected effects. This scheme of attention therefore allows a way of visualizing two or more frames of attention operating or overlapping at the same time. It also conceptualizes attention as 'unframed' in terms of layers, where frames have not yet formed. In this way, two modes of attention begin to emerge for practical purposes: the former, frames, is based in recognition and expectation, the latter, layers, in the unexpected. Mis-attention is further conceived in terms of interactions between different and conflicting kinds of frames and between layers of attention.

*Dancing* invokes the frame of attention concerned with the white cube gallery (the 'white cube frame') that has effects on how attention is directed and shaped in the relations between viewer and artwork. The white cube frame extends beyond the physical framing of a work or the structure of the gallery, to discourses on art and our ideas and expectations of fine art practice. Brian O'Doherty has examined how, under Modernism, the white cube gallery operates not as a blank, white, neutral container, but as a system that spatially, psychologically and ideologically repeats the conventions of the 'technology of esthetics' (1999:15). He refers to the 'perceptual force' of the white cube gallery as being so effectual that 'things becomes art in a space where powerful ideas about art focus on them' (1999:14). The white cube gallery can be thought of as a conceptual and metaphorical frame of attention that shapes and directs viewers' expectations, behavior and how we 'attend' in ways that accord with, or are cognizant of, those conventions<sup>40</sup>.

The 'technology of esthetics', can be understood in terms explained by Thomas McEvelley, as 'Plato's vision of a higher metaphysical realm' that is disconnected from real life (O'Doherty, 1999:11). It is also understood in terms of Fried's notions of 'presentness' and 'absorption' in relation to Modernist painting and his critique of minimalism, or literalist art, as 'theatrical' (Fried, 1998). It can also be understood in terms of a binary

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<sup>40</sup> See also Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How To Do Things with Art*, which examines the governing and ritual role of the white cube gallery and museum (von Hantelmann, 2010).

relationship between viewer and artwork or subject and object, that Derrida critiques, through Kant's aesthetics, in terms of the parergon. These discourses on fine art practice themselves frame the white cube frame and have effects on how attention is shaped and directed in the relations between viewer and artwork. In these cases, it could be said that attention that is concerned with the body or real life is excluded from the white cube frame.

The white cube frame can be thought of as bracketing out everyday life, and excluding the body, and by implication the kinds of attention that are concerned with real life. O'Doherty refers to how, in pursuit of aesthetic contemplation, the viewer's own body 'seems superfluous, an intrusion' in that space, and while 'eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not', and that they are only tolerated 'as kinesthetic mannequins for further study' (1999:15). O'Doherty's work is a defence of 'the real life of the world' against the white cube frame (McEvelley, 1999:12). O'Doherty analyzes how the body of the spectator (as well as the performer's live body in performance art practices) is 'eliminated' from the white cube frame (1999:15 and 64).

Analogously, Fried refers to 'theatricality', where the viewer is self-conscious and aware of their relations in the 'entire situation', including duration, and that this is antithetical to his notions of 'absorption' and 'presentness' (Fried, 1998). The white cube frame promotes the viewer as 'above the vicissitudes of chance and change' (McEvelley, 1999:10). It is argued that the white cube frame has effects in shaping and directing attention in expected ways. However, looking away concerns other kinds of attention that involve chance and change, contingency, the unexpected and the non-habitual.

Frames can be thought of as shaping and directing attention in ways that are representational and expected. O'Sullivan points to Derrida's work (1979) as demonstrating that discourses on art, and meaning in general, are predicated on binaries of object and form, or meaning and content, based on 'representational models' found in

Western metaphysics; where art (for example) becomes predetermined by the question asked (2007:14). The representational system extends further into the way 'we all tend to think ourselves, and our relation to the world' (2007:16). O'Sullivan writes:

We are, if you like, representational creatures with representational habits of thought. We inhabit an internal and an external world. We separate ourselves as subjects from the object world. Indeed, this alienated state is the very precondition of self-consciousness (O'Sullivan, 2007:16).

It is argued that frames of attention are concerned with representational systems, and tend to shape or direct attention in fixed or normalized ways. Layers of attention, on the other hand, relate to non-representational events that invoke or provoke a different mode of attention that is unexpected or minor in relation to the norm.

In *Dancing*, the activity of dancing in the gallery could be thought of as in conflict with the white cube gallery's representational frame of attention (the white cube frame). Whether dancing in the gallery is considered as an everyday activity, or whether it is thought of as an artwork, it invokes different kinds of attention that are concerned with movement and duration and conflict with the kinds of attention associated with the representational white cube frame. The latter concern frames that bracket out real life and the body, are 'timeless' and involve a binary relation between viewer and artwork (referred to earlier at pages 141-142 in discussing Fried, O'Doherty and Kant's aesthetics).

The modes of attention associated with dancing may concern other kinds of frames and/or be unframed in terms of layers of attention. When dancing is introduced into the white cube frame, different kinds of frames and layers come together disjunctively—that is where areas of frames are wholly or partially incompatible with each other—and, it is argued, create discordant effects on attention. *Dancing* can be thought of as showing tension, or instability, between disjunctive and conflicting kinds of frames and layers of attention, which overall causes these discordant effects. This understanding provides a

conceptual model of mis-attention to use to investigate how relations between viewer and artwork are complicated in a way that is analogous to the 'fluster' of embarrassment. The parergon provides a way of explaining the operation of disjunctive frames and layers. According to Derrida, the parergon actively intervenes inside the frame in order to define, support and sustain what is within it. Derrida writes:

A *parergon* is against, beside, and above and beyond the *ergon*, the work accomplished, the accomplishment of the work. But it is not incidental; it is connected to and cooperates in its operation from the outside (italics in original) (Derrida, 1979:20).

The co-operation from outside adds something extra that is missing, or 'lacking', inside the frame itself. Derrida shows that:

it is not simply their exteriority that constitutes them as *parerga*, but the internal structural link by which they are inseparable from a lack within the *ergon* (italics in original) (1979:24).

The parergon's active intervention between the inside and outside of the frame is the reason why it is unstable, slippery and constantly subject to change and this reflects the envisaged interaction in the scheme of attention between different kinds of frames and layers.

Without the internal structural link, between the parergon and what is lacking within the ergon, there would be no work. In other words, without that link between inside and outside the frame, what is lacking within the work would not appear (ibid.). Derrida contends that: 'Framing always sustains and contains that which, by itself, collapses forthwith' (1979:37). The conception of the parergon therefore reflects an inherent tension, between the inside and outside of any frame and is applicable to the concept of frames of attention used in this thesis. The parergon can be described as an active agent that intervenes from the outside, because the inside is missing, and as such is unstable,



slippery, constantly shifting and 'undecidable' (Royle, 2003:27). The nature of the parergon is proposed as reflective of the practical conceptualization of the disjunction and discordance between different kinds of frames, and between frames and layers of attention, in the fluster of embarrassment described in *Dancing*.

The tension between inside and outside the parergon, extends beyond the physical frame of an artwork, to any kind of structure, theory or practice. Derrida points to the importance of the frame in theory and practice, in creating a limit or border, and creating an 'interiority of meaning' (1979:24). The parergon is referred to as having a 'thickness, a surface which separates', not only the artwork from the outside, but also from 'the entire historic, economic, and political field of inscription' (ibid.). Derrida showed how Kant was able to use the parergon to legitimize the autonomy of 'art' as a form of knowledge, as distinct from other forms of knowledge, but also how the frame problematizes its own activity by avoiding the issue of framing:

No "theory", no "practice", no "theoretical practice" can be effective here if it does not rest on the frame, the invisible limit of (between) the interiority of meaning (protected by the entire hermeneutic, semiotic, phenomenological, and formalist tradition) *and (of) all the extrinsic empiricals which, blind and illiterate, dodge the question (italics in original) (1979:24).*

The parergon has been used to allude to wider ideas of how artworks are framed in cultural institutions, but also through wider frames that reflect and support the narratives and discourses that take place within the frame. Framing can also be said to be a subjective process of how we view the world, where we are already framed, to some extent, by institutions, experience and narratives that tenuously hold the subject together (Richards, 2008:34). Framing extends from the outside and the extent of this is reflected in David Wills' comment that: 'Whatever occurs within the frame can only be contained there by a series of framings, physical, institutional, and discursive, that are held to reside outside it' (Wills, 1995:58 cited in Royle, 2003:14).

The frame is pervasive in visual arts, but the extended involvement of the parergon beyond aesthetics, emphasizes its importance in theories, practices and also subjective processes of framing and representing ways we view and interpret the world, constructing it for ourselves, by including and excluding certain aspects (Derrida, 1979 and Richards, 2008:29-49). These processes are dependent on framing to create the interiority of meaning and therefore understanding, but because this seems like 'common-sense' the framing processes may be taken as given, or overlooked. But, at same time, the conception of the frame as parergon always has potential to upset, shake or put in tension that structure, through its potential parergonal activity. This idea is applied to the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention, and the operation of artistic practice in relation to this conceptualization.

Another key term that is useful in envisaging how the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention operate, concerns attention, and in particular, aspects of Waldenfels' phenomenological approach (2011). Waldenfels argues that attention is a 'key phenomenon which discloses experience in a unique fashion' (2011:63). Attention seems so 'ordinary' that it may be overlooked (2011:58). However, in Waldenfels' terms, attention pervades how we perceive or see the world. He says:

All perception begins with something coming to my attention, imposing itself on me, attracting or repelling me, affecting me. (2011:63).

This understanding of how the phenomenon of attention operates, as something that happens to us, which does not originate in us, but at the same time, in respect of which, we cannot help but be involved, addresses how we experience the 'alien', or, the strange or unfamiliar in everyday life (2011:46). In this way, Waldenfels considers how attention is concerned with non-habitual ways of seeing or perceiving, which break with previous knowledge and understanding and disrupt the order of things.

Another feature of attention, in Waldenfels' terms, is that it is concerned with 'how' we experience or perceive the world. Waldenfels refers to attention as deciding the "how" of experience, as distinct from deciding the "that", "what" and "who", or 'its potentially truthful contents' (italics in original) (2011:64). Attention involves the selection of information, because when we give attention, we are taking it away from something else (ibid.). Waldenfels, citing Husserl (1950), refers to our 'experiential field' as being organized 'by way of center points, margins and backgrounds' that form an "affective relief" that is always changing (Husserl cited in Waldenfels, 2011:64) The faculty of attention is, therefore, capable of changing how we see, or perceive the world, without changing its empirical contents.

Waldenfels makes a distinction between 'originary' and 'secondary', or 'normal', attention, (the former as referred to in the previous paragraph) (2011:65 and 2016). The 'originary' or 'primary, innovative' attention is described by Waldenfels as a 'centripetal arrival from elsewhere', that 'comes towards us', that corresponds 'to a hesitation, a waiting', which 'allows itself to be surprised', and 'does not yet know what to expect', and 'waits for something which will never be fully there', and as such it both extends and increases experience (2011:65). In contrast, secondary attention, which arises from habits and habitual modes of attending, reinforces previous understandings and ways of seeing, and in this way 'expects something that is not yet present' (ibid.). Attention may be stabilized, shaped or controlled by others, by structures and habits, by socialization, by culture and technology and economies and politics of attention and in being controlled and shaped it may join 'a counterplay of subject and object' (2011:59).

For Waldenfels, however, attention is not perfectly controlled but rather operates in tension and as an 'unstable occurrence' on either side of a threshold between the familiar and the unfamiliar and alien (2011:67). If it were perfectly controlled, it would allow for nothing that is unexpected, and life would be determined only by habit (2011:58). The

tension seems to lie in the way that attention 'wakes up'. Waldenfels refers to this in these terms:

[attention] is not initiated by objective stimuli, intentional acts or common rules, it rather wakes up whenever something strikes us (*auffallen*) stirring up our attention (*aufmerken*). So it is never completely available (*italics in original*) (Waldenfels, 2012).

Waldenfels also notes that the unexpected relies on 'the contrast with the familiar', and he refers to this contrast as bringing about 'the tension (*tensio*) which permeates attention (*attentio*)' (*italics in original*) (2011:65). This understanding of attention, as operating in tension, is reflected in the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention and the analysis in this thesis of how the artistic practice operates in relation to them.

An explanation for the 'fluster', experienced in *Dancing*, is proposed through the key term of attention derived from Waldenfels' work and the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention. As discussed above, the work invokes, or provokes, both the white cube frame and other kinds of attention that are concerned with dancing in the gallery as an artistic experiment, as an artwork and/or as a playful exercise. The 'fluster' is conceived as shifting and tension between different modalities of attention in respect of the same empirical, white cube gallery space. In each shifting of attention, there is a different selection of information, that changes how the same white cube gallery space is perceived, between, on one hand, a formal institution, subject to the frame of fine art discourses and the white cube frame, and on the other hand, as a space to play and experiment, where that formality was irrelevant for a time. For example, in shifting between modalities of attention, a viewer may accept (as more dominant or habitual than other modalities) the conditions of the white cube frame (of bracketing out the everyday and real life) that place them in a different conceptual and metaphorical frame in relation to the same space than would be the case without that frame of attention.

