

# **Sonic Stuff**

## **Objects and Objectiles**



**Craig Wells**

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**Newcastle University; School of Arts and Cultures**



## Abstract

This thesis investigates the role of objects in creative practice as alluring and evocative materials that disrupt compositional intentions and trajectories. This research does not begin from music as a cultural text but rather from the deeper experiences of sound as resistant materials that animate experiential space with their own styles of atmosphere, ambience and inaudible-audible signatures. Working across and often at the peripheries of the theoretical disciplines of object orientated ontology and process philosophy I address the philosophical issue of how sounds and objects possess the potential to unsettle, agitate and reconfigure networks of relation.

Practice has informed a hybridisation of concepts derived from various disciplines, which are held together by threads of fictionalised prose that contribute alternative insights into the field of studio-based composition. This research employs a phenomenological method of reduction and at times an object orientated approach in theorising the autonomous life of sounds and objects. Dense descriptions of experiences, observations, thoughts and poetics form the basis for developing an informed creative treatise. Deviating descriptions of sensuous experiences are deployed throughout this research in order to find personal and meaningful ways of articulating sonic encounter.

What are the multiple contours of *Sonic Stuff*? Is there an identity of sonic potential? What tensions/relations occur between the composer, studio and sonic object? In what form does *Sonic Stuff* reveal and characterise experiential time and space? What do the concepts of the withdrawn and revealed afford an understanding of sonic objects and sound in-itself?



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**The ears reveal**

**An overgrown maze between bodies**

A maze that reflects **back** on it's own **sustain**

**With**

**Delaying** glances



## **Introduction**

*Sonic Stuff* is a dialogical concept that articulates my endeavour to speculate both sound in-itself and sound in relation to the immanence of the listening body, tracing sonic encounter and the impact of sensual objects as they assault, inhabit and orientate the body. Of particular importance is how composition and working with sound as a creative practitioner connects the composer to science, technologies and philosophy and synthesises these disciplines/materials without a care for academic boundaries. This synthesis affords an alternative perspective of these disciplines and breeds them into a mutant species of investigation; sonic ontology and sonic fiction converge as a poetics of the inaudible-audible, as an archaeology of the air and a theory of the intimate.

The conatus of my practical endeavours has been the incorporation of improvisation within the DAW, which has highlighted how ideas, forms and styles become mutated and manifest through negotiations with error and malfunction. Technologies are not merely a means of producing, mastering and disseminating sound, but rather active surfaces of resistance that afford, extend and amplify the compositional palette whilst infecting the body as a digital perceiver. Technologies are much more than instruments, gadgets or machines but rather active processes and mind-sets, which act as generative gene pool splicers that breed melodic lines and individual sonic trajectories. The composer does not impose forms onto sound but rather finds forms in sound and enters into an active relation of distributed agency with sounds, instruments and technologies.

A dialogical understanding of various cultural theories and branches of continental philosophy have supported an ever growing interest in the ecology of concepts and objects and how concepts and objects interact within the immediate experience of sound. A difficulty that I have encountered in articulating and theorising sonic experience is that I have to be in one state of mind to engage with sonic materials and another state of mind in order to comment upon those aesthetic engagements. The intersection of theory and practice has been a difficult terrain to navigate; reproducing the sensations of sonic experience in commentary often results in a cleavage of non-translation. As a creative practitioner, I prefer a practice of theory where ideas and concepts are manifest in action, a thinking with sounds and objects rather than thinking about them. This mode of praxis has allowed the creative and theoretical aspects of my

research a certain freedom to mutate and dictate their own directions; hence this research is not concerned with categorising sonic qualities or producing taxonomies of sonic objects. My encounters and experiments with sound have at times been barely translatable into language and can only be articulated through flights of imagination and fictionalised prose that border on the edge of naive realism. It is these fictionalised nuances that have been at the heart of my artistic efforts. Poetic shards stab the body of this thesis, muffling the enunciation of concepts and the written words begin to lend themselves to sonic effects; trills, bends, distortions, delays and fuzzes of concepts and theories. A sigh, a touch, a sound, a hesitation or a shift of direction through a *dérive* of *Sonic Stuff* is as important in its own right as the signification it is charged with conveying. This thesis is a witness to my own creative sounding(s), webbed with reflective theoretical embellishments and contemplations; it is a record of shifts in creative trajectories and the development and decay of sonic identities and eroding alter egos. What is essential is putting into language, however minimal or difficult that may be, the struggle for language and its failure in reproducing the intensities and sensations of sound upon the body. Defining, reflecting, intuiting and experimenting with sounds and objects are a means of extending the body's capabilities, experimenting with its tendencies, traits and habits in order to agitate problematics so that new concepts and a priori cartographies can be formed. The poetics of sonic experience do not advance in the same way that scientific study does, in that it is difficult to prove that one's experiences or findings are correct but what practice based research does afford is the development of alternative ways to listen and approach practice and ultimately contributes interesting and provocative insights to creative communities.

The theoretical foundation of this thesis is that sounds are not attached to minds or physical objects but exist independently whilst simultaneously producing flows of experiential times and spaces that the composer inhabits. Sounds cannot be reduced to secondary qualities, like colour or taste nor reduced to an effect of the sources that caused them; rather sounds are distinct, alluring sonic objectiles that multiply difference. In, *Alien Phenomenology*, Ian Bogost speculates how objects experience their world and caricatures of other objects and asks, what is it like to be a thing? It is important to stress that human access does not just caricature real objects as sensual objects but rather objects do this to one another beyond human access. Bogost attempts to grasp the phenomenology of things, his approach is not a metaphysics as such but more a thought experiment, a speculative realism of some sort that attempts to see the

world from the other side. Improvising with a sampler is not merely a connection of tool practice, rather it is a transferral of perception, and it is to hear the world as the sampler does. Humans are capable of leaving their shells and speculating from the other side. Becoming other is not a metaphor, it is to go beyond language, beyond signification into the realm of significance and to explore the differences that sounds, objects and technologies bring to the body. Creative practice and experimentation with objects is a way of developing a mode that unsettles the body, short circuiting intentionality and revealing experiences that at times violate expectations. The key theoretical thread that runs throughout this thesis is that the reality of sound in-itself always evades immanence, but the transcendence of sound in-itself can only be evidenced within immanence. Phenomenology reduces metaphysical realism to epistemological realism; from thing in-itself to phenomenon. Of specific interest, as a composer, improviser and listener are how the materiality of objects, things and stuff, push against ones will. Creative practice is located in surprise; when sounds, objects and creative processes present themselves as one expects, then intentionality is fulfilled, however if sounds, objects and creative processes do not present themselves as one expects, then intentionality is unfulfilled. This teratological liminal space of the breeching of expectations and the idea that there is always much more to discover about sound and objects than that which appears to human consciousness, continues to intrigue me.

## **Objects, Sound in-itself and Base Theories.**

The experiential listening body is entrained, sped up, slowed down and composed by the intensive tones of *Sonic Stuff*. Resonance entangles me and submerged hums guide my steps, my memories are imbedded in sounds fibres, woven to past events, actions and encounters. I am a bag of sound, immersed in sound, creating sound and moved by sound. The world of sound is already there before I reflect upon it; I am already hearing and listening before I think about hearing and listening. *Sonic Stuff* is the sensory labyrinth that undresses conventional notions of boundaries and limits, of inside and outside, and exposes the potentiality inherent in vibration. As I inhabit the rhythm of sound, it inhabits mine, creating a mesh of transitory throbs that fold into my skin and binds my body to objects, technologies, spaces and times through processes of experiential echoing.

Ontology has tended to approach the question of what entities exist and the categories and relations between entities from the position of what appears to the visual sense. Gaut and Lopez (2008) state that the etymology of the word aesthetic can be translated ‘to see’, derived from the Greek word aesthemi. When speculating the reality of objects one thinks of tangible solids whereas intangible and ephemeral sensations such as smell, taste and hearing have tended to be undermined in the long history of philosophical and perceptual inquiry. *Sonic Stuff* rattles the cavities of the skull, attacks the eardrums and body, shatters glass, shakes walls and floors and creates involuntary memory and bodily reflexes. An understanding of the body as immersed in an immanence of sonority that pours into the body from every conceivable angle is deceptive in that it reduces sound in-itself to the phenomena of sensual objects/qualities that are experienced as sensations and perceptions. This reduction undermines sound in-itself and reduces it to a correlate of the body rather than an autonomous force in-itself that acts beyond auditory detection and the body’s recognition of it. The ears are an extremely small portal into sounding reality.

There are frequent references throughout this thesis to sonic ‘objectiles’ and sonic ‘objects’ in relation to the processes of composition and therefore it is necessary to clarify distinctions and briefly outline my understanding of relevant discourse in this particular area of investigation. The term sonic objectile refers to the processes of



objective becoming and can be understood as event based; in contrast the term sonic object refers to recorded sounds, instruments, technologies and other creative materials. It is important to stress that all objects are virtualised as sonic objectiles, in that any object such as a brick, a piece of wood, a dust bin, a guitar or a fork can be deemed to have sonic potential. The experimental composer or improviser projects virtual potentiality onto every object encountered and actualises this virtual potential through creative engagements. An object never manifests all of its potential, there is always a surplus of potential and therefore engaging with materials in creative practice is a means of drawing out; extracting and synthesising an object's withdrawn potential and actualising the concealed qualities rather than merely those that are locally manifest.

Pierre Schaeffer (1966) proposed a concept of 'objet sonore', which borrowed extensively from Husserl's 'intentional object' and the phenomenological method of reduction. Schaeffer proposed that a sound object is an intentional representation of a sound detached from its event, source and context. The dislocation of sound from its source and context through the use of technological reproduction gave sound an independent identity, rather than sound being perceived as a quality it took on the form of an object. Schaeffer attempted to access sound in-itself and regain a renewed sense of sounds essence by bracketing out its context and reducing sound to listening alone. Schaeffer gave the sonic object an autonomy that allowed any sound to be compositional material, which was the compositional approach of 'musique concrete' and later developments of acousmatic and electroacoustic composition, which both develop along a Schaefferian continuum. 'In the Acousmatic Age there's nothing to see except the sound in its non-self' (Eshun 1998, p.12). Schaeffer afforded sound a certain degree of materiality distinct from sounds temporal relations, so that sonic objects were perceived beyond indexical relations to other objects. The sonic object promotes the fracturing of temporality, where the once transient and dynamic sonic 'objectile,' a term coined by Deleuze in *The Fold* (1993), is contained and crystallised as a sonic object, reduced to a mere caricature of a 'sonic objectile'. Schaeffer did the equivalent of looking at sound under a microscope; the dynamic sonic flows of reality are consolidated through recording processes into objects for examination and sounds are selected for their qualities alone. Reduced listening and sonic objects are correlates of one another that do not grant sound autonomy from the subject but rather reduce sound to human access alone. Schaeffer's concept of sonic object fails to give a full account of sound in-itself, nevertheless, 'musique concrete' was a revolutionary development in

the history of experimental music and continues to be an inspirational platform for compositional procedures. Of particular interest is the phenomenological method of reduction in order to apprehend what is given immanently to consciousness. Schaeffer bracketed in the ear and bracketed out sounds contextual relations, which appears as an aesthetic heightening of the auditory sense and an anaesthetic numbing of other bodily senses. If one were to bracket out sound from all relations, including the ear, which picks out certain sonic qualities relative to individual auditory dispositions, it may be possible to come to some understanding of what sound is in-itself.

Traditionally an object has been perceived as having a fixed identity, a stable substance of singular endurance with an abundance of manifest qualities that defines its phenomenal character. We perceive a reality populated with objects extended in space, set apart from one another as quantifiable and measureable. The hybridisation of Gilles Deleuze's concept of 'objectile', and Alfred North Whitehead's concept of 'super-ject' as outlined by Shaviro (2007) in chapter 2 of *Deleuze's Encounter With Whitehead*, provides an interesting entry point into the dynamic processes of studio-based composition. The conceptual synthesis of objectile and super-ject creates a third concept, which I have termed the *super-jectile*, which seeks to explain the site where composition becomes manifest as a teratological cluster of 'lines of flights' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004). Deleuze theorises the concept of objectile as,

The new status of the object no longer refers its condition to a spatial mold, in other words, to a relation of form matter, but to a temporary modulation that implies as much the beginnings of a continuous variation of matter as a continuous development of form (Deleuze, cited in Emergent Objects Design and Performance Research Cluster).

Whitehead's concept of super-ject can be broadly understood as the product of subjective experience, the difference between becoming and being, the subject is that which experiences and the super-ject is the product of subjective experience. The processes of subjective and objective becoming are located in experimental and improvisational practices; the product of this process is the emergence of a composition from the symbiosis of sensual objects in dialogue. The studio environment is an active ecology of sonic objects; sounds, instruments and technologies that animate and orientate creative trajectories through engagement and experimentation. The composer's actions and intentions are not an outcome of encounter with objects but rather emerge as the process of tracing objectiles and following their shifting qualities as they unfold and

mutate through time. Sonic objectiles are intensive dynamic flows of divergent and different lines of flight, where objective becoming withdraws in order to reveal sensual qualities that release varying intensities towards the body. 'The Bergsonian idea of a coexistence of very different 'durations', superior or inferior to 'ours', all of them in communication' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.263). Objectiles are a multiplicity of temporary states that undergo their own adventures and are always an assemblage of connections and networks but always exceed those connections and networks of relation.

The body adapts its positions and dispositions to accommodate sound and its intensity of inevitability and unpredictability. One does not immediately see or hear the river banks erode before one's eyes or ears, flowers blossom, the landscape change, buildings decay, humans age, the patina of paintings crack, however technology makes it is possible to speed up these rates of becoming so that one can detect the engines of difference as they unfold in a condensed temporal state. Frames, scenes, fractures and fragments are stitched together to give an alternative visual and auditory image of divergent durations of becoming that would usually be imperceptible or inaudible. It becomes apparent that the identity of anything has already been and gone and as soon one thinks that one knows something it becomes something completely different, hence identity is located in the past. The active ecology that supports objects maintains the illusion of their stable identity, simultaneously as the ecology changes so too does the identity of an object. The environment actualises and maintains certain properties and qualities of an object, a stability of ecological forces that prop it up for sensual encounter. The processes of composition are a larval flow of frequencies, timbres, technologies, instruments, infrasonics and ultrasonics, that all participate in a dynamic occasion of experience. It is important to stress that perception stabilises difference and experience reduces sound in-itself to sensual and perceptual phenomena. Every connection in a creative ecology is an immanent production of difference for the sake of production itself. This leads me to speculate that the processes of composition are very much a site of distributed agency, as the residues of actual entities infuse the subject, and sonic objectiles converge and connect at a core of intention to become a *superjectile*; the process of overlapping becomings that produce a composition. There is no single identity but always many, there is no singular state of being but a multiplicity of events and becomings; composers, technologies, sounds and other influential objects are connected in constellations of affects, that perpetually affect and become affected by one another. Affect cannot be attributed to a single object or subject but rather points to

the force of virtualities, of something yet to be actualised, an unstructured potential. ‘An affect is a non conscious experience of intensity, it's a moment of unformed and unstructured potential’ (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.58)

Throughout this thesis there are references to affects, percepts and concepts and therefore it is important to briefly outline the theoretical context in which I deploy them. Affects are situated as instances of becoming that pertain to bodily states of emotion and spirit, percepts are multi sensory perceptions and concepts are philosophical and poetical constructions. To clarify,

Affect is transmissible between bodies. Bodies resonate with the intensities they encounter, including those generated by media technologies; the power of many forms of media lies not so much in their ideological effects, but their ability to create affective resonances independent of context and meaning (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.58).

And to further clarify,

Percepts aren't perceptions, they're packets of sensations and relations that live on independently of whoever experiences them. Affects aren't feelings, they are becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them... affects, percepts and concepts are three inseparable forces, running from art into philosophy and from philosophy into art (Kozel 2012, p.215).

From the outset, this research has been infused by an interest in visual-auditory, subject-object, and human-non-human dichotomies. For much of the 19th and early 20th century Kantian thought dominated philosophical enquiry. According to this paradigm, the world of objects was nothing more than a product of the subject and human cognition, objects were deemed to be inanimate and mind dependent. According to Kant humans could have no knowledge of things-in-themselves, which are distinct from the phenomenon of objects as they appear to the senses or observer. The notion of things-in-themselves posited a deeper realm of reality where essences lurked behind the appearance of objects and as such were concealed by phenomenon. Nevertheless Kant seemed committed to the possibility of two realms of an object; one unknowable and non-spatial and the other knowable and spatial. This distinction is the difference between the ground of that which appears and appearance; a thing-in-itself can be considered ‘noumenon’ whereas the appearance of a thing is the ‘phenomenon’ (Gaut and Lopez 2008). A metaphysical distinction between ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ properties of things defines the two realms of an object. When Kant distinguished a

thing-in-itself from appearance he was proposing that 'a thing' has 'intrinsic' properties and 'that thing' of observation and human experience has 'extrinsic properties'. In short, things-in-themselves have no relations and therefore are unknowable whereas appearances and experiences are relational and therefore knowable. 'Intrinsic' properties are understood as isolated whereas 'extrinsic properties' are understood as social in that they relate to humans through the senses and perception (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). Quentin Meillassoux has described this view as 'correlationism', by which he means that 'we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from each other... every philosophy that disavows naive realism has become a variant of correlationism' (2009, p.5). Meillassoux (2009) believes that one can dig deeper into the primary realm of things-in-themselves rather than how they manifest in perception and goes on to speculate a pre-human reality, and introduces an un-correlated approach that he terms the 'ancestral realm,' that locates a reality of things and events that precede human consciousness. For Meillassoux 'correlationism' limits access to what occurs between being and thinking and states that this bind has been thought unable to be exceeded, in order to think about subjectivity one must include objectivity and vice versa. Sparrow (2004, p.86) explores how Meillassoux argues against the contemporary notion of transcending towards the world and posits it as the relativising of experience. It is an interesting premise that Meillassoux puts forward, but what does a 'noumenon' world that precedes consciousness have to do with composers and listeners? If one does not experience this noumenon world, then how can one explain it and even posit that it exists? But this very notion is the 'correlationist' view; whatever is not experienced is not worth investigating. It is important to stress that Meillassoux does not reject correlations but proposes that we take the human out of the equation and open thought to what he terms the 'great outdoors' (Sparrow 2014, p.87-90).

