

Felicity Valerie Ford

The Domestic Soundscape and beyond... presenting  
everyday sounds to audiences

Oxford Brookes University

This Thesis plus the accompanying portfolio of practical works are submitted in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements of the PhD

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Full name of candidate: Felicity Valerie Ford

Title of Thesis: The Domestic Soundscape and beyond... presenting everyday sounds to audiences

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## Abstract

This PhD submission contains a select portfolio of practical works that have been created in answer to my research questions. This Thesis contextualises those works in a theoretical framework, linking them explicitly to the academic discourses with which they are inexorably bound.

The introduction of this Thesis examines the research context in which research questions were formed. Evaluating a complicated previous project and describing a seminal, difficult encounter with the realm of sound art, this section explores some of the problems involved with presenting everyday sounds to audiences and proposes that these problems might in part be solved by forming new presentational strategies. Problems discussed include the difficulty of presenting everyday sounds to audiences who do not have access to the same information and knowledge that the work's creator(s) have; presenting everyday sounds to audiences in conditions which offer limited scope for interaction and participation; and presenting everyday sounds to audiences which rely specifically on the primacy of those sounds alone to communicate a message to listeners.

The questions that are formed in order to begin solving these problems include looking to feminist art practices of the 1960s/70s for inspiration regarding how theories concerning the value of everyday sounds might be practically applied to artmaking in domestic contexts; exploring ethnographic or Anthropological models to see how everyday sounds might be presented to audiences through investigative, participatory formats; investigating the possibilities for subverting or expanding the frameworks through which sound art is typically disseminated so that that territory might better accommodate the specific resonances and associations of everyday sounds; and proposing Internet-based strategies for presenting everyday sounds to audiences which are inherently intertextual, participatory, and social.

The first Chapter of this Thesis examines how the home might be re-envisioned as a sound art site and brings the theories of John Cage together with feminist art thought to reinvent that space as a specifically sonic site. In the second Chapter, investigative anthropological approaches to the everyday are the focus of the discussion. This Chapter explores the context of radio as an inherently domestic medium, and discusses how it might be used as such for the presentation of everyday sounds to audiences. In the third Chapter of this thesis, I position my research in relation to the established tenets of contemporary sound art. Exploring ideas of subversion and critique, this Chapter looks at the proposed revisions to those established tenets which I have offered throughout my research. The final Chapter explores how I have used the Internet both in specific instances and more generally within my practice, connecting my research with emergent recording technologies and Internet platforms which allow everyday sounds to be socially shared.

In the conclusion, I discuss what the key findings of exploring these questions have been.



## Acknowledgements

My research would not have been possible first and foremost without the incredible support of my main supervisor and director of studies, Dr Paul Whitty. I am indebted to Paul for introducing me to the Ear of the Imagination and Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire score during my MA Programme. But most of all, I am indebted to Paul for the support he has consistently shown for my research and for his practical help with, and enthusiasm for, my projects.

Thanks are also due to the other people who have acted in a supervisory capacity at one time or another; – Ray Lee for his thoughtful tutorials and valuable writing advice; - Dr Paul Dibley for helping me to situate my work in relation to certain practices within electroacoustic composition; - Christine Hill for agreeing to meet me in the middle of her busy schedule in Berlin for an invaluable tutorial; - and Elaine Le Corre and Ruth Millar from the Print Department at Oxford Brookes University, who have provided consistently excellent technical advice on all my printing projects.

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Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo of Mundane Appreciation deserve a special mention here too; - The Fantastical Reality Radio Show just wouldn't have been the same without the input and creative strategies of Mundane Appreciation.

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Thanks also to Dr Kate Davies, who encouraged me to write my first conference paper and who has become an amazing friend and comrade; - to Lara for her enthusiastic support for my work, for her friendship, and for allowing me to record The Sounds of her Life; - to Rachael for spinning my cassette tape into yarn and for providing ongoing inspiration, fantastic old clock noises, and a very spectacular plumbing recording; - to Emmylou for sitting in Gallery 10 for days on end in the freezing cold, looking after our group show Love is Awesome; - to Suzanne Stallard for helping me to find opportunities in Reading; - to Liz for braving the earliness and the cold to come and join in on my World Listening Day Soundwalk; - to Lisa for knowing what it's like and being a friend; - to Stav for the STELIX sessions and for all the road trips; - to Rob Hawthorne for his patience and technical support on Around the A4074 recording equipment questions; - to Mel for lending me the tape her Dad created whilst working as a car engineer; - and to all the other knit-buddies, friends, colleagues, participants, interviewees, and family who have supported, encouraged and contributed to my creative endeavours.

Most of all, I want to thank Mark, my partner, who has been the most supportive person of all throughout my research; - who is my comrade in the domestic soundscape that we share and create together; - who is my favourite recording accomplice; - and who is always happy to blow up some fireworks for the sake of making sound art.

## Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

The study was financed in part by a one year fee waiver and scholarship from Oxford Brookes University during year one, and by a funding award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council throughout years two and three.

The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation (2008) was commissioned by earshot, Sonic Arts Network and Radio Reverb.

The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series (2009) was commissioned by Sound and Music.

The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation was the result of collaborating with the artists Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo of Mundane Appreciation.

The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series also involved collaborating with a wide variety of practitioners, all of whom are credited for their work in the shows, and in the show-notes which are supplied in the appendices.

Around the A4074 also involved collaborating with a wide variety of practitioners and a number of musicians granted me permission to include their work in the show, all of whom are credited for this work in the show.

The Sonic Tuck Shop window-installation was commissioned by Suzanne Stallard and Jelly, Reading.

Permission has been sought whenever someone's face, name or voice appears in my work.

Some of the ideas contained within this Thesis have been presented in earlier, reduced forms at the following conferences:

A Woman's Place, Newcastle University, June 2008  
Sound-Diaries Conference, Oxford Brookes University, June 2009  
Oxford Brookes' Practice-based research seminar series, November 2009  
Sounding out 5 Conference, Bournemouth University, September 2010  
Sound:Site Festival, South Hill Park, October 2010

Many of the ideas discussed in this Thesis have been referenced in my blog; a collection of relevant posts is supplied on CD as PDF files, and these are referenced throughout the Thesis.

Photographic documentation of the practical projects discussed is also provided throughout this Thesis, and – unless specifically stated – everything depicted in the photographs in this Thesis is my own, original work.

Likewise, unless referenced in the Bibliography and explicitly accredited to another author, all the text in this Thesis is my own, original work.

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Felicity Ford

## List of sound recordings and artist books included in this submission

### CDs

CD	Year and Artist(s)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestica 2007 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• Memoryphones 2009 Felicity Ford</li> </ul>
2	FRRS in assn. w. MA – 1: INTRO SHOW 2008
3	FRRS in assn. w. MA – 2: OFFICE SPECIAL 2008
4	FRRS in assn. w. MA – 3: EXPO SPECIAL 2008
5	FRRS in assn. w. MA – 4: DOMESTIC SPECIAL 2008
6	FRRS in assn. w. MA – 5: GRAND FINALE 2008

All FRRS in assn. w. MA content jointly produced by Felicity Ford, Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magic Hour 2008 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• SOUNDBANK 2008 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• Sound diaries 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• Art object 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• I SPY: thatched wall 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• I SPY: country tools 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• I SPY: salmon ladder 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• I SPY: windmill 2009 Felicity Ford</li> <li>• I SPY: in Woodstock 2009 Felicity Ford</li> </ul>
8	DIFFICULT DOMESTIC and the domestic soundscape 2009 Felicity Ford
9	HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape 2009 Felicity Ford
10	ROOMS & CHAMBERS and the domestic soundscape 2009 Felicity Ford
11	TAPE and the domestic soundscape 2009 Felicity Ford
12	Realisation of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire 2010 Felicity Ford
13	Around the A4074 part 1 2010 Felicity Ford
14	Around the A4074 part 2 2010 Felicity Ford

### Artist books

This submission also includes copies of Artist books produced during my research:

- The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book
- Soundwalk Stationery
- SOUNDBANK envelope and card
- Sonic Tuck Shop shopping list

## Websites

The following websites have been designed and maintained during my research:

The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation website:

<http://www.fantasticalreality.com/home.html>

My online PhD workspace:

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress>

Sound Diaries:

<http://www.sound-diaries.com/>

## Data CD

A data CD has been included with this submission, containing electronic copies of all the blog posts referenced in this Thesis, in case for any reason they become inaccessible or unavailable online.

# Introduction

## 0.1 Research Context



Figure 1. Listening with Care, Oxford Brookes Arena, 2007

To define the context in which I developed my PhD research questions, it is useful to revisit a work I produced during my MA in Sonic Art and Composition at Oxford Brookes, entitled *Listening with Care*, (Fig. 1) because this work raised many of the questions which I went on to investigate at doctorate level.

*Listening with Care* consisted of 32 miniature speakers each covered in knitting and collectively diffusing a collage of domestic field-recordings into a large space. The knitted speakers were suspended at head-height from the ceiling in a sprawling network, and the sounds I played through them were recordings gathered from my everyday life. My intentions were that these speakers (with their distinctly homemade appearance) would act as a context or framework for presenting domestic sounds, referring directly to their content by being quite evidently derived from the domestic materials and practices of knitting. Too, the care and labour which went into fashioning the knitted speakers were calculated to reverently frame the sounds playing through them, and to thereby signpost them as being precious and worthy of our careful listening attention (an idea additionally underscored by the title of the work).

## Feminism and Cage – linking everyday, domestic concerns, with everyday domestic sounds

Listening with Care was also intentionally subversive or political, proposing a relationship between domestic labour and domestic sounds (which are often produced through domestic labour) and attempting to elevate the status of both by combining them in ways which would make them seem extraordinary and special. In this respect Listening with Care drew on the legacies of feminist practitioners from the 1960s/70s such as Bobby Baker and Mierle Laderman-Ukeles, who used materials from private, domestic spaces to make public, political artworks which questioned societal values. (These assertions will be substantiated and discussed in later Chapters.) Furthermore, Listening with Care was a tentative foray into the new modes of listening which might be instigated when presenting sounds to audiences. The volume of the sounds in the installation was deliberately low, so that those sounds might be experienced as a background hum, or heard in sharp detail by bringing the woolly speakers closer to one's ears. The tangle of knitted speakers hanging from the ceiling allowed listeners to determine a wide range of different experiences for themselves based not only on hearing the sounds from the speakers, but also on touching the woolly speakers and walking around them. These aspects of the piece constituted a formative response to my own experiences at sound art events. I will explore this explicitly in Chapter 3 and in more detail further on in this Introduction, but the main thrust of this last aspect of Listening with Care is that I specifically wanted to develop a sound art practice with a clear relationship to non-sonic concerns, and to actively reject the idea of making art with sounds which is purely about sound for sound's own sake.

### Working against “sound-for-sound's sake”

In explicitly attempting to link the domestic sounds which I played through the knitted speakers in Listening with Care with meaning via the framework through which those sounds were playing, I intended to explicitly criticise what Seth Kim-Cohen has dubbed the “sound-in-itself” (2008, p.xxii) tendencies which I have experienced in my own engagement with sound art. I will explore this point in more depth in Chapter 3 of this Thesis, but an example of what is meant by “sound-in-itself” may best be provided by dissecting a seminal experience which I had whilst attending the For Those Who Have Ears concert on 23<sup>rd</sup> June,

2004, organised by Art Trail, in Cork, Ireland<sup>1</sup>. At this event I experienced the sensation of being aurally assaulted by the sounds produced during an electronic set by an ensemble entitled Safe. I was confused because I was not able to link these sensations of aural assault to any external frame of reference and the sounds being played were so abrasive, strange, unrecognisable, difficult and loud that it was beyond my imaginative or listening capabilities to actively pay attention to them. I had not been presented with any information with which to contextualise what I was hearing, and the sounds that were being produced had been electronically processed so that the only reality which they resembled was the reality of other, similar, experimental concerts.

The only recognisable elements framing the unfamiliar (heavily processed and massively amplified) sounds were the traditional constituents of a conventional concert performance which framed the event. Cryptic notes alluding only to the name of the ensemble – Safe – were handed out; chairs were reverently placed around the performance space in semicircles; and I interpreted the hushed silence imposed by the concert organisers as an indication that I should respectfully listen to this recital. The performers were positioned centre stage as the active disseminators of culture, while I sat in the audience as a recipient of this dissemination. The absolute focus of the event seemed to be the performers' interest in exploring the sonic possibilities of their technology; an interest which I could only share from the compromised position of being sat on a chair some distance from it. Unlike the performers, I could not touch the technology or influence the sounds it produced; I had far less knowledge than they did about how the sounds I could hear were being produced; and the scope of my ability to actively engage with the work was limited purely to sitting still and listening to it.

Disempowered by my situation in that concert as a seated and silenced audience member, challenged by sounds which were so far out of my range of experience that I could not understand what they were or how I should engage with them, I became increasingly frustrated with the nature of the experience. It was as though I was being presented with a long, shouting, sonic statement; a statement to which I had no tools to reply.

Although my description of Safe's concert is highly subjective, I believe that it is important to acknowledge and address the subjectivity of audience members. Throughout this Thesis I will describe the responses of other audience members to my own work, but for the purposes

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<sup>1</sup> Safe, (2004). For Those Who Have Ears concert, organised by Art Trail, Cork, programme details [Online] Retrieved 2010 from: <http://web.archive.org/web/20040610232239/http://www.arttrail.ie/sample/framesetarttrail.html>

of outlining my Research Context, it is important to begin with the experience which I had as a subjective audience member, because my research questions were shaped by this experience.

I felt that creating some access point into the work – an address; an explanation; a more informative programme; – and setting up alternative listening circumstances – a different arrangement of chairs; space to move around; a speaker arrangement which would allow listeners to determine the volume of sounds they wanted to listen to by being allowed to move in relation to the sounds etc. – could have radically changed the way that I received or understood the performance given by Safe, and would have perhaps have allowed me to engage more positively with their practice and ideas. I have thought about the experience I had at Safe's concert many times since 2004 and considered that perhaps Safe were attempting a radical revision of the hierarchies of music; that in their approach to organising sounds they were challenging entrenched traditions concerning the aesthetics of sounds and the conventions surrounding the types of sounds which should be performed in concerts. If this is indeed how their work should be read, then I can understand that presenting it in the context of a traditional recital setting was crucial to their overall message, and that – as such – their performance constituted a radical, subversive act of intervention.

However, even this generous reading cannot account for how I experienced Safe's treatment of me as an audience member in the circumstances of that concert, and exciting, imaginative interpretations of their work are eclipsed by the memory of the assailing racket – the inexplicable wall of loud and painful sounds, devoid of references to anything but those sounds in and of themselves – to which I felt subjected in that concert. As an experience of power-relations between audience and artist, I found the ethics in Safe's concert to be questionable or – at best – unconsidered.

This experience of sound art has not been an isolated one in my encounters with that emergent field of creativity and art-making, but because it was the first one, it was perhaps the most memorable.

In my own work as a sound artist since, I have attempted to work in direct opposition to this encounter, creating contexts for listening which allow the physical freedom and movement of a listening audience; providing frameworks to contextualise the sounds I am producing; and working in dialogical formats which have provided opportunities for my audiences – when I shout – to shout back. *Listening with Care* was an early attempt at presenting sounds to audiences in this mode.



To summarise, *Listening with Care* was intended to framework documentary recordings of everyday, ordinary sounds; to elevate the everyday; to explore the frameworks by which sounds might be presented to audiences; to blur the borders between private and public experiences by importing sounds from one context into another; to extend the legacies of 1960s/70s feminist art practices; to expand the possibilities for different kinds of listening experiences, to engage audiences actively in an expanded field of listening, and to explicitly link sounds to non-sonic concerns.

The piece was unsuccessful inasmuch as nobody who encountered *Listening with Care* felt it had positively changed their impression of everyday sounds; it did not cause anyone to revise their imaginative relationship with the domestic soundscape; and the relationships between references, materials, ideas and sounds were not as readily identifiable as I had hoped they would be. In my evaluation of *Listening with Care*, I discussed how the work “highlighted some key problems and issues connected with offering field-recordings or environmental sounds to an audience” and reflected on some of the issues that arose during class feedback;

I intended the space at a distance from the work to be filled with a general wash of domestic sound-textures; rain falling on the roof of a parked car, things bubbling in a saucepan, an electric kettle boiling combined into a kind of soup etc., and for this wash to take people to their own sonic memories and moments of home.

As it was, the configuration of the speakers was confusing for the audience: Feedback I got was that that people were puzzled by the jarring contrast between the angular sounds playing and the woolly softness of the speakers; that the correspondence between what you hear and what you see doesn't make sense; that the suspended-speaker-structure looked welcoming and positive but that the sounds playing within it were detailed and required concentrated and effortful listening, and so on. In retrospect I feel the knitted speakers and the domestic sounds are a somewhat clumsy and literal combination of elements that didn't really convey what I was meaning them to convey. The speakers didn't reverently frame the sounds in a way that inspired people to hear everyday sounds differently. Something in my decision-making process overcomplicated the audience's experience and made the work difficult to understand and the connection between the knitted speakers and the domestic sounds was not the readily identifiable link I had supposed it would be.

My research context emerged directly out of *Listening with Care*. I wanted to refine and develop strategies for working with a combination of domestic materials, practices and sounds. I was interested in furthering my investigation into different modes and sites of listening, and I wanted to develop or evolve new ways of frameworking everyday sounds in order to present them to audiences. Finally, I wanted to develop the idea of a subversive arts practice which would define new, socially-engaged approaches within sound art, and to

position myself in the field of sound art as a dissenting voice, insisting on the need to connect sounds explicitly with meaning and lived experience.

## 0.2 Research Questions

### Feminism and Cage

In searching for precursors or theoretical precedents to help me further the creative agendas uncovered in *Listening with Care* I found that some of John Cage's writings and some aspects of 1960s/70s feminist theory bore a resemblance to my desire to elevate and foreground the everyday via a combination of sounds and materials. I saw this act of elevation and foregrounding as a political act; a creative assertion that the home is more than a "place for the cultivation of privacy, and the related interiority of individual and family caring" (LaBelle, 2010) and that it is rather – in keeping with feminist "postulates... not a mere habitation to be used as a refuge," (Vicente Aliaga, 2009) a site filled with complex meanings and a context in which public artworks can both be made and consumed.

A research question forged out of these concerns became;

How might Cage's ideas and the legacies of 1970s "personal is political" feminism inform one another, and what kinds of work might result from synthesising ideas from these two realms?

This is the research question I shall explore in Chapter 1 of this Thesis, giving particular emphasis to how I have explored it through the creation of artworks and discussing how I feel these works constitute an original contribution to knowledge.

### "The Everyday" beyond feminism

When developing my research questions from my research context I realised that – while exploring domestic space as a site of meaning has traceable roots in 1960s/70s feminist art practice - an investigation into the background sounds of everyday life also has a relationship with a less gendered, contemporary interest in the everyday.

In terms of how this interest in the everyday relates to sound, perhaps the most obvious recent example is *The UK SoundMap* – an ambitious, participatory project instigated by the

British Library in 2010 to engage the public in collecting and recording everyday sounds and uploading them to a map via the Internet, in order to answer the questions “What does the UK sound like today?” and “What impact do these sounds have on our lives?” (The British Library, 2010.) Taking the idea of recording everyday sounds from one’s ordinary life into a sound art practice is described by Katherine Norman in relation to her 1996 release *London* as performing “an aural autoethnography”, (Norman, 1996) and in examining sound’s particular role in our evolving understanding of the everyday, my second research question became:

What creative practices and projects might arise from exploring one’s own immediate soundscape in acts of “autoethnography”, and how might the results of such activities be framed and presented as art, to audiences?

I will explore this research question in Chapter 2 of this Thesis in particular relation to *The Fantastical Reality Radio Show* in association with *Mundane Appreciation*, (The FRRS in assn. w. MA) (CDs 2 – 6: *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*), *SOUNDBANK*, (CD 7: Track 2, *SOUNDBANK*) and *SOUNDWALK Stationery*, (a copy of which is enclosed with this Thesis).

## **Working against the “sound in itself” tendency within sound art**

Both before and after experiencing the sound art concert featuring *Safe*, I was interested in how sounds might be linked to ideas about the everyday, the politics of domestic space etc. and not in sounds as purely sensory or acoustic phenomena, and I was exploring the work of other practitioners working in related fields.

At the same time that I was building the speaker network for *Listening with Care* and experimenting with recording the sounds of everyday events like boiling rice or making tea, I was also collating materials for *Domestica*, (CD1: Track 1, *Domestica*) and was finding that - with the exception of Peter Cusack’s *Your Favourite London Sounds* project, (1998) – it was difficult to find examples of works which used sounds from domestic spaces or implements as art objects in themselves rather than as musical resources to be improved through digital manipulation. For example, although releases like Magali Babin’s *Chemin de Fer* (2002) existed – where the objects from domestic space had been used to produce sounds – the everyday uses of such objects were not the focus of such recordings. The sounds derived from whisks and saucepans in Babin’s album do not resemble the sounds such objects produce in their native, culinary environment within the domestic soundscape. The whisk does not whisk eggs or milk; the saucepan is not used for cooking food. These

utensils instead become surrogate musical instruments, extricated from their domestic environments and imported into the contexts of music primarily for their sound-producing qualities rather than for their links to other realms of experience or meanings such as home, memory, domestic labour, or the sustenance of the body. In Babin's project, the material qualities of the metallic surfaces employed in sound making are prioritised above these associative meanings. Likewise, Jonty Harrison's *Klang* (1982) – a composition derived ostensibly from the sounds produced by or inside two earthenware casseroles – is more about the sonorous potentials of those objects than the sounds which they might produce during their everyday use or the everyday experiences which such sounds evidence. The language which Harrison uses in the work's programme notes (2011) to describe his investigation of the earthenware casseroles used in *Klang* is unequivocally musical, and is therefore not the language which we associate with this item's ordinary, domestic usage;

Material of two kinds was recorded - attack/resonance sounds made by tapping the lids on or in the bowls, and continuous rolling sounds made by running the lids around the insides of the bowls. Different pitches resulted from the various combinations of lids and bowls, and different qualities of resonance emerged according to the attack position. The microphones were placed very close to the bowls to maximise the movement within the stereophonic image.

I was interested both in *Listening with Care* and in *Domestica* in the complexity of these issues; at what point does a saucepan cease to be a saucepan and become a surrogate drum? At what point does focusing on the sonic life of an object remove it from its original context and turn it into a musical instrument? And how might the frameworks of music – the concert; the composition; the score – be used not to extrapolate everyday sounds from their original contexts, but to foreground those sounds, and to thus change our imaginative relationship with their sources? To what extent do uses of domestic implements – as in Babin's or Harrison's electroacoustic works – comprise a positive transformation of domestic reality rather than an abandonment of it? In contemplating these issues, a third research question emerged:

How can the established contexts of sound art or music – the concert, the composition, the score – be used to explore, redeem and enrich everyday reality? How might they be expanded?

In Chapter 3 of this Thesis I will discuss my artmaking responses to this question in relation to my use of instruction scores and creative experiments. The discussion will include my engagement with the scores of Pauline Oliveros, Yoko Ono, Alison Knowles, Alvin Lucier and Jennifer Walshe. I will contrast their approaches with those taken by electroacoustic practitioners like Francisco Lopez, Magali Babin and Jonty Harrison, and link my

observations on their work back to the ideas about feminism discussed in Chapter 1. I will discuss the practical works I have created in response to these complex ideas and suggest that works I have made throughout my PhD – particularly *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series* (CDs 8 – 11: *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series*) and *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book* (enclosed with this submission) and the *Love Assignments* (Figs. 13., 15., 26.) – both reinvent the instruction score, and suggest ways in which musical frameworks might be applied to everyday experiences to change our imaginative relationship with them.

## Recordings, reality and representation: frameworks for listening to and presenting everyday sounds

One of the key issues related to working with everyday sounds concerns documentation. How can everyday sounds be documented or recorded; where and how can such sonic documentation then be displayed or presented to audiences; and what variables might exist to shape how those recordings are subsequently perceived and heard by a listener?

The sounds presented in *Listen with Care* were field-recordings, created by recording domestic events around the home in a manner sonically akin to the visual practice of taking photographs. They were documentary recordings evidencing lived moments of reality and it was this documentary approach to sound – sounds linked to geographies, experiences and memories – which I wanted to apply in my practice. The knitted speakers were a sonic, technological picture frame, but – as I reflected in my self-evaluation of that work – they did not work to contextualise the sounds playing through them as I had intended. The research question which formed from considering this problem was:

What are the frameworks through which everyday sounds may be shared with audiences, and how can the Internet be used as a space or picture frame for presenting everyday sounds to audiences?

In Chapter 4 I will discuss how my engagement with various technologies – recording equipment, the Internet, social media, blogging software, online sound projects, etc. – has helped me to understand the relationship between documentation and reality. I will discuss how these ideas informed the curatorial decisions I made whilst co-programming the *Sound:Site* festival with Martin Franklin during the last months of my research, and the new artmaking approaches which I have developed throughout my research which fuse the possibilities afforded by technology with the ideas I have discussed in previous Chapters. I

will also discuss how exploring and representing my private, domestic soundscape in the public context of the Internet has changed my relationship to the spaces in which I live, and how this practice reflects developments in the public/private discourses evolving from 1960s/70s feminist artmaking approaches.

In my conclusion, I will discuss the key findings which have resulted from making work in answer to my research questions. In my Conclusion I will demonstrate that my practice-based research has – as was my original intention at the start of my research – extended the dialogues between feminism, composition, theories of the everyday, and a native, anthropological approach to sound. I will show how I have successfully created new forms for contextualising everyday sounds by linking sounds to a range of materials from other disciplines, thus finding ways of resolving the problems in *Listening with Care*. I will also show how my research has created new ways of behaving in, and conceptualising domestic spaces and familiar environments, through sound.

I will demonstrate that several of the projects I have instigated represent new modes of engaging audiences with sound art; that the works I have created throughout my doctoral research extend the legacies of Cage and 1960s/70s feminism into contemporary debates about the meaning of the everyday; that the works I have created throughout my doctoral research frame sounds and present them to audiences in new contexts; and that the works created throughout my doctoral research delineate ways of working which link sound specifically to non-musical concerns and meanings. I will argue that – as such – the body of work which I have produced during my doctoral research represents an original contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 1: How might Cage's ideas and the legacies of 1960s/70s "personal is political" feminism inform one another and what kinds of work might result from a synthesising ideas from these two realms?



Figure 2. Colour in the washing up, tracing of photo, included in The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation Activity booklet, 2008

In music, we should be satisfied with opening our ears. Everything can musically enter an ear open to all sounds! Not only the music we consider beautiful but also the music that is life itself...the more we discover that the noises of the outside world are musical, the more music there is... in the case of sound, whether the sound be loud or soft, flat or sharp, or whatever you like, that doesn't constitute a sufficient motive for not opening ourselves up to what it is, as for any sound which may possibly occur.

John Cage, For the Birds, 1981

I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I "do" Art.

Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. I will live in the museum and I customarily do at home with my husband and my baby, for the duration of the exhibition and do all these things as public Art activities: I will sweep and wax the floors, dust everything, wash the walls (i.e. "floor paintings, dust works, soap-sculpture, wall-paintings") cook, invite people to eat, make agglomerations and dispositions of all functional refuse. The exhibition area might look "empty" of art, but it will be maintained in full public view.

MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK.

Mierle Laderman-Ukeles, M A N I F E S T O FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969! Proposal for an exhibition "CARE", 1969

Laundry Piece

In entertaining your guests, bring out your laundry of the day and explain to them about each item. How and when it became dirty and why, etc.  
1963

Yoko Ono, The Fluxus Performance Workbook, 2002

Figure 3. Laundry Piece, Yoko Ono, 1963



## 1.1 Combining ideas from 1960s/70s feminism with the writings of John Cage

In *Listening with Care*, (Fig. 1) I had intended to contextualise domestic sounds using knitting. I had noticed correlations between certain feminist, socially-engaged art practices, and some of the ideas of the American composer, John Cage, and the mixture of knitting and everyday sounds in *Listening with Care* was an attempt at articulating this combination; at giving it form. It seemed to me that Cagean thought could be extended and applied within an art practice to make new kinds of sound works – works intended to scrutinise everyday life and dismantle hierarchies of experience. When Mierle Laderman-Ukeles proposed to bring her housework into the gallery in *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!*, she contested the widely-held belief that such work is unworthy of our contemplative attention and proposed that in fact we should use the special circumstances of the gallery to observe the relationship between “maintenance and life’s dreams,” (1969, p.5.) In an inversion of this idea, John Cage wrote in *Music Lover’s Field Companion* (1954, p.274) that sometimes

...a lively musician reads from time to time the announcements of concerts and stays quietly at home

hinting that perhaps the imaginative encounters that give our lives meaning are not necessarily experienced within the established institutions of culture. In the case of a *Music Lover’s Field Companion*, (1954, p.274) Cage used the frameworks of music to represent his mycological expeditions as a series of concerts, writing that he;

...spent many pleasant hours in the woods conducting performances of my silent piece, transcriptions, that is, for an audience of myself

And in the case of Laderman-Ukeles’s manifesto, the frameworks of art are repurposed for representing housework in a cultural investigation wherein “maintenance everyday things” are “flushed up to consciousness... exhibited as Art,” (1969, p.4). In both instances the assumed categories of experience are contested; non-art activities become art, and non-musical activities become music. The hierarchy of experience which elevates art and music above more mundane activities is criticised and dismantled, and Cage and Laderman-Ukeles invest themselves – as artists – with the subversive rearranging power required to author this transformation.

Much of my work regarding the domestic soundscape has involved revising the hierarchies surrounding music, art and labour and asking why we consider some sounds, experiences, materials and activities to be less important or interesting than others. I have also explored how – once those hierarchies are dismantled – we might differently envision or explore those contexts.

John Cage pronounces in *For the Birds* that it is not “necessary to give preference to sounds,” (1981, p.39) and that the ambient, background sounds or noise of the world – “the music that is life itself” (1981, p.61) – need not be “subservient to what is commonly described as “musical,” (1981, p.39.) Criticising what he calls “tonal archaeology,” (1981, p.99) Cage envisages music as a kind of listening state rather than the product of a specialist system for organising and controlling sounds. In this revision, the ears are “open to all sounds,” (1981, p.61) rather than being tuned to privilege sounds that have been organised, arranged and controlled according to tone, pitch, dynamics, rhythm and so on. Cage sees this open-eared music as being fundamental to the experience of living rather than an academic preserve or activity, and he links this integrated approach to music to a paradigm in which the artist’s role is “to draw us nearer to the process which is the world we live in.” (1981, p. 81). An enhanced experience of life, Cage argues, can only be attained through the de-segregation of what we commonly understand as the discrete categories of music and sound. In Cagean thought, the notion that some sounds are more special than others is abandoned and the hierarchy of sounds which dictates that a chord is prettier to listen to than a toaster, is collapsed (1981, p.203);

My position is not to impose a certain attitude on Western listeners, but to persuade them that there are sounds, and that those sounds, whatever they are, are worthy to be heard.

Broadly speaking, this Cagean view might be interpreted as a democratising musicalisation of the world’s sounds. Cage bestows value and worth on everyday sounds by extending the category of music to include them – most famously in the situation of 4’33”, in which the cultural conditions of the music concert are used to frame or contextualise the everyday sounds inhabiting the space. Seth Kim-Cohen points out that 4’33” communicates only from within “the established presumptions of music” (2009, p.163) and proposes that;

Cage’s notion of letting sounds be themselves... lacks an account of the real-world situations and connotations of sound.

However I propose that Cage’s legacy can be extended into practices which are socially engaged, which address subjectivity, which are grounded in the realities of contemporary,

Western society, and which connect the dismantling of the hierarchy of sounds with the dissolution of other categorisations of experience.

For instance within 1960s/70s feminism there was an explicit desire to have the categories assigned within art extended to include materials and processes which were seen to have originated in domestic space. Second-wave feminist art theory criticised a worldview which values creative work undertaken in the public sphere above creative work undertaken in the private, domestic sphere. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (1981, p.70) summarise the situation;

Women often perform tasks similar to those of men, but their work is awarded a secondary status because of the different place the tasks are performed. The structures of difference are between private and public activities, domestic and public work.

Parker and Pollock (1981, p.78) contest the problematic “art hierarchies” which categorise forms of expression originating “in the fulfilment of domestic duties” – quilting, needlework, knitting, baked foodstuffs etc. – as being essentially “feminine.” They argue that this gender-based categorisation marginalises the importance of domestic space, detracting from the fact that it is a distinctive context with universal, humanistic significance. Delineating domestic space as a specific site with its own rules of exchange, its own materials and its own talented practitioners, Parker and Pollock argue that work made in the home, by women, out of domestic materials, usually in familial contexts, comprises “a distinctive form of art with different kinds of relations between maker and object and between object and viewer.” Ultimately the political argument here is for domestic materials and objects to be included in the category of art, and formally recognised as a distinctive and legitimate context (1981, pp.80-1);

Women artists are not outside history of culture but occupy and speak from a different position and place within it. We can now recognize that place, that position, as essential to the meanings of western culture.

In *The Culture of Knitting* Joanne Turney refers to this theoretical framework (2009, p.10) as “second-wave feminism” which “investigated the significance of women’s creative practice in the home” and “attempted to redress and valorize women’s hobbies and creative domestic practice.” Turney then describes a later phase of feminism – sometimes described as “third wave feminism,” - where gender becomes less fixed and is “largely characterised by bricolage and identity-formation” (2009, p.11). With this ideological shift, domestic practice is associated even less with an oppressed female position within the patriarchy, and more with individual choices, identity-formation and self-expression. An important study of

domestic practices was conducted by Sarah Pink in 2004; *Home Truths – Gender, domestic objects and everyday life*, which reflects these development (2004, pp.106-10);

As homemakers, women are creative and imaginative agents in wider processes of change... In making homes... women... work with a variety of materials, sensory, social and emotional resources to create expressive spaces... how can we view these womens' departures from traditional gender... as an index through which changing gender...might be discussed?

In my practice I am interested in both the second-wave feminist idea that in order to fully understand western culture we must value domestic space and practices more highly, and also with third-wave feminism which positions the housewife as an expressive figure whose practices and materials reflect a broad range of creative potentials.

I am interested in how John Cage's redemptive approach to everyday sounds may be combined with a feminist agenda that legitimises marginalised practices and materials from domestic spaces. I perceive a shared, humanistic focus inherent to both these agendas which Cage alludes to when he says "I mix musical needs with social needs," (1981, p.179) and which inhabits the feminist insistence that the personal is political. The social consequence of dismantling the hierarchies surrounding sounds and the hierarchy of labour is that resultant works must inevitably be affirmative in nature, reinvesting the home, (where we spend a great proportion of our time) its materials and objects (which we spend a great deal of time using and touching) and its ever-present soundscape (which we hear often, whether we are listening or not) with rich, imaginative possibilities. Both Cagean and feminist approaches to the domestic soundscape question the primacy of cultural establishments as disseminators of meaning and edification, and extend the possibilities for contemplation, considered listening and imaginative conjecture beyond the walls of the concert hall and the art gallery and out into the readily available territory of the everyday world which surrounds us. How my interest in these ideas manifests in my work often involves reframing, representing and celebrating everyday sounds in contexts which link such sounds to feminist concerns and readings.

Having explored some of the connections between John Cage's ideas and the legacies of 1960s/70s "personal is political" feminism, it is now necessary to examine some of the works I have made which explicitly synthesise ideas from these two realms.

## 1.2 Developing a visual language which elevates or celebrates the domestic by drawing attention to its sonic potentials

An ongoing creative project which I have been involved with throughout my PhD research which represents an amalgamation of the ideas discussed so far in this Chapter involves the visual language which I have devised for my projects. I am talking about an ongoing series of images which I have been producing throughout my research, which deliberately confuses the iconography traditionally associated with music and attentive listening with the symbols and materials of domestic practices. Examples from of this ongoing, investigatory image-making practice include Scone Score, (Fig. 4) Musical Cookie Cutter, (Fig. 5) Biscuit Music, (Fig. 6) and Alphabetti-listen, (Fig. 7).



Figure 4. Scone Score, baked and photographed in the run up to The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation, 2008



Figure 5. Musical Cookie-Cutter, image created to publicise The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation, 2008

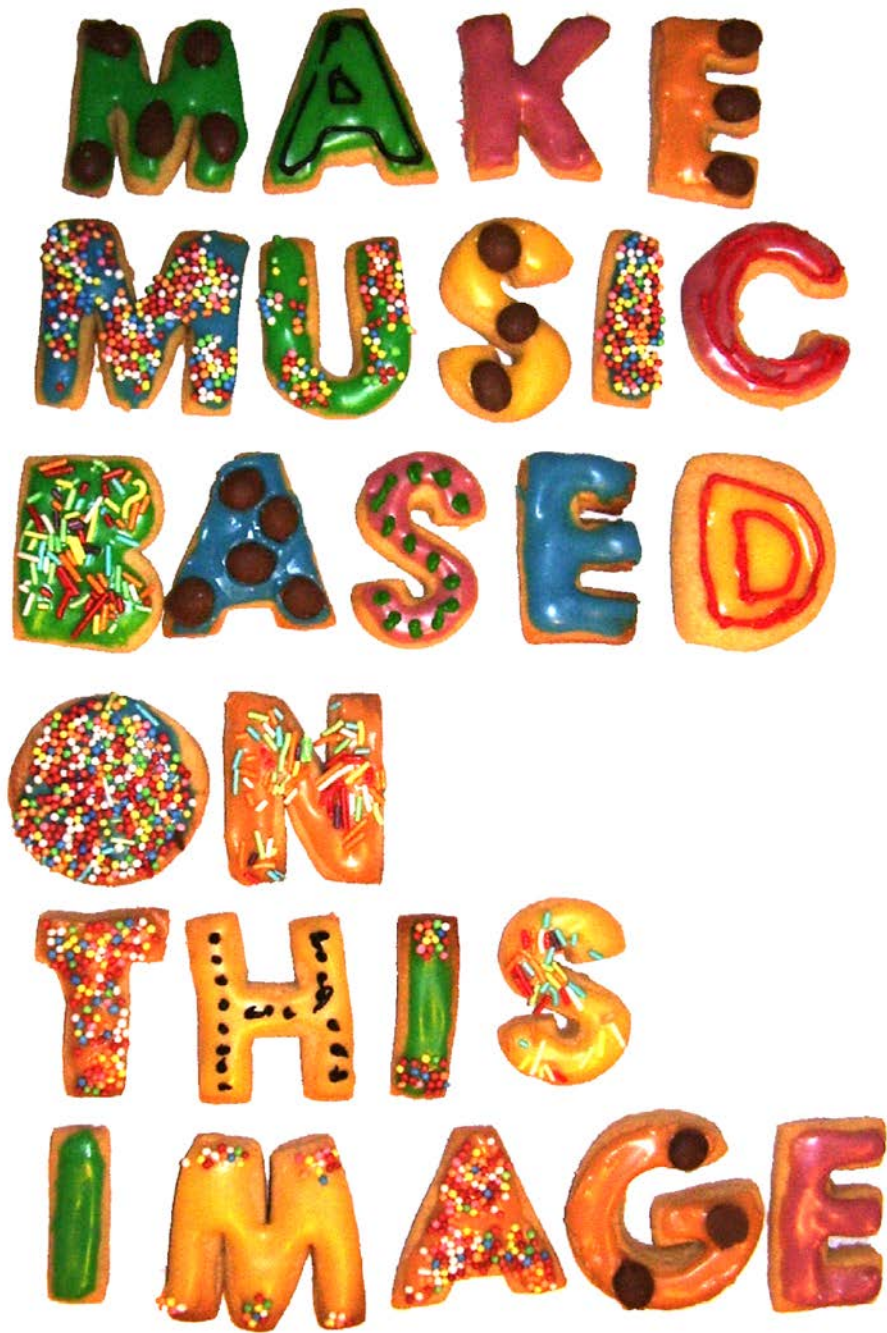


Figure 6. Biscuit Music, biscuit dough, icing, sprinkles. 2007

Scone Score and Musical Cookie Cutter explicitly allude to the context of music through their references to Western musical notation. In Scone Score the wires of a cooling rack act as a surrogate stave, and in Musical Cookie Cutter a striped tea towel fulfils the same symbolic function. Scones and a cookie cutter shaped like a musical quaver are arranged on these “staves” respectively, in mimicry of printed sheet music.



Figure 7. Alphabetti-listen – alphabet spaghetti and toast prepared and photographed in the run up to The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation, 2008

Like John Cage's recategorisation of outdoor walks in the forests as concerts or recitals, (1954, p.276) this application of musical terms to the non-musical act of baking threatens to recategorise that domestic task as a musical one; to allude to baking as a sonic event. The images are deliberately provocative and playful, suggesting multiple readings. Could they be played like the printed sheet-music which they appear to be simulating, or are the images a visual assertion that the sounds of baking scones constitute "the music that is life itself" (Cage, 1981)? Likewise, in Biscuit Music, (Fig. 6) the directive to "make music based on this image" demands a consideration of the relationship between the visual spectacle of the iced biscuits with all their references to culinary materials and kitchen play, and the yet-to-be-created music implied by that spectacle. Perhaps the sounds of recreating the biscuits in the photo – the sounds of sprinkles and stirring wet icing-sugar in a glass bowl and sliding a metal baking sheet in and out of the oven – are a kind of music in themselves, or perhaps the image suggests a musical interpretation. As Laderman-Ukeles's deliberate performance of domestic tasks "as art" (Laderman-Ukeles, 1969) was intended to transform the meaning of those tasks, what transformations might take place as a result of making biscuits and conceptualising that process as the creation of music? Similar questions apply to Alphabetti-listen; (Fig. 7) what sounds or soundscapes does the image direct our listening to?

From a Parker and Pollock perspective, this juxtaposition of art content with domestic materials could be read as a kind of subversive broadening of the category of music; an



extension of that category to include the materials and practices of someone working in a domestic environment with domestic materials. A material approach, in fact, not entirely unlike Sandra Ogel's Sheet Closet, created for Womanhouse in 1971 – a house taken over by a collective of woman artists in the 1960s/70s for artmaking and described by Judy Chicago (1982, p.113) as;

A context for work that both in technique and in content revealed female experience. There were quilts and curtains, sewn sculptures, bread-dough pieces, and a crocheted room

Orgel's Sheet Closet looks like a sheet closet; it is a closet filled with sheets and it is self-evidently comprised of domestic materials. However, the mannequin who has been added to this closet and whose human shape is disturbingly bisected by the shelves inside it makes the whole arrangement also resemble figurative sculpture. We are to understand from Orgel's amalgamation of symbols that Sheet Closet is not only about the domestic chores associated with the maintenance of the sheets, but that it is also about the social experiences of gendered self (implied by female the mannequin) in relation to the sheets and the tasks surrounding their maintenance. The domestic figure presented in Sheet Closet speaks from a distinctive place in history; she is literally imprisoned in the closet, her hand ambiguously extended, as if either poised to hand out sheets, or reaching towards freedom. This figure speaks from the 1960s/70s, when domestic labour was famously identified by Ann Oakley as being "trivialized" and "not a respectable subject for study" (1974, p.91) in her infamous treatise on the subject, *Housewife, High Value-Low Cost*. It was in this socio-political climate that Mierle Laderman-Ukeles wrote her manifesto exploring both the value of housework to "the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species" (1969, p.2); in this climate that she also asserted that such maintenance work is also "a drag; it takes all the fucking time," (1969, p.3); and in this climate that Womanhouse was created. Judy Chicago writes that "Womanhouse was important because it was a step towards building an art that allowed women to feel that their lives had meaning, that their experiences were rich, and that they had something of value to contribute to the world," (1982, p.116) but she also points out how difficult it was for the work presented there – created by women from domestic practices and materials – to be accepted as valid or serious art. She describes how one man visiting Womanhouse mistakenly read the work as a self-deprecating "parody on women," (1982, p.115) and provides a socio-political context for the work (1982, p.130);

As we move out of the historical time when men were the primary breadwinners and women were confined to procreative and domestic functions, we are left with a heritage of social roles and attitudes that are entirely inconsistent with reality but that assert their hold on us nonetheless.

The woman artist making work in the 1960s/70s about domestic labours was involved in a very real struggle for recognition of the value of domestic labour; for domestic materials and practices to be accepted as valid forms of expression within the art world; and for her distinctive position within society to be legitimised as a position from which to speak. I do not think that historic struggle has been completely won, but I do think the nature of it has changed, and it is important to trace a legacy from Orgel's and Ukeles's works with domestic materials and practices to mine, to establish both a historic context for my work, and also to determine how some things have changed for the artist who is a woman working with domestic materials.

In order to do this, we must deal with the identity of the artist-self in relation to the domestic spaces that she both inhabits and critiques through her creative practices. If we read the mannequin in *Sheet Closet* as a euphemism for Orgel herself, then we see that the artist-self is represented as hemmed-in, confined, and limited by the apparatus and materials of the domestic environment. In Laderman-Ukeles's case, where domestic maintenance tasks are relocated from the home into the gallery, the artist-self becomes an activist, relocating her housework activities to the gallery as a public demonstration or campaign for recognition for the value of labour; demanding that society re-evaluate the relationship between "maintenance... and life's dreams," (Laderman-Ukeles, 1969).

Building on this legacy, the images which I have created confuse art/music/domestic materials and suggest a further kind of artist-self. A maverick domestic, musical baker is suggested by the placement of the items in the images I have created; one who has played with the food colouring; who has mischievously rearranged the cooling rack and the scones to look like a musical score; and who has pushed spaghetti-on-toast about with a fork until it spells "LISTEN." This artist-self is a privileged and playful figure; one who has the time and space to investigate the creative potentials of domestic materials rather than one engaged solely in making a socio-political complaint about the devalued status of domestic labour. As such, this implicit figure bears more resemblance to Pink's active, imaginative homemaker who is expressive with domestic materials (2004, pp. 106-10) than to Orgel's imprisoned mannequin who is confined and limited by them. Too, this series of images alludes to an assertive and empowered artist-self who – like Cage – invests herself (myself) with the subversive rearranging power required to author transformations in how such discrete acts as baking and making sound art are ordinarily categorised.