The key terms of the parergon and attention, referred to above, both concern an inherent tension and instability. In the case of the parergon, there is a tension and instability between the inside and outside of the frame, reflected by parergonal activity. In attention, there is an inherent tension and instability between 'originary' and normal attention. The tension and instability is envisaged as applying to the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention and their interactions. Frames are proposed as reflecting the intentional, or what is 'expected', or to some extent already known, that comes 'after', as if to describe or support the frame itself, which reinforce the contents of the perception. Layers are proposed as 'unframed' and therefore unknown and have yet to form a recognisable or representational form of attention. Whereas frames can be considered in terms of attention that tends to be directed or shaped in ways that are controlled, habitual, expected and representational, layers are proposed as unexpected. The tension between these two modes of attention arises in the shifting interactions between different kinds of frames, and between frames and layers of attention, when they come together.

It is proposed that the interactions between frames and layers of attention create both expected and unexpected events, which have effects in the relations between viewer and artwork and on frames of attention themselves. It is argued that artistic practice provokes the tension that is inherent in the parergon, and in attention, and in the interaction between the practical concepts of frames and layers. The work, *Dancing* problematizes the white cube frame, by bringing together different kinds of frames and layers (that is, the white cube frame and attention concerned with movement and real-life). The effect of this is to complicate attention by invoking disjunction and discord between frames and layers, experienced as 'fluster'. Accordingly, a question raised is how these effects on frames may be conceptualized in practice.

The application of the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention can be extended more widely, to contemporary arts practices that involve the live body, or

performance, that operate both inside and outside the white cube gallery. Such practices problematize the white cube frame. Fine art performance-related practices could be considered as a particular frame of attention that is layered or embedded in the white cube frame, and that has a particular set of expectations and ideas surrounding it. These are different to the expectations and ideas that frame conventional performance and theatre practices, which also invoke their own conceptual and metaphorical frames of attention (the 'theatre frame').

Performance art, fine art performance-related practices and installation works complicate the operation of the white cube frame by invoking other kinds of frames and layers of attention and their interactions. The issue is complicated further, by the expansion of dance and choreography practices in the white cube gallery and therefore the white cube frame. While such practices have come from the conventional frames of choreography and dance practices, they have developed and adopted methods and approaches that have come from the frame of fine art and fine art performance-related practices. Choreographic and dance practice are further complicated by being also framed, in particular ways, by the theatre and performance studies frame (the theatre frame) as well as other artistic practices including writing and film. Ric Allsopp and André Lepecki provide an account that indicates the complications of overlapping contemporary choreographic artistic practices (2008).

A further question in the research therefore concerns what happens in relation to attention and the practical concepts of frames and layers where works are made under different conditions, for example outside the physical white cube frame and where works 'borrow' the kinds of attention conventionally found in different disciplines of artistic practice. This raises the issue of what kinds of frames of attention are invoked, and/or have dominance, and how are they affected under different conditions. The method of varying the conditions, that is setting up works under different conditions, was adopted to allow comparisons to be made between works through the frames of attention.

An example of a highly complex interaction between different kinds of frames and layers of attention is proposed in Siobhan Davies' Dance collaborative work, made in association with the Warburg Institute, that has toured gallery spaces: *material / rearranged / to / be* (2017). The artist-led organization, Siobhan Davies' Dance, comprises practices that come from the frame of choreography and dance. The work featured the following artists and choreographers: Andrea Buckley, Siobhan Davies, Helka Kaski, Charlie Morrissey, Efrosini Protopapa, and Matthias Sperling, from the world of choreography, dance and performance, Jeremy Millar and Emma Smith from a visual arts/fine arts context and designers, Glithero (Tim Simpson and Sarah van Gameren).

*material / rearranged / to / be* (2017) was presented as an immersive performance installation comprising 'performance, film projection and sculptural objects' (see Figure 30). This was continually arranged and rearranged by the artists, and the viewer was 'immersed in a live environment that evolves around them' (Davies, 2017). The exhibition considered the work of art historian, Aby Warburg, and reflected his methods in relation to his ideas on gesture<sup>41</sup>. Warburg considered that gestures from Classical iconography reoccurred throughout history. He investigated this through amassing, and categorizing, a vast collection of images from photographs, books and reproductions of artworks. In his most important project, the *Mnemosync Atlas*, images were pinned to hessian-covered boards, and continually rearranged, to discover unexpected connections between them.

The individual works, the exhibition, and the methods used to present them, can be said to concern multiple kinds of frames of attention operating at the same time, made up of framings from different artistic disciplines and perspectives. This multiplicity of frames is further complicated through the subject matter of the investigation, in addressing Aby

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<sup>41</sup> For more information on the *Mnemosync Atlas*, and the conception of the project, see Jeremy Millar's 'Notes on Gesture-I,II,III' (Millar, 2016), prepared in association with the organization, and available at: [https://www.siobhandavies.com/media/uploads/files-downloads/notes-on-gesture-information-sheet-\(final\).pdf](https://www.siobhandavies.com/media/uploads/files-downloads/notes-on-gesture-information-sheet-(final).pdf) [accessed 18 November 2018].

Warburg's ideas of the reoccurrence of gestures in different times, and the methods of rearranging the presentations. Different kinds of frames of attention and framings are invoked that also operate at the same time. On one hand, the works can be viewed through a particular established frame, but such a frame is continually subject to the effects of other frames, splitting from the main frame. Alternatively, the complications created are such that it could be said to effect a dissolution of frames altogether, so that the works, and the relations between viewer and artwork, can be said to be 'unframed', or to primarily reside in layers of attention.



Fig. 30: Davies, Siobhan (2017) material/rearranged/to/be. [immersive performance]

In summary, *Dancing* proposes an approach to mis-attention, using frames of and layers of attention, as a practical conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork. The work also introduces a particular kind of frame of attention, in terms of the white cube frame as well as referring to a further kind of established frame, namely, the theatre frame. Mis-attention is envisaged where different frames and layers of attention conflict, are disjunctive or discordant with each other and reflects an inherent tension in their interactions, which shift and complicate the relations between viewer and artwork. The operation of frames and layers of attention is envisaged through the key terms of the parergon and phenomenological understandings of attention. *Dancing* also initiated the method of varying the conditions in further experiments to invoke different kinds of frames, for example by using different locations, spaces and viewers but with the constant



condition of the live body in the work (whether experienced live or by video). Two comparative works are examined in the next section through these practical concepts and method.

### **Relations between viewer and artwork**

#### ***Fran's People: Freeform Interpretation ("Freeform")***

The first comparative work examined is *Freeform*<sup>42</sup>. The work was a live performance that took place on a Saturday morning over two hours at The Exchange Gallery, Penzance, which, at the time, featured an exhibition of *Bloomberg New Contemporaries, 2014*. Aspects of the work were documented in photographs and videos of two particular segments, and some of these are presented in the images and the videos in Figures 11-30 PD3 and Video 10 PD3.

*Freeform* was developed to extend the ideas that had arisen in *Dancing* (referred to above) by setting up the same conditions as in *Dancing* and involving dancing in a white cube gallery as a live work with viewers present. The aim of the work was to examine different kinds of frames of attention that were invoked in the relations between viewer and artwork under these conditions. There were many visitors to the gallery, including local visitors and tourists, and the gallery provided a hub of activity as children's art workshops were being run. The notes in indented text below include my observations, as one of the performers during the work, of the relations between the work and viewers, as they appeared at the time.

There were two 'main' performers in the work, both wore sculptural costumes that were designed as two halves of a whole object-like structure. A third performer, dressed in

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<sup>42</sup> *Freeform* is also discussed from a different perspective in Shift 2: Embarrassment.

overalls with a *Freeform* motif, undertook the role of technician (Figure 13 PD3). Over the course of the work, the performers were always moving from place to place. They undertook a sequence of activities that included walking, entering doors, climbing stairs and sitting down on a bench and which involved moving around the entire gallery amongst the other exhibits as well as walking around the exterior of the building. There were also two dancing sequences, situated amongst the exhibits in the main gallery that alluded to a more 'theatrical' performance in the way the performers were positioned before the viewers. The work involved no obvious narrative or purpose, and there was no display of skill or endurance.

The Exchange gallery is an open plan complex comprising a large high ceilinged white walled gallery space, off which there is a café, reception area and workshops. The *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, 2014 exhibition also provided a further context for the work. The installation of the show comprised a large selection of nearly 60 exhibits from recent graduate and post-graduate art students of sculptural objects, two-dimensional works, video projections and video monitors on plinths. An overview of the exhibition could be described visually, in terms of an eclectic and busy assemblage that filled the gallery space.

The dancing sequences were situated at one end of the main gallery, amongst other exhibits. These sequences were choreographed so that the performers danced together and then separated from each other, in an arc around other objects in the gallery before drawing back together again (See Figures 14-30 PD3 and Video 10 PD3). The video camera was operated so that the camera's frame could be thought of as following a view of what may have been in a viewer's attention during the dancing sequences, if they were to follow the movements of the performers. The camera was operated by the 'technician', and fixed in position on a tripod, which was panned round to follow one or other of the performers as they split apart and drew together, so at least one, if not both of them, remained in the frame of the video camera.

Some observations from the work follow:

I noticed different ways in which the viewers gathered or orientated themselves towards or away from us as we undertook our activities. Viewers watched or glanced at us from a distance, on one occasion a group of viewers, in the reception area, seemed to follow our progress intently as we tried to climb the stairs, which was difficult and precarious in the costumes. As we walked around the gallery I was aware that many viewers ignored us sometimes turning away or oblivious and continuing with their activities.

On occasions viewers came very close to inspect us, almost in a face-to-face interaction. When we were walking around the outside of the gallery, people outside the gallery glanced at us or ignored us but one couple tried to ask us 'what we were advertising?' which resulted in an awkward interaction where, in trying to keep stone-faced, I stifled laughter and mumbling pointed to the gallery to which they said 'ah yes' as if understanding it was 'something to do with art'.

During the dancing sequences we situated ourselves in the midst of the exhibits. There was no overt call for an audience at the start, nor a demarcated area for the viewers to stand. A small number of viewers gathered together in groups in an area to the front of us as we were dancing while others stood far away at the sides looking on and others ignored us. When the dancing sequences ended there was an awkward applause.

Overall, different kinds of viewer behavior and orientations, both towards and away from the performers, were observed and attributed to apparent modes of attending, or not attending. Viewers' attention seemed to range from indifference, to singular close-up inspection, and also as small collective gatherings for parts of the work, similar to an audience before a stage, particularly in the dancing sequences and the activity of climbing the stairs. Throughout the work, the physical positions, behaviours, and modes of attending of the viewers changed in relation to the Work, and in relation to other viewers. Viewers' attention appears to shift between different forms or kinds of attention, and modes of attending and not, apparently, attending.

The observations of viewers' behaviours, outlined above, suggest that the relations between viewer and the artwork, *Freeform*, was constantly shifting over its course, in physical, spatial, conceptual and metaphorical terms. The levels of attending or kinds of attention given to the work appeared to move between different modalities and, it could be said, there was no singular view of the work, and viewers did not appear to spend more than a few moments of time (other than in the dancing sequence) fully attending to it. At times the relations between viewer and artwork were recognisable, or indicative to the observer, as the white cube frame, where there appeared high levels of attention or scrutiny in a one-to-one relationship between viewer and artwork. At other times, they were indicative of conventional frames associated with performance or theatre (the theatre frame), where viewers collectively gathered as an audience separating themselves from an invisible stage. At other times, attention and attending of viewers indicated the idea of layers, where attention is unfocussed, distracted or in a state of inattention.

The videos of the dancing sequences were set up to provide an idea of how a viewer's attention may frame these sequences using the camera frame. It is proposed that they provide an indication of how schemes of static and moving components, in the frame of the video camera, fluctuate and change over the time in their relations to one another. The objects in the gallery, including the performers, continuously re-assemble their relations between each other, and between the background, foreground and middle ground of the video frame. The result can be considered as a fluctuating composition of objects (including the performers) in the camera frame, over duration, in which the viewers also form an object amongst others.

Other than taking place within the white cube frame, *Freeform* was not framed in any sense. It had little that would support or contextualize the work and a number of factors contributed to this. It was not framed in a formal or recognisable way, nor was it delimited or separated from its immediate surroundings, for example the dancing sequences took place amongst the exhibits. There was also minimal supporting or contextual material,

either on display in the gallery, or otherwise associated with the work, which would allow viewers to interpret it. The advertising was low-key, and involved a few Twitter posts, and a digital poster linked on The Exchange website (Figures 11-12 PD3).

There was no artists' statement, no labels, no other contextual material, nor even notifications of timings for the work in the gallery. The beginning of the work was not announced: it just 'happened'. The performers had entered the gallery, after walking around the outside of the building, emerging from a side entrance. There were no singular places marked out for viewers to stand in relation to the work. There was no temporal frame, indicating a start or finish of the work. Further, distinct from the main performers in this work, there was a third performer who undertook the role of 'technician', and whose position was unclear as to whether they were part of the work or not.