Object-orientated approaches depart from the primacy of the subject and propose that objects exist independently of human perception; the human is simply another object amongst objects, so ending subjective incarceration and the belief that human access is at the centre of being, organising and regulating it. There are two approaches to the object-orientated approach that are deployed throughout this thesis and used as tools to probe the notion of sound in-itself and the sonic objectiles of phenomenal experience, that of Graham Harman and Levi Bryant. The work of these two philosophers has been prolific and I am still very much in the process of working through their thoughts and

speculations and drawing theoretical inspiration from their approaches in order to clarify an understanding of sound and compositional processes regarding assemblages of objects and distributed agency. For both Harman and Bryant, phenomenology is a philosophy that posits that reality is processed through a human filter, whether perceptual, cognitive or practical. Our encounters with objects are always experienced through the lens of humanity and hence we can have no knowledge of the thing-in-itself (sound in-itself).

Object orientated philosophy is alchemy for describing the transformations of one entity into another or for outlining the ways that an object can seduce or destroy humans and non-humans alike (Harman 2009, p.55)

Harman re-presents Husserl's 'intentional objects' as 'sensual objects' with 'sensual qualities' and explores the relations that objects display at different times and how objects appear to us whilst at the same time remain distinct from their shifting 'sensual qualities'. For Harman the 'intentional object' relation is such that objects always refer to other objects and every relation results in a sensual caricature. For Harman all objects are capable of intentionality and are reduced by one another and humans to sensual presences of phenomena. Harman speculates that all objects interact as indirect causality, whereby real objects (things-in-themselves) only relate through further relations with 'intentional objects' or 'sensual objects'. The problem that Harman speculates is that if objects are autonomous from one another and their real properties can never be grasped by another 'real object' how is it possible for them to interact at all? Harman's answer is 'vicarious causation'. In the sense, 'real objects' are always withdrawn from one another; all 'real objects' are an autonomous reality that is different from their 'sensual qualities', 'real objects' do not relate causally but only at the peripheries of their sensual surfaces. For Harman only 'sensual objects' genuinely interact, and thus all causation can be understood as an aesthetic act. As such the interaction of objects are an action at a distance or causally 'vicarious' in that they are mediated by a third object of intentionality through which they relate, both subject and object inhabit the interior of the total intentional relation (Sparrow 2014, p.114-139). In *Alien Phenomenology*, Ian Bogost proposes that objects are ready and present for one another as much as they are for humans. Harman (2010) argues that objects have the capacity to withdraw and reveal certain 'sensual qualities' towards one another but believes that we can never know things-in-themselves or rather 'real objects' because they are forever withdrawn

into ‘subterranean machinery’, objects are the primary reality that exist autonomously of human cognition.

Levi Bryant flattens ontology and proposes that both cultural and imaginary objects are real. Bryant explores the power of objects and the different types of dynamics and fluctuations that occur between objects beyond human access to them. Bryant’s concept of ‘onticology’ makes some interesting and important points; the qualities of an object are not something that an object has but rather what an object does (object power); objects are ‘acts’ rather than things that possess qualities; objects are always in excess of their actuality and local manifestations and possess a reserve of potentiality. Bryant locates difference as an immanent flow of experience and it is the task of music and art to produce differences that may appear to be transcendent but are simply produced by the flow of differences, they are not intentions in a mind, but rather relations between becomings and differences as they meet indeterminably. Chance breed’s difference and aesthetics are simply objects in dialogue. For Bryant (2010) objects are difference engines and he theorises that the proper being of objects is their ‘virtual potential’ rather than their ‘actuality’, an object never actualises its totality of powers as it locally manifests. This onticological stance addresses the difference that objects contribute to existence and how objects produce differences and act out their differences.

Bryant affords creative practice the notion of ‘teasing out the imperceptibles’ and negotiating with materials beyond the citadel of the self. Bryant’s approach borrows extensively from the new materialism of Deleuze, which situates a democracy of expression; both human and non-human becomings flow into one another and carve one another up. In relation to composition, embellishments of ‘wilderness ontology’ as proposed by Bryant (2011), offers a way of approaching audibility and its concealed contours, by mining not what is actually manifest to the immanence of the body but rather what can actuality and the inaudible world become through an active dialectic of virtual potentialities. Bryant’s comments on difference, as a mechanism for breeding or multiplying further difference, continue to intrigue me. He explains a causality of transformation and how aesthetic contours mutate and manifest at the peripheries of actuality; the bleeding of virtual flows act as activators of difference. It is evident that the object-oriented approach is a development/extension of phenomenology, which to some extent has been infused with a Deleuzian transcendental empiricism. Traditional empiricism has always been committed to immanence; any idea or concept that we use

to explain experience is an event within experience. The problem arises when we locate experience as immanent to an object or subject and begin to define experience as 'human experience' and conceptualise experience as what is present to us, as what is actual and in doing so we fail to recognise that we are nothing more than events within a much broader field of experience that extends way beyond the egocentric position and what we know. An essential aspect of Deleuze's empiricism is that we do not understand experience from some ultimate subject/being but rather there is a multiplicity of experience in which any being/event/idea is affected, transformed and infected. Deleuze uncovered the error of transcendence, in that it is to think that there is a world 'outside' that we feel the need to represent through an order of signs. Instead, for Deleuze and Bryant, all life is a flow of signs, a play of signs that swarm and interact amongst themselves, each perception is a sign of what lies beyond and there is no ultimate level of referents that lay beneath signs. Useful and inspirational is Bryant's expansion, in that perception is neither actual nor virtual but rather a liminal activator that brings actuality out of the virtual and therefore the body is situated as the becoming of experience and perception. The recalcitrance to situate images, becomings as housed within a privileged image, subject or brain is what makes empiricism transcendental, it allows empiricism to act out as a transcendental field, a field that does not set itself up inside or outside the given in a grand tower of judgement. If I attempt to reduce the complexity of these concepts I arrive at a condensed notion with a high potency, which is Life, a life, a singularity that we all share before identity gives singularity differences is nothing more than the actual and virtual in rhythm and each flow of experience that a body happens to be caught up in always becomes other to what it is not. The error of thought and a fundamental illusion that has occupied philosophy since antiquity is the notion of transcendence; where we begin from a given foundational judgment that acts as an outside, where we set up an interior and an exterior. In the simplest sense, the habitus and ego are nothing more than a habit of saying I. Bryant's impressions afford creative practice an understanding that music, art and fiction are events/acts that should make life more complex, that should multiply affects and intensities beyond the rational and pre-given schematics of idealism and the pre-ordained. Sounds are no longer indexical signifiers but rather material acts that have withdrawn contours that can be amplified and augmented and on encountering sounds they unleash certain qualities of the body that would have remained unknown to the subject. There are experiences that flow in every direction and are modulating into actuality and instigating virtuality, these experiences are connected like a machine with a series of inputs and outputs that



form the image of a body that contemplates these connections and mistakenly sees itself as the author of these connections. Sound therefore is a contemplation in itself- an echo of ideas, a perception. It is not that I have ideas about sound or that I contemplate sound but rather sound is an idea; it is contemplation, a perception with a force of intensities that tangle up with other flows of differences in the immediate. The body is a tunnel into which some experiences flow whilst other experiences flow into other tunnels, into other bodies. As a creative practitioner all that I can do is attempt to open my tunnel up to alternative flows, to be nomadic with its placement, in the sense that potential becomes its place, and it is that which is the attraction of the audible. Through a Bryantian lens of investigation composition can be understood as a process of extracting musical sounds from ordinary non-musical objects, mining for potentiality, revealing the withdrawn, transforming the familiar into the obscure and alien and following the material imperatives into the nomadic and what Bryant terms ‘wilderness ontology’ and allowing the allure of potentiality to guide direction.

An object-orientated approach may come across as a vitalism of materials, in that one imprecisely projects a living nature onto all objects, but it is far from this, rather than merely focusing on the similarities of objects and humans, an object-orientated approach draws attention towards the differences that are inherent in objects, as objects reveal and withdraw certain qualities not only to humans but also to one another. Objects construct their own worlds, act and translate their own experiences of relations with other objects. How do sounds construct their own worlds? What is sound in-itself? Bryant proposed that objects have a reserve or rather a surplus of potential that is not locally manifest to human experience, in that it does not reveal itself as phenomenon. Is it necessary to think of sound as having surplus or hidden potential and how can we speculate this surplus of potential if it cannot be encountered as sonic phenomenon? This leads me to speculate that sound in-itself is the reserve or surplus of audibility and hence must be inaudible or imperceptible to the senses. It may appear that I am constructing something from an absence, or rather positing that sound has an inaudible sphere likened to what Harman would term sounds withdrawal into-itself. If one takes the phenomenological notion of bracketing out the source, context and event from which sound emerged even further and bracketed out the ear, what would one be left with? Harman’s real object of sound in-itself, is an abstract idea of sound without any relation; the inaudible, formless non-sound. The teetering imperceptibles beyond the sensual domain?

One can sense a sound's presence without it being audible, especially in relation to infrasound and submerged low level frequencies. Harman states that all real objects perceive a caricature of other real objects as sensual objects with sensual qualities. If one were to reduce sound to its minimum relation; the medium through which it travels, is this to say that a vibration at a source experiences a caricature of the medium, or that the medium experiences a caricature of the source vibration? If one were to take away the medium of sound what would one be left with? Vibration in-itself? Pushing phenomenological reduction to its extreme, what would sound be without relation? Un-contoured noise or inaudible duration without interruption? When sound is no longer attributed to a thinking subject or object in space, one gets a sense of sound in-itself, not as perceived actually but rather of what is produced or given from a virtual flow of vibrations, a 'pure affect' (Deleuze, cited in Colebrook 2002, p.59) of sensation that is not referred to any object or body. However, perceptual experience and encounter with the sounding world are such that one does not hear a sound for what it is but rather hears one's self through sound. The immanence of sound to the body is the realm of sensual objects and qualities that appear to pour into the body and enfold it in sonority whereas sound in-itself is immanence in or to-itself. Deleuze's notion of immanence to itself is the 'the plane of pure immanence' (Deleuze, cited in Colebrook 2002, p.74-77), where sound in-itself is without subject, object, inside or outside, a multiplicity of undifferentiated forces and intensities of vibration prior to perception and the thinking subject who stabilises these flows of difference into a stability of sonic objects, organised forms and conceptual schemas. To posit reality as the phenomena of experience and encounter through sensations and perceptions is to posit sound as a sensual object. To posit sound in-itself, as noumenon that is not experienced is to posit sound as an unformatted difference or rather as an alternative dimension to the reality that we inhabit. Creative practice and experimental composition draws out the qualities that are not locally manifest, teases out new experiences, disrupts intentionality and amplifies the qualities of objects that are locally manifest so that they become more potent and perceptible. The studio-based composer is an extractor and synthesiser of qualities who magnifies the teetering imperceptibles, which are composed into tapestries and meshes of crosscurrent sensual objects. Objects withdraw from access which means that an object's very own parts cannot access its own inner cavity, a strange irreduction of objects; in which an object is neither reducible to its qualities/parts nor its whole. A studio is made up of screens,

speakers, technologies, instruments and bodies but none of these objects alone embody the studio, the studio is an assemblage of these parts but cannot be reduced to those parts, a space of action that cannot be reduced to its contents. Undermining objects in thought or practice, with heat, water, electricity or the force of time does not mine the withdrawn essence of an object. Some objects are perceived as more real than others, when I see a guitar or play the violin it becomes what it is, it becomes real when in use, when it comes into contact with a more real entity; this is the overmining of objects. The overmining or undermining of objects either absorbs and eats up objects into larger objects or breaks them down into fragments and parts. Each object in the studio has a potential infinite regress of other objects and around each object there is a potentially infinite progress of other objects. There is nothing to stop a group of objects from forming a larger and more potent object; objects forge their own alliances; just as the studio is a society of wires, sockets and interfaces, each object is a world into itself, each object is its own earth and every connection between objects creates alternative sensual objects. All objects are contained within other objects and contain objects but at the same time have autonomy. Of particular interest is that if objects cannot be overmined or undermined, then there is no foundational object, there is no object from which all other objects can be reduced or produced. This leads me to propose that there is no environment distinct from objects and that all connections between objects are emergent properties of objects themselves (objects as different engines), from which follows the notion that objects do not sit in a container of space and time but rather space and time emanate from objects and their emergent qualities, objects are time and space acts. As explained, objects are withdrawn from in-themselves, an object is itself and at the same time not itself, or rather there is an active fissure between an object's essence and its appearance within an object as well as between networks of objects. This fissure is similar to substance and accident, which is the premise of ontology, in this view objects are like volcanoes with exciting surface contours, colours and eruptions but have an inner substance that is never encountered, an essence of molten larvae. Sonic objectiles are the emergence of experiential time and space, they are zones that are already happening, that we find ourselves tangled up in; sitting in the park on an autumn afternoon and hearing the chatter of birds and people, watching the shadows of the trees grow tall across the grass, these are zones of sensation where causality weaves between autonomous zones that converge and overlap and implement the body in the becoming of experience. If a sound or object is both itself and not itself, both appearance and essence then it is the fragility of this

fissure that affords the possibility for transformation and invention and when this rift collapses this is where destruction and death are located. When a sound decays into frequencies beyond human hearing, it has not ceased to act or exist, but to the human ear its appearance has decayed into its essence, into-itself as it emanates zones beyond human perception and sensation. New objects are born, in the fissures of rupture, when objects break, malfunction or error arises, when the structure of objects cannot handle the power and intensity of other objects. It is the inconsistencies of objects and their fragile zones that mark the flow of existence, where experiential time becomes perceivable. To compose is to improvise with the qualities of causality, to extract zones of qualities from sensual objects that form new autonomous zones that undergo further adventures. All objects, sounds, things, instruments, appearances, substances, accidents, qualities and relations radiate zones and horizons of aesthetic and causal durations; flows of affects, percepts and concepts which the experiential body is always falling into, always tripping over into new experiences, becoming experience.

The events and processes of sonic experience can be clarified with a brief outline of Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy, with particular with reference to his concepts of super-ject, eternal objects as discussed by Shaviro (2007), and actual entities. Whitehead identifies reality with change and development through the actualisation of potential within occasions and events. Actual entities are occasional entities that are the basic reality of temporality and experiential phenomenon that shapes the subject. Reality is the intermingling of actual entities; substances, occasions and encounters that form subjectivity and chisel away the processes of individuation. The experiential body is shaped through the passing actualities of reality. We find ourselves passing through the world, through its many durations of becoming, amongst the elements. The dynamic interplay of actual entities and the eternal object is a process that produces the super-ject. The subject can be understood as the creative process of change and the super-ject can be understood as the created product of change. The subject can be understood as experiencing and the super-ject the crystallisation of certain qualities of subjective experience. Eternal objects are potentials that humans unleash into actual entities in order to characterise experience. Eternal objects are a synthesis in a process of abstraction from prior experience, where certain qualities of actual entities reside within us and to some extent are eternally transformed through each occasion of encounter. Eternal objects are sensory qualities, tactile sensations, conceptual abstractions and moral and ethical qualities that allude to the way that a feeling feels,

emotion, intensity, pleasure or pain. Eternal objects are ideal abstractions from prior experience of actual entities that are selected and projected onto present and future actual entities. An eternal object is always a pure potentiality for actual entities and every occasion is determined by the impression of the pure potentials of eternal objects and the real potentials of actual entities. Each actual entity or occasion is caricatured through the selection or rejection of eternal objects.

Eternal objects are similar to the virtual, in that even though eternal objects are real they are very different from actual entities, virtualities are not actualities, they are not causally determined and cannot make things happen in isolation but only in relation to an actual entity or occasion' (Shaviro, 2007).

When the potentiality of an eternal object is realised within an occasion, it contributes and defines that occasion and gives it character. The studio is a womb of actual entities and the body is fractured into multiple listening positions, a hydra head space of eternal objects each with a cave of virtualities that probe the sensual surfaces of objects and sounds, mining for concealed differences and amplifying the imperceptibles. The body's immediate encounter with sound is shaped and characterised by eternal objects that are projected through listening in order to reduce difference, and to come to some understanding of sounds indexical relations with objects and bodies. The eternal object can be understood as an object of eternal difference that is continually updated and altered from abstract entities that synthesise the qualities of actual entities into unified experiences.

In order to investigate the processes involved in composition it is important to make clear the distinctions between visual and auditory senses. I am not attempting to give the auditory sense dominance but rather draw attention to the differences that sonic experience can contribute to philosophical understandings of sensation and perceptual experience. The visual sense (seeing and looking) has tended to take precedence over the auditory sense (hearing and listening) that has generally been regarded as secondary senses. The visual world has often been thought of as object based and the auditory world as event based. A number of contemporary thinkers have made interesting distinctions between the visual and auditory senses. Tim Ingold (2011) addresses the power and importance of the auditory sense and makes a distinction between how we observe visually and participate aurally. He proposes

Vision yields a knowledge that is rational, detached, analytical and atomistic whereas hearing draws the world into the perceiver and yields a knowledge that is intuitive, engaged, synthetic and holistic' (Ingold 2011, p.245).

In support of this position, Don Ihde highlights how 'vision objectifies and sound personifies', and reminds us that the word person is derived from the Latin verb 'personare', literally translating 'to sound through' (Ihde (1976) cited in Ingold 2011, p.246). Walter Ong adds further support to the importance of the auditory sense by stating that, sight isolates and sound incorporates.

Sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance whereas sound pours into the hearer...vision comes to a human being from one direction at a time... When I hear however I gather sound from every direction at once; I am at the centre of my auditory world, which envelops me, establishing me at a core of sensation and existence. You can immerse yourself in hearing, in sound. There is no way to immerse yourself similarly in sight (Ong (1982) cited in Ingold 2011, p.249).

These theorists establish that the visual sense is extensive and schematises reality as quantifiable, it sees a caricature of reality spread out before, closes the world into actualised forms and stable terrains and situates the perceiver at a distance from what is perceived. The auditory sense is intensive and sound is drawn into the perceiver as qualitative affect, it opens up worlds of dynamic fluxes and virtual trajectories without stable terrains and unfolds an intimate fiction within.