I propose that in linking Cage's compositional theories and essays – forged in the contexts of public, academic life and a career as a composer and an educator – with feminist art ideas concerned with exploring the question “what does the idea of house, the idea of home mean?” (Vicente Aliaga, p.92) – I have developed a contemporary, hybridised artmaking approach which resists categorisation, and an artist-self which deliberately acts to expand the borders of what can socially be accepted as art-making in sound art contexts.



Figure 8. Presenting The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book at the launch of SoundFjord, London, 2010

The most extreme manifestation of the maverick musical baker artist-self who reorganises both domestic and sonic elements to suggest a radical re-envisioning of both of those contexts, is the artist-self I presented at the launch of the SoundFjord gallery in 2010, wherein I presented The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book (enclosed in this submission) in the context of a stall (Fig. 8) where objects exploring the sonic potentials of domestic materials were packaged in such a way as to draw attention explicitly to their sonic qualities, and to frame their preparation or consumption as discrete sonic events or found musical experiences. I was interviewed by Adam Asnan for the SoundFjord Auricular 1 (Asnan, 2011) and at this event and I told him;

I really wanted to do something that wasn't recording those sounds; I wanted to find another way of working with them... I really wanted to find a way of giving those sounds to an audience that wasn't [just] giving them a CD that they stick in a player...

Sitting at my stall, surrounded by copies of *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book*, hangover tablets re-packaged as *Sonic Hangover Cures*, apples wrapped in paper printed with the word CRUNCH, and *Genuine Installation Pieces* (which were repackaged elements from a previous window-display I had created in Reading, celebrating the sounds of food) my cake stand and hand-knitted clothes, I was deliberately positioning myself as a creative ambassador for the domestic soundscape, enthusing on its possibilities as both a site filled with exciting sounds, and a situation in which discrete, sound art events might be enjoyed. All of the items on my stall presented the possibility of relocating listening or sound art experiences to within the home, and – through their modest means of production; labels, text, domestic printer print-outs, etc. – suggested that visitors could apply the same principles to investigating (or playing in) their own domestic environments. This last idea was further emphasised by my inclusion of *Genuine Installation Pieces*, (Fig. 9) which deliberately gave visitors to the stall the choice to reinvent or reinstall the “art” I had formerly created in a Reading shop window, as private, domestic installations.

Building on the legacy of the images I had created to publicise The FRRS in assn. w. MA using spaghetti, scones, cookie-cutters and tea towels, *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book* and all the materials I created in association with its presentation at SoundFjord not only questioned which materials can be used to produce sound art, nor where sound art should be heard, but also who should present sound art to audiences, and in what guises a sound artist might present his or her self. There was a frisson of confusion at SoundFjord’s launch concerning the status of my stall. Where was the sound art? I appeared to have no CDs (save for the one included in the book) for sale; nor to be performing – as the other artists involved with the event were – via a concert performance. Also, my work demanded verbal participation and exchange with visitors to the stall rather than seated listening, and my work seemed to be about ideas, concepts and language and not only about sound.

The listening experiences I was attempting to offer to audiences at SoundFjord were – like John Cage’s transcriptions of his silent piece, experienced in the forest and like Mierle Laderman-Ukeles’s gallery-contextualised maintenance work – attempts at relocating the situation of meaning from one context into another, and attempts at challenging the conventions which surround how – or where – we encounter culture and meaning. In the context of sound art, I was especially interested in understanding whether active listening and an appreciation of everyday sounds could be suggested and introduced as a concept via objects and materials. In this, I was building on the legacies of Fluxus, and working directly in what Seth Kim-Cohen has dubbed “conceptual sonics” (2009, p.159).



Figure 9. Genuine Installation Pieces, presented in association with The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book at the launch of SoundFjord, London, 2010

### 1.3 Frameworks for listening and “Conceptual Sonics”

In applying Cagean thought practically to the creation not only of sounds but also to the creation of meaning, I recognise him as a “precursor of a conceptual sonics,” (Kim-Cohen, p.159) and am principally interested in how he reorganises the symbolic frameworks of music to reframe and thereby elevate or celebrate traditionally non-musical moments. Throughout *Music Lovers’ Field Companion*, (1954) Cage collapses the borders between

different kinds of experiences, contrasting the “dozing” audience at a “program of Elektronische Musik” unfavourably against the “riveted attention accorded... [at] a lecture describing mortally poisonous mushrooms and means for their identification” which he had previously attended in Paris (1954, pp.274 -6). In his observations, Cage questions the categorisation of the program of Elektronische Musik as a musical experience, resignedly dismissing this official concert by stating “enough of the contemporary musical scene” before proceeding instead to imagine what sounds – what “gamelan-like sonorities” – the mushrooms described in the non-musical lecture might produce.

There is a parallel between Cage’s re-envisioning of traditionally non-musical, mycology lectures as musical experiences, and the process by which many gallery artists involved in Fluxus (Kim-Cohen, p.169) – influenced by Cage’s lessons at the New School in New York – began to use musical frameworks such as the score to reframe everyday moments;

In Fluxus we find a special preoccupation with the terminology, practices, and conventions of musical communication and performance.

Yoko Ono was one of the artists who began to immediately apply Cagean approaches to recategorising everyday experiences via the ontology of music. In *Snoring Piece*, (1964) Ono supplies the following instructions;

Listen to a group of people snoring.  
Listen till dawn.

Because of its instruction-score qualities and its implicit references to music, duration, or a sequence of sonic events, this score effectively reframes the traditionally unmusical circumstances of “a group of people snoring” as a somehow musical experience and thereby elevates, foregrounds and celebrates this event.

However it is not actually necessary to listen to a group of people snoring to experience the concept of *Snoring Piece*, just as it is not actually necessary to go to a lecture on poisonous mushroom-identification to understand that you could decide in such a lecture to recategorise the experience as a musical one, simply by effecting a change in perception. As Cage writes in *The Future of Music: Credo* (1937);

Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating. The sound of a truck at fifty miles per hour. Static between stations. Rain.

In a similar mode of perceptual reorganisation, and recategorisation of experiences, Mierle Laderman-Ukeles proposes in *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!* (1969, p.3) to recategorise – as art – the maintenance work that is normally considered to be not art;

The exhibition of Maintenance Art, “CARE,” would zero in on pure maintenance, exhibit it as contemporary art

In reading Cage’s ideas like this – as conceptual frameworks for re-viewing our everyday experiences, rather than as absolute doctrines about how to listen to, or compose with, everyday sounds, and in linking Cage with feminism – I am situating my approach to Cage directly in an emerging field of thought that Seth Kim-Cohen has termed “non-cochlear Sonic Art.” In his book entitled *In the Blink of an Ear, Toward a non-cochlear Sonic Art*, music and sonic art are treated to many of the conceptual readings and interpretations that determine discussions within visual art, and Kim-Cohen makes a compelling argument for why this must be so. To not do this, i.e. to not read Cage’s thoughts conceptually, argues Kim-Cohen, (p.167) is to miss the important thought that “sound is bigger than hearing,” i.e. that sound describes events other than itself and that its use in composition and sonic arts practice must recognise its relationships to other dialogues. If we compare Cage’s ideas to Mierle Laderman-Ukeles’s manifesto, or to Yoko Ono’s instruction scores, it is possible to see that Cagean thought can be cross-referenced with feminist practices and applied to ways of semantically interpreting the world, as well as ways of hearing it;

A non-cochlear sonic art responds to demands, conventions, forms and content not restricted to the realm of the sonic. A non-cochlear sonic art maintains a healthy scepticism toward the notion of sound-in-itself... In questioning how and why the sonic arts might constitute themselves, I hope to lead the ear away from the solipsism of the internal voice and into a conversation with the cross talk of the world.

The images previously discussed – Scone Score, (Fig. 4) Musical Cookie Cutter, (Fig.5) Biscuit Music, (Fig. 6) and Alphabetti-listen, (Fig. 7) were designed precisely to facilitate and underscore the relationship between non-sonic realms and what is heard. Scone Score, Musical Cookie Cutter and Alphabetti-listen, were presented alongside the sonic content contained in *The Fantastical Reality Radio Show* in association with *Mundane Appreciation* project (CDs 2 – 6: *The FRRS* in assn. with MA) as part of the whole media vocabulary which comprised that project (a website, radio shows, fliers, interactive stalls and online use of social media were also part of the project’s vocabulary).

The playful, investigatory nature of the relationship between the sounds and the materials of the home which is visually suggested through the scone and spaghetti images is amplified by radio features like the *Messy Tuesdays* special of *Adventures in Washing Up* episode in the

DOMESTIC SPECIAL, (CD 5: The FRRS in assn. w. MA 4: DOMESTIC SPECIAL) wherein Reshma Pauveday playfully describes the sonic qualities of washing up a wok, and muses on the creative potentials of a large, completely untouched pile of washing up in the shared student kitchen of her home.

In this radio show feature, sounds have undoubtedly been arranged. The volume of the voices in relation to the background sounds have been deliberately organised, and editorial decisions have been made about where to include the sounds of washing up a wok, and which parts of the interview regarding the unwashed washing-up to include. However these decisions have not been made only in relation to the aural qualities of the sounds contained, but are also connected unequivocally to socio-political ideas about how domestic space might be differently envisioned as a site of creativity and meaning. The interesting sounds of the wok are unmistakably linked to the everyday experience that is washing-up that wok. The wok's ordinary life as a vessel for the preparation of food is made apparent in the radio show as well as its interesting musical or acoustic properties. Pauveday's description of exploring the sounds of the wok whilst washing up suggests a subtly transformed relationship to that maintenance task and perhaps provides a partial answer to the question "what is the relationship between maintenance, and life's dreams?" (Laderman-Ukeles, 1969).

Other features in The FRRS in assn. with MA DOMESTIC SPECIAL (CD 5: The FRRS in assn. with MA 4: DOMESTIC SPECIAL) suggest a similar association between creative play and domestic tasks; the sounds of domestic appliances are vocally emulated (or parodied); and irritating sounds are listed and objectified in The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show. All of these instances of presenting domestic sounds specifically alongside semantic content – language and discussion and description – suggest a revised, imaginative relationship that we can have with those sounds. In this way the work not only embodies a form of non-cochlear sonic art, but also echoes Martha Rosler's video work, *Kitchen Semiotics*, (1975) in which the intended uses of kitchen items such as a bowl, a cookie cutter, an apron etc. are parodied in a kind of mock-instruction video wherein Rosler pantomimes the use of each object and loudly declares what it is called. The work enforces the idea of the kitchen as a site of meaning and codes, through Rosler's assertive, vocal act of labelling. As such, she transforms her own relationship to the kitchen environment by relocating herself as the author of that space with the power to subversively rearrange and name its constituent elements. Rosler's work is described by Juan Vicente Aliaga as proposing a "radically different proposal to that of the satisfied housewife... happy in her kitchen," but the humour and irony in her video are also noted as "better, more subtle weapons than literal



denunciation,” (2009, p.93). Building out of that tradition of humour and subversion, (which is also central to Bobby Baker’s practice, as we will later see) my own work with domestic sounds has attempted to wryly undermine the confining semiotics of domestic space by reinventing my own relationship to it through humour. Pauveday laughs in her interview about the washing-up; she discusses the sounds and shapes which it suggests to her in a playful, inventive way, just as the “fucking drag” (Laderman-Ukeles, 1969) that is housework is subverted in the interactive social media project Messy Tuesdays which I will discuss in Chapter 4 of this Thesis.

I opened this chapter with Colour in the washing-up (Fig. 2) which was also used as a publicity image for The FRRS in assn. with MA. This was an image intended to underscore ideas of creative authorship in relation to domestic space, and to visually communicate the humorous, subversive message of the Adventures in Washing up feature. Although none of these gestures towards re-envisioning our relationship to housework actually remove the physical necessity of domestic labour, they do suggest the possibility that we might enjoy a revised, imaginative relationship with them.

One form of domestic labour which is increasingly being reclaimed as a creative material by artists and makers is knitting. It is this area of domestic labour which we will now explore in relation to my exploration of the domestic soundscape and presenting everyday sounds to audiences, because – like washing up, and like making scones – is expressive; historically undervalued; gendered; and a material which is increasingly being repurposed to make politically resonant statements.

## 1.4 Knitting: the personal is political

Knitting, of course, is something everyone is very familiar with: it is everywhere... so many of the things that are worn or surfaces that are walked or sat upon are knitted. Knitting therefore represents a democracy of objects and practices, so prolific, so mundane, that it isn't noticed. It's taken for granted... Similarly, knitting has historically been a domestic practice; this means that knitting has been seen as largely undertaken in the home and is therefore familial and familiar... Such familiarity breeds contempt. We see knitting as a site of nostalgia, a highly gendered relic from yesteryear that not only defies fashion, but somehow deserves derision... Consequently, the investigation aims to question how the seemingly mundane becomes significant.

Joanne Turney, *The Culture of Knitting*, 2009

My aunt never explained to me what she meant by THOUGHTS, and I didn't think it was the kind of question I could ask her. Eventually I had to put the sampler away because it made my head hurt. The idea of my aunt making a picture of the word THOUGHTS in needlepoint amazes me. I never would've thought of it. It's the perfect combination: profound expression and humble craft.

Carol Hayes, *Taking Things Seriously*, 2007



Figure 10. *Listening with Care*, Oxford Brookes Arena, 2007

*Listening with Care* (Fig. 10) involved physically disseminating recordings of domestic sounds to an audience from within a hand-knitted creation. I felt there was an affinity between the materials I chose; knitting is often seen as being mundane and “not special,” (Turney, p.5) and shares an undervalued status with the everyday sounds that Cage hopes to

“restore dignity to” (Cage, 1981.) In *Listening with Care* both sounds and knitting are used dually for their material and referential qualities, to convey meaning in “the layer-upon-layer overlap of semantic fabrics,” (Kim-Cohen, xxiii).

However, the complexity of this layering of meanings in the case of *Listening with Care* was partially responsible for the confusion regarding the work. The jolly, tea-cosy-ish colours surrounding the speakers simultaneously linked them to the “limited popular associations of knitting” such as “woolly objects, and the old-fashioned,” (Turney, p.1) while simultaneously the apparent redundancy of the knitted covers (like the e-number-laden, nutritionally questionable biscuits of *Biscuit Score*) made them somehow too playful to be a reference to domestic labour. In fact the practical uselessness of the knitted speakers connects them to a certain type of feminist reading wherein “useless” knitting is encouraged, because it distances knitting from the “familial sacrifice” (Turney, p.40) historically associated with patriarchal oppression. Like the biscuits and scones previously discussed, the type of knitting exemplified by *Listening with Care* evidenced an expressive repurposing of a traditionally private, domestic material of knitting for the purposes of publicly reframing and representing domestic sounds.

I wrote on my blog (Appendix 1, 01. Rhubarb Jam, *Domestica* and a Poll) that the “connection between knitted speakers and domesticity was, in hindsight, a fairly clumsy and simplistic constellation of elements, especially given that knitting is less and less a domestic activity and more and more a public, political form of creativity,” a trend which has been dubbed The Stitch’nBitch movement.

## 1.5 Stitch’nBitching and the erosion of traditional public/private borders

The Stitch’nBitch movement is described by Stella Minahan and Julie Wolfram Cox (2007) in *The Journal of Material Culture*;

Stitch’nBitch is the term used to describe the global movement where women meet virtually, through the internet, and physically, often in local cafes and hotels, to socialize and share their craft... It is named after a book, titled *Stitch’nBitch*, written by Debbie Stoller (2003), editor of the New York-based feminist magazine *BUST*.

Attending local Stitch’nBitch groups both in Oxford and in Reading provided an important context for the creation of the knitted speakers and continues to provide an important framework for fundamental ideas within my practice such as the social status the value of

everyday life, the symbolism of the objects which populate it, and the economic realities of various (domestic) forms of labour, (see Appendix 01, 01. Trying it on.) Although the process of knitting itself has become a public, social activity – often taking place in pubs and cafés – the objects we make are intrinsically linked to our domestic lives. Not only does our knitting often continue in our private homes once our meetings have disbanded in the evenings, but the socks, hats, dishcloths, scarves and sweaters that we knit enter the drawers, wardrobes and corners of our domestic spaces as well as clothing our own bodies and the bodies of those others with whom we share our homes. The domestic life of our knitting is made public through our frequent use of blogging as a way of documenting projects – a process which often extends to documenting other aspects of traditionally private domestic life. This virtual knitting “has transformed traditional concepts of home,” (Turney, p.147-52) and shifted public/private thresholds. As Kate Davies (2008) writes;

In very particular ways, the internet really has informally transformed the domestic into the public sphere. From their kitchens and computers, women and men all over the world are exchanging knowledge about an enormous range of practical issues and debates, sharing their messes and mistakes as much as their proud creations. These people are asking questions about consumer and gender politics, about the history of design, about process and about material practice. They are making things for beauty and for use: benches, pies, hats, yarn, toys, books, tools. Some people are examining the idea of domesticity and transforming it into art, while many others are finding it the basis of successful businesses.

Our knitting projects travel constantly between public and private spheres, and between physical and online spaces, transitioning easily between the lively, sociable bustle of the Stitch’nBitch meeting, the banal inevitability of the laundry basket, and the glowing, pixelated interfaces of the Internet.

This idea of merging public and private realms traces a direct lineage back to the feminist practices of the 1960s/70s, where bringing the private into the public via performances was seen as “taking a large step toward bridging the culture gap between men and women,” (Chicago, pp.130–1) and wherein “the public and private are interrelated in both everyday life and in ideological superstructures and political, economic and social attitudes,” (Vicente Aliaga, p.75.) Knitting is increasingly being used to express ‘the unconventional, the philosophical, the obsessive, the political, the inventive, the intellectual, and the extreme,’ (Gschwandtner, 2007) and its references to domesticity and housework are increasingly subverted and appropriated for the purpose of making new meanings. For example in *Knitted Homes of Crime*, (2002) Freddie Robbins exhibited a set of tea-cosies, the designs of which were based on the houses where female serial killers either lived or perpetrated their crimes.

The work questioned the cosiness of knitting and the safety of the home, and spoke specifically through the appropriation of knitted wool, and its subversive use, as a medium.

The knitting covering the knitted speakers therefore represented a kind of signifier or reference to my rich experiences within Stitch'nBitch culture, my participation in knitting groups, and the new understandings of domesticity that I was forming through my engagement with both online and offline knitting community. Following their presentation at Oxford Brookes in a conventional, white-walled Art Gallery space, I presented the speakers in more explicitly knitterly contexts such as in the window at Prick Your Finger (Rachael Matthews's haberdashery in Hackney) and online at my blog (then titled Knitaluscious). In these contexts, the knitted speakers became increasingly distanced from their original soundtrack, and took on a life of their own as original handmade objects speaking within the digital and physical-world contexts of Stitch'nBitch culture, described as Minahan and Wolfram Cox (2007, p.6) as;

...a local and global phenomenon in which the production and consumption of gender, technology and society collide, one that exemplifies a new materiality.

Sadie Plant describes this "new materiality" caused by a collision of traditional values, online and offline realms in *Zeroes + Ones, Digital Women and the new Technoculture* (1997, p.255);

Machine code has been enough to allow sound, images, calculations, and texts to interact on an unprecedented plane of equivalence and mutual consistency. What were once discreet media and separable senses have become promiscuous and intertwined.

Echoing the erosion of hierarchies within music effected by Cage and the feminist re-evaluation of hierarchies of experience, in Plant's promiscuous technoculture (1997, p.186);

...all the elements of neatly ordered, hierarchically arranged systems of knowledge and media find themselves increasingly interconnected and entwined.

This complex, enmeshed, collided situation wherein meaning is conjectured and produced is correspondingly termed by Seth Kim-Cohen as the "Conceptual turn" (2009, p.245).

Discussing the "dematerialisation... demolition of distinctions between fields of practice... [and] feminist challenges to traditional definitions," which characterise the conceptual turn, (2009, p.246 – 55) he argues for;

...pushing music away from the "proper" territory of the ear and toward the "improper" non-territory of the frame; the nether reaches of the expanded sonic situation."

This expanded sonic situation – a destabilized, decentred context within which sound is read not on its own but in relation to other fields and discourses – is precisely the situation in which Cage and feminist theory may be combined to make new kinds of sound art.

Listening with Care was an early experiment with this idea; the idea of playing everyday sounds through the speakers was intended to extend the appreciation of the domestic past-time of knitting to another domestic material – domestic sound – and the decision to include recordings of sounds like boiling rice and frying onions was intended to lend an exuberant and celebratory voice to the domestic sounds which surround us. Instead, they were heard as uninteresting or difficult sounds, and correlations between the sounds and the speakers which they played through were indecipherable. I had inadvertently recreated some elements of the experience of the Safe concert for my audience, and so I decided that more explicitly personal and domestic frameworks must be used if future works were to be more successful in communicating my intentions to audiences.

## 1.6 Memoryphones – bringing it all together

Take a tape of the sound of the snow  
falling.  
This should be done in the evening.  
Do not listen to the tape.  
Cut it and use it as strings to tie  
gifts with.  
Make a gift wrapper, if you wish, using  
the same process with a phonosheet.

Yoko Ono, Tape Piece III, 1963

Knitting for me is about time. It takes time, it defines a time, it is used as a meditation to process what is going on at the time.  
When I look at my knitting, I can usually remember, which train I was on, who was driving the car, what film I was watching, why I was ill, or what opportunities were on the horizon at the time the piece was made.  
I started knitting relics, in Herdwick, which is my favourite yarn from the Lake district. It has friendly roughness and looks like the local stone the glaciers pushed around there thousands of years ago.

Rachael Matthews, Love Was Awesome, 2009



Figure 11. Memoryphones, headphones with knitted coverings made from yarn with a tape spun into it. The narrative which played through the speakers described the tape which was in the yarn. Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009

Having learned from *Listening with Care*, the knitted headphones which I developed for the group show *Love is Awesome* were a much more explicit statement on sounds and the role that they play in our imaginative reorganisation of, and interaction with, the domestic soundscape. As headphones their function was fairly self-explanatory and – unlike the knitted speakers – their usage did not first need to be learned or understood by prospective listeners. Additionally, the fact of their knitted covering gave them a kind of narrative function which indicated that as well as well as actually being headphones, they were also in some sense about headphones. Once placed over the ears, you could hear a narrative (Appendix 2: *Memoryphones script*) in which I discussed an old, beloved tape that I had owned. It had been taped directly off the radio when I lived in Ireland, and I described the life of that tape, how I had recorded the tape, where I had listened to the tape, the relationship between the tape and my sense of home, and so on;

...there was a whole section where I had obviously just left the tape deck recording. You know, where the tape suddenly is full of adverts and breaking news and this kind of thing. I probably would have recorded over this, except that I really liked the song just after the adverts.

So I left all the news and stuff on the tape, so as not to cover up this one amazing song. And in time... after 7 or 8 years, say... the adverts and the news announcements began to hold a real fascination and – especially after I left Dublin – a real sense of place.

The narrative was deliberately scripted in the style of an intimate confession, and linked my everyday relationship with taping the radio to an “everyday emotional narrative,” (Pink, p.72) in which time and memory played key roles. The narrative linked the physical materiality of the tape with certain emotional associations – like Yoko Ono’s Tape Piece III, (1963) quoted above – deriving meanings from the imagined sounds of the tape, the tape itself as a material with certain physical qualities, and the narrative played through the headphones as a space for these ideas to converge in textile-related metaphors and descriptive language linking fabric, comfort, domesticity and sound;

...there was a cocoon-like quality about this tape I’d made for myself and when I rediscovered it, I found it still very warm and comforting.

Whereas in *Listening with Care* the relationship between the yarns and the speakers was somewhat oblique, in *Memoryphones* the relationship between form and content is made increasingly explicit as the narrative runs on;

When I heard that Rachael Matthews was making yarn out of old cassettes in her analogue amnesty project, I knew that I wanted to spin this mixtape into yarn of some kind.

...so I chose some colours and some textures for the yarn that would somehow communicate the sort of dark, safe, interior place that I always experienced somewhere in my imagination when I listened to the mixtape, and then I turned the yarn into headphones, to remind me of the headphones hour.

*Memoryphones* constituted a far more successful integration of knitting and the context of domestic sounds than *Listening with Care* had. Instead of the impenetrable wall of field-recordings which had been so hard for the audience to decode in *Listening with Care*, the semantic content of *Memoryphones* was clarified through language and form. One person who visited *Love is Awesome* said that *Memoryphones* was her favourite piece because it reminded her of the process of making mix-tapes, and of tapes she had owned which had held a particular, personal significance.

In terms of its relationship to the domestic soundscape *Memoryphones* was not about literally re-presenting domestic field-recordings in a gallery situation as *Listening with Care* had been; instead, it explored and celebrated the domestic practise of creating mix-tapes. However in spite – or because of – this distinction, *Memoryphones* came far closer to exploring our imaginative engagement with the soundscapes of the home than *Listening with Care* had, because the low-key narrative was full of space for people to remember their own experiences of creating mix tapes and the circumstances in which they had done that.



Informal conversations sparked by people's engagement with the work (Fig. 12) referred frequently to tape-recording equipment they remembered, particular mix-tapes which the work had reminded them of, people with whom they had exchanged those tapes, or specific radio shows which they had taped as part of their daily rituals.



Figure 12. Joceline listening to Memoryphones, Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009

Too, Memoryphones was the subject of a series of blog posts which contextualised that work in the personal narratives of my life, blurring art/life borders considerably and situating the knitted headphones in a series of public, online discussions in which people could participate. One blog post (Appendix 1, 01. Love Assignment #5: Build Memoryphones) featured photos of the newly-knitted Memoryphone covers sitting on my radiator, and invited comments on the project idea. This post also linked back to a previous post (Appendix 1, 01. Analogue Amnesty) in which I had written about the mixtape and its transformation into yarn at Rachael Matthew's participatory art project, Analogue Amnesty, (2008). Additionally, in another blog post (Appendix 1, 01. Of Mixtapes and Men) I organised an online swap of mixtapes as part of my overall engagement with the context of the mixtape;

...in terms of the domestic soundscape – that the sound of music playing definitely gets mixed up in the other sounds of life. The sound of the toaster is not necessarily more interesting or meaningful than a mixtape made for you by your first boyfriend, and the world of our everyday lives is as much bound up in albums, releases, hit singles and pop charts as it is in the environmental sounds that surround us constantly. I thought of this when I was making the piece with the cassette-tape-yarn headphones; about the role that mixtapes play in a personal, interior dialogue.

The rich, hyperlinked, dialogical nature of Memoryphones and its links to other projects and conversations online informed the way that I set it up in the circumstances of the gallery. Like all the projects I exhibited at Love is Awesome, Memoryphones had its own Love Assignment folder (Fig. 13) detailing the history of the project and the provenance of the yarn I had knit the Memoryphones covers from. I conceptualised the whole presentation of Memoryphones as the fulfilment of a DIY assignment entitled Remember a Mixtape you loved, and supplied tags near to the Memoryphones which gallery-visitors could use to fulfil this assignment themselves. I documented the ideas behind the assignment format in a blog post (Appendix 1, 01. Assignment);

I want to make work that could be adopted by any person and used like a recipe or a knitting pattern, almost to provide an empowering stimulus for artistic activity.

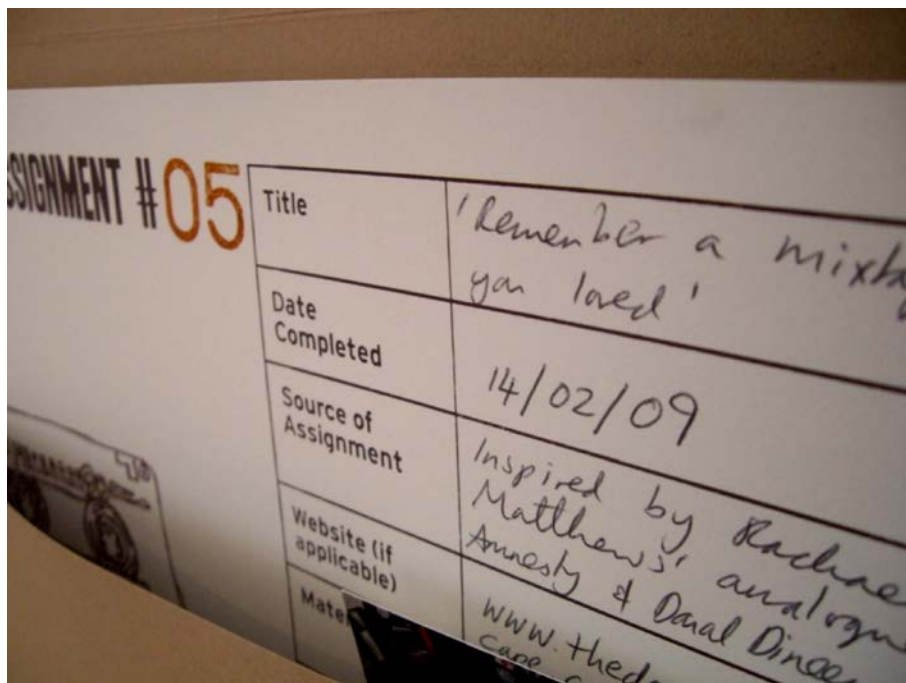


Figure 13. Love Assignment #5: Remember a mixtape you loved, accompanying folder for Memoryphones, Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009

The instructions on the numerous Love assignments dotted around Love is Awesome resembled Yoko Ono's instruction scores and reflect the same curious mix of deliberately enacting and conceptually framing moments that could otherwise remain completely inconsequential. Like John Cage's "noise" which becomes "fascinating... when we listen to it," (1937) conceptualising experiences as being culturally significant changes how we value those experiences and that is perhaps the most exciting, affirmative potential that Cage and feminism share.

I explicitly articulated these ideas in a further image produced for The FRRS in assn. w. MA entitled Little Scratchy Joy (Fig. 14.)



Little  
Scratchy  
Joy

I used to wish my piano-shaped pencil sharpener made a noise like a piano but then one day I noticed how lovely the sound of a pencil sharpener can be. Now I look at pianos and wonder if they can ever sound like a pencil sharpener.

Figure 14. Little Scratchy Joy - Post-Cagean philosophical dilemma, image created for The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation Activity Booklet, 2008

In Little Scratchy Joy the image of a pencil-sharpener is juxtaposed with a text which echoes the philosophical question raised in the well-known tale of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Philosopher Zhuangzi's butterfly dream, (Wikipedia, 2011);

Once Zhuangzi dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuangzi. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuangzi. But he didn't know if he was Zhuangzi who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuangzi. Between Zhuangzi and a butterfly there must be some distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things.

Little Scratchy Joy proposes a Westernised and contemporary updating of the idea of perceptual transformation; as the man and the butterfly are inverted in Zhuangzi's tale, so the pencil-sharpener and the piano are in mine. The underlying implication of the image is one of subversion, mischief and rearrangement. Like the spaghetti in *Alphabeti-listen*, like the biscuits in *Biscuit Music* and like *Colour* in the washing-up, Little Scratchy Joy suggests a playful, philosophical encounter that we might instigate with everyday reality via modes of perception and modes of listening. As visual and textual works intended to sit alongside recorded sounds, all of these works demand that a certain kind of intellectual rigour and imaginative play are applied to the act of listening. These works are and aren't about sound; they are also about text and how sound is read. The pencil sharpener itself in Little Scratchy Joy and the assignment formats with their evocations of school and some form of language-based study imply an active engagement with sounds which places the listener as a scholar (and writer) of their meaning, as well as a recipient of their audible transmission.

I will explore the significance of assignment and instruction score formats more thoroughly in Chapter 3 of this Thesis, but for now I hope I can show that some of the important results of combining the legacies of Cagean thought and 1960/70s feminist art practices include a collapse of traditional boundaries of experience and an exciting reinvention of the sonic and creative potentials of domestic space. In terms of the research question posed at the start of this Chapter, I hope to have demonstrated how works I have made throughout my research have synthesised and updated Cage's ideas and the legacies of 1960s/70s "personal is political" feminism into some new strategies for creating sound art which include:

- Rearranging the materials and processes of domestic space to make conceptual statements about the value of domestic sounds by combining such materials and processes with the symbols of music (*Scone Score*, *Biscuit Music*, *Alphabeti-Listen*)
- Developing images, (*Scone Score*, *Biscuit Music*, *Alphabeti-Listen*) performative actions, (*SoundFjord* appearance) objects (*The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book*) and strategies for engaging audiences (e.g. blog posts specifically inviting comments from the public) which locate imaginative sound art experiences outside of designated cultural (public) precincts (such as concerts and galleries) and inside the traditionally private environs of the home

- Bringing the “risk of intimacy” (Heathfield, 1999) of feminist art practice to a practice of working specifically in sound art contexts (e.g. confessional, autobiographical nature of Memoryphones)

My early thoughts on the synthesis of Cage’s ideas with feminism were articulated in the paper I presented at the conference in Newcastle University – A Woman’s Place – (Appendix 2: A feminist approach to The Domestic Soundscape) during my first year of research;

One of my core intentions or aims is to reconcile my role as a woman and my role as an artist into one thing so that the my experience of being in the home is always authored and informed by my contemplation of that space from the point of view of being an artist... I want to author my experiences of being in the home and to articulate them to a broad audience. I find it very empowering to record the world around me and to document all the sounds which are generally considered to be boring and meaningless. I also find that recording sounds is an amazing way of physically recreating the space and moments in time that exist within the home – because sound physically describes space and time in a way that photos or static images simply cannot – and that my relationship to the home as a recordist, investigator and commentator makes my relationship to domestic space an empowered and questioning one.

Throughout my research this perspective – articulated early on – has developed. Perhaps the most tangible effect on my practice of combining feminist artmaking approaches with Cagean thought is evident in the subversive, sometimes humorous voice which I am cultivating in my practice. John Cage’s essay Music Lover’s Field Companion was originally published for an edition of the United States Lines Paris Review “devoted to humour,” (1954, p. 274) and it is amusing in its gentle derision of the musical establishments of the era when it was written, and its elevation of the sonic possibilities of wild mushrooms;

Enough of the contemporary music scene; it is well known. More important is to determine what are the problems confronting the contemporary mushroom...

However as well as being funny, Cage’s essay contains a serious subtext. Exuberantly celebrating imaginative encounters with the forest and much of what grows therein, his words evidence an earnest appreciation for life. He affectionately describes his move to the countryside, the fungi-guides which he acquires at second-hand bookstores to examine through long winter evenings, and the hidden, imagined soundworld of mushrooms that he infers from his engagement with the world of mycology. By continually cross-referencing these private activities with the contexts of music – with concerts, record companies etc. – he questions the primacy that is given to formal art experiences as disseminators of meaning and offers the rich, life-affirming experiences which result from exercising one’s creative agency outside of those contexts as alternatives. Yet Cage’s most memorable outputs were

not exacted from the living room with his mushroom book or from the forests where he walked. However inspirational these private activities may have been, throughout his career his main format for presenting sounds to audiences remained the public, established contexts of music, and arguably the most definitive gesture of his entire career – David Tudor’s performance of 4’33” – was effective precisely because it took place in those established contexts. In practical terms, Cage wrote hundreds of scores and performed in hundreds of concerts, in spite of his theoretical appreciation for traditionally personal or private contexts as sites of meaning.

The most useful practical models for how art might be presented to audiences outside of established art contexts – and particularly in private domestic environments – come not from Cage, then, but from the history of feminist art practitioners. The Cal Arts’ collaborative Womanhouse project, (1972) Martha Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, (1975) and Bobby Baker’s *Kitchen Show* (1991) carved out historic precedents for the home and its materials to speak as a specific site within culture; one with its own meanings, practices, materials, resonances and rules. Cage gives us a theoretical context for exploring the idea of concerts outside of the concert hall, feminist practitioners showed us how such concerts might actually be achieved and presented as public art works, and the platform of the Internet has allowed for both sounds and representations of private spaces to be shared from one home to another.

I hope I have by now demonstrated that in my practice-led research I have found ways of synthesising these ideas to create art forms which allow the impulses in Cage’s prescient essay to be realised in domestic contexts and simultaneously made public. The means for this sharing are various and include public blog posts about my private life; public performances in a domestic guise; imagery which suggests an imaginative interplay between domestic sounds and the contexts of music; or sonic content which – in its collection, reception and dissemination – indicates domestic space as a principal location for creative sonic experiences and meanings.

The result of doing this has involved the development of a visual and aural vocabulary which reflects both the mischievous Cagean composer suggested in *Music Lover’s Field Companion*, and the reinventing domestic/cultural figure embodied by 1960s/70s feminist art practitioners. It is only by inventing and embodying such an artist-self that I feel the relationship between maintenance and life’s dreams might be explored and shared with audiences.

I have as yet collected no conclusive answers regarding the relationship between maintenance and life's dreams, but introducing a spirit of play and reinventing my own domestic space as a place where sound art is regularly heard and produced has certainly made me hopeful that one day I will.

Chapter 2: What creative practices and projects might arise from exploring one's own immediate soundscape in acts of "autoethnography," and how might the results of such a "study" be framed and presented as art, to audiences?



Figure 15. Love Assignment #10: Make a field recording of your neighbourhood. Source: Miranda July and Harroll Fletcher's LTYM project, 2007 (see Bibliography) individual realisation of work, Felicity Ford, Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009



## 2.1 Anthropology and the domestic soundscape

Existing anthropological discussions of sound have been developed mainly in the work of Feld and in ethnomusicology... Here my concern is with the less studied (with the exception of Tacchi 1998) area of how individuals use sound in their personal experiences of home and the sentiments this evokes.

Sarah Pink, *Home Truths, Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life*, 2004

If there is any moral responsibility of the scientist at all, it is that he should spend a part of his time... in studying normal and everyday behaviour problems of our own lives, as actually lived in the houses and factories, pubs and chapels and shops in this sort of civilisation.

Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson, *Britain by Mass Observation*, 1939

Our daily habits are mechanical actions that we do unthinkingly; but they can also tell us about our collective attitudes, ideas and mythologies – our ways of making sense of the world and our lives.

Joe Moran, *Queuing for Beginners, The story of daily life from Breakfast to Bedtime*, 2007

The dish was full of night-cooled water when I began. I put my hand in it. The suds were gone and the water was still – it was like taking an early-morning swim in the lake at camp, not that I ever did that. I could feel some hard places down on the bottom that would need scrubbing, and there were two dinner forks lurking below as well. I was glad to know about the forks, because if I had poured the water out without removing the forks I would have made a jangling that might have woken Henry. I got the water from the tap to a hot but not unbearable temperature and, having successfully felt for a rough-sided scrubber sponge and the container of dishwashing liquid, I squirted a big blind C on the bottom, where the baked-on cheese was. It was a silent C: as one gets better at squirting out dishwashing liquid one learns how to ease off at the end of a squirt so that it doesn't make an unpleasant floozling sound.

Nicholson Baker, *A Box of Matches*, 2003

As we have seen, from the 1960s onwards, knitting, cake, biscuits, texts, images, photographs and all manner of physical and visual materials from domestic space have entered into cultural discourse via visual arts practitioners like Mierle Laderman-Ukeles and Bobby Baker, and via projects like *Womanhouse*. In these examples such materials are repurposed for artmaking, but they also retain their resemblance to ordinary reality. The cake in a Bobby Baker installation looks very much the cake one might bake at home, for example, and we understand that such a cake is both of cake and about cake.

In contrast, as I discussed in my Introduction, sound art practitioners whose works originate in encounters with domestic materials such as saucepans (Babin, 2002) or earthenware casseroles (Harrison, 1982) rarely end up being about those domestic things. In the contexts of sound art, sounds which originate in domestic spaces and which retain their obvious connections to such spaces remain somehow under-explored, thinly-represented and curiously unwanted. Contemporary composer Jennifer Walshe (2007) refers to the quotidian sounds that she is interested in working with as being somewhat “flawed or redundant,” and lists such sounds as “twigs snapping in a burning fire, paper tearing, breathing,” maintaining that they “have their own beauty,” though they are not considered to be beautiful “in standard terms.”

Walshe’s description here of her decision to work with “redundant” sounds reminds me of the themes of abjection and redemption which haunt Bobby Baker’s work, (Barrett, M. pp.13-15) and the practices of artists like Hilary Kneale or Mierle Laderman-Ukeles who create work out of materials or processes normally considered to be worthless.

With Baker, Kneale and Laderman-Ukeles, it is possible to discern a feminist imperative at work wherein the historically undervalued materials of domestic labour are placed into the cultural sphere of art in order to highlight economic disparities and inequality, and the undervalued status of such labours. But there is another more contemporary reading of Laderman-Ukeles’s ideas about maintenance, based in the notion of their relationship to “our own anthropology,” (Perec, p.210) wherein – as well as giving form to political ideas – such works also represent or “speak of... “common things”... [and] track them down, flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they remain mired,” (Perec, p.210.) Nicholson Baker’s book *A Box of Matches* – a quote from which I opened this section with – represents a brilliant example of a book which explores the minutiae of domestic, daily experiences, in a less explicitly gendered, more general anthropological fashion. Baker writes in great detail throughout the book about the experience of lighting the fire every morning; about the sounds which trains passing outside make; and about the

process of making his coffee each day. Sounds are described throughout the book in context, as part of an overall project to engage more thoroughly with the banalities of the start of his days, using all his senses. Nothing much happens in the narration of Baker's book, but he gives language and form to the subtleties of everyday reality, and the attention which he pays in particular to everyday sounds connects his listening experiences explicitly to their native context.

Walshe compares the beauty of her "redundant sounds" to "pebbles on the beach or graffiti," (2007) and thereby implicitly cites "endotic" (Perec, p.210) materials as worthwhile inspirations and sources of meaning. Similarly, Irene Cieraad writes about the need for anthropology to explore symbolism and meaning within "Western domestic space," as opposed to focussing exclusively on the "exotic domestic spaces" (1999, p.2) that have previously been the preoccupation of the discipline. The symbolism and meaning of un-exotic maintenance work undertaken in Western domestic space is clearly one focus for Mierle Laderman-Ukeles in her manifesto (1969.) In Hilary Kneale's performances such as Peel, (2007) (Fig. 16) daily rituals such as peeling potatoes are given greater visibility through the use of props which heighten and highlight the symbolic significance of those actions. Peel is discussed and recreated in CD 9: HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape.

Predating Cieraad's assertion and the work of these artists by several decades, Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson wrote in *Britain by Mass Observation* (1939 p.12) that;

Anthropologists... who have spent years and travelled all over the world to study remotes tribes, have contributed literally nothing to the anthropology of ourselves.

The same sentiment is reiterated by Sarah Pink in *Home Truths, Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life* when she points out that "anthropology's subject matter" has "traditionally [been] "the other," (2004, p.25) and by Joe Moran who outlines – in the introductory paragraphs to *Queuing for Beginners* – that we associate meaningful rituals and practices with the behaviours of other societies rather than our own (2008, p.4);

When we use the word "ritual" in its anthropological sense we tend to imagine some kind of significant tribal occasion like a marriage, funeral or rite-of-passage ceremony. But rituals can be found in daily activities like holding a fork, tying shoelaces or shaking hands, which people do forgetfully all the time without seeing them as meaningful at all.



Figure 16. Artist Hilary Kneale with her giant apron and peeled potatoes (featured in *Peel*), photographed in her studio by Felicity Ford, during an interview for *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series*, 2009

Anthropology's history is closely aligned to the history of phonography or sound recording as has been demonstrated by Erika Brady in her discussion of early recording technology – the phonograph – and its use by ethnologists for recording “language, music and ceremony” (2002, pp.56 –72) from other cultures; primarily Native American Indian cultures. The title of Brady's discussion, *Save, Save the Lore!* relates to the phonograph's ability to capture the indigenous speech – the lore – of such other cultures. Representations of our native culture were not sought after by these early ethnographers whose use of the phonograph followed the main trends in anthropology towards recording otherness and exoticism.

Working against this fascination with the lure of The Other, Humphrey Jennings, Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson founded MASS OBSERVATION in the 1937 – an organisation established to “study everyday behaviour in Britain – the science of ourselves,” (1939, Madge, C, and Harrisson, T.) In the opening Chapter of Mass Observation’s first book – Britain by MASS-OBSERVATION - (1939, p.10) Madge and Harrison described the teams of volunteers they were training to conduct surveys from ordinary people about their everyday habits, attitudes and behaviours;

Out of ordinary man’s bewilderment and desire for fact has grown a new organisation called Mass Observation. This consists at present of 1,500 amateur Observers, ordinary people who have volunteered to help in the making of factual surveys... In the two years of its existence M-O has been exploring new techniques for observing and analysing the ordinary.

Several decades later in 1973, Georges Perec – a French author – published an article entitled “Approaches to What?” which was later assembled into a larger work called *The Infraordinary*, (1989, p.209) titled to reference “that part of our lives that is so routine as to become almost invisible, like infrared light,” (Moran, p.3.) Perec (1989) declared;

What is needed perhaps is finally to found our own anthropology, one that will speak about us, will look in ourselves for what for so long we’ve been pillaging from others. Not the exotic anymore, but the endotic.

Perec’s work with this idea was later described by Joe Moran – a reader in cultural history – when he published his book, *Queuing for Beginners*, (2007, p.3);

Perec spent his whole career trying to make the “infra-ordinary” more visible by lavishing it with the kind of painstaking attention we normally reserve for earth-shattering events and grand passions.

