

University of Dundee

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Artist as Troubadour

Exploring Creative Encounter through Song, Travel and Story

Foster, Joanna

*Award date:*  
2020

[Link to publication](#)

**General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# The Artist as Troubadour

Exploring Creative Encounter through Song, Travel and Story

Joanna Foster

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Scholarship  
Doctor of Philosophy Thesis Submission  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design  
University of Dundee



## **Declaration**

I declare that I, Joanna Foster, am the author of this thesis, and that all references cited have been consulted by myself. The work of which this thesis is a record has been carried out solely by myself, and where collaborative projects discussed in this thesis have been made all parties have been acknowledged. This work has not previously been accepted for a higher degree.

## **Co-ordinates**

### **Map**

- Outline .....10
- Navigation ..... 11

### **A Troubadour's Toolkit**

- Research Aims + Methods ..... 14
- A Multi-disciplinary Approach .....18
- Definition of Terms .....29
- Review of Sources .....33
- Introduction to Sambia K'e .....43

### **Journey**

- Invitation ..... In Sleeve



## **Travel Guide**

### **Creative Encounter**

- Unfolding .....47
- Method + Medium .....51
- Sambaa K'e .....61

### **Song**

- Sounding Out, Hearing In .....70
- Container + Conduit .....81
- Hearing Forward .....90

### **Conditions of Encounter**

- 'Liveness' .....102
- Mediating the Unmediated .....115
- Intuition + Instinct .....122

## **Travel**

- The Travelling Musician .....133
- *'Go Out and Sing!'*.....138
- Movement + Correspondence ..... 146

## **Creative Exchange**

- Immediacy + Spontaneity ..... 158
- Play, Apply... ..... 169
- ...Connect, Flow ..... 181

## **Story**

- Return to Sambia K'e ..... 190
- Tellings + Rememberings .....203
- Community Building ..... 220

## **Traces**

- Drawing Breath ..... 234



## Journal

- Digital Folders .....On USB

### Folder 1: Sambaa K'e

- Music and Coffee .....1
- Community Portraits .....2
- Sambaa K'e Print Studio .....3

### Folder 2: Song

- Out Into The Aether .....1
- Freight Train .....2
- Lighthouse ..... 3

### Folder 3: Workings-out

- Speech Rhythms ..... 1
- Hearing the Shape ..... 2
- Repetitions ..... 3

**Folder 4: Travel**

- Kutapita .....1
- Corinna Rose .....2
- Tereza and Sam .....3

**Folder 5: Jamming**

- Late Night .....1
- Kitchen Conversation .....2
- Above The Clouds .....3

**Folder 6: Story**

- Roots .....1
- DIY .....2
- Triassic Tusk .....3

**Folder 7: Sketches**

- Journeys .....1
- Notes .....2



**List of Illustrations** ..... 252

**Bibliography**

- Literature ..... 259
- Audio ..... 267
- Visual ..... 269

**Activities**

- Publications ..... 271
- Conferences + Residencies ..... 273
- Talks + Workshops ..... 275
- Community Projects ..... 277
- Exhibitions + Performances ..... 278

**Troubadours**

- Canada ..... 281
- Scotland ..... 282

**Acknowledgements** ..... 283

**Map**



## Outline

This thesis is a reflection on my multi-disciplinary practice as a performing singer-songwriter and visual artist. The live performances I have made as a singer-songwriter provide the context for my research investigation into a relationship between performer, audience and environment developed in real-time. Research is practice-based and necessarily non-linear; triangulating audio, visual and textual languages in a polyphony of voicings that allows room for interpretation between methods of working.

Underpinning this research is my experience as an artist-in-residence with the Smbaa K'e Dene, a traditionally nomadic community of First Nations Canadians located in the Western Arctic. Development of music, drawing and printmaking projects with the Dene community, and first-hand experience of the Dene's intimate relationship with the land, shaped my subsequent journey as a travelling musician in British Columbia and Alberta.

The song performances I made as a travelling musician provide the context for research into what I am calling 'creative encounter'; a relationship between performer, audience and environment that develops collaboratively in real-time. Key areas of research include embodiment, embodied learning/practice, as a troubadour I am both 'method' and 'medium'; qualities of 'liveness', 'spontaneity', 'flow' and 'feel' in an experiential process, and the transformative potential of song performance to become a conduit for connection.