*Freeform* gave rise to a number of overlapping themes and questions. These included how the conditions of the work set up frames of attention in the relations between viewer and artwork, what kinds of frames were invoked, addressing the proposal that the work invokes the frame of attention concerned with performance and theatre, developing the concept of the theatre frame, how the viewers were observed and envisaged as attending to the work, how attention was managed or not managed in the work, and the implications of that, the effects of the work in relation to interactions between layers and frames, and how the key terms could be used to articulate, and argue about the way these conceptualizations operate in complicating the relations between viewer and artwork.

The research argues that *Freeform* problematizes the frames of attention, and specifically, the particular white cube frame. An explanation for the way that viewers' attention seemed to shift in *Freeform* can be analyzed in terms of the operation of the interactions between different kinds of frames and between layers of attention. In this work, the white

cube frame is invoked as a dominant frame of attention, through its conceptual and metaphorical effects, by setting the work up within a white cube gallery. The operation of the white cube frame depends on the viewer accepting this framing. However, it is proposed that, in this work, the theatre frame is also invoked at the same time. Viewers' attention appeared to shift between these two kinds of frames, although primarily their attention, in appearing to avoid or ignore the work, lay not within these frames but elsewhere in layers of attention, or the unframed territory of the white cube gallery.

The theatre frame can be thought of as a further conceptual and metaphorical frame of attention, which conceptualizes the viewer's experience if they accept its conditions. It is argued that both the white cube frame and the theatre frame shape and direct attention, in ways that objectify the artwork. However, there are differences between them.

Dorothea Von Hantelmann refers to the experience of the visual artwork, in a museum or gallery as conceived 'as being a one-on-one experience, unlike e.g. the theater, which addresses the individual as part of a collective audience' (2010:11). Performance or theatre takes place over time and invokes a temporal frame or 'duration'. The white cube frame, however, eliminates temporality and duration, and evokes timelessness. For example, O'Doherty refers to the artwork existing in a white cube gallery, 'in a kind of eternity of display' where, he says, 'there is no time' (O'Doherty, 1999:15).

The white cube frame and the theatre frame both operate through bracketing out the everyday, and delimiting what is inside from what is outside the frame. The theatre frame, derived from a traditional or conventional approach to theatre, sets up an illusion of reality, framed by the stage and proscenium. The conceptual framing does not necessarily depend upon the actual presence of these as physical structures, but more the willingness on the part of the viewer to accept the separation between onstage and off-stage (Maaik Bleeker et al, 2015:2). Ridout argues that 'absorption' advocated by Fried (1998) in the case of Modernist painting is the partner of theatrical realism. He says both modernist projects 'seek to eliminate the spectator from the set up' and 'hide the full extent of the

'entire situation'' (Ridout, 2006:10). This is in a phenomenological sense (as intended by Fried) and in a political sense (ibid.). In the case of the latter, where the 'economic and other power relations between artist and audience' are 'hidden by both realism and abstraction' (ibid.).

A way of explaining the observed and suggested shifts between 'attending' and not 'attending' is in terms of the shifting, and unstable effects of the parergon and parergonal activity of frames of attention. *Freeform* is proposed as invoking two different frames at the same time, the white cube frame, and the theatre frame. These frames may be conceptualized separately and at different times, or perhaps even both at the same time. These frames could be conceived as coming together, but as disjunctive and discordant, in that they operate simultaneously, but at times wholly or partially in opposition to each other. The areas of disunity could be conceived as 'disturbances' of each other's frames, or impingements into the frame of the other, which complicates the relations between the viewer and artwork. It is argued that the way the viewers shift between singular inspections to collective gatherings (e.g.in relation to the dancing sequences) points to how artworks make or invoke their own frames of attention, through the management of attention, and how viewers also conceptualize their own frames of attention. In any event the relations between viewer and artwork are proposed as surrounded by different unstable and continuously changing frames and layers.

The complexity and shifting nature of the frames and layers surrounding the relations between viewer and artwork in *Freeform* can be explained in terms of the parergon. As previously indicated Derrida refers to the parergon, and the tension within the built-in structural link between the outside and inside, as producing unstable and shifting forms that has complex effects. Derrida refers to these as follows:

Always a form on a ground, the *parergon* is nevertheless a form which has traditionally been determined not by distinguishing itself, but by disappearing,

sinking in, obliterating itself, dissolving just as it expends its greatest energy. The frame is never a ground in the way the context or work may be, but neither does its marginal thickness form a figure. At least a figure that arises of its own accord (*italics in original*) (Derrida, 1979:26).

The parergon is therefore constantly shifting, slippery and impossible to pin down, as it dissolves, disappears and obliterates itself. It is not possible to detach, or isolate, the parergon from an artwork without changing the work. It is not possible to name the ergon without the parergon. As soon as the parergon is identified, or has its 'greatest energy', it disappears and splits, forming further frames that must be named and identified. Derrida refers this aspect of parergonal activity, as following the 'logic of the supplement' as follows:

At the limit between the work and the absence of the work, it divides into two. And this division gives rise to a sort of pathology of the *parergon*, whose forms must be named and classified (*italics in original*) (Derrida, 1979:27).

The conceptual and metaphorical white cube frame and theatre frame are proposed as operating (potentially at least) at the same time in *Freeform*. However, since these frames are incompatible with one another, conceptualizing them as operating at the same time—as if layered over one another—is impossible to reconcile without forming another kind of frame that names the work (for example the framing of 'performance-related artistic practice discourses') which sets up its own set of expectations, and reflects the parergonal activity of frames splitting, dividing and dissolving. Each of the frames operates in tension, where the inside is supported from the outside by a set of different discourses and expectations.

It is proposed that the disjunction and discord between different kinds of frames arises because they have different, and incompatible features, which either results in invoking another kind of framing, or explains the shifting of viewers between frames, in search of something recognisable. These effects complicate the relations between viewer and



artwork, and open up other questions about conflicting and incompatible frames. For example, what happens when there is confusion between incompatible frames? Why can one kind of frame be dismissed in favour of another? How do particular established frames dominate over each other, and, how would the notion of something being 'not very good' operate? Finally, what would the effects be on the binary between success and failure in this conceptualization?

The preceding paragraphs concern *Freeform*, and conceptualize the effects where two different, and incompatible, frames operate at the same time. It is proposed that the effects of conflicting frames can be extended into other kinds of attentional conditions, where frames are invoked that have nothing to do with each other and involve different kinds of attention. In *Roaratorio* by Merce Cunningham and John Cage (1983), (see Figure 31) the artists, inspired by James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, present a complex performance of discordant elements of sound, text, movement and choreography.

*Roaratorio* could be described, broadly, in terms of two primary kinds of frames of attention, that is, sound/text and movement/dance. In this case, neither seemed to have anything to do with the other in an obvious way that might lead to an established framing, such as progressing a narrative, or providing a clear meaning or interpretation for a particular image. Rather, these frames seemed to be incompatible and clash with each other, creating disjunction and discord. The artistic practice complicates relations between viewer and artwork in bringing incompatible frames together; it can also be thought of as creating something that is unexpected in terms of attention.

Another example of artistic practice that invokes conflicting frames of attention is proposed in the film works of sound artist Phill Niblock, *The Movement of People Working* (2003). This series of works comprise multiple moving images made between 1971 and 1991, portraying the workers, whose faces are often outside the frame, and focus is on the physical exertion and repetitive movements of manual labour in non-

industrialized countries. Against the vivid film images, are soundtracks that comprise Niblock's signature harmonic, 'drone' sound. The work is also performed live, with the musicians' positioned in front of multiple screens of these moving images (see Figure 32). *The Movement of People Working* can be thought of in terms of two sets of conditions that invoke two different kinds of frames of attention, that seemingly have nothing to do with each other, that is, the visual images and sound. These frames conflict with and contradict each other, and it becomes impossible to determine which particular frame (sound or vision) has dominance over the other as they blur together. It is proposed that this effect is a kind of 'trashing' of the frames where they 'bleed' together into layers of attention.



Fig. 31: Cunningham, Merce and John Cage (1983) *Roaratorio*. [performance]



Fig. 32: Niblock, Phill (2003) *The Movement of People Working*. [performance]

A further consideration of *Freeform* is how it problematizes both the white cube frame and the theatre frame on their own terms. The work moves around the gallery continuously, and is not framed in the sense that the contextual or supporting aspects are ambiguous. As mentioned previously in relation to *Freeform*, there is little advertising and no artists' statement. There is no announcement signifying the start or the end of the work. The work becomes difficult to objectify in terms of the white cube frame, because it does not attempt to capture or sustain attention, in a one-to-one relation between viewer and artwork in an exchange of subjectivity. The work also becomes difficult to objectify in terms of the theatre frame, because there is no defined stage, no proscenium, and no formal, collective space for the viewer, and no timings. There is therefore no clear frame of attention within which the work is drawn to separate it from everything else.

Another way of considering the interactions of different kinds of attention in *Freeform* is proposed in terms of the artwork's 'playful' approach to frames, by provoking disjunction and discord between them and having an effect of 'trashing' them. The work does this by suggesting, or invoking, the different kinds of frames, but not allowing them to fully virtualize so that the white cube frame and the theatre frame are blurred together. Neither kind of frame fully materializes, or virtualizes, out of the layers of attention that,

conceptually for the purposes of this research, also form part of the medium in which the relations between viewer and artwork reside. *Freeform* could be said to provoke the agency of the viewer to operate within layers of attention, rather than through established frames. The more blurred that the frames become, the more irrelevant they are, and the concept of layers becomes more important.

*Brainbug* (2014) by Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, situated within the white cube gallery, is an example of how artistic practice 'plays' with the white cube frame (Chetwynd, 2014). This work was a performance that took place in a white cube gallery, comprising performers and dancers who interacted with and around a large, visceral puppet structure with sound (see Figure 33). The work took over an entire gallery area, and both over all and in terms of individual sculptural, costume, installation and performance aspects, it appeared to move between seeming very chaotic and improvisatory, to being carefully choreographed and managed. These aspects of the work could be said to reflect how attention is being managed or not, in the relations between viewer and artwork. It is argued that Chetwynd did not seek to critique the conditions of the white cube gallery in the work, but rather, seemed to embrace the conceptual and metaphorical complications by ignoring them, effectively 'trashing' the white cube frame and bringing multiple and heterogeneous 'other' kinds of attention to the foreground from layers.



Fig. 33: Chetwynd, Marvin Gaye (2014) *Brainbug*. [performance]

Where an artwork 'plays' between frames and layers, it could also be said to draw attention to the multiple, competing and different forms of attention that operate within a white cube frame. In the case of *Freeform*, these may include attention that is concerned with how the curator has installed the works of the Bloomberg 2014 exhibition, as a busy and eclectic mix, and why it was presented in this way, and what is intended to be achieved by this framing. There is also an economy of attention, where the works were selected in the Bloomberg 2014 process, rather than other works that may have been entered. This reflects a more general idea within the white cube frame and its institutions of a selection of attention, where there is control as to what is displayed, or brought to attention, over and above what is not.

There are also other kinds of attention that can be proposed as being at play in *Freeform* (and artworks more generally). For example, how the individual artist intended their work to be perceived, if at all, and what kinds of framing they used to achieve that end. This may be complicated, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by not corresponding with how the viewer's attention conceives it. There are also kinds of attention a viewer may invoke, subjectively, from their own knowledge, background and experience to conceptualize their experience. The presence of other viewers, and artworks in the gallery space, also has effects on attention. All these forms of attention have potential to become frames that shape and direct attention in particular ways and that may, or may not, align with the white cube frame.

The approach to *Freeform* in this research seeks to consider what the artwork 'does' in terms of attention and the white cube frame. The concept of performativity has a different focus, but also considers what an artwork 'does'. Von Hantelmann has examined the artwork's performativity, within the governing conditions of the white cube gallery and museum, in *How To Do Things With Art: The Meaning of Art's Performativity* (2010), arguing that 'Art's performative dimension signifies art's possibilities and limits in generating and changing reality' (2010:18). What Von Hantelmann means by an artwork's

performativity is the impact and effects that it has in a relation to a particular context and public. The questions this invokes include considering the kind of situation the artwork produces, how it situates its viewers, and what kind of values, conventions, ideologies and meanings are inscribed in that situation (ibid.).

In the model of performativity referred to above, von Hantelmann argues that it has nothing to do with the 'art form of performance' (2010:18). Historically, 'Performance Art' has operated 'with an ideology' that is 'outside of the social systems of the museum and market', in that it strove to break with and disrupt the conventions of art, such as commodification, objectification and art's autonomy (von Hantelmann, 2010:19). This research takes a different approach to what the artwork 'does', by thinking about its interactions with different forms of attention, and attempting to conceptualize this through frames and layers of attention. Von Hantelmann considers performativity, through the ritualistic, one-to one relationship between viewer and artwork in an exchange of subjectivity in the white cube gallery (2010:11). The approach to attention in *Freeform* seeks to open up and complicate further the singular relationship conceived by invoking multiple kinds of attention which are at play in and around those relations. Further, this approach allows a problematization of those relations, in considering the antithetical position, where an artwork 'avoids' attention, (which has been discussed previously in Shift 2: Embarrassment).