My concept of *Sonic Stuff* takes into account non-human expressivity and the power of objects as alluring materials with vibrant inner cores that can withdraw and reveal alternative qualities, sensations and intensities to the experiential body. *Sonic Stuff* explores how sonic objects and sonic objectiles act out their own qualities and how the composers intention is not something that the composer directs towards objects but rather intention is teased out from the body; connecting to different becomings that produce difference and generate creative 'lines of flight'. Sound animates the composer before the composer attempts to carve forms into sounds flowing air pressures. Every encounter with *Sonic Stuff* is affective and aesthetic and the studio environment is an assemblage of dynamic objectiles that distribute agency and mutate creative trajectories as the process of composition becomes manifest as a *super-jectile*; the colliding styles of techno objects, sonic objects, eternal objects and the fleshy tendencies of the body all communicate in active modes of dialogue.

The music can resound on the surfaces of the drums and in the throats of the trumpets

and saxophones, it can pervade the space before us, it can reverberate in our ears or it can rumble in our bodies not as something specifically acoustic but as visceral stridency, a harmonious quiescence or vital throbbing (Lingis 1998, p.28).

### **Bric-a-Brac Teratology**

Composition, in itself and the procedures of joining together never stop anticipating their own development and keep us waiting in some way for the result, or outcome- of their order, their calculations and their music o-logic (Nancy 2007, p.66).

Improvisation is an act that is likened to randomly flicking ink onto paper, whilst the process of composition blurs these dotted entrails with a sweeping hand gesture. The ink and paper offer themselves to the composer as action, the motor intentionality of the arm, wrist and fingers are irreducible to any act of subjectivity. The ink finds its own settlement upon the paper and the composer works with connecting these settlements as dwellings for material expression. Sound reveals transition, transformation and distributes its own properties of difference before the composer even attempts to tame sonic projectiles as terrains for expression and signification. Composers are drawn to the potency of potential; desires are produced in sounds, pitches and volumes, not in terms of a lack or loss but rather the desire for aimless metamorphosis. Sound infects the body, the body crumples itself into Eros and the ears hunt for logos. Listening is transformation, it is to become the experience; the gestures, tears, laughter, sounds and dancing movements are not acts or simply something that the body does but rather the body is a region where sounds transform themselves into musicality, where noise becomes sonority and sonority becomes place. Being amongst objects is the throb of desires in motion that express a drive for contagion, to touch everything that the body is not, as it drifts in the excesses of experience and dissolves regulated cartographies into exaggerated stridencies, the body always surprises itself through its tendencies, impulses and intentions. Composition is the irresistible pull of 'non-time' against a reinforced succession of identities, a plasticity of dispositions that fabricate the 'I' and the 'me', there is no-body that experiences, there is no self at the driving seat, there is simply experience amongst experience.

The street enters into a composition with the horse, just as the dying rat enters into a composition with the air, and the beast and the full moon enter into a composition with each other (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.289).

### ***Compositional Alliances***

The processes of composition are always concerned with forging alliances with objects, spaces and techno assemblages. Creative practice is agitated in the sphere of symbiosis and involution, as object, subject and space slip inside one another and the heterogeneous elements find relation through their own intentions, 'that brings into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.263). In the studio environment all objects possess expressivity and offer themselves to the body as action.

To figure the generative source of effects, as a swarm is to see human intentions as always in competition and confederation with many other strivings, for an intention is like a pebble thrown into a pond, or an electrical current sent through a wire or neural network. It vibrates and merges with other currents, to affect and be affected (Bennett 2010, p.33).

Every object becomes something audible even before it has sounded. Perception is a vital encounter, something happens and something unfolds and every actual object has a plurality of virtual events that ripple around it and allure intention and action. The composer does not perceive objects as fixed and stable but rather as actualities of embodied potential in their processuality and plurality of virtual nodes of action, as the past and future are held in a material fold of allure. The mute button has its position as the master of ceremonies in networks of noise, it has the power to end the playback, to halt the feed and reverse the stream of sound back into itself. Acoustic forests splash incorporeal events as a kick drum finds an alliance with a snare and the snare finds an alliance with a high hat. Alliances always induce the propulsion of the body, altering its mechanisms of grounding, footing and earthing. The composer builds alliances with dislocations, sample snatching(s); severing sounds from their sources and attempting to disconnect dispositions from the body; for the body to encounter sound without the ingression of perceptual and cognitive capacities; contentless intention, an unformatted ear that only hears what is present within its range, what is given to the auditory sense as a direct expression of intensity, as pure sound and real vibration. Bruno Latour talks about networks of relations and actors; composition is concerned with networks of sensations and occasions that have their romances with de-formations and dis-arrangements rather than arrangements and stability.

### ***Sounds Demand***

In, *The Imperatives*, Alphonso Lingis theorises levels as the withdrawn depths of



objects that allure and expand the body through the imperatives of materials that proliferate incorporeal events and animate perceptual folds. Lingis proposes that levels draw the body towards the object in-itself. Sound summons and listening catches onto it and follows its de-composing trajectory as it withdraws into its inaudibility. ‘The idea of a trajectory, a directionality or movement away from somewhere even if the towards-which it moves is obscure or even absent’ (Bennett 2010, p.32). Sound-in-itself is never encountered rather it is always becoming a sensual object whilst at the same time becoming in-itself imperceptible, as all relations disintegrate and sound decays into the distance. The brontide of low distant rumbles of thunder are the earth’s vocal contribution to the body, the earth sets the levels of sonority and subsequently composition resets the levels; faders are zeroed and headspace prevails. The meshes suspend the webbing of the ears filtration system; certain frequencies and indexical signals are suspended like hollow shrines, signifiers without any significance. The body is a spirit level that adjusts its anchorage to the surrounding sonic levels and finds its optimum position for the detection of sensations.

The levels are not a framework of a field we find already there as soon as we awaken, they emerge from sensory elements, as directives that summon, by following them a field unfolds (Lingis 1998, p.37).

### ***The Body***

The composer intuits spaces of potentiality in levels of sonic attraction, which always allude to an excess of sonic experience. The sonic horizons of actuality meet the horizons of the body’s virtual capacities, which open fields of crosscurrent affects, percepts and concepts. Eternal objects fumble with the body’s conceptual cartography, spread out like a flat map upon a table as they process sensations and communicate to the body how they feel or how they are supposed to feel. Levels of intensity stutter episodic tremors into the rhythm of breath and remembrance of the body, as it waits with its sensitive parts, its critical points, the ears are open to the vividness of sound, hoping for un-diluted phenomena so that the body can dehisce smoothly.

Once we hear something, we are henceforth open to a level of resounding reality; every subsequent sound and silence will be a crest or trough along its level (Lingis, 2008, p35).

Experience is active and productive and unfolds as the fleeting, wandering and transient, as the tensions between sensual objects and sensual qualities curate the experiential

field that resonates within the body at varying levels of concentration,

Our bodies perceive and move in a field, in stylising, their positions and initiatives picks up the style of the field, catch onto its levels and follows its directives (Lingis, 1998, p35)... the contingency of the sensuous element is in the very fullness and abundance of the present that plugs up the horizons, the future (Lingis 1998, p.19).

*Sonic Stuff* produces experiential space and time, which makes it an exosomatic material for memory from which the listener can retrieve historical socio-cultural content. Scientists have recently discovered that sound can recover memories in brain trauma and Alzheimer sufferers. *Sonic Stuff* is a material that restores narrative and autobiographical memories and pitch perception is an effective stimulus for recovering memory as sound plays out the narratives of a lifetime.

Informatic noise, then, is comprised of permanent reverberations of the past, the affective ricochet of a vibrating archive in which present action must take place, but equally is made of resonances of the future (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.70).

In a Deleuzian sense, to repeat the past is to repeat difference, to relive the intensities of past encounters at varying levels of vividness. The past is in production just as much as the present, whilst the past always stretches forward into an unknown future. Memory interrupts the actual present, because memory is real, just like fiction and imagination, it exists virtually in the present. Time is inner and outer, virtual and actual durations flow into one another, inform one another and create divergent flights across one another. Creative practice has for a long time been understood as is in-action, in time, whereas theory is on-action. In, *Time and Interaction; research through non visual arts and media*, Henrik Frisk proposes a distinction between 'in time' processes and 'over time' processes which closely relate to notions of reflection 'in' and reflection 'on' action, whilst highlighting the blurred relation between practice and theory. Frisk states that there is a difference between reflection upon the research object as a whole (outside time) and reflection on the research object as it unfolds and mutates (in time). It has become evident that objects, bodies, sounds, words, theories, concepts, affects and percepts are all performances that be understood as objectiles, as events that perpetually mutate through the shifting occasions of experience. It is precisely the discontinuities and the non-synchronicity of events and the varying speeds of becomings of objectiles in time that make time perceptible. Without the breaks, cracks, errors and fissures experiential time would remain hidden or illegible. The body has an

outwards listening that relates to the sounds of others as they disclose 'in time' and an inwards listening to past encounters, experiences and memories. In-time listening and out-of-time listening interact with one another, transform one another and characterise the individual auditory field.

Sonorous time takes place immediately according to a completely different dimension, which is not that of simple succession. It is present in waves on a swell, not in a point on a line; it is a time that opens up, that is hollowed out, that is enlarged or ramified, that envelops or separates, that becomes or is turned into a loop, that stretches out or contracts, and so on. The sonorous present is the result of space time; its spreads through space, or rather opens a space that is its own, the very spreading out of its resonance, its expansion and its reverberation (Nancy 2007, p.13).

### *Contemplations on Temporality*

Time is mapped by the intervals between objects and the body's movements between these intervals. The body follows the sensual elements into a derive of qualities and occasions, which expand experiential fields, which in turn enfold as the body involutes their styles.

When a sound field is not uniform, moving through it converts spatial differences into temporal differences. As listeners move through the space, they hear spatial difference as temporal changes' (Blessner and Salter, 2007, p44).

Sound reveals different and divergent durations and becomings, the virtuality of time opens a portal that points to the un-thought, unseen and un-sounded, the not yet actualised. The eternal object is in continuous production; the past is always re-animated, reinvented and projected into present occasions and waits to characterise future sonic encounters.

Our existence in the present increasingly takes on the performance of a virtual already actualised and merely held in abeyance as future shadow, a multiplicity of footsteps already laid out by our temporal avatar (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.71).

The experiential sound of time and the sound before our time; the nature of time, time-tracing backwards to the beginning of time; time is woven into the fabric of the cosmos, feeling the presence of the past, the cyclical rising and setting of the sun and the waxing and waning of the moon is the rhythmic heartbeat that marks the passage of time, the deep time that shapes the universe, the way that time plays out, connecting us to alternative time zones, time as it unfolds reveals that nothing lasts forever, time plays out as a vivid framing, the arrow of time, permanent change and decay, building

change upon change, explosive depths that pass through distant eras, time is the currency, how we spend our time, stolen time, lost time, how we waste our time, all we need are more hours in the day, before your time, time to forget, killing time, keeping time, time capsules, time heals, time of your life, time difference, from time to time, time to remember, time keeping, out of time, I thank you for your time, turn back time, hard times. Every sound articulates an impression of the presence of time upon the body, time speaks through the language of vibration and vibrations speak through the language of sounds and echoes. The body is an experiential assemblage of sonic timings, historical resonant utterances that swarm through the fleshy membranes of the body and nest in the eternal objects, dividing and multiplying, hatching expectations into virtual probes that sweep the sensual surfaces of instruments and spaces.

The vibration of time is itself in the stroke of a present that presents it by separating it from itself, freeing it from its simple stanza to make it into scansion. Thus rhythm separates the succession of the linearity of the sequence or length of time; it bends time to give it to time itself (Nancy 2008, p.17).

Sound is an indexical temporal object; it always refers to a multiplicity of occasions and materials in relations of tensions that proliferate sound without limit. Sound is never contained within a place or space but rather bleeds the thresholds and boundaries of places and spaces. The seeping corpus is the mixing console, the limbs are the faders, the body has its tempo, swung rhythms and staggered drifts, the conceptual cartographies with their virtual volcanoes are akin to a sampler with legs that moves of its own accord and hears reality through its own funnelled experiences. Experiencing sound and objects can be likened to an ice cream cone whose immediate point of encounter has an expanding history behind its entrance. The tip of the present is a concrescence of actual entities that are fused together in an instance, into an experiential moment, the funnelling cone that expands from the tip is the region of decaying memories and zones of virtual capacities of potential. The cone is not a storage device where memories await to be replayed like old cassettes, rather the cone is the confrontation of actuality on the body, where memories descend down to the tip, towards action, towards the point of the present and the present ascends up into the funnel of the cone. The composer and improviser constantly attaches and detaches to the present; each arrival and departure creates difference, retention is invention as the body leaps between temporalities. Composers are time bandits and sounds and objects are difference engines.

Tones disengage from the surfaces upon which they were vibrating and weave into the space between us and the instruments. Our hearing begins another movement, from one tone to the next in a lyrical space that dilates and condenses, expands over a vast horizon, approaches from distances, the tones materialise emergences, events and destinies (Lingis 1998, p.106).

Sound spills atmosphere and ambience from one region to another and guides the body into territories through the curiosity of the unseen or unheard. To experience sonic objectiles is not only to experience the immediacy of the moment but also to experience the passing moment; sound as the just was and the just about to be, as its sensual qualities ruffle up gradients of prophetic hieroglyphs that animate the withdrawn cavities of the body. The eternal object can be understood as an eternal difference that is upgraded by actualities that become virtualities, which in turn become actualities through the unleashing of potentialities in improvisational and experimental practices.

There is nothing more alluring than the barely audible, the faint, ghostly formlessness that speaks through us, that keeps us in motion, that evades us and maintains the sound in-itself from our grasp. Real objects in themselves are absences but in their very absence create the allure that alludes to an all-encompassing presence that can be found nowhere and always resides at the thresholds of the senses, teetering on the peripheries of the real.

Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form. It is the alpha factor of the universe found in all objects from the ground up, but gradually built up into increasingly larger and more intricate shapes. While allure has no hope of ever getting us closer to the objects in themselves it can unleash objects that had been largely muffled in their relations with us, and can translate already recognised objects into more potent form (Harman 2011, p.245-246).

The concept of allure points to the withdrawn inaudible background plasma where territories of sounds in-themselves reside uninhabited by ears. These withdrawn territories can rise up and erupt the surface of inaudibility and become the sensual objects of sensation and perception. I borrow the term plasma from Bruno Latour, which he explains along the lines of the un-formatted background of things that are not yet in use and not yet engaged.

No understanding of the social can be provided if you don't turn your attention to

another range of unformatted phenomena... I call this background plasma, namely that which is not yet formatted, not yet measured, not yet socialised, not yet engaged in meteorological chains, and not yet covered, surveyed, mobilised, or subjectified. The plasma is in between and not made of social stuff, it is not hidden, simply unknown...things happen because the articulated social world of relations leaves so much unarticulated; monsters and angels seep from the plasma. (Harman. 2008, p.133)

### ***Background Plasma***

The inaudible background plasma exists everywhere, it has a life of its own and its own intentionality that can become known to experience at any given time as interruption or interference, becoming the sensual object of phenomena. Every city has a hum that acts out as inaudible background plasma, a subterranean machinery of underground transmission rhizomes, electric and fibre optic cables and currents that power and connect dwellings within the grid. Each city has different cycles per second of electricity that flows beneath its streets, its own individual current- (cy) of inaudibility that provides the city with its own inaudible plasma of style according to its density of population and technological advancements.

We are immunised to the general existence of noise. Less a linear or dialectic signal, less an on/off, presence/absence parasitism, the significance is the transition of noise to atmosphere, to oscillation on a continuum, a variable stability that is equally in invariance by instabilities, a continual modulation of strength, intensity and affect (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p58).

The inaudible background plasma is the density of the urban soundscape, every sensual object plays out against a background of inaudibility. There are ranges of frequencies that the ear cannot detect by listening but the body feels their intensity as the inaudible background plasma animates the cavities of the body. Human hearing ranges between 20 to 20,000 Hz, which varies between individuals, we only have a narrow portal into the sounding world. The city has both a soundscape and an affective tonality; we do not have to hear sound to feel its presence and to be affected by its vibe. Ultrasonic descends into infrasonic bass materials that throb out their submerged rhythms and durations and immerse the body in the inaudible un-sound (no reference to Steve Goodman). If one were to imagine a blackout and the intention of electricity that constructs the grid were to stop flowing and the city's inaudible background plasma stuttered and eased off; vibes from one region to the next would fade out in a cascading motion from one body to another, a loosening of un-sound. As night falls and the dark draws in sounds presence would become heightened and intensified in the absence of the city hum, the bodily tensions that had been immersed in the permanence

of mechanical oscillations would be released. Pressure would be eased from the ears and body and the intricate soundscape would be revealed as ghostly apparition, sound would dominate the darkness. ‘Throughout a night without images but buffeted by black sounds, amidst a turing of forsaking bodies beset with no longing but to last against all odds and for nothing’ (Kristeva (1980), cited in Harrison and Wood 1999, p.1015).

Alongside and inside singular human agents there exists a heterogeneous series of actants with partial, over-lapping, and conflicting degrees of power and effectivity. Here casualty is more emergent than efficient, more fractal than linear. Instead of an effect obedient to a determinant one finds circuits in which effect and cause alternate positions and redound on each other (Bennett 2010, p.32).

An object-orientated approach to composition shifts the composer away from the centre of practice and allows sounds to call forth, to some degree, their own cuts and mutations, as they demand that we work through them rather than on them. Sounds tease out styles from the composer and the composer teases styles out from sound in an inter-causal relation. Within a compositional ecology rather than understanding the composer, sound or technology as the cause of an effect it is rather a distribution of emergent agency between all objects, ‘there are instead always a swarm of vitalities at play’ (Bennett 2010, p.32).

