RESEARCHER: Oliver Gingrich

RESEARCH OUTPUT:

KIMA: Voice

Exploring the effect of participatory art on Social Connectedness

15.07.2019

Dr. Oliver Mag Gingrich

With an Engineering Doctorate in Digital Media, a Master in Fine Art and a 14 year long career as professional within the creative industries, my research focus centres around conceptions of presence, the societal impact potential of participatory art. With a strong practice based research focus, my research outputs discuss the disruptive potential of digital art, to bring communities together, foster societal cohesion and to contribute to social connectedness and mental health.

Section 1

**Research Questions
OR
Problem Statement**

Can participatory arts practices facilitate social connectedness?

Loneliness is a major national issue affecting 9 million people, a fifth of UK adults. Perceived social connectedness can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and improve mental health. Can participatory art forms contribute to increased feelings of social connectedness?

Section 2

The Research Output

Research Outputs

The artefact KIMA: Voice is a participatory art installation that was exhibited at Imperial College's Great Exhibition Road Festival, followed by the Event Two Exhibition, 30 years of Computer Arts Society at Royal College of Art in Summer 2019. 200 Participants took part in he experimental study at Imperial College, shedding light on the effect of participatory art experiences, through a Before / After Trial.

The artefact, the participatory art piece KIMA: Voice invites audiences to engage in collaborative sound and music making. A visual interface, in this case a holographic screen, represents their voices in real-time indicating harmonies between the two voices as 3-dimensional form. The interface thus invites audiences to find harmonies between their voices.

A questionnaire designed in conjunction with Imperial College was facilitated before and after the participatory audience interaction. Results were conclusive and presented subsequently at two conferences EVA – Electronic Visualisation in the Arts as well as the SPARC – Audience Participation in the Arts Conference at Sheffield University.

Research Outputs

Research outputs of KIMA: Voice were multifold:

- **The artefact itself KIMA: Voice**

- **Exhibition at Great Exhibition Road Festival**

- **Exhibition at Event Two / Royal College of Art**

- **Exhibition at UCL's AI & Art event at Barbican, London**

- **Conference presentation at EVA London**

- **Conference presentation at SPACE, Sheffield**

- **Peer-reviewed Paper publication at EVA London Proceedings**

Research Outputs

KIMA: Voice at Great Exhibition Road Festival 2019, Imperial College

Research Outputs

KIMA: Voice at Great Exhibition Road Festival, audience interaction

Research Outputs

KIMA: Voice at Great Exhibition Road Festival, performance by Kate Smith

Research Outputs

KIMA: Voice at Event Two Exhibition, Royal College of Art, July 2019

Section 3

The Research Context

The Research Context

The research team was collaborating with the HEartS Study Team at the Centre for Performance Science (CPS), an interdisciplinary research centre with an award-winning track record of research and knowledge exchange in the arts and wellbeing, to understand the effect of participatory artwork on audience's perceptions of social connectedness and wellbeing. HEartS, a research project funded by AHRC, situated at the CPS, investigates the Health, Economic and Social Impact of the Arts.

The role of the arts in promoting health and well-being throughout the life course is increasingly documented (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Well- being, 2017; Lomas, 2016; Royal Society and Public Health Working Group, 2013). There is now evidence to suggest that across art forms (e.g. music, literature, the visual arts, and drama), engagement with arts-based activities can enhance various aspects of well-being and subjective experience, for example enjoyment, meaning, bonding, and aesthetic appreciation. CPS played a key role in providing evidence for the impact of participatory arts on health, but more research is needed to understand the effect of arts on perceived social connectedness better.

The Research Context

The role of participatory arts in promoting feelings of social connectedness or preventing feelings of loneliness has been relatively overlooked in empirical research. Previous research body from the Centre for Performance Science using a range of methodological approaches suggests that engaging with music, often a social activity in itself, can enhance social wellbeing and facilitate creation and maintenance of social connections.

For instance, music-making has been found to enhance social interactions in older adults (Rhythm for Life, Perkins and Williamon 2014), mental health service users (Making Music for Mental Health, Perkins et al. 2016) and new mothers (Music and Motherhood, Fancourt and Perkins 2017, 2018). Nonetheless, the few studies which explored social benefits of arts engagement focused on participation in single, traditional art forms, and the benefits experienced at the individual level.

The Research Context

Evidence of the effect of participatory arts on mental health and wellbeing remains limited in scope: The Arts Council of England report and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing as well as the Creative Health report: Ars and Wellbeing highlight the role of participatory arts for Health, yet both deplore the lack of quantitative evidence. With the KIMA: Voice study, we used quantitative methods to provide further evidence.