## Navigation

This thesis consists of three interrelated parts presented in two stages: 'Travel Guide', 'Journal' and 'Journey'. The 'Travel Guide' situates my research to lay out and analyse the content and contexts that shape and inform it; the 'Journal', on USB and interwoven throughout the 'Travel Guide', consists of drawings, documentary video footage and audio examples of song development, to reveal my multi-disciplinary methods of practice and raw material for reflection and analysis, which is intermediate between the concreteness of live experience and the abstract level of critical analysis, but which points towards both.

The 'Journal' provides a cohesive reading of the text that is somewhat closer to the flow and variety of my experience as an artist-musician than the more critically reflective sections. The aim is to interfuse more concrete elements of creative practice with more abstract elements of critical self-reflection. This integration places emphasis on practice as research to move freely between context and content, underlining that practice-led research develops in non-linear ways.

To equip the reader for their own journey through this thesis, a 'Troubadour's Toolkit' is provided at the onset introducing my research aims and methods, multi-disciplinary approach, key sources, definition of terms, and residency undertaken at Samba K'e.

The 'Travel Guide' contains seven chapters of investigation including three key areas of research that I have termed 'Creative Encounter', 'Conditions of Encounter', and 'Creative Exchange'. A more detailed discussion of these terms will follow, but in short, 'Creative Encounter' expresses the embodied nature of troubadouring where the

performer's body becomes a medium in relation to its environment. 'Conditions of Encounter' introduces live song performance as subject to, and influenced by unmediated conditions (by which I mean conditions which the performer does not control), and 'Creative Exchange' positions live song performance as a transformative experience co-created in real-time.

Between these three areas, the themes of 'Song', 'Travel' and 'Story' are explored, each containing an 'action' chapter recounting first-hand experience; among the Dene community at Samba K'e, my time on the road as a travelling musician, and my subsequent return to Samba K'e. These personal accounts, interspersed at key points during the reading provide a reminder of the experiential source on which this thesis is based. The final chapter 'Traces' - a conclusion in effect, but more of a pause than a full stop in relation to an open-ended process - draws connections between preceding strands of investigation to lay out findings for other artists and troubadours.

The 'Journey' follows the examiners reading of the 'Travel Guide' and 'Journal' and will consist of a live song performance by me as the 'troubadour' prior to the viva voce. Concrete experience forms both the subject of research and exemplification of my methods of practice explored in the 'Travel Guide' and 'Journal'. It is therefore essential that this submission includes a first-hand encounter with the troubadour to demonstrate the creative source that informs critique and reflection.

## **A Troubadour's Toolkit**



## Research Aims + Methods

This thesis is a reflection on my multi-disciplinary practice as a performing singer-songwriter and visual artist. I have chosen to describe myself as a 'troubadour' to evoke the concept of 'journey' inherent to the practice of a travelling musician, and to place emphasis on the voice as central to this practice. The aims of this thesis are:

- 1) to explore live song performance as a meeting place
- 2) to uncover the particularities and conditions involved
- 3) to reveal the transformative creative exchange that can take place.

The performances I have made provide the context for investigation into a relationship between performer(s), audience and environment that develops in real-time; a relationship I am describing here as 'creative encounter'. Spontaneity, openness, repetition, attention and flow are real factors in my experience as a troubadour and artist that feed into the aims of this thesis and an exploration of live performance as:

- an embodied practice
- dependent on collaborative co-creation
- drawing on the troubadour's skills to facilitate engagement.