In terms of how these ideas contextualise my approach to sonic practice and artmaking, there are two trains of thought which I want to follow in this Chapter; firstly, I want to discuss the idea of native sonic practices and rituals as theorised by Jo Tacchi and Sarah Pink in relation to our everyday uses of sound within the home, and secondly I want to talk about the counterpart or partner to an anthropology of the everyday, which is a phonography of the everyday. Some scattered sound art practitioners such as Peter Cusack, (*Your Favourite London Sounds*, 1998) and Katharine Norman (London, 1996) - who described her project as a “form an aural autoethnography” (2011) – have worked to document the specifically domestic soundscapes which backdrop everyday, Western life at home and I will attempt to situate my work in relation to theirs’ before exploring the relationship between the works discussed here and the research question which opened this Chapter.



Figure 17. my kitchen sink; the image I used as my blog-header between 2007 and 2010

## 2.2 Native sonic practices and rituals

A mixtape or mixed tape is a compilation of songs recorded in a specific order, traditionally onto a compact audio cassette.

A mixtape, which usually reflects the musical tastes of its compiler, can range from a casually selected list of favourite songs, to a conceptual mix of songs linked by a theme or mood, to a highly personal statement tailored to the tape's intended recipient. Essayist Geoffrey O'Brien has called the personal mixtape "the most widely practiced American art form."

Wikipedia, 2010

TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape (CD 11: TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape) - one of the Podcasts I created for Sound and Music in 2009 - grew in part out of the creative process of making Memoryphones, which I discussed in Chapter 1. An influential book I read whilst producing that work was Rob Sheffield's memoir; *Love is a Mix Tape*. The book charts Rob's marriage to Renée who tragically died when she was very young, and the chronology of events throughout Sheffield's memoir is relayed in reference to specific mixtapes which he and his wife exchanged and created throughout their life together. The book is a testimony to the significant and symbolic manner in which we organise sounds in our homes and the meanings we ascribe to those activities. In *Love is a Mix Tape* (Sheffield, p.97)

mixtapes are associated with other aspects of domestic life such as washing the dishes, so that everyday tasks and the organisation of sounds within the home are combined;

The Comfort Zone was a dishes tape, maybe the finest of all dishes tapes, guaranteed to get me up to my elbows in Dawn Power Sudsing Formula and through the loading of the drying rack. I cranked it on the boombox we kept on the kitchen counter, right next to the sink.

Love is a Mix Tape works because it describes exactly how we use sound to create meaning and atmosphere in domestic spaces, and how we build this use of sound into daily rituals and personal narratives. Mixtapes are nearly always created at home; this act is one of the sonic practices which are in a sense native to domestic space. I propose that mixtape making must be considered if we want to think about the domestic soundscape as a site of social meaning and not in purely formal terms, as “a huge musical composition, unfolding around us ceaselessly,” (Schafer, 1977) which is why I made it the focus for the narrative in *Memoryphones*, and why I revisit aspects of tape-making in *TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape*, (CD11: *TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape*).

Making mixtapes is just one activity within a broad range of domestic, sonic practices that have evolved in response to changing technologies and the ways they can be adopted for understanding and expressing ourselves. Although magnetic tape itself has a specific set of properties and connotations, the act of mixtape making is also related to other ritualistic and symbolic uses of sound inside the home such as tuning into certain radio shows at specific times, deliberately switching on the television to create a certain sonic atmosphere, and so on. As Sarah Pink observes (2004, p.72);

Domestic sounds need to be constantly maintained or replaced: the radio must be switched on and off, the programme changed, and CDs changed or re-played. This active intervention forms part of the everyday performativity of life at home, and the choices made are part of the process of living out a certain gendered self.

This observation on our symbolic and tactile use of sound within the home is part of Pink’s exploration of “how individuals use sound in their personal and private experiences of home and the sentiments this evokes,” (2004, p.69). In this discussion, Pink builds on Jo Tacchi’s conceptualisation of Radio as a kind of social texture or fabric, and on Tacchi’s (2002, p.242) proposition;

...that radio sound is experienced as a part of the material culture of the home, and that it contributes greatly to the creation of domestic environments.

In terms of understanding the domestic soundscape as a research context – and in terms of understanding radio as a destination for sound work – it is important to foreground these subtexts surrounding the medium itself.

Tacchi has suggested that Radio has a social dimension, a role “in the establishment of relationships, between the self and others,” (2002, p.242). Examples include playing the radio to combat silence and introduce an atmosphere of company into the home, maintaining a sense of connection with public events through listening to news bulletins, and tuning into a particular music station to induce an atmosphere of belonging to the “imagined society” (p.248) conjured through one’s associations with that music. These social dimensions are increasingly being expanded through the integration of social media and Internet technologies into the ways that radio functions; a phenomenon highlighted by Paula Cordeiro earlier this year when she proposed that we change the word radio to “r@dio,” in recognition of the evolving “multimedia, multi platform and convergent” (Cordeiro, 2010) dimensions of the medium.

Understanding the expanded, multimedia context of r@dio is important for explaining how some of the radio projects I have worked on have developed and functioned, since social media and my use of the Internet have been fundamental to creating content and finding online audiences. *Domestica* was created largely from content discovered online via the Yahoo Phonography Group and the “folk community” (McGinley, 2010) that has grown around Patrick McGinley’s framework radio show; and *The FRRS in assn. w. MA* used Facebook, Myspace and various websites to gather news, traffic reports, and other personal reports or opinions as the basis for many of its features.

Additionally, the iconic subtext of radio as a domestic and social medium has been a recurrent theme in my work. The ritualistic, everyday uses of radio to provide certain kinds of atmospheres in the home was in some respects a site of intervention for *Domestica* and *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*, wherein traditional content was replaced with something different, and the possibilities for the listening experiences one can have at home via radio were intentionally broadened to include and draw attention towards the domestic environment itself.

## 2.3 Native domestic sounds

In *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape*, the tuning of the world, R Murray Schafer writes that “the ear is always much more alert while travelling in unfamiliar environments,”



(1994, p.211) conveying the pervasiveness of the idea that the exotic is always more interesting than the endotic.

This was a situation I was interested in remedying. In November 2007 I began searching for sound works created in non-exotic, Western, domestic settings, in answer to a call for submissions. framework has been produced and curated by Patrick McGinley since 2002 on Resonance FM, and in 2006 McGinley advertised framework:afield;

...a guest-curated series produced by artists from all corners of the globe and based on their own themes, concepts or recordings.

I created a framework:afield episode specifically exploring the idea of recordings made in domestic spaces entitled *Domestica*, (CD 1: Track 1, *Domestica*) and On 11<sup>th</sup> November 2007, this show was aired on Resonance FM. *Domestica* was the first of several works intended specifically to explore and represent domestic sound recordings in a radio and Podcast context.

The sources for the sounds collaged into *Domestica* (Fig. 17) were diverse; the only element the recordings held in common was an allusion in each piece to domestic space or domestic activities such as cooking and cleaning. Sounds and texts were interwoven throughout the show like sonic bricolage, and mixing the show was both an exercise in composing with found materials and a research activity involving hours of foraging online to learn who else was exploring domestic sounds. I searched through many websites, wondering who else was recording banal, familiar sounds or objects; who else was – in the words of Georges Perec (1989, p.210) – “questioning their tea spoons?” I wasn’t interested in achieving a distinctive, aural aesthetic when I made *Domestica*; I was interested in understanding the domestic soundscape as a concept or a text and in seeing how it might be differently represented or framed through a variety of sonic practices.

This early research/making exercise revealed different approaches; as with my *Perfect Cup of Tea* recording, (an un-processed recording of a cup of tea being made using only a mini-disc and a cheap microphone) other recordists had taken a documentary, almost ethnographic approach to recording everyday sonic events from around the home – like one contributor on the freesounds website who had uploaded a small archive of what sounded like completely unaltered kitchen sounds to the site. An electro-acoustic compositional approach was taken by other contributors who had made recordings in domestic environments and then manipulated these sounds according to some impenetrable, inner rationale or aesthetic directive. There were also speech recordings which invoked domestic spaces through

descriptions and observations of daily tasks, such as those from Bell and Figueiredo's Mundane Appreciation Week. Finally, there were the recordings that Peter Cusack had made for the Your Favourite London Sounds project; recordings linked explicitly to examining "the significance of sound in everyday life," and discovering "what city dwellers find positive about their city's soundscape" (Cusack, 1998).

When I was developing *Domestica*, I read and re-read the notes that came with the CD edition of *Your Favourite London Sounds* by Peter Cusack, (2001) and I realised that my interest in this release lay less in the formal qualities of the sounds represented on it than in the premise for their collection and the stories of lived experience with which they were connected.

In 2006, I heard Cusack speaking about *Your Favourite London Sounds* at the Sound Practice conference in Goldsmiths University, and was especially struck by his story about the track entitled *Onions frying in my flat*. This was the favourite London sound of a foreign exchange student who was homesick, and to whom the sound of onions frying was a reassuring one invoking the comforting, cultural associations of her native cuisine. This anecdote evidenced the meanings we assign to sounds, and the role that they can play in our narratives and daily rituals. I wrote in the notes for *Domestica* that;

It is Peter Cusack's recording... "*Onions frying in my flat*" from "*Your Favourite London Sounds*" that really needs to be noted here; the cataloguing of detail from people's everyday lives that underpinned the whole process of making "*Your Favourite London Sounds*" is probably the thing I heard which got me interested in the idea of the domestic soundscape in the first place.

I was fascinated by the documentary power of sound evidenced in the release, and the process by which the project had made unobserved human experiences somehow tangible. It seemed to me that it would be difficult to capture the occurrences detailed on *Your Favourite London Sounds* without the sense of time and duration contained in sound recordings. As well as this documentary power of sound, the philosophy of the project was celebratory of everyday reality in a way that linked sound to socially-engaged practices; a kind of post-Cage, post-feminist approach such as that which I was seeking to create in my own work.

Joseph Young - Family Album / Domestic Hiss - Bathroom / Bell & Figueiredo - Mundane Appreciation Interviews

<http://www.archive.org/details/JosephYoungTheFamilyAlbum>  
[http://www.archive.org/details/domestic\\_hiss](http://www.archive.org/details/domestic_hiss)  
<http://www.myspace.com/mundaneappreciation>

Suzanne Williams & Dio Mock - Canal Jam / Bell & Figueiredo - Mundane Appreciation Interviews / Felicity Ford (the littlesongbox) - The Perfect Cup of Tea

<http://www.myspace.com/majamoxford>

Peter Cusack - Onions Frying in my flat / John Zeman - An evening at home / Kitchen Sink Dharma - Cooking Omelettes at home

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Cusack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Cusack)  
<http://isnoone.org/>  
[http://www.archive.org/details/Kitchen\\_Sink\\_Dharma](http://www.archive.org/details/Kitchen_Sink_Dharma)

Kitchen Sink Dharma - Nothing cooking / Bell & Figueiredo - Mundane Appreciation Interviews / Gallagho Kitchen Soundpack - The Freesounds Project

<http://freesound.iaa.upf.edu>

Peter Cusack - Keys in my door / Joe Young - Family Album / Amy Vickery - Stairs

<http://www.myspace.com/amyvickeryartist>

Amy Vickery - 4 London Road / Alejandra & Aeron - The Shed Record / Domestic Hiss - Kitchen

[http://www.luckykitchen.com/aa\\_works/aacv.html](http://www.luckykitchen.com/aa_works/aacv.html)

Felicity Ford (the littlesongbox) - Washing machine, telephone pickup / Alejandra & Aeron - The Shed Record / Kitchen Sink Dharma - Dusting a Piano

Joseph Young - Family Album / Alejandra & Aeron - Family Album / Alejandra & Aeron - Christmas in the empire

<http://www.fallt.com/empire>

Magali Babin - Chuchotement / Felicity Ford (the littlesongbox) - Telephone pick up and telephone / Felicity Ford (the littlesongbox) - The Speaking Clock

<http://www.archive.org/details/nta012>  
<http://www.sonus.ca/curators/norman/babin.html>

Joceline Colvert - Creaking Floorboards / Alejandra & Aeron - Family Album / Tim Coster - Liz's alarm clock

<http://www.myspace.com/timcoster>

Diane Cluck - taking a phonecall halfway through a song!

Figure 18. Domestica playlist, the show aired on framework in November 2007

If I am interested in “questioning my tea spoons,” (1989, p.210) as Georges Perec entices us to do in *The Infraordinary*, then sound has an unrivalled ability to convey the material quality of those spoons, the kind of drawer in which they live, the character of the mug in which they might stir, and the length of time that stirring action might take. The problem Georges Perec had identified concerning the voicelessness of “the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual” (2008, p.210) seems in part to be solved through documentary strategies such as collecting recordings from those contexts, or asking people to speak about them. Most significantly in terms of my practice were evolving understandings – forged whilst collating *Domestica* – of the role that language could play in contextualising sounds. Descriptions of specific shops and buses in the liner-notes of *Your Favourite London Sounds* linked such sounds to narratives and stories, to concerns beyond what Kim-Cohen (2009, p.124) has dubbed “sound-in-itself,” and towards a way of working which doesn’t see language as a “defiling influence,” (Kim-Cohen, p.125) but as the contextualising, semantic content which comprises meaning. I decided that finding my own language and forms to contextualise everyday sounds would be my own approach to celebrating the everyday; my own strategy for extending the legacies of Cage and feminism discussed in Chapter 1 of this Thesis.

Translating Cusack’s public, citywide endeavour into a personal, subjective approach, the sounds I personally contributed to *Domestica* were all recorded from around my home; the sound of tea being made; a recording of the speaking clock; and the drone of my washing-machine acquired through affixing a telephone pick-up to it. I was beginning to familiarise myself with recording equipment, with the activity of recording familiar domestic sounds, and with the regular practice of what Georges Perec might term my “own anthropology” (1989, p.210) or what Katharine Norman might call “autoethnography” (2011). I wanted to situate myself as a sonic investigator of the everyday, exploring both the everyday in sound, and sounds in the everyday. I realised this role I had created for myself had a meaning and relationships to existing practices and ideas. I also realised that my presentation of my adventures and investigations online in the context of my blog located my investigations within the broader discourses discussed in Chapter 1, pertaining to gender, identity, and the representation of private domestic space in public online space. In blog posts such as *Washing up recordings #3, #4, #5* \\_/\* 28.01.08, (Appendix 1, 02. *Washing up recordings #3, #4, #5* \\_/\* 28.01.08) I was deliberately exploring the role of Perec’s envisaged anthropologist, who “gives a meaning, a tongue” (2008, p.210) to what is immediate; to what is everyday. I was using sound combined with interviews of my friends doing the washing

up to fulfil this role, and struggling to understand the relationship between their doing of the washing up and my documenting it;

Firstly, the means of recording Washing up has to become more responsive to the circumstances of Washing up. Washing up happens when people are ready, when they can't bear the sight of dirty dishes any longer, when they wish to prepare the kitchen for a spot of cooking etc. and imposing anything artistically "formal" on the conditions of Washing up seems to contradict my wish to document the very banality, the very everyday-ness of the task.

This was the artist identity or brand I began formulating for myself when I assembled *Domestica*, and these early experiments later comprised the *Adventures in Washing up* feature in *The FRRS* in assn. w. MA.

## 2.4 Combining native domestic sonic practices and native domestic sounds

Cusack writes in the accompanying notes to the *Your Favourite London Sounds* CD that "the tiniest sound differences can become significant if they are within the pattern of someone's daily life" (2001) alluding to the specific subjectivity with which we hear things and connect what we hear to certain narratives. The majority of sounds which feature on Cusack's CD are taken from public, urban environments around the city, but the domestic sounds – Key in door, Onions frying in my flat, Post through letterbox, Rain on skylight while lying in bed – fascinated me, as they added intimacy and subjectivity to this sonic portrait of a Capital city. It is interesting to consider Cusack's account of our relationship to daily sounds in the light of Pink's account (2004, p.69);

Sound, whether intentionally created or not is inescapably part of the home. This includes speech and conversation... music, radio, television, domestic dogs barking... windows knocking against their frames in the wind, the running water and clanking ceramics of washing up or an intentionally slammed door. These and many other sounds are crucial to the way people communicate in their homes.

Pink focuses on the ritualistic use of popular music and mainstream radio broadcasts within the home rather than investigating those ambient sounds which characterise domestic space, but by broadcasting sounds like the recording Peter Cusack made of Onions frying in my Flat, the borders between ambient sounds and radio or music are eroded, because the "inescapable" ambient sounds which were in the background become foregrounded through their reproduction and transmission. A curious consequence of this use of radio is that it becomes self-referential, drawing attention to the context in which sounds are being heard, and it also creates a kind of voyeurism where – rather than public life entering the private

home via radio – it is private, domestic life which we hear; perhaps the specific, sonic texture that radio often masks. Tacchi (2002, p.245) writes of how sometimes the inescapable soundscapes of home appear as a “troubling silence” comprised of the sounds which occur when we are quiet, and which remind us that we are alone;

Silence as a commentary on sociality can... remind us of our mundane and perhaps lonely existence. These will be very individual connections – for some the ticking of a clock, or the sound of church bells.

Tacchi suggests that in this context the condition of having the radio on covers up these sounds, creating a friendly reminder of the social spheres which exist beyond the immediate environment of the home.

In understanding how I approached the context of radio in both *Domestica* and to contextualise the specific contributions I made towards *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*, it is important to build a third reading concerning domestic uses of radio onto Pink and Tacchi’s ideas, in which radio is used as a social space for sharing the domestic sounds we have in common rather than rearranging the domestic soundscape so that we do not have to hear them. This social aspect of radio can be further expanded when – as was the case in *The FRRS in assn. w. MA* – online activities in which one can participate are part of the makeup and constitution of the radio show. The website at [www.fantasticalreality.com/home.html](http://www.fantasticalreality.com/home.html) evidences many of the social interactions which comprised features like *The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show* (which was created through a poll I ran on my blog) or the news reports, which were compiled from real life mundane stories which collected largely through Facebook.

An important rhetorical question I have concerns the affirmative potential of a project like *Cusack’s*; What would happen if the lonely listener who Tacchi envisages switched on her radio to hear a recording of the Church bells, or the ticking of a clock which have thus far been the soundtrack of isolation and loneliness? Would hearing those sounds on the radio – contextualised in some way with narratives or by some other means – reinforce their associations with boredom and loneliness, or create new kinds of social, sonic connections, wherein the listener may feel that someone else is hearing the same things as her; that someone else is listening? What happens if this imagined listener learns they can send an opinion to the radio show and become part of the show without the “risk-taking” attached to “face-to-face social interactions?” (Tacchi, p.245) The idea that this third domestic use of radio might exist – that radio may be used as a site for celebrating, sharing and exploring the sounds we have in common in banal, everyday reality – was very much on my mind while I

was creating *Domestica*, and when I first encountered Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo's art concept – Mundane Appreciation.

## 2.5 The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation

I first heard Bell and Figueiredo's work during Mundane Appreciation Week in 2007, at the Graduate showcase at Oxford Brookes entitled, *Mum, Dad, I'm an artist...* when I went to the bathroom and became aware that I could hear someone talking in great detail – and fascinatingly – about their shaving routine (Appendix 1, 02. Eggs Hats and Houses) Bell and Figueiredo had collected a number of interviews of people describing their everyday routines and rituals in this way and had then broadcast these around Oxford Brookes throughout Mundane Appreciation Week using mp3 players, short-range radio transmitters, and radios (Fig. 19.)

The experience I had during Mundane Appreciation Week of hearing Bell and Figueiredo's interviewees talking about their daily lives reminded me of reading Georges Perec's essay, *Notes Concerning the Objects that are on my Work-table*, (1974, p.145) and of the Amedee Ozenfant quote that has haunted me ever since I saw it on a poster in Christine Hill's Accounting Archive (Fig. 20) which reads "Art is the demonstration that the ordinary is extraordinary."

In encountering people's accounts via Mundane Appreciation's radios, I experienced both a feeling of great affinity with the content, and also renewed surprise at how fascinating and invisible many aspects of daily life often are. The experience reminded me of my first encounter with Christine Hill's *Volksboutique Accounting Archive*; the project which I researched for my BA dissertation; *Valuing Reality*, a philosophy based on the work of Christine Hill, (Ford, 2004). I described *The Volksboutique Accounting Archive* as "a deepening investigation into people and everyday interactions, and the desire to record these, or archive them in some way." I remember feeling a strange excitement at encountering people's "accounts" on the walls of Hill's Accounting Archive; a mix of finding people's stories simultaneously very familiar and very strange, since we rarely encounter formal representations of the minutiae of everyday life. I felt the same way when I heard the careful description of shaving which was playing on the Mundane Appreciation radio when I went to the bathroom at Oxford Brookes during *Mum, Dad, I'm an artist...*

Joe Moran has termed my response “both the shock of recognition and the shock of the new,” (2008, p.3) because while the content of this kind of work is very familiar – we have all brushed our teeth, we have all sat in a chair – many of us have not encountered descriptions of these actions which foreground them. Like Cusack’s recordings of everyday sounds, the interviews which Bell and Figueiredo collected for Mundane Appreciation Week gave a form and a voice to things which we imagine are too obvious to be worthy of comment.



Figure 19. Mundane Appreciation radios at Mum, Dad, I’m an Artist... Oxford Brookes, 2007, installation by Artists Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo featuring radios, transmitters, mp3 players and pre-recorded interviews, photo by Felicity Ford, 2007



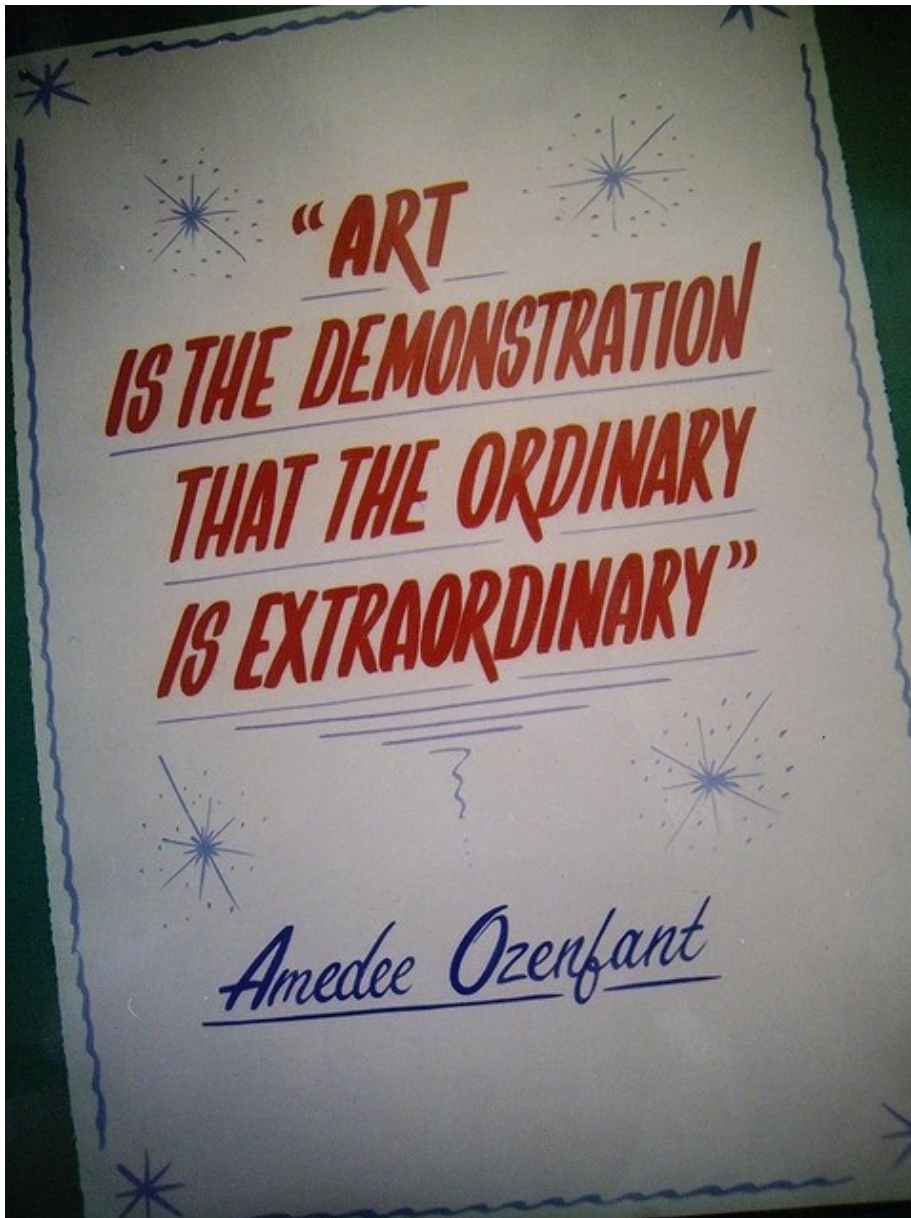


Figure 20. Amedee Ozenfant quote Volksboutique poster on the wall at Christine Hill's Home Office exhibition, Christine Hill and Volksboutique, Ronald Feldman Gallery, photo by Felicity Ford, 2003

In the first Chapter of this Thesis I proposed that Cage's legacy can be extended into practices which are socially engaged, which address subjectivity, which are grounded in the realities of contemporary, Western life, and which connect the dismantling of the hierarchy of sounds with the dissolution of other categorisations of experience such as distinctions between High and Low culture. My strategy for demonstrating this when I created *Domestica* was to foreground the very sounds which had been previously considered totally unsuitable for making music – the sounds of food being cooked, the sounds of cutlery being rattled in a drawer etc. – and to contextualise these sounds by juxtaposing them with

Mundane Appreciation’s interviews of people describing everyday things and activities. In doing this, I intended to show that valuing everyday sounds is connected to valuing everyday, lived experiences. This was my intention when I placed the sounds of spoons and forks in *Domestica* beside Mundane Appreciation interviews, and when I put together a proposal for our collaboration, *The Fantastical Reality Radio Show* in association with Mundane Appreciation, (CDs 2 – 6: *The FRRS* in assn. with MA).



Figure 21. *The Fantastical Reality Radio Show* in association with Mundane Appreciation, FRRS logo by Felicity Ford, MA logo by Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo

The FRRS in assn. w. MA (Fig. 21) came about because I maintained contact with Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo after I had created *Domestica* and through emails and meetings the idea of a collaborative project emerged. In the early stages of conceptualising the project, we determined that it would be structured like a conventional radio show featuring gameshows, guest interviews, news and traffic reports etc. but that the content would reflect the everyday sounds which – if we are to take Tacchi and Pink at their word – are normally overwritten by radio. In our proposal to the Sonic Arts Network I wrote that we would;

...create a series of radio shows that would contemplate everyday sounds and situations. Featuring a range of Game shows, Interviews, Listening Spots and Competitions, this radio show would intentionally question the established categorisation of “boring” and “interesting” sounds. Building on the ideas of John Cage, the idea of “the banal” and arts practises concerned with the idea of “The Everyday” the show would be affirmative and celebratory, while at the same time challenging and questioning perceptions of what is/isn’t interesting or worthy of considered listening.

My responsibilities in the collaboration included writing the copy, the press release and the proposal for the project; designing the website; doing the final mixing of the shows

(although Kayla always listened through and suggested minor changes before broadcast); negotiating with the Sonic Arts Network re: our contract; managing the project budget and writing and recording all of the scripts which glued the features together in each show. Additionally, I designed and created jingles for Adventures in Washing Up, The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show, The Fantastical Reality Radio Show (I produced the longer FRRS jingle – the shorter one was produced by Kayla Bell and friends), Sonic Postcards (a term derived from the Sonic Arts Network project of the same name, and used with their permission), and the [www.fantasticalreality.com](http://www.fantasticalreality.com) jingle; I also came up with the initial ideas for our respective sonic profiles; our sonic giveaway (CD 4: FRRS in assn. w. MA 3: EXPO SPECIAL) the copy the appliance using only your voice feature and Messy Tuesdays. Finally, I did some of the interviewing and recording required for various Mundane Appreciation features, and I recorded some of the sounds and interviews required for either The Sound Parade or Try To Name the Object, Situation or Location, beginning with the Letter on the Spinner, from only the Sound. Bell and Figueiredo AKA Mundane Appreciation designed and created the jingles for all the other features – The Sound of Your Life, Listen In, Out and About, Meet the Expert, What have you got inside your Handbag?, Traffic, News, Sound Parade, Sutherland Road Bus Stop, Pie Charts, Try to Name the Object, Situation or Location, beginning with the Letter on the Spinner, from only the Sound, Listen In, and Perfect Cup of Tea. We agreed on the themes for the respective shows together, and decisions to include such things as the biscuit addition to Perfect Cup of Tea in DOMESTIC SPECIAL (CD 5: FRRS in assn. w. MA 4: DOMESTIC SPECIAL) and the party bags which we sent each other for the GRANDE FINALE (CD 6: FRRS in assn. w. MA 5: GRANDE FINALE) were mutually agreed over online correspondence.

The result of this collaboration was an episodic series of 5 radio shows (CDs 2 – 6: The FRRS in assn. with MA) organised around various themes and connected to an active set of social media initiatives, a website, and an interactive, participatory installation at Sonic Art Network's 2008 Brighton EXPO where visitors to our stand could become a part of the show and interact with the project by filling out questionnaires, playing with our game-show spinner, and allowing us to record their experiences for the show.

Mundane Appreciation has a set of highly effective strategies for engaging the public in discussions and collecting information. By employing their distinctive techniques, Bell and Figueiredo extrapolate a certain kind of reflective interview from people on subjects such as how they organise their fridges to what their favourite chairs are like, and they used their techniques throughout the creation of The FRRS in assn. w. MA to gather and compile

montages of people talking about things like the design of office chairs, or the preferred method for brushing one's teeth and so on. As stated on the Mundane Appreciation website;

Mundane Appreciation has three main functions: collecting, displaying and interpreting information. They hold regular events around the country where visitors are encouraged to participate in activities such as badge making, vegetable peeling, interviews and many more. The information collected at these events is then interpreted and presented in the form of display books, audio installations, radio broadcasts, activity books, films and newsletters.

In contrast to Mundane Appreciation's conversation-led approach, I was more interested in using the frameworks of conventional radio for presenting actual sounds. For me the discursive interview pieces developed by Mundane Appreciation were contextualising content to sit beside and with the everyday sounds that I hoped to foreground in the work, rather than the main point of the radio show.

Features which I had suggested such as The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show benefited from Kayla's keen sense of a popular radio style, and her suggestion that Guy Tucker read the script for that feature; and when time constraints meant that the recording tasks for a Mundane Appreciation feature such as The Sounds of your Life fell to me, I approached them with my less resolutely positive and more reflective style which was different to the Mundane Appreciation brand. I enjoyed the comparative differences when we all created something roughly equivalent – such as the Sonic Postcards – because, though ostensibly about the same thing from episode to episode, our versions would always vary quite a lot from one another because of our different approaches.

The various ways in which we were respectively interested in framing or celebrating the everyday led to intense negotiations regarding what would go into the show and what would not, and the net result of our efforts is an amalgamation of disparate approaches to representing the everyday. If there had been a greater bias towards my approach involving more ambient sounds and a more overt use of the background noise of daily life, we would have lost the show's resemblance to traditional radio and therefore some of its subversive effect; yet the gameshows which featured everyday sounds might have seemed gimmicky were they not presented alongside more thoughtful features like Sonic Postcards, or Mundane Appreciation's Listen In. As it was, I think we achieved a fairly good balance of features and ideas, and the show exists in a very liminal category which is part conceptual art, part composition, part radio art and part sonic art.

Too, all the jingles that Kayla and her friends made and the introduction of populist Mundane Appreciation game-show formats gave an "everyday" quality to the show which

contrasted strongly against the less recognisable ambient sounds and my more identifiably home-made jingles with their cheap electronic keyboard beats and DIY layering. These contrasts are important; the show with its host of presenters and games, its jolly background music and its friendly tone bears a resemblance to commercial radio, which opens it up to the kind of social use that Tacchi cites; to radio as a means of introducing a texture of chatty sociability into the domestic soundscape, far from the “troubling silence” of the quiet home. Too, the structure of the popular radio show as a recognisable context bears a resemblance in function to the structure of the concert performance subverted by David Tudor’s performance of Cage’s 4’33” in 1952. As Cage’s performance utilised certain expectations set up by the concert conditions to draw attention to everyday sounds, so The FRRS in assn. w. MA utilised the expectations set up by the idea of popular radio format to reframe and represent unfamiliar radio content.

As with David Tudor’s historic performance of Cage’s 4’33” where the conditions for music (the concert) were specifically used to draw attention to non-music reality, (the environmental sounds surrounding the concert) the familiar sonic veneer of the show with its stylistic resemblances to commercial radio is shot through with opportunities for real life and fantasy to collide; for the sound represented on the radio (fantastical) and the sound actually present in the listening environment around the radio (reality) to blur. The FRRS in assn. w. MA paradoxically masks the everyday soundscape with its chatty exterior, and brings it to the fore with its content. For instance, there might be someone in the radio show imitating the sound of a washing machine using their voice at a certain moment, and it is not ridiculous to suppose that someone might be listening to the radio at home just then, with their washing-machine on. The show is full of moments like this, where the conditions exist for some slippage between art and life to occur; for slippage between the representation of sound and the sound itself to happen. This slippage is enacted through many different strategies ranging from recordings of everyday tasks like the washing-up through to gameshows devised to test people’s knowledge of everyday sounds.

In terms of answering the research question which I assigned to this Chapter and introduced at the start of this Thesis, I believe that producing The FRRS in assn. w. MA helped me to explore many acts of “autoethnography”, and the project exemplifies many creative strategies for presenting aural ethnographic materials as art, to audiences. Some such strategies explored by myself, Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo in developing the show include:

1. Introducing participatory exercises which invite the audience to share their personal experience of everyday sounds (like the feature which involves imitating an appliance or everyday action using only your voice, or the online poll which invites people to vote on the sounds they find most irritating)
2. Creating narrative structures which contextualise everyday sounds by placing them in relation to accounts and stories (like creating the Sonic Postcards)
3. Developing gameshow or quiz structures which engage audiences in the act of listening to everyday sounds by introducing a competitive element or prize-related incentive (like Try to name the Object, Situation or Location, beginning with the Letter on the Spinner, from only the Sound...)
4. Creating visual images which intentionally suggest or convey sounds or listening activities and which relate those sounds or listening activities to everyday contexts (such as the images discussed in the previous Chapter)
5. Using the pretext of “I am making a radio show about everyday sounds” as a way of instigating interviews and discussions which may otherwise be difficult to initiate (like the Meet the Expert feature, which involved interviewing various professionals about the sounds in their work environment)
6. Finding ways of inventorying everyday sounds or drawing attention to them via Museum labels or tags (like the Mundane Appreciation Museum feature, which involved tagging or inventorying an everyday object each week and then describing this item in the show)
7. Designating specific listening spots via public announcements or jingles (like the Mundane Appreciation Listen In feature)
8. Recording the sounds from around people’s local environments and playing those sounds back to them (such as in the Sounds of your life feature)
9. Recategorising repetitious everyday actions as musical refrains (such as my observation that the different stages of tea-making could comprise a found musical score; an idea I introduced during the Perfect cup of tea feature)
10. Creating sonic similes (like Claudia’s use of my recordings of popcorn to simulate the sound of applause during The Sound Parade, inspired by my use of popcorn in Taste Sensations to mimic the sound of fireworks)

There are many precedents for the work that we created together; many of which are discussed elsewhere in this Thesis. Alison Knowles’s Propositions and Pauline Oliveros’s Open Field (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this Thesis) demonstrate the roles that intention and concept play in defining the meaning of an object that is made (in this case, a radio show, destined to be heard at home); Christine Hill’s criticism of the idea that we only

experience culture within designated parameters or institutions creates a premise whereby we can choose to ignore those designations and choose to locate cultural experiences outside of those parameters (on a blog post, in a radio show, whilst eating crisps etc.). The presenter voice which I employ throughout is intended to be friendly and easy to listen to, but it is also intended – like the obviously home-made jingles which I created for the show – to evidence the fact that the show was an achievable DIY project. This was important because I wanted the show – like *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book* – to implicitly suggest an alternate reading of domestic space and domestic sounds to listeners; to indicate that the sounds which are normally the background noise of life may at any time be turned into charts, games, features or stories. In order to propose this reading of the space, I needed to make the gap between myself and the audience to be very small, so that anyone listening to the show could conceivably imagine authoring these transformations themselves; recording their own scripts at home, and exploring their familiar environments with a recorder and a notepad.

The FRRS in assn. w. MA was not exclusively concerned with domestic space, but many of the sounds which featured in the show were recorded in our respective homes and I feel we successfully found ways of foregrounding these sounds through the strategies listed above.

Also, in terms of the show's status as a kind of anthropological, sonic project, the shows – as a collection – draw attention repeatedly and in unexpected ways to the meanings and associations that we assign to everyday sounds in our lives.

I learned through making the show how intimate people's understandings of their domestic soundscapes are, and the experience of recording sounds around Lara's home for *The Sounds of your Life* feature (CD 2: FRRS in assn. w. MA 1: INTRO SHOW) was revelatory to both of us who had never realised either how many sounds resulted from daily actions, nor how intimate and immediate Lara's knowledge of the sounds in her home environment was. Similarly, I found no shortage of people happy to emulate their washing-machines and irons using their voices, revealing the detailed impressions that these objects make on their users. This perspective on the intimate relationship we have with the sounds of appliances was echoed in the interview I conducted with Lise Lefebvre in a later project – *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series* (CD 10: ROOMS & CHAMBERS and the domestic soundscape) – wherein Lefebvre talked about how important the sounds of such appliances are to their users.

The *Fantastical Reality Radio Show* was never intended to form the basis of a serious, anthropological study and no decisive statistics or conclusions can be drawn from these

reflections. However the small revelations concerning everyday sounds which we recorded and collated for the show constitute a strong statement linking everyday sounds to daily rituals and narratives.

Where *The FRRS in assn. w. MA* differs from other projects which link sounds to everyday narratives and rituals such as Peter Cusack's *Your Favourite London Sounds* or Katharine Norman's London pieces, is in the combined and somewhat literal way that sounds are presented alongside, and interwoven with, spoken word. Peter Cusack supplies all the text (and context) surrounding *Your Favourite London Sounds* in printed words, which cannot be heard in the pure field-recordings which are collected, where Katharine Norman's London release (1996) – which features three compositions inspired by “not the London of tourist brochures” (Norman, 1996) but the London she herself had lived in, and the London her mother recalled from – develops other “autoethnographic” strategies. In Katharine Norman's *In Her Own Time*, (1996) a composition created from Norman's mother's recollections of London during World War 2, layers of pitched tones beneath snippets of speech, plus some processing to the voice so that it sounds distant or partially erased, give the work a self-conscious air of strangeness which is very different from the deliberately literal, and humorous address we employed for speaking about sounds and everyday events in *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*. Norman's piece uses sounds to allude to the horrors of World War 2; to allow the voice to rise and fade to the fore amidst a slightly threatening backdrop of suggestive, ambient sounds. Of another track, *London E17* – this one based around field-recordings created around her “home patch” (Norman, 1996) – Norman writes that the sound-processing she has used to link the recordings are “intentionally surreptitious,” in order to let “the so-called ordinary shine through.” In contrast, when we created *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*, we linked the sounds with narrative via the scripts I had created, and the structures for gameshows which Bell and Figueiredo had introduced. Our framework for letting the ordinary shine through was to – in a very literal and almost deliberately naïve way – use language and radio forms to make the ordinary the focus of every show. Where Cusack's endeavour shows an ethnographer who is cataloguing and inventorying a list of significant sounds like a botanist who gathers specimens from the field, Norman's endeavour shows an auto-ethnographer who is layering significant sounds from her own life into a shimmering narrative where “real” life sounds – field recordings and unprocessed speech – emerge and fade from a backdrop of subjective music. In contrast, as an autoethnographic project *The FRRS in assn. w. MA* contextualises many ordinary sounds in entirely unexpected contexts. Rather than organising our everyday sounds into an inventory (like Cusack) or melding them seamlessly with more recognisably musical sounds into a composition, (like Norman) our everyday sounds are reorganised into charts, games, listen-in



moments, interviews and so on, and then piped back – via the process of radio broadcast transmission – into the home environments resembling those places where they were originally produced.

## 2.6 After the Fantastical Reality Radio Show: Language, context and sound

After The FRRS in assn. w. MA, I found myself increasingly interested in the relationship between language and sound. SOUNDBANK (Fig. 21) has been presented in various contexts both on and offline and it grew jointly out of my exposure to Christine Hill's art practice, Georges Perec's habit of inventorying things, (1989, p.244) my own collaboration with Oxford Contemporary Music and the Oxford Botanic Gardens throughout Magic Hour, and the project which myself and my supervisor Dr Paul Whitty jointly run, entitled Sound Diaries and hosted online at <http://www.sound-diaries.com>.

When I interviewed Hill in 2003 for my undergraduate Thesis, we discussed The Volksboutique Accounting Archive – an installation created by Hill to collect, archive and value people's accounts. I concluded in my BA Thesis that “in inventorying... what is real in our lives... we give it some legitimacy; details become of consequence when they are recorded” (2003, p.39). Correspondingly, Georges Perec describes the affirmative role that inventorying can play in lending form and visibility to “the background noise” of life (2008, p210);

Make an inventory of your pockets, of your bag. Ask yourself about the provenance, the use, what will become of each of the objects you take out.

When I was invited by Oxford Contemporary Music and the Oxford Botanic Gardens to create a site-specific way of inventorying and gathering visitor feedback on the work due to be exhibited at their event – Magic Hour – in Autumn 2008, (CD 7: Track 1, Magic Hour) we agreed on using formats and materials appropriate to that context. I salvaged and decorated a garden shed as a location in which visitors could leave their comments.

I furnished the shed (Fig. 22) with various inventorying tools; tags which people could affix to a map of the garden recording their experiences; glassine envelopes (which are the same type as the ones used by garden staff for collecting and archiving seeds) for saving sounds; and forms featuring the motto “Feedback is Fertiliser,” which visitors to the shed were invited to place in a compost bin “to nourish future projects.”



Figure 22. The Feedback Shed and contents created for Oxford Contemporary Music and the Oxford Botanic Gardens, for Magic Hour, Felicity Ford, 2008

I recorded my thoughts about these ideas online (Appendix 1, 02. Magic Hour and The Shed of Dreams) commenting that;

I am interested in what causes us to treasure or nurture a moment in time, a sound we hear, a sight we see...

Like the concepts Memoryphones, The Feedback Shed was a way of framing or considering sounds; a way of extending the idea of listening beyond the phenomenon of hearing, into realms where sound is conceptualised and documented as part of an overall strategy for valuing reality. Although the sounds in this case were created by experimental music installations by other artists in an event which was – according to its title Magic Hour – self evidently intended to be extraordinary – the processes of recording and inventorying listening experiences was one which could be extended to my own artistic concerns. I devised a project for inventorying sounds from everyday life entitled SOUNDBANK (CD 7: Track 2, SOUNDBANK).





Figure 24. installation detail of saved “sounds” left by visiting members of the public who attended Magic Hour and left their feedback in The Feedback Shed, Felicity Ford, 2008

As I progressed with this ambitious project, it underwent several changes and was presented in different contexts as I experimented with the idea; in the case of presenting SOUNDBANK as a participatory exercise at the group show, Love is Awesome, (Fig. 26) the sheer unfamiliarity of the task of recording sounds in notation, words or drawings, baffled exhibition visitors who registered their responses clearly, (Fig. 25) and who were evidently uncertain as to how to interact with SOUNDBANK and what the purpose of doing so might be.

In a blog post (Appendix 1, 02. Recording Sounds) I publicly reflected on how people had used SOUNDBANK;

I think that the screen-printed glassine envelopes, letter-press printed record cards therein and open-plan style of presentation (biro, record cards, pin-board containing prior submissions to the SOUNDBANK) do not – as a collection of things – adequately convey the meaning or purpose of the SOUNDBANK. I think it would benefit greatly from some clearer signposting.

...Either that or I need to broaden my views on what sounds the SOUNDBANK is intended to house! During the exhibition a treatise on despair has been submitted to the SOUNDBANK, along with an Aphex Twin Tune, and Bjork’s I Miss You. One gallery goer did, however, create a very interesting graphic score using the notation line on the record card and representing somehow “the joys of this exhibition.”

Something about the design of the SOUNDBANK record cards deters people from submitting sounds. It could be that describing ordinary sounds in detail is so alien for most people that they would not even know where to begin with it, as a process. Or it could be that I need to present a clearer explanation of the project in order to invite contributions.

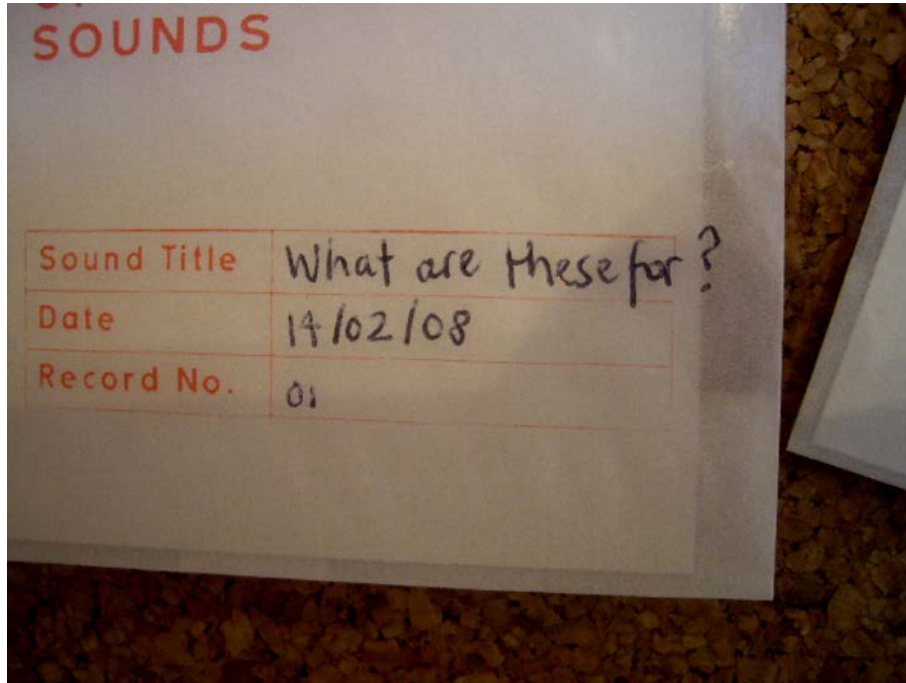


Figure 25. unofficial exhibition visitor feedback on Love Assignment #2: Record Sounds in Words, Notes, or Drawings, (SOUNDBANK) Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009

However in later adaptations of the SOUNDBANK project – including an online project where I opened and presented sounds which I had recorded myself, and in the case of the stationery I developed for my World Listening Day Soundwalk – the practical applications for SOUNDBANK as a tool for framing and celebrating the background noises of life became increasingly evident.