### ***Signal-arities***

Every sound is a unique signal-arity with its own signature of inaudibility becoming audible. The term signal-arity refers to the play of forces and resistances that each and every sonic objectile acts out towards the body. It as though the inaudible ties knots in air pressures that the ear attempts to unravel, each thread that is teased out becomes a sensual quality of sonic experience. Sonic encounter is the rhythm and momentum of difference that can compel the composer to think and act in specific ways. The composer is the instrument for sound, the body is a cavity of resonance and amplification that sensual objects agitate, infiltrate and ultimately animate with multiple sensual qualities. Signal-arities are the teetering imperceptible qualities and the unique differences of which each sound is composed within it-self. In, *Several Silences*, Jean-Francois Lyotard (1972, p93) explains singularities,

The sensitisation of the material will be extreme. Requiring the virtual destruction of the filtering device; it will be intensive potency, potency of the intensities, and will not refer to the unity of the musician-musical body but to surges in tension, to intense

singularities. In fact, there is no device to receive these intensities; their singularity consists in their not being related by memory to units of reference in the phenomenological body.

Lyotard's explanation of singularities inspired my concept of signal-arities, as a way of translating abstract philosophical terminology into practice based ideas.

Sounds are composed of signal-arities that are not qualities such as volume, duration or timbre but rather they are the imperceptible nuances that generate qualities and form through the interplay of forces. Signal-arities connect the composer to sound, they are the variables of interaction and the resistances of materials. A sonic signal-arity can be appreciated when composing and experimenting, the act of effecting sounds with augmentations, modulations and time stretching affords the composer to understand what holds a sound together, what maintains its identity and style of sounding. Time stretching affords the composer the act of changing sounds speed of becoming without changing its pitch, alternatively pitch shifting affords the composer to change pitch without changing sounds speed of becoming. Signal-arities are the gristle of interaction, they are the slips and tares, the folds or rather nuances that generate the fold, the deformations and de-composition of sounds intensive qualities. Signal-arities are actors of individuation that generate qualities and drive form but are not directly perceived in sound. They are not the object of phenomenon but rather the objects within objects, the qualities within qualities. Time stretching affords the composer to open a sound up and stretch it to a critical point that reveals sounds concealed fibres; a grain of dust becomes a castle and the skin becomes craters on the moon. The act of composing can be likened to opening a sound up and connecting the sensual body to its materiality, to its sensual contours where multiple durations reside in a moment of listening, like a rabbit hole, a sound opens up differential spaces. 'At any rate, it is a question of surrendering to the wood, then following where it leads by connecting operations to a materiality, instead of imposing a form upon that matter' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.408). The term signal-arity is taken to mean distinct and unique, in that each and every sound is a different species that is produced from specific material collisions, at specific times and in specific spaces whilst at the same time cannot be reduced to any of these relations. A sound is always a swarm, a gathering of air pressures and ultimately a difference engine.



### ***Potentiality as Event***

Sounds are always a double-sided event in that the actual qualities of sound; frequency, wavelength, amplitude, pressure, speed and direction enliven virtual potentials, a composer does not hear a sound for what it is but rather hears what a sound does, what a sound can become, other than what it is. Virtual potentials need a relation in order to be become actualised, a guitar has actual properties of length, strings, density, weight and form and its virtual potentials are that the guitar can be played, produce sound, affect bodies and transmit signals etc... These virtual potentials are spaces of possibility that are associated with specific objects in specific occasions, virtual potentials are always events rather than states, being heavy or long are the state of the guitar that endures but being played and being heard is a temporal event. Virtual potentials are always relational; arguably a wasp or badger wearing boxing gloves cannot play a guitar whose virtual potentials need to be animated through relations with certain other objects that have grasped the guitars virtual potentials as though they were actual qualities. 'Virtualities are real even though they are not actual' (Manuel De-Landa). Sound has the capacity to entrain beings, synchronise limbs and shift attention, vision and ultimately perception in any given direction and at any given time. The studio environment is a womb of objectiles, a teratological incubator of mutual becomings, and a space of de-formation where sounds act out their own qualities of attraction that the composer grasps, catches onto and ultimately bends their actual states through portals of virtual potentiality towards mutant realisations.

### ***Assemblages***

The studio is an assemblage of dynamic surfaces that are illuminated with constellations of LED lights that guide gesture and the thinking hand and allure the sensuous body to follow their blinking eyes. An analogy can be drawn between the composer and the perspective of an astronaut. He observes the earth-sphere from space, as he approaches he locates his familiar terrain through the flickering networks of urban city lights, highly populated with light and sound pollution. He deliberates where he should land, on the terrain that he has already territorialised with style, signature and expression, but instead he becomes curiously drawn once again towards the dark peripheries of a wasteland, a deterritorialised dumping ground where rebellious rogue objects, obsolete thinking machines and the debris of consumption await to be re-assembled, re-generated and re-invested with ears. The astronaut takes samples from the wasteland, mashes them up and remixes them. He releases them into

the air and ultimately they return remixed. He weaves himself a space suit (e) from the materials of the simulacra in order to navigate the chaotic infinity of representations. The astronaut reproduces teratological mutants from the echoes of the de-composed before he once again returns to his space. Every time the astronaut returns to the earth-sphere everything has changed because of different rates of becoming. The repetition of his return produces difference, a sonic difference that is not inside of space or time but is the actual vibrational force of time and the production of space itself. The astronaut becomes alien towards the earth-sphere and space becomes his place, his planet as he waits for others to follow.

In some far off place  
many light years in space  
I'll wait for you  
Where human feet have never trod  
where human eyes have never seen  
I'll build a world of abstract dreams  
and wait for you.  
(Sun Ra, 1968)

The studio is an assemblage of bits and pieces, spaces and places, keys and strings, codes and nodes, tones and drones, skin and bone which are intimately interconnected and also highly conflictual.

Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within (Bennett 2010, p.24).

The voices of objects fuzz, mumble and slur into successive gradations of enunciation as ideas and materials liquefy into larval flows; a multiplicity of perceptions, sensations, affects, sounds and technological malfunctions that are not yet organised or crystallised into a style or genre. The affective tones of sounds do not speak to me but through me, rupturing and reconfiguring my bodily sensations and perceptions. In turn my body effects and reconfigures sounds textural modulations with the use of reverb, flange, delay, fuzz, distortions and echo. Composition excites the senses and disorientates the eternal objects through chance wirings and the disconnection of cartographies from solidified routes of potentiality; section timings, fader shots and rotary swivels become hurdles for the ears and imaginary places for the hands to undergo their own rituals. The offerings of an embodied consciousness can momentarily slip its own content, unhinge the faculties and express for its own sake, a

somatic cognition whereby the body has its own modes of dialogue with instruments and technologies. Improvisation is an exploration of somatic cognition as the body solves complicated problems faster than the conscious mind. Coley and Lockwood (2012) highlight some important aspects of somatic cognition and investigate bodily anticipation and the half second delay between action and cognition which has been biologically demonstrated,

An action is set in motion before we have decided to perform it. To be specific, an action is set in motion by the body approximately 0.8 seconds before we have the conscious experience of that acting (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.62).

### ***The Body as Pre-Conscious Frontier***

The body has its own theory. The processes of composition, improvisation and sonic experimentation are concerned with the rediscovery of how to encounter sound directly as the body does. Nothing can be separated from what it expresses and interactions with sound, instruments and technology are the body's way of doing and learning its own theory.

We therefore respond to intentions before they arise. In terms of 'readiness', then, consciousness or thought occurs after the bodily action itself- consciousness 'takes time to construct'. Readiness exists in the body before it moves into the realm of conscious thought (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.63).

The body can be understood as the pre-conscious frontier, as the body demonstrates anticipation, intuition and improvisation.

To be non conscious, to be lost amidst these waves of collective sensory energy, is also to take flight from the 'prison house of the known' and the descriptive labels of sensational, conscious experience (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p65)

The body has its own time, language of expression and understands its own encounters without having to make use of the symbolic. The following quote by Jean Francois Lyotard is an interesting contemplation on the body as a filtering region in relation to sound and noise,

The phenomenological body is a body that composes, a body possessed with Eros. But to compose is always to filter out and to bind, to exclude entire regions of the sound world as noise and to produce 'music' (that which is audible) with the input. The noises rejected by the body, be it a body that composes, are not heard and if they are, it is as

dissonances, as flows of sound entering a device not prepared to receive them and transform them into music (Lyotard 1972, p.93).

*Sonic Stuff* produces abstract body maps, sound affords alternative ways for the body to move, stretching and bending the body and activating spasms into alternative rhythms of motion and thinking. The body is sounds topological material; the corporeal is a malleable membrane for the assaults of sound, an echo chamber of resonating eternal objects that feed from actual and abstract entities. Residues process the tender gristly parts of becoming, the overlaps and folds hollow out the occasions that allow the sensual qualities to sink into the body; the body is unleashed into occasions and torn apart by occasions. The scenes of back flight blur, the ear bores and the drift off begins as the ears are torn and cast a drift into the sensual elements of audibility. Representation is always mediated by concepts and the term immediate is nothing more than a cheap run to make something that is beautifully slippery and wandering, feel extremely dry. Unhinge the faculties and amplify the self, wire the body up to everything that it is not and make as many possible connections to objects and technologies as is possible.

### ***Objects as Earth***

It appears to me that an object-orientated ontology positions every object as its own earth; inner core, outer core, mantle and crust. Each shell like layer has undergone its own historical process of individuation. The earth in-itself experiences its own internal and external relations; the dialogue between layers, the networks of planets, constellations of stars and neighbouring galaxies, the earth is defined by its relations but it can never be reduced to them. It's bevelled face with mountain tip peaks are mined, stabbed and probed for resources, potentiality, rich intensities, substances and essences, by the humans that dwell, encrust and mask its surface. The object of earth and the convection of the mantle shift the earth's extensive properties, which creates radical intensive reactions on its surface. The atmosphere is continually funkyed by seismic waves that are emitted by the inner core and travel through all the layers of individuation towards the crust of sensual qualities. The intensity of seismic waves gradually fades out but as humans we continue to experience radical shifts and problematic encounters, as the earth re-jigs its networks of relations.

### ***Anthill Art***

The process of composition can be likened to ‘Anthill Art’ (YouTube, Casting a Fire Ant Colony... 2013). Liquid aluminium is poured into abandoned anthills and slowly solidifies to reveal an intricate web of tunnels, channels and ant-trajectories that were submerged beneath the earth. The flow of molten metal finds, fills and solidifies the empty channels. The combination of materials; earth, absence of ant, metal and artist reveal the concealed workings of a hidden core as an emergent structure and style unfolds. The ear is analogous to the anthill and the hot aluminium is analogous to sound. The durations of pouring, smearing and dripping are processes of level finding. Sound fills the cavities of an a priori body and finds its own channels into sensations, perceptions and affects that have already been detected, actualised, animated and felt. The composer breeds aliens forms from earthling forms; it is not that the composer invents new forms but rather finds pre-existing sounds and amplifies them. Found sounds are the whispers of things working out their own relations.

### ***Gene Pool and Species***

The gene pool of audibility is the perpetually shifting soundscape of the everyday. Sound burrows into the body and releases the body from its exoskeleton; it makes everything malleable from limbs to ideas. The composer takes a range of samples from the sonic gene pool of the everyday soundscape and isolates them within the studio environment, producing multiple variations of the selected samples until a unified difference crystallises, a species of style. Sound is never a universal style and has no author but rather always has a particular style of its own. An object-orientated approach speculates that every act between objects is aesthetic, casualty is always aesthetic and every event, occasion and instance has a style. Listening is always listening to something that is both actual and virtual, hearing ‘as-reality’ and listening ‘into-hyper reality’. The world has an expressivity independent of humans, sounds realise their own forms, styles and develop their own relations with objects and environments as they undergo their own adventures and carry the composer along. Sounds urge the body to act and react, they want to be heard and strive to infect ideas with rhythms that resonate eternally within the body’s membranes. Things sound at me and objects sound with me, sound has its own intention and aim. I am a destination amongst the many destinations of a sounds duration and flow. I am no master of sound but obedient to its imperatives, to its call, its demanding resounding that implicates me within myself, connects me to my past and opens horizons to the future of inaudibility

becoming audible.

### ***Senses and Cross Modality***

The act of composing unfolds a unification of the senses; it is a translational synesthetic process whereby the impressions of sound create automatic responses in other sensory and perceptual registers. 'We hear the softness, liquidity and turgidity of resounding things; we hear the hardness and unevenness of the road in the rattle of the carriage' (Lingis 1998, p.48). The body is informed with its tastes and distastes, compulsions and repulsions, wired within a circuit of colliding signals that animates flesh and bone and folds the eternal object so that is compelled to motorise the abstraction process from actual entities. The body is informed with all of its senses and also with a sense of urgency, a sense of reality, common sense, tactical sense, a sense of responsibility, a sense of timing, a sense of humour, a sense of balance, a sense of direction, a sense of being, a sense of becoming and a sense of belonging. Sound bathes the body in a matrix of sensual infusions, subtracting and synthesising the body as a mixing console of the senses and a search engine of sensation.

If an artist can disengage himself from the practicable fields to devote himself so exclusively to colours and tones. It is because he finds himself receptive to the imperatives he finds in the colours and tones, that their own ordinance be seen or heard (Lingis 1998, p.107).

### ***Collisions***

The collision of materials, sonic objects and technologies detonate creative ecologies that release voyages of sensual qualities that invade and flow throughout the body. The composer is caught up in a tornado of sonic frequencies and air pressures that entangle the body in resonance and envelope the subject within an assemblage of active tones that transmit their own imperatives and agitate imperceptible thresholds. Every material has its own inner constellation of agitation and rupture and its own capacity to reveal and withdraw qualities towards experience. Sound is a translation of action that is actualised through the friction of objects, as they rub and merge their fuzzy peripheries. One may never experience a real object directly because of the shifting qualities that veil direct access to it, but one can intuit its nature of becoming expressive, one can feel the air pressures that it ruptures, exposing the secret shuffles that it does behind one's back and beyond the phenomena that one experiences. Real objects chatter amongst themselves, and composers as curious neighbours amongst

them, put their ears to the world and hear what is becoming, what is composing and what is de-composing.

### ***Sound's Life***

Sound has its own propensity to find entry points into the body, which reveals the body's virtual capacities and unformatted tendencies. Sonic sensual qualities slow down and speed up the experiential body's temporality, a network of durations, speed channels, patch cables and rates of change buffer the body. Sounds capacity for morphogenesis is the vital impetus that transforms the body through the currents of sounds capacity for transformative life. The concept of vital impetus relates closely to Bergson's notion of *élan vital* and real duration, a 'pure time' that is experienced through the intuition of imagination. The propulsion of the flowing contours of change carries experiential continuity, which guides the body through transformations above and beyond how humans attempt to represent these shifting flows through scenes, points and mathematical intervals. 'Intuition is the entering into it as distinct from the standing over it and watching its successive parts or selecting points of view' (Carr. 2004, p.50). Real duration is the flow of becomings that are not mathematically cut and sliced into intervals of cultural time, but rather transformative flows that delineate the time of our lives. The composer harnesses intuition as a raw material that rides 'a line of flight' and detaches from the everyday differentiation towards a visceral throb where ideas and concepts are lost in the immediacy of sounds emergence. Intuition is a sense of objects without identity prior to the eternal object and the unleashing of transcendental probes that act out and engraft fixity and stability onto dynamic materials. Sound can both maximise and minimise intensity upon the body, interpreted as a collection of actual and virtual traits, habits, affects and movements. This relates closely to Deleuze's notion of 'the body without organs' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), as the body feels sonic intensity afresh. Through encountering and creating alien soundscapes the composer activates the withdrawn potentials and capacities of the body. To listen to sound, is to experiment with the body, to experiment with sound is to activate parts of the body residing in depths unknown to the self, not yet actualised or felt. For every rhythm of sound there is a convulsion of the body and a tremor of concepts and perception, a syncopation of actuality and virtuality that closes the cadence of memory into a foreground and resolves the body into the turbulent and accidental, where actions are the effects of objects and events are the fabrication of diversity and difference that

thrust the nomadic. As the fleeting and wandering senses follow to the depths of things beyond appearance.

### ***Familiar Differences***

The studio is a familiar space but at the same time uncanny and otherworldly, perpetually modified by constellations of micro-sound worlds that reconfigure the faculties of the body. The teratological space between sound and the body breathes, contracts and dilates into the *super-jectile*, dissolving the subject and object dichotomy, creating a mutant identity, a product of play, cast adrift from the rational sphere; where sound is skin, gesture is bone and electricity is breath. The act of sampling is the Dionysian spirit manifest into techno object, as the sampler offers itself as action and as a gesture towards peculiarity. Sampling is the irrational aesthetic act that was born to fragment and fracture representation but ultimately recombines and multiplies representation without a care for ownership. The sampler is the pirate, the bullion breaker and worm of the studio that eats its way into the ear as a symbol of de-historical laughter.

The sampler is a mandate to re-combinate- so its useless lamenting appropriation. Resisting replication is doing without oxygen. The sampler doesn't care who you are (Eshun 1998, p.123).

### ***Technologies***

Creative interaction with technologies is not about engaging with technologies as items of equipment, instruments or tools but rather riding the wave of technologies as they unfold digital and virtual dérives that afford terrains of malfunction and error, that stutter and slur trajectories and modalities of potentiality and contingency. I borrow the term 'derive' from Guy Debord to describe experimental behaviour and actions, charged by the transient sonic allure that enraptures the composer in the shifts of sensual qualities that twist imagination, perception and direction.

On the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities do not exist or only barely so-double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject (Kristeva 1980, cited in Harrison and Wood 1999, p.1016)

### ***Wasteland***

The composer navigates techno-wastelands, the dumping grounds of excessive communication and discarded cultural artifices in a space (craft) launched by a midi



pad and fuelled by Ableton Live. Guided by intuition and imagination, travelling through techniques at technological hyper-speeds, circling hyper-real planets in order to encounter alternative grounds of expression and hear the language of fuzzy rogue objects, that offer alternative grounds of expression, terrains for the emergence and eventual crystallisation of new styles. A sound invades the body, a body snatcher that captures the body and takes it somewhere else and other. Infrasonics gradually modulate into terrestrial zaps that surprise and lift listeners outside of themselves. This can be likened to watching the night sky and tracing the flight of a shooting star as it travels through the dark, emoting with its movement and riding it into the future of a whirlpool galaxy that devours the subject as it momentarily dislocates from its corporeal space station. The star promises the fulfilment of the unfulfillable, the distances, the possibility of unbounded potential and the rupture of determinacy. Deleuze's 'line of flight' is the branching out of differences; disruptions, breaks and mutations spawn their own flights of becoming with their own speeds of change and transformation. Each flight is an expansion of possibility and the creation of unfolding forms. Flight paths crossover other flight paths, which create a continuous variation of divergent pathways into potentiality. Sound has its own line of flight that traverses across the body and animates the body's virtual capacities.