Tino Sehgal's work can be described as 'performance-related', and is considered by von Hantelmann as exemplary in terms of performativity in 'the exhibition ritual' within the white cube gallery (2010:14). In von Hantelmann's terms, Sehgal's works operate within the pre-existing conventions of the white cube gallery and challenge them, particularly as regards the 'material basis of a visual artwork' (2010:16). A key aspect of Sehgal's works is they are not object based, and do not participate in material production (ibid.). Sehgal uses performers in his works, as 'interpreters' or 'actors', in situations where they interact with viewers in the gallery. In *This Progress (Sehgal, 2006)*, viewers were ushered through

the gallery by a series of guides, who ranged in age from a child to an older person, and who asked them questions relating to the idea of progress. The emphasis, in the relations between viewer and artwork, could be said to be on the fleeting and transient social interactions between the viewer and 'actors', rather than the material object of the artwork.

Another way of considering *This Progress* is in terms of how attention is managed in relation to the work. Whilst it has no material basis, and Sehgal does not allow his works to be photographed or recorded, it is presented as if it were a visual artwork or object. The work is available during opening times over the course of its run and is exhibited, sold and circulated through galleries, museums and the market (2010:16). In this respect Sehgal could be said to be managing, or controlling, attention in relation to the work very tightly. The work can be thought of in terms of a highly managed attentional system, that is about an exchange of attention between viewer and artwork at all levels, from the viewer and 'actors' in the gallery to its marketing, where the lack of documentation relating to the work reflects a wider economy of attention. The importance of the management of attention for Sehgal is reflected in an interview quote, where he says that: 'Attention is the material I work with' (Sehgal, 2012)<sup>43</sup>.

Like Sehgal's works, installation and performance works also may intentionally manage, or capture attention tightly, in order to achieve specific ends. Performance works may manage attention through timings, setting up places for the viewer to attend to the work over a temporal period, forming 'stages' or creating a physical or psychological separation between viewer and audience where the viewers collectively gather. Installation works may similarly set up, or house, their own attentional systems within the white cube gallery, through structures (physical or otherwise) that exclude, or attempt to

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<sup>43</sup> See also Sven Lütticken's essay 'Progressive Striptease: Performance Ideology: Past and Present' for another view of Sehgal's work and von Hantelmann's analysis (Lütticken, 2012).

exclude, the effects of the white cube frame. This raises a question as to the extent to which an artwork manages or controls the viewer's attention.

A theme to emerge in *Freeform* is the lack of any consistent, singular or stable frame of attention between the viewer and artwork. This is perhaps because the work does not attempt to capture or manage attention in a sustained way. It is proposed that, at times, the work actively seeks to avoid attention altogether. The notion of an artwork seeking to avoid attention seems counterintuitive to understandings of relations between viewer and artwork, particularly in respect of performance-related work that that would seem to be predicated on an equal exchange of attention. The efficiency of this exchange can be considered through the degree to which the attention is managed. The works referred to in the above paragraphs (i.e. Sehgal's *This Progress* (2006), Chetwynd's *Brainbug* (2014) and *Freeform*) can be compared and contrasted in the extent to which attention is managed or mis-managed, and the differing effects of that management or mis-management in the relations between viewer and artwork.

Another approach that problematizes the white cube frame is in O'Sullivan's formulation of 'the aesthetics of contemporary art' (2011:197). In this formulation, O'Sullivan has considered Cathy Wilkes' works (see Figure 34), which appear in the white cube gallery and are object-based. O'Sullivan refers to her work as involved in the 'production of new 'assemblages'', in a style that 'has a certain resonance with Deleuze's philosophy' (2011:189). He is referring to a style that, unlike 'post-conceptual' works in the 1980s and 90s, does not involve 'attention to the signifier', but tends towards 'object-based practices' that are 'idiosyncratic' and '*subjective*' (italics in original) (2011:190). O'Sullivan refers to Wilkes' work, *Beautiful Human Body* (1999), in these terms<sup>44</sup>:

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<sup>44</sup> This work was made in 1999, and my argument is that these comments are equally applicable to Wilkes' works broadly, including more recent works, for example, as seen in Wilkes (2008) and (2015).



An assemblage of different parts and pieces in a careful, and seemingly precarious construction that was somehow figurative and yet non-figurative at the same time [...]. Quite frankly I found this particular assemblage unfathomable, impossible to place. It seemed to stymie any interpretative strategies at my disposal (signifier enthusiast as I was myself back then). (O'Sullivan, 2011:190).



Fig. 34: Wilkes, Cathy (2008). *I Give You All My Money*. [installation].

O'Sullivan's discussion of Wilkes' work is reflective of how attention has been approached in relation to *Freeform*. Attention is conceptualized through frames of attention, which are signifying and expected, and layers, which are non-signifying, unexpected and lie in 'percepts' and 'affects' (discussed above at page 139). It also reflects how the interactions and shifts between frames and layers are conceived as confounding interpretation and meaning.

O'Sullivan's theorization of 'contemporary aesthetics' does not re-adopt the Kantian notion or aesthetics or transcendence of the artwork (that has been argued previously in this thesis as aligning with the white cube frame) (2011:196). He considers aesthetics in terms of both the 'rupturing quality of art: its power to break our habitual ways of being and acting in the world (our reactive selves)' and the accompanying 'production of

something new' (ibid.). This formulation is underlined by Deleuze's critique of representation in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), which is cited by O'Sullivan, and refers to the concept of a 'fundamental' or 'genuine' encounter, described in these terms:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter* (Italics in original) (Deleuze, 1994:139).

An 'object of recognition' is 'a representation of something always already in place' (italics in original) (O'Sullivan, 2007:1). It is a 'non-encounter' that is derived from and reconfirms our knowledge, beliefs and values and what is already understood. In Deleuze's terms, no thought takes place because 'our habitual way of being and acting in the world are reaffirmed' where representation 'stymies thought' (ibid.). A fundamental or genuine encounter however, operates as a disruption of representation and, as such, as 'a rupture in our habitual modes of being and thus habitual subjectivities' (ibid.). O'Sullivan describes it as producing 'a cut, a crack' that contains a moment of affirmation or a way of seeing or thinking about the world differently (ibid.).

In O'Sullivan's formulation of aesthetics, which concerns specifically the white cube frame and its conceptual and metaphorical properties, he refers to artworks invoking a 'genuine encounter', which operates to 'rupture certain circuits of reception and consumption and other habits of 'spectatorship'' (2011:196-7). These are habits, he says, that reinforce previous knowledge and understandings, or 'even a given subjectivity' (ibid.). At the same time, he argues, such artworks may open 'us up to other perhaps more unfamiliar but more productive economies' (O'Sullivan, 2011:197). O'Sullivan divides this response between two 'moments': a 'dissent' or a 'turn from, or refusal of, the typical' and an 'affirmation of (something different)' (ibid.).

O'Sullivan is arguing that the contemporary practices he is referring to 'have *worked through the ruins of representation*' (italics in original) and have a 'knowing' or 'self-

conscious' character, but are 'involved in the production of worlds rather than in the critique of the world as it is' (ibid.). O'Sullivan's view reflects aspects of this thesis, where taking account of the operation of the white cube frame, the artworks he is referring to are also 'trashing' or 'playing' with and around that frame of attention, rather than critiquing it head-on, and causing effects where the frame dissolves, splits or becomes irrelevant and where this approach allows the production of something new or unexpected.

A further way of explaining how layers and frames operate and the complications in relations between viewer and artwork in *Freeform* is through the key term of attention derived from Waldenfels' phenomenology of attention and an argument that *Freeform* operates at the 'thresholds of attention' (2011:67). For Waldenfels, 'thresholds of attention'—that is attention at the limits between intention and 'originary' attention—play a special role in audio and visual arts where 'gazes and sounds are never merely optical and acoustic phenomena' (ibid.). Thresholds of attention '*separate the visible from the invisible, the audible from the inaudible*' (italics in original) (ibid.). Waldenfels states that '*what is seen and what is heard* or what occurs in the world of vision and sound' '[...] are also occurrences of *becoming visible and audible*' (italics in original) (ibid.).

Following Sigmund Freud, Waldenfels says that 'attention is at its most affective where it occurs, not as directed, but as free-floating' (Waldenfels, 2011:68). This is further referred to in Jonathan Crary's historical study of the paradoxical nature of modern attention (2001). Crary argues that there is a continuum between attention and distraction 'in which the two ceaselessly flow into one another, as part of a social field in which the same imperatives and forces incite one and the other' (2001:51). Crary refers to one of Freud's 'techniques of attention' as an 'evenly suspended attention' that gives equal notice to everything by attempting to resist selection which arises through what usually focuses attention in terms of 'personal inclination, prejudices and theoretical assumptions' (2001:368).

The practical concept of layers of attention and Waldenfels' 'originary' attention, as affective and non 'intentional', also alludes to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, and their conceptualization of artworks as independent of the 'viewer or hearer' (referred to previously at page 42) (1994:164). The artwork is thought of as '*a bloc of sensations*' comprising percepts and affects or as '*a compound of percepts and affects*' (italics in original) (ibid.). Percepts and affects are preconscious and operate as forces and intensities, independent of the viewer. The viewer is also thought of as 'a compound of percepts and affects' and 'the work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself' (ibid.).

Deleuze was not considering specifically performance-related artistic practices in a fine art context in his writing on art. However, Elizabeth Grosz has expanded Deleuzian ideas as being concerned with:

all forms of creativity of production that generate intensity, sensation, or affect: music, painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, design, landscape, dance, performance, and so on [...] in exploring the peculiar relations that art establishes between the living body, the forces of the universe and the creation of the future (Grosz, 2008:18).

Deleuze's approach to theatre in the essay *One Less Manifesto: Theater and its Critique* has some connection with the practical conceptualizations considered in this research in terms of the operations of artistic practice on frames of attention (2000:239-258). The essay, as Laura Cull reiterates, proposes a call for an experimental theatre (Cull, 2009:4). Deleuze calls for a theatre of 'subtraction' of representations '*of power*', and '*as power*' (italics in original) meaning the 'concept of *theatrical* presence, as a non-representational relation between audience and event', where 'the perpetual variation or difference-in-itself, that for Deleuze constitutes the real' might be apprehended (ibid.) The operation of 'subtraction' consists of: '(1)

deducting the stable elements, (2) placing everything in continuous variation, (3) then transposing everything in *minor*' (italics in original) (Deleuze, 2000:246 Cull, 2009:5).

Both Waldenfels' 'originary' attention and Deleuzian concepts of 'percepts' and 'affect', horizontal thought and philosophy of the event (that there are only subjectivities or differences in the world) can be connected in Rogoff's writing on 'looking away'<sup>45 46</sup> understood 'not necessarily as an act of resistance to, but rather as an alternative form, of taking part in culture' (Rogoff, 2005:119). Rogoff argues that 'when something called "art" becomes an open interconnective field, then the potential to engage with it as a form of cultural participation—rather than as a form of either reification, representation, or contemplative edification—comes into being' (2005:126). Rogoff's main concern is the relations between viewer and artwork that implicitly focus on the 'subject matter of works or exhibition thematics', where the viewer has a function as spectator (2005:122).

As Rogoff has put it:

The ethnographies of visits to the Tate Gallery and to the Courtauld Institute, and to all the other exhibitions and institutions that I am attempting to describe in the course of this work on participation, are encounters with mythic spaces in Nancy's terms. They allow me to make concrete and manifest, to stage as it were, the unauthorized consequences of what I have called "looking away," of diverting attention from all that culture demands we pay attention to. It is precisely because we are knowledgeable about the "auratic" value invested in art through teleology and filiation (to use the Marxist and the semiotic terms of analysis), precisely because we have been through such a long and protracted phase of institutional critique of the spaces and strategies of display, that we can affect such a bold step of "looking away" from inside those discourses and those spaces. In the process we produce for ourselves an alternative mode of taking part in culture in which we affect a creative

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<sup>45</sup> Referred to previously at page 9 of Introduction

<sup>46</sup> Note also that, whilst not addressed in this thesis, Rei Terada's work: *Looking Away: Phenomenality and Dissatisfaction, Kant to Adorno*, addresses the notion of 'phenomenophilia' and 'looking away', as an alternative to aesthetics, 'a counteraesthetic that plays on the periphery of the aesthetic' (Terada, 2009:7)) which is also considered in Joe Kelleher's essay 'On Misattention' (2014).

*bricolage* of art works and spaces, and modalities of attention and subjectivities, that break down the dichotomies of objects and viewers and allow for a dynamic manifestation of the *lived* cultural moment (italics in original) (Rogoff, 2005:133).