The Research Context
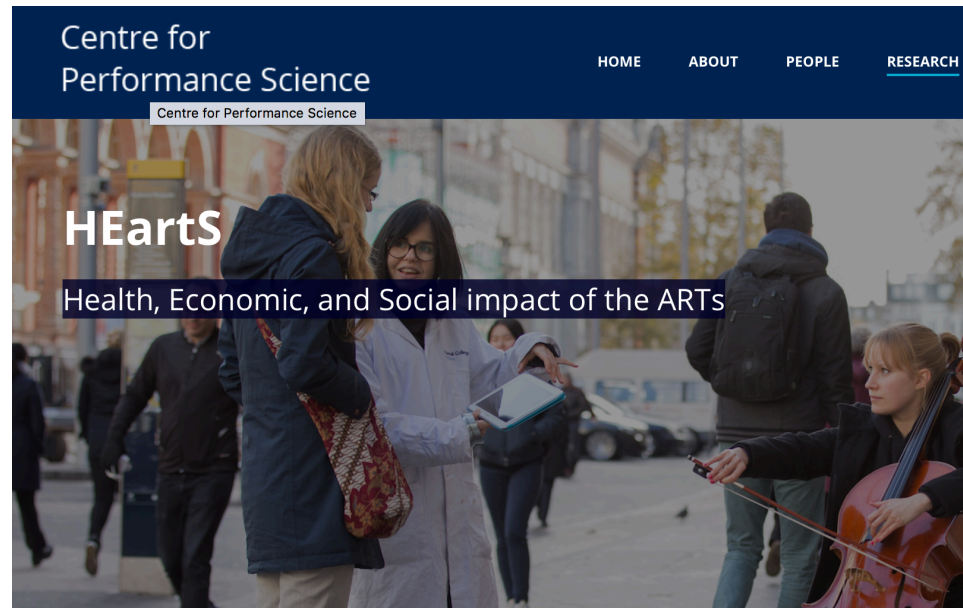
A joint venture of the Royal College of Music and Imperial College London has been awarded £1 million for a new research project on the arts and health.

The HEartS project is exploring the impact of the arts and culture on health and wellbeing, from individual, social, and economic perspectives.

One area the team is studying is the link between cultural pursuits – like joining a choir, learning an instrument, or attending art classes – and health and wellbeing in society. The work is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Section 4

Research Methods

Research Methods

Use this part of the template to describe your research method(s). Explain how you conducted the research; talk about what you did, and why you did it. Crucially, this section should address the relationship between your research and your practice: does your practice respond to the insights of your research; does your research aim towards the advancement of practice; is your practice positioned as a method, through which your research is conducted? Explain how your working methods (and practices) have helped you to formulate and 'answer' to your research questions, or articulate a response to the problem that motivates your research.

Research Methods

In conjunction with HEartS and the CPS team, we developed an interactive questionnaire that would measure perceived social connectedness, loneliness, as well as being in tune with one another and general feelings of happiness before and after the intervention.

The questionnaire was electronically facilitated and directly linked to a server that would allow to capture the duration and quality of the audience interaction. Data on the frequency of audience's vocal harmonisation, duration of interaction was captured during the audience interaction and directly correlated to the questionnaire results.

Thereby, the research team was able to measure if there as a link between perceived social connectedness and duration and quality of audience interaction. For three out of four idioms (Social connectedness, general happiness and feeling in tune with one another) we were able to measure an impact of the audience interaction onto their mental wellbeing.

Research Methods

Social impact (I, II)

○ Pre-post engagement scores in social connectedness, 'feeling in tune with others', loneliness, and happiness, n=144

Pre-post engagement scores
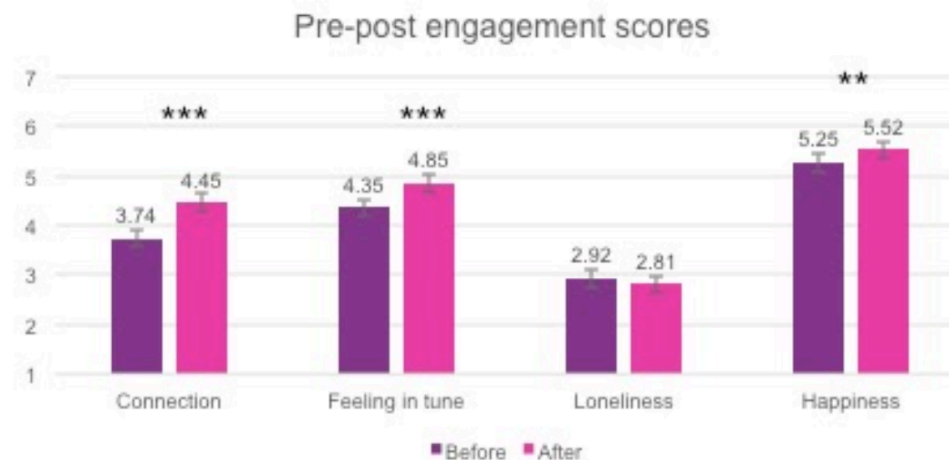
*** p<0.001; **p<0.01

Section 5

Contribution to Field

Contribution to Field

The study KIMA: Voice provides much needed evidence to highlight the role of participatory arts in providing a sense of social connectedness to members of the public.