*the world as biography*

1

Concrete experience is at the heart of the troubadour's practice. Source and subject are the primary place of actual, lived experience, prior to any theoretical, historical or other sorts of abstraction. The topic of this thesis, then, is inescapably subjective, rooted as it is in direct experience and feeling, personal and inter-personal. In that sense, a practice-led investigation of live song performance, and art practice itself, does not fit comfortably within 'classic' academia with its demand for objectivity and precision, and the methodologies which align with that ideal, not least, quantitative methods. The ideal of objectivity has been described by Didier Debaise as a 'construction' because it

---

<sup>1</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College, Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

eliminates from view the observer and, establishes the artifice of 'nature' revealed as it is 'in itself'.<sup>2</sup>

This ideal reaches a limit when the object of interest includes the *relations* between observer and observed, the factors which *connect* each to the other and to their common environment. *Relations are just as real as the things related.* This is of the essence in modern humanities research because relations are the stuff of human life and experience. Therefore, this thesis possesses a type of validity well established in humanities research, through which it has been accepted that an understanding of many human activities can only come through subjective experience and testimony.<sup>3</sup>

As a thesis where experience of being-in-the-world<sup>4</sup> is worthy of critical evaluation, the phenomenological question would be to enquire 'what is my experience of being a troubadour?' However, this thesis asks instead 'what is my experience of *becoming* a troubadour?' A key differential as the former assumes an inherent role prior to experience, whereas the latter implies that troubadouring is created *through the action of undertaking it.* This is at the heart of my research; for it is through the ongoing activity of meeting experience that the practice grows.

---

<sup>2</sup> Debaise. D. (2017) *Nature as Event*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p.13.

<sup>3</sup> Pohland. P. (1972) 'Participant Observation as a Research Methodology' in *Studies in Art Education*, Vol.13 (3), pp.4-15.

<sup>4</sup> While also a general Heideggerian term, this can be attributed to Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973).

Mullan, M. (2018) 'Gabriel Marcel's approach to recognising presence: Being, body and invocation' in *Review of Communication*, Vol.18 (4), pp.319-335.

Unlike an artist who develops work in a familiar studio environment, the artist ‘as troubadour’ develops their practice in public, meeting any number of unmediated conditions as they go. In this context the practice is messy, unfolding in the flux of concrete reality. This is also what makes a practice situated in, and subject to, particularities of the public domain, a vibrant act of spontaneous creativity developing in actuality through response, expression and interpretation. Furthermore, the practice of the troubadour is embodied; both residing within the physical and emotional body of the performer, and subject to internal and external conditions that affect the development and outcome of the performance itself. From this precarious foothold, *‘the singer-songwriter is...’*, as Billy Bragg intimated before I stepped onto the newcomer’s stage at Glastonbury Festival,<sup>5</sup> *‘...at the frontline of performance; baring their soul and rendering themselves completely vulnerable.’*

---

<sup>5</sup> Bragg, B., in conversation with Foster, J., *Glastonbury Festival*, 2006.

## A Multi-disciplinary Approach

My research is practice-based and therefore necessarily non-linear; hence my initial image of triangulating audio, visual and textual research in a polyphony of voicings that allows room for interpretation between methods of working. Therefore, this thesis can be read as a multi-modal composition influenced in part by my musical sensibilities. Audio, visual and textual voicings provide multiple languages to access what it means to have a creative encounter. In this way the text is very much a 'weave', a polyphony of different voicings brought into conversation to create areas of harmony and counterpoint, highlight critical tensions and, like notes that 'sound together', contribute towards an overall feeling of entirety; serving to remind the reader of the complex unity of the experiential.

This approach also plays with aspects of rhythm that entwine accounts of lived experience within critical discourse to pace the reading of the text. For example, the three 'action' chapters: 'Sambaa K'e', 'Go Out and Sing!' and 'Return to Sambaa K'e', contain first person narratives that travel along at a faster pace. Like a freight train running along its tracks, the reader can jump down from these personal accounts onto a path of critical discourse, slowing to a walking pace to dig deeper into what these experiences mean. I have also made use of everyday language to define key terms so that this thesis is accessible to a range of practitioners and readers, who in turn can apply knowledge gained through their own experience to a reading of this text.

My research draws on a deep well of knowledge, both from my own direct experience and the experience of others as expressed to me. Since live song performance is an ever-changing, always renewed process which flows into and out of participative-performative events which have an organic, complex unity of their own, the 'facts' here are discursive, of their nature 'fuzzy'. Therefore, as opposed to testing any prior hypothesis or theory, my research approach has been to allow practice to lead the way; practice has determined research questions that I would not otherwise have discovered, such as:

- What skills are required for the troubadour to mediate conditions of encounter?
- In what ways does live song performance encourage a sense of community?
- What are the qualities of song performance that seem to speak on an innate level?