The practice of recording sounds regularly in SOUNDBANK is in part a realisation of Pauline Oliveros's Open Field score (1980); in certain ways the act of recording a sound each day is a way of recording certain moments as "art experiences." In another way, my personal use of SOUNDBANK echoes Oliveros's writings (2005, p.18) concerning Recording Observations of the External Soundscape in her book, *Deep Listening – A Composer's Sound Practice*;

All of the waveforms faithfully transmitted to our auditory cortex by the ear and its mechanisms constitute our immediate soundscape. Though we may not be of it, we are in it... Recording the flow of sounds through the space/time continuum like a journalist can promote a deeper understanding of your presence and meaning in the environment.



Figure 26. Love Assignment #2: Record Sounds in Words, Notes, or Drawings, (SOUNDBANK)  
Love is Awesome, Gallery 10, 2009

Similarly, my use of the SOUNDBANK as a personal tool for documenting everyday sounds bears some resemblance to R Murray Schafer's description of keeping "a soundscape diary" (1994, p.211). However unlike the practices of either of these composers, my interest in recording everyday sounds in SOUNDBANK is a way of inventorying and celebrating the mundane, background noise of life and not a way of either documenting ways to either improve or surpass it. There is something reminiscent of the transcendental art experience (Becker, 1996) in Oliveros's description of the "altered state of consciousness full of inner sounds" (2005, xv) which prompted her to build her Deep Listening practice (described in the book of the same name as "a form of meditation" (2005, xxiv)). Likewise, in Schafer's writings, the keeping of a soundscape diary is explicitly linked to "adjudicating the

soundscape” (1994, p.211) and – in spite of asserting that “acoustic design should never become design from control from above,” (1994, p.206) – Schafer describes “God” as “a first-rate acoustical engineer” (1994, p.207) and asserts that “when we regard the soundscape of the world as a huge musical composition... the boring or destructive sounds will become conspicuous enough and we will know why we must eliminate them” (1994, p.205).

Unlike either of these approaches, my recording of sounds in SOUNDBANK was never linked to a desire to either align listening to spiritual practices, nor to contribute to any endeavour concerned with improving the world’s soundscapes. Rather, in recording sounds in SOUNDBANK, I was interested in seeing what happens when moments which normally pass without remark or regard are reframed or preserved as being meaningful. Where Schafer is concerned with instilling principles of “Acoustic Design” (1994, p.206) amongst students, and thereby precipitating deliberate changes amongst the sounds which are allowed to exist in the soundscape, I am interested instead in effecting a perceptual change in how we listen to the sounds which evidence the real lives that we have, even when those sounds are boring or difficult – as some of the sounds I have recorded in SOUNDBANK have seemed to be, to me. Like Mierle Laderman-Ukeles, who says maintenance work is “a drag,” but nevertheless demands that we seek a connection between this work and “life’s dreams,” (Laderman-Ukeles, 1969) I have tried to document sounds in SOUNDBANK as I have heard them; even when they have seemed to me to be difficult or boring, (Appendix 1, 02. Supermarket);

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP  
Out of my way... fsh... sorry... aaaargh... sigh...  
OUT OF MY WAY... SORRY... AAAARGH! SIGH! SORRY... SIGH! FSH...

In its online form I presented SOUNDBANK as a kind of Advent Calendar on my blog. I introduced the project in a blog post (Appendix 1, 02. SOUNDBANK Advent Calendar) and every day throughout December 2009, opened one of the glassine envelopes that had been filled with a SOUNDBANK record the previous December, and relayed its contents. This exercise mimicked the physical opening of doors on a cardboard Advent Calendar in real life, and was contextualised by the narrative framework which I used to describe the project. Unlike the unofficial feedback I received at Love is Awesome where the function of the SOUNDBANK stationery was evidently unclear to exhibition-visitors, posts detailing sounds which blog-readers could relate to their own experiences of everyday sounds gathered thoughtful comments concerning our imaginative relationship with everyday sounds. For instance the SOUNDBANK record I presented online (Fig. 27) detailing the noises our cat

makes (Appendix 1, 02. Joey's Noises) attracted several comments from readers concerning their own relationships to the different sounds produced by their pets.

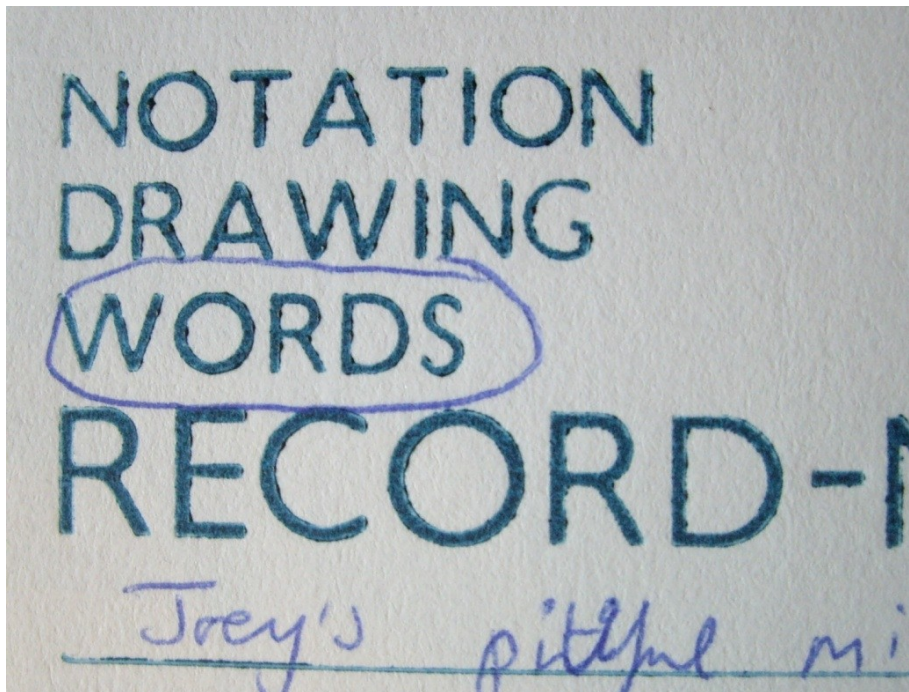


Figure 27. (detail) Joey's Noises, one of the SOUNDBANK records relayed to the public during the online SOUNDBANK Advent Calendar Project, Felicity Ford, 2009

Joey's noises are very various and have become an important part of family life in Mark's house, and he does a great number of noise-making things besides miaowing. He has a really disturbing growly/screeching noise that he does when defending his cat-flap against other cats or fighting with them, he has a lovely purr... He also has a very insistent, clear miaowing sound that he makes as a sort of announcement when he is entering the room or has killed a mouse. I have nicknamed him Thunderpaws because of the sound that he makes when he is coming up the stairs, and he makes a fantastic noise when he sharpens his claws on the stairs carpet; it is an amazingly spiky, stacatto sound.

I think one of the best things about Joey, however, is how well he does silence. When you think of the racket a dog makes when it is sleeping or just being in the room with you, a cat is comparatively noiseless. When he is not coming up the stairs at speed, Joey pads around the house silently and with great delicacy; I love the dampening or dimming effect that his soft, pink, furry paws have on the sound of his walking. And when he sleeps, he makes himself very small and very quiet.

Similarly, during the Soundwalk which I organised as part of World Listening Day, my adapted version of SOUNDBANK with its attendant stationery (Fig. 28) helped participants on the walk to articulate or document specific listening experiences which they had had whilst walking on the route I had mapped out for that occasion.



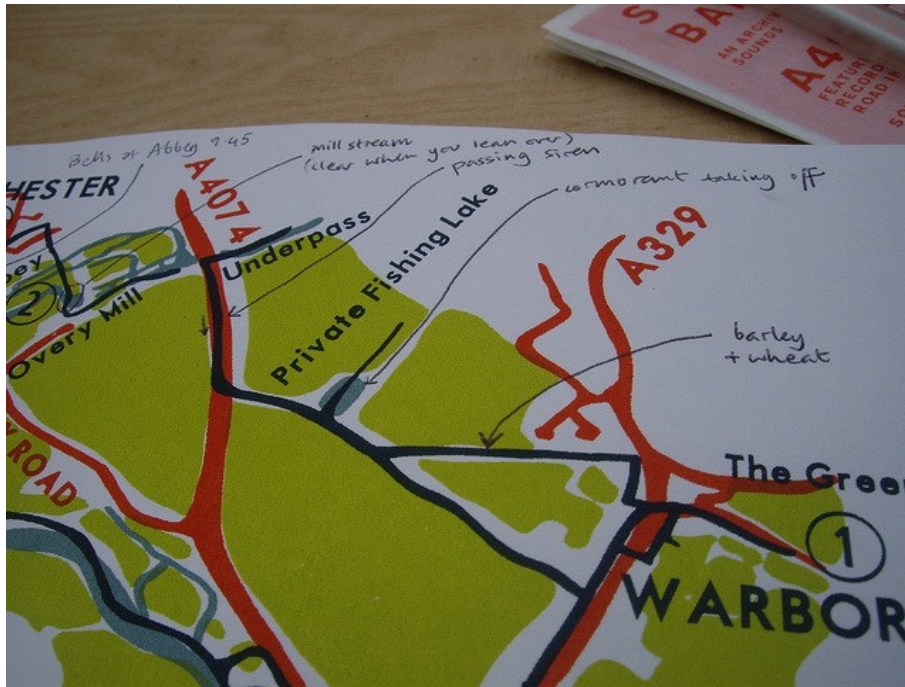


Figure 28. Soundwalk Stationery developed for World Listening Day event, July 18th, Warborough, Felicity Ford, 2010

SOUNDWALK was a difficult project; I had identified a route which encircled Warborough village, taking in what I considered to be some of the most interesting features of the A4074 road which I was making a documentary about (CDs 13 -14: Around the A4074 parts 1 and 2) during the Summer of 2010. The process by which I was exploring that road was the focus of a paper which I presented at Bournemouth University, (Appendix 2: Radio and Place – an Artist’s Perspective) and the whole project involved my having many discussions with local groups, individuals and organisations – both about their relationships with the road itself, and about any issues which my proposed interactions with the landscape around the road might raise. SOUNDWALK was due to coincide with World Listening Day – a date which I had nothing to do with organising – and which unfortunately coincided with the Warborough and Shillingford Festival, which was to be happening in the very place where my proposed route was intended to start and finish. After telephoning the organisers of the Warborough and Shillingford Festival to discuss the situation with them, we agreed there was some mutual benefit in my having a stall at the event on the previous day (July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010) wherein I could tell people about my proposed SOUNDWALK and also interview any visitors willing to share an opinion about their views on the A4074 road. We also agreed that the SOUNDWALK which I had proposed should begin very early indeed on a Sunday morning, in order not to clash with the programme of activities arranged as part of the festival. Turning up very early in the morning to this tiny township in Oxfordshire with my friend Liz as moral support and a local sound artist as the sole other participant, we set off on my route, with the vague

instruction that while we were walking, we would pay special attention to the sounds of the route so that we would be able to record our sounds on the map at the end of the walk.

As someone heavily invested in the soundscape around the A4074, I was in a privileged position when compared to my walking companions who did not know the environment, and who did not have the same incentive for caring about its sounds as I – in developing a radio show for BBC Oxford about it – did. Also, walking alone and listening is a much more natural activity than walking in a group and listening, because one does not have to (when alone) stifle the urges to socialise and talk which I discouraged in my presentation of how SOUNDWALK should unfold. The result of failing to organise any socialising to break up the concentrated listening along the way was that a strained, anti-social atmosphere pervaded SOUNDWALK. Too, at just under 5 miles long, the distance really prohibited focussed listening as one's ears and mind run out of energy for active listening quickly when faced with hours of traffic and wind sounds. The actual process of SOUNDWALK, then, was one of the less successful (or original) projects embarked upon throughout my research. The only redeeming features of the event were that we all enjoyed filling out the stationery I had produced – which sparked a lively and enthusiastic conversation about the sounds of swans; the different sounds produced by wind in a field of barley as opposed to wind in a field of wheat; the differences between the Parish church bells in Dorchester and Warborough; and the wearying nature of the sound of traffic in close proximity to the self.

In evaluating SOUNDWALK as an exercise, I have come to view the negotiations I had with the local community regarding the project and the stationery that remains (a copy of which is included with this submission) as the most enduring and positive outcomes of the endeavour. Explaining the premise of SOUNDWALK to visitors at the Festival, and filling in the stationery at the end of our sombre trudge around Oxfordshire linked the sounds of the environment to concepts, ideas and language. These discussions invited creativity and play; offered frameworks for drawing attention to the sounds heard in everyday life; and gave me a way of presenting sound art to audiences in the context of a rural village festival.

In terms of the research question posed at the start of this Chapter, I hope to have demonstrated how works I have made throughout my research represent innovative approaches to exploring one's own immediate soundscape in acts of "autoethnography," and that I have uncovered new frameworks for presenting such studies to audiences. To recap, some of the innovative approaches to exploring the immediate soundscape in a kind of sonic anthropology have included:

- bringing interviews with visual artists like Hilary Kneale and Lise Lefebvre concerning the value of everyday rituals like peeling potatoes and everyday devices such as food processors to sound art contexts, to contextualise works heard (interview with Hilary Kneale, CD 9: HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape)
- developing approaches to working with sounds which address the native sonic practices of the home - the creation of mixtapes; the use of radio - and which use such practices as sites for artistic intervention (The FRRS in assn. w. MA; work about Mixtapes including Memoryphones and associated blog posts)
- developing a new radio format which challenges both the traditions of chatty, popular radio shows and the widespread earnest/seriousness of sound art radio (The FRRS in assn. w. MA)
- devising printed materials and performative approaches which further discussions regarding the immediate soundscapes both in the home and in one's locale (Magic Hour; SOUNDBANK; SOUNDWALK Stationery)
- finding ways of engaging an audience of blog readers in a discussion about everyday sounds (SOUNDBANK Sonic Advent Calendar)
- using language - hypertext; printed media; radio-scripting; interviews; essays; stationery; and instigated conversations - as formats for inducing dialogue about everyday sounds
- creating radio formats such as Adventures in Washing Up which combine language, sound and sociability to instigate appreciation for, and discussion of, that everyday task (The FRRS in assn. w. MA)
- treating radio shows, podcasts and the extended context of r@dio (Cordeiro, 2010) as a shared social space for exploring the domestic sounds we have in common rather than as tools for rearranging the domestic soundscape so that we do not have to hear them

The frameworks which I have developed for conducting and presenting everyday sounds to audiences in a kind of ethnographic mode all share an element of sociability. An emphasis on participation, engagement and dialogue is evident throughout all of the projects discussed in this Chapter; as is a kind of implicit ethos of scholarship or investigation. The stationery of SOUNDBANK is about everyday sounds, but in its inky, papery, glassine-envelope materiality it also references documents and documentations; record-making and note-taking. The FRRS in assn. w. MA website was designed with notepaper as the underlying visual texture, too, and my blog, in which so many of these ideas have been presented to audiences, is inherently text-based and discursive.

All of which suggest new modes for exploring the soundscape – the domestic soundscape and beyond – which are exploratory and based as much on language, reference and concepts, as they are on an appreciation for everyday sounds. Although the collaboration with Mundane Appreciation was at times difficult, the battle over content for the show was an extremely rich and worthwhile one to have, because it meant that together we created a work which truly contests the idea of presenting sounds to audiences without explanations. Sounds

are contextualised, explained, elevated and explored in that show as part of an overall strategy for celebrating everyday reality.

The sociability of the projects which I have instigated or been involved with in an “autoethnographic” (Norman, 1996) sense has necessitated the development of dialogues – often held outside of the established precincts of sound art – with new audiences. Other craft bloggers who follow [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress) because of a principal interest in what I am knitting have continually expressed a growing appreciation for small, everyday sounds in their lives as a consequence of the posts I write about my sound art work, whilst the discussions I had with the organisers of the Warborough and Shillingford Festival regarding my proposed SOUNDWALK involved presenting new ways of thinking about sounds at the traditionally non art context of that festival.

My principal sites of activity while exploring this second research question have been my home, social media on the Internet, my local environment and the footpaths and villages which lie around my commute along the A4074 road. I have been exploring these environments as sites not only of sonic interest, but also of human interest. I have been publicising my explorations of these contexts largely through mediums which will allow my projects and ideas to be received in correspondingly private, domestic environments such as on people’s home computers or through the medium of local radio waves.

One downside to presenting art in these traditionally non-art contexts is that it is not always possible to identify the borders between everyday activities and artmaking. Where does writing a blog post about the sound of the supermarket in the run up to Christmas begin or cease to be an art project, for instance? I am not certain I can answer that question conclusively. However I hope that what my research has shown, is that in exploring these domestic settings as locations for presenting artwork to audiences, I have radically expanded the territory which we ordinarily associate with sound art, and that I have introduced some new approaches to working with everyday sounds which are inherently sociable, scholarly and playful, and which give us new blueprints for using sound to “conduct our own ethnography” (Perec, 1989) and which provide practical examples as to how we might – as Cage inferred in his essay, *Music Lover’s Field Companion* – exercise our creative agency outside of the designated cultural precincts of art. If the cost of exercising creative agency outside of those precincts is public recognition that one is “doing art,” then the life-affirming benefit whereby queuing in the supermarket, driving one’s commute, cooking in one’s kitchen etc. all get framed in ways which make them feel valuable – then maybe it is a price that is worth paying.

Chapter 3: How can the established contexts of sound art or music – the concert, the composition, the score – be used to explore, redeem and enrich everyday reality? How might they be expanded?



Figure 29. The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book Launch at the launch of SoundFjord, Summer 2010

Baker had taken a domestic object, and one that expressed women's skill, as well as their ambivalent relationships to their own eating and bodies, and to the task of feeding their families... Baker's aestheticisation of her baseball boot cake was not simply poking fun at the Anthony Caros of the world (though it certainly was that: "I just laughed with delight at the sheer irreverence"). Nor was it simply an attempt to elevate women's domestic trivia to the status of art... (though it certainly was this too: "this decision to name such a pathetic, poorly crafted object A Work of Art of Great Significance"). More complex is how to think about the way in which our perception of an object changes when it is placed in an artistic context.

Michèle Barrett, Bobby Baker, *Redeeming Features of Daily Life*, 2007

Housework and home creativity are both processes of the constitution of self that involve embodied performative actions, material objects and sensory experience... My informants' descriptions of the housewife also situated her in relation to her material home quite differently from the feminist approaches that would have her imprisoned and lonely in the labyrinth of masculine architectural structures. Instead they emphasised her expert and privileged knowledge and the power this endowed her with.

Sarah Pink, *Home Truths, Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life*, 2004

-what is the relationship between maintenance and life's dreams [?]

Mierle Laderman-Ukeles, **M A N I F E S T O FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!** Proposal for an exhibition "CARE", 1969

### 3.1 The relationship between the domestic soundscape and The Concert

As I discussed at the beginning of the previous Chapter, domestic sounds became an important focus for me when I realised that they had a kind of abject quality, and when I realised that they had not been linked explicitly to agendas concerned with documenting and representing ordinary life in art contexts. In the realm of sound art, one such art context to consider is the concert, as this has traditionally been the situation in which audiences attend artworks which need to be listened to in order to be received – in spite of the many alternative listening contexts which exist.

I perceived that exploring domestic sounds in different ways would provide me with an exciting array of concerns and materials to work with. But I also felt there was a political subtext inhabiting my decision to delineate and highlight the domestic soundscape as a specific site of study; an impulse akin to Bobby Baker's rejection, in the 1970s, of the massive, abstract, metal forms that were being produced by her male contemporaries (Barrett, p4);

In those days St Martins was dominated by Anthony Caro and the “British School” of sculpture – they created huge works in heavy materials such as iron, often in the form of large industrial flats and girders. Caro was an influential figure at St Martin's in Baker's time there. Baker felt it was “inconceivable” that complex and difficult ideas could be expressed in these massive art forms.

The impenetrable, massive, anti-semantic nature of abstract expressionism inspired Baker to take up the more subtle, gendered and difficult medium of food (Baker, B., cited in Barrett, M., p.5) – “a “language”, a “material”, a “form”,” – in order to express her more complex ideas. Too, in developing her own creative vocabulary of tools and materials, Baker revised not what she would work with, but where she would place her works. Kitchen Show, as Bobby Baker declares, “only takes place in working kitchens,” (Baker, p.53) suggesting not only a rejection of abstract metal forms on Baker's part, but also a rejection of the formal art contexts sites where such works were typically shown. Baker has presented work in her local Church; in her own home; in community centres and in other contexts not traditionally associated with live performance art, because she felt these sites were more fitting environments in which to contextualise her performances. Baker's choices regarding the materials and venues with which she works can be seen as a “riposte” (Baker, p.38) to the established artistic trends of the time, and in reading Bobby Baker, Redeeming Features of Daily Life, I was especially intrigued by the correlations between Baker's perception of her contemporaries and my own experiences within the contexts of sound art;

[I made] the decision that... I would always adopt more neutral garb, in the form of a woman's overall... I liked the fact that it was neutral and yet deeply complex in the ways in which it could be read. Also it was my conscious female riposte to Joseph Beuys's macho fishing waistcoat and hat. I wore my shoddy, humble female work outfit with equal pride.

Like Baker – who moved both the materials and the site of performance away from the established grounds – I have been interested in exploring where listening takes place, and whether or not the concert is the most appropriate situation in which to present works which deal with the domestic soundscape and everyday sounds. Too, I have been extremely interested in understanding how the many other situations in which human beings listen may be utilised by the sound artist who wishes to transmit their ideas to audiences.

In a sound art context, the decision to work with domestic sounds (and to make that context explicit through language or other means) is not dissimilar to Bobby Baker's decision to work with cake, and my desire to work with recognisable sounds and with explicit meanings is largely motivated by the frustration I feel when faced with the wall of indecipherable music exemplified by experiences such as the one I had during Safe's recital at the For Those Who Have Ears concert, (2004, Cork) which could be described as "intended to be devoid of semiotic attachments to identifiable referents" (Kim-Cohen, p.125).

So as well as my interest in the documentary powers of domestic sounds and their ability to describe interior spaces and give visibility to the unacknowledged rituals of our domestic lives, I also have an interest in the extended text surrounding the idea of the domestic soundscape as a concept, and in forming an artistic approach which acts as a riposte or a challenge to existing trends.

Throughout my research I have intentionally inhabited a rather liminal position somewhere between art and music which has made my content-driven approach difficult to situate at sound art events primarily concerned with how sounds sound rather than what sounds mean. Presenting my research in contexts such as at the 2008 Brighton EXPO, OCM's Magic Hour and Sound and Music's 2009 Cut and Splice Living Rooms festival, provided opportunities for me to test my own approaches to organising sounds in relation to the other approaches taken by artists working in those contexts, and to place my activities in relation to the broader discourses of sound art.

At all the events cited above, I experienced myself as a maverick outsider, and my work as a subversive entity – like Bobby Baker's "riposte" – largely antithetical in its use of sounds to



other works by other artists on display. The live/performative aspects of the FRRS in assn. w. MA such as our interactive stalls at the Brighton EXPO in 2008 sat uneasily beside the other works on show there, and the disparity between the sonic texture of our project vs. the sonic textures evidenced by other artists in the show is very apparent in the show which we intentionally recorded at EXPO 2009 (CD 4: FRRS in assn. w. MA 3: EXPO SPECIAL). The background layers of sounds from other works on display can be heard, introducing a sonic strangeness or unfamiliarity which is not present in any of the other FRRS in assn. w. MA radio shows. It was important to me, Bell and Figueiredo, that one major experience which should be available to the audience for the FRRS in assn. w. MA radio should be the experience of becoming part of the radio show. We intended to actively engage an audience in dialogue with us – to build the show from their sounds and input as much as possible – so that the sound art which we were making suggested numerous possibilities for sonic interaction, beyond listening. This meant that on the opening night of the EXPO launch, we had set up a stall and were ready to receive the public with our questionnaires, surveys and rubber stamps. While we discussed many aspects of the everyday with visitors and had them impersonate various household appliances for us vocally, or talk to us about their relationship to everyday sounds, Hugh Metcalfe – performing under his Fuck off Batman - guise – filled the air with discordant guitar strumming and loud profanities. Myself, Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo were meanwhile dressed in our FRRS in assn. w. MA aprons, and were acting as roving reporters at this event, distributing postcards and leaflets amidst visitors, discussing our show with that audience, and inviting the gathered crowd to contribute to the FRRS in assn. w. MA in some way. Making my way through the crowd to announce the winner of the Perfect Cup of Tea mug prize-draw over the PA between Halal Kebab Hut and Brown Sierra created a curious disjuncture between the discrete sound worlds created by those performers and the non-art sonic world of social clubs or church bazaars referenced by the tone and nature of my announcement that Ian was the winner of the Perfect Cup of Tea perfect tea mug (CD 4: FRRS in assn. w. MA 3: EXPO SPECIAL).

8.30 – 8.50	Jay Hammond & Fern Edwards
9.10 – 9.30	Babygrand
9.50 – 10.10	London Concrete
10.30 – 10.50	Halal Kebab Hut
11.10 – 11.30	Brown Sierra
11.50 – 12.20	Fuck Off Batman

Figure 30. Official line up of artists performing in the launch event for The FRRS in assn. w. MA, SAN Brighton EXPO, 2008

Where the FRRS in assn. w. MA was participatory, dialogue-based, and interactive, the adjoining concert (Fig. 30) involved very different modes of receiving and transmitting sounds. Where we were inviting dialogue about and contextualising sounds within the framework of a participatory radio project, the other artists presenting sounds to audiences on the night proscribed listening from the audience. Their sounds were presented very clearly within the framework of the concert which did not allow for direct discussions about the work between performers and audience and which did not provide an explanation for the rationale behind the sounds being played or presented. I hope that I have shown in Chapter 2 of this Thesis that for us to have presented a staged performance of everyday sounds at the concert would have been intrinsically at odds with the imaginative experiences we intended to effect in creating The FRRS in assn. w. MA. Our decision was that – in order to create a social space for sharing the domestic sounds we have in common – it was necessary for us to create an interactive presentational format for live events. Our creative concerns dictated that we were amidst and talking to our audience at EXPO 2009 and on the radio or the Internet in their homes, rather than positioned on a stage, disseminating field recordings from everyday environments.

Presenting everyday sounds to audiences via the format of the concert poses very specific problems in terms of how listeners are engaged with ideas and sounds. When Sound and Music asked me in 2009 to create a series of podcasts to contextualise the Living Rooms programme with some of my ideas concerning The Domestic Soundscape, I attended the concert at which the Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society were performing, because I was fascinated to see how they would frame or treat the everyday sounds of domestic appliances presented so sparsely on the project's website, in the situation of the concert. Established in by Benedict Drew in 2007 “with the express purpose of pursuing a non-exotic approach to field recording,” (Drew, 2009) DAARS in its online form presents a sparse selection of domestic field recordings, supplied by various artists such as Lee Patterson and Helena Gough. The website presents a listening experience whereby you can hear different fridges, heaters, light switches and electricity meters; but it also suggests the exciting, practical possibility of labelling, archiving or inventorying all the appliances in one's own house, in a sort of sonic equivalent of Rosler's labelling activity in *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975). Encountering the sounds on the DAARS website is not only both a conceptual and sonic experience; it is also a self-directed one, wherein a viewer/listener can direct their experience according to personal desires, whims and curiosities. Also, if one is at home whilst exploring the DAARS website, a curious relationship is set up between representation and reality; in a perceptual transformation like that described in *Little Scratchy Joy*, (Fig. 14) a pleasing and celebratory confusion is created about where the art object or the art

experience is actually located. If one is listening to a coffee machine via the DAARS website as a cultural exercise, or as an engagement with “non exotic phonography” and one’s own coffee pot is boiling away on the stove, in listening to which of the two sounds is sound art experienced? Once the burbling sounds of the coffee pot have been foregrounded and celebrated through this listening experience, how are subsequent instances of its boiling then perceived?

However in contemplating the sites of listening, it was my experience that in transporting the DAARS project to the listening context of the concert, many of the pleasing listening/thinking experiences discoverable while browsing the DAARS website privately from home became far less accessible. The sounds themselves lost their resemblance to reality, as they were presented in a layered mix on a stage crowded with people and domestic appliances. Droning and building in this busy context, as a low-level, white-noise sonic backdrop, the domestic sounds included in the performance were somewhat drowned out beneath a theatrical speech which simultaneously spoofed the idea that this performance was the DAARS AGM, and delivered information about the history of domestic appliances. Additionally, a vast overhead projection featuring a visual presentation further complicated the presentation of actual domestic sounds so that as a listener in the audience, I felt myself to be in an uncomfortably passive situation, overwhelmed by this multimedia presentation.

I believe that the conventions surrounding the concert limited the possibilities for the way the DAARS performance could have been staged. In my perception, the expectations that there should be a climactic build in the sounds and that the arrangement of sounds should seem to follow some kind of choreographed logic betrayed a kind of insecurity regarding the value of the plain old source sounds themselves and their inherent interestingness. But perhaps the difficulty is that – like Bobby Baker’s works, sounds as conceptual content or material have “to find their appropriate site,” (Baker, 2007) which – in the case of my experience of DAARS was not necessarily the concert.

When I interviewed Peter Strickland and Colin Fletcher about their ongoing electroacoustic project with food – Sonic Catering Band – for my DIY publication *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book*, (included in this submission) Strickland said that in the beginning, they didn’t really believe in their source material;

In the early days, Sonic Catering were not entirely convinced of the interest that could be provided by the unprocessed sounds of cooking, and they used many processing contrivances to jazz them up. But as Strickland asks, “where is the point

where you are just hiding behind effects rather than showcasing your original sounds?”

In the same interview, (The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book, pp.16-9) Fletcher said that there is “there is only so far you can go if what you are doing is just recording the sound of something boiling,” but in my research, I have discovered this is only true if we consider the concert to be the principal destination for disseminating sound art which features unprocessed recordings from everyday reality, and if we consider the main type of listener in such an environment to be a passive, aural spectator.

In The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series (CDs 8 – 11) which I created to accompany the Sound and Music Living Rooms Cut and Splice Festival in 2009, the creative brief was for me to attempt to situate the works shown in that festival via a series of informative podcasts. The resultant series contains interviews with artists, examples of other artists’ work, and interviews or excerpts with other kinds of practitioners whose ideas I felt were relevant to an imaginative contemplation of the whole creative context of the domestic soundscape as a source in relation to artmaking. Additionally the podcasts also feature many examples of sound-recording or perceptual experiments which I conducted in my exploration of the domestic soundscape as a creative context. In HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape, (CD 9: HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape) I discuss DAARS amidst recordings from my own domestic environment. Taken from the script for this show, sounds are shown in bold;

#### toothbrushing sounds

For most people, the sound of brushing your teeth will be one of the sonic events that takes place in the morning. My routine involves also the kettle going on, the toilet flushing, a big pot of tea being made and my laptop booting up. The sonic life of appliances and the daily routine are inexorably bound together in one’s domestic soundscape.

#### kettle boiling, toilet flushing, tea-making sounds, laptop engine

A project that looks at everyday appliance sounds is the Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society. This society was formed in 2007 with the express purpose of pursuing a non-exotic approach to field recording. The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society collects and re-presents those sounds that occur in the course of our ordinary lives, and gives them back to us via a well-designed and carefully edited web-presence, maintained both on myspace and on Benedict Drew’s website.

#### DAARS sounds

If you visit the online homes of the Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society, you will find recordings of toasters, electricity meters, fridges, kitchen lights and more toothbrushes, and so on... A deadpan and refreshingly pared-down approach

characterises the websites of The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society. Clear in purpose, self-explanatory and uncluttered, the collected audio samples are presented so you can contemplate the sounds of appliances without distractions, and give your full attention to commonplace sounds that are rarely heard for their own sake, like this heater:

heater

In this sort of context, it is possible to appreciate the sonic qualities of things that we habitually use, and typically ignore. Good quality recordings are like putting a microscope to sound, and once you have heard something in detail, your ear knows and remembers that sound. And you can't unhear something once the audible memory of it is inscribed in your mind. Recording and listening to the sounds of everyday appliances changes the way that we hear them in the normal course of life...

Intended to be listened to at home via a computer or a media-player, the podcast series is specifically designed for private, domestic consumption, and no attempt to translate it to the concert environment should ever be made because it was always intended – like the FRRS in assn. w. MA – to be heard at home. The home is not the retreat from sound art in the instance of The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series (CDs 8 – 11); it is not, as LaBelle has suggested, “a counter-balance to the dynamics of exposure,” (LaBelle, p.48). Instead, the home here is treated as the site of both the production and consumption of sound art; a site for the dynamics of exposure, i.e. the place in which audiences are exposed to culture, sound art, making, and the place where creative correspondence between artist and audience can occur. The domestic soundscape in the podcast series (CDs 8 – 11) is a continuum or reality with which the The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice podcast series is intended to intersect, and the borders between life and art are intentionally blurred.

In scripting the podcast series for the Sound and Music Living Rooms Cut and Splice Festival, I used recognisable sounds which might conceivably be similar to the sounds my listeners might be hearing in whatever listening environments they were in. Rather than offering straight reportage on the events and acts to be featured in the Sound and Music Living Rooms Cut and Splice Festival, I wanted to bring the artworks in question closer to the sounds of the home; to create moments of recognition; to invite slippages between reality and representation. To do that, I needed to speak to an audience from the context of my own domestic environment, with its inherent sounds, and for my transmissions to be experienced in homes, too.

When Bobby Baker created Kitchen Show and presented it in her own house she literally took the art performance home. Hers was not a subsidiary activity to public art, but a challenge to, and an expansion of, the limits of that territory. Similarly, I perceived The

Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series as an act of bringing the sound art home; an act of deliberately reinventing the concert and expanding the concept of that territory to include the home as a designated site for the consumption of sound art rather than a retreat from it.



Figure 31. Sonic Tuck Shop idea #1, crackle bag, screen-printed for The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist book, Felicity Ford, 2010

This relocation of the sound art from the concert hall to the environments of the listener is most explicit realised in the context of Have a Concert in your Mouth - Sonic Tuck Shop Idea # (Fig. 31) in which the concert is radically relocated to one of the most intimate, resonant spaces available to a listener – their own mouth. Hand printed onto a paper bag which contains popping mouth candy, this directive expands the concept of the concert away from its entrenched conventions and towards radical new ways of disseminating listening experiences to audiences.

The entire object – the paper bag, the popping mouth candy inside, and the screen-printed design – has been designed to set up an encounter with sound where the private act of eating sweets might be conceptualised as a concert. Contesting the division between the idea that the concert is a public event and the home is a private retreat, Sonic Tuck Shop Idea #1 not only acknowledges the body and the home of the listener, but seeks to be experienced and heard there.

## 3.2 The relationship between the domestic soundscape and The Composition

During my research I undertook the electroacoustic composition undergraduate class at Oxford Brookes in order to be able to position my own work with sounds in relation to that of other practitioners loosely working in the same field as me; i.e. working with ambient sounds recorded in everyday life. One day – as an assignment - we were directed to a list of effects plug-ins which we were to use, and given a sound-recording which we were to subject to the effects of those plug-ins. The essence of our assignment was that we were to modify the sound-recording by applying different effects to it, and to end up, through this process, producing a composition. The nature of this exercise raised some difficult questions for me:

1. Why was the provenance of the recording we were to use of such little significance that we were all arbitrarily assigned the same file to work with?
2. Why would no explanation regarding the meaning of any transformations we subjected our sound recording to be required?
3. What exactly was meant by “composition?” and in what terms would such an entity be judged to be either a success or a failure, given that neither the source file nor the plug-ins applied to it appeared to be of any consequence?

I could not understand why it was necessary to process the sound recording we had been given and – in the context of my practice - I perceived that treating a sound recording as pure acoustical data and ignoring its links to context or meaning was fundamentally adversative to the notion of linking Cage’s ideas with feminism or socially engaged sonic practices.

All of the projects I have discussed so far in this Thesis represent part of a generalised endeavour to find figurative ways of connecting sounds explicitly to ideas, concepts, narratives and ways of experiencing or interpreting the world. Is it possible for this connection to be maintained when sonic documents of lived reality – such as a sound recording – can be arbitrarily transformed for no other purpose than one’s personal preference for the resultant sound?

The implication that we should manipulate sound for sound’s sake, and the implied disregard for original source sounds reminded me of my initial search for recordings of everyday

sounds during the creation of *Domestica* and finding countless examples of altered domestic sound recordings which had been inexplicably processed in some way. For example the contributor going under the online moniker of *Domestic Hiss* (2007) recorded sounds from around the house and then “processed these sounds and added additional effects to make something a bit more listenable.” What that processing was, or how it was believed to improve the interestingness of the resultant sounds involved was not explained.

There are degrees of electronic processing which must be discussed in the context of Electroacoustic Composition. Jonty Harrison *Klang* (1982) and Magali Babin’s *Chemin de Fer*, (Babin, 2002) which I referred to in the introduction to this Thesis are works which – while radically extending the sonic potentials of domestic implements through recording processes, amplification and digital manipulation - (the earthenware casserole; the saucepans and the whisks) - do not ever allow the identity of their sound sources to be entirely erased. In some ways, expanding the sonic potentials of a saucepan or an earthenware casserole via creative, sonic experimentation bears a resemblance to Martha Rosler’s expansion on the function of similar items when she alphabetically inserts them into her artwork, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975). The residual impression of the resonant qualities of a casserole which one is left with after listening to *Klang* might change the way that the ordinary usage of that implement is experienced, or open one up to the possibility that making a stew is a process which contains musical sounds, exposed or amplified through the exploratory mechanisms of Harrison’s compositional process. Too, the front cover on Magali Babin’s *Chemin de Fer* featuring that artist peeking mischievously over the top of an enormous catering saucepan suggests a liberating revision of traditional depictions of women holding saucepans. The relationship between sounds and veracity is a fundamental concern of the Sonic Catering Band, too, as documented in the featured article on their work which I included in *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book*;

Sonic Catering are agreed that contrived processing happens only after their recipes have been recorded and never before. “Our aesthetic was very much “we’re not going to bang a pan specifically to make the sound of it; we’ll cook the dish and whatever sounds come from actually really cooking the dish, are the sounds that we’ll use.”

The menus produced by the Sonic Catering Band to accompany their releases, the notes which accompany *Klang* by Jonty Harrison and the illustrations and photographs of kitchen implements on the CD cover of Babin’s *Chemin de Fer* all suggest that the source sounds used to develop their works are of importance to these artists, and that their electroacoustic works can be read as a means of extending our imaginative relationship with the everyday objects and processes which we encounter in domestic space.



However, the remark made by “Domestic Hiss” declaring that processing and effects would automatically make banal recordings made in domestic space “more interesting” nonetheless speaks volumes about how such sounds - and by extension the contexts in which we hear such sounds – are regarded. To me the act of processing such sounds implies that they – and the contexts they evidence – are just not interesting or good.

Processing ambient recordings without reference to either the source of those sounds or without considering any of the potential meanings which may be ascribed to acts of processing is a tradition which has grown out of musique concrète and the ideas of Pierre Schaeffer. Seth Kim-Cohen describes Schaeffer’s influence, (2009, p.9);

Schaeffer pioneered the approach of musique concrète, a music of concrete sounds in the sense both of sounds of the world and of sounds as concrete, discrete parcels of material. Schaeffer referred to this discrete unit of sound as the “objet sonore,” the sonic object. Such a sound is not treated as a note with a pitch value... the objet sonore is to be accepted for its sonic, acoustic properties; for its texture, its grain...

Schaeffer pioneered the idea that the sonic object is to be listened to for its inherent, formal qualities; for its abstract, absolute properties. Most importantly, the sonic object is to be contemplated apart from its source – to be heard “acousmatically,” (Schaeffer, P., cited in Wikipedia);

Acousmatic, adjective: referring to a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it

A loyal adherent to acousmatic, compositional approaches – Francisco López – described by Kim Seth-Cohen as “an outspoken proponent of fundamentalist Schaefferianism” (2010, p.123) employs a language of purity and aspiration when describing his compositional intentions (López, 1998);

I believe in the possibility of a profound, pure, “blind” listening of sounds, freed (as much as possible) of procedural, contextual or intentional levels of reference. What is more important, I conceive this as an ideal form of transcendental listening that doesn’t deny all what is outside the sounds but explores and affirms all what is inside them. This purist, absolute conception is an attempt at fighting against the dissipation of this inner world.

There is a correlation between the desire for transcendence in the visual art idea of a “pristine white gallery,” (Becker, 1996) and the desire for escape from the real world that is evidenced in the Schaefferian tendency towards pure, phenomenological sound. Seth Kim-Cohen critiques López’s stance, asserting (p.129) that;

What López calls “the mud of contemplation” is the necessary process of encounter as it functions in and as a complex series of symbolic grids. It may be muddy, but the residue it leaves behind is meaning.

In my own work – particularly *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series*, (CDs 8 – 11) the works of various electroacoustic practitioners are discussed and explored in relation to the domestic soundscape so that the connection between sound art and the politics of domestic space are always explicitly delineated. I want to keep the relationship between the residual “mud” of meaning and sound art. In *The Difficult Domestic*, (CD 8: *THE DIFFICULT DOMESTIC*) episode of this series, for instance, Erik Belgum’s *Bad Marriage Mantra* (1997) is discussed in direct relation to Bobby Baker’s performances *Kitchen Show* (1991) and *Drawing on a Mother’s experience* (2000.) Belgum’s work uses two actors – Rebecca Lynn Myers and Jay Scheib – to recreate the structure of a “spectacular verbal fight” heard by Belgum and his wife through the wall one night in a Toronto hotel. In the work, a male and a female voice are heard repeatedly insulting each other in a “stylized realisation of a different fight with the same deep structure” (Belgum, 1997). This work was showcased at the *Living Rooms Cut and Splice* festival, organised by Sound and Music, and – in order to fulfil my commission – it was necessary for me to contextualise it in relation to my research into the domestic soundscape. In order to explore my research questions, it was important that this release by Belgum be discussed not only in relation to the idea of finding musical structures in everyday reality, but also in relation to some of the difficult politics of the home. It would be possible to discuss Belgum’s work in purely musical terms; to talk about the resemblance between a verbal fight between a man and a woman and the use of “sparsely chosen materials” and “varied repetitions” in “musical and literary traditions,” (Belgum, 1997) but I wanted to additionally connect this work to non-musical aspects of domestic reality such as illness and fighting and not to strip it of its connections to the darker social aspects of domestic life;

On first listening, *bad marriage mantra* is shockingly profane. The endless repetition of accusatory phrases and verbal violence is incredibly disturbing to listen to. But perhaps more disturbing is the familiarity of its circular rhythms and the fact that the structure of this argument is not totally alien to us. Like the prospect of illness that we’d rather forget in *Coughing piece* or the embarrassing realities of the body alluded to by Bobby Baker, *Bad Marriage Mantra* takes a dark aspect of domestic life and gives it back to us in a way that we can hear it outside of the personally dangerous context of an actual argument.

To discuss Belgum’s work in relation to these other aspects of domestic reality was to point to the links between sound and meaning; an idea directly opposed to the idea of working purely with the acoustic properties of sounds.

In exploring my research questions, it has become apparent that Schaefferian compositional approaches are directly opposed to my own creative intentions and that – furthermore – my own approaches to working with recorded sounds must necessarily work as an active protest against those principles. To extend the legacies of feminism and John Cage explored in Chapter 1 within my sound art practice is to link materials, sounds and contexts with social meanings and imaginative procedures. In working to preserve the connections between everyday sounds and the politics of the world which those sounds evidence, it is antithetical to inexplicably alter the formal quality of those sounds. What would such alterations mean? Too, the practices of autoethnography and aural anthropology explored in Chapter 2 are principally connected with the function of the sound recording as a document of lived experience. Although their documentary nature means that sound recordings may never be mistaken for reality itself, the number of filters or processes through which such recordings are passed considerably distances them from the original circumstances which they evidence, and lessens the possibilities that reality and representation might collide affirmatively. To explore the research question posed at the start of this Chapter, it is necessary to state here that the relationship between my research and fundamentalist Schaefferian compositional approaches such as those taken by Francisco Lopez and Safe must necessarily be oppositional.

This realisation grew through my development of The Sonic Tuck Shop group of projects, commencing with the work which I created in response to the assignment outlined at the start of this section in this Chapter. Through my participation in the electroacoustic undergraduate classes, I created Taste Sensations; a work which I then submitted to Keele University for consideration in the conference programme for the ICMSN 2009 with the following note (personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2008);

Taste Sensations explores the idea of similitude and context in sound. Built entirely from unprocessed recordings of a family firework display, a morning's walk beside a river and a range of different culinary activities, the piece has been created through the repetition and layering of sounds which – while having disparate sources - share similar aural qualities... The origins of the sounds employed in developing Taste Sensations have deliberately been preserved in the piece because the imaginative associations conjured by the listener's knowledge of the sounds are as important in shaping their experience of the piece as the formal qualities of the sounds themselves.