Through a novel mix of methods, combining quantitative data with a before/after survey, conducted with over 200 participants, the research result provides evidence that participatory arts can provide a sense of social connectedness to the public, thereby combatting loneliness across different strata of our society.

The research conducted with the NCCA and members of CfPS contributes to an important discourse on Arts, Health and Wellbeing and in particular Mental Health.

Section 6

Dissemination

Dissemination

The piece KIMA: Voice was shown across two days, at the Great Exhibition Road Festival, a unique public facing festival organised by key institutions located at Exhibition Road including the V&A, Science Museum, National History Museum, Serpentine Gallery and Imperial College.

The Festival brings together science and the arts in a unique programme of creative workshops, talks, exhibitions and performances - all in the spirit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's vision for the Great Exhibition.

KIMA: Voice was shown across two days, where audiences were invited to explore their own voice as well as harmonies between their voices visually.

More than 2000 people visited the installation, and over 200 people took part in the HEartS study about the effect of participatory art on periceived social connectedness.

Dissemination

The piece KIMA: Voice was shown across two days, at the Great Exhibition Road Festival from the 29th-30th June 2019, a unique public facing festival organised by key institutions located at Exhibition Road including the V&A, Science Museum, National History Museum, Serpentine Gallery and Imperial College.

The Festival brings together science and the arts in a unique programme of creative workshops, talks, exhibitions and performances - all in the spirit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's vision for the Great Exhibition.

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Dissemination

KIMA: Voice was subsequently shown at the Event Two 30 year anniversary exhibition of the Computer Arts Society from the 12th – 17th July 2019 alongside a selection of most relevant media arts, curated by ART IN FLUX London. A catalogue accompanied the exhibition.

KIMA: Voice and the results of the HEartS study were presented at Electronic Visualisation in the Arts London Conference, on the 10th of July 2019 and published in the peer-reviewed EVA London Proceedings.

KIMA: Voice and relevant research results were also shown at the SPARC conference for audience participation, which took place from the 3-5th of July at Sheffield University.

A performance of KIMA: Voice also took place at Barbican during UCL's symposium on AI and Art entitled Art (I)Relevance which took place on the 12th of September 2019.

Dissemination

Dissemination

Audience Research in the Arts Conference

3–5 July 2019, The University of Sheffield

Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (SPARC) hosted a conference in July 2019 in partnership with the International Network for Audience Research in the Performing Arts (iNARPA), The Audience Agency, Routledge, The University of Leeds and Deakin University, to bring together researchers and industry professionals who investigate audience engagement with the arts. This conference came at the culmination of two substantive contributions to the field of audience research at The University of Sheffield; the Understanding Audiences for the Contemporary Arts (UACA) study and the Modern Fairies project. The conference also celebrated the publication of a Cultural Trends special double issue on 'Audience Data and Research' and launched a sector-facing handbook from the UACA project. It featured sharing sessions from the two research projects and papers from contributors to the special issue.

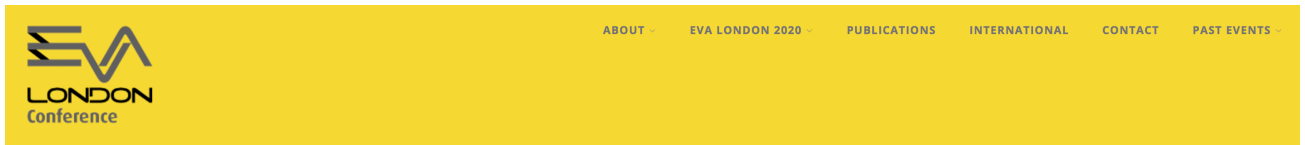**Search #ARITAconf to read discussion on Twitter**

Dissemination

Audience Research in the Arts conference programme (updated 24.06.2019)