Rogoff is interested in a 'looking away' and a 'coming together' in participating in culture (2005:123). In support of this as an alternative model to participating in culture, Rogoff cites three theorists in her analysis whose thought is concerned with 'concepts of community that is not founded in the politics of identity' where there is a play with 'flows and ebbs of mutuality' (ibid.). She cites Giorgio Agamben's 'unhinging of "singularity" into the "whatever"' (Agamben, 1993:1-2 and 67, cited in Rogoff, 2005:127-129) and Jean-Luc Nancy's 'insistence on the disruption of myth' (Nancy, 1991:44, 52, 53 cited in Rogoff, 2005:130-132). Rogoff also cites Hannah Arendt's 'space of appearance' (Arendt 1998:199). Rogoff refers to this in terms of a 'constant flow of made and remade "spaces of appearance"' (Rogoff, 2005:123).

Arendt's 'space of appearance' is 'neither concretely inhabited nor temporally constant' (Rogoff, 2005:124). It comes into being 'whenever men are together in the manner of speech and action and therefore precedes and predates all formal constitution of the public realm and its various forms of government' (Arendt, 1998:199 cited in Rogoff, 2005:124). The 'engagement with "art"', Rogoff argues, can provide 'a similar space of appearance to that described by Arendt', that does not impose a set of 'interpellated pensive gestures' but rather consists in 'seeking out, staging, and perceiving an alternative set of responses' (2005:126). The 'space of appearance' is, in Rogoff's terms, not a traditional political space, but is where the everyday is animated and transformed, where momentary actions, such as protests, celebrations, refusals and affirmations take place and where 'I appear to others as they appear to me' and we make our 'appearance explicitly' (ibid.).

Following Rogoff, *Freeform* can be considered as not compelling or sustaining attention but, perhaps, as provoking a 'looking away', by merging into and out of the other 'manifestations' that are taking place in the white cube space, that may be as or more important or significant than what we are 'supposed' to be looking at (Rogoff, 2005:119). Whether or not *Freeform* is meeting the aims of Rogoff, in terms of her notion of looking away, it does underline the importance of attention, or an exchange of attention, in the relations between viewer and artwork, when these are considered in traditional ways, and the political consequences of 'looking away'. The provocation to 'look away' by an artwork is an avoidance of attention and, conceptually, an evasion of frames. This has consequences in complicating the relations between viewer and artwork because they are no longer framed.

In summary, this aspect of the research in *Freeform*, is concerned with how frames may be invoked by the artwork and its conditions, how they may operate simultaneously, between each other and with layers of attention, and the effects of these interactions. *Freeform* also considers, specifically, effects where the white cube frame and the theatre frame operate simultaneously creating shifts in viewers' attention. It is argued that conflicting frames are continuously destabilized, and there is disjunction and discord between them, caused by shifting and unstable parergonal and attentional activity. Visual images of these effects are proposed in terms of 'splitting' and 'dissolving' frames, as well as 'blurring' or 'bleeding' together. It also suggests the idea of 'playing' with frames of attention, by avoiding or ignoring them, or partially invoking them, or 'trashing' them, to the extent that frames, in the relations between viewer and artwork, become irrelevant, and the conception of attention as Layers becomes more important.

In the conceptualization proposed in this Shift, the relations between viewer and artwork are no longer binary frames of attention, between subject and object. The relations become complicated by extending beyond that linear connection, to the surroundings and its participants, in the heterogeneous and affective realm of layers of attention.

Complications arise because frames become blurred and dissolve, as they oscillate between signifying frames and asignifying layers. The viewer can be thought of as an embodied participant in the entire situation, rather than as one side of a binary relationship. It is argued in *Freeform* that in the relations between viewer and artwork there is a tension between two modes of attention, as frames and layers, one that is 'expected' and the other that is 'unexpected' and the threshold area in between. The tension has effects in shifting the viewer into different and wider relationships with the artwork, as part of those relations, rather than being the object of them.

### ***How Soon Is Now ('How Soon')***

The second comparative work considered in this shift is *How Soon*, performed four times, with different configurations of viewers and venues, including a pub, seminar rooms and a formal black box space to a mainly academic audience. The work was a live multi-media performance of approximately 20 minutes containing speech, dancing and a background video projection. The evolution of the work as different iterations is set out further below<sup>47</sup>. Aspects of the work, from different versions, were documented in photographs and videos; some of these are presented in the images and the videos in Figures 31-75 PD3 and Videos 11-13 PD3. Figures 68-73 PD3 are preparatory materials and the script for the 'PARSE version'<sup>48</sup> and pages 2-20 of Appendix B consists of preparatory work, notes, scripts, contemporaneous handwritten responses of viewers and a typed transcript of the same, for the 'FARG version'<sup>49</sup>.

*How Soon* extended a number of different ideas and findings (including the practical concepts and methods) that had arisen in *Dancing* and had been developed in *Freeform*. For the purposes of this Shift, the concern is how the work operates in relation to the practical concepts of frames and layers of attention. In particular, this examination of the

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<sup>47</sup> See also at page 77 onwards in Shift 1: Failure.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*



work is concerned with the content of the work (rather than the differences between each of the four iterations) and a specific frame of attention is introduced and developed to address this that concerns narrative and intelligibility (the 'narrative frame')<sup>50</sup>. This shift is therefore concerned with examining the content of the work, across the different versions, through the narrative frame. In order to do this, further kinds of frames, or sub-frames of the narrative frame, were conceived and used, which reflect the main aspects or segments of the work and include speech, text, dancing and video as frames of attention.

*How Soon* also implemented the method of varying the conditions. The work was set up under a different set of conditions to *Freeform*, which had been set up in the white cube frame, so that different kinds of frames of attention could be invoked and examined. *How Soon* was set up outside the physical space of the white cube gallery, in a format where the viewers' attention would be 'captive' over a temporal period and in a specific and sustained orientation towards, or in front of, the work. In this respect, the frame of attention is like a theatre frame. However, it is the narrative frame, which operates over duration, that is primarily focused upon in this section.

*How Soon* evolved from a first iteration that took place at an event organized by The Independent School of Art<sup>51</sup>, of artists' performance called the ISA Sessions, at a public house, The Shipwrights, in Falmouth ('ISA version') (see Video 11 PD3 and Figures 31-40). The content of this version was reconfigured and additional material included in the later three versions that was performed in a format more suggestive of an artist's 'performance lecture' or a 'presentation', or 'lecture performance'. The latter versions took place with different configurations of space and audience. These included: a seminar

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<sup>50</sup> Note that *How Soon* is also examined in Shift 1: Failure, in relation to another conceptualization of the viewer and artwork relations that considers the effects on attention in the differences between two of the iterations (Dr@ft and PARSE) from page 77.

<sup>51</sup> The Independent School of Art is an artist led group that hosts presentations, talks and events by artists, writers, musicians and theorists in Falmouth and Penryn, Cornwall. More information on ISA is available at their website <https://bit.ly/2OzEELe> [accessed 4 September 2018].

room for the Fine Art research group within the Falmouth School of Art ('FARG version'); a formal black box theatre space, as part of a set of three academic presentations for a conference convened by Platform for Artistic Research Sweden<sup>52</sup>, Gothenburg University, Sweden ('PARSE version'); and in a seminar room at The Academy of Music and Theatre Arts, Falmouth University for the dance, performance and choreography research group, Dra@ft (Dance Research at Falmouth group)<sup>53</sup> ('Dr@ft version') (see Video 13 PD3 and Figures 54-65 PD3). The background video and stills can be found at Video 12, and Figures 41-53, 66-67 PD3)<sup>54</sup>.

Some thoughts and observations on the four different iterations of the work follow, in particular the evolution of the work and the content that was developed in the FARG version:

I performed the first iteration of this work (the ISA version) with Ros Bason in a public house, as part of an evening of artists' performance, for the Independent School of Art, an arts group run by local artists and writers (ISA). The work comprised two dancing segments against a video projection in which we both featured. In this first iteration, the work was positioned centrally in the room and viewers situated around us, primarily seated at tables or leaning against the bar. Throughout our performance there was a sense of the audience being relaxed and chatting to each other, or moving around to leave and getting drinks at the bar. There was some amusement at times and laughter can be heard in the video. Ros and I, both felt both embarrassed doing this, but also relieved and pleased when it was over and I was glad we were doing this together.

In the later iterations of *How Soon*, I added further material to the ISA version and re-orientated viewers to the front of the work. This 'flattened' the work spatially, and the format became similar, or recognisable, as a presentation or a performance lecture. The further iterations all took place in academic settings, which supported this framing. There is a 'captive'

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<sup>52</sup> The PARSE website is available at <https://bit.ly/2RV6Reu> [accessed 16 October 2018].

<sup>53</sup> The Dr@ft website is available at <https://bit.ly/2RTbVje> [accessed 16 October 2018].

<sup>54</sup> Video 12 PD3 is, for ease of reference, a shortened version of 10 minutes 16 seconds, of the background projection for the latter three versions of *How Soon*. The parts that have been removed are video footage from *Freeform* and *Dancing*, which the reader will have encountered earlier in this shift.

relation between the viewer and the work. This relationship seems to emphasize an understanding or commitment that the work takes place over time between the work and the viewer and involves an exchange of attention. The analogies to a lecture-like event implicitly suggest that something is to be imparted in exchange for that time. This may be knowledge, or some kind of authority, or at least a comprehensible, or intelligible, narrative.

The second iteration of the work, the FARG version, took place before an informal research group, FARG. Initially, I intended to present *How Soon* as an aspect of the research, by presenting clips and talking about it in the way that I had made formal presentations to the group previously, that is, in a traditional format. However, I was not sure what I wanted to say about this work, or, at that stage, where it was taking the research. I wanted to test the ideas and methods in the work further by making a performance for FARG that was not intended to present the research as such, but rather 'was' an aspect of or experiment with the practical research itself, in situ. There were approximately six viewers, comprising academics and post-graduate students, who I knew through work and as a student at the University. I performed the work by myself; the atmosphere was friendly, but serious and I felt very nervous. I launched straight into the work, without introducing it or giving it any context and there was a discussion afterwards.

In the FARG version and later versions, I had reconfigured the experiment to include the original sequences and material from the ISA version, but also further materials such as speech, text and more video footage that I had made in collaboration with Ros Bason. I had further developed and planned the work using the scripts in Appendix B, at pages 7-15, and a storyboard and plans based around that, which visualized each element of the work as series of frames interacting along the timeline of the video (see Figs. 68-71 and 74-75 PD1). The work became a roughly scripted and minimally rehearsed live performance of approximately twenty minutes that inter-related with the video projected behind me.

The scripts, storyboard and plan of the work guided the timings of each segment of the background video, which held the timeline of the interactions with the live performance. At particular points, the live performance correlated with images in the video, and at other times the video was blank. In the live performances of the work, which were intentionally unrehearsed, these interactions bled into each other. For example, the speech segments either overran and interrupted the video, or fell short of the timeline, the dancing segments involved awkward costume

changes in situ that led to further contingencies. At times there are gaps of silence where neither video nor speech nor other live aspect is taking place, and these felt awkward and uncomfortable.

The scripts for *How Soon* included speech segments and these were aligned with the video timeline with the dancing segments. These scripts were amended slightly between iterations. The earliest versions used in FARG can be found at Appendix B pages 7-15 and a later version in used in PARSE can be found at Figures 72-73 PD3. Broadly, both scripts include a set of complex philosophical quotes (which I had been attempting to grapple with). The speech segments were intended to run at particular times in the video timeline but one of the consequences of not rehearsing these segments, and the complexity of the ideas in them, was that, being very nervous, my speech was rushed and the texts were unintelligible (see further on viewers' comments below). Further, uncomfortable gaps arose where nothing seemed to be happening before the next segment of the video started, or the speech segments overran causing confusion in my mind about the timeline.

Before performing the FARG version, I provided a draft of the script in Appendix B to one of the viewers in advance, as they had kindly agreed to review it and give feedback at the group<sup>55</sup>. At the end of the FARG version the viewers kindly provided me with their thoughts and feedback on the work. My notes of their responses appear in Appendix B at pages 2-6 and 17-20, and these comments have been very helpful, both broadly and specifically, in my approaches to the research and to the practical concepts that were developing and are discussed further below.

In the course of the FARG version, another viewer's comment seemed to give a particular perspective of the work and was useful in terms of thinking about how the relations between viewer and artwork operate. The comment was: 'Really liked it but didn't enjoy it'<sup>56</sup>. This suggested that, at least for that viewer, there were ambivalent or conflicting conditions set up in the work that could not be resolved. This also suggested a difference between a viewer's hypothetical expectations, perhaps in being able to find the artwork intelligible and understandable, and what the work did, or its intentions, in creating an awkward or uncomfortable experience.

The later two versions (FARG and PARSE) have been discussed previously in Shift 1: Failure.