This is a piece for your ears and mouth.

According to Schaefferian definitions, Taste Sensations stretches the limit of what might be termed “electroacoustic” by not only revealing the sources of the sounds involved in the creation of the work, but by also asserting that knowledge of these sources is fundamental to

the work's reception. I realised through this process that my research concerns dictated strong, ideological reasons for not arbitrarily stripping the recognisability from my recordings through electronic processing, because this would involve weakening its relationship to the real world that it evidences; the real world that I am interested in engaging with and celebrating. The title of the work is a reference to Bobby Baker's words in *Kitchen Show* (1991);

I like to have little tastes, all of the time, of as many different things as possible, it keeps me stimulated I think. I call them "Taste Sensations". I think, "Oh, I must have a Taste Sensations of that cake mixture" – or "that biscuit" - or "that bit of butter".

The sounds I used – some friends' young boys throwing stones into a river; some fireworks set off by my partner, Mark during a DIY firework display; a bottle of Prosecco popping open when we celebrated Mark's MBA results; the mouth candy we enjoyed during *Reading: An Open Gallery*, some sonic experiences, (Appendix 1, 03. *Reading: An Open Gallery*) – were my sonic equivalents of Baker's Taste Sensations. They were sounds which I hoped would have imaginative associations for listeners, and I organised them according to the found structure of a conventional firework display. I had learned with *Memoryphones* and presenting *Joey's Noises from the SOUNDBANK* on my blog that knowing the sources of the sounds would make it easier for audiences to connect the work to their own experiences and I didn't want to remove their traces of familial fun and modest festivity.

*Taste Sensations* - which appears at the end of *DIFFICULT DOMESTIC* (CD 8: *DIFFICULT DOMESTIC*) and in the CD included in *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book* enclosed with this submission can be read as a practical exploration of the difficult questions which the assignment at the start of this section on electroacoustic composition raised for me. The provenance of the recordings was highlighted in *Taste Sensations* because the sounds I gathered were allowed to keep their resemblance to reality and because the supportive text which I supplied with my submission explicitly itemised the sources of those sounds. Too, the sounds were not organised arbitrarily; they were edited both in their timings and sequencing according to the familiar structures of a firework display.

In terms of whether or not I consider *Taste Sensations* to be successful as a composition, it must be viewed in relation to the research question posed at the start of this Chapter. I think that in its ability to explore, redeem or enrich everyday reality, *Taste Sensations* does not propose the same exciting, exploratory or radical enrichments of everyday reality or the revision of our encounters with sound proposed by other projects discussed elsewhere in this Thesis. It is a work in which the sounds of reality have been chopped up and pasted together

to resemble the sonic qualities of what has traditionally been called music, rather than a framework for recategorising everyday sounds as such – and this is a crucial distinction to make.

Perhaps the most successful aspect of Taste Sensations is the trajectory of thought which accompanied its composition and the ideas about the relationships between feminism, John Cage and Schaefferian approaches to sound which emerged through the practice of making it. Delving into the world of electroacoustic composition allowed me to position myself in relation to it.

Although Magali Babin, Jonty Harrison and The Sonic Catering Band have all found ways of working creatively with the materials of the kitchen in order to create new kinds of sound art, there is an undeniable drift in their works towards the established frameworks of music. The main means for encountering the works of these practitioners is in the concert or by purchasing CDs or records featuring recordings of their works. So it is with Taste Sensations. In considering the limitations of this work, I wondered how the composition might be reworked to operate outside of these designated frameworks; how I might redefine the composition using domestic practices and materials, and rewrite the composer/audience relationship, perhaps in the mode of Fluxus practitioners, but also in a contemporary, post-Cagean fashion, concurrent with the everyday practices of writing blog posts, publishing recipes, and revising knitting patterns.

That is why – after producing Taste Sensations – I declined to produce further compositions of this nature and went on, instead, to extend the ideas I had uncovered through creating Taste Sensations into what is now The Sonic Artist Tuck Shop Book – a kind of radically reworked instruction score which draws on the recipe book and the DIY zine as its chief inspirations.

### 3.3 The relationship between the domestic soundscape and The Score

Proposition #1

Make a salad  
1962

Alison Knowles

Figure 32. - Proposition #1, Alison Knowles, 1962

What is the elusive threshold of perception which separates following a recipe or a knitting pattern from realising a musical score? If one realises Alison Knowles's Proposition #1, (Fig. 32) will the outcomes be sonic, nutritive, artistic, or all of those things? Are all salads to be considered as realisations of this Fluxus score, or only the salads which are intentionally prepared using Knowles's sparse instruction? How would an audience witnessing the process of making a salad be aware that they were intended to perceive this event as a cultural experience, a happening? Does the work even need to be realised, or does encountering the score transform perceptions by suggesting that the ordinary culinary activity of making a salad can be categorised as artmaking?

In the "expanded sonic situation" (Kim-Cohen, 2009) described in Chapter 1 of this Thesis, John Cage conceptualises his walks in the forest as concerts, Mierle Laderman-Ukeles proposes to do her housework in the gallery as art and Yoko Ono recontextualises the experience of listening to a group of people snoring as an artwork. In this context, it is not difficult to imagine corresponding scenarios wherein the sounds of the forest are played in a traditionally musical space such as a concert hall, where housework is reframed as a cultural activity and where snoring is cultivated as a deliberate art-form. In the "expanded sonic situation" (Kim-Cohen, 2009) the definition of what constitutes a musical score is intentionally broadened, and the distinctions between normal reality and art become increasingly soluble.

This situation arguably has its origins in the Fluxus group which was established by George Maciunas in the 1960s, and which involved many of the students attending John Cage's hugely influential classes at The New School for Social Research (Kim-Cohen, 2009). In the event-scores produced by artists involved with Fluxus – as with Alison Knowles's Proposition #1 – there is a preoccupation with using the frameworks of music in order to change our perception of everyday events such as making a salad. Kim-Cohen observes that

this preoccupation is “evident... in the frequent use of the word “score” to indicate a set of instructions” (2009, p.169).

Works like George Brecht’s *Word Event, Fluxversion #1* wherein “the audience is instructed to leave the theater” (1961) or Ben Vautier’s *Nothing* wherein “Performers do nothing” (1962) can only be realised in the designated cultural precincts of music which they appear to intentionally subvert. Without the situation of the concert and its attendant apparatus of instruments and personnel to negotiate with, such event scores struggle for a context within which to communicate. The audience cannot be instructed to leave the theater if there is no theater, and the spectacle of performers doing nothing is arguably only meaningful when it frustrates an audience’s expectation that those performers were meant to do something. These event scores produced by artists involved in Fluxus historically broadened the scope of the musical score. Rather than being documents intended to purely detailing the organisation of sounds, event scores raised non-sonic, contextual questions about how experiences are categorised. The sound of the audience being instructed to leave the theater is not the point of Brecht’s score; nor is the sound of performers doing nothing the point of Vautier’s.

Many more event scores produced by members of Fluxus like Knowles’s *Proposition #1* (1962) or Yoko Ono’s *Laundry Piece* (1963) take the idea of the instruction score even further from the contexts of music, and operate instead as frameworks for “annexing everyday life into the realm of art” (Bryan-Wilson, 2007). In Yoko Ono’s *Laundry Piece*, (Fig. 3) the situation for the performance “in entertaining your guests” is implicitly domestic – as are the materials for the performance; one’s dirty laundry. Like the event scores which contravene the rituals of *The Concert*, Ono’s *Laundry Piece* is a playful riposte to the idea that dirty laundry is taboo and shouldn’t be aired in public, and a subversion of the rules governing domestic space.

In a contemporary context, the possibilities for the realisation of event scores have been broadened by the advent of the Internet and technologies such as blogging and social media which have made it possible for works to be simultaneously domestic and public. It would have been very much harder for an artist in 1963 to realise Yoko Ono’s *Laundry Piece* in its intended, domestic context, and to then make that realisation public than it is today, when a carefully constructed blog-post documenting private, intentional activities and exchanges might publicise that private happening to an online audience in minutes.

The use of instruction scores to framework private activities as public art was the impetus behind Miranda July and Harroll Fletcher's Learning to Love You More project, in which a public website disseminates assignments to be performed largely in domestic spaces. In the introduction to the book which July and Fletcher published to document this project, the artists state that "sometimes it is a relief to be told what to do," (2007, p.1) and that;

With this revelation in mind we founded the website Learning to Love You More (LTLYM) in 2002. Visitors to the website are invited to accept an assignment, complete it by following the instructions, and send in the required report (photograph, text, video, etc.). The report is then posted online by our collaborator, Yuri Ono.

Like Yoko Ono's Laundry Piece or Alison Knowles's Proposition #1, many of the assignments presented on the LTLYM website are both modest in scope, and grounded in everyday reality. I was especially interested in the affirmative potentials of the project. As Ono's Laundry Piece celebrates the narratives of our everyday clothes by frameworking them, so do many of the LTLYM assignments affirm or celebrate moments in everyday life, such as the following examples:

- 2. Make a neighbourhood field recording
- 10. Make a flier of your day
- 58. Record the sound that is keeping you awake

These examples are assignments which provoke a different encounter with everyday reality, as I can personally attest now that I have completed them. Dropping fliers through the doors of all my neighbours and then calling into them to record the sounds in their homes instigated a new kind of contact with the people who live on my street, whilst making a flier of my day made me construct narratives concerning that day which I might not otherwise have done. Finally, recording the sound which kept me awake at night and working out a way of presenting it in a gallery situation revised my relationship with that sound – a series of events which is described in ROOMS & CHAMBERS and The Domestic Soundscape (CD 10: ROOMS & CHAMBERS and The Domestic Soundscape). I completed these LTLYM assignments and presented my realisations of them within the context of Love is Awesome (2009, Gallery 10) as Love Assignments. The Love Assignments were gathered from disparate sources, including many which I had made up myself. Every Love Assignment – as shown in Chapter 1, in the discussion of Memoryphones – (Fig. 13) was assigned its own folder and its own worksheet, and thus titled to underscore the life-affirming potential of its undertaking. Here is a total list of the Love Assignments and their sources:



- Knit a walking stick cosy for The Missability Radio Show's knitted walking stick cosy collection – Felicity Ford, [www.missability.com](http://www.missability.com)
- Record sounds in words, notes or drawings – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)
- Honour the broken heart on Valentine's Day – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)
- Make an encouraging banner – LTLYM, [www.learningtoloveyoumore.com](http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com)
- Make a flier of your day – LTLYM, [www.learningtoloveyoumore.com](http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com)
- Create a site-specific work using the knitted speakers – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)
- Build a transistor radio – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)
- Find beauty in the city – Anna Francis, [www.thereisbeautyinthecity.blogspot.com](http://www.thereisbeautyinthecity.blogspot.com)
- Make a neighbourhood field recording - LTLYM, [www.learningtoloveyoumore.com](http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com)
- Record the sound that keeps you awake at night - LTLYM, [www.learningtoloveyoumore.com](http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com)
- Revisit and represent an old piece of work – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)
- Eat an apple while listening to a binaural recording of someone eating an apple. Write about this experience – Heston Blumenthal, <http://www.thefatduck.co.uk/About-The-Fat-Duck/>
- Remember a mixtape you loved – Felicity Ford, [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com)

One crucial difference between my Love Assignments, the Learning to Love You More project and the instruction scores of Fluxus, is that I connected the realisation of assignments explicitly to the personal narratives of my everyday life through the technology of the Internet. Many blog posts connecting the assignments to lived reality (Appendix 1, 01. Love Assignment #5: Build Memoryphones and Assignment) were written around the time of the Love is Awesome gallery show (where the assignments were presented). The Internet provided a platform for the realisation of Love Assignments to be contextualised within the story of my life. The Internet also acted as a public forum within which to stage intentionally meaningful actions and my blog also provided a context for me to convey a performative, online identity in the form of the maverick, musical baker discussed in Chapter 1 of this Thesis.

My use of the Internet – and particularly blogging software – has therefore provided an important platform for frameworking everyday experiences as artistic ones, and for describing or contextualising my engagement with the context of scores. The post I wrote on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, (Appendix 1, 03. Reading: An Open Gallery) reviews the discovery of exploding mouth candy in a local sweet shop as a sonic art experience curated in a sweet

shop and titled edible explosions (Fig. 31). Recordings created to document this experience were used in the composition Taste Sensations which has previously been discussed, and a physical, non-Internet-based means of transmitting this experience to an audience was devised in the formerly discussed work Sonic Tuck Shop Idea #1 – Have a Concert in Your Mouth (Fig. 31);

Although vaguely grotesque, this experience has an appealing quality rather like the design of its packet or the design of old-fashioned firework packets. Overly Bright, Overly Stimulating and Overly Crass, edible explosions will change the way you experience your own mouth, momentarily, and the resultant sounds will stay in your ears, fizzing pleasingly like alka-seltzer or excited whisperings, for a long time afterwards.

Figure 33. Edible Explosions, found sonic experience, sweet shop in Reading as part of the Reading: An Open Art Gallery experiment, Autumn 2008

The basis for recontextualising experiences in this way has largely come about through my contact with Fluxus instruction scores, but also through my contact with the works of Jennifer Walshe, Pauline Oliveros, and Alvin Lucier. To contextualise *The Sonic Tuck Shop* Artist Book I will now discuss;

- Pauline Oliveros – Open Field
- Yoko Ono – Kitchen Piece
- Alison Knowles – Proposition #1
- Alvin Lucier – I am sitting in a room
- Alvin Lucier – Gentle Fire
- Jennifer Walshe – Hostess in a Jiffy series (Marl Salad a la Familie)

I will demonstrate how crucial to the development of performances of *Gentle Fire* my experiments with musical scores have been, before moving onto a discussion of the concert performance of this piece which I presented at Sonic Art Oxford 2010. I will contrast this with another performance I offered at this same event – an early incarnation of *The Sonic Tuck Shop* project, which I later developed into the book of the same name, included with this submission.

I interviewed Jennifer Walshe for *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series* about a set of scores she had produced, which I had found particularly interesting (Fig. 31). In that interview – which can be heard in *THE DIFFICULT DOMESTIC (CD 8: THE DIFFICULT DOMESTIC)* – Walshe says;

I'm interested in speculative scores. You know, scores that you create that don't ever necessarily have to be performed [that] could just be like an idea. You don't need to [ever actually perform such scores] because reading the score [means that] you have an imaginative experience that happens inside your ears and internally in your mind. And I'm satisfied if that's all that it goes to.

This idea of imagined sounds or speculative scores is central to understanding how the composition in *Listening with Care* failed at the moment of audition and how I began to conceive of projects like *SOUNDBANK*, which rely on imaginative listening rather than on aural hearing. It is also central to the realisation of *Love Assignments*, and to understanding the aspect of scores which is not concerned with the production or arrangement of sound, but with the categorisation of experiences, and the intersections between the everyday world, everyday sounds, and imagination.

When I was studying for my MA in Sonic Art and Composition we were encouraged – as an exercise – to recall the first sound we remembered hearing that day. This was my first encounter with what Murray Schafer dubs “the Ear of the Imagination.”

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🕒 21 AERATED INFUSION-BROTH  
🕒 59 CHALK MASH WITH SILVER SAUCE  
🕒 67 FLOATY SOFT-BREAD  
🕒 345 MARL SALAD A LA FAMILIE

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Figure 34. Jennifer Walshe, Hostess in A Jiffy score series, image copyright to and used with the permission of Jennifer Walshe 2004

In his essay, “Open Ears,” (2003, p.36) Schafer writes;

Everyone has the power to imagine sounds... Try this experiment. Imagine the following sounds, taking time to let each resonate in the mind before cross-fading to the next:

- A baby laughing;
- A woman weeping;
- A bowling alley;

When I discovered this text, I was struck by the suggestive power of language and its relationship to the mind's ear; by the realisation that "memory and expectation... are part of the listening process" (Kim-Cohen, p.140). Reading Schafer's words and invoking those sounds in my head now, reminds me of the first time I consciously tried to recall an everyday sound. On that day, in the class where we had been asked to recall the first sound we could remember hearing, I had eaten cereal and recalled instantly the sound of the milk pouring into it (Fig. 35). I was amazed by how tactile and detailed my recollection of this sound was; I could remember the very specific mix of tiny crackles and dribbling milk, and the slight rise in pitch as the resonant space inside the bowl was engulfed by its expanding contents. I was suddenly aware that my whole life was full of moments which could be recaptured like this; everyday moments I had lived through "in a dreamless sleep," (Perec, p.210) which sat – latent – somewhere in my mind, and which could be activated through effecting simple shifts in perception such as deliberately trying to remember a certain sound.



Figure 35. cereal and milk, eaten, heard and photographed for The Sonic Tuck Shop book, Felicity Ford, 2010

I realised I could call any sounds into my head like this and that in doing this I might frame otherwise completely unremarkable events in ways which made them suddenly significant. Spending time having this conscious memory of sound was like discovering a way of "questioning the habitual," (Perec, p.210) of giving form and tangibility to experiences that

are so commonplace and ordinary we assume they “carry neither questions nor answers, as if they weren’t the bearer of any information.”

In the case of my cereal it would be possible to analyse the specifics – to ask when the cereal was invented, or in what culture the ritual of cereal-eating locates me, what the significance of eating from a bowl is, etc; to conduct – as Joe Moran has done throughout *Queuing for Beginners* – a kind of anthropology of the everyday, unpacking the meanings and histories surrounding ingrained, habitual behaviour. I am certainly interested in the idea that there is an underlying symbolism to everyday things, objects and practices. However, Moran’s outline for conducting a study of everyday things evidences their overlooked status, as aspects of life discarded at the bottom of a hierarchy wherein we consider some experiences to be worthy of contemplation and others less so; a situation wherein, as Percec writes (1989, p.209);

What speaks to us, seemingly, is always the big event, the untoward, the extraordinary: the front-page splash, the banner headlines.

If our everyday routines are enacted habitually, mechanically and unthinkingly, there are simultaneously other realms of experience which we designate specifically for non habitual, imaginatively-engaged and thinking behaviours. Within this paradigm lie entrenched cultural expectations regarding the function of art. Carol Becker (1996, p.58) describes the associated anticipation that art will be;

transcendent... able to catapult its viewers outside their mundane lives, provide therapeutic resolution to emotional ills, and, most significantly... it will end in wonder.

Implicitly escapist, work which functions in this way “makes few crossovers with the real world,” and remains rarefied in “the pristine whiteness of the gallery, forever hidden from the course of history” (Becker, p.58-59). In an echo of Percec’s observation that “we sleep through our lives in a dreamless sleep,” (1989, p.210) Becker criticises the expectation for sublime, transcendental experiences within art as further evidence that we live “in a world suffering from narcolepsy.” What does it mean for our day-to-day experiences of life to accept those categories; to remain asleep? And what happens when we challenge those categories; when we – in the words of John Cage – “wake up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent?” (1959) For the contemporary artist Christine Hill discussed in Chapter 2 of this Thesis, (Ford, 2004) this imaginative awakening comes about when we contest categories of experience and question the idea that art or culture are rarefied preserves, distanced from the day to day business of living;

I became very critical of this whole [idea of] “now we are entering the museum, and hence we are having “culture.””

In Hill’s practice, the recategorisation of experiences has manifested in her conceptualisation of a personal brand entitled Volksboutique, under which moniker she conducts projects which embody an almost total merger of art and life (2004, p.197);

Volksboutique is an entity incorporating everyday life and artistic practice.  
Volksboutique is not theater. It is a production of life.

In terms of sound art practice, a corresponding recategorisation occurs when “we discover that the noises of the outside world are musical,” as John Cage suggests, (1981, p.90.) In Cage’s world as in Hill’s, the mundane, the ordinary and the everyday are as open to contemplation as the spectacular, the extraordinary and the infrequent, suggesting that it is modes of perception which make things interesting rather than things themselves. In the Appendix to INVENTORY, The work of Christine Hill and Volksboutique, (2004, p.233) Hill summarises this idea via the following quote, from H.M. Tomlinson;

We see things not as they are, but as we are.

A statement echoing Kim-Cohen’s observation that it is the listener at a performance of John Cage’s 4’33” “who must identify the sound, the music,” (2009, p.140) in a rendition of that work. The work is heard not as it sounds, but as we listen. With his silent piece, Cage presents a perceptual framework for recategorising listening experiences; a set of circumstances through which we can identify the ambient sounds which bleed into the concert space as music, thus reorganising our concepts of sound and music. In his discussion of 4’33”, Cage describes a corresponding idea wherein we might also bring the attention and modes of perception from concert spaces into the real world and identify other sounds in other spaces as being music. In *Music Lover’s Field Companion* (1954) Cage describes how he framed certain stretches of time spent walking in the forest as “performances of my silent piece”;

At one performance, I passed the first movement by attempting the identification of a mushroom which remained successfully unidentified. The second movement was extremely dramatic, beginning with the sounds of a buck and a doe leaping up...

Other composers who have explored this idea of reframing found sound events in the world as specific listening experiences are Alvin Lucier and Pauline Oliveros. Lucier describes the sensitive and “graceful” timings of an elevator in the Gramercy Park Hotel (1965) as a very particular kind of experience where “if you let the elevator teach you something, you could

step out of it feeling more graceful.” Pauline Oliveros – in her composition, *Open Field* – (1980) invites you, the reader, to consider specific moments or experiences as “art experience” and to “find a way to record an impression of this momentary “art experience” using any appropriate means or media.”

Perceptual shifts such as those described by Cage, Lucier, Walshe and Oliveros were what I intended to activate when I presented *Listening with Care*. The rationale for this work was that I would record banal sounds from around my home and disseminate them to an audience via a specially designed knitted speaker network. In capturing sounds from the untoward banality of my home and elevating them or foregrounding them by placing them into a gallery situation, I hoped to emulate the mechanisms by which Cage had presented everyday sounds in a Concert situation in the instance of *4’33”*, and to suggest that domestic space and its sounds might – like Cage’s forest, Lucier’s elevator or Oliveros’s “art experience” – be considered as a context for contemplative listening. I was interested in the affirmative potential of that idea; in how moments could be conceptually framed like this.

The sounds which I played through the speakers – of rice boiling, of tea being brewed, of clothes being knitted – were intended to intersect and cross over with the real world and to give a voice to the background noises of life. In a sonic re-enactment of Mierle Laderman-Ukeles’s *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!* (1969, p.5) I wanted to take these “everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art.”

However, in my engagement with all of the above practitioners, language played a key role in determining my experience of the work. Schafer’s essay, Oliveros’s score, Lucier’s essay, Cage’s writings and Fluxus instruction scores all contextualised imaginative encounters with everyday sounds with language. To translate the ideas in these scores into experiences for audiences without bringing that crucial, contextualising language to the moment of audition – as I found when presenting *Listening with Care* – arguably denies the audience access to conceptual frameworks which are arguably essential to a shift in perception regarding the value or interestingness of everyday sounds. In many realisations of concepts as sonic works – as in my experience of Safe’s concert (2004, Cork) – the performer is privy to knowledge about the work which the audience does not have, without which they cannot experience the same imaginative encounter with the sounds being presented that the performer or the composer enjoys. In reading Schafer’s words concerning *The Ear of the Imagination*, or in being asked to remember the first sound I had heard that day, or in working with Oliveros’s *Open Field* or in reading Lucier’s account of the elevator, I had access to frameworks which helped me to interpret, identify and conceptualise my listening experience.



However when I presented *Listening with Care* to an audience, I reverted to an abstract presentational mode which failed to connect the domestic sound recordings in the piece with any words or philosophy, and which – through supplying all the sounds as recordings without any explanations – provided little space for the audience to recall listening memories of their own. I had assumed incorrectly that sourcing the sounds from my home was justification enough for me to deem them representative of the domestic soundscape and I had organised them into a layered, stereo composition (Fig. 36); a process by which they largely lost their resemblance to everyday reality.

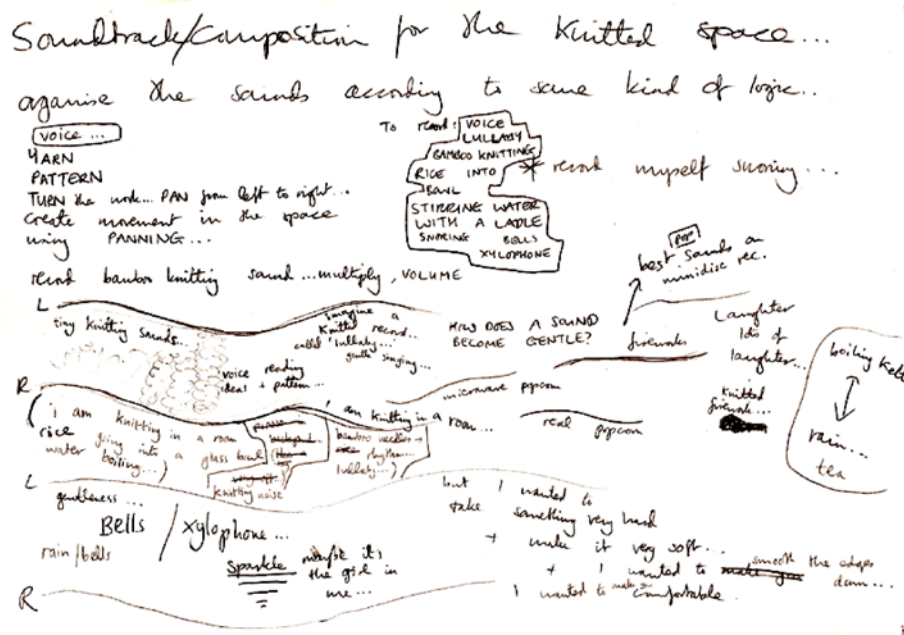


Figure 36. score for *Listening with Care*, 2007

The recorded sounds in *Listening with Care* were intended to be representative of the everyday sounds that are heard and conceptualised in real time when travelling in the Gramercy Park Hotel elevator, walking in the forest, or deciding that whatever you are doing might now be considered an “art experience,” but in fact the recordings are documents of moments that have already happened elsewhere, and so they have a very different quality to sound events which are unfolding in real time. As well as this temporal disjuncture between the sounds being heard and the site of audition, the manner in which I organised the sounds in the piece was problematic in terms of supporting my intentions for the work. Sounds were arranged in *Listening with Care* in such a way that when played through the knitted speakers, they took on a non-figurative, abstract quality which made it difficult to connect to lived experiences. Sounds do not in normal reality pan from left to right as they did in my composition. It seems that in this panning decision – as in many other decisions I made

whilst collating the composition for *Listening with Care* – I adopted what Seth Kim-Cohen (2010, p.157) has termed “the mode of abstraction” in my approach to arranging sounds in the score, wherein;

form is understood as self-referential and self-justifying, gestures and decisions making sense only relative to a logic established internally.

The problems with this approach did not become apparent to me until I worked through the relationships between my concerns, and the relationship between those ideas and the contexts of the composition, as previously discussed. I now understand that taking sounds out of the sequence in which they might naturally occur, playing different sounds through the left and right channels, juxtaposing similar sounds and so on are all decisions I made in the arrangement of sounds which complicated the relationship between recorded sounds and lived reality in *Listening with Care*. However, writing the score for *Listening with Care* – (Fig. 36) rather than producing the subsequent composition which played through the speakers – was the start of my engagement with listening as a conceptual process rather than a purely physical phenomenon. Sounds were collected according to the associations they conjured as well as their aural qualities, and I was interested in using sounds as evidence of the “mundane life” that is traditionally “transcended” (Becker, p.58) via art experiences. And many sounds – such as the sounds of knitting (the creation of clothes) and the sounds of cooking (the provision of food) – were deliberately employed for their material subtexts; for their links to feminist art practices such as that of Mierle Laderman-Ukeles who stated her intention in *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!* to use this work to instigate a consideration of “the relationship between maintenance and life’s dreams.”

Once I understood that my methods for organising and presenting the sounds in *Listening with Care* had damaged their ability to convey semantic meanings and references to banal, domestic practices and realities, I set about finding ways of presenting sounds which kept their referential qualities intact. For instance, in the case of performing Alvin Lucier’s *Gentle Fire* (1971) at Sonic Art Oxford, not only were the audience furnished with programmes explaining the piece (Fig. 38); also, an overhead projector and camera set-up relayed close-up images of the area where I was mixing the piece. I had written in large letters on every CD the source sounds contained on it, so that while the audience was watching and listening, they could anticipate the sound that were coming (Fig. 37). The programme is shown overleaf and the recording was adjusted for radio, (CD 12: Realisation of Alvin Lucier’s *Gentle Fire*) so that the words could reach an audience without these visual cues.



Figure 37. Felicity Ford's realisation of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire, Sonic Art Oxford, 2010

In exploring the relationship between this realisation of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire and my previous discussions of the concert and the composition, it is necessary to state that this presentation of everyday sounds to audiences did not represent as radical revision of the concert as proposed by The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series, or Sonic Tuck Shop Idea #1. However, in insisting that language be present at the moment of audition, and in demanding that the audience had full access to the score and the concepts inhabiting my realisation of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire, I deliberately position this work as "conceptual sonics," (Kim-Cohen, 2009) and present this realisation of Alvin Lucier's score as an example of sound that is not only sound for sound's sake.

One of the ways of linking everyday sounds to non-sonic concerns – maybe – is to dispense with the apparatus of music whilst talking about those sounds. Kim-Cohen has speculated that music has historically enjoyed a kind of "exemption" from "any obligation to mimesis, iconicity, or indexicality," (2009, p.157) indicating that because music has always been understood as a self-evidently abstract artform – perhaps using any musical elements to framework everyday sounds invites abstraction in the interpretation or creative use of such sounds. This was an idea I explored during the live/participatory stall which we ran as part of the FRRS in assn. w. MA at EXPO, 2008, when I constructed the rubber-stamping score station and presented it as part of our radio-show content-generating stall.

The rubber-stamping score station (Fig. 39) consisted of a desk area, furnished with a cork-board for mounting work on, and a set of rubber stamps featuring quotidian objects like washing machines, hammers, safety pins, zippers etc. A range of ink pads and a pile of manuscript paper sheets was supplied alongside these things, featuring the instructions "DIY Musical Score: Use the rubber stamps provided to create your own musical Composition(s) There are no rules. Title of Work \_\_\_\_\_ Composer \_\_\_\_\_".

## **Gentle Fire**

**Alvin Lucier, 1971**

**Performed by Felicity Ford**

Collect, on tape, examples of ambient sound events such as those made by

Screeching Brakes, Chattering Guests, Warring Gangs, Rioting Prisoners, Stalling Motors etc.

Using an electronic music synthesiser or any equivalent configuration of electronic components, process the examples in such a way that they become transformed into what could be perceived as sound events of different origin such as those made by

Ocean Waves, Wind in Trees, Flowing Streams, Boiling Tea, Cooing Doves etc.

For example, snarling dogs become crunching snow; crashing planes, laughing girls; and manoeuvring tanks, ocean waves.

Record these transformations...in any sequence or any number of channels, using any manner of mixing, overlapping...taking care only that the process of change from each original sound event to its final state of transformation is slowly, gradually and clearly heard...

- excerpt from the prose score, Gentle Fire

The imaginative treatment of sound in the score of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire fascinates Felicity Ford. Using the prose score as a guide, she has been collecting recordings as part of her realisation of this work. So far she has been collecting sounds for Gentle Fire for two and a half years.

This collecting process has become an important and ongoing aspect of the project, as integral to Gentle Fire as the performance you are going to hear today. The first part of Lucier's score is being realised through an ongoing process of listening and recording in everyday life. Recordings garnered in this way are not always pristine; they bear traces of physical movement and circumstantial imperfections – wind, the banging of a distant door, the interference caused by snowflakes landing on microphones – as the artist moves through life digitally gathering and listening to sounds.

But this raw, real-life quality of sound is to be intentionally retained throughout today's performance where the emphasis is on the physicality of sound. Sounds have been prepared for this performance from the raw materials of the collection, and like substances lined up for a cookery demonstration, they will be presented sequentially so that you can consider for yourself their imaginative and sonorous properties.

Trying to change one sound into another is a process that makes us think about surface quality and texture, space and duration. To make Droning Turbines sound like Sounding Dolphins is not easy, and so far methods for collecting such sounds as Frowning Clowns and Spurting Blood have proved elusive. However, hopefully trying to change sounds in this way, searching for rare or potentially inaudible sounds, or even imagining what such sources would sound like, expands our ideas of what the mind's ear is capable of.

THE PERFORMANCE MAY CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING SOUNDS AND TRANSFORMATIONS\*

**SOURCE SOUND**

**TRANSFORMED SOUND**

**TEARING PAPER  
SCREECHING BRAKES  
CREAKING DOOR  
DRONING TURBINES  
BUZZING SAWS  
FRYING EGGS  
POPPING CORN  
RAGING FIRES  
ROARING TRAINS  
SPINNING WHEELS  
SNORTING HOGS**

**SCUTTling CRABS  
HONKING GEESE  
CROAKING FROGS  
BLOWING GALES  
SWAYING PALMS  
FALLING RAIN  
DRIFTING SANDS  
BOILING TEA  
PASSING SHIPS  
CREAKING BOATS  
WHOOPING  
CRANES**

**MELTING SNOW  
STOMPING BOOTS  
DRAINING DREGS  
CRACKING ICE  
BARKING DOGS**

**CRACKLING FIRE  
RUNNING BOYS  
SWIMMING TUNA  
SPOUTING WHALES  
WARBLING BIRDS**

\*THIS IS NOT A COMPLETE LIST AND YOU MAY HEAR OR IMAGINE YOU HEAR SOMETHING ELSE.

Figure 38. Programme for Felicity Ford's realisation of Alvin Lucier's Gentle Fire, 2010

The principal idea in this work was to use the frameworks of music (the manuscript paper and the staff) to recontextualise or recategorise sound sources that we typically think of as being unmusical, (sounds created by mundane actions such as washing dishes etc.) and to use the experience of playing with the station to think about the meaning of that activity. Everybody who visited the stall interacted with it in a different way; after creating Musical Chairs, (Fig. 40) one visitor to EXPO went away and electronically submitted 3 tracks to the show which were allegedly derived from his score, (you can hear these at <http://fantasticalreality.com/listen.html>).



Figure 39. The rubber-stamping score station created for The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation, Felicity Ford, photo by Kayla Bell, 2008

I could not discern or perceive any relationship between the sounds submitted in this instance and the sounds produced by chairs in their daily usage. The figurative/linguistic/conceptual ideas expressed in the score do not discernibly translate into a sonic realisation of that score and the only person who can really explain the logic of the translation from the score to the sounds produced by realising that score is the composer/performer who produced both the score for that work and the resultant composition.

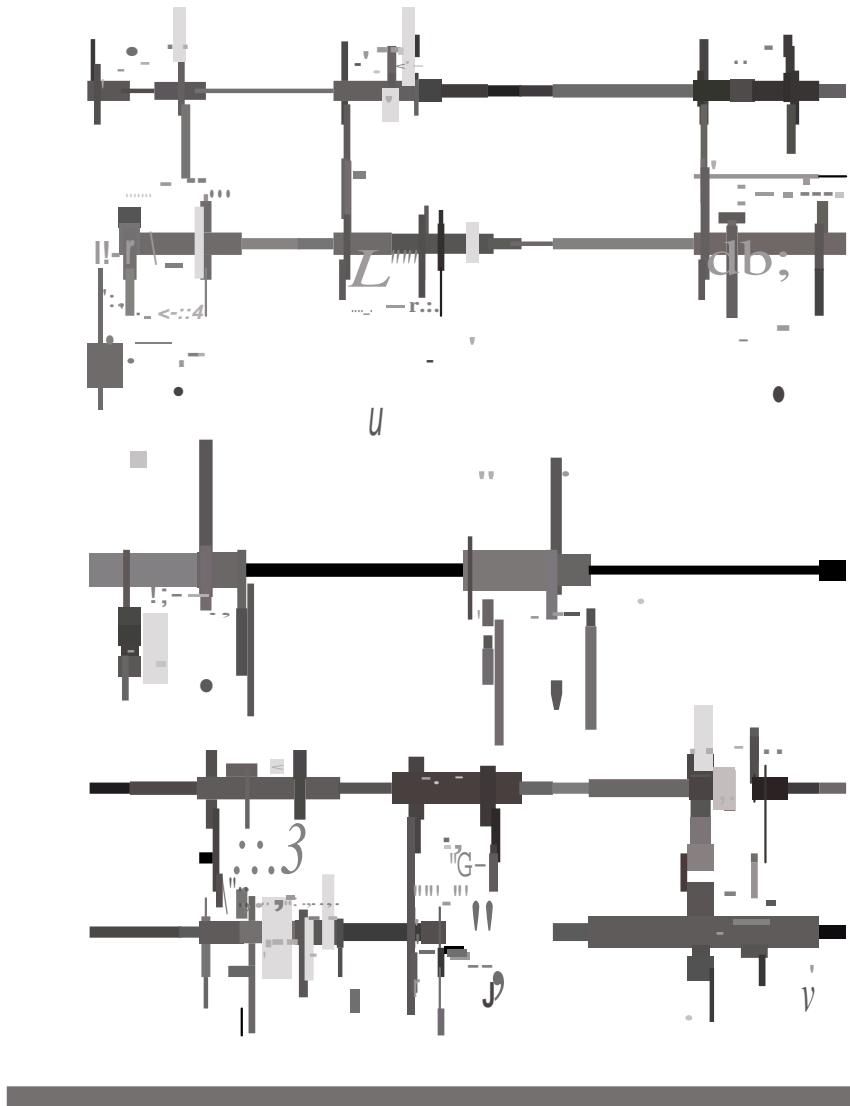
I was interested in how people responded to the idea of the score station, but – especially in the case of the Musical Chairs compositions which were sent into the show – I felt the

presence of the additional " " in the wood bod induc d non-tigwati...., abstract reinterpretations of 1M sounds of everyday reality, rather than inspiring new ways of categorising those sounds in relation to their sources. The presence of the staff in the DrY scores installation sums to have enforced the sense of exemption that Kim Cohen identifies, rather than inducing a way of conceptualising everyday sounds as music.

DIY Music score: *Un th' rubberSt.Jmps pmmid.-d co C're.t you.r own*  
 Composition {t} *Thett ut-ao ruSt-s.*

Title of Work *Mv "' \ < t.\t'*

Comp • --- 1-----



**Figure 40.** *Music (1 C3:lirs. created by Drew usIns 11:eYUihstfh.mpiJlt score station, mi.de tor The Fant<lst,cal Reality Radio Show ill Association with Mundane Appreciation, Fell:ley Ford,*

:Z00S



**A musical score describing the organisation of a series of everyday sounds**



The score above depicts a series of sonic events and is open to a wide range of interpretations.

The sounds from the stirring of tea, old cassette tapes, crows, cars, stereos, pigeons, telephones and watery items like a jug full of ice, a bottle full of water and a hot kettle all appear in this musical score. A simpler score is the

smaller one below, which is a visual representation of the noise one makes when blowing over the top of a bottle.



DIY Musical Score: Use the stickers provided to create your own Composition(s) There are no rules.

Title of Work \_\_\_\_\_

Composer \_\_\_\_\_

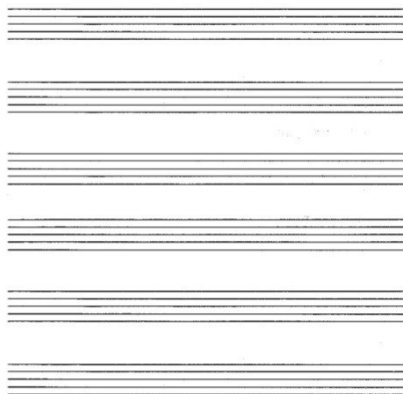


Figure 41. The DIY Score pages in The Fantastical Reality Radio Show in association with Mundane Appreciation Activity Booklet, 2008

A key finding of my practice-led research is that the elusive threshold of perception which separates following a recipe or a knitting pattern from realising a musical score is ultimately defined by the frameworks which an artist provides and by the contexts in which their works are presented. In my work with scores I have devised many strategies involving scores - some more successful than others - all of which use language to explore, redeem and enrich everyday reality. To recap, some of the approaches I have taken relating to the domestic soundscape and the score include

- presenting realisations of scores alongside explanations of scores (Love is Awesome, Love Assignments)
- renaming scores “assignments,” thus connecting scores with non-musical, everyday reality and with the scholarship of the everyday (Love is Awesome, Love Assignments)
- discussing scores and assignments openly with audiences via my blog – an inherently dialogical context
- giving explanations of scores to audiences during concert performances (Felicity Ford’s realisation of Alvin Lucier’s Gentle Fire)
- explicitly describing scores in podcasts, interviewing artists about their scores, realising scores and then linking those scores to everyday reality (Marl salad a la familie – (CD 8: THE DIFFICULT DOMESTIC)
- Producing objects which revise the visual/material language of scores (Sonic Tuck Shop Idea #1 – hand printed paper bag containing popping mouth candy)
- Providing audiences with tools to make scores, or to revise the score from being a site purely designed for the tonal arrangement of notes into a site for the

recategorisation of everyday sounds as music – (rubber-stamping score station, Fig. 39)

Broadly speaking my work with scores has explored numerous ways for engaging audiences in their production and reception. I have practically researched many ways of making the concepts and ideas held within instruction scores transparently available to the audiences to whom realisations of those scores are being presented, and I have – from the outset – treated the score as a context for celebrating everyday reality. The focus for the scores I have written (Love Assignments) has been the affirmative power of reframing our imaginative relationship with everyday gestures, and linking everyday sounds to personal narratives (my use of my blog). Scores have been used interchangeably with other language-based media (scripted radio shows, printed programme notes, hand-printed objects featuring text etc.) as part of an overall endeavour to recategorise everyday experiences as art experiences and thus to enrich our imaginative relationship with the domestic soundscape and everyday sounds.

To understand how I have organised my engagement with the concert, the composition and the score into one cohesive entity, it is now necessary to examine in closer detail The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book.

### **3.4 The Concert, The Composition and The Score re-envisioned in the form of The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book**

The final incarnation of The Sonic Tuck Shop is a handmade book which offers frameworks for recategorising experiences and enjoying “cultural” experiences outside of the designated precincts. The sites for the cultural listening experiences offered in The Sonic Tuck Shop Book are the provinces of domestic maintenance tasks; the purchasing of food; the creation of meal plans; the preparation of bubble and squeak; and the consumption and preparation of any of the small items “sonically” packaged within the book to be enjoyed as discrete listening experiences.

A listener cannot experience the imaginative transformations or cultural listening experiences proposed in the book in a concert hall, and some of the recordings on the CD included with the book – such as Track 1: Binaural recording of eating apples – can only be completed through the agency and activity of the listener (who is instructed in this instance that the track is “best heard on headphones while eating apples). Assignments and spaces to write are offered throughout The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book, so that the sound art

experience which I – as an artist – am offering to an audience in this case is a linguistic and a conceptual framework for imaging “what yeast sounds like” when it is leavening bread (p.13) or considering the role that sounds play in how we encounter foodstuffs (assignment on p.12) rather than providing audible content. The book acts as a focus for celebrating the creative agency of the listener/audience member, and as a lens through which domestic maintenance tasks might be transformed into contexts for sonic creativity rather than as a finished sonic statement.



Figure 42. recording research for The Sonic Tuck Shop book, 2010

The idea of availing of all the different cultural experiences offered in The Sonic Tuck Shop Book conjures an image of performative, exuberant domestic activity – akin to that embodied by Bobby Baker’s use of the kitchen as a creative site in Kitchen Show – (Ferris, 2002);

Baker’s self-insertion into these scenes of the kitchen both remakes it as a site of agency and stages her send-up of conventionalised domesticity.

For instance, the deliberate act of shopping for food based on its sonic qualities – an exercise I undertook in order to research The Day of Sonic Tuck feature in the book – completely

reframed the experience of shopping and turned the chore of acquiring food into a site of sonic intervention and imaginative conjecture. The process reminded me of performing Walshe's recipe score – Marl salad a la familie – for THE DIFFICULT DOMESTIC edition of The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Series, where repurposing my kitchen space as a concert or recital area, fetching and implementing all the props required to perform the piece and then enacting all the gestures proscribed to produce the intended sonic results gave me a very different perspective on that space. Through the act of working on that score, I developed an experimental, creative, expanded perspective on the kitchen's functions and imaginative potentials as a site. The experience of performing Marl salad a la familie also changed my perspective on the recipe format as a form for proscribing deliberate, sonic activities.

However certain elements of Marl salad a la familie remain very specifically musical, and in her discussion on the score (CD 8: DIFFICULT DOMESTIC) she talks very much about the recipe format as a means for being precise about what sounds are produced. Although elements of Marl salad a la familie – its graphic design and its language – undoubtedly borrow from the recipe format, they also depart radically from it, into the contexts of music;

1. Snap out towel and prostrate crisply on floor.  
distribute gravel evenly on towel, screen with newspaper,  
and shuffle lightly on top whilst singing atomising mel. 6  
(4B; brittle tipping, porous, even grain). Upon conclusion  
fall still, noiselessly becoming heavier for 7B.

“mel.” means melody and “7B” indicates 7 beats. Also, none of the elements in this excerpt from the score are conceivably edible. Walshe's score represents a radical departure from the traditional musical score, and an expansion of the vocabulary which is used to determine how sounds might be organised. In realising the score, however, the main purpose is to produce highly specific sonic outcomes, and not to recategorise the ordinary act of following a recipe as a musical or cultural listening experience in and of itself.