A flight is a sort of delirium, to be delirious is exactly to go off the rails... there is some demonical or demonic in a line of flight. Demons are different from gods because gods have fixed attributes, properties and functions, territories and codes: they have to do with rails, boundaries and surveys, what demons do is jump across intervals, and from one interval to another (Deleuze and Partnet (1970), cited in Ballantyne 2008, p.7).

### ***Wilderness***

Sounds are agential durations that navigate the composer on a nomadic journey away from the cultural field and out towards the peripheries of the wild. In 'wilderness ontology' Levi Bryant (2011), explains the philosophical plurality of agency as distinct from human centred action. Bryant theorises that one experiences oneself as being amongst rather than being above other objects and posits the agency of alterity as a foundational ontological principle that extends to all entities. Spheres of wild otherness destabilise relations and afford the composer to cut across boundaries, styles and genres and locate uninhabited sonic worlds. Wilderness ontology speculates from the other side, decentring the subject into multiple pebbles that are felt when stepped upon by the other. The composer imagines strange objects interacting at the far-flung corners of the earth and is curious to hear what they sound out. On a field recording, the composer positions himself in the perspective of the stream that splashes over the rocks and seeps into the

soil of the eroding banks, he posits himself outside of himself as the rock, the soil or even the process of erosion in order to imagine what sounds reside there. ‘That outside which thought could explore with the legitimate feeling of being on foreign territory– of being entirely elsewhere’ (Meillassoux 2009, p.7).

### ***The Habit of Saying I.***

The citadel of the self is never enough, nothing more than a bank of ideals that attempts to feel the given through the funnel of the pre-given. Whilst composing, identity departs from the self and returns to the self and each sound received has a larval ego that rides its audible contours. Whilst improvising, the present affords an amnesia of history, which comes with it a responsibility to turn relations into a materiality, to produce alternative histories and points of connection. The body is situated as a gated flow, the relation of flows and the constant input of sense data fictionalises a position, the habitus is a habit of saying I. Impressions are not the echoes of presences on a fixed being, but rather experiences confronting experiences. The body enjoys and satiates itself, filling its flesh, that is its purpose, a phenomenology of death or rather towards death, Thanatos, the death drive, a filling of the flesh until the time when the flesh decays. When experiences encounter experiences there comes a virtuality of high potency, aggressive intention and most notably the proliferation of expectations. Action is an effect of materiality, language is a reaction to encounter and intention is an object’s allure. It is not the act of a body in isolation, but rather a body that follows differences that glimmer, shine and sparkle, resonate and hum. Life is like light without surfaces to produce shadow, in that it goes unseen, it is a pure singularity/signal-arity, a flow of undifferentiated intensities. Only when it reaches and strikes the surfaces of objects does it become visible, become an agent, become a multiplicity, become a reflection of identity, and then it becomes my life, an ownership and an author of choices. As life and existence faces its own shadows, it comes to face itself, as essence-confronting essence. Pure sound is vibration beyond relation, however when it finds materialities to travel through, when vibration actualises its qualities locally, the body becomes a listener and the body occupied by an inter-subjectivity, inhabited by a swarm of fictions parallel to our own fictions (you know the other heard it too- but we are never sure exactly what the other heard). Sound is always a network of inter-relations, and an object of pure mutation, a contagious object that travels on its own journeys, an attracting encounter that folds back on itself in order to amplify itself.

### ***Spawning Faces***

Sonic identities are generated and regenerated through the cognitive dissonances that sound assaults on being. The body's prosthetic-techno-extensions are a mutating teratology, a site where fictionalised identities are spawned in a swamp of virtual realities. The symbiosis of a multitude of voices; objects, things and thinking machines malfunction; the hardware freezes, the software glitches, CPU overload, or my techniques are simply unworthy of the machines potentiality, perhaps I need to be updated or upgraded so that I function effectively for the technology to use me. The body, objects and machines are fused into a sonic circuitry; the enter button is a mini portal, a slingshot of speed, where concepts bleed into one another, like ink meeting water. The composer brings the sampler to life by using it, but nonetheless the sampler has agency that it exercises upon the composer when it is used. The sampler has its own physical properties and processes and interacting with the sampler bends the composer to adapt to its processes.

Your ears have had their optical capacity switched on. In a strange way your ear starts to see... all the other senses can go through the ear as well (Eshun 1998, p.181).

The sampler is not merely a tool for the composer's intention but rather modifies the composer's intentions; therefore intentions cannot be strictly attributed to the composer. The sampler is a key protagonist; the sampler pads activate the random squibblings of the fingers that begin to grow ears, the body feels the tactility of sonic explosions, and the cochlear grows a telescope. The sampler brings the body together and binds the senses, there are no compartments but rather a visceral mechanic throb with loose connections and the immanent capacity of error.' Technology is society made durable' (Latour (1991), cited in Herbrechter 2013, p.159).

### ***Sustaining Relations***

Composition is always a transitional process in that it releases thresholds of new experiences that translate to every register of the body in motion. The body stretches out as a field of sensations and sounds sweep back into the body as an alien object, which produces a network of coagulated metaphors and synaesthetic translations. The studio setting expresses a dynamic arrangement of sustaining ecologies; imagination and memory sustain perception, the body sustains thinking and feeling, the organs sustain existence, the limbs sustain action, sound sustains concern and necessity, hearing sustains attention, listening sustains the grasping for meaning, technologies

and objects sustain transformation which ultimately sustains experience, all of these elements of the ecology are supported by the given, by the ground that sustains the production of new relations. The ground that the body stands upon sustains the body's support, the walls that enclose the body sustain privacy, the table that the body approaches sustains the technology a position and a proximity of tool-being, the chair that the body pulls away and sits upon sustains the limbs support and freedom, the instruments that the body has played and will play again sustain ideas realisation and direction, the technologies that resist and malfunction sustain indeterminacy and contingency. Uploading new samples into a sound bank can be likened to opening up a corpse and trying to locate its memory flow, samples are an embalming of objects that allows one to forget the events of which they were a part. The preservation of a forgotten difference that will no doubt return as an inevitable rupture in the future.

The recording confronts my ears as an artefact or an event, not simply as the event itself, if it is an antidote to total forgetting, it still, thrives on forgetting, on a past that recedes and retreats (Stern 2003, p.319).

### ***Laboratory***

The composer inhabits the space of the Frankenstein monster, the studio is a laboratory of quasi-objects; limbs, organs, lights, screens, inputs/outputs, cables, sockets and ports pivot between allies and enemies that have the capacity to both enable and restrain compositional direction. The teratological laboratory of red and amber warning signs and genre thresholds quickly abandon their bases. An electric hermit crab scurries between different shells of sonority as the intentional act of listening becomes fractured into a hydra-headspace. Sonic quicksand folds in on itself and catches the listener in a granular flux, where multiple grains are played, looped and layered at varying speeds. The seeping force of saturated tape hiss is heavy rain to the soluble skin as the ears bob on the surface. A tempo shift decelerates the teratological head fracture into an ambient soundscape, as the grains are stretched and form sonic clouds that hover above an unpolluted audible field.

In its ontological liminality the monster 'polices' the boundaries between the possible and its realisation, especially in techno cultural society, and it functions as a warning; if 'you', if 'we' transgress this boundary, we ourselves are in danger of becoming monsters! But in fact this warning should read: then we no longer know 'who' or 'what' we are. Monsters thus have cultural geographic and controlling functions and are positioned between known and unknown territory (Herbrechter 2013, p.89).

Technology alters the body as a species, ‘Riveting your ears until you’re staring at the sound’ (Eshun 1998, p.148), as the data processing of computers accelerates and machines possess the potential to become more intelligent, differentiated and arguably more human than humans. Machines are programmed with ethical and moral codes that build and program one another in chains of assembly lines. Samplers and synthesisers are mating in cupboards all over the world, creating strange hybrid techno objects, half mouse, half moog with a SU10 underbelly in search of a gold standard of audible confusion.

Rather than the subject passing into the clutches of the machine, nothing prohibits machinic networks from engaging in a sort of process of subjectification, in other words, the possibility that machines and humanity might one day start to entertain fruitful symbiotic relations. (Guattari 2013, p.40).

### ***Surgery***

Computer based surgery is not merely a tool for minute slicing and automating effects but rather it infects the mind as a digital perceiver; the composer begins to listen and think in abstract numerical ways; sections, codes, ratios, attack times, release durations, compression and the quantisation of expression. In short technologies become more complex and bodily gestures less so. The composer takes abstract materials and maps them via beat mapping, marker mapping and harmonic mapping which all flow into the eternal object of mind mapping. Perceptions are mutated by the technologies that we interface with. Digital technologies and the composer’s perceptions bend the actuality of sonic objects in specific directions and durations, which creates a feeling of strain that is the channel between the actual dimensions of a sound and the infinite number of virtual transformations that technologies afford. The inexhaustible combinations and effects that technologies offer push against the pure potentials of the composer’s ideas and create an infinite perplexity of choice. Technology is no longer a matter of how the composer animates sound through DSP but rather how technology subtracts sound as an infinitely countable object. The power of technology is that it can cause imagination to come face to face with itself and open imagination up to an unbounded potentiality. An abstract potentiality that lays beneath the materiality of sounds and technologies, an oscillation of active modulations that sync and swarm. Neither sound nor technologies can be considered as passive materials waiting to be shaped, considered as instruments to cut and paste but rather they are evocative, vibrant and alluring materials with mindsets. Through interfacing with technologies

and machines the body becomes a Deleuzian 'becoming machine' a transversal hybrid, through surges of electrical currents, connections and resistances with active surfaces. The body becomes an instrument for the machine, a techno-object amongst other techno-objects, a process that destabilises agency.

The human technology dialect has progressed to the point of a post human condition where subjects are imbricated in, penetrated by and reconstructed through objects and technologies. (Best and Keller (2001), cited in Herbrechter. 2013, p.50).

A process of material embodied adaptation, the composer manipulates technologies but to what extent do technologies infect and manipulate the composer and composition? Technology drives towards invisibility, into the withdrawn, as it withdraws, fades and merges into the background becoming imperceptible, or as Graham Harman would term it, subterranean machinery. Technological prosthesis is not an external instrument, which one interacts with but rather a slice of individual self-experience and a gesture of one's own body.

### ***Sound is a Symptom of Silence***

The sadness of a metronome; a tool for improvement, patented in 1815 by Johann Maelzel, punctures the atmosphere without ever becoming anything other than a marker, invented in order to help improve the musician who had irregular timing. It changes the pace by human intention; used to hold everything together and as such functions as a binder of parts. When a composition finds its end, its realisation, the metronome is omitted, however its absence is heard in all the parts of the composition... as a silence. A silence that silenced difference, in order that difference could become more subtle through comparative nuances of bpm; restricting the materiality of sounds from bleeding and spawning asymmetry, as they naturally do. The sadness of a metronomic tempo measured from the beginning. Slow it down, speed it up divide it, tempo and time have no knowledge of division, but as humans we do. The labouring body is parcelled into time frames, each frame with an affective tempo. The metronome is akin to an artificial heartbeat concealed within the flesh, withdrawn behind the rib cage and chest plate, it constantly reveals a body in action. The asymmetry of a heartbeat is a cause for concern, a promise of failure and a symptom of finality. A symptom, in that arguably we never experience death but rather experience what leads towards death. Death reveals its qualities, one may witness death but it is never our own, we never experience death but can only its becoming; its symptoms are sounds and its finality is

silence. Composition is a reciprocal exchange of information and anecdotes, intentionally aimed and gathered together in the enunciation of the others ears. Compositional processes reveal that solitude is productive and in the absence of bodies comes the construction of a potent materiality that produces a heart and character.

The composer's identity disappears into multiple alter egos that exist simultaneously and proliferate in faceless anonymity. Sonic identities are spawned, nurtured and disseminated as avatars, brands and genre hybrids. 'Technology makes the body queer, fragments it, frames it, cuts it and transforms desire' (Herbrechter 2013, p.98). The symbiotic relationship of composer, technology and sound is a co-evolution of multiple sonic identities and styles that occupy different frequency terrains; drone barons, glitch fly's, noise demons, beat herders and ambient ghosts roam different frequency bands and occupy alternative wastelands of vibration. To borrow and adapt a term from Michael Foucault, *'Technologies of the Self'* (1982), the technologies that one engages with in order to produce and arrange sounds are the tools that individuate compositional styles and sonic identities from others; the grains of technologies are the skeletons of mutants as they manifest from experimentation. Technologies of the self synthesise the body and wire it up to expressions of the body, that otherwise may not have been voiced. Obsolete genres and technologies are stockpiled in a wasteland of screens and profiles, rhizomes of wires and fuses sleep without electric current- (cy). Identities decay into a virtual backdrop as new genre brands and avatars take the stage. The composer has a zombie nation of sonic veils; profiles which are swallowed up into the tombs of code that occupy web pages that have not had a hit in years. The composer is a gathering machine that constantly searches through timeworn sonic archives and estranged techno objects for materials to sample, mash-up and remix in order to construct an army of mutant sonic species that differ from any other breed. A tapestry of coded voices are reduced to utterances as sounds mumble amongst one another, a dialectic of warp and weft, audible threads are set off in modes of tension as the composer weaves back and forth across the topography of the soundscape. An electric caterpillar spins casings from meshes of effects that cocoon the sonic object with modulations and augmentations. The composer is an eating machine that nibbles away at the fringes of sonic phenomena with recording devices, taking little samples from any time and anything in order to produce and inhabit a cocoon like womb of sonority in which to withdraw into the headspace of headphones. The cocoon is an incubator for larval sonic identities, styles and mutant genres in the process of emergence; a becoming that has not yet been crystallised in any

specific form. Obeying the demands of materials and following the nuances of objects with the ears and hands leads the body into teratological vistas that mirror the eerie places within, shadows become denser, more irrational and instinctive and sound begins to draw its own visions.

To be a sensitive organism is not only to be a prehensile system wired to grasp that carpentry of the practicable field but an organ that follows the summons of the colours into another domain, that follows music into a sovereign order (Lingis 1998, p.107).

I have explored how disturbingly alien the familiar can become when illuminated through amplification and signal processing. The use of DPA microphones has opened entry points into the submerged cavities of objects, revealing *Sonic Stuff's* alternative enunciations of transmission beyond everyday listening. Experimentation with instruments is an indeterminate conduit that flushes excursions and swerves into alternative sound worlds and experiences. Augmented headspaces are intensive pockets where found sounds collide with synthesised ruptures. Static twists and compressed kicks accent rhythms of syncopated difference upon the eternal object that peels itself open as a nest of old ears. The listening body conflates the virtual and actual into a dance of fiction. Studio-based composition gives experiential time and space a style, it animates the air with the rhythm of ideas in action, the manoeuvres of solitude and the repeat of studio times. The ecology of studio-based composition is to work in-between the contrasts of the withdrawn and revealed contours of objects, where actuality and virtuality meet inside a moog and create their own mirage of mutant offspring. To stutter thought through sound and to stutter sound through the movement of the body; stuttering as becoming, as time cut, as space cut, to become is to transmit and to transmit is to stutter a transmuting memory into the present.

### **Poetics of Ears and Other Places**

Sound creates selves at the moment of encounter. As sound approaches a pre-existent identity it produces a larval identity in the making. 'Identity is actualised as it is performed, rather than being caused by an inner essence identity is open to disruption' (Kozel 2012, p.208). When sounds are detected they produce the selves that detected them. One detects sound through sensation, recognises sound through perception and



feels sounds significance through affective tones. The body navigates the world by echoes and navigates a world of echoes and as such one is always becoming an echo of one's former self. The immediacy of sonic encounter affords the body to act prior to thinking; it is an intuitive and immediate bodily reflex that facilitates the unison of becoming through the occasions of sounds constitution. As sound unfolds and reveals sensual qualities, so too does the body; the limbs and membranes of the skin are stimulated into action through a swarm of surface vibrations. Sound has the power to seduce the senses before it seduces the mind. The etymology of the word stuff; to cram full, filler of the body, a substance placed in cavities or a woven cloth or fibre is a term used to highlight the force of sound as it composes and orientates the experiential body through an overflow of communicative signals and sonic bits and pieces. *Sonic Stuff* articulates sound as it burrows into the vivid depths of the body's resonant cavities and apprehends the intention of listening through its raw intensities; it drags sensual objects from the body and teases out engagement and attention. *Sonic Stuff* addresses the potential of sound to both fill and empty the experiential body, as it acts as a difference engine that multiplies relations between bodies and objects.

The term *Sonic Stuff* is intentionally ambiguous in order to dissolve genre and stylistic idioms and open a way for a democracy of sounds; an object amongst objects and an event amongst events. *Sonic Stuff* makes no distinction between noise, sound or music but rather investigates what is presented to the body as a unity of everyday sounding. If one were to imagine multi-dimensional planes of vibration in motion, likened to a complex mesh of fluidic conveyor belts that depart and arrive at the body as experiential collisions, one has an image of the everyday soundings of the ecological soundscape. Each belt is driven by its own conatus of intention and has its own inner relations of waves and mediums of transportation, a sonic projectile that delivers sensual qualities to bodies, that are received muffled and mutated prior to being recorded and represented as sonic objects of expression. This transient crosscurrent of intangible vehicles act out and transport ephemeral lacuna messages that are received and interpreted differently by the different bodies that they encounter.

We have a universe made up of objects wrapped in objects, wrapped in objects wrapped in objects ... every object is both a substance and a complexity of relations (Harman 2011, p.83).