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<sup>55</sup> This was Dr Neil Chapman whose comments are encapsulated in paragraphs below (from Appendix B pages 2-7 and 17-20)

<sup>56</sup> This comment was from Dr Andy Webster (from Appendix B pages 5 and 19)

*How Soon* gave rise to overlapping themes and questions divided between: how to approach an examination of the work through mis-attention, how the conditions of the work set up particular frames of attention in the relations between viewer and artwork; developing an understanding and conception of the narrative frame and finding an approach to examine the work through that frame; how the viewers' responses to the work extended ideas in the research; how viewers were envisaged as attending to the work; how attention was managed or otherwise; the effects of the work on frames and layers of attention and how the key terms may be used to propose ways in which these practical conceptualizations operate in complicating the relations between viewer and artwork.

Aspects of *How Soon* are analogous to what has been termed a 'performance lecture' or 'artist's performance' that has become a feature of many exhibitions and events in contemporary art, frequently in conjunction with museum and gallery exhibitions<sup>57</sup>. The history and status of contemporary lecture-performances, as political and pedagogical, has been discussed recently by Mashinka Firunts (2016:19-25)<sup>58</sup>. She refers to Robert Morris, *21.3* (1964) as setting the stage for a 'pedagogical spectacle where the university-trained artist demonstrates bravura fluency in scholarly discourse' which 'almost immediately' 'dissolves into a Brechtian mist of defamiliarization and disrupted information transmission' (Firunts, 2016). This could be considered in terms of the intangible knowledge of artistic creation, in contrast to 'rational' modes of knowledge. It could also be considered in terms of the intelligible and unintelligible, or as narrative and non-narrative. The frame of attention used to examine this work reflects the operation of a traditional lecture in the form of an intelligible narrative, where there is an expectation

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<sup>57</sup> See also Gordon Hall, founder of the Center of Experimental lectures, a 'platform for artists, theorists, and other cultural producers to engage with the public lecture as a format'.

<sup>58</sup> See further in *Shift 1: Failure*.

that information will be imparted and an argument progressed from beginning to end (the 'narrative frame').

The examination of the work, in terms of the narrative frame, is undertaken by dividing the work into smaller or further kinds of frames, or sub-frames, of attention with an understanding that the narrative frame would hold a progression of frames that build up over the temporal period, and are organized intelligibly from the start of the work to the end. These particular frames include speech, dancing and video, reflecting the main aspects of the work, as well as the unintended gaps and the overall spatial and conceptual frame of attention. Each kind of frame is considered individually and then collectively in terms of the overall narrative frame.

*How Soon* is set up as a recognisable theatre frame (referred to at page 150) where viewers attend over the duration of the work and the live bodies of the performers form part of that frame, or a sub-frame thereof. The video projection in the same space provides another kind of frame of attention in the work, comprising moving images. A further temporal frame is set up in the video, with the title page at the beginning and the end page (Video 12 PD3). However, the video images do not unfold in time in the same way, or in tandem with the live performance aspect of the work. Through editing, green screen effects and blank segments in the video timeline, time is speeded up, slowed down, moves between past, present and future, and there are instances of different times operating simultaneously. There are then multiple frames of attention (e.g. theatre, live body and video frames) operating in the work at the same time, in ways that are potentially at odds with each other.

The live body operates at the same time as the video frame. However, the live body does not necessarily have the same dominance, or command the same kind of attention as the video frame does, and they do not interact equally with each other. The projected images in *How Soon* are larger and brighter than the live body, and would attract attention more

easily than the dimmer figure of the performer. The work was unlit in all the versions except PARSE, and stage lighting was not used to lessen the difference between the live body and projection in that case either.

The speech frames are formed from texts and scripts referred to above, which contained sections of original writing as well as complex theoretical quotes (Figures 72-73 PD3 and pages 7-15 of Appendix B). Some observations on how these operated in the live work follow:

I was nervous in speaking from the texts, particularly in the FARG and PARSE versions. I could not see the video behind me to check my timing. I read the speech sections hastily both through nervousness and trying to keep up with the timeline but having no cue of where I was in relation to the video as it played. My gestures and position involved pacing back and forth across the performance space in front of the audience. I avoided eye contact in these performances. In the Dr@ft version at times I had my back to the viewers and held the microphone away from my mouth, muffling my speech.

Overall, the speech segments or frames started by appearing intelligible but quickly became unintelligible over the course of the performance.

The video material was created and edited using the method of improvisatory conditions comprising several strands of footage made at different times<sup>59</sup>. The footage was intercut between these strands and was edited on a timeline so that it operated with the live performance aspects of the work (speech and dancing). The footage can be thought of as B-roll or supplementary footage. B-roll footage would normally be used to intercut with a main shot to help drive a narrative; it can be thought of as extra or additional to the main shot. In the case of *How Soon*, there are no intelligible main shots, and there is no overall narrative to drive. The way the video was edited was treated as a 'collaging' of video footage, without regard to setting any narrative but rather in a more intuitive way, to see

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<sup>59</sup> The method of improvisatory conditions is discussed in Shift 1: Failure

what rhythms and patterns emerged in setting the images over a twenty-minute sequence. Over all, as with the speech segments, the video can be thought of as unintelligible.

The key term of the supplement, derived from Derrida's concept of the '*supplément*' (italics in original), and discussed previously in detail in Shift 1: Failure, is helpful for the purposes of this shift in thinking about the B-roll video footage because it problematizes the notion of pure origin of a work. Derrida refers to the supplement as 'at once what is added on to something in order further to enrich it *and* what is added on as a mere extra' (italics in original) (Royle, 2003:48)<sup>60</sup>. The research argues that the supplement reflects a tension between inside and outside of 'something'. It is neither inside nor outside at the same time and forms part of something without being a part of it (2003:49). The tension is maintained because the supplement is necessary to make up for a 'lack' or something that is missing within. Consequently, B-roll footage, that would normally be ignored because it is in the background, is not the 'main thing' and contains mistakes, clumsiness, amateurism and accidents, is brought to the foreground in the video. Bringing the background to attention in the foreground suggests further unintelligibility of the video.

In *How Soon* the use of the video footage in this way, and the editing, suggests frames that initially appear to be intelligible become unintelligible over time. For example there are sequences where: the speech soundtrack is out of sync with the visual images of people talking; speech and film have been sped-up; there is panning of the camera from the foreground to focus on background elements in a scene; there are green-screens effects which form frames over other frames. There are also sequences of faces speaking at the viewer, making no sense. They seem to be answering questions of an unseen

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<sup>60</sup> The Appendices to this thesis reflect the problematic of the supplement. They could be regarded as supplements themselves, i.e. supplemental to the thesis. However, in this case their role has been specifically carved out by stating they do not form part of the thesis although they have had a role in this research (see page 8 and pages 32-33 Methodology)



interviewer, but their answers do not lead back to an understandable question. There are intercuts between the black and white sequences and colour images in a studio or garden that do not seem to lead to a narrative similarly the costumes of white laboratory coats with ill-fitting wigs, musical references and pointless actions.

In the first segment or frame of dance in *How Soon*, the performers dance against the video projection of footage of a dynamic, highly saturated, pastoral scene with accompanying music. There is also a frame of the background noise, comprising footsteps, cracking undergrowth, buzzing insects and birds singing. This was amplified over the pastoral music, bringing what would be in the background or otherwise ignored to attention in the foreground. The choreography of this dance segment involved a sequence of steps and sweeping motions of the arms. However, this was to be performed wearing a swathe of pink gauze on the performers, which again seems pointless. The second dancing segment of frame, involved dancing in comical green trousers, with movements adapted from 'Northern Soul' dance, to a musical track. The speed of the song is increased dramatically towards the end of this frame, which forces the performers to dance faster and faster. It is evident that it is very difficult for the performers to keep up and they become visibly exhausted and flag.

In the live performances, there are intentional, as well as unintentional and uncomfortable gaps between the segments, with sequences of blank video and/or silence where nothing seems to be happening. In the Dr@ft version there was an accidental use of a longer version of the video than was intended, which resulted in an even longer uncomfortable gap at the beginning of the work. Before each dancing segment the performers had to put on the costumes and the changes into the green trousers were particularly awkward because they were roughly made and likely to fall apart. These unintended gaps raise an issue about the notion of the accidental, the unpredictable and mistake in relation to frames of attention.

The question arises as to whether, when something is accidental or a mistake, it is genuinely unpredictable. The use of improvisatory conditions, as discussed in Shift 1: Failure, was deliberately implemented to set up the possibility of unpredictable events occurring. But this is paradoxical because, in setting up such conditions, it is arguable there is a degree of intentionality or even rehearsal, even though the specific outcome was not predicted, that blurs whether what is accidental or a mistake is genuinely unpredictable, or unintended, and plays into the notion of a 'successful failure' (Blažević and Feldman, 2014:18). This has been discussed previously in Shift 1: Failure, in looking at work for example by Tommy Cooper. Blažević and Feldman refer to the accidental and mistaken and other kinds of 'misorder' as 'misperformance' (2014). Misperformance is referred in terms of the 'complications due to the continuity of failing-yet-performing actions' (2014:19). This might be distinguished from a 'successful' failure, that is 'the completion of a singular failed act' (ibid.). The approach of misperforming, the acceptance of the accidental and the mistake, they suggest, 'intended and partly staged', puts forward a 'strategy of political' and ideological resistance (2014:12).

The following paragraphs set out some thoughts and comments of one of the viewers (Dr Neil Chapman) at the FARG version of *How Soon* (extracted and assembled from pages 1-20 of Appendix B), which were useful to the research in terms of analyzing the work, and setting up visual images on how the conceptualization of frames of attention, the overall frame of the work, as well as individual frames, are approached and operate<sup>61</sup>:

First thing is to notice is how unforgiving the presentation is of the actual writing which has to be a strategic thing—has to be—just thinking the very beginning of the presentation where you read, allude to, the theoretical ideas, concepts and then, which was, a kind of foundation for what comes up because it comes first but given in such a way that almost impossible to follow

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<sup>61</sup> Further comments from Dr Neil Chapman and other viewers at the FARG version in October 2015 can be found at pages 1-20 of Appendix B.

so fast so quick and I read that as performative, part of a performative aspect, to what is going on.

Refs to Agamben, Derrida, Deleuze—immediately strikes me as problematic insofar as you are presenting a named theory in a precise way where the implication of presenting them in this way implies a reduction of one to another [...] in a potentially dangerous [...] subordinating way.

However, as with your gesture of speaking too quickly so audience can't hear what is being said, I see it as a comment on the problematic of how you deal with this in art research—how you deal with these names—the use of the named theorists and problems [...] invoking these names—there is a kind of wrecking going on. Is that the only way to begin by trashing? Are you conscious of this –whether you think it does have to be done-whether implications for artists who are working in the realm of research i.e. is it only way to begin by trashing the space to give something to work [with]—[the] ruination as a first potential—where these names and theories have been invoked they are simultaneously revoked by the performative delivery of the text that trashes the space where they are summonsed. It seems as if they are called and removed in order to clear the way for something else.

Specifically with Deleuze's idea of difference which is so provocative on the page, where difference is precisely not graspable by determined objects but precisely the flux, interconnectivity of things, these lines give complete turnaround of idea of difference [...] the world as multiplicity, intensities –that's the concept that you rendered illegible but not dissimilar in presentation of the images on screen [...] taking place in different levels. (Dr Neil Chapman, from pages 2-6 and 17-20 Appendix B).

The different levels of obscuring in *How Soon* that Dr Chapman was referring to above included the aspects of the work that have been referred to earlier, in terms of the frames of attention of dancing, speech, text, video and the effects on those frames in rendering them unintelligible, using strategies including speeding up the dancing and video, the images of the double, green screen effects and zooming in on the background to bring it to attention in the foreground. It was helpful to use the idea of trashing and wrecking to envision how the artistic practice operates in relation to these frames and the overall narrative frame. Following Dr Chapman's comments, this operation can be thought of as summonsing an image, concept or narrative, only to revoke it through artistic practice, by

trashing the frame in which it appears, with the underlying possibility that this clears the way for something else.

A further more broad point, in relation to the viewer responses set out in the notes from the FARG version (pages 2-6 and 17-20 Appendix B) is the diversity of responses reflected from five viewers in relation to the same work. For example, the responses detailed in the paragraphs above were very detailed and analytical; others were more practical, or applied theory in different ways or represented a visual response. One viewer alluded to how the work invoked for them some specific Deleuzian concepts, and, as previously mentioned (at page 85) also seemed to refer to the experience of discomfort in the work in saying 'Really liked it but didn't enjoy it'<sup>62</sup>.

Another response invoked a number of visual images, themes and ideas including: 'stuttering and stammering', 'puppet', 'ventriloquist', 'as a decoy' 'Throw shade Paris is burning' 'a stance a buffalo stance'<sup>63</sup>. There was also further area of discussion on theorists that were invoked and those that were not in the work. It seems important that these are responses that were gathered straight after the work and that were inspired or instigated in some way by what the respondents had just attended to. The main purpose of drawing attention to these responses here is to show that there were multiple interpretations of the same work that were, it is argued, instigated by the artistic practice 'trashing' and 'wrecking' frames of attention.