Contrastingly, the presentation of unpopped popcorn kernels (Fig. 43) and effervescent hangover tablets in The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book is intentionally ambivalent, as these edible items are framed as being “sonic” materials, yet they are quite self-evidently also consumable. Whereas the whole point of realising Walshe's score is to produce a sound, the point of preparing the sonic popcorn is to prepare popcorn and to deliberately notice the sounds which that culinary act produces. The borders between routinely making popcorn as

one normally would and specifically making sonic popcorn are incredibly flimsy, whereas the only reason to realise Marl salad a la familie is to produce its proscribed sonic outcome. The act of framing everyday activities as exciting sonic experiences fills The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book, and the concept behind this idea is made explicit in the FAQ section at the front of the book (p.4);

The Sonic Tuck Shop is a state of mind in which culinary sounds are re-imagined as sonic treats to be savoured by the ears as well as by the belly! The re-imagining of culinary sounds can be done in many ways, ranging from composing with food-sounds to repackaging food in such a way as to highlight its sonic qualities. The Sonic Tuck Shop state of mind can also be adopted for changing the way that everyday food-related tasks are approached, so that the meal becomes a concert, the food shop into a sound-gathering exercise, and so on. As well as being a state of mind, you could also say that The Sonic Tuck Shop is a lens for the ears, through which everyday food sounds are transformed into aural sweeties, for your listening pleasure.



Figure 43. SONIC POPCORN, customised, repackaged popcorn created for The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist book, 2010

The idea of adopting such a strategy builds on my engagement with the works of electroacoustic composers like Jonty Harrison and Magali Babin. In the introduction of this Thesis I complained that the whisk in Babin's *Chemin de Fer* does not whisk eggs or milk, and that the earthenware casserole in Harrison's *Klang* is not used for the preparation of stews. The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book poses that the whisk whisking eggs and the casserole with a stew cooking in it may be viewed through a celebratory framework and that it is not

necessary to subject those implements to many processes – which distance them from their original, domestic contexts – in order to make them sonically interesting or special. The recipe format is not appropriated in *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book* for the purposes of producing sounds; the act of following a recipe in and of itself (p.20) is posited as a cultural, sonic experience. The rearranging powers of the maverick, musical baker are transferred to whoever is using the book, as instructions, frameworks and a range of listening experiences – some of which are provided on a CD, and some of which must be devised by the audience member/listener in the course of planning their meals; inventing the day of sonic tuck (Fig. 44); or listening to apples being eaten whilst eating apples.



Figure 44. *The Day of Sonic Tuck!* a Sonic Tuck Shop Artist book feature, 2008

By intersecting explicitly across the idea of a recipe book, a shopping list and a meal planner, *The Sonic Tuck Shop* book resembles the appropriation of everyday materials adopted by the performance artist, Bobby Baker, for her performances. In her work, Baker often deals with the difficult politics of domestic space; with the interpersonal dramas, personal rituals and material pleasures of that space. In her practice, she builds on Pink's assertions that (2004, p.42);

Housework and home creativity are both processes of the constitution of self that involve embodied performative actions, material objects and sensory experience...

And Marina Walker (1995) writes of Baker that;

she finds her material to hand, never in specialist shops or fancy, brand name boutiques. She is developing a vernacular at all levels – dramatic, visual, topographical.

Bobby Baker’s adoption of everyday materials to speak about everyday things has its origins in her realisation that cake would be her sculptural medium. In her intentionally uncomfortable, self-effacing presentational style, Bobby Baker (2007) describes the abject quality of the baseball cake which she decided to name *A Work of Art of Great Significance*; its “pathetic” nature (2007);

...this decision to name such a pathetic, poorly crafted object *A Work of Art of Great Significance*...

When I researched, produced and scripted *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Series*, I felt it was absolutely necessary to make reference to this emerging dialogue between the abject, “vernacular” materials of everyday life vs. the pristine white gallery; and between the unprocessed sound which evidences a lived moment and the background noises of life, vs. aspirations to the escapist purity of sound for its own sake. That was the context in which I scripted and collated *DIFFICULT DOMESTIC* and *HABIT & ROUTINE* for *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series* in particular. *DIFFICULT DOMESTIC* ends with *Taste Sensations*. In that Podcast I also included Yoko Ono’s *Toilet Piece*, (1971) for its muddy semantics; for its references to the body, and to domestic, corporeal realities.

When I was offered the commission by *Sound and Music* to produce a series of podcasts to contextualise the works being shown at *The Cut and Splice Living Rooms Festival*, I decided to offer a feminist perspective to the idea of *Living Rooms*, i.e. the rooms that we live in, and to add my own sounds (washing up, Hoovering, baking a cake) to the sounds of someone snoring, (Lescalet, J. and Lambkin, G.) a couple arguing, (Belgum, E.) and a pear being thrown at a kitchen wall in rage, (1991). In *HABIT & ROUTINES*, I was especially struck by the silence of *Housewife, 1946 – 1998*, in *Karen Magazine* – “a magazine made out of the ordinary” – (Lubbock, 2007) and I decided to make recordings based on the idea of documenting “the daily round, the common task” (Kneale, 2006) in response to this silence. I wrote in the script for *HABIT & ROUTINES* and the domestic soundscape;

The repetitive, necessary, comforting and unrelenting nature of housework struck me strongly when I came across a schedule printed in issue 2 of *Karen* magazine, entitled simply *Housewife, 1946 – 1998*.

I became interested in using this schedule as a kind of found score...

In the text in Karen magazine, the repetition of certain activities like Hoovering, watching specific tv programmes and so on, are like recurring motifs or refrains in musical terms. These refrains give routines a rhythm that I thought could be used as the basis for making a recording. What I quickly realised, however, is that following the exact schedule edited and recalled by Karen from her Grandmother's life, would actually end up being about otherness rather than familiarity since it's very different from my own life and is already a stylised and edited representation of reality. In order to look at repetition and habit in daily life, I realised I'd have to deal with my own behaviour, and take a look at the order of my own days, since nobody else's daily activities are more banal to me than my own.

Around the same time that I was developing this feature for The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series, I instigated the surface.image.sound (March 2009) project on the Sound-Diaries website, where people were encouraged to create sound-diaries based on considerations of the relationship between surfaces and sounds;

...surfaces are something we are intimately in contact with every day. From the feel of the mug from which we drink our morning tea, to the rough, firm texture of a potato that we are chopping for our dinner, the qualities of sound and surface are at times difficult to distinguish from one another.



Figure 45. Sourdough dough rising, the image I used to accompany a sound-diaries recording based on boiling mud, <http://www.sound-diaries.com/?p=404>, 2009

I was interested in the idea that Karen's Grandmothers' routine performances of tasks and chores would have produced a corresponding pattern of sound, and I was interested in the relationships between the things we hear and the things we touch in daily life.



The experiences of browsing the DAARS website in my own home; reading Karen magazine and considering her Grandmother's housework habits as a kind of found score; discovering that I was far more interested in actually enacting Walshe's score in my own kitchen than in listening to someone else's realisation of the work; and the desire to move away from abstract presentational modes all informed the development of *The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book*. I wanted to intentionally expand and contest the definitions of the concert, the composition and the score into contexts more messily entwined with the everyday world we live in. I wanted the popcorn to be both ordinary everyday popcorn and special sonic popcorn; I wanted the CD feat. apples cooking and coffee boiling to mix up my representations of such sounds – my art – with the ordinary happenings in the domestic life of the listener in possession of the book and CD; with their apples and coffee. If I was using a whisk in my work I wanted the whisk to be both whisking eggs or milk and producing an interesting sound, however I did not wish at any point to transport the materials and practices of domestic space outside of those contexts. Instead, I wanted to broaden the categories of the concert, the composition and the score to speak within, of, and to, home environments.

*The Sonic Tuck Shop* embodies some of the strategies which I have developed in order to explore how the established contexts of sound art or music – the concert, the composition, the score – might be used to explore, redeem and enrich everyday reality because it offers a situation wherein a concert might be relocated to your mouth; wherein buying groceries is a kind of found concert; wherein the routine tasks of preparing and consuming food become sites for sonic creativity; and wherein the domestic life of the listener is intrinsically addressed.

This material world with its muddy meanings, its messy materiality, its champagne-popping moments and its super stressful supermarket queues; this material world where we live and dance and play and make things; this world where we fight over who does the dishes and where we argue over money; this material world where we have to Hoover and tidy and brush our teeth and get up and go to bed; this material world is the one I want to record, and the one which I want to celebrate. It seems to me that in drawing attention to this material world and reframing it, and representing all the sonic fun we can have with its tea spoons and its biscuits and its mushrooms and all the other “common things” which make life real, is one way to “lay hold on our truth,” (Perec, p.211).

Chapter 4: What are the frameworks through which everyday sounds may be shared with audiences, and how can the Internet be used as a space or picture frame for presenting everyday sounds to audiences?

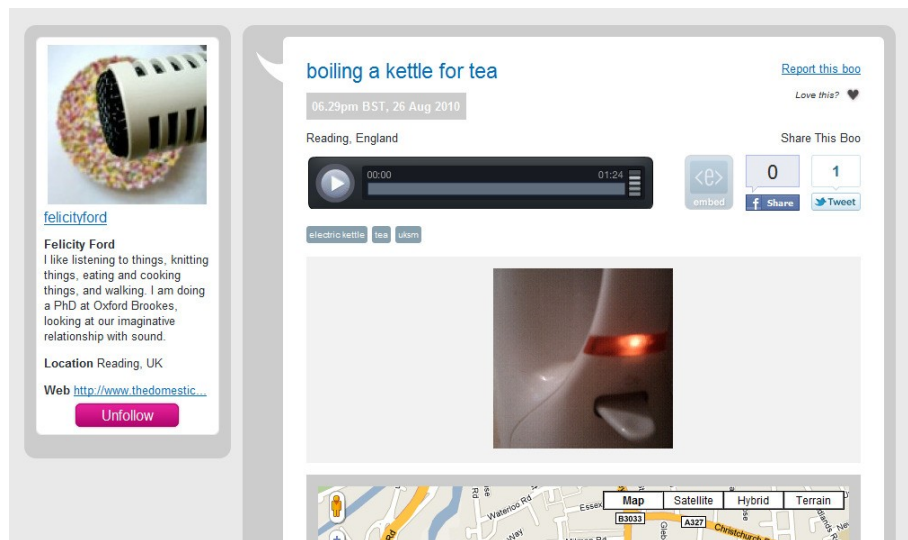


Figure 46. my upload to The UK SoundMap of the kettle boiling, 2010

## 4.1 Gender, technology, and changing sonic practices

Related to my decision to work with the domestic soundscape has been an ongoing interrogation of the relationships between gender and technology. The knitted speakers were an early attempt at blurring traditional gender boundaries, clumsily combining the feminine qualities of knitting with the masculine qualities of DIY electronics. However, throughout my research I have found more interesting ways of collapsing those borders, and I have become increasingly intrigued by how having access to different technologies has changed both my relationship to domestic sounds and also my concept of myself as a woman living in a house.

The technologies which have been most important to my research are Internet technologies and recording technologies, and engagement with these tools has comprised a major area of my research. Inadvertently, I have created new roles for myself within domestic space through my use of technology, so that recording everyday sounds is now a part of my everyday reality, and so that my domestic soundscape has become a kind of referential, imaginative text which is constantly being written, re-written, represented, created, and experienced.

The Sound Diaries project which I set up with my supervisor Dr Paul Whitty in 2008 uses blogging software to house an ongoing, online inquiry into how experiences might be documented or recorded via the creation and sharing of sound diaries. The project is described on its website at <http://www.sound-diaries.com> as an “initiative... focused around sound-recordings and sound-texts and the ways in which we can use sound as a document of our lives.”

As well as housing sound diaries by myself, Dr Paul Whitty, and a host of online contributors, Sound Diaries was also the focus for a conference (held at Oxford Brookes in June 2009) where I presented my research into using Alvin Lucier’s score – Gentle Fire – as “a “filter” for recording with everyday sounds” (Appendix 2: Soundhunting for Alvin Lucier’s Gentle Fire). I also presented a discussion concerning the role of my blog in my PhD research at an Oxford Brookes study day in November, 2009, where I evaluated the pros and cons of using my personal blog as a site for presenting, sharing, contextualising and exploring research ideas.



Figure 47. Glitterphones, the image I created for the Sound-Diaries sonic advent calendar launch, 2008

Additionally – through my online interactions with the Noise Futures Network – I attended a consultation meeting concerning The UK SoundMap . This experience partly informed some of my programming decisions regarding the speakers for the Sound:Site festival, which was co-organised with Martin Franklin, and which took place at South Hill Park in October 2010. I presented a keynote address at this event, and introduced the day with the idea that “a lot of the projects we’re going to hear about today sit in the gap between living our lives and documenting our experiences,” (Appendix 2: Sound and Site Conference Introductory Speech) Chris Clarke from the British Library’s UK SoundMap project (Fig. 46) was one of the other speakers who presented at the event along with other practitioners who are also exploring the questions surrounding online documentation and the Internet as a destination for sound-based works.

All these outputs reference the role that documenting experience plays in changing how we see ourselves, and how we perceive experiences and environments. Broadly speaking I have been investigating the idea that through recording technologies and Internet usage, the traditional borders of public and private experience have become less distinct, so that – at least in online space – the home has ceased to be a private retreat. Gender roles have historically been consolidated through the organisation of public and private spheres; of the division of space into the respectively male and female worlds of work and the home. These divisions were contested by the artists I have already mentioned here, and I have continued

working out of their legacy, largely enabled and facilitated by developments in, and my appropriation of, technology.

I will also show – as the title of this Thesis suggests – how working with domestic space and conceptualising it as I have done, eventually led to the production of *Around the A4074*; a radio show focussed around my commute and the familiar landscapes of my regular journeys between home and work.



Figure 48. *Around the A4074* project flier design, used to publicise the project, 2009

Finally I hope to demonstrate that – as exemplified by the intentionally interdisciplinary nature of my research – the domestic soundscape must be conceptualised in terms which recognise the relationships between the sounds that describe Western, domestic settings, and the extended political, material and art history dialogues which pertain to our everyday environments.

## 4.2 Representation and reality

Describing the process through which the composer Luc Ferrari created *Presque Rien, ou, Le Lever du jour au bord de la mer*, (Almost nothing or daybreak at the Seashore) in 1977, Seth Kim-Cohen introduces some of the issues surrounding the use of sound to describe and evidence lived experiences. To create *Presque Rien*, Ferrari placed microphones on his window sill each morning for several hours and from the collected recordings, edited

together a 21 minute long sequence of sounds. Seth Kim-Cohen describes how Ferrari “prized sounds for their connection to the world and to senses other than hearing,” and dubs the resultant record “a portrait, not just of sounds, but also of a community and the repetitive cycles of its daily life” (2009, p.177). However, he also points out that projects like Ferrari’s – which purport to be representative of reality – are not, and never can actually be mistaken for what is actually real, and how the act of documenting experiences in and of itself, necessarily changes and frames such experiences.

Throughout my research I have been preoccupied with understanding firstly the nature of any framework which is used to present everyday sounds, and secondly the changes to ordinary reality which the creation of such frameworks effect. The Fantastical Reality Radio Show was named that, because I wanted to acknowledge the fictive nature of the project and the fact that the show – however much about ordinary things, ordinary sounds and ordinary situations – nonetheless constitutes an elaborate cultural construct and an aestheticisation of the everyday.

Similarly, I SPY/I HEAR – the feature that I developed for The Hub on BBC Oxford – was deliberately themed around the recognisable format of the I SPY children’s books, which frame ordinary experiences in a very particular way, describing items which are to be spied, and points which are to be awarded for spying such things. I wrote about the I SPY books in my blog on January 26th, 2010 (Appendix 1, 04. I SPY/I HEAR ) and about how their use – as a very particular kind of framework - inspires a distinctive form of interaction with everyday reality. Joe Moran (2007, p.215) has written about the way that using I SPY books frames our relationship to everyday things;

It was the I-SPY books that first inspired my interest in the strange invisibility of the quotidian, that unobserved area of our lives which is suddenly rendered exotic when we pay it the compliment of prolonged attention.

I used my I SPY IN THE COUNTRY book to develop a series of radio features for The Hub, - billed as BBC Oxford’s cultural magazine show (Fig. 49). The I SPY/I HEAR features I produced for BBC Oxford (CD 7: Tracks 5 – 9) were created by my travelling around the Oxfordshire countryside armed with my I SPY IN THE COUNTRY book, documenting the sounds which surrounded the items detailed in the book and awarding myself points for the items I spied. In designing the feature I wanted to demonstrate that “culture” can be found in unexpected places, and to find a celebratory and playful ways of representing and experiencing reality. My experience of making the show was that the act of hunting for specific items in the I SPY books provided a framework for appreciating and valuing the

significance of “very everyday things,” (Moran, 2007) and also the inspiration behind the stationery which I designed for the Soundwalk that I led on World Listening Day.

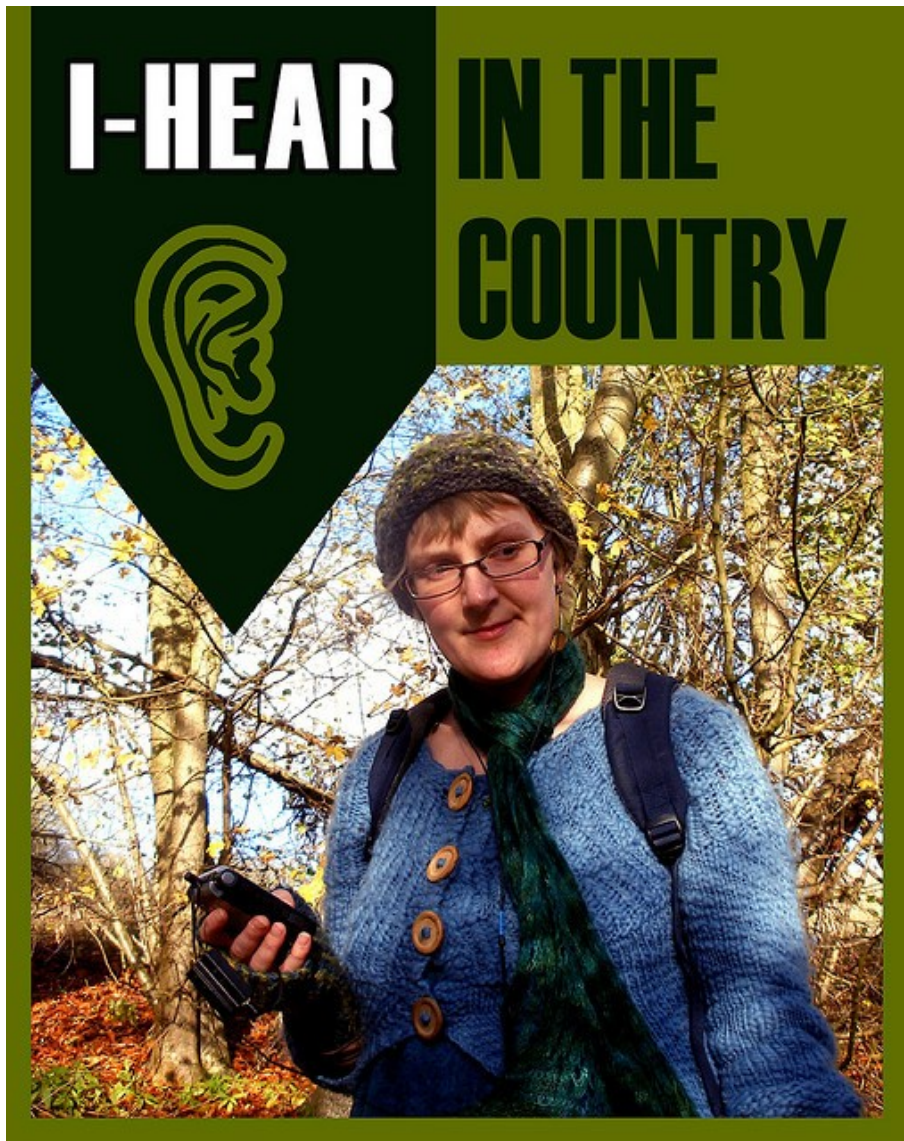


Figure 49. I HEAR - image based on the popular I SPY books of the 1950s - 1970s, this was the image I used to publicise my I SPY/I HEAR radio features on The Hub, BBC Oxford, 2008 - 2010

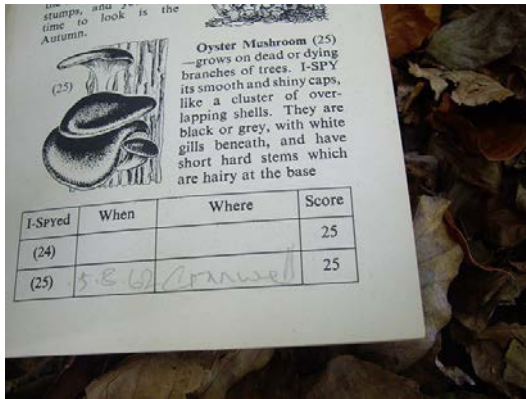


Figure 50. I SPY Oyster Mushrooms, 2009



Figure 51. Oyster Mushrooms, 2009

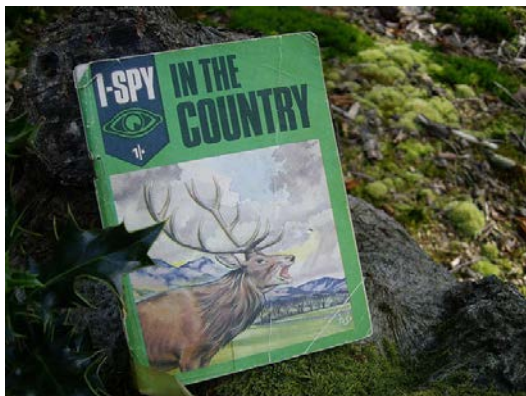


Figure 52. I SPY in the Country, 2009

After twenty years of picking mushrooms, I tell myself that I'll probably get bored looking for others. But each year, when I go back into the woods in Spring or Summer, I find new ones. It's as exciting as the first time!

- John Cage, For the Birds, 1981



Relatedly, in the creation of the FRRS in association with MA – and particularly in the creation of The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show feature – my relationship to irritating sounds was changed because in pursuing such sounds, they acquired desirability. I wrote about this on my blog in a post written on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Appendix 1, 04. Soundhunting);

Today as I sat in Presto Pizza waiting for my order, I threw the recorder on to enhance my experience of listening to exactly where I was for the duration of the wait. I listened intently to the large extractor fans in the pizza shop kitchen. To the rumble of traffic outside and the casual banter of customers and staff. The telephone ringing. The busy sounds of pizza cooking. And then, without my prompting or hunting or seeking it in any way, a police car came by at full speed with its siren wailing at full volume.

There is something incredibly thrilling about finally capturing a thing I have been seeking for months and which has been so difficult to catch. It thrilled me so much that I totally forgot, until now, that the original reason for finding the sound was to be able to present it within the context of the irritating noises chart. How ironic to find that one of the most annoying sounds I could think of to record, was one of the most joyous ones to eventually find.

In the use of the I SPY books, the creation of The FRRS in assn. w. MA, and the recording tasks associated with making such features as The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show I found myself constantly placing frameworks over reality, and using these to filter out and produce discrete versions – fictions – of that reality. I spent most of 2010 walking around with I SPY books and my hand held digital recorder in my pockets, editing reality all the time through these filters and bringing the act of documentation to many areas of my life.

I introduced these issues regarding the framing and documenting of sounds at the Sound:Site festival, co-organised by myself and Martin Franklin at South Hill Park (Appendix 2: Sound and Site Conference Introductory Speech). In my keynote address I presented the theme for the day as the interplay between real experiences and online documentation;

...this idea about real experiences and online documentation is one of the major themes running through the day and certainly my interest in working on this programme came about through working in both online and offline contexts as an artist and realising more and more how those things are getting mixed up... I've started to notice how these spaces – the online world and the offline world – actually inform each another. And I think a lot of the projects we're going to hear about today sit in the gap between living our lives and documenting our experiences.

To introduce the concept of what I meant by the interplay between “reality and representation” I showed a photograph which had been taken of my brothers, taking photos of each other taking photographs (Fig.53) during a family outing. The photograph illustrates how – with the advent of ever-more affordable recording devices (whether they are cameras

for making visual recordings or devices with microphones for making aural recordings) – the practice of documenting experiences is increasingly becoming more enmeshed with having an experience at all. Hours of time at weddings or other family occasions are now devoted to the practice of documenting the event, and with the proliferation of platforms from which to share and disseminate representations of reality, a culture of documentation-as-experience is quite self-evidently growing. The UK SoundMap of which Chris Clarke spoke at the Sound:Site festival is only now possible because recording equipment (in the form of inbuilt smartphone microphones and recording software like Audioboo) has become much more widely available. Practising phonography – as has been the case with photography – will only become more widespread as people gain access to the tools for documenting reality in sound.



Figure 53. Two of my brothers, taking photos of each other taking photos, 2009

Myself and Dr Paul Whitty presented recordings from the Sound-Diaries project at Sound:Site, talking through the processes by which certain diaries for that project were created. Sound-Diaries – like The FRRS in assn. w. MA, or Around the A4074 – has a unified aesthetic and a clear objective, as a project. The purpose of Sound-Diaries is to explore the notion of “recording life in sound” and the questions which surround that idea;

The Sound Diaries initiative is focused around sound-recordings and sound-texts and the ways in which we can use sound as a document of our lives. It is hoped that you will join in with the project contributing your views, sound-recordings, sound-texts, project ideas and perspectives on the notion of Sound Diaries.

### 4.3 What is the role that my blog plays in my practice?

Exploring and exposing the expressive, sonic life of the home using personal blogs, web-based projects like Sound-Diaries, technologies like Audioboo and smartphones somehow dents the “myth of two worlds apart, the public and the private,” (Cieraad, p.7) because it brings the “background noise” of everyday life (Perec, p.210) squarely into the foreground. I am reminded of this while listening to *The silence of the living room*, (Minderman, 2010) or *at home*, (Lee, 2010) on The UK SoundMap ; renderings of private moments which have somehow now become part of a public, sonic resource. The effect is close to the feeling I hoped to evoke for listeners whilst working on *The FRRS in assn. w. MA*; only this time, it is the map – rather than radio – which becomes a kind of social space for sharing the domestic sounds we have in common, and I am a participant in the project, rather than the instigator.

The notion of creating a kind of social space for sharing sounds has evolved the development of my own blog – which can be considered as another kind of framework for presenting everyday sounds to audiences. My blog principally began as a knit-blog; a place to document knitting projects and share useful, technical information with my fellow knitters, and it has evolved over time into an online space for sharing essays, sounds, recipes, accounts of my life, exhibition information etc.

The knitted speakers which I introduced at the start of this Thesis, and the approach that I have taken with my blog emerge out of a common idea; that of embedding sounds within a wider context. In the case of the speakers, this embedding happens materially, and knitting is used to impart a specific aesthetic to the sound recordings playing through the speakers. But with my blog, software is used to locate a player within the text, images and narratives, which act like a virtual knitted system through which sounds are contextualised and conveyed. There is no hierarchy to the way that information is organised on my blog, just threads of ideas running through – which is partly a condition of the medium (Plant, p.12);

The yarn is neither metaphorical nor literal, but quite simply material, a gathering of threads which twist and turn through the history of computing, technology, the sciences and art... the World Wide Web, the net, and matrices to come.

On my blog, information definitely runs along twisted and turning yarns rather than in straight lines, or discrete bursts of information. Hierarchies are consistently dismantled in

posts wherein life and art completely collide. Posts like the one I wrote on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (Appendix 1, 04. My Busted Atlas) intentionally blur the borders between art and life.



Figure 54. Sound:Site publicity image, feat. map-speakers, Felicity Ford, 2010

In this post, I describe how a recent trip to Scotland was complicated by my having cut up the Atlas we needed for the car journey in order to cover some speakers. The speakers had been covered in order to be photographed for the Sound:Site festival artwork (Fig. 54) The post is an exploration of the borders between representation and reality. The Atlas pages which signify ideas of site and geography in the Sound:Site artwork become useless in fulfilling their function as a navigational tool but gain a new currency or purpose as conveyors of meaning. In turn, the blog post which relays these events reveals “the mess behind the scenes,” (Hill, p.197) laying bare the means by which the art is created, and showing how the acts of creation intersect with everyday life.

Mess is important in the vocabulary of my blog; In a post about Nicholson Baker’s book – *A Box of Matches* – (Appendix 1, 04. Reading and Writing) I describe it as being “just my sort of book” because it “has already included several incredible passages dealing with the dishwasher, and some burnt scum in the bottom of a pan.” This public appreciation for mess is part of the performativity of self which also inhabited the blog-based project *Messy Tuesdays*, (Appendix 1, 03. Mess is Beautiful) and is also a deliberately oppositional stance against the ideas surrounding purity and abstraction which I discussed in the previous Chapter of this Thesis, particularly in relation to Francisco Lopez’s compositional

ideologies, and Carol Becker's examination of the transcendental subtext of the white cube gallery space.

Negotiating my own complicated relationship to housework (Fig.55) is a constant theme in my blog and Messy Tuesdays (Appendix 1, 04. Messy Tuesdays (incl. Manifesto)) was probably the most celebratory and participatory exploration of this idea. It formed the basis for one of the features in *The FRRS* in association with MA, and involved my writing an online manifesto, enticing other bloggers to celebrate and revel in the materiality of the home and the processes their messes evidenced;

I present to you the delightfully affirmative concept of Messy Tuesdays... Anyone can participate in this positive and celebratory blog-based project. To be involved you must simply photograph a mess somewhere in your house and place the photograph on your blog on a Tuesday. You may write an accompanying text if you so choose including some thoughts relating to your mess and reflecting on its significance, your feelings towards the mess or your desires concerning the future of the mess.



Figure 55. Dust, photographed and documented for Messy Tuesdays blog project, 2008

Many fellow bloggers participated in Messy Tuesdays, enthusiastically documenting the things they had not tidied away, the reasons why they had not tidied those things away, and their emotional relationships with mess. It was a project which precipitated a collective exploration of the things which surround us all the time, and which we do not normally comment on. Messy Tuesdays was one of the projects which could not have existed without

the mechanisms of the Internet and the phenomenon of knit-blogging – in which representations of domestic life are frequently shared – and are often the subject of debate.

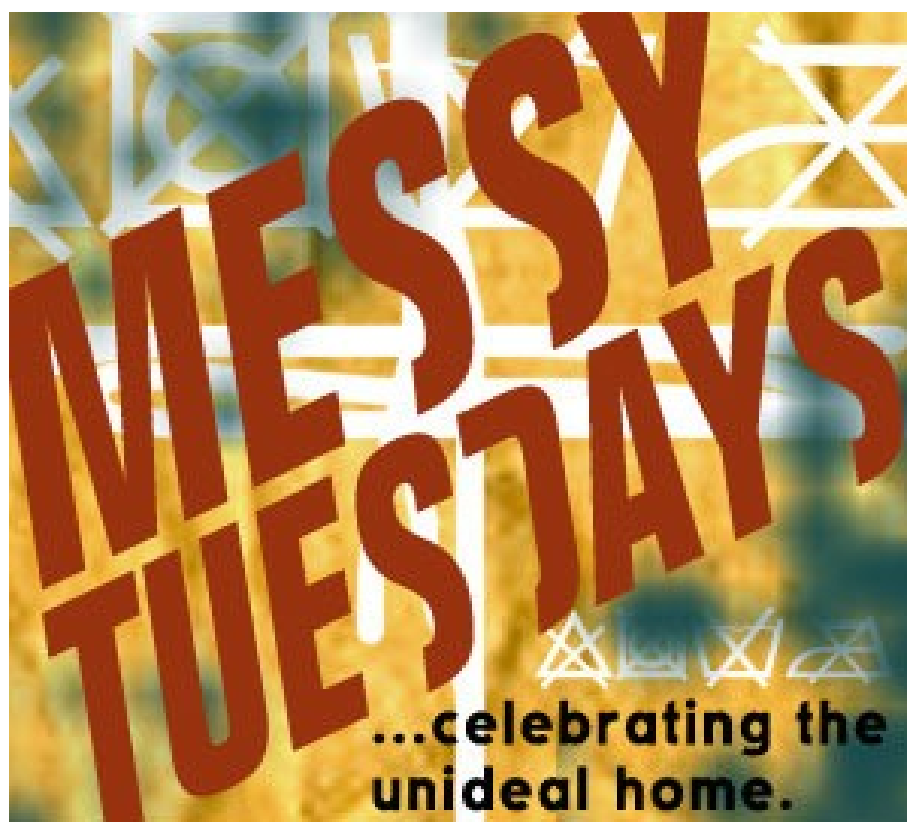


Figure 56. Messy Tuesdays Logo, for the blog-based project, Messy Tuesdays, 2008

There is a question about whether the concept of Messy Tuesdays would have come about without the constant documentation of everyday sounds in my home which my research projects have required and the evident changes which that documentation has wrought in the way that I see my home and my relationship to it. Like Georges Perec, who surveys the objects on his table with pure curiosity and wonder, I have found that the act of studying or documenting my home as a sonic site has fundamentally changed the way I felt about it, because it has placed me in the position of phonographer, investigator and author in relation to the space. The mess on the floor beside the bed becomes an interesting – almost exotic – phenomenon when viewed from this perspective and documenting the mess around my home in Messy Tuesdays posts had the same atmosphere of curiosity and DIY anthropology as Georges Perec's Notes Concerning the objects that are on my Work-table (1976, p.144);

I spend several hours a day sitting at my work table. Sometimes I would like it to be as empty as possible. But most often, I prefer it to be cluttered, almost to excess.

The act of making sound recordings is in and of itself a way of frameworking individual sounds and it is a process through which I have developed an intimate and tactile knowledge of the materiality of my home. Activities such as creating a sonic postcard for The FRRS in assn. w. MA blurred the inquisitive behaviour of a tourist with my familiar domestic environment.

Pink writes about our uses of sonic appliances in the home – the stereo, the radio, the soundtrack on the TV etc. – as being “interventions” into “the everyday performativity of everyday life at home” (Pink, p.72) but the routine action of amplifying the domestic soundscape and exploring it through headphones could – in my case - be added to this list, which represents “the process of living out a certain gendered self.”

#### 4.4 Beyond the domestic soundscape

The relationship that I have developed with my handheld recorder – the Edirol R-09 – has been well-documented on my blog. In a post written on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (Appendix 1, 04. The Recording Kit) I described my reluctance to embrace new recording technologies, because my recording device itself had become such a familiar tool of personal creativity;

One of the things I love about the Edirol is its portability, and its size (it fits in my pocket!) and the fact that I can hop over stiles with it on, and walk whilst recording, with relative ease.

I use the Edirol like an inexpensive camera, to produce an endless sonic snapshot of the world around me. I love its ease of use and comparative cheapness, but most of all I love the listening state that it induces when I am exploring the world with it and the way that it functions like a sonic magnifying glass. The Edirol is no hindrance to walking and listening; with binaural microphones, it can sit happily in my pocket capturing the sounds while I walk, paying special attention to the sound events that occur along the way. I do think about what I am recording, but the equipment itself is mostly an accessory to active listening, if that makes sense, and recording sounds with it is not necessarily the main focus for being out walking in the first place.

I upgraded my equipment earlier this year for the production of Around the A4074 (CDs 13 and 14). However I have yet to assimilate my new recording tools into “the everyday performativity of self” in my life, because the new equipment so aggressively signifies sound-recordist that its presence in any situation alters it.



Figure 57. The Sound Recordist, photo by Mark Stanley, 2010

The rationale for upgrading my equipment was that I specifically wanted *Around the A4074* to air on BBC Oxford, and the production quality demanded a certain level of fidelity.

The reason for wanting the show to air on BBC Oxford was inexorably linked to the nature of the project, and the previous interventions into routine uses of radio which *The FRRS* in association with *MA* and *Domestica* affected. The use of radio which I suggested in Chapter 2, in which the medium is used as a social space for sharing sounds we have in common, was an idea which I also wanted to adapt for the circumstances of the commute; I intended to create a shared space with other drivers on the A4074 road on which I regularly commute between work and home.

*Around the A4074* grew out of my investigations into my daily life at home and the inevitable curiosity which my practices of recording and documenting daily life provoked in other familiar circumstances. The interest in documenting the familiar – fostered through my experiments in domestic spaces – began to extend itself to other areas of life. I began to take a special interest in my commute, after calculating that I had spent over 40 days of my life



driving along it. I presented a paper about this project at Bournemouth's Sounding Out conference (Appendix 2: Radio and Place – an Artist's Perspective) and asked;

What would happen if I explored this road and its surrounding environment as a discontinuous, varied and exciting site and not merely as a transitory “dead space” between point A and point B? Considering Perec's questions regarding the *Infraordinary*, how could I wrest the A4074 road – as a “common thing” - from “the dross” in which it remained “mired,” how could I give the road “a meaning, a tongue?” And how might this “tongue” speak to other drivers who may share my dual feelings of habituation to, and unawareness about, the A4074?

Accordingly, throughout the summer of 2010 I studied the road as a site, conducting interviews with people whose ideas I wanted to include in the show, with people who lived around the road, and with musicians who I met in my explorations around the road. The end result is a collage consisting of interviews, conversations, environmental field-recordings and music. Like *The FRRS* in association with MA, I was interested in giving this show a veneer which would make its contents accessible; which would allow for it to be played on local radio and which would thereby make possible a situation wherein someone driving on the road might tune in to the radio and discover that the content which is playing, relates to exactly where he is; to create slippages between reality and representation.

An inherent desire to share and discuss “the life we have in common” (Moran, p.217) drives my use of technology. The radio show is a context for sharing what may otherwise be isolated experiences either in the home or in the car; the majority of my outputs are discursive and language-based; my blog is an inherently dialogical medium; and in many of my projects, discussions are a central element of the work.

My blog was initially housed at <http://knitaluscious.blogspot.com> and I migrated it to my official research website at [www.thedomesticsoundscape.com](http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com) the end of my first year because it seemed at odds with the overall aims of my research to keep everyday life and my art life separate from one another. My participation in the online knitting community via physical meet-ups and the maintenance of my blog have framed my understanding of domesticity and domestic labour in very specific ways which draw from 1960s/70s feminist art practice and contemporary *Stitch'nBitch* culture. The deliberate confusion of the boundaries between life and art inherent in this evolving approach descends directly from the notion that the personal is political, and from art practices like Christine Hill's *Volksboutique*, (2004) in which artmaking “is not theater: It is a production of life.”

The mixing up of art, recipes, sounds, academic essays, exhibition reviews etc. which is evidenced throughout my blog and my whole approach to artmaking is partly a product of my engagement with Internet technology. Sadie Plant has termed the mechanisms of hypertext as a kind of intellectual “promiscuity,” where projects which were once discrete merge into one another in user-created narratives (Plant, p.10);

Only when digital networks arranged themselves in threads and links did footnotes begin to walk all over what had once been the bodies of organised texts. Hypertext programs and the Net are webs of footnotes without central points, organizing principles, hierarchies. Such networks are unprecedented in terms of their scope, complexity, and the pragmatic possibilities of their use.

The mechanisms of hypertext and linking have destroyed the authority of printed formats because readers can create their own pathways through knowledge, linking endlessly as they go and creating their own collages of meaning. My blog reflects the chaos of hypertextuality; the tendency to find connections between things. In the post TEASMADE (Appendix 1, 04. TEASMADE) I shared the new sounds in my home bought about by the introduction of a Teasmade™ into my environment. Conceptualising the sound of the Teasmade™ as “a sound installation,” I also wrote about a cardigan I was designing, a book I was reading for this Thesis and the creation of a tea-museum which I had commenced. I offered a recording of the Teasmade™ so that readers could download the sound I referred to in the post and leave comments on their own experiences of quiet domestic moments.

Although this approach to presenting sounds makes it difficult sometimes to disentangle art content from tales of family life, reports on knitting projects, and recipes, this deliberate enmeshing of different realms is partly the point. Like Bobby Baker with her performative adoption of specific kinds of things to speak with a distinctive, material “vernacular” language, my use of the blog has – over time – become a conscious quest to situate and contextualise my sonic practice in relation to the rest of my life. The result is a chaotic bricolage of meanings which, when taken together, can be read as a *critique* – like *Taste Sensations* – of abstract approaches to working with sound. Presenting the sound of the Teasmade™ as a sound art installation invites the same affirmative slippages between the sound art object and the everyday object as my own experiences of listening to the sounds of a coffee-maker on the DAARS website while my own coffee-pot was brewing.

To explore how can the Internet may be used as a space or picture frame for presenting everyday sounds to audiences, it is necessary to recap on the many examples of projects which I have discussed throughout this Thesis and to draw them into a discussion. Instances

in which I have used the Internet as a framework for presenting everyday sounds to audiences include:

- Developing a visual vocabulary/voice/brand on my blog – based largely on combining sound art/musical and domestic content into indivisible ideas – through which listening experiences are linked to other realms of life and contextualised within the edited narratives of my life
- Using the facility of an online player to share sounds found in everyday life as discrete listening experiences, thereby building on John Cage’s assertions in *The Future of Music: Credo* (1937) that “When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating”
- Using the Internet’s inherently interactive facilities to engage listeners in the devising of sonic content, as well as in its reception – examples include running the online poll for *The Top Twenty Irritating Noise Chart Show* – and discussing the best ways of developing *Memoryphones* with my blog readers (Appendix 1, 01. *Memoryphones*)
- Instigating participatory, public projects about the depiction of domestic space such as the interactive *Messy Tuesdays* project, which acted to contextualise (and inspire) such features as *Adventures in Washing Up*, and to link housework related recordings to broader discourses concerning the complicated politics of domestic labour
- actively engaging audiences in dialogue with me through my use of the comments facility in my blog

I hope that this list of projects and approaches demonstrates the inherently social and intertextual nature of the Internet as a frameworking device for presenting everyday sounds to audiences.

the discursive, interactive, participatory possibilities of the Internet have allowed me to engage and find an audience for my version of the domestic soundscape. It is highly unlikely that – were my works bound inexorably to one physical location on earth – I would otherwise have found willing participants to join me for my musings on the value of the everyday; for my extrapolation of Cagean thought into domestic artmaking activities; for my continued efforts to elevate and foreground the everyday sounds which surround us in daily life; and for my ongoing efforts directed towards linking these explorations with everyday life as it is lived.

## Conclusions

When I initiated my research, I stated in my funding application that;

the value of... the work lies in its ability to simultaneously contribute to multiple art dialogues... and projects such as... the ongoing work of the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA), the World Soundscape Project and ongoing feminist dialogues. My research will link these projects adding articles, artworks and commentary while also bringing in new elements that are unique to my own practice, but related to these existing debates.

Throughout my research I have produced outputs which have indeed contributed to these dialogues as originally intended; one of the features for The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series – the Sonic Wallpaper feature – was developed in MoDA; I participated in World Listening Day (organised by the World Listening Project) by organising a Soundwalk in Warborough; my presentation at Newcastle University of A feminist Approach to the Domestic Soundscape contributed to the dialogue there concerning A Woman's Place, and joining the Noise Futures Network meant I was involved in a consultation with the British Library concerning the implementation of The UK SoundMap on 27th November, 2009. These activities span a wide range of disciplines and the associated outputs exemplify a unique approach to synthesising ideas from these disparate areas of thought and practice.

Many projects not traditionally associated with sound art or sonic practice – such as Karen magazine, Bobby Baker's performances, and Lise Lefebvre's felt-covered domestic appliances – were featured in The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series; the Sonic Wallpaper project is the first use of the MoDA's wallpaper collection for generating a sound project and Podcast content; the Soundwalk in Warborough involved the creation of innovative maps and sound-recording stationery; my presentation at Newcastle offered new ideas about how 1960s/70s feminist art practice might inform a contemporary approach to contextualising and documenting the domestic soundscape; and my involvement at the consultation meeting with The UK SoundMap at the British Library influenced my programming decisions for the Sound:Site festival that I co-organised with Martin Franklin at South Hill Park, and which took place in October 2010.

## Examples

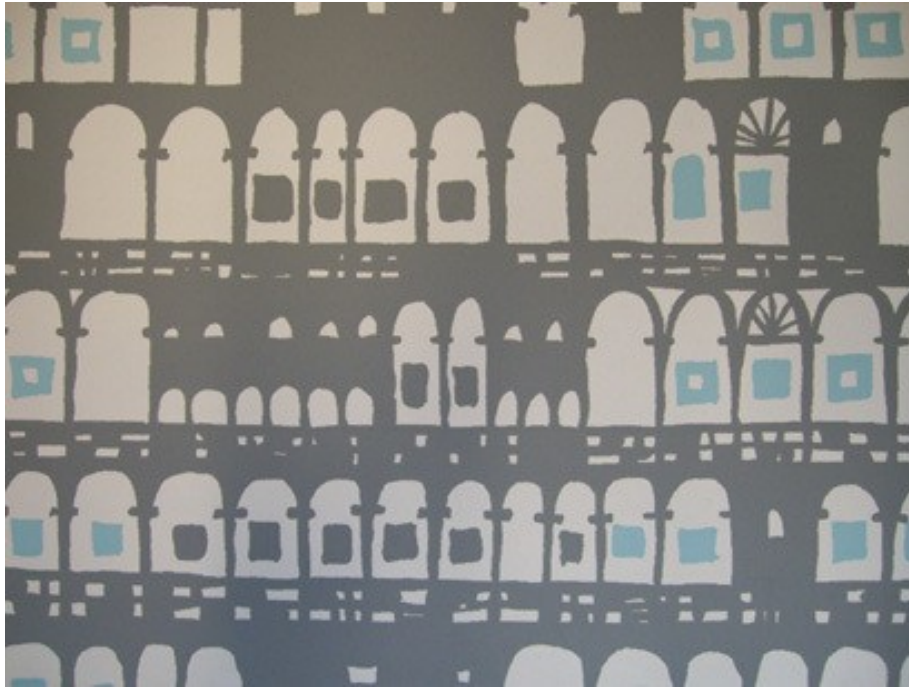


Figure 58. 1950s Wallpaper from the MoDA collection; one of the prints we looked at in the initial meeting for the Sonic Wallpaper feature. Image used with courtesy of MoDA, 2009

Sonic Wallpaper is featured on MoDA’s website, offering a unique perspective on how study resources such as archived wallpaper pattern books might be used for generating new types of sound works (Ford, 2009);

It is possible to buy every conceivable kind of visual distraction or design feature when putting a room together by sight, but we rarely consider the acoustics, sonic properties, or sound-qualities of the spaces that we live in. How would it be if one could design domestic spaces sonically, selecting soundscapes for spaces in the same ways that one picks out wallpaper designs?