To arrive at an informed understanding of the natures of *Sonic Stuff* is to use the power of imagination, fiction and to speculate beyond a human perspective into a sonic perspective. It is to situate oneself as a transient tone, an assemblage of vibrations and a throb of transmissions created from the frictions and connections of human and non-human encounter. Sound is not merely a real object/quality or a sensual object/quality, it does not simply afford a presence or readiness to ear but rather sound is an oscillating configuration of all these dimensions at any given moment. As a term and a concept *Sonic Stuff* allows sound to be whatever it is, when it is and why it is and to understand that human access and interpretation can only reach so far into the core of its becoming. *Sonic Stuff* holds an ambiguity of atmosphere that pivots on the proximity of intimacy and distance, inaudibility and audibility, non-communication and communication, it is what glass is to the architect, an audible transparency that promises transition and reveals the outside to the inside and the inside to the outside. The body is transformed by sound, experiences alternative sensations, durations and perceptions and when one hears-listens to sound one is ultimately re-invented in the process of sounds becoming. *Sonic Stuff* unfolds towards experience, it gives the body a momentary feeling of distance, a distance that has nearness, as it reaches into the body from the distance and reveals the actions and events of other becomings that grow closer through the fleeting air pressures that vibration ruptures. ‘We are in an outside that carries inner worlds’ (Sloterdijk 2011, p.27). The imagination breeds a chain of associations and scenarios as curiosity is aroused and speculates how distant sounds were formed, what actions, collisions, materials and events animated the air and invaded the body as it sits alone in its room.

I sit at an open window and hear a lawnmower growling in a distant garden. I imagine the scene; the grass being sliced and the buttercups and daisies becoming beheaded and my head feels decapitated as I emote with their encounter to the lawnmower. I feel myself as jagged metal with a serrated blade, as speed, as rhythmic rotation charged by electricity. I imagine I am the body that pushes and pulls the lawnmower backwards and forwards as I softly whistle but I cannot hear myself. I only hear the motor oscillation and feel the clods of grass that stutter the continuity of mechanical rotations. For a moment I become the malfunction, the clods of grass that frustrate the body in its act of efficacy. I imagine the resistance of the grass as it attempts to hold its unity against the blades. Curiosity leads me to the window to take a look outside at the scene; I was mistaken and see a man crouched over as he sands a wooden bench. The incorporation

of visual perception into my auditory perception transforms hearing into listening. My perception of the scene and event was not the perception of something present but the presentation of an absence, a force of something yet to be visually perceived. 'Seeing is believing, we say, but don't believe everything that you hear' (O'Callaghan 2007, p.6).

*Sonic Stuff* activates involuntary memory and evokes imagination through a cascade of associations that de-centre the body into multiple positions of listening and each position has its own fiction and its own becoming. Sound bleeds the thresholds of the intimate sphere and maintains a network of connections with the collective and the wild outside. The body withdraws from the collective sphere of otherness into its intimate bubble inflated by the self. *Sonic Stuff* bursts the intimate bubble and teases out curiosity. To exist is to change and transform the senses through curiosity. Sound maintains the curious body, whilst vision reveals what curiosity was seeking, sound activates the curious search. Listening affords the body detection and recognition of what objectiles are doing in the environment, how they interact and connect to one another, where all of this occurs and the duration of interactions between objectiles as they sound.

What recent philosophers referred to as 'being in the world' first of all, and in most cases, means being in spheres. If humans are there, it is initially in spaces that have opened for them, because, by inhabiting them humans have given them form, content, extension and relative duration (Sloterdijk 2011).

Sloterdijk makes a number of interesting analogies to spheres, bubbles and foam. He proposes that humans are immersed in spheres of interconnectivity and the discovery of the self can be likened to the blowing of a bubble and watching your breath depart from the body as you follow its journey amongst other bubbles and see yourself standing at a distance. When these bubbles of otherness collide they create foam, which he terms the poetics of plurality, where art, music and other creative practices can be located. The foaming embellishments of being are the archaeology of the intimate, Sloterdijk creates a theory of the air, what he really unearths is that human beings are always immersed in something extremely active even though it may be imperceptible, it is nonetheless always real and constantly changes our states of being. One has one's own intimate bubble but shares spheres with the collective which has a kind of air conditioning where breath always participates in a shared subtlety of the spheres expansion, which delicately highlights the intimacy between beings and

objects and offers an interesting insight into the sounding ecology. The ideas that Sloterdijk proposes resonate with my particular interest in objects, architectonics and intimate spheres of engagement. He highlights the notion of a shared inside, lives immersed in lives, he states that 'being in' is always togetherness. This notion of mutual interpenetration is where objects and subjects live 'in and for' one another but still retain autonomy. One senses the affects of things in-themselves indirectly; they animate personal bubbles and collective spheres beyond one's perception and phenomenal experience. Sensual objects and qualities are reminiscent of Sloterdijk's notion of pluralities of foam, a frothing proliferation of the real through an indirect relation of bubbles that collide and burst.

One never hears a sound in itself but rather hears oneself and histories through sound. This makes reference to the subjective dimensions of our relation to sound, which can be understood as an ancestry of tonalities and shared resonances that constitute a forest of ears. The forest of ears addresses how the listening body is displaced into various phenomenologies of listening. It is the force of something yet to be perceived from a point that is beyond our own, it is to listen through the ears of others and imagine what they hear and at times what they want to or not want to hear.

Some sounds we hear, and for which we find evidence that the other hears them too, with no quasi determinate sense of what it is the other hears, we are awake with the sense of another sensibility in the dark parallel to our own (Lingis 1998, p.20).

Sound reveals the movements of the other, a sonic constellation of becomings in coexistence that pollutes the field with successive sonic projectiles and opens an ethics of auditory displacement. I must be quiet because the neighbours may hear my sounding above their sounds. *Sonic Stuff* is always audible and sound in-itself is always inaudible or rather imperceptible. *Sonic Stuff* never stops unfolding but can startle, silence and freeze bodily motion that stops to listen and survey the acoustic architectures. Every listening encounter is a connection to an alternative 'line of flight' to that of our own, but at the same time it becomes our own, an intimate experience that swells between hearing and listening, presence and absence. Listening is not an act but rather the individuated body that is produced through connections and interactions, as such the listening body is a social construct.

Sonic encounter affords the composer an entrance into a multiplicity of sensual micro-

worlds and the act of composing is to inhabit and explore the successive constitutions and breakdowns of these sensual micro-worlds as they expand, dilate, contract and draw the sensuous body deeper into their resounding. Sonic encounter ignites the composer's capacity to imagine other worldly spheres as sounds approach and inhabit the de-centred body, which is the prism of becoming; the affective, behavioural and cognitive animations of the body are activated as existential terrains that sweep the peripheries of the imperceptive. Sound pulls and pushes these existential terrains of becoming in different directions and at different times distinct from one another. A cross pollination of inner and outer time, of actuality and virtuality pressed together in an instant of sonic difference. To transmit a sound, to listen to a sound and to engage with objectiles and instruments is to activate and actualise the body, to connect to what it is not. Sonic encounter transcends the autonomy of choice, listening is something that happens to the body.

Synesthesia and ideasthesia mediate our encounters with the sounding world, to the extent that the auditory sense is never isolated but is always infected with ideas and information from other sensory registers.

Every sensory register thus bears with it both its simple nature and its tense, attentive, or anxious state; seeing and looking, smelling and sniffing, hearing and listening (Nancy 2008, p.5).

For example when I hear the softness of ambience I am using both the tactile and auditory senses in order to access and characterise the sensual qualities of a sound. When I listen to sonic objectiles in the immediate I strain towards meaning, towards the absence of meaning and my ears guide my vision and body to spaces of obscurity. The dialogue between the senses is metaphor in action; we make sense of the sounding world through a mesh of all the senses. The cross meshing of sensory registers leads to the sensing of ideas, images and concepts that reside in our relations to sound.

This, of course, is exactly what Saussure had in mind when he described the verbal signifier- the pattern of sound registered in the psyche- as *sound image* (Saussure (1959), cited in Ingold 2011, p.248).

Air-pressures vibrate upon the ear and facilitate the construction of perceptual cartographies, categories, meanings and taxonomies that tame the abstract sounding world and consolidate sonic objectiles of the everyday as sonic objects. 'Sense is sought

in sound, on the other hand, sound, resonance, is also looked for in sense' (Nancy 2008, p.7).

Sonic reality is a heterogeneous assemblage of audible bits and pieces, a bubbling cauldron of objects and qualities that create alien resonances, which afford the body alternative sensations, experiences and internal movement as sound speaks into and through it. The body is a resonant cavity of amplification that emits a vibe into the atmosphere like an alchemists ethereal vapour cloud that rises up into the air and pollutes the sonic field for others. The exterior penetrates the interior through listening and the voice penetrates the exterior from within as sounds find their phonetic voices in words. The reverberating echo from the environment tunnels into the body where it is transformed and then channelled back out again, a loop of inputs and outputs, connections that each time returns difference, a spiralling causality that implements the self amongst others in the laments of the audible.

The world is a reality studio where all the tapes run all the time, do-this<>do-that loops internalised by humans as tradition (Eshun 1998, p.145).

The sonic world is a phonological iconism composed of sonic monuments, terrains, places, symbols and structures that fold the dwellings of the symbolic and imaginary into successive origamis' of the senses. Sounds are in the world and resonance is of the world and when sound withdraws resonance remains. Sound crystallises its own species of style amongst the meshed planes of vibration and reveals a symbolic architecture of the senses that sculpts a face into the air pressures of the transient. The blurred face of audibility emerges with motion and soon slips away to reveal passageways into a distance that looms closer and teleports becoming into alternative spheres of experiential spatiality and temporality. Experiential sound mobilises the body and thought; it dissolves imagination into memory, memory into perception, and perception back into ideas and actions.

The eternal return of resonance and the echoes of disembodied techno-voices continue to speak to and through the body from a 'hyper-real' topography of schizophonic bits and pieces. A soundscape of speaking machines chatter amongst themselves without the need for human ears. The inability to distinguish between immediate real world sounds and the abundance of sounding simulations that continue without beginning or end is the post-human schizophonic reality. The body is enfolded in forces of amplification

that displace the living sounding world, the body inhabits amplification rather than real world sounds. Techno objects produce new ways to listen through myriads of low resolution and low fidelity en-framings. The ‘gestell’ (Heidegger, cited in Christian Fuchs) of compressed amplification infects the ears, which no longer have to strain to hear the distant whispers of audibility.

The permanence of sound recording was an imagined future, the message to future generations, whether a spoken banal piece of advice or the fragments of an eroding tradition (Stern 2003, p.325).

The corporeal decays into an underground silence of soil and bones whilst the proliferation of the incorporeal voice is eternalised and encoded into a continuum of sounding data that is inscribed onto tapes and reels, into fibres and codes that wrap, encase and mummify the body. The collective builds temples from the voices of the deceased, historical shrines of a past materiality that traces the archaeology of human engagement and expression. Sonic projectiles unfold planes of indeterminacy; the voice of the other ricochets from surface to surface and demands our attention and concern. The sound in-itself consists precisely in the movement from potentiality and inaudibility into a sonic projectile of actuality, audibility and the determination of sensory experience. It is a process that shifts from sonic projectile (presence) and listening, to sonic object (readiness) and hearing. The sonic projectile unfolds an occasion of sonic experience that perishes into an immanent objectivity and leaves behind traces of sensation that are encoded into the eternal object.

The most important tool that we have with which to encounter sound the sounding world is the ear. We rely on it to function efficiently and rarely consider all the mechanisms that are at play whilst listening in the immediate, if I were to do so I would not be able to listen attentively and consciousness would be overwhelmed. When the ear malfunctions and ruptures its function we have a heightened sense of its presence in the world standing apart from what it affords the body as a tool for listening/hearing and as a sense to sustain relations with the world. An example of presence to hand is the assemblage of the synthesiser. To play a synthesiser one is unaware in the immediate of the circuits, signals, electricity, fuses and how each component interacts and relies upon the other components within this specific assemblage to function. One would not be able to focus on performing with the synthesiser if one had to think about the concealed and withdrawn assemblage of the object as a unity. However if the synthesiser were to

malfunction one would question each component and become conscious of the presence of the relations of components that form the unity of the object; the plastic outer case, the stand it sits upon, the socket in the wall, the input and output, the circuit board, each capacitor, the multiple switches and knobs, the network of wires it holds inside. One would follow each autonomous component of the synthesiser in order to trace the trail of malfunction for repair or replacement, in doing so the object would have revealed itself as a presence of autonomy other than its function as a tool or item of equipment. The malfunctioning of the synthesiser is a line of flight where error induces creative solutions and alternative ways of interacting with technology and instruments. Readiness to hand refers to the withdrawn, an object-tool that is utilised for a specific end, to achieve something and get something done. It is used to negotiate within immediate contexts without one needing to be fully aware of its construction; it is a reliance on the totality of the components of the object rather than the autonomous object with individual agency as an assemblage of parts. For example whilst playing guitar, the improviser does not think about the soldering that links the pickups, the input jack, the amplifier and its magnet cone, the fuse within the plug, the weave of metals that construct the strings, what the tuning pegs are made from, if the improviser were to do so, he/she would not be able to focus on encountering the sonic potential of the guitar. Whilst engaging with the guitar there is a totality of engagement with the instrument and reliance upon the object-tool to function and fulfil its intended use. The guitar becomes withdrawn into its function rather than an autonomous object that reveals its own being. 'When a tool is most a tool, it recedes into a reliable background of subterranean machinery' (Harman. 2010, p.6). In this understanding the object/instrument is an extension that meshes itself with the body as a means to achieve a particular end. The distributed agency of the studio environment is an assemblage of emergent malfunctions and errors that give rise to alternative presences, ways of interacting with instruments/technologies and unfold alternative trajectories that further creative advancements. Hearing provides a readiness to the ear, whereas listening provides a presence to the ear that reveals unfamiliar encounters and situations. When listening there is always a malfunction of meaning, a rupture of context, an obtrusive happening within the environment, one hears the sonic object and listens to the sonic objectile. The following citations by Jean-Luc Nancy outline and support the notion that sound reveals and withdraws a presence or a readiness to the ear.



To hear [...] is to already each time understand at least the rough outline of a situation (a context if not a text), to listen is to be straining towards a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible (Nancy 2007, p.6)... Listening takes place at the same time as the sonorous event (Nancy 2007, p.14).

Stern (2003) distinguishes between hearing (passive) and listening (active). Stern's concept of 'audile technique' highlights that listening is something that we learn, it is habit driven whilst hearing is a personal quality of sound that has interiority and situates the body at the core of the sonic environment. Stern traces different modes of active listening that coincide with the rise and development of technological reproduction. The ears have evolved multiple modes of effective listening and switch between them in accordance to varying situations and contexts. For Stern hearing and listening combined create the acoustic space and the individuation of the audible field. What is interesting is that Stern locates listening as a solitary activity (headphone-headspace) that transcends the immediate acoustic environment. What becomes apparent is that the body does not listen as an act or action but rather listening becomes the individuated body's identity. 'Identity and individuation stem from the account of sound as disturbance events' (O'Callaghan 2007). In short, we become 'interpellated' as ideological subjects through the 'hailing' (Althusser, cited in Gray 2004), down of sonority, through the phonetic sound of one's name being called out; in turn the body has learned to listen attentively. 'Auditory attention converts vision into watchfulness' (Ingold 2011, p.277).

Sounds can conceal and mask out another sounds qualities and objects can conceal and mask out the intensities of other objects. This process of masking out or veiling is when the threshold of hearing a particular noise or tone can be raised or reduced by another noise or tone. White noise reduces the volume of all tones, at times low-level frequencies mask high-level frequencies and high-level frequencies mask low-level frequencies. *Sonic Stuff* unfolds as a battlefield; a soundscape that sustains and supplements existence, a field where the audible and barely perceptible fight it out to be heard. This is particularly important for understanding that sounds do not merely reveal and withdraw in relation to human access but also reveal and withdraw in relation to one another. Sounds are always other than what they reveal to the ear and are never exhausted by the ears relation to them. *Sonic Stuff* withdraws into the inaudible background plasma as a supporting layer that subsequently reveals itself as a disruptive sonic objectile. Sound directs towards before towards was there. The soundscape is an aural maze of divergent different durations, a dis-continuum of fluxes and flows that

reveal the co-evolution of a forest of ears; all listening back to one another to hear who was listening and all sounding to hear what resounds for the longest duration. Listening conjures up imaginary times and places, an excavation of forgotten depths, which ultimately implicates the body in the production of the past and the intensities that came with it are re-collected at different levels of force. 'The temporality of sound thus opens a horizon toward which narrative and the movements of looking are directed' (Labelle 2010, p.6). The corporeal body is an intercalation of fragmented narratives into a sounds incorporeal transient life. Sound in-itself is a historical narrative of its own echoes, resounding, delays and distortions that mutate at the threshold of the ear and subsequently returns resonance to the narrative of the body, a passageway of phase transitions that age and decay.

Sonic objectiles possess seductive forces and intensities that persuade the sensual body into alternative occasions of encounter. Sound makes the distinction between communicating things and doing things. Sonic encounter transforms the body's relation to the environment before the body understands what the sonic objectile has communicated. *Sonic Stuff* functions as a binder of inner and outer experience; it is not merely the intersection of subject and object but rather a movement of action that slips the subject into the object and the object into the subject, the super-jectile. This movement is much more than what the idealist terms a representation or what the realist terms a thing, it is rather a reverberation of alterity, in which the composer is a signal of becoming through multiplicities of other signals and their resounding. When a sound has ceased to act it never ceases to exist. The composer's perception of sound is by no means a straightforward process and is open to many interpretations, variations and interruptions that are caused by both the complexity of the sonic field and the contents of intention which are always charged by the infusion of ideas, concepts and the repetition of encounter with the 'schizophonic' (Schafer, 1969), soundscape. Whilst hearing one may undermine important sonic objectiles and when listening attentively one may overmine others, either way we bracket in or bracket out certain sonic qualities.

Hearing is instantaneous whilst in other contexts the body listens sensibly and selects particular details for examination irrespective of the variation and diversity of the sonic field (selective listening). Sound activates concepts and evokes ideasthesia, perception is always virtualised and animated-contaminated by the ingression of the eternal object and the transformation of the sensation of sound into an idea of sound or an image of

sound. The repetition of encounter with *Sonic Stuff* is such that one learns to engage with sound in similar ways to others, it is a feature of human society, culture and a product-perversion of mechanical and technological reproduction that is highly charged with symbolic and cultural significance. Technological recording was developed to represent and document musical events, which in turn made the musical event an object that had to be faithful to its representation.