In summary, *How Soon* starts by appearing intelligible and there is an expectation that it will remain intelligible. A theme to emerge, particularly from the above comments, was the idea of trashing or wrecking of frames of attention. Starting with the first frame of speech, the texts are trashed or 'cleared away' in a process of becoming unintelligible. This is compounded over the duration by the recurring trashing of each seemingly

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<sup>62</sup> Dr Andy Webster – from page 5 and 19 of Appendix B.

<sup>63</sup> Gillian Wylde – from page 13 and 19 of Appendix B.

intelligible frame rendered unintelligible. Intelligibility is the capability of being understood. This presupposes a framework of understanding from a viewer that supports, even to a limited extent, that capability of being understood. Unintelligibility, as a clearing 'the way for something else'<sup>64</sup>, seems to undermine that framework of understanding. This leaves the materiality of the speech, images, movement, time and the live body in the work, with no signifying properties, perhaps enacting or presenting the concept of 'difference' in Deleuze's terms, as suggested in Dr Chapman's comments referred to above (at page 187) (Deleuze, 1994).

A way of explaining the effects on the narrative frame of attention is through the key term of the parergon. The logic of the parergon applied to frames of attention means that a frame is supported by further framings outside that support what is within it. Where there is no support for the framing from outside, the frame shifts and is unstable. The artistic practice, in terms of *How Soon*, seems to trash any potential of the narrative frame because there is nothing intelligible to support the 'lack' within such a frame. The effect of trashing frames contributes to undermining the overall framing of the work as a lecture or presentation. There is, overall, no intelligible narrative that would be expected, and it 'stops making sense', as O'Sullivan puts it (2011:200). The consequence, in terms of the practical conceptualization in this Shift, is that the work tends to reside more in layers of attention. Layers have been conceived as multiple, and heterogeneous, and give rise to attention that is unframed, unexpected and unintentional, in contrast to frames, that represent dominant, intentional and expected ways of attending.

Each part of the work starts with something intelligible that sets up expectations. Those expectations start to dissolve when the performer starts speaking, and then continues to disintegrate on one level. At the same time, something else happens, bearing in mind that the viewer is attending, which brings into question how we deal

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<sup>64</sup> See full quote of Dr Chapman at page 187.

with things that are not intelligible. On one level we may lose interest. On another level, our mode of attention may change, so that it is coming towards us, and we are passive in this, rather than it coming from us. There may be a transition between one kind of attention and the other or between frames and layers of attention. This is a kind of relation, and tension, between the two, that is reflected in John Hall's essay on *Reading (il)legible Pages* (2014). Referring to how difficult it is to get the word 'illegibility' 'to behave consistently, to be intelligible as a fixed sign', Hall refers to 'a seemingly irresolvable jostling for a place' to find a status or a sign that is real and fixed (2014:15). The tension is also reflected in the observation that when you are conscious of legibility 'there is already a kind of il/legibility' in play (2014:21).

Another way of approaching the tension and interactions between frames and layers of attention—and to account for the instability of the frame as the parergon—is suggested by O'Sullivan in his discussion of the concept 'mythopoeisis' (2007:144-148 and 2011:203-204). O'Sullivan positions this concept from a Deleuzian perspective in the context of works by Cathy Wilkes and Matthew Barney. Wilkes' object based works have been discussed above at pages 72-3. Barney's *Cremaster Cycle*, including *Cremaster 5* (see Figure 35), is a series of films, installations, photographs, drawings and sculptures made between 1994 and 2002 (Barney, 2004). Nancy Spector describes these complex works as exploring the 'creation of form, employing narrative models from other realms such as biography, mythology, and geology' (Spector, 2003:5 cited in O'Sullivan, 2007:150).

O'Sullivan understands Wilkes' and Barney's work as mythopoetic. He says their work is difficult to read 'using our typical frames of reference' because they present 'a different narrative of sorts' or a 'different arrangement of reality' built up from 'a variety of techniques, objects and text' which involves both 'signifying *and* asignifying components' (*italics in original*) (2011:203). O'Sullivan considers mythopoesis as 'the imaginative transformation of the world through fiction', (*ibid.*). This is connected to Henri Bergson's

idea of fiction as 'fabulation', or 'story-telling', that allows us to 'unplug and to enter a different duration' (ibid.). Fabulation involves 'the use of signifying material to access something, specifically asignifying' (ibid.).

The signifying regime is turned to the world we inhabit '*as it is*' (italics in original), however, the mythopoetic character, or the asignifying side of artistic practice, gestures beyond the limits of 'what is seeable/sayable' (O'Sullivan, 2011:203). Asignification takes on a political function in that it disrupts dominant systems of meaning, framing and representation where 'new and different myths' are produced 'for those who do not recognise themselves in the narratives and image clichés that surround them' (ibid.). The concept of mythopoeisis therefore gives rise to a tension and interaction between signification and asignification. This is reflected in *How Soon*, in terms of interactions between frames and layers, where frames initially allow the appearance of intelligibility, but break down, or dissolve, over duration becoming unintelligible in layers of attention.



Fig. 35: Barney, Matthew (1997) Cremaster 5. [multimedia installation].

The idea of 'something' becoming unintelligible over duration can be understood from Alvin Lucier's work *I am Sitting in a Room* (1969). In this work, the listener's attention is drawn through the device of the artist's speech, where he states at the start exactly what is going to happen, and why. Using two tape recorders, a microphone, and a speaker in a room, Lucier successively replays and re-records the initial recording 32 times. The acoustical properties of the room in which the work is performed transform his speech over the course of the work, as the resonant frequencies of the room are repeatedly reinforced and attenuated, until only a faint rhythm from the initial speech remains. That is my interpretation of how the break down of speech in the work manifests, and it could be different for another viewer. Over the course of the work, the speaking voice seems to 'dissolve' to the point where it is no longer intelligible as speech. As the irregular patterns of speech become recognisable as speech, they are replaced by something else, which is more noticeable as a rhythm.

Lucier's work can be thought of as starting with an intelligible frame of attention, which shapes attention in a particular way to meet expectations. Over the duration of the work, the recognisable speech is dissipated, and gradually disintegrates. Our attention changes from expecting 'something' to happen, to the situation where something unexpected happens to us passively. This process reveals patterns and rhythms in the work, unique to the person who is listening. This sense of passivity, and of attention 'happening to us', reflects how Waldenfels' 'originary' attention operates (2011). In terms of the practical concepts, the dissipation of speech could be thought of as the gradual dissolution of frames of speech, that exposes multiple and heterogeneous layers of attention behind the frame. The notion of dissolution of frames seems more appropriate in Lucier's work, where frames are dissolved incrementally over its duration, as compared to *How Soon*, where frames are 'trashed' almost immediately after they have been formed.

A further term that alludes to Waldenfels' 'originary' attention, and the effects of frames dissolving or being trashed and forming layers to reveal something else, is suggested in



O'Sullivan's consideration of 'refrains', conceptualized by Deleuze and Guattari (2007). One of the viewers of *How Soon*, in the FARG version, commented that the work was 'full of refrains'<sup>65</sup> (from Appendix B page 5 and 19). The refrain is a concept that appears in *One Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2007:342-386). The concept also appears in Guattari's individual writing on the production of subjectivity and on art (O'Sullivan, 2007:87-95). Guattari considers subjectivity is made up 'from a multiplicity of refrains'. For example, in a simple act of watching television, there are refrains going on around domesticity, such as the kettle boiling and the baby crying (Guattari, 1996:200, cited in O'Sullivan, 2007:92-3). Another example is birdsong, as a 'territorialising refrain' that marks out the bird's home and subjectivity (ibid.).

Artistic practice is another kind of refrain. Like the birdsong, it is a form of territorialisation that produces conditions for deterritorialisation, in 'the production of a particular kind of subjective territory' (O'Sullivan, 2007:93). The refrain can be thought of in terms of patterns, sounds, rhythms, as well as rituals and narratives that emerge in processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation, meaning they are created as temporary configurations from chaos, or heterogeneity (ibid.). Deleuze and Guattari refer to the refrain as 'rhythm and melody that have become territorialized because they have become expressive—and have become expressive because they are territorializing' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2007:349). Refrains may produce affective responses, and as such they may 'rupture' old habits and perhaps forms new ones (ibid.). The concept seems to reflect how frames and layers interact in tension between each other as territorialising and deterritorialising, to evoke patterns, rhythms and affective responses as refrains that arise from the subjective marking out of territory in *How Soon*.

In summary, this aspect of the research in *How Soon* problematizes the concept of frames, and in particular the narrative frame of attention, in relation to the work. The work

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<sup>65</sup> Dr Andy Webster.

proposes a tension between attention that is expected and intelligible, and the unexpected and unintelligible. The tension, or 'jostling', between these states was theorized and visualized through the concepts of the parergon, originary and secondary attention in the concept of attention, mythopoeisis and the refrain. It is argued that *How Soon* trashes frames of attention, complicating the relations between viewer and artwork, and forces shifts between frames and layers of attention, where frames begin to lose their relevance. This process produces refrains, fictional worlds and narratives that gesture beyond the sign.

### **Summary of shift**

This shift developed a conceptualization of relations between viewer and artwork in terms of frames and layers of attention in order to develop the notion of mis-attention and considered how the artistic practice operates in tension with frames of attention. It proposes that artistic practice operates against frames, by playing with them, avoiding and invoking frames, and creating conflicts, disjunctions and discord between different kinds of frames in the process. The artistic practice also has effects on frames by trashing and dissolving them. In each case, frames lose their relevance as they dissipate into layers of attention, leading to unpredicted outcomes. The shifts between frames and layers of attention operate in tension between representation and asignification, and the expected and unexpected. A key aspect of how *Freeform* and *How Soon* operate is proposed through the lack of management of attention in the work.

## CONCLUSIONS

One of the interesting outcomes of this research has been the development of a multi-dimensional conceptualization of the relationships between viewer and artwork and the articulation of these relations in terms of their unpredictability. These findings have emerged through approaching the practice counter-intuitively—that is, through looking away—in the three modalities that were adopted. The thesis has set out to develop a practical conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork that takes account of their multi-dimensionality and unpredictability. It has done so, through three sets of concepts and methods, which provide different views, or perspectives, of the same body of work, and that foregrounds the tension between the artistic practice and binary approaches to viewer-artwork relations.

The project started with initial investigations in the initial works that aimed to find ways to approach the three modalities. The initial works did not necessarily result in a direct approach to the modalities but did lead indirectly to the questions in the study that opened up areas of theory to consider. Overall, this approach led to unexpected results in the formulations of the practical concepts and methods that emerged in the initial works and their development and findings. From this, further experiments in the main works were developed, to which the practical concepts and methods were applied, probed and extended and that, together with the initial works, form the body of practical research. The course of the research in terms of the practical, contextual and theoretical aspects, was not linear or rational, but rather a messy process. It was in the writing and rewriting of the thesis (including the narrative writing on the works drawn from drafts, like the samples in Appendix A) that the modalities, practical concepts, methods and contextual and theoretical research emerged and took shape in a way that has been organized between the three shifts presented in the thesis.

The tension between the practical concepts and methods in artistic practice has been

supported and informed by the key terms that elicit the tension and instability of foundational approaches. For example, Derrida's concepts of the '*parergon*' and '*supplément*' offer devices that reflect the tension between inside and outside of the frame and of the notion of pure origin. Waldenfels conceives attention as a tension between conscious thought (that expects something) and something that happens to us passively, that we are not intentionally involved in (2011). The phenomenology of self-consciousness points to the tension between the corporeal body and the lived body (Fuchs, 2003). Goffman's sociology of embarrassment (1967) can be understood as the tension between embarrassment and its avoidance and Bergson's theory of the comic (2008) can be understood in terms of a tension between mechanization and life. These key terms are used to conceptualize and help visualize the stress or tension inherent between artistic practice and binary approaches to the relations between viewer and artwork, and the oscillating shifting between positions in that relationship.

The thesis has centred on the artistic research and has involved the investigation of practical concepts and methods that have arisen from the practice and that have been used to interrogate the work. The position of the theorisations behind the key terms in the research has not been to interrogate practice through theory or to make work that critiques a particular theoretical proposition in seeking to extend it. Rather, the key terms have provided a means to conceptualize and visualize how the practical concepts and methods operate in the works. This has been shown in the use of visual metaphors in each shift that describe how the practical conceptualizations are envisaged as effected by the artistic practice. The theoretical ideas of elasticity and failure in the contract, as a framing of the relations between viewer and artwork, introduced in Shift 1: Failure, operate as a coherent thread that runs throughout the thesis. These concepts underlie the practical conceptualizations of further kinds of frames in Shift 2: Embarrassment and Shift 3: Mis-attention and how they are affected in the artistic practice for example in 'unframing', 'trashing', 'stretching', 'break down' of frames as well as the idea of 'falling out' of the relations altogether.