Thursday 4 July		A - High Tor 2	B - High Tor 3	C - High Tor 4
	Registration			
09:00	Session 1	Title	**Methods**	**Audience experience**	**Audience participating in artwork**
		Chair	Matthew Reason (York St John University)	Cayenna Ponchione-Bailey (University of Oxford)	Sarah Price (University of Sheffield)
		Paper 1	Sarah Frost (Spektrix Limited)	Gina Emerson (Hamburg University of Music and Drama / SPARC)	Emma Curd (Liverpool John Moores University)
			Collaboration, community and CRM: the 2019 Spektrix Insights Report	Receiving the contemporary: investigating audiences for contemporary classical music	Usership versus authority: renegotiating audiences as users to develop processes towards 'The People's Glossary'
		Paper 2	Charlotte Gilmore (University of Edinburgh Business School), Celia Duffy (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)	Andrea Halpern (Bucknell University), John Sloboda (Guildhall School of Music & Drama)	Peter Peters (Maastricht University)
			QUAL[itative]: the art of research insights	Audience reactions to repeating a premiere on a concert programme	The orchestra as a lab: collaborative experiments in symphonic audience engagement
		Paper 3	Hoe Su Fern (Singapore Management University)	Maren Bosma (Royal College of Music)	Oliver Gingrich (NCCA, Bournemouth University / Analema Group), Ula Tymoszuk (Centre for Performance Science, Royal College of Music / Imperial College London)
			Audience matters, audiences matter: counting access and participation in Singapore	An investigation into the impact of verbal introductive context on audience response to tonal versus atonal music	
		Paper 4	Kirsty Sedgman (University of Bristol)	Fan Wu (Independent Researcher)	
			You don't win friends with metrics: how to understand value in an anti-expert age	The impact of audience interactions of unfamiliar theatre productions	Participatory art as means for social connectedness
11:00	Coffee break				

Dissemination

Programme

EVA London is not just a conference of presented papers – it also hosts demonstrations, panel sessions, exhibits, performances, an invited symposium, a research workshop mainly by students, and an associated "Research in Education" day for universities by invitation.

- **Full conference programme:** Four days of presentations on a wide spectrum of themes and topics, with distinguished keynote speakers.
- **Symposium:** Day 1 morning event.
- **Research workshop:** Students from leading universities present their work in an informal workshop setting on the afternoon of Day 1.
- **Reception:** Free evening event on Day 1 celebrating the launch of the book *Museums and Digital Culture*, with many EVA London authors.
- **Event Two:** Free preview evening event on Day 2, with demonstrations and exhibits, run by EVA London in partnership with the *Royal College of Art*.
- **China Cultural Evening:** A special evening event and session on Day 3.
- **Demonstrations:** Presentations that are interactive or highly visual – meet and talk to the artists and presenters.

EVA London includes a number of popular networking and socialising events in the form of evening receptions.

The provisional EVA London 2019 programme is embedded below. This version of the programme may be subject to minor changes and revisions. Some paper presentations have a corresponding dem component in a longer session of 30 minutes. Individual paper and demo sessions are 20 minutes. If you have problems viewing the embedded version, you can view the Google Spreadsheet directly.

Dissemination

Dissemination

Dissemination

UCL Home » Innovation & Enterprise » Art (I)Relevance: AI and art futures symposium
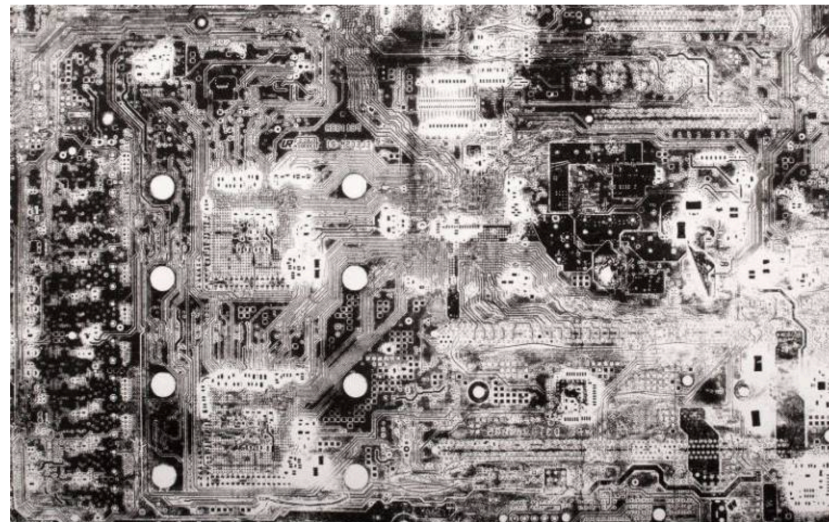
Art (I)Relevance: AI and art futures symposium

12 September 2019, 10:00 am–6:00 pm

The inaugural 'AI and art futures symposium' will explore the interplay of art market futures, art and data, and the role of the tangible and intangible artefact. Attendance is by invitation only.

Section 7

Appendix

Appendix

KIMA – The Voice: Participatory art as means for social connectedness

⬇ Cite this publication

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Alain Renaud