Recording as a form of exteriority, it does not preserve a pre-existing sonic event as it happens so much it creates and organises sonic events for the possibility of preservation and repetition (Stern 2003, p.235).

The entrainment of the ear synchronises bodies into unified rhythms and brings together a unison of movement, twitching spasms of poly-counter-contra and cross kinesthetic limb cycles bind the assemblage of bodies (crowd). As background noise is raised, intimacy is heightened, communicating through the noise makes bodies move closer to one another, sharing intimate spaces, bodies grind together, which creates all kinds of creative fictions, frictions and intensities. The quantised rhythms of computer-based music homogenises the rhythms of bodily movement and implements the limbs within the grid, which has multiple references; the electric grid of a city, the information grid, the grid of a step sequencer etc... The body is more familiar with sonic reproduction than it is with real world sounds, which are pushed into the distance as interference or background noise. What becomes central is that composers and listeners distinguish between the sonic signatures of machines and technologies, each machine and techno object has its own grain and style, an aura of malfunctions and almost imperceptible errors.

The whole series of things about accidents, about bugs, about the producer being someone who can nurture a bug, who can breed a bug. Simultaneously most of the key musics have been accidents, they've have been formed through errors. They're software errors in the machines programming and they form these sounds-and the producers taken these sounds and nurtured this error, built on the mistake (Eshun 1998, p.189).

Technological malfunctions and errors are crucial in the species shaping of styles and artistic approaches; these malfunctions are opportunities that the composer catches onto. 'Error is on the side of the angels (or from the perspective of the machine, the side of demons, error as horror)' (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.44). Following from 'Cracked Media',

Malfunctions and glitches are eruptions of potentiality, 'the crack' is a point of rupture or a place of chance occurrence, where unique events take place that are ripe for exploitation toward new creative possibilities (Kelly 2009, p.4).

The body connects to machines and technologies in order to become, to connect to what it is not, to become other in a mutual process of re-production that transforms and maximises itself. The ear connects to headphones or speakers, the finger-tips connect to rotary knobs and percussion pads that create perceptions beyond the human and reveals how the body can be transformed by connections to technology and machines. Difference and 'lines of flight' reside in the continual process of connection and disconnection, wiring oneself into an ecology of malfunctions, errors, disruptions and breaks. The body becomes a composer, producer and engineer when connected to a mixing console, sampler, instrument or computer. The ear connects with sound and becomes a listener; the mouth connects with language and becomes a speaker.

Sound is a continuous weave of absences and presences, of communications that alternate between inaudible and audible horizons that open thresholds of the body that the body may never have actualised without sonic encounter. 'Transcendental resonance is nothing but the opening of a body' (Nancy 2007, p.29). The imperative of *Sonic Stuff* is that it not only influences the body as a unity but rather the ramifications are that it cuts and fragments the body, it splices the affective, behavioural and cognitive spheres of being, at different times and in different ways creating zones of indeterminacy and resistances that delimit and constrain bodily gestures, motions and perceptions whilst simultaneously opening channels into alternative gestures and perceptions. Perception is such that sound is filtered before it is converted into action nevertheless the body can directly sense sound and convert it into action before perception takes place. Sonic objects act as a reproductive prosthetic of the body that extends and amplifies the body's capabilities and communicates its significance to itself and to others. Connecting to machines and technologies pushes buttons of the body that it never knew existed. Sound lubricates the body, excites the senses and brings forth a rumble of cultural representations. The sensual qualities of sonic experience encrust and mask sound in-itself with a veil of historical echoes. *Sonic Stuff* gives a face to the air and a landscape to the ear, similar to the way that architecture gives a face to the landscape through its cities, towns, houses and monuments. The sonic face has its exteriority of marks, scars and symbols but beyond that exterior lay something that is ungraspable and holds

expression deep inside, a vibrant withdrawn inner core that cannot be encountered. What has become central to this research is how sound escapes us whilst at the same time engages us. Sound has the potential to draw out and reveal the submerged contours of the composer's creative expression, images fracture the body into extensive fields and sound puts the body back together through intensive flows.

### **Sonic Architectonics**

Archival ecology is awash in a dynamic noise of data, an immanent informational static, an atmosphere rather than a layer, something which gets into the individuals, such as the modulations and intensifications to its rhythm bring about physical and biological changes, a transmission of affect (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.57).

Sound interconnects bodies at varying proximities and binds them through the shared experience of feeling embedded in the soundscape together; time sharing, space sharing and sound sharing. Listening is grounded in horizons, it is a given of the sonic atmosphere that sounds will approach the body from horizons of inaudibility. An uneven topography of sonic projectiles with their own horizons, intentions and languages of phase transition constitute the indeterminacy of the soundscape. 'In our exposure to noise and silence we in turn confront questions of place and placelessness, domestic rootedness and urban transience' (Labelle 2010, p.47). The social circulates a synchronised rhythm that is choreographed by the species of spaces, non-places and urban planning, a sonic architecture that continually reassembles the socio-cultural field through the contained domestication of noise. To hear is to passively consume whilst to listen is to actively produce a relation to the world as the individuated body becomes experience and invents experience. Sound design is the unravelling of a sonic architectonic, an imaginary conception of space that is not solely physical in terms of context, but rather dissolves physicality, an infidelity towards the visual and the static, an expansion of narrative that alters the landscape through an unfolding soundscape. Dialogues of reflection and refraction are expansive elevations, clouds of echoes that unsettle the body as it involutes its withdrawn history over and over. Objects are ways of exploring the sonic architectonics of specific spaces, rooms and buildings; placing microphones inside objects, glasses, bottles, boxes and tin cans affords a displacing phenomenology of thingness; how the box, glass or bottle experiences the sonic architectonic. Artificial signal processing stimulates the surreal spaces, an internal vastness that has no limits to its virtual capacities as retention bubbles over edges and forms complex shadows of the self. Signal processing affords the sonic modelling of

physically impossible places and buildings, plastic sound worlds override the extensive dimensions of a listening position into a meandering disposition, where foundations have legs and walls breathe. The light and shadow of buildings can be related to silences and background noises, the absence of sonic differentiations creates shapes and silhouettes, the subtle throbs, drops and teetering imperceptibles play with the emptiness of a cavity as a way of proliferating metaphor and emotion. The reverberation and echo of a space is a way for sound to objectify its own origin or essence, a mirror of audibility as sound hears itself return transformed to itself.

Life forms, whether organic or artificial, exist in any space where material forces are actively aestheticised, where matter is sculpted and vital agents are managed, organised, affected and otherwise made aesthetically active (Coley and Lockwood 2012, p.42).

All causality is an aesthetic experience for any object, sound experiences the surfaces that it collides with, surfaces experience the vibrations of sonic waves, the body is supported by the sonic waves that refract and reflect around it, animated by sonic detours, echoes and returns. The body constructs frequency cartographies, maps of transmission trails, navigational systems, neurological and physiological circuits of resonant networks that are continually revisited and provide the familiar feeling of how a sound feels, like a bat that navigates the night sky using echolocation or a homing pigeon that returns to its loft from a vast distance using infrasound. Air pressures push and pull one another, as sounds chatter amongst themselves and mutate through their own colliding vibrations. The body is propagated and immersed in audible plasticity. Computer based surgery affords resonance a level of malleability, something that can be created and manipulated; the propagation of repetitions, reverberations, echoes, distortions and phasing is an illusion of distant proximities that move in head-spaces rather than physical spaces, an internal theatre where memory draws the curtain. Sound as plasticity generates spaces that are not yet known, architectures that are waiting to be constructed, embellishments and ornamentations that the eyes have never seen but the body has encountered their alien vibration as complex intensive phenomena rather than extensive measurements.

A chaotic frenzy of *Sonic Stuff*, the wild outside ignites the inside, like a mouse that scurries under an anvil, the body tremors and the senses are pressed up against one another, the body desires the ungraspable silence (silence as the ideal) as it rushes through bodies to reclaim its own body in the calmness of its place. The stillness of

buildings is animated by the sounds that seep and diffract from windows and doors that ultimately connect dwellings through the transient locus of hums. The inaudible architectures of buildings reside in-themselves. A sound from the other side of the wall dissolves the privacy of spaces and places, binding the intimate spheres of becoming together. What vision conceals through obstacles, sound reveals through the horizons that actualise at the immanence of the body. An alien resonance brings a rumble of allies and air pressures that waltz with the cochlear and probe the eternal object with zaps of technological neuron slicers, audible pins that puncture the balloon of being with the becoming of the future. The body is spiked and owned by sonic encounter. The scaffolding of an echoed vibe; a contagious sharing of tones; repel and attract object to environment. Encrustations on the inner surface of the body open and close the 'I' into the 'We' and the 'We' into the 'I', as sound binds the collective through toxic and contagious transmission exchanges. A stirring of the incorporeal swamp, as the tentacles of the ear reach out to slurp up the dregs and drips without the need of a face or body to accompany a sound, a sensual alienation from sound waves to territories. I encounter sound and sound encounters me. I extract from sound and sound extracts from me. I reveal myself through sound and sound reveals itself through me and so on to the other. I become accounted as sound and for sound as I encounter sound. I am implemented in sounds constitution, a becoming through the echoes of a historical resonant bass material. Sonic pollution is resonant involution, outwards, inwards and onwards and all over again. Sound waves hail down towards the seeping corpus as the interior unfolds as the interiority of interiors within interiors within interiors, an overabundance of clatters, clutters and sonic shards swarm towards some kind of perceptual coherence and then quickly disintegrate back into a jigsaw puzzle of dislocated mumbles and swerved proximities.

Meaning consists in a reference. In fact, it is made of a totality of referrals, from a sign to a thing, from a state of things to a quality, from a subject to another subject or to itself, all simultaneously. Sound is always made of referrals; it spreads space, where it resounds while still resounding within me (Nancy 2007, p.7).

Sound always makes reference and refers to another becoming; object, time, space and event. It points us away from where we are, whilst simultaneously pouring the distant into us from a swerve of uneven sonic proximities, filling and file-ing us. The body is sounds brief container, a destination amongst its many destinations as its flowing durations crease the contours of becoming with waves of prophetic currents. *Sonic*

*Stuff* is a sonorous configuration of constellations that can guide, intimidate, orientate, confuse and make us feel like us, whilst at the same time implementing us in a forest of ears. Ethereal mists of diaphanous fuzzy frequencies move through corporeal spaces, every movement of a sonic objectile leaves a trail of audible phosphorescence that animates the environment through the vibe of its becoming and reveals the laments of ambience and atmosphere that give the immediate its complexity of durations and directions. Sound launders the terrestrial with the firmaments of a noisy azure. The vibe of a sonic architectonic is a swirling interaction of objects within objects within things within environments that all-express different intensities of sensual qualities simultaneously. Refusing the listener as spectator, sonic architectonics implicate the listener in the spatio-temporal spheres that they generate and engage the body in ways that are visceral, affective and conceptual.

A sonic architectonic is a pulsating membrane of sonic activity that is characterised by barely perceptible rhythmic movements of attack, release, phase and decay. It is nothing more than a multiplicity of connections in dialogue; the incorporeal voice of a corporeal materiality, a mesh of pulsating membranes that structure presences and give form to absences. One can hear the whispers of a room or building in the absence of its bodies, a sonic architectonic in-itself without the animation of limbs and voices. The room/building creaks a sigh of relief as it comes to rest after the habitual interactions with other bodies; metal pipes tap and rattle, expansion contracts as the flowing water cools and stagnates, walls decrease their resonant hums as generators are halted, the space opens itself out to the blur of air conditioning, microscopic tremors from distant trains send infrasound into the foundations, the room/building's vacated state reveals the voice of its endurance and its gradual metamorphosis of tonality. The building contains its own memories of encounter.

To sound is to vibrate in itself or by itself. It is not only for the sonorous body, to emit a sound, but it is also to stretch out, to carry itself and be resolved into vibrations that both return it to itself and place it outside itself (Nancy 2007, p.8).

Weismann (2008) speculates what the world would be without humans; cities would decay, towering skyscrapers and concrete jungles would erode, sinking into the swamp of weeds and crawling ivy that eats and swallows fabrication, cockroaches that could survive a nuclear fall-out would perish without heating systems. Wiesmann theorises the effects of a de-populated earth and speculates how the environment quickly conceals



human inhabitation. Buildings would deteriorate and fall apart as winds tear off roofs and leaks rust nails that hold structural timbers together, walls would sag and foundations corrode. Weismann offers the composer a mode of intensive listening to the subtleties of rooms/buildings and environments and attempts to bracket out the body in order to imagine the sounding world without humans. What would the earth sound to an unformatted ear that floats through transforming urban terrains as they become engulfed with foliage and thriving wildlife, where species of birds and other animals proliferate? What would the world sound without human interference? These questions are important for compositional processes and imagination, to situate oneself outside of one's bodily cavities, of external and internal thresholds and become a fly with a DPA microphone strapped to one's back as you hover around the ancestral realm. 'Human beings are only one of many species that evolved a sense of territory based on the size of their acoustic arena' (Blessner and Salter 2007, p.27). Whales communicate signals to one another over great distances but their habitat, the ocean, is becoming increasingly noisy with the interference of submarines, ships, motorboats and propellers that break water. Whales are becoming confused and washed up on shores because the mediums of their sounding(s) are sonically polluted. The body is charged with the sound of others and charges others with the sounds of ourselves. The soundscape is a 'schizophonic' matrix of techno-voices that decontextualise the origins of sonic projectiles. The power of the sonic architectonic is that the boundaries of the individual do not end where the body does, but intimately extends into the socio-cultural-environmental collective. The listener becomes the outside that is contained in the inside of an immersive sonorous space that devours subjectivity as bodies phase with one another and dislocate one another through the echo of representation and phonetic signification.

Listening guides vision to and from the multiple surfaces that surround the body, the atmosphere is animated with a forest of ears. Sonic projectiles multiply sensual objects and qualities, and hum their own experiential sense of space and time as the continuous flow of variation and difference that perpetually re-awakens bodily sensation to the immediate soundscape of tones amongst tones, frequencies amongst frequencies, ears amongst ears and voices amongst voices. The forest of ears has no centre of control, command or hierarchical structure it is rather a gathering machine that binds ears, bodies, places and spaces. The forest of ears is the overcrowding of experience as bodies push and pull, absorbing energies and vibes from one another, to the extent that it becomes problematic in locating and understanding where the

boundaries of the individual begin or end. *Sonic Stuff* has a diversity of sensual qualities, all of which are perceived differently by the individual both in terms of perceiving and what is perceived. In many cases differences in the perception of sensual qualities may be wholly or partly concealed by a redundancy of information, by which I mean, that the individual is only interested in that which affords the body action, sensation, thought and imagination. Not only are there differences in the perceptions of different beings but there are also differences of perception in the same being at different times and in different contexts. When one encounters sound one does not perceive the entirety of sound, but rather the qualities that interest and afford possible action; what a sound can afford the body in terms of movement and direction both conceptually and physically.

Resonant ethereal mists connect spaces to places, as the body becomes caught up in the flesh of vibrations, an immersion and dwelling within a resonant architectonic that is enfolded into a network of resounding architectonics. The interplay and interconnections of these resonant and resounding forms create the dissonance and consonance of embedded-ness, the feeling of being out of place and out of time. Every sound encountered contains a resonant multiplicity of other virtual spaces and times, that presents a time that is not our own, as the body is presented with other times and lines of becoming. One learns to see things with the ears that one could never see with the eyes, the body is all ears and the ears always ring a reality that gives the body an ear-full. Sonic projectiles have a constellation of orbiting sensual qualities and when various sonic projectiles collide so does the configuration of sensual qualities. Sound unfolds without beginning or end and communicates an experience of sound as a continuous organism of intensities and affective tones. The sounding world is an interpenetrative loop of distributive casual connections, in that one projects needs and desires into the sounding environment through ones voices and moods of audibility and in turn one is influenced by the resounding of the environments permanence. Sound is never monomial but rather integrates a multiplicity of communicative modes that forges connections between the unstable and situated self. Listening to sound is a way of materialising the sounds of others with ourselves, a blending of distant partial becomings as the body is composed by the occasions of associations. The imperative of a sound is to be so immersed in its vibration that for a moment the whole of reality pours into it, as each instant of listening apprehends the next.

Social relations are influenced by the way that certain physical spaces are constructed

in order to design the acoustics of specific spaces, whether that be the symbolic places of religion, the modelling of concert halls, the sounds of 'non-places' (Auge 2008), banks or waiting rooms. These physical spaces hold certain auditory signatures, background noises, atmospheres and ambiances that define their socio-cultural function as either spaces, places, memorials or non-places and to some extent confine bodily expression within ideological architectures. Places and spaces breathe and emit sounds that are both inaudible and audible, one does not need to hear a sound to feel its presence, the active imperceptibles; sub bass frequencies and high frequency signals that create dizziness, paranoia, anxiety and nausea beyond audible perception. It is easy to identify physical spaces through visual differences and demarcations, which at times come pre-inscribed in the immediate environment, however sonic thresholds are less easy to be exact about.

Sound acts out as a submerged depth, the bass material that sustains and supports every scene, event and process. Sonic horizons are a presence felt everywhere, partitioning the world into explored and unexplored enclaves and propagating spaces of virtual potentiality that are real even though they may not be manifest and actual. Sonic horizons are comprised by a distribution of phenomenal relations that surround every flow of consciousness and announce a deferred presence and the promise of something yet to come. Sonic horizons refer to more than the peripheries of spaces and places but rather refer to the context in which one detects and recognises sounds significance as it infiltrates ones intimate sphere of sensation and perception. The horizons of moods, ambience and atmosphere, spoken words and bodily language become discursive transient architectures that can affect other beings and entangle them in vibes of alterity. Sonic horizons are the blurred division between the inaudible and audible that strain the limits of auditory perception, as the ears stretch out to capture a meaning that is absent; it is a grabbing rather than a grasping. Unlike visual horizons that the body moves towards, sonic horizons move towards the body whether one likes it or not. Explorers sailed towards the horizons in search of difference and newfound lands whereas sonic horizons make the body difference; the body is territorialised as sounds newfound land. Sonic horizons are more than how sound unfolds at the peripheries but reveal how the body's horizons meet sonic horizons and connect as an active terrain of sensation and affect, where the activation of involuntary memory always consists in the unfolding of recollection into the present. One can never leave a place, a home, a person or a sound. The dreams, fears and shadows of

these places penetrate deep beneath the skin, at the edges of the eyes and in the gristle of the ear lobes resides a city of shadows, impressions, prior encounters, smiles and distortions. Hands run through your hair but sound runs into the deep places. Composition functions to incite the greatest number of possible encounters and extend the field of relations with others. The defining mode of composition is consumption and contagion, for sound to be consumed by the other, for the sounds that one creates to be heard, for the sounds that one organises to affect and be invested with multiple ears, to infect others and inject alien rhythms into other bodies.