Each shift involved a problematization of the association between attention, intention, framing and representation as factors in the relations between viewer and artwork. The management of attention was found as a way of making the relations between viewer and artwork stable, and allowing intended conceptual frames that support representational systems and intention implicit in a binary relationship to be realized. On the other hand, mis-management or lack of management of attention had effects on the interplay between intention, representation and framing, creating unintentional and unanticipated outcomes because there is little control on the conceptual frames that will be interpreted by a viewer. The research connected the unpredictability and unanticipated outcomes in the relations between viewer and artwork to a dynamic interplay of the relations between attention, intention, representation and framing.

Broadly, the research argues that the more attention is intentionally managed, whether on a macro or micro level, the more likely it is to be shaped or directed in ways that are representational, framed and expected. This underlines the binary that is inherent in the arts and arts education where contextualization is taken as given or implicitly presupposed. The tension between unmanaged and tightly controlled attention can be considered in terms of the stress between the 'messiness' of artistic practice and the representational and framed system, in which and within which it operates and resides. The different degrees and ways in which attention is controlled seem to have effects on the relations between viewer and artwork. Where attention is highly managed, experiences that are expected and predictable may be created. On the other hand, examples of highly managed attention may create experiences in unpredictable ways (for example in the work of Tino Sehgal). Attention that is not controlled or is mis-managed may provoke unanticipated events. This lack of control could be considered in terms of a political resistance to the dominance of representational systems that are supported by the management of attention, where looking away is a withdrawal from that system, rather than a head-on opposition.

The thesis has used the body, in live and recorded work, in a way that has departed from how it may be considered in performance in a traditional sense. The live body operated as a control, in the practical research; it was always present in the work, against which other factors could be examined. The live body also invoked the practical concepts and methods that have been used to articulate looking away. This approach is different to one that measures, or considers, the role of performance as the prime function in terms of the live body being the site of the work, or an object in performance studies. The use of performance-related artistic practice has been activated as a tool in the research, because of its inherent ability to be contingent and invoke unanticipated outcomes. It is also helpful because it allowed the observation of viewers from the position of the artwork itself. The body is also a useful tool for examining the interplay of intention, attention, representation and framing because of its inherent ability to be unpredictable.

The thesis has contributed to artistic research, and specifically performance-related artistic practice, within a fine art context. The practical approach depends, neither on a single subjective viewpoint, nor on theories of spectatorship, in offering a multi-dimensional view of relations between viewer and artwork. The research has departed from methodologies that use theories of embodiment, receptivity and affect, even though it is implicit that in looking away, the affective properties of artistic practice and the live body are at play. The research has also departed from alternative approaches, based in subject/object relations of spectatorship, the gaze/objectification that use theoretical models that do not take subjective methodologies into account. Subjective methodologies do not necessarily allow for an objective analysis of the work, and objective approaches may eschew subjective accounts. This study developed a set of practical concepts and methods, which allowed the relations between viewer and artwork to be considered in objective terms, without impinging on the subjective nature of the relationship between them. As such, the research proposes, and argues for, a set of concepts and methods that could be applied more broadly in other areas of practice.

The research has examined the dynamic space between spectator and performer in works that reside in the field of performance-related fine art research, focusing on that relationship where failure, embarrassment and mis-attention occur. As a result of this investigation the research has contributed to knowledge within the field of performance-related fine art and overlapping discourses positioned in fine art research, viewer and artwork relations and areas concerning the modalities of failure, embarrassment, mis-attention and looking away.

This research has made a contribution to discourses in the field of practical fine art research in producing a novel approach in the thinking of the relationship between, on one hand conceptual and theoretical ideas and on the other, the practice where the discourse situates itself between these two areas. Discourses in practice-based, and practice-led research in fine art have situated the relation of theory to practice in different ways and to varying degrees with each other, and the issue has become increasingly nuanced, characterized by subtle and complex distinctions in research in performance-related fine art and performance studies. This investigation developed its own novel and nuanced relationship of the thinking between theory and practice.

The relationship between theory and practice developed from processes, ideas, questions and thought experiments that emerged from doing the performance-related practice. The research adopted a heuristic approach based on the position of the researcher as performer (of being in the work) and the emergence of conceptual ideas and thought experiments through practice. This process gave rise to a set of seven theoretical and philosophical key themes that were 'borrowed' or 'adopted' in the research and allowed the research to develop further by applying them back into the research in the development of practical concepts and methods.

The heuristic approach used, positions the practice as the origin of the emergence of theoretical and philosophical ideas which have then become intertwined together to

produce conceptualizations of the practice. The theoretical ideas were applied further to the practical works and in so doing transformed the practice and enabled it to be articulated in ways that gave rise to the underlying findings concerning the multi-dimensional conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork including the visual metaphors which aid the expression of the practice and address the questions raised in the research. Although the approach to the relationship between theory and practice that has been developed arises from, and relates to, the particular practice in this study, the approach adds to discourses in fine art research more broadly by deepening and widening this field in offering a further nuanced approach to this relationship. This relationship has new dimensions that can be added to previous methodologies of creative research concerning the space between theory and practice in practice-based or practice-led fine art research.

The research has also contributed to knowledge in fields that concern an examination of the space between spectator and performer, or viewer and artwork in discourses that surround those relations such as spectatorship, embodiment and affect. In this respect, the research contribution is a novel practical and conceptual framework that discusses the space between viewer and artwork, and which has been produced in an original way. This framework has emerged through a synthesis of a number of ideas, themes, practical concepts and methods that have not been brought together in this way before and which give rise to a multi-dimensional view of viewer and artwork relations in relation to performance related fine art practice. The framework is both multi-perspectival and dynamic and conceptualizes how these relations operate and how they are affected under different conditions focusing on the occurrence of failure, embarrassment and mis-attention.

The idea of the relations between viewer and artwork as being a kind of contractual framing that has qualities of elasticity in the event of failure of the contract and operates as a coherent thread underlies the framework and the entire research. Other key



conceptual ideas comprise mis-attention and frames of attention, embarrassment and the live body as well as visual metaphors describing how these relations are affected, for example in 'unframing', 'trashing', 'stretching', 'break down', 'shifting' of frames and the idea of 'falling out' of the relationship altogether. Together this use of language in relation to this conceptual framework provides a transformative mechanism that could be applied to other areas of practice, as well as to analyse practical works or develop further questions around the relations between viewer and artwork.

In its novel contribution to discourses in the space between spectator and performer or artwork and viewer, the research offers a dynamic framework supported by a number of adopted key terms and their theoretical support (for example attention, the comic and laughter, self—consciousness, embarrassment), that have the effects of disrupting and disturbing idealist notions of that relationship. In this respect the relationship can be considered as a dynamic process of events and 'oscillation between states'. This approach attempts to take account of social, subjective and unpredictable events that may occur and arise from the subjectivity of the live bodies in relation to each other, whether they are the performer or spectator and where these events might otherwise be considered as embarrassments, mistakes or unpredictable and how attention, intention, representation and framing affect this dynamic. For example, one view of the relations between viewer and artwork is developed through a combination of the comic and its relations with laughter and ridicule, embarrassment and the live body. The practical framework could be extended further with the introduction of, and examination of other kinds of frames of attention which focus in on other particular aspects of the work.

In addition, this research has conceptualized the space between viewer and artwork from a new perspective that departs from previous approaches of spectatorship, reception studies and embodiment and thereby adds to gaps in these fields. Notions of spectatorship and embodiment do not necessarily take account for both aspects of objectivity and subjectivity in a theory of the space between viewer and artwork.

Subjective methodologies may not allow for an objective analysis of the work, and objective approaches may eschew subjective accounts. This study developed a set of practical concepts and methods which allowed the relations between viewer and artwork to be considered in objective terms, but without impinging on the subjective nature of the relationship between them.

The investigation makes a further contribution to this field in taking the counter-intuitive approach of 'looking away' to contribute an original approach so that the practical framework may be objectively applied but retains the integrity of the subjective element of those relations in the subjectivity of both viewer and performer and the affective qualities of that relationship. In doing this, issues that might not otherwise be considered as relevant in the discourses around the relations between viewer and artwork have been brought to attention, such as unintentional failure, failure in attention, self-consciousness, mistakes, embarrassment of the performer or spectator, and unpredictable laughter or ridicule. Further, in approaching these supposedly undesirable and normally avoided aspects of the relations between viewer and artwork, the research begins to open a critique of intentionality through discussing the affective responses that result from mis-management or non-management of attention in the presentation and experience of art.

There are also contributions to gaps in knowledge in fine art contexts and overlapping fields. These areas primarily concern the modalities of failure, embarrassment and mis-attention and also the notion of 'looking away'. In this study, the notion of attention emerged in the interrogation of 'mis-attention' and the research adds to discourses in the overlapping field of performance studies which itself has traditionally drawn on discourses in the phenomenology of perception where the nature of, or what, the content of the perceptual experience is, in other words what is being conveyed to the viewer, is the primary issue. As a current field of interest in performance studies, recent work in the field of the phenomenology of attention (Waldenfels, 2011) has shifted and widened these discourses in considering attention as the 'how' of such perceptual experiences, and the

viewer as an 'attendant' in relation to the performance (Sherman, 2016:12). The research has adopted aspects of these studies including the notion of 'originary' attention as a means of articulating the practical conceptualization of relations between viewer and artwork.

Further contributions arise in discourses on failure and embarrassment where there is an overlap with existing discourses associated with failure, for example as anthologised by curator Lisa Le Feuvre (2010, between performance-related fine art practices and theatre-based studies on failure in the work by Sara Jane Bailes in performance theatre and poetics (2011), and in the work of artist and performance maker, Tim Etchells<sup>66</sup>. In particular, the research considers failure in a novel and practical way, as an event that arises where expectations are not met in the dynamic relationship of the contract between viewer and artwork, rather than a fixed notion that is in binary opposition to the notion of success. In this way the research contributes to areas discussed in terms of how and where failure operates as 'mis-performance' in the field of performance studies and theatre-based discourses (Marin Blažević and Lada Čale Feldman, 2014). The research also contributes a practical approach to Rogoff's notion of 'looking away' as a theoretical notion which has political or philosophical implications in the field of visual and cultural studies.

The practical conceptualizations of viewer and artwork relations that have been uncovered in this project may be useful for further research. The works discussed are unlikely to be performed again, at least not in these forms, and are now an archive for use in reinterpreting and appropriating aspects of the research in the future. However, the practical concepts and methods and the multidimensional conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork are tangible outcomes that could potentially be

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<sup>66</sup> See [www.institute-of-failure.com/catalogue.html](http://www.institute-of-failure.com/catalogue.html) (accessed 26 August 2019)

applied or developed further as a model in different contexts or extended to a potentially wider application. The model cannot predict (unanticipated) outcomes, or the multiple possibilities of the multi-dimensionality of the relations between viewer and artwork, but proposes how the setting up of particular conditions has effects on the relative positions between intention, representation, framing and attention, and may be more likely to create unpredictable outcomes.

In reflecting on the research overall, the project has been an invaluable learning experience, even though it has been at times frustrating. The main achievement has been to find a way of capturing the messy nature of artistic research in an objective structure that is presented in the thesis. It has taken sustained interrogation and reflection of the practice in terms of both individual works and the whole body of work over the period of investigation to articulate and organize this structure through the development of pairs of practical concepts, methods and modalities of inquiry. The research project has also provided some ideas that have helped me examine my future artistic practice. What has struck me particularly in terms of the practical research is the seemingly minor methods in the work, that may have been otherwise overlooked, but were developed and applied back on themselves to interrogate the practice and reveal much wider implications than were expected. The practical conceptualization of the relations between viewer and artwork in terms of frames has been useful as an investigatory tool in this research and it would be of interest to develop this as an approach that considers wider and different framings in artistic practice, taking into account how they operate together through a driving tension.

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Figure 31: Cunningham, Merce and John Cage (2011). *Roaratoria*. [screenshot]. Next Wave Festival, BAM Howard Gilman Opera House. Merce Cunningham Dance Company at BAM HAMM Archives. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=15&v=gGHvnRtr3Tl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=gGHvnRtr3Tl) [accessed 3 October 2018].

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Figure 32: Niblock, Phill (2010). *The Movement of People Working*. [screenshot]. [online]. Pirelli Hangar Bicocca. Available at: <https://www.hangarbicocca.org/en/exhibition/phill-niblock-the-movement-of-people-working/> [accessed 18 October 2018].

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Figure 33: Chetwynd, Marvin Gaye (2014) *Brainbug*. [screenshot]. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwksSCAjog> [accessed 3 October 2018].

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Figure 34: Wilkes, Cathy (2008) *I Give You All My Money*. [screenshot]. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/turner-prize-2008-artists-cathy-wilkes> [accessed 18 October 2018]. Photo © Tate CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported)

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Figure 35: Barney, Matthew (1997) *Cremaster 5*. [screenshot]. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/barney-cremaster-5-t07572> [accessed 18 October 2018]. Photo © Tate CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported)



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