For the project I worked with a small group of students from Middlesex University in MoDA’s study room where we looked through wallpaper pattern books as a stimulus for discussing the interior sonic design of home spaces. This was a unique use of the Museum’s collection and the process was documented in The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series (CD 10: ROOMS & CHAMBERS and the domestic soundscape) and in a post on my blog – Sonic Wallpaper – May 7th, 2009. Sonic Wallpaper merges Sarah Pink’s ideas regarding “how individuals use sound in their personal and private experiences of home” (2004, p.69) with ideas from the composer Alvin Lucier, (1970) who has explored the sonic life of rooms in works such as I am sitting in a room;

I am not as interested in the resonant characteristics of spaces in a scientific way as much as I am in opening that secret door to the sound situation that you experience in a room.

In Sonic Wallpaper, I wanted to link everyday domestic practices – such as choosing wallpaper for a room or using radio to create a certain atmosphere in the house – with sonic practices like Lucier’s which explore how sound evidences and describes real spaces through resonance. The result of my investigation was a unique podcast feature which opens up new ways of thinking about how we organise the domestic soundscape, and offers fresh perspectives on how visual or archival materials from traditionally non-sonic realms might be used to instigate new discussions in sonic practice.



Figure 59. Teapot fitted with speakers for performing Alvin Lucier's *Nothing is Real for The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series*. The teapot later became part of the *Tea Museum* (pictured here) that was exhibited in Jelly, Reading, 2010

Relatedly, when I designed a Soundwalk to coincide with World Listening Day, I specifically bought ideas from traditionally non-sonic realms – such as visual design – to the paraphernalia that I created to accompany that event. Although both the composers R Murray Schafer and Pauline Oliveros detail ways of documenting sounds through writing, neither of them dwell on the role that the visual design and physical qualities of printed materials – scores, maps, notebooks etc. – might play in framing our imaginative relationship with recording activities. Oliveros advises on the importance of keeping a listening journal “with descriptions and reminders of immediate experiences, memories and ... imagination of sounds,” (2005, p.17) whilst R Murray Schafer (1994, p.209) describes an almost academic

approach to surveying sounds where such things as “Distance from source,” “Atmospheric conditions,” and so on are reported on “for later analysis.” I extended these ideas when I created the Soundwalk stationery for my World Listening Day event on July 18th, 2010. I intended to use the writing materials which I supplied to walkers as a framework. This framework – like the use of wallpaper archives at MoDA – was designed to precipitate an imaginative encounter with sound through visual design and material stimulus. The Soundwalk Stationery resulted partly from my ongoing work with the SOUNDBANK which I discussed in Chapter 2, and I documented my thought process surrounding its development in several blog-posts.

The crossover between visual, material frameworks and sounds was also key to the presentation I gave at the conference – A Woman’s Place – in Newcastle University where I described how I had sought in *Listening with Care* to deal with the visual and material aspects of the work as well as its sonic content (Appendix 2: A feminist approach to The Domestic Soundscape);

I wanted to somehow present the sounds via a listening system that was in tactile and visual appearance... inexorably linked to domesticity.

This is not a complete list, but it introduces the inherently interdisciplinary nature of my research approach and the new creative practices and art objects which have emerged from my original set of research questions.

My manifold research activities constitute a diverse and celebratory repertoire of works which crosses between disciplines in unique ways and stakes a claim in the idea that the domestic soundscape – and in fact all the world’s soundscapes – should be treated as rich repositories of meaning, and not merely as acoustic phenomena.

## Key findings

All of the works discussed above – Domestic Wallpaper; SOUNDWALK Stationery etc. – plus the other works which I have discussed throughout this Thesis, are underpinned by the research questions which I have introduced at the start of all the Chapters presented throughout this Thesis. Here are the research questions;

1. How might Cage’s ideas and the legacies of 1960s/70s “personal is political” feminism inform one another and what kinds of work might result from a synthesising ideas from these two realms?



2. What creative practices and projects might arise from exploring one's own immediate soundscape in acts of "autoethnography," and how might the results of such a "study" be framed and presented as art, to audiences?
3. How can the contexts of sound art or music – the score, the concert, the instrument, the installation, the radio programme etc. – be used to explore, redeem and enrich everyday reality
4. What are the frameworks through which everyday sounds may be shared with audiences, and how can the Internet be used as a space or picture frame for presenting everyday sounds to audiences?

I hope by now I have demonstrated that these research questions are not isolated propositions but interrelated concerns. The methodologies I have used to explore these questions have covered both the general aspects of my practice such as what materials I use, and how I present myself in my work; but they have also informed very specific questions in my research, such as where listening happens and how audiences are engaged into the act of listening to sounds.

At the end of Chapter 1 I concluded that my synthesis of Cagean thought with feminist thought was a manoeuvre designed to find practical ways to approach sound-based, domestic artmaking. I observed that while Cage gives us a theoretical context for exploring the idea of concerts outside of the concert hall, it is historically feminist practitioners who have shown us how such concerts might actually be realised within domestic spaces and made public through some means. I hope I have successfully demonstrated that in my research both the discrete projects I have created and the generalised way in which I have contextualised those projects represent a successful co-joining of Cagean theory with the legacies of 1960s/70s feminist practices and offer new strategies for sound-based, domestic artmaking.

The methodologies I have employed for locating art experiences within the home – disseminating sonic materials from my website, from the sound-diaries website, and via terrestrial radio – are not in and of themselves unique. However, *Domestica*, *The FRRS* in assn. w. MA, *The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series* and the radio content I produced for BBC Oxford, can be differentiated from other podcasts and radio broadcasts by the intrinsic way that I have connected those projects autobiographically to my life, and by the way that I have organised the content inside those outputs to speak and interact specifically with the domestic contexts in which it is designed to be heard.

Some key findings connected with this deliberate enmeshing of art and life in the context of my blog include the discovery that a contextual, autobiographical platform for presenting

artwork outside of the designated precincts of sound art may be created through combining a strategic use of the Internet, blogging software, and the creative exploration of one's home under one creative banner.

The maverick identity I have built for myself as an artist working in this way has granted me unique freedoms re: the authorship of domestic space; the transmission of my ideas to audiences; and a framework for entirely reinventing my relationship to my own domestic environment by thinking differently about its sounds. It has also allowed me to find strategies for engaging other bloggers (mostly other knitters) in the discourses of sound art. However my outsider approach to making art always runs the risk of being ghettoised, which is why it has additionally been necessary to bring my domestic approaches to the established precincts of sound art, such as the SoundFjord gallery launch, and the Sonic Arts Network EXPO, 2008.

Furthermore, at the end of Chapter 2, I identified one key finding regarding the presentation of art in traditionally non-art contexts such as personal blogs and blog projects such as the SOUNDBANK Advent Calendar as being that in such situations, it is not always possible to identify the borders between everyday activities and artmaking. By way of an example, I asked where writing a blog post about the sound of the supermarket in the run up to Christmas begins or ceases to be an art project (a question I still don't have the answer to).

However, in exploring the idea of conducting "my own Anthropology" (Perec, 1989) further key findings involved the discovery of many creative strategies for investigating everyday sounds, and re-imagining our relationship with the everyday world that we live in through creative activities involving sound and listening. The projects which I discussed in that chapter – The FRRS in assn. w. MA; Magic Hour; SOUNDBANK and the SOUNDWALK that I instigated – offered multiple frameworks for exploring everyday sounds – many of which were inherently social, discursive, participatory and self-consciously scholarly. In exploring the practice of conducting a kind of sonic Anthropology, I variously placed recordings of everyday sounds into playful radio show formats (FRRS in assn. w. MA); subjected everyday sounds to writerly or textual recording procedures (Magic Hour; SOUNDBANK); and physically journeyed with the express intention of listening to them (SOUNDWALK). As isolated incidences of sonic exploration, there are some unique points about these endeavours, but when they are surveyed together as a total approach, it becomes apparent that such exploratory endeavours are both interdisciplinary in nature, and that they expand the territory of sound art to include a wide range of different listening experiences. The listening experiences offered by my research projects variously include thinking about

sounds through mimicry or description; writing about sounds; drawing sounds; chasing sounds and locating sounds in different, familiar environments; and sharing sounds socially via social media. These myriad forms of listening build onto existing dialogues about where or how we listen, and define listening as an embodied and conceptual activity.

At the end of Chapter 3, I argued that my interactions with the traditional sites of music – the concert, the composition and the score – have intentionally sought to expand the territorial ideas concerning where sound art experiences should be heard, and what the sound artist/audience relationship should be. Subversive relocations of the concert from the public hall to the interiorities of the body – Sonic Tuck Shop Idea #1 – and the deliberate and relentless inclusion of explanations regarding what is being heard in concert recitals – Felicity Ford’s realisation of Alvin Lucier’s *Gentle Fire* – downloadable podcast content – The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series – and performable scores – The Sonic Tuck Shop Artist Book – position my work as inherently conceptual as well as aural. The body of work which I have produced throughout my research and the way that I have discussed and presented it here places it squarely within the emergent “non-cochlear” dialogue surrounding sonic art which Seth Kim-Cohen has identified.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I described how the discursive, interactive, participatory possibilities of the Internet have allowed me to engage and find an audience for my version of the domestic soundscape.

Taken together, the research activities which I have been engaged with have added to the growing theoretical debates surrounding social media and r@dio; (Cordeiro, 2010) have fed into the emergent theory of non-cochlear sonic art defined by Seth Kim-Cohen; have contested the boundaries of what is and isn’t sound art; and have broadened the scope of what the domestic soundscape might be considered to be by linking that soundscape, always, to the non-sonic subtexts of domestic space. Fiercely campaigning against the idea that sound art is a discrete or escapist category of experience wherein pure listening can be used to transcend the dirty, difficult, complicated world that we live in, my research has instead uncovered strategies for rather linking sound art precisely to that reality. Non-escapist, celebratory, mischievous and playful, the central message of my work with the domestic soundscape is that listening and paying attention to the background noise that is life and relocating the situation of the art experience to the immediate environments of our homes can be fundamentally affirmative and celebratory.

While recategorising everyday experiences as art, celebrating the everyday sounds of the home by making radio out of them, reorganising domestic space into a site where art is both made and produced and so on can seem to be merely mischievous or humorous activities, they are the expressions of a serious desire to celebrate the very world we live in. Most of our lives do not take place in art galleries or in concerts; they take place instead in the million and one ordinary, necessary, repetitive tasks which sustain our bodies. I therefore have been fundamentally interested – in my work with the domestic soundscape – in establishing ways of using art to more deeply access or celebrate that fact, and not in devising strategies which allow me to avoid it.

In contextualising my work with the domestic soundscape in this manner, and using these ideas to devise the projects I have discussed throughout this thesis, I believe that the body of work I have produced throughout my research represents an original contribution to knowledge.

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## Appendix 1: Blog Post Links

### 01. Blog post links for Chapter 1

1. Rhubarb Jam, Domestica and a Poll  
November 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=78>
2. Analogue Amnesty  
January 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=113>
3. Trying it On  
January 19<sup>th</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=343>
4. Love Assignment #5: Build Memoryphones  
February 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=395>
5. Assignment  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=423>
6. Of Mixtapes and Men  
March 24<sup>th</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=479>

### 02. Blog post links for Chapter 2

1. Washing up recordings #3, #4, #5 \\_/\* 28.01.08  
January 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=6>
2. Irritate-o-meter  
May 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=160>
3. Eggs, Hats and Houses  
May 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=16>
4. Magic Hour  
August 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=207>
5. Shed of Dreams  
September 5<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=209>
6. Recording Sounds  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=428>
7. SOUNDBANK Advent Calendar  
December 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=828>
8. Joey's Noises  
December 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=855>
9. Supermarket  
December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=878>

### 03. Blog post links for Chapter 3

1. Mess is Beautiful  
March 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=140>
2. Bobby Baker Reviewed  
March 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=9>
3. Reading: An Open Gallery  
November 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=250>

4. Composed  
November 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=266>
5. The Domestic Soundscape  
August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=1314>
6. Brain Food  
September 13<sup>th</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=1456>

#### 04. Blog post links for Chapter 4

1. Messy Tuesdays (incl. Manifesto)  
March 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=135>
2. Sound hunting  
December 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=288>
3. Reading and Writing  
March 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=460>
4. I SPY / I HEAR  
January 26<sup>th</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=929>
5. TEASMADE  
April 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=1066>
6. The Recording Kit  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=1113>
7. My Busted Atlas  
August 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 - <http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=1358>

## Appendix 2: Papers and Essays

<a href="#">A feminist Approach to the Domestic Soundscape</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">Soundhunting for Alvin Lucier’s “Gentle Fire”</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">Radio and Place – an Artist’s Perspective</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">Sound and Site Conference Introductory Speech</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">Memoryphones Script</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#">HABIT &amp; ROUTINE and The Domestic Soundscape</a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

## A feminist Approach to the Domestic Soundscape

Here is a transcript of the Paper I gave at this year’s Conference: [A Woman’s Place](#), organised at Newcastle University earlier this year by [Lucy Gallagher](#) and Emma Short.

I'm doing a practise-based PhD at Oxford Brookes, where I'm looking at the domestic soundscape and the use of everyday sounds within arts practise. I'm going to start today by talking about some of the ideas I've inherited from earlier feminist art that deals with domesticity, then I'm going to discuss a piece of work that I made which attempted to synthesise some of these ideas. I then want to briefly cover the idea of subversion as a way of creating meaning, and then finish up with looking at the more celebratory approach that I'm now interested in adopting.

My practise is particularly informed by the area within feminist art-making that addresses undervalued and neglected areas of human experience. There's a great trend towards the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, towards making work that specifically attempts to dismantle the established borders between Art and Life. So I'm talking about feminist artists who insistently demand that we see more representation of things like housework, and that we see more instances of Art and Life intervening.

Let's start by looking at the Maintenance Art Manifesto, which was written in 1969 by Mierle Laderman-Ukeles. The full title of this work is "Maintenance Art-Proposal for an Exhibition." Ukeles wrote this manifesto after becoming pregnant and looking critically at the perceived split between her labour as a mother and housewife, and her labour as an artist. The Manifesto proposes an exhibition in which the artist lives and perform the tasks associated with maintenance and living, as the actual art work. I'm going to read some of the manifesto to you, and put this image up:

This is Mierle Laderman-Ukeles undertaking domestic chores at the Hartford Art Museum in a 1973 performance. In the performance, she washed the floor of the museum during regular public visiting hours. This is an extract from her Manifesto:

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother.  
I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supportive, preserving,  
etc. Also, (up to now separately) I "do" Art.  
Now I will simply do these maintenance everyday things, and flush them up to

consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. I will live in the museum as I customarily do at home with my husband and my baby, for the duration of the exhibition...and do all these things as public Art activities: I will sweep and wax the floors, dust everything, wash the walls... cook, invite people to eat... etc.

**MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK.**

In this manifesto and in this work, Ukeles demands both that we question the values we confer on Art and the values we confer on housework. The means by which this work operates are entirely subversive, exposing the mechanisms by which we assign values to either Art or Housework. The work demands that the artist must be allowed to synthesise her two realms of labour into one, which is an idea that is especially interesting to me, and to which I will later return in this talk.

Another art project that is essential to mention here is the Womanhouse project, which began in 1971 when 21 art-students, led by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, took on the idea of physically creating an exhibition in a house. Unlike Ukeles work, which relates specifically to service and labour, Womanhouse was a project that was really about women's imaginative engagement with the house or the home as a kind of feminine environment... Judy Chicago writes in her book, "Through the flower, My struggle as a woman artist,"

Women had been embedded in houses for centuries and had quilted, sewed, baked, cooked, decorated, and nested their creative energies away. What would happen, we wondered, if women took those very same homemaking activities and carried them to fantasy proportions?

...Room after room took shape until the house became a total environment, a repository of female experience, and womanly dreams.

Womanhouse provided a context for work that both in technique and in content revealed feminine experience. There were quilts and curtains, sewn sculptures, bread-dough pieces, and a crocheted room... Womanhouse became both an environment that housed the work of women artists working out of their own experiences, and the "house" of female reality into which one entered to experience the real facts of women's lives, feelings and concerns.

In one sense, Womanhouse can be read as a kind of consolidation of stereotypes surrounding femininity. You have all these materials and ideas which relate to traditional ideas about what women do, what women think about, and, crucially, where women belong. And an easy criticism to make is that Womanhouse confirms certain ideas about women and domestic space. On the other hand, I think it is historically a very important work from the point of view that it really is a project in which women author their own experiences of the home, rather than being in some way subject to the home...this idea of authorship is very important to my own practise.

Looking at this idea of authorship, let's take one example from Womanhouse in which the woman is the author of the piece; in this instance a performance piece

entitled “Waiting” and an example of a Victorian genre painting of the same subject; we’re going to look at Ford Madox Brown’s painting, “waiting.”

In the image by Ford Madox Brown we see the artist interpreting and describing his ideas about the woman. The woman is the subject of the painting; not the author. In this painting the woman featured “waiting” was in fact modelled on Madox Brown’s wife and the child in her lap is his daughter. The woman is waiting for her husband to return from the Crimean war; the depiction of her domestic moment has been appropriated for this topical reference and is arguably not the full point of the painting. Described by various critics as a painting with “a quiet intensity,” Ford Madox Brown’s “Waiting” has been compared to images of the Madonna and child and we see the familiar, sentimentalised and idealised vision of domesticity that was so popular in the Victorian era. The woman in the painting is mute, ideal, quiet and industrious. Her waiting is virtuous and it is done in relation to her husband. His absence is the focus of her actions, she is realised in relation to him and her child. But there is nothing in the painting that suggests things ought to be otherwise. This is, in fact, the correct way for her to behave as far as Victorian society dictates.

Contrastingly, Faith Wilding’s behaviour in *Waiting* is somehow “incorrect;” hers is not a performance intended to maintain the status quo; rather it is a challenge to, and a lamenting of, woman’s reliance on others.

Here is an excerpt from the poem she performs as part of “waiting,” the performance documented in the photograph here:

I read Wilding's performance – *Waiting* – performed in *Womanhouse* in the 1970s – as a revision and correction of the silence of waiting women in previous periods of art's history. Most un-Madonna-like and most unquiet, Wilding lists the waiting a woman does in her girlhood, in her adulthood and in her senior years in a stark and depressing poem.

We are embarrassed by the reflection she offers us, of woman's disempowerment. I believe Wilding offers us her lament as a provocative gesture; one intended to leave us galvanised and more self-aware. Although she – as Madox Brown's domesticated subject – sits in a chair, in a house, in a long dress, it is her own version of this situation that we hear and we are commanded, by her poem, to perceive the relationship between this image of the woman sitting at home and the related disempowerment and reliance on others that are itemised so powerfully in her poem.

This is not a man's version of a wife's dutiful waiting; this is a woman's articulation of what it means to feel one's life has not yet started.

Although the words seem damning, although the image painted before us by the words and the performing figure seem somehow to be affirming the pitiable nature of women, I believe the artist in the performance of *Waiting*, is actually a very powerful and active figure. In authoring the experience of waiting herself, Faith Wilding is able to expose the noxiousness of the waiting; its threat to the life-force of the woman who is doing the waiting. The use of disempowered phrases in the poem is subversive; in each line that says what Wilding is waiting for, resides the implicit message that she could choose not to wait for others, but to do instead for herself.

Her poem is also a sad lament of the tragedy of life lived exclusively in relation to others; it is also an empowered gesture; one specifically connected to the artists' ego.

One of things that strikes me about this issue of authorship, is its relationship to empowerment, and to that of the artists' ego. In her immensely important book, *The Obstacle Race*, Germaine Greer talks about how it is because we live in relation to others and therefore have constantly to choose between being a woman (living in relation to others) or being an artist (living in relation to the self) that history has thrown up “no female Titian, no female Poussin...” etc. is “that you simply cannot make great artists out of egos that have been damaged.” She writes that;

...The choices are before her: to deny her sex, and become an honorary man, which is an immensely costly proceeding in terms of psychic energy, or to accept her sex and with it second place, as the artist's consort... To live alone without emotional support is difficult and wearing and few artists have been able to survive it. For all artists the problem is one of finding one's own authenticity, of speaking in a language or imagery that is essentially one's own, but if one's self-image is dictated by one's relation to others and all

one's activities are other-directed, it is simply not possible to find one's own voice.

This sentiment is very much echoed by another important influence for me – Bobby Baker – who also felt keenly the impossible choice between womanhood and artist as vocation, but eventually found her own language through performance and foodstuffs.

Bobby Baker felt, all the time at Saint Martins, an anxiety that someone would tap her on the shoulder and say, “you can't be an artist, you are a woman.”...She made a cake, carved a boot from it, decorated it with icing, and looked at it. The revelation that she then describes, “the new thought” that shone, was that this cake was no more a cake, it was a sculpture. It was a work of art just as Anthony Caro's huge sculptures were.

Bobby Baker writes of this realisation;

I had discovered my own language, material, form...

Bobby Baker made the Baseball Boot cake that precipitated this revelation, in 1972. These are the artists that have inspired me to find my own material, my own form. For me, the material I want to use is the sound that constantly surrounds me in the home, where I have spent a huge amount of time – partly due to disability (I got arthritis when I was 19) and partly due to my fascination with and genuine love of, domestic space.

My use of domestic sounds goes back to a piece I made in 2004 for my graduate degree show. I'll play that to you now. [play Whale.mp3]

Apart from obviously being about body-image and weight issues, and containing a degree of triumph over my former bullies, this was the first work I made directly about my own experience, rather than trying to make something more abstract or cerebral. Like Wilding's performance – Waiting – the process of documenting and articulating my own account of body-image issues in my own language and using my own images, was immensely empowering. The most important thing to note about Whale is the enormous effect that creating the soundscape had on me. I lived very close to the sea at the time when I made the recording, but I chose to recreate the sounds of the ocean by lying in the bath and making all the sounds that way. I deliberately wanted to use sounds as a kind of material... for me, the associations with the bathwater rather than the sea gave the recording a kind of intense intimacy and also a sense of re-creating a memory rather than illustrating the memory. To actually record the sea would have been, for me, a very literal translation of the idea of the piece and also a mere illustration or sonic decoration of the story. I wanted to use sound very much as a material in itself... to take the qualities and associations of a domestic space – the bathroom – into this story. To contextualise it, really. And it's interesting how even when I listen to the piece now, I recall the bathroom which is really the area – with its mirrors and necessary nakedness – where body-image issues are most keenly experienced.

So this is the first example in my own work of where you see evidence of these other influences. I'm interested in making work that uses my personal voice as its main means of communication; that takes the actual sounds I experience in my daily life and uses them as a kind of fabric and that attends to issues or areas of life normally considered to be unworthy of artistic attention.

Now the other side of my feminist approach to the domestic soundscape concerns the position of my practise in relation to the field of phonography, experimental sound- art etc. So this world of experimental music. Which is implicitly gendered as a masculine or male-dominated environment. If cakes and knitting and crocheting and waiting and making bread are implicitly feminine, then mixing desks, screwdrivers, mini-jack leads, soldering irons and the Maplins catalogue, are implicitly masculine. So I made this work that was really about synthesising the worlds of constructed masculinity and femininity and it didn't really work, but I'll show you it now, and we can talk a bit about why it didn't work.



This is the knitted speaker sound-system. My idea here was to somehow synchronise the means of presenting sounds, with the sounds themselves. Rather than providing the standard, black and chrome speaker system associated with sound-work, I wanted to somehow present the sounds via a listening system that was in tactile and visual appearance, more inexorably linked to domesticity. The soundscape I played through these speakers was comprised of many domestic sound-textures. I had taken the sounds of rice boiling, rain falling, tea being made, television humming in the background etc. and “woven them” into a kind of soundscape. (You can also hear this at the bottom of this post.)

Unlike with the visual arts, there is little precedent for sound work that specifically deals with domestic space, from a feminist perspective. This work was incredibly awkward and confusing for my audience. There was a lot of disappointment that all



the speakers seemed to be playing the same sound; the dispersion of the sounds into space, like a kind of sonic texture, was not really of interest to anyone except me, and the relationship between the knitted soundsystem and the sounds playing through the sound-system was baffling to many.

At the time, this was how I evaluated the work;

All the recordings used in the final composition came from specific moments where I was living in my house and contemplating the meaning of my actions. The desire to preserve and relate the very ordinariness and banality of those sounds as they happened in real time was what prompted the decision to create an appropriate sound-system.

I hoped the knitted speakers would comprise an appropriate sound-system; that they would provide a warm and intimate invitation into the sounds themselves, and reference domestic industry. I wanted it to be possible for the audience to experience the sounds at very close quarters and to fully immerse their listening in those sounds because domesticity is real for everyone. I intended the space at a distance from the work to be filled with a general wash of domestic sound-textures; rain falling on the roof of a parked car, things bubbling in a saucepan, an electric kettle boiling combined into a kind of soup etc., and for this wash to take people to their own sonic memories and moments of home.

As it was, the configuration of the speakers was confusing for the audience:

Feedback I got was that that people were puzzled by the jarring contrast between the angular sounds playing and the woolly softness of the speakers; that the correspondence between what you hear and what you see doesn't make sense; that the suspended-speaker-structure looked welcoming and positive but that the sounds playing within it were detailed and required concentrated and effortful listening, and so on. In retrospect I feel the knitted speakers and the domestic sounds are a somewhat clumsy and literal combination of elements that didn't really convey what I was meaning them to convey. The speakers didn't reverently frame the sounds in a way that inspired people to hear everyday sounds differently. Something in my decision-making process overcomplicated the audience's experience and made the work difficult to understand and the connection between the knitted speakers and the domestic sounds was not the readily identifiable link I had supposed it would be.

In the write-up, I then went on to speculate about how using my own voice in the work may have clarified the work for the audience and looked at the score which I had originally developed. I concluded my criticisms of this work by saying:

Introducing such statements as "maybe it's the girl in me" into the sonic textures of this work would lead people to entirely different conclusions about its meaning. Sensuality, gender and domesticity would maybe become more evident, along with exaggerating the private/public threshold within the work. It is difficult to speculate at this stage, but I think in many ways this would comprise a more risk-taking and

vulnerable work than the unexplained collage of field-recordings that existed in the first incarnation of Listening with Care.

The need to resolve the issue of form and content within this piece motivated my decision to apply for funding to research the territory of the domestic soundscape, and in this, I am looking very much towards making work which succeeds in celebrating and exposing the value of everyday sounds.

One of my core intentions or aims is to reconcile my role as a woman and my role as an artist into one thing so that the my experience of being in the home is always authored and informed by my contemplation of that space from the point of view of being an artist. Like Faith Wilding, I want to author my experiences of being in the home and to articulate them to a broad audience. I find it very empowering to record the world around me and to document all the sounds which are generally considered to be boring and meaningless. I also find that recording sounds is an amazing way of physically recreating the space and moments in time that exist within the home – because sound physically describes space and time in a way that photos or static images simply cannot – and that my relationship to the home as a recordist, investigator and commentator makes my relationship to domestic space an empowered and questioning one. Like Bobby Baker I am interested in finding a way of using the material that comes readily to me – sound – as a way of articulating my personal experiences. Like Mierle Ukeles I am interested in bringing materials from the home and my life in it, into the public realm of the art exhibition, because I still believe the home and the work that is still largely done by women in the home, to be undervalued. I find the contact that recording sounds necessitates between myself and unfamiliar technologies very empowering in itself, having been raised in a family where all electronic repairs were automatically undertaken by my 3 brothers of my father.

I feel my latest commission – the fantastical reality radio show – which I am creating along with two other artists and their agency, Mundane Appreciation – reflects a development on from the knitted speaker soundsystem. I am finding that my intentions behind using everyday sounds are much clearer and much more positive than in the knitted speakers piece. The audience is not left guessing; the playful framework of the radio show contextualises the everyday sounds in a way that the knitted speakers with their references to handicrafts, didn't. I'll play you now the sonic profile I made for myself as a personal introduction to the show. (Again, you can hear this at the bottom of this post.)

The references to baking, to my garden, to craft etc. are all here, as in the knitted speakers piece, but I find this altogether less defensive than the earlier work.

I believe there is a way of writing, singing, dancing and making art about domestic space that asserts the power and history of woman's contribution to that space, which articulates such assertions from an empowered, first-person point of view, and which acknowledges the historical fact of woman's relationship to the home.

This is the approach I hope to take in my work with the domestic soundscape.

## Soundhunting for Alvin Lucier's "Gentle Fire"

This is a transcription of the paper I presented last week at the [Sound Diaries conference](#). Please forgive the informal spoken dialect of the piece; I decided to record the talk as it was actually spoken, rather than in essay style.

Basically I am doing a PhD here; I'm halfway through my second year and I'm focussing on The Domestic Soundscape and presenting everyday sounds to audiences. And one of the things I came up against a lot last year, was that when I would be explaining this to people, there would be this kind of appalled silence, followed by then 'so what... are you just recording crying children or...' and there was this sense of the unwanted-ness or the worthlessness, if you like, of domestic sounds. And I would find that invariably, talking to people about the domestic soundscape would focus around this area of unwanted or difficult or irritating noises. So I became very interested in this idea of unpleasant sounds, difficult sounds... sounds people don't like. And on that level where people are very conscious of sounds annoying them... so things like car alarms going off all the time. And last year one of the things, one of the pieces that I made, I was doing a radio show that was focussed around everyday sounds and I decided to deal... I wanted to find a positive way of dealing with irritating noises, so I made the top twenty irritating noises chart, and I went around interviewing people about sounds, and then what I noticed happening, was that, as I would interview people about sounds, then I would have to go and find that sound, to put it into the show. And my relationship then with the irritating sounds was completely transformed. Because I would be there like... and somebody was talking earlier about emergency sirens... and I don't know if anyone's tried to record an emergency siren? But it's a nightmare because you have your recorder, and you have about one second to get it out, switch it on, and get the levels right and invariably what you'll get is just a peaked out nightmare IF you manage to get it on in time. So suddenly, my relationship with this annoying sound that was so loud and invasive and intrusive, became like... you know, as soon as I would hear even slightly a glimmer that this sound was there, I have to make this radio show so it's like 'brilliant! This amazing sound!' So I got very interested in that, and then I came across this score by Alvin Lucier called Gentle Fire, and I don't know if any... does anyone know the score?

I'll introduce it so that you have... a sense. It says, it's for any number of synthesizers, and the first instruction of the score is, 'collect on tape examples of ambient sound events such as those made by screeching brakes, chattering guests, warring gangs, rioting prisoners, and it goes on through this huge list of sounds... and then when you get to the end of that first list, it says, 'using an electronic music synthesiser or any equivalent configuration of electronic components, process these examples so that they become transformed into what could be perceived as sound events of different origin such as those made by ocean waves, wind in trees, flowing streams, boiling tea, cooing doves...' and so on... so there's this real...urm... I was very interested in this, this score... and this idea of transforming one sound into another sound. I also got... going back to the idea of difficult sounds... when he wrote about this piece, he said – and I think this is very interesting for anyone who – like for field-recordists and people who, like myself, who've invested a lot of time in valuing everyday sounds, he writes that he feels guilty about Gentle Fire. Like he

says 'the first column has images that are supposed to be unpleasant and those in the second are supposed to be pleasant, but I can't decide whether some are pleasant or unpleasant, so I put them in both columns' – some of the sounds are repeated in both columns, it's like 'well, it's an annoying sound but it's quite nice as well... then he goes 'perhaps you could just change your mind about how you felt about the sound and then the exchange could be made mentally...' and then he says he feels guilty about gentle fire, really because you know it's maybe a bit counter-productive to, again, his practise was very much about valuing everyday sounds so... this negative judgement on sound and this sort of hierarchy of sounds, where some sounds are beautiful and some sounds ... we kind of think that they're rubbish. And that's interesting to me because, like the sounds that I like and the sounds that are difficult to me, that's a real question for me. Like for instance, I'm going to play... I record sounds all the time, and those judgements that I make 'that's a horrible sound, that's a nice sound' I'm really interested in that and I think that in some ways collecting sounds is very similar to how you collect photographs... like, the reason for collecting a sound... might be, like for instance if I've just finished a sweater that I've been working on for a really long time, I'll get someone to take a picture of it. And I'm not actually interested at all in how that looks, I just want a record of the fact that I finished this epic knitting task. So there's a sort of symbolic, 'I want a record of...' a thing.



Symbolic 'I want a record of this moment' style of photography, or documentary.



A picture I took because I wanted to capture something that was ‘really pretty.’

And then there’s another level where I take a picture of something because I think it’s really pretty. So I’ve got two sounds... this first one was recorded in a woollen mill. And it’s a very small wool-spinning mill in Sussex and I recorded in there because I was really, really, really, really, really interested in the building and in what was happening in it. But I’m not sure if it’s a sound that I recorded because I like the sound, or because I wanted a record of the fact that I was in that space. So I’ll play that to start with.

### [Wool spinning machinery sounds](#)

So that’s a sound that I collected because I wanted a record of that specific thing. Now this next recording was recorded... I was walking through the Highlands, and in Glen Etive there was a lot of ice and there was a stream that was frozen and as I was walking past I was like ‘that’s the most incredible sound, I must record that’ so it’s a very different impulse to record and I’ll just play that... this would be very much what I would think of as a pretty sound...

### [Bubbling ice stream in Glen Etive sound](#)

So this is the way that I’m going around recording things, this very kind of casual use of sound, just building up tonnes of sounds and in a way the edit is me, so it’s like something I’m interested in, or something that I think is a really great sound. And to me it’s a little bit like when you’re cooking, if you just cook what you like cooking what you like cooking all the time, then after a while you realise that you’re just eating the same thing everyday. And I was like I really need to actually challenge what I’m doing a bit more and find a way of working with sound that pushes me in some other directions. So I went back to this score and thought well maybe I can use this as a filter for how I record things, particularly because it deals specifically with that territory of the sounds that you like and the sounds that you don’t like. So... I went back to this score and I became really fascinated at its relationship to photography. Because in some ways this score isn’t just about how we listen to sound, it’s about how we see sounds. Like how can you make a sound recording really... how easy would it be to collect the sound of a collapsing mine? Or a bursting bomb? Or spurting blood I think is one of the recordings, and I really can’t think of a situation in my life where there would be spurting blood in the room and my first thought would be ‘I must record that.’ You know. So... I made some rules about how I was going to approach this... I wanted it to be a filter of my daily reality, in a way to kind of record my daily life through the filter of this score, so that I would create a radically different picture of my life through a sound diary than I would if I just left it up to myself. And reading through this score and thinking about this photographic quality of the words and the suggestive imagery, got me to think about the idea of speculative scores and the imaginative potential of thinking about sound, as well as how it actually sounds. So I have a really small clip of an interview that I did with Jennifer Walshe talking about speculative scores because I think that what she says about how we think about and imagine and connect ourselves to the ideas of sounds is really relevant. I hope it’s OK, because it was recorded on skype...

[audio link](#)

...I think the scores function as text scores, that are, like you're saying that you write these sounds down you make this sound bank and like, you're calling, you know, this sound into your head, do you know what I mean like you're creating it in your mind and you're sort of calling it into being, and I think that like... these texts have been published in literary journals, you know, and so... because people enjoy reading them, do you know what I mean? And like imagining that in their head and so like for me, I think, also I have a friend here in New York – Tony Conrad – and you know, he and I were talking because he played all these Cage scores and you know he did all this text scores back in the sixties and I was saying to him I'm sort of interested in almost like speculative scores. You know, scores that you create that don't ever necessarily have to be performed and they could just be like an idea, in the same way that like you read Stanislaw Lem or you know, some Sci-Fi writers and they write... or Borghese and they write fake reviews of books that don't exist. You know what I mean? And so it's like... you don't need to... if... because your experience reading the score you're, you have an imaginative experience that happens inside your ears and internally and, you know, in your mind when you're reading them. And so I'm satisfied if that's all that it goes to. Different performers perform them in different ways... and you know it's funny it's like seeing different people's cooking styles. I've seen the same piece performed by different people and you know they'll be really some person will be really sloppy and another person will finish you know 20 minutes later than everyone else because they are so careful you know of everything that they do... and things like that and so I'm happy for it to be flexible.

- [Jennifer Walshe](#), the composer who introduced me to the idea of The Speculative Score

So I thought that was really interesting in terms of Gentle Fire and the way that it acts as a sort of synaesthetic filter – yeah not just for sound, but how we value or judge or think about sounds and bearing ALL of that in mind, I'm slowly trying to collect all the sounds that are in this first list like to the best of... you know like I've made a number of rules. So the first rule is no faking it. So like no going out of my way to like you know, go to the Zoo specifically to record the scratching claws of the rats or the meerkats or something. And then the second thing was just to always have... like I just have this small book that I just log, every time I come across a sound it goes in here, and then I... No foley. I had this massive conversation with someone about how things like, when you make a movie and you want to make the sound of breaking bones apparently celery's really good. And I can imagine that snapping celery would be great. But I don't want to fake it because I want to deal with that philosophical dimension of this text that is to do with how do we value the sounds that we hear and experience every day.

And the other thing that's interesting... there's... for instance, if I was at a circus and the clowns were there and they were frowning and I took a field-recording at that point in time, I would point that as being the frowning clowns thing that's in this list, but I'm really sure that the sound that you would hear in that situation wouldn't actually be the sound of the frowning of the clowns, but that would be the context that I gathered the sound in. So those are some my kind of with approaching it... and the other thing that I've noticed is that, if I've decided myself that something I've heard is an unpleasant sound then I will now specifically record it and log it even if it's not in the list, as part of my process of doing this work. And the context in which

we hear things really changes whether or not we find them to be a horrible sound... like this next recording probably could be a very interesting soundscape at a certain point, but like this is... I was just walking home it was very late, and I just walked past a pub and the cars were coming very loud, and it just felt like a very threatening soundscape to me. But I don't know if actually the sounds are threatening or if it's the way that I think about the sounds... so I'll just play you that...

#### [a soundscape I personally found threatening](#)

I don't have very much more to say, so I was just going to play you some of the sounds I've been collecting so far, and to say finally that I think the most interesting thing about following this score as a recording process, is that I really think that almost all sounds become amazing once you invent a desire for them. And I'm not sure if in the end I will find it necessary to process the collection of sounds like it says in the score, using a tape – synThesiser, and I want to go back to what Alvin Lucier says where going back to that thing where he says 'Perhaps you could just change your mind about how you feel about them, and the exchange could be made mentally. I feel guilty about gentle fire because one can learn to tolerate noise and pollution; you design an imaginary synThesiser in your head with which you transform unpleasant sounds into pleasant ones.' ...but that point about making an imaginary synThesiser in your head, I think where I want to take this collection of sounds, and this entire process of collecting these sounds in this way, is I want to find a way of presenting it to audiences in such a way that they can explore that idea of unpleasant or pleasant sounds and maybe have... I would like to share that moment of discovery that I've had, I suppose, that I've had in sound hunting via this score. And I'm not quite sure how to do that yet. I'll just play you some more of the sounds that I've collected.

#### [Sounds collected so far](#)

Screeching Brakes  
Roaring Train  
Chattering Guests  
Drowning turbines (fans)  
Snarling Dogs (barking)  
Roaring Crowds



## Radio and Place – an Artist’s Perspective

Title Radio and Place - an Artist’s Perspective  
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The A4074 connects Reading and Oxford. It is locally famous for being a beautiful road, a difficult road, and a dangerous road. More personally, it's the road I have been using regularly to commute between home and work for about five years. At some point driving on this familiar route, I realised I really didn't know much about it. Driving on the road had become a kind of 'dreamless sleep,' (Perec 1989) enacted habitually and without curiosity. As Joe Moran (2010, p.2) writes:

An ordinary road... is just part of the invisible landscape of the everyday. You will probably see those white lines stretching into the distance, and hear the sound of tyres on tarmac, every day of your

life. Everyone eats, sleeps, talks, works and loves within about a hundred feet of a road. But a road is not there to be dreamt about, feared, or remembered; it is there to be driven along forgetfully on the way to somewhere else. A road is overlooked and taken for granted because its shared routines seem to offer little opening for individual creativity or invention. We see most of our journeys on roads as dead time...

But if this is true of routine commutes then, during these times, – as Georges Perec asks in his seminal essay, 'The Infra-Ordinary,' (1989, p. 210) 'Where is our life? Where is our body? Where is our space?'

I calculated that if I drove on the road 3 times a week, and if it took me 40 minutes each way, and if I had been doing this for 5 years, then including all my return journeys along the A4074, I'd spent approximately 43 days in a place to which I was habituated but which I did not really know. My understanding of the road was limited to knowing where the safe overtaking points were and what the speed limit was in different places along the way. But I could not name the hills I recognised, and I had no idea where the footpaths signposted enticingly from the road actually led. Like everyone else who drives, my attention is trained on the road and the car ahead - a system that does not facilitate an imaginative contemplation of one's surroundings. As Julio Cortázar (2008, p. 24 – 25) writes:

The engineers who conceived and elaborated what could be called the institution of the freeway performed heroic feats to remove from the driver's path not only any obstacle that could reduce his speed...but also anything that could distract the driver's concentration from the strip of asphalt that must give to those who follow it... the impression of uninterrupted continuity

I wanted to dismantle this 'impression' of 'continuity,' to do something other than merely drive to and from work along the A4074 and to find

more 'openings for creativity and invention' (Moran 2010) relating to the context of my commute.

What would happen if I explored this road and its surrounding environment as a discontinuous, varied and exciting site, and not merely as a transitory 'dead space' (Moran 2010) between point A and point B? Considering Perec's questions regarding the *Infraordinary*, (1989, p. 210) how could I wrest the A4074 road – as a 'common thing' - from 'the dross' in which it remained 'mired,' how could I give the road 'a meaning, a tongue?' And how might this 'tongue' speak to other drivers who may share my dual feelings of habituation to, and unawareness about, the A4074?

In order to interrupt the normal mode of perception employed on the road – the endless tarmac, the insulated microclimate, absent-minded thoughts of the destination ahead, and so on – I felt motorists on the road should be addressed directly in the act of driving, and a visual language for this address was out of the question, since drivers shouldn't be encouraged to look at anything other than the road whilst driving - for obvious safety reasons. It seemed increasingly clear that locally broadcast radio would be the best medium for the road's 'tongue,' as it would locate that tongue in a specific and somehow native province, and radio could speak directly to anyone driving on the road, tuned into the local station.

As Perec observes, (1989, p. 209) 'The Daily Papers contain everything except the daily,' and in 5 years of driving along the A4074 - a road which is used by hundreds of motorists every day – I've noticed that it's only ever mentioned on local radio in the context of the traffic bulletin. The other, ordinary, non-eventful life of the road – its routine use and contemplation - goes unreported 'as if life reveals itself only by way of the spectacular, as if what speaks, what is significant, is always abnormal.' (Perec 1989)

I wanted to interrupt this established radio-language surrounding roads with a different kind of transmission; one which would relate directly to the

non-spectacular, everyday use of roads. I wanted to create the possibility that other motorists using the A4074 could find their location being discussed on air, and seemingly in real time. I wanted to draw attention to the here and now experience of the commute and to use radio to draw a fulsome, audible portrait of the places that lie along it. I also wanted the radio show to make road-users visible to one another, so that the truly shared nature of the road – as a social space – could be rendered explicit. Local radio – as a hub for community issues and a platform for local voices and opinions – seemed perfectly suited to this purpose. BBC Oxford provisionally granted me a two-hour slot on the August Bank Holiday, and I commenced with developing *Around the A4074*, a show intended to celebrate, explore and describe a place where I have spent at least 43 days of my life, and which countless others have also inhabited - many for even longer stretches of time.

## Production of the radio show

How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual? (Perec 1989)

The first thing that I did towards evolving a 'tongue' for the A4074 was to walk around it. It is a narrow road in places, and the speed limit sits mostly at 60 MPH. Also, the road isn't paved along its entire length, and so it was necessary to walk on the public rights of way nearest to the road rather than directly along it.

The paths I identified around the road comprise a 30 mile route, which I completed several times. During my walks, I mapped the route by recording observations, sounds, and descriptions of details in the landscape. Consulting maps as I went meant that I was able to find place names for all the features in the landscape which had remained nameless beforehand and it soon became clear that language – especially descriptive language and place-names – was going to be central for linking the driver's experience of the road, and the environment around it.

Of all modes of travel, walking is the most natural... there is no other way of getting into the heart of the mountain and moorlands, there is no better way of exploring the ins and outs of the fascinating old towns and villages, there is no way in which you are more likely to... learn something of the ways of nature (Davies 1948)

Through walking around the A4074, I discovered some of the routines encircling the road; for instance there is a hare which can sometimes be found on a farm track near Ipsden, and a Reed-Warbler which sings just before sunrise along the Thames, near Wallingford. Night-time helicopter flying practice regularly takes place around Benson Airfield, and the bells of Dorchester Abbey ring out at 15-minute intervals. This detailed knowledge

of places is difficult to discover without either living in or regularly exploring them on foot, and I decided that one strategy for reducing the anonymity of the road, would involve populating the radio show with this discovered knowledge, and using sound recordings in the radio show to conjure a sense of place.