## **Poetics of Praxis**

### ***Soft Edges***

The compositions take an aural form, where standard parameters of rhythm, vertical harmony, and horizontal progressions are so blurred that they become static, creating a dense swathe of slowly evolving tone clusters that splay into multiple portals, a folding and refolding of sonority. Clustering events of found sounds break the rhythm and continuity of the mechanical. At moments standard punctures of beat time collapse and then rebuild their tempo, a quicksand to the ears. Whilst recording, changing the breath of the synthesiser by switching it on and off creates moments of unease, of error. I inhabit the objects on a table, which display a strange topography, a world of heights and differences but most notably potentials that are not actual. Auras of functionality radiate invitations to the hands. Fusions of microtonal intervals add ghost like qualities with tombs of distant reverbs moving between dry times and wet registers. Wide leaping vocal solo lines chop the voice into shard like stabs, a process in which the voice undergoes vicious vocalisation and the throat, mouth, palette and breath are translated into midi maps. The keyboard becomes the voice, playing random stitches amongst moog chords that result in an underbelly of tangled knots, twists and curves. A species of neo-impressionism, where found sounds create a scurrying landscape across an ambient synth-sky and clock like ticks cut the scenes into different shades. Sections become spheres, orbs that explode like disposable plastic bottles, creating particles of audibility that ease into the next composition. Everything is generated by improvised instances.

Rhythms find their relation in the exterior as particles unite through motion and are compelled into a gradual resolution of the limbs, there is always strut. The grid (step

sequencer) is a wall of voids that can be filled and unfilled, the gaps between a click drag highlighted sections out of focus. Rhythm composes relations between parts that had never confronted one another as aggregates form a syncopated substance of tempo. The rhythms of actuality, occasions, and impressions give virtuality its character. Hand railings support steps as the feet move beyond the body, no difference finds unity, as different tempos unleash one another other, free each other. Trance faces techno as a father, hip-hop holds disco in its ancestral pallet. Western art music folds its resistances into the popular, as serialism and minimalism meet inside a drone that diminishes an identity. The techniques of Stockhausen are pre-sets-pre-scribed, built in effects that hold significance only when activated inside certain contexts; an art gallery amplifies the high modern as the grand shift. Rhythm becomes a parody of itself, a technique of somatic jutting, when to accelerate and when to pause. Tempo quotes itself whilst quoting its genres, species, allies and its limits. Tempo wars as an 808 fires a cannon into a rim shot that asks a high hat for support, anything over 240bpm becomes a blur. In high speed form becomes formlessness as tuning toms' divide-escape into drip like substances that give a composition its pointillism.

Highly augmented found sounds and noise somehow represent the pre-historic. In my imagination, tiny sounds without signification that escape the chronology of history, empty orbs of sonority that the listener struggles to connect them to events and objects in reality. Melodic patterns have a definite circular rotation within a swarm of loose sounds, dabbed into the composition, some sculptural and some softer; the constructed object against the undulating soundscape. A sense of pulse and rhythm dominate on a monolithic base that fades and eventually dies away to spluttering drum interjections, like a winding down clockwork toy or a battery dying. The music always attempts to find the mechanic decay as the LED light flickers and dies. The tape loop on each return becomes less prominent, as the repetition of the same word over and over makes it slowly become silent (a transcendental meditation or materialism). A series of blocks are sharpened by instrumental registers, each block has a vocal statement, a melodic motion, where brief snatches of gain and distortion soften the mechanical edge, where the amplified erases contrast and fuzz softens distinctions and differences. The power of timbre, above and beyond nuance, lived its life for many years as subservient to the melodic and harmonic, once a carrier and now central. Sonic art posits listening as an artistic act, it is to delve beneath crusts and enter tiny kingdoms where the sovereignty of the body is given to sound, for the flesh to be dominated by ghosts, for a spirit of

alterity to enter my confines. Composers once had to convey meaning and narrative, now they have to quote the mechanical, as music becomes an echo of itself, a repetition of representation that is somewhere tangled in between the knots of the symbolic.

Sub bass and low level frequencies are akin to putting one's head in a barrel and having the barrel hit with a hammer and the delicate voice and acoustic timbres are reduced to scrapes and scratches as though the barrel were being whipped with shoe laces. Disembodied sounds and clattering percussions frame the ambient. A loosening of foreground and background is achieved by the use of extended delay and decay times. As soon as pulse finds its cycle, acousmatic interjections disrupt the continuum. Intention is always a co~evolution, when something attracts then intention is activated towards a certain manoeuvre, guided by things as they manifest themselves into iridescent objects. The sonic pallet is tempered by a sense of direction towards a tonal point and away from a time signature. In theorising the compositional process; architecture emerges from tonality and rhythm and found sounds create a friction that produces a flame. I always imagine burning a sound, scorching, bleeding, and softening its edges, which makes it more fragile and brittle. It is a primitivism that is driven by the rattles and hisses of motorised rhythms- responding to others discoveries-where phrases struggle against often-subdued sonority. Days of silence, of not recording and composing are like gasps of air as the ears rest from being trapped inside head-ponic caves of compression where you hear the shadows grow, becoming more vivid and intense, taking the headphones off is like birth, an opening of the womb, closed back headphones silence the world in order for new worlds to emerge in the imagination- no need for selective listening.

Rhythm's of exchange- everything bleeds its edges and produces something other- at the threshold of difference is where you find rhythm- the timbral qualities of a snare fold a kick, they side chain each other, a dialogue of audibility that talk compression and release- rhythm enters silently with different ratios of attack, a pulse is eased on and off, a dimming switch of transition- there's no immunity to rhythm- its inside cavity- of a body and between vibrant bodies and networks- blood flows are drum rolls and heart beats are cymbals. Never a silence but rather a rhythm of sighs and gasps; a flow of nothing, as listening is neither fully the sound nor fully the body, a liminal relation of nothingness that is always self reflecting, counting itself as it listens, 1,2,3,4, between presences and scenes. Rhythm is movement without direction, a pulse without need,

destination or a trajectory, it produces its differences through repetitions- through cycles, through grooves- a groove in a materiality- a record holds history in grooves, in the gaps, like the inner circles of a tree- composing is taking a needle and running it over all materiality, listening to the changes in grain; glass, wood, metal, soil, plastic and water- listening to the jumps in materiality that produce different frictions.

Eight loops of varying lengths are set off in motion- grouped in frequency bands to minimise frequency cancellation. Each return of the loop meets another loop at a different intersection. A junction of sounds, a nexus of composition, each node has its own capacity for morphogenesis, its own will to mutate; convergence and divergence creating nomadic trajectories, flights without destination that are sensual journeys for the ears. Each rotation is transformation- effects are spread across moments, inserting difference into the repetition- heightening the potency of a chance relation, collisions spawn their own temporary rhythms; jerky and staggered- each loop has its grain- its technological fingerprint, the ears are immersed in static, a sound's birth place. Travelling at high speed in a car on the motorway; as you watch the painted white lines on the road from the window, you follow their subtle shifts, the imperfections, the faster you travel the more the form of the lines becomes a blurry suggestion- becoming imperceptible, becoming a brush stroke, a continuous one without end- a stroke of white or sometimes yellow against the tarmac, a contrast that is heightened with motion. A collision announces the force of encounter, an intensity of qualities confronting one another gives a composition its will- aggression is aggregated diffusing on their own journeys and returning transformed whilst attempting to become a whole again.

When the spirit and imagination can no longer take charge of the corporeal, when the slave stands up over the intangible shackles, and the body runs wild amongst vibration- the pre-ordained is split down the middle, one path is now two, and the splitting occurs again, over and over, ideas illuminate parts of experience but they do not organise it, they simply extend it. Metaphors are absences, the way language tingles amongst non-communication, presenting the non-present. Code as art, like the Dadaists, technology as art, was always art, traditional notions of aesthetics are swept along with specialisation induced by notation, the score is bypassed in favour of the mechanical, memory into matter as the ears listen through technological lenses, elevations- when the technology is gone these perceptions live independently of the technology and reside in being as impressions with digital frames. Translating the analogue into digital- the composer becomes a medium, a translator, taking expressivity from found sounds of the

everyday and converting them to their closest pitch, gentle modulation, seismic waves from 5.5 miles below the earth's surface, play a deep jazz, converting these hums into midi, into a synch swell creates a strange jazz, a complex jazz that goes beyond human thinking. The acoustic is dominant as we think about sounds, but material vibration resides in being without thinking, it is an ever presence at the peripheries of the perceptive body. Interesting music follows the body, induced complexity for complexity's sake follows thought, and being does not rely on thinking. To improvise is to be with sound, not caught between an interior and exterior interval, but to be as sound, split the correlation the body does what it will.

### ***Bone Smile***

Abstraction to the picturesque- fictions to faces- I imagine exploded diagrams- parts extended in space- it is as though I listen through an IKEA diagram- an assemblage of pieces that will create an object that is not yet present- a potentiality of parts coming together, with the possibility that they never will. As though the body were chopped into parts and sound somehow reconfigures it in an abstract way, the body is still functional in a limited capacity- it hobbles, roles, limps-sways and swings- -rapid flashes of light opens doors that the ears somehow answer- a feeling of containment and constriction- material straining to be released but never being allowed to. Beautiful mazes- lines upon lines- the centre is a sub bass mixed low- imperceptible to all the layers that cover its throb-glide bends its edges- modulates notes into the microtonal- the sub bass is like an ocean bed- the sea life is akin to ears that populate the editorial moment- the waves are the current(c)y- effects create swells- the drag of sound-its flow changes direction- colours arrive and depart, purple- magenta- night blue- crimson red- it is always colours that contour and contain very vivid and erotic scenes- always playing coitus with the ears, gently and then aggressively fucking myself- injecting sounds-erecting structures- the headphones are like a condom that stops all the people in my vicinity getting fucked too- holding Bataille's hand and looking at the solar anus, erotic soundscapes that transport the genitals- the sensitive parts of the body are all excited by the ears more so than the eyes, the eyes tell of everything that appears as evident whereas the ears tell of what the eyes cannot see but the mind can only imagine- the ears tell of the withdrawn- the in-itself, the naked as every grunt holds a thrust, as every whisper holds tiny seductions and every sound holds in it a curve and a surface of the skin.



Sounds arrive and find mutation at the ear, of importance is the amplified thresholds of their disappearance, whilst composing, the only way to free rhythm from the shackles of representation and the pre-ordained is to become disinterested with direction, a letting go of sounds motives and the cultural other. Science translates sounds potential, it shows its velocity, its attack, its wave shape, its pitch etc... Technology makes these translations durable, it embeds translations into materiality, as items of equipment, as interfaces. Science manifests new ways of understanding whilst technology makes these new forms of knowledge tangible. Nature becomes culture and culture becomes a second nature (Latour says over and over 'we have never been modern'). Everyday my ears are born from ideas, every sound is a contemplation for itself, listens to itself amongst other sounds. Preferences become shameful, as though choice amongst materiality were a tiny freedom. The more that sounds play with me, the more I find audibility as the core of encounter and the more I fictionalise myself as a composer. Minimalism was born as a rejection of serialism and indeterminacy, it had very little narrative and emotional development but still returned to tonality, it worked with the gradual variations that alter the composition over time, it was an experiment of trance over reasoning. As composition develops, the composer has more freedom but the composition loses meaning, freedom is always a break with signification in that it signifies nothing but itself, non indexical and self absorbed it points to its own direction, to itself before looking at its own contours through the ears of others, its own immanent vibration rather than its echo and reverberation.

Sound banks are loaded with contrasting splashes of sonority, 15 banks with varying qualities of audibility are activated, at first it is a chaotic swarm, a dense forest of audibility without any clearings This approach to composition relies on subtle subtraction, allowing the sounds their own material magnetism. The compositional process traces the confrontation of materials amongst themselves and demands a listening to each sound in its relation to others. A negative aesthetics of eeriness is desired in order to activate the interest of the ears beyond the pre-ordained, an outside of the self situation, portals and a world beyond the correlation of thinking. Audibility decides what sounds are irrelevant and what qualities detract from the swarm, as sounds construct their own allies. Composition relies on attraction and repulsion, certain frequencies and timbres ignite incisions and demand a sculpturing, as though narratives are emerging but need a certain amount of excavation and illumination so that they become journeys and adventures for the ears. Beats are scattering devices that heighten

the potency of minimal melodic embellishments, chords and melodies are pushed up against the repetition, as the ghosts of a heartbeat carry mumbled improvisations along. The crisp enunciation of rhythm is in dialogue with the indeterminate utterances of melodic lines and harmony rarely enters, extended chords, 13ths flutter in a series of evenly spaced intervals. Each chord is played with an identical intensity, a serialism, gradations provide monuments into sections, volume swells give scenes urgency and the penned complexity of midi is given expression by the looseness of combining equipment. A sampler achieves the durability of asymmetry, the samplers language is that of fracture and potent representation, an archaeology of layers and times. Knowledge resides between the layers, moist and mossy and somewhat unformed, whilst encountering the materials gives knowledge its purpose. Particular sounds are grouped into general themes; aggression, passion, desire, cultivation and craft are a fivefold. The effect of oxidisation is a metal that displays a certain patina when exposed to air and water, reverb oxidises the composition. Crackles and interferences are no longer outlawed but rather welcomed, collected and gathered in groups that infect the hyperbolic. The hiss hypnotises exaggerated strides.

Minimalism is no longer concerned with repetition and working with a select amount of materials but rather it is concerned with minimal gesture and maximum effect. Looseness is where difference resides, for the past 200 years musicians have been marching alongside a metronome, faithful to its mathematical pulse. Working with machines and technology allows for the harnessing of human error, rotary knobs entitled 'human feel' turn it up to hear a gradual bagginess grow around the metronome, making it sound loose enough so that it can be perceived as real, as though the coordination of limbs were involved. Looseness is on a threshold between chaos and control, bobbing between the two- two faces- chaos as reality and control as appearance. The body forgets where the strong beat is, the stress falls randomly on different hits, each hit spawns a decay, a delay that creates intersecting polyrhythms that the limbs can only dream of producing. Reverbs are pinned to individual hits, each hit has a signature of space, like a rubric cube of rooms, each with its own size and expanse that stands out against a mesh of dryness, shards of wetness are eased on and off- like a water colour- it always transforms the topography of the paper, it changes it into a landscape and creates an unevenness that is beyond colour. It is water meeting a dry surface, absorbing a wash gesture that runs beyond its intended effect and the intensity of material encounters announce their own ideas. Reverb transforms a found sound, it re-modulates a space

into a place, and a yard into a cathedral. Looseness gives materiality a chance to flop over the edges and spawn a shadow rhythm.

Open sources, fidelity to origins, to the event, as though a representation were inferior, we know different, the illusion that an event is authentic and an original, because of the infinite nuances that define its character, by all the tiny occasions coming together as a close spectacle that suffocates the face so that it looks down on itself and fears itself. Crowds are always beyond the railing, sounds elevated and speakers growl, cabinets, cones, female and male XLR, amplifiers, volume wars- territories without a fixed ground, floating, air pressures carry and convey. As a child I often found myself surrounded by armies of miniature toy soldiers, where I had caged myself into a space and could not move having created a fiction of being under attack. Twenty years later nothing has changed, now it is hardware, speakers, interfaces and instruments, setting up the conditions of being under attack, as though existence were under threat, as though every sound performed was a preservation of extinction. Maybe one day these medias and records will provide the answers to the humans species and its quest for survival as I speculate annihilation through recording the voice over, and over and over and over, again until my voice is no longer my own, but was it ever?

The fingers are form finders and forms are thought finders, a categorical realism of things exist beneath language and perception. The guitar sits with a history too heavy to pick it up, the headphones are no longer a sanctuary but a sectioning, an asylum of voices, building walls of reverb, artificial spatial signatures to give my mind a sense of adventure, modelling sounds and chiselling depths into the closeness. The sound of a wasp slowed down and pitched dropped 5 octaves is a bull running with rage, the sound of birds and their refrains as they chatter amongst one another become machine guns when ran through a granule synthesiser, technology translates hidden potentials and transformations. Putting the needle of a record player over the whole of materiality is the only way to navigate beyond anthropocentric expression. I would rather be animal than human, instinctive, as non idiomatic improvisation facilitates the growth of horns, the hand changes into a paw or a claw, the nose turns into a snout, the instrument turns into a trough to be devoured, splattering as consuming the waste.

The sampler is armed, loaded with tiny histories, found sounds hide behind a finger pad, low rent realism, automatic seriality and slavish reproductive fecundity. Composition is

archaeology, digging for spines and creating monsters. Knowledge is encoded into spines, a book shelf is a veneer of spines each holding tiny worlds that lay withdrawn until a page is opened, as though the spines speak to themselves when the library closes, sounds do the same. Teratology is when spines combine, concepts have multiple spines, whilst the given is spineless until it faces language. Tap tempo and marker settings open up corridors into cheap effects, effects that are embarrassed of themselves, sci-fi into lo-fi- ring modulators are reversed, the sampler ignores the metronome, there is no way they can ever build a relation of harmony, the sampler always leans on asymmetry. Soft edged sounds corrode like cliff tops, they fall into one another, apprehend one another and dissolve the edges of contrast as sounds meet, fuzz and spit larvae like tiny worlds that open up as a scattering of qualities that the ear regroup. Composition is always a nest of old ears, an ethical phenomenology of working with sound that someone will hear, an ethical aesthetics. The best way to compose is to make music that you think know one will ever hear, that is the disinterestedness of its destination, music for no ears other than the initial ones that it brought into existence.

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