One element of car-travel which contributes to the illusion of continuity on any road is the perpetual engine drone, which means the whole journey sounds the same from start to finish. This engine drone drowns out the quieter sounds that locate where you are, and delineate your sense of place. In contrast, walking brings you into intimate contact with those sounds. The sound of walking on different textures at different points along the route helped me to build up a mental picture of my pathways. I found I could remember the sequence of sounds associated with different stages of the journey, and that these memories formed a useful, mental map of the road which was more detailed than impressions I had been able to form from within my car. I therefore endeavoured to find ways of bringing those specific sounds into the car of my imagined listener, who may be driving on the road and listening to the radio show. I felt sound recorded from around the road could be employed to animate and make real the places glimpsed by this imagined listener, and I hoped that in using them, I could close the gap between the insulated box of the car, and the rich and various world outside it.

My next production research involved driving along the road and recording myself remembering the points of interest I had discovered on foot as I did so. This exercise helped me to perceive the discrepancy between walking and driving speeds. The same stretch of road that takes an hour to walk on can take 3 minutes to drive along, and there is no way of introducing all that one could possibly hear or see along that stretch in a way that is congruent with the speed of a car travelling at 60 MPH. Each place

mentioned on the radio show was going to have to be represented in a condensed manner, closer to the speed of driving. At this point I had a kind of rough, sonic drawing of the places around the A4074 from which to draw a more condensed, somewhat hyper real picture, and an idea of the pace I would need the show to move at.

As well as making the landscape around the road audible to the motorist, I was interested in how local radio – with its inherent formats like interviews, features and music – could be appropriated specifically for discussing the A4074.

I hoped that adopting these pre-existing elements found in local radio would render the show's content accessible, and I drew up a list of interviewees and events that could populate the show's 'features' list, and provide context for the idea of the show itself. Joe Moran was my first guest of choice, because his book – *On Roads* – was so influential in shaping my own perception of the A4074. Similarly, the Woodcote Steam Rally and the Warborough and Shillingford Festival were local events – both signposted from the A4074 – with press offices that I could contact.

In terms of finding other users of the road, the biker café near Benson was extremely helpful, agreeing to my interviewing the bikers who meet there every Monday night. It was harder to get to talk to lorry drivers, but a few lorry drivers meet at the same café and everyone else that I spoke to had experienced driving on the road in a car. It is regrettably harder to make contact with commuters who are not necessarily connected to any place specifically along the road itself, but maybe travelling along it between points beyond its beginning or end.

I researched bands and open-mic nights from around the A4074 so that even the music in the show could be linked to the road. Several bands kindly agreed to record their tracks for me beside or near the road, and I worked closely on the script to connect the ideas in their music with my

experience of walking around the A4074. In this way, a link was constantly maintained between the road and the music. For instance, one song in the radio show – *The Language of Birds*, performed by Telling the Bees – is introduced with an interview by the songwriter, Andy Letcher, who draws an analogy between learning what different kinds of birdsong are, and learning what different plants are in the hedgerow. He talks about the richness that such detailed knowledge brings to our experiences of life, and thus the song and its introduction build on the radio show's overall theme re: enriching one's perception of the road with knowledge about it.

The production process of this radio show - my habitual driving and walking on the road, my meetings with other people around it, and the various leads and tangents which such a process inevitably occasions - started to resemble a journey in itself. This idea of a dual journey – both the imaginative journey of discovery and uncovering and the physical journey of actually travelling around the A4074 – led to the decision that the final radio show ought to be structured around an actual drive along the road itself.

The links for all the features were thus recorded either beside the A4074 or in the car driving along the road, and between features, I discussed what each section of the route meant to me with my co-presenter. It was important to honestly present my journey around the A4074 as a subjective, single-person 'voyage of discovery,' because the editing decisions I made along the way were all informed by a subjective view of how I wanted to portray and explore and celebrate the road. This approach to making work about places is described by Suzanne Lacy (cited Lippard, 1997) in *The Lure of the Local*;

The artist enters, like a subjective anthropologist, the territory of the other, and presents observations of people and places through an awareness of her own interiority. In this way the artist becomes a conduit for the experience of many others, and the work a metaphor for relationship. (Lacy, cited Lippard, 1997, p.278)



However in the case of *Around the A4074*, the idea is that the work will not act only as a metaphor for relationship, but that it effectively transmits as a real communication directed at other road users. Through no format other than radio broadcast does the possibility exist for several hundred people to simultaneously hear the very road they are driving on being discussed, and it is difficult to imagine by what other means anyone listening to such a work could directly respond to it. Similarly, it is hoped that radio will be able to draw in some of the voices – such as the elusive commuter – who I have not yet been able to reach.

At the time of writing this, the work has not yet aired on BBC Oxford, so it is premature to discuss the project's outcomes. I'll close instead with some of the ideas that will inform my evaluation of *Around the A4074*. According to Lippard,

The greatest challenge for artists lured by the local are to balance between making the information accessible and making it... provocative as well... to innovate not just for innovation's sake... but to bring a new degree of coherence and beauty to the lure of the local. The goal of this kind of work would be to turn more people on to where they are, where they came from, where they're going, to help people see their places with new eyes. (Lippard 1997)

In bringing local voices and covering local events on the radio, I did nothing especially innovative; however, subversive and inventive elements of *Around the A4074* do exist. The entire broadcast – while coming guised in the accessible formats of 'local radio,' - I hope – subverts the accepted norms surrounding the way we normally discuss roads on such radio stations. As Moran writes (2010, p. 185) of radio traffic bulletins;

...we have no vivid collective imagination, no easy way of thinking beyond our own experience other than our view of the back end of the car in front. The nearest thing we have to sociology is the drive

time radio traffic bulletin, that litany of low-intensity aggro with stock expressions as familiar as the weather forecast.

It was specifically this language surrounding the discussion of roads – the language of complaint, traffic-jam frustration etc. – that I hoped to challenge in producing *Around the A4074*. The form of local radio and the subversion of its usual ways of discussing and presenting the road are as important in the end, as the content of the work itself. Interrupting our expectations of how the road is perceived on local radio mirrors the ethos which runs through the show; an ethos that challenges our consideration of the roads we routinely use, and which hopefully gives them a different, more complex, and discontinuous voice.

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## Sound and Site Conference Introductory Speech

First of all, a very warm welcome everybody to Sound:Site; it's great to see you here and I think we're going to have some really good experiences today; we've got an amazing selection of people talking and presenting, and I'm really glad you could all come.

Also I wanted to say a massive thank you to Martin and The Digital Media Centre here for all the work that has gone into making Sound:Site happen; also of course thanks to Dr Paul Whitty and the Sonic Art Research Unit at Oxford Brookes for supporting this event. And of course I'd like to say a massive thank you to all the speakers who have braved the weather to come out to the wilds of Bracknell today!

I'm only going to talk very briefly; I just want to set the scene for today and to give some context for this event. So I'm going to talk a bit about my experience of some of the projects we're going to hear about today, and then I'm going to hand you over to Chris Clarke from the British Library, who's going to be our first speaker.

I have this slide behind me, and really this idea about real experiences and online documentation is one of the major themes running through the day and certainly my interest in working on this programme came about through working in both online and offline contexts as an artist and realising more and more how those things are getting mixed up. Like most people here I imagine, I do a lot of projects that really only happen online like podcasts and so on. And then I do more traditional things like concerts and installations which aren't designed to go online, but they sort of end up online because I write about them and take photos and document these activities. In some ways this distinction between the real world and the Internet seems clear; you make things, you write about them; they are separate. But over the past few years, I've started to notice how these spaces – the online world and the offline world – actually inform each another. And I think a lot of the projects we're going to hear about today sit in the gap between living our lives and documenting our experiences.

I have this great photo here of two of my brothers playing camera wars; we had gone for a walk and they had both decided to bring their cameras. And we all took a lot of photos, which became part of the experience of walking together. And this is increasingly how we are doing things... not just in my family but in many social situations people are taking photos on their phones and uploading them to the Internet. Or, they are making little videos and putting them on YouTube... and now with the inbuilt microphones which phones have, and with the relative affordability of hard disk recorders, people are increasingly use sites like Audioboo and Soundcloud to publish sounds directly to the Internet. And there is a lot of time given to talking about what that means for privacy and copyright and so on, but not a lot

of time given to what this mixing up of experiences and documentation and recorded material means for our imaginations.

To give you some examples, let's think about some of the projects we're going to hear about today. Let's start with the British Library's UK SoundMap project, which Chris Clarke is going to present in a moment. This is possibly the first time in history that everyone in the UK with a computer and a microphone or a smartphone can tell everyone else who is online, what sounds they like, how their street sounds, what the first thing they hear in the morning is, and so on. You can see here from this tweet I copied in that somebody uploaded some sounds of Morris Men... and whenever you go to the site there are little stories like this of people who are somewhere when they suddenly think 'I could put this sound on The UK SoundMap!' and we never had that idea before and I wonder how it changes our experience to be able to think about it like that.

There is a big metal shutter on the pizza shop at the end of my road, which closes very noisily at around midnight. I love that sound, because it's like the sound of the street officially closing and it makes me feel like it's time to go to sleep. And now – because The UK SoundMap is on my mind – I can think about this sound in another way and so now as I'm lying in bed, I hear that sound and find myself thinking 'I really should record that sound and put it on The UK SoundMap.' And now I've told you that, I'm sure you will hear something in the next few days and find yourselves thinking 'I really should record that sound and put it on The UK SoundMap.' And so this new sound idea is around, because of this Internet project.

Patrick McGinley's radio show – framework – has been running since 2002, and in the 8 years or so since it was first set up, it's been hugely instrumental in terms of bringing together a community of artists who are spread out all over the world, and wouldn't have found each other without this common focus. And in terms of imagination, listening to the show completely opened my mind to what might be done with recorded sounds and what could be considered music.

The most recent broadcast of Framework that I listened to featured a recording by Eric Boivin of the Family Christmas Dinner. And listening to this I realised that this Christmas, when I sit down to dinner with my family, I will find myself thinking about the sounds and wondering if we are eating our dinner, or creating some sound art together. And these are the kinds of things you can find yourself wondering when you listen to the show and I think it's really changed the way that I hear things to be involved with producing shows for framework, and listening to the things which get played on that show which... without the Internet... I wouldn't really know about.

I'm really excited to hear from some of our 5 x 9 presenters about the new ways of thinking and imagining which are coming about through their online and offline activities; Helen

from the SoundFjord Gallery is going to talk about some of the things that are happening there. Helen mentioned here a couple of weeks ago on the Gene Pool Podcast how important it is for SoundFjord to be not only putting work on the walls and online, but to be a part of the extended discussions which are growing out of sound art. And I think that the Internet really pushes those discussions because, for example, sounds now can be shared on Facebook and Twitter and you can comment on websites... And I believe this sociability online is changing how we are talking about sounds offline so SoundFjord for me kind of embodies the zeitgeist of that in some way.

Elisabeth Mahoney wrote in an article last week for the Guardian that Soundart Radio 102.5FM features a blend of 'the highly local and impressively far-reaching.' Although Soundart Radio seems to work closely with the community in Totnes, there seem to be many ways that people from other places can get involved or participate in their programme. I've become especially interested – like Elisabeth Mahoney – in the idea of the Jingle Hell radio project which is Soundart Radio's current search to create an alternative Christmas playlist. Just knowing this search is out there means that next time I am buying mince pies I will be wondering whether I should record the event for this alternative playlist... and it also makes me think about the kinds of mixtapes I could create for my friends around the festive time and what alternative content I could include.

And ever since I heard about the Audio Gourmet net label, I have been intrigued by the idea that I could go and find a different soundtrack for my tea breaks. Unfortunately I am a bit disorganised and tend to drink tea at irregular points, and probably in less than fifteen minutes. But ever since I heard about the label, I realised this possibility existed, to tune into a specific soundtrack for 15 minutes, and have a new experience.

Also, since I've been following Joe Steven's seaside sounds project, I can't help but think about the seaside differently when I am there. I love listening to people's opinions on Joe's site. Are seagulls a negative noise? Somebody Joe interviewed thinks they are! I love the sound of seagulls but hearing other people's descriptions of sounds makes me think differently about what I hear when I am near to the seaside.

Similarly, the London Sound Survey has given me a completely different perspective on my relationship to my hometown and one of my favourite stories about the relationship between documentation and experience came via an email exchange I had with Ian Rawes about the website – and I hope he won't mind me sharing this – but he told me about a specific expedition that he had made to the clock museum at noon, hoping to record all the clocks chiming at once. And this left me with a philosophical dilemma. Without the project – without the London Sound Survey website as a destination for this recording – would Ian have ever gone to the clock museum? And now all of you are going to be wondering what it

sounds like in the clock museum at noon when all the clocks go off at once, and without the London Sound Survey website, you'd never be able to find out.

Now just yesterday I saw an announcement on twitter that Kathy Hinde and Ed Holroyd have relaunched twitchr, especially for this event. I have this image of the website here, and this line which reads 'Twitchr is a participatory on-line artwork that combines bird watching, social networking and graphic scores.' Well really... when has it been possible to mix those things up before in the past, into a single page which we can see and interact with like this? I love learning about the different sounds that birds make, but the idea of this project adds all these extra dimensions to the experience of hearing a bird, because now I can put my birdsong up on this site and turn it into something else!

Finally, since I have been working with Paul to run the sound-diaries website, I have become more and more interested in understanding how other people think about this relationship between documentation, life and sound. We have had many contributions from other people on sound-diaries, and have embarked on many recording adventures ourselves, investigating the whole notion of 'recording life in sound.' What people choose to submit, and how they choose to create a sound diary shows how complex the process actually is, and for anyone who has ever tried to make a sound-diary, the process leads to some absurd situations where life and art get mixed up. Like my brothers in that first photograph I showed you, I often find when I am making sound diaries, that the fact I am making this work, for this specific website, means I have the experience in a different way than I would if I wasn't making the sound diary.

The framework 250 CD release was made to celebrate 250 episodes of framework airing on radio, and the CD features tracks from many different artists who have been important to the show over the years – two of whom are Simon Whetham and Jonathon Coleclough. These artists will be remixing various sounds and ideas from the CD, and Patrick McGinley – the project's instigator – will also be performing. I'm really excited to see these live performances from these artists whose work so far I have mostly heard online.

And that brings us back from the Internet and the online community that formed around that radio show, into this very offline place and this nice wooden room... and you're welcome packs. There's various postcards inside those packs; the glittery headphones postcard goes with the sonic advent calendar that we created for sound-diaries when we started the project; the CD features tracks from some of the artists speaking today – including one especially made track from Simon Whetham – and there's a schedule and some information on all the speakers, and finally there's this envelope which is an idea I just wanted to pass on to you from my own practice, which concerns what does it mean to save or record a sound? And I'm not sure if I started writing this archive of sounds because I wanted to hold something

tangible in a world filled with invisible, downloadable mp3s... or if it was because I wanted to practice trying to describe a sound. But I've spent a lot of time over the past 2 years writing about sounds in these envelopes and then saving them. And knowing I have to write a sound in the sound bank on a day, means I listen differently and it puts me in a certain frame of mind where – a bit like with The UK SoundMap – I find myself thinking 'I really should put that in the Sound Bank.' So I just wanted to invite you all to hang onto that envelope and just bear it in mind, and then one day... when you hear something you want to save, write about it and keep the memory in that envelope.

So... without further ado, these are some of the ways that I believe online and offline practices are influencing one another, and I really wanted to bring together some of the key practitioners who I think are using the conversational possibilities of the Internet, the documentary potentials of sound, and the vast powers of imagination to create new ways of dreaming about and exploring the world we live in... and I hope you all have a great day here and enjoy all the sounds and ideas.

Now I'll hand you over to Chris Clarke, thank you all for listening!

## Memoryphones Script

Stop + rewind sounds from Dictaphone...

I had a mixtape in my car for about a year, and for this time, I only played this tape. Like I wouldn't listen to anything else; there would either be no music on while I was driving, or this tape.

I made the tape when I lived in Ireland. Donal Dineen used to do a show – maybe he still does the show – called Here Comes The Night. And it would start at 10 in the evening and then I think there was a section at around one or midnight, called The Headphones Hour or headphones or something like that.

And I really loved the whole show, but I particularly loved the headphones hour, because Donal Dineen would just play incredibly soulful kind of ballads really during the headphones hour.

...But I also found that Donal Dineen was so enthusiastic about playing music, that he had a tendency to rush through the details of who had recorded the records. So there would be this amazing music followed by 'and we were listening to Inlnlllh and now we're going to listen to hdfks' next record. So I would frequently miss learning who had made the great music on the show, which used to really frustrate me. So I bought a huge box of blank tapes and took to just keeping one in the tape deck and hitting the record button every time something came on that I really liked. I hoped that by doing this I would be able to listen again and note down who had made the tracks. Of course, I would often forget that I had left the thing recording, and would listen back to find bits of news, or random advert-breaks... but there would be the occasional gem; a fantastic track plus details of who made it. The ultimate aim with these tapes, was to eventually make one that was back to back excellent tracks plus details, but I don't know if I ever managed that.

With my mixtapes, I tend to give them titles that don't really convey a lot about what's actually on the tape. So by the end of my time in Ireland, my huge box of tapes was full of cassettes with names like 'the mixtape of dreams' or 'the mixtape of joy' and so on... now the tape that I had in my car for a year was titled 'best of donal dineen' and I had obviously been very conscientious on one side of the tape, as there was no fillers, no music I didn't want on it, and no advert breaks. But then there was a whole section where I had obviously just left the tape deck recording. You know, where the tape suddenly is full of adverts and breaking news and this kind of thing. I probably would have recorded over this, except that I really liked the song just after the adverts.

So I left all the news and stuff on the tape, so as not to cover up this one amazing song.



And in time... after 7 or 8 years, say,... the adverts and the news announcements began to hold a real fascination and – especially after I left Dublin – a real sense of place. When I rediscovered the tape in 2007, putting it on in the car took me vividly back to being in my early twenties and living in... you know, Ireland, which is a completely different culture and a very distinctive place.

And somehow the selections I had made when I was recording off the radio, evoke everything I remember about being that young and that hopeful and, you know, really unhappy and introspective at times, as well. I think I would listen to this very soothing music and it would just mend me, somehow. After work or college I would go home and listen to Donal Dineen and cook really nice food and be comforted.

So there was a certain cocoon-like quality about this tape I'd made for myself and when I rediscovered it, I found it still very warm and comforting.

As I played the tape relentlessly in the car, the tapeheads got more and more worn and the sound on the tape became more blurred and indistinct... less and less like music, and more and more like some kind of mood or atmosphere. And I kept wondering if I would ever tire of hearing the same news reports over and over and the same songs and the same tracks. But I never tired of listening to these things just over and over...

I did realise at some point that this wasn't about music anymore; it was about memory and the kind of mingling of feelings and recollections and sounds and music that can happen. This tape became like a kind of measure of time for me. The time passing between when I recorded the tape and now was constantly marked by the absurd, obsolete news... the music began increasingly to belong to a different era in my life and yet the desire to retreat into music is as strong now as it ever was.

When I heard that Rachael Matthews was making yarn out of old cassettes in her analogue amnesty project, I knew that I wanted to spin this mixtape into yarn of some kind.

...so I chose some colours and some textures for the yarn that would somehow communicate the sort of dark, safe, interior place that I always experienced somewhere in my imagination when I listened to the mixtape, and then I turned the yarn into headphones, to remind me of the headphones hour.

## TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape

This is a reworded version of [the essay I had published on The Sound and Music website](#), in conjunction with the release of the 1st podcast in [The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series](#). This series of podcasts was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and [Sound and Music](#).

[Tape](#) is the material that gathered and collected a curious generation's first experiments in home-recording, and historically disseminated the power to author, retain and remix the soundscape of the home. Almost all contemporary domestic - recording experiments and techniques are derived from this context, and so art-practises that focus on the collection of ordinary sounds are linked – inextricably – to tape. Like records, tape has sound directly and tangibly embedded in it, and can be used in a synaesthetic way to say something about sound without being played as in Christian Marclay's *The Beatles*, made from crocheted magnet tape pillow.

Christian Marclay's tape pillow, image hosted [here](#) at [The Hammer Museum](#)

As well as having this synaesthetic quality, tape additionally turned home-recording into a relatively widespread social and familial practise. Tape enabled hundreds – maybe thousands – of amateur recordings to be made of birthday parties, family holidays, historic personal moments, children's first words, audio letters, and even Weddings.

Today these recordings give – in a very practical sense – subjective impressions of various domestic soundscapes. But the tapes that haven't been thrown away over the past twenty or thirty years also say something about how we value the apparently banal moments of our early – or our ancestors' – existences. Old recordings have an aural quality akin to that possessed by treasured family photographs, only the same cropping cannot occur on tape as in a photograph, because time and sound leak

outside of the box of a photographic frame and cassettes are not easily edited. A recurrent theme in conversations about tape concerns the unwanted or mistake-rich quality of this inefficient medium, and the process by which – over time – those parts of a tape that were initially most irritating, most accidental and most non-deliberate, can often become its most valuable features. Sometimes hearing a sketchy, taped impression of a room's acoustics can bring memories and associations flooding back in ways that a photo, with its deliberate, self-conscious and much-more-easily-edited content, cannot. Like family snapshots, home-recordings reflect our desire to keep or retain important, personal experiences. Like old photographs – which have been widely adopted as a reference point and material by artists working visually – old recordings have associative, imaginative, historic and material characteristics essential to our experience and understanding of domestic space.

Additionally, tape – as a material that can be damaged and repaired – is analogous in the way it behaves, to our physical bodies. You can wear tape out, you can hurt it, you can take care of it, you can neglect it, and you can mend it. A busted CD can't be played and can't be repaired, but a damaged tape – though indelibly scarred – can probably still relay its contents. A useful comparison may be drawn between a contemporary adoption of worn-out, amateurishly recorded old/found tapes and the persistent use of the human body and its functions by artists in the 1960 and 70s. [Yoko Ono's Coughing Piece and Toilet Piece](#) reminded the world of our humble, mortal bodies in a cultural climate overwhelmingly obsessed with abstract and formal art-making concerns, and Ono was one of many artists who challenged abstraction by asserting that the personal is political. The cultural value of working with the difficult, muddled and imperfect social realities of life was really pushed by feminists at this point in history, and continues to have an influence – particularly in relation to ideas concerning domestic space. In a contemporary sonic-arts framework, works that deal with the everyday soundscape in terms of history, meaning and materiality, are a challenge to ideas that privilege high-fidelity and crisp audio production values over and above the more literal and social aspects of sound. Tape is a matter of history; a vast, swirling, magnetic ribbon of collected experiences, forgotten moments, and shared sounds.

Looking at these and other connections between listening, understanding and art-making, I've tried to unpack some of the complexities surrounding tape in [TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape](#).

[Organising a mixtape swap through her blog](#) and a tapespondence through [the Yahoo phonography group](#), reading [Rob Sheffield's memoir, Love is a Mixtape](#), travelling to Sheffield, London and Glasgow to meet [Bob Levene](#), [Rachael Matthews](#) and [Mark Vernon](#) and spending many hours online reading up on projects involving tape, the research for TAPE and The Domestic Soundscape has also involved knitting headphones from an old tape and listening to a lot of old cassettes.

[The consequent podcast](#) features interviews with Mark Vernon, Bob Levene, Rachael Matthews, Lloyd Dunn, Joyoti Wylie, Joceline Colvert and the Sticks and String knitting group, and the emphasis throughout is on what tape means, what it says, what its history is, how artists use and relate to tape, how tape behaves materially, sonically and imaginatively, and why tape is important in terms of The Domestic Soundscape.

I dialogued with Mark Vernon and Lloyd Dunn about recording communities that grew up around tapes and home-recording, met with Rachael Matthews to discuss yarn spun from mixtapes, discovered old family tapes belonging to Bob Levene and Mel, listened carefully to Aki Onda's recording [For the Birds](#), and found out from [Joyoti Wylie](#) how an answerphone tape and a cellphone can be used to create new conversations about art history.

Featuring old recordings, contemporary recording experiments, delights from the Phono-Static cassette and Derby Tape Club archives, the analogous sounds of Rachael Matthews's spinning wheel and some of the thoughts I've had along the way, it is hoped that this small foray into a vast topic will stimulate a few conversations about the role that tape has played in home-recordings and the way we hear ourselves and our lives.

Links:

[Bob Levene](#)

[Christian Marclay](#)

[The Phono-Static Cassettes](#)

[Mark Vernon](#)

[Tatty Devine hosting Analogue Amnesty](#)

[Rachael Matthews's Blog](#)

[Joyoti Wylie's answerphone piece](#)

[Aki Onda](#)

## HABIT & ROUTINE and The Domestic Soundscape

When everything is interesting, how do you edit reality into manageable, art-project sized chunks to work with, and what do you choose to focus on? Those are the questions for creative practitioners whose area of interest is ordinary, everyday reality. And these are questions that can't be conclusively answered because The Everyday differs hugely from one person to the next, and – because of this subjectivity – evades clear definition.

But while there are no hard and fast rules about what The Everyday is, there are identifiable habits, routines and commonly shared rituals that we spend a great deal of our lives immersed in. And even on points of disagreement, we experience mutual contact and recognition because there is a shared understanding that – however they are accomplished – certain things like eating, cleaning and sleeping, must happen.



We all need clean eating and cooking implements.

And there is an identifiable, cultural history in which these commonplace activities and experiences get passed off as being unworthy of artistic consideration, or even profane. Artists who work to redeem this discounted material agitate and contest the established definitions of cultural value. Look, they say, isn't the world to hand interesting? Listen, they say, doesn't it sound amazing? Insisting that direct experience and the immediate environment are as inspiring and imaginatively rich as fantastical pursuits or exotic locations, they give us cause to reconsider our actual lives in artistic terms. Art is not some distant, abstract otherness in this territory of artmaking; it's right here, right now, right where we stand. The means for dealing with this idea, negotiating the borders between art and reality, and making work which addresses these distinctions, are complex and varied.

The third podcast in The Domestic SoundscapeCut and Splice podcast series has been put together with these ideas in mind, and features projects that deal in some

way with The Everyday. Exploring works by [Bobby Baker](#), [Mundane Appreciation](#), [Karen Magazine](#), [John Cage](#), [Peter Cusack](#), [Paul Whitty](#), [Hilary Kneale](#), and [The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society](#), this third podcast is all about creative practitioners who explore the significance of repetition and routine, and who derive creative projects from our most habitual, ingrained and overlooked behaviours.

In John Cage's influential work, [4 minutes and 33 seconds](#), the everyday soundscape is presented and framed within the concert hall situation. The score for this piece instructs the performers not to play any notes throughout the entire duration of the three movements of the work, and the effect of this is that in the expectant atmosphere of the concert situation, the environmental sounds that bleed into the space where the piece is being performed become EXPOsed. Presented within the tense framework of the concert situation, these environmental sounds receive the rapt listening attention that we normally reserve only for what is conventionally understood or thought of as Music. This piece by John Cage is almost a philosophical statement that says we can bring the same attention we would bring to a recital, to the everyday sounds that surround us all the time. [Karen Magazine](#) is the print-world equivalent of John Cage's 4 minutes and 33 seconds. Emptied of the fashion shoots, celebrity gossip and advice columns we would anticipate finding in a magazine, the ordinariness of life rises from the pages and catches our attention instead. Reframing casual conversations, familiar sights and ingrained routines in ways that are affirmative and celebratory Karen magazine – like 4 minutes and 33 seconds – confronts our expectations of Art and directs the special attention we reserve for it towards the commonplace happenings of life. Something transformative happens to everyday, ordinary reality when it is represented in this way; it becomes almost extraordinary.



Mundane Appreciation at the Oxford Brookes Degree Show, 2007.

In yet another creative approach to The Everyday, [Mundane Appreciation](#) celebrate the expertise with which we all enact daily rituals and perform routine tasks. Their interviews on subjects such as strategies for the organisation of cupboards,

methodologies for brushing one's teeth and so on take an investigate and celebratory approach to the everyday routines and activities that we normally take for granted and allow us to understand and appreciate the mundane in a new – specifically participatory – way. With Mundane Appreciation's projects, you always have the opportunity to become part of the investigation, to contribute to the research, to share your own insights as to how you do the dishes or lay the table.

[The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society](#) reframe and present the sounds of domestic appliances to us via two carefully designed websites. Set up in 2007 with the express purpose of pursuing a non-exotic approach to field-recording, The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society collect and re-present those sounds that occur in the course of our ordinary lives, and gives them back to us in ways where can appreciate them, free of distraction.

Similarly, Paul Whitty's recordings – made during [Unpectacular February](#) on the sound-diaries website – allow us to think about the unofficial rituals of evening-time kitchen behaviour, and to listen to the sounds of tasks we all perform in our lives, usually without thinking about them. The podcast explores the special significance that we attach to the specific sounds resulting from such activities.

The podcast also explores some of the trends to do with everyday sounds and subjective experience, as highlighted by Peter Cusack's project, [Your Favourite London Sounds](#). Since Peter Cusack first asked the question 'what is your favourite London sound?' he has dealt with over 1,000 answers and has noted from reading these submissions that our relationship to sounds is intimate and that the significance of sound is highly subjective from one person to the next. The sounds cited by listeners as their favourite sounds are strongly bound up with the context in which they hear a sound, and this in and of itself, says a lot about sound and The Everyday.

The bus journey or the daily commute to and from work is a routine that many of us have ingrained in our senses in multiple ways. The unique tactile qualities of certain public transport upholstery, the specific rattling soundscape of a bus or a particular engine tone all combine to make a vivid impression of our regular journeys. Projects like Your Favourite London Sounds give us a framework for articulating and considering the otherwise wholly private and invisible reality of the time we spend in transit. Additionally, the sequence of sounds that marks the passage of the day is sort of highlighted in Your Favourite London Sounds. Gathered from many different perspectives, it offers a collective impression of the sounds which start, end, and fill the days of the UK capital. From blackbirds singing at dawn to bagel shopping at night, to the bells of Big Ben and the hissing of coffee machines, it is a project which works with a collective idea of what is precious in the everyday soundscape of one city.

A more intimate relationship to The Everyday is explored by both [Hilary Kneale](#) and [Bobby Baker](#) when they take the world of the kitchen and the rituals performed within it as the basis for making artworks. Hilary Kneale's performance, [Peel](#), developed around her Grandmother's philosophical refrain, 'the daily round, the common task,' repeats and exaggerates the action of peeling potatoes in a gallery situation so that viewers are compelled to reflect on the significance of this familiar action in their own lives.



Hilary Kneale in her Peel Apron, in her studio.

Bobby Baker's Kitchen Show deals with the psychological and emotional dimensions of everyday rituals and routines, discussing the relationships between rapture and margarine, a good friend of hers and her wooden spoon, her anxieties surrounding the provision of tea to guests, and so on. Bobby Baker writes that 'the idea for this work came about while I was peeling carrots. I admired my technique enormously. I spent a great deal of time doing mundane tasks and I entertained myself, while doing them, by having imaginary conversations with famous men where I described my skill, dexterity and endurance and they were always suitably fascinated and impressed.'





Hilary Kneale's potato peeler collection.

Both Hilary Kneale's *Peel* and Bobby Baker's *Kitchen Show* deliberately collapse the borders between what we consider to be boring and worthless, and what we consider to be High Art. Bobby Baker's materials in *Kitchen show* – a wooden spoon, a tub of margarine – are familiar and inexpensive, as are Hilary Kneale's potatoes and potato peelers. In using such objects, we – the audience – are given little opportunity to escape into abstraction. We know these tools; we have used them ourselves. And once you have seen a potato-peeler or a wooden spoon in an art performance, the real object in daily use is seen differently, because it becomes invested with this other layer of meaning, this narrative, this imaginative potential. Works like Hilary Kneale's and Bobby Baker's, provide an important political and imaginative context for any creative practise that deals with the home. Bobby Baker's assertion that carrot peeling is an activity worthy of a professional demonstration bears a kind of relationship to John Cage's idea that the everyday soundscape ought to be contemplated in a formal concert situation. Both ideas deal with the elevation of the everyday through the media of high art. But Bobby's work also characterises a feminist perspective because it relates not only to generalised ideas concerning the everyday, but also to the specific realities of housework.

So in terms of everyday rituals, routines and habits and *The Domestic Soundscape*, there are many approaches. In this podcast there is no attempt to conclude what exactly *The Everyday* is, or to determine the relative merits or losses concerning the efficacy of different techniques for working with it. Instead, the podcast is a foray through some of the philosophical, political and creative concerns that attend the territory of *The Everyday*, and an attempt to show the parallels and commonalities that exist between an incredibly diverse and affirmative set of projects.

## Appendix 3: Track lists for The Domestic Soundscape Cut and Splice Podcast Series

### 01 TAPE and the domestic soundscape track list

1. Bob Levene talking about her family recording tape
2. Bob Levene's family tape (excerpt)

<http://www.boblevene.co.uk>

3. Sections from Mel's family tape
4. Excerpts from Mark Vernon's collection of the Derby Tape Club tapes, including
  - a. Derby Tape Club local radio advert
  - b. Rough brick stereo experiment
  - c. Tape-letter from Germany, sent to Bill Howard
  - d. Duke Manners and Bill Howard meeting up

<http://www.meagreresource.com/archive/tape.html>

5. Excerpts from the Phono Static Tapes, including
  - a. Bill Cutler cut up - the Creature Comforts (Ralph Johnson and Lloyd Dunn)
  - b. Spoken Outro - Paul Neff
  - c. Verbal Advantage - Ybrigor Moss
  - d. Yes John, we have better things to do with our hands – Lloyd Dunn
  - e. In much wisdom is there much grief – Kathleen Yearwood

<http://www.ubu.com/sound/pw/phono.html>

6. Bill Howard's electronic music experiment – Mark Vernon's collection of the Derby Tape Club tapes

<http://www.meagreresource.com/archive/tape.html>

7. Yes John, we have better things to do with our hands – Lloyd Dunn (reprise)

<http://www.ubu.com/sound/pw/phono.html>

8. Rachael's new spinning wheel – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

9. Wrong speed – tape in Mark Vernon's collection playing at the wrong speed – Felicity Ford

10. Answerphone piece (excerpt) – Joyoti Wylie

[http://www.aut.ac.nz/schools/art\\_and\\_design/st\\_paul\\_street\\_gallery/exhibition\\_2007/joyoti\\_wylie\\_exhibitions07.htm](http://www.aut.ac.nz/schools/art_and_design/st_paul_street_gallery/exhibition_2007/joyoti_wylie_exhibitions07.htm)

11. For the Birds – Aki Onda

<http://akionda.net/index1.html>

12. More sections from Mel's family tape

13. Pause Button Portrait – Mark Vernon

<http://www.meagreresource.com/>

14. Pause Button Portrait (for Mark Vernon) – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

15. Tapespondence so far (excerpts of) –

- a. Felicity Ford
- b. Duncan Chapman
- c. Simon Whetham

[www.simonwhetham.co.uk](http://www.simonwhetham.co.uk)  
[www.myspace.com/simonwhetham](http://www.myspace.com/simonwhetham)

d. Joseph Young

[www.fieldrecording.org.uk](http://www.fieldrecording.org.uk)  
[www.neofuturist.org](http://www.neofuturist.org)

- e. Houtan Seyed Ahmadian
- f. Matt Davies

[www.myspace.com/mattedavies](http://www.myspace.com/mattedavies)  
[www.audiblefields.blogspot.com](http://www.audiblefields.blogspot.com)  
[www.virb.com/mattdavies](http://www.virb.com/mattdavies)

g. Dallas Simpson

[www.dallassimpson.com/](http://www.dallassimpson.com/)

16. Mel's family tape

17. Bob Levene's tape recorder clicking – Felicity Ford

## 02 ROOMS & CHAMBERS and the domestic soundscape track list

1. Janek Schaefer talking about Wilton's Music Hall

<http://audioh.com>

2. Recorded delivery – Janek Schaefer

<http://audioh.com>  
[http://www.ubu.com/sound/schaefer\\_j.html](http://www.ubu.com/sound/schaefer_j.html)

3. Handmade – Bob Levene

<http://www.boblevene.co.uk>

4. Janek Schaefer and Jennifer Walshe talking about space, volume, distance and sound

<http://audioh.com>  
<http://www.milker.org/>

5. Bob Levene's metal shoes with Velcro straps

<http://www.boblevene.co.uk>

6. Jumping in Wilton's Music Hall – field-recordings made at Wilton's Music Hall by Felicity Ford, during Bob Levene's creative investigations of the space

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

<http://boblevene.co.uk>

7. I am sitting in a room – score by Alvin Lucier, performed by Mark Vernon and Felicity Ford

<http://alucier.web.wesleyan.edu/>

<http://meagreresource.com>

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

8. In my hall – work derived from Alvin Lucier's piece, I am sitting in a room – and written, reworked, performed and recorded by Jeff Cloke

<http://www.myspace.com/jeffclokemusic>

<http://www.youtube.com/jefferycloke>

9. I am sitting in a room – score by Alvin Lucier, version performed by Charles Stankievech, live performance using custom software and original sample from Lovely Records

<http://www.stankievech.net>

10. I am sitting in an office – work derived from Alvin Lucier's piece, I am sitting in a room – and written, reworked, performed and recorded by Becca Laurence, David Rogerson, Jonathan Webb, and Richard Whitelaw with Mick Grierson working as technician.

<http://www.sonicartsnetwork.org>

<http://www.soundandmusic.org>

11. Sonic Wallpaper – project led by Felicity Ford at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, working with Simon James French, Lucia Chung, James Stephen Finn and Martin Thompson. Recordings of workshop conversations recorded by Felicity Ford

<http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=543>

<http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk/index.htm>

<http://plundr.tumblr.com/>

<http://www.jamesfinn.co.uk/>

<http://www.moize.net/>

12. White noise and sine tones sonic wallpaper experiment – Martin Thompson and Lucia Chung

<http://www.moize.net/>

13. Simon James French talking about speakers and sonic wallpaper

<http://plundr.tumblr.com/>

14. Simon James French and James Stephen Finn discussing everyday sounds and Barry Truax

<http://plundr.tumblr.com/>

<http://www.jamesfinn.co.uk/>

15. Wallpaper loops made from environmental sounds – James Stephen Finn

<http://www.jamesfinn.co.uk/>

16. Songscore sonic wallpaper for dealing with a difficult domestic sound – Felicity Ford

17. Jam jars in the bottom of the shower cubicle as a sonic intervention – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

18. Lise Lefebvre talking about her Masters Degree project, The Aesthetics of Domestic Sound

<http://www.liselefebvre.com/>

19. Record the sound that keeps you awake at night, project idea from Miranda July and Harroll Fletcher's website, Learning to love you more, and realised as art installation, by Felicity Ford

20. The sound that keeps me awake at night – Felicity Ford + broken tap (now mended)

<http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com/>

<http://thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress/?p=428>

21. Portable sounds – James Stephen Finn's idea, recorded at home by Felicity Ford and replayed on 3 stereos in The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture

22. Portable sound by James Stephen Finn – recorded at home by James Stephen Finn and replayed in 3 stereos in The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture

<http://www.jamesfinn.co.uk>

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

<http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk/index.htm>

23. Rachael Matthews's vintage plumbing – pipes 'played' by Rachael using taps and flush systems, plumbing recorded by Felicity Ford

24. Nothing is real – score by Alvin Lucier, performed, played, recorded and adapted by Felicity Ford using teapot, oven, basin, cooking pot and flute

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

### 03 HABIT & ROUTINE and the domestic soundscape track list

1. Karen from Karen Magazine talking about shared routine

<http://www.karenmagazine.com/>

2. Karen from Karen Magazine talking about everyday routine

3. Buying milk and other basics

4. Bringing jumpers to the dry-cleaners

5. 'What are you having for tea tonight?' Carol and Karen

6. Sausages and eggs

7. Karen talking about meat and fuel

8. Karen talking about relationships and the community of Karen magazine

9. Carol's thing about potatoes

10. Hellos and goodbyes

<http://www.karenmagazine.com/>

11. Out and About with Mundane Appreciation: Toothbrushing – Mundane Appreciation (Kayla Bell and Claudia Figueiredo) for The Fantastical Reality Radio Show

<http://www.mundaneappreciation.com>

<http://www.fantasticalreality.com>

12. Electronic toothbrush, kettle boiling, toilet flushing, teapot clunking, laptop switching on – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

13. Toaster – Benedict Drew, for The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society
14. Electricity Meter – Lee Patterson, for The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society
15. Fridge Freezer – Benedict Drew, for The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society
16. Kitchen Lights – Lee Patterson, for The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society
17. Heater – Helena Gough, for The Domestic Appliance Audio Research Society

<http://benedictdrew.com/DAARS/>

<http://www.myspace.com/domesticapplianceaudioresearchsociety>

18. Paul Whitty talking about sounds and the unspectacular
19. Vintage Chefette mixer – Paul Whitty, for Unspectacular February, a sound-diaries project
20. Paul Whitty talking about hierarchy of sounds
21. Making Tea – Paul Whitty
22. Fan oven – Paul Whitty

<http://www.sound-diaries.com/?p=248>

<http://ah.brookes.ac.uk/staff/details/whitty/>

<http://www.soundandmusic.org/node/13339>

23. My kitchen lights going off – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

24. The bell on the 73 bus – Peter Cusack

<http://www.favouritelondonsounds.org/>

25. The number 17 bus – Felicity Ford
26. Post through letterbox – Peter Cusack
27. Onions frying in my flat – Peter Cusack

<http://www.favouritelondonsounds.org/>

28. Hilary Kneale talking about her kitchen and the daily round, the common task
29. Hilary Kneale talking about Peel

<http://www.kitchenanticsandappliances.com>

30. Bobby Baker talking about peeling vegetables – Kitchen Show by Bobby Baker
31. Bobby Baker talking about hot drinks - Kitchen Show by Bobby Baker
32. Bobby Baker talking about margarine - Kitchen Show by Bobby Baker
33. Bobby Baker talking about roaming - Kitchen Show by Bobby Baker

All excerpts taken from Bobby Baker's Daily Life Series: Kitchen Show and used with the kind permission of Bobby Baker and Arts Admin

<http://www.bobbybakersdailylife.com>

<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk>

34. Karen from Karen magazine talking about Housewife, 1946 – 1998

<http://www.karenmagazine.com/>

35. Electronic toothbrush, kettle boiling, toilet flushing, teapot clunking, laptop switching on – Felicity Ford

36. Monday, in 8 second segments by Felicity Ford

glass of water, pot of tea, emails and blogging, making sourdough bread, walking to the station, buying train ticket, train arriving in London Paddington, Underground train to Bethnal Green, Rachael washing up, lunch with egg salad sandwiches, coffee brewing, interviewing Rachael for the podcast, listening to old family tapes, working in Prick Your Finger, winding wool, Underground train to Paddington, train to Reading, Leaving the station, walking to meet Mark, drinking in a pub, making tea, making dinner

37. Brick Lane Bagel Shop – after Peter Cusack's recording, by Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com>

## 04 DIFFICULT DOMESTIC track list

1. Bobby Baker throwing a ripe pear against a kitchen cupboard - Kitchen Show, Bobby Baker

All excerpts taken from Bobby Baker's Daily Life Series: Kitchen Show and used with the kind permission of Bobby Baker and Arts Admin

<http://www.bobbybakersdailylife.com>

<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk>

2. Washing up – Felicity Ford (this track is used intermittently throughout the podcast as a background)

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress>

3. Bobby Baker talking about stain removal – Drawing on a Mother's experience, Bobby Baker
4. Bobby Baker talking about berries and Greek yogurt – Drawing on a Mother's experience, Bobby Baker
5. Bobby Baker talking about breastfeeding - Drawing on a Mother's experience, Bobby Baker
6. Bobby Baker talking about her experience as artist/mother/performer – Drawing on a Mother's experience, Bobby Baker
7. Bobby Baker talking about post-natal depression - Drawing on a Mother's experience, Bobby Baker

All excerpts taken from Bobby Baker's Daily Life Series: Drawing on a Mother's experience and used with the kind permission of Bobby Baker and Arts Admin

<http://www.bobbybakersdailylife.com>

<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk>

8. Hoovering my floor – Felicity Ford

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress>

9. Maintenance work Manifesto – by Mierle Laderman Ukeles

<http://www.feldmangallery.com/pages/artistsrffa/artuke01.html>

10. Baking a cake – Felicity Ford (this track is used intermittently throughout the podcast as a background)

<http://www.thedomesticsoundscape.com/wordpress>

11. Toilet Piece – Yoko Ono

<http://www.ubu.com/sound/ono.html>

12. Jennifer Walshe talking about recipe scores

13. Marl Salad a la Famille - © Milker Corp. (Food Preparation System) 2004 all rights reserved – Jennifer Walshe, performed by Felicity Ford

14. Marl Salad a la Famille - © Milker Corp. (Food Preparation System) 2004 all rights reserved – Jennifer Walshe

<http://www.milker.org/>

15. Cough piece – Yoko Ono

<http://www.ubu.com/sound/ono.html>

16. Bad Marriage Mantra – Erik Belugum

<http://www.freewords.org/biennial/artist/badmarriage.html>

17. Hilary Kneale discussing the work of Kitchen antics and appliances, a collaborative project between Hilary Kneale, Barbara Dean and Ann Rapstoff

<http://www.kitchenanticsandappliances.com/>

18. Listen, the snow is falling – From The Breadwinner, Graham Lambkin and Jason Lescalet

19. E5150/Body Transport – From The Breadwinner, Graham Lambkin and Jason Lescalet

<http://www.erstwhilerecords.com/catalog/052.html>

20. Taste Sensations – Felicity Ford

<http://soundcloud.com/felixbadanimal>