Throughout this investigation, my drawing and printmaking practice have facilitated a visual space in which to engage with people and place, to work through and reflect on the live performances I have made as a singer-songwriter, and to visually document experience. At Samba K'e, I used drawing and printmaking to facilitate communication with members of the Dene community and to set up a DIY initiative of poster-making to promote collaborative music events. On the road as a travelling musician in Canada I used a digital sketchbook to collate audio, visual and text-based observations, reflections and ideas. Drawings and sketchnotes developed in tandem with audio recordings of new song ideas, reflective journal writing, and photographic and video documentation of jamming, performances and travel.

---

<sup>6</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College, Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

This multi-disciplinary approach has allowed for differing perspectives to co-create a multi-layered impression as close as possible to the actuality of lived experience. In turn, this reflective process of drawing began to inform and influence the way in which my song performances as a troubadour developed. Leafing through sketches, journal writing and audio recordings, I began to see threads of connection that helped me to understand *where* and *how* a process of transformation occurred. The following key elements of visual practice complimenting and contributing to my understanding of live song performance will be explored in this thesis:

- sketch as a gesture and impression of experience
- the process of drawing directly from life
- collage as a process of connecting the part and the whole

I have developed my drawing and printmaking practice over many years, from my undergraduate degree at Edinburgh College of Art where I specialised in Drawing and Painting, to building my Master of Fine Art portfolio at Dundee Contemporary Arts Print Studio. I have used drawing and printmaking to facilitate public engagement in interactive installations made as a selected artist for Cupar Arts Festival, Impact 8 International Printmaking Conference and as a co-creator of Dundee Commons Festival, among others. At ECA, many of my peers in the school of Drawing and Painting were, like myself, 'painter musicians' making music at the same time as art. Most notably were Gordon Anderson, John Maclean and Robin Jones who would later form the Beta Band. So, my having a musically and visually mixed sensibility didn't seem so unusual.



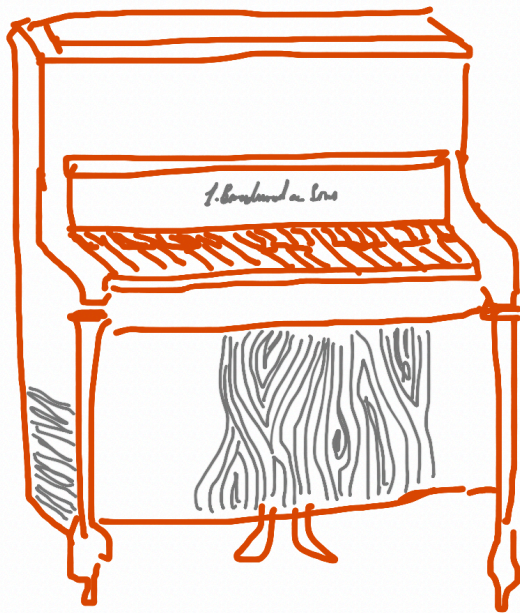
Drawing has been my constant companion, alongside singing, since I was a child. When I am travelling on trains or in cars, my hands reach for my sketchbook and the people on the train or the conversation in the car finds its way into my mark making; often in a gestural style. This has opened conversation with people who have sometimes noticed me drawing them. I always prefer to draw directly from life; there is something about the focus and attention required to observe in real-time and trying to capture the essence of that moment. My preferred subject matter is people, influenced by a lasting admiration of the portraits of local community figures and friends painted by Vincent van Gogh during his stay in Arles. This was brought to life when during my undergraduate degree I was selected for the Erasmus exchange programme to study in the south of France, visiting Provence and feeling that I was experiencing colour for the first time; when in a field with art school peer and musician Gordon Anderson the paintings of van Gogh seemed to come alive in the landscape.

The printmaking process I use most often is the relatively simple method of mono-type; for its immediacy of mark making and gestural expression. Inspired by the portraits of David Hockney, in 2014 I started using a digital sketchbook and some of the drawings I made in Canada were included in a publication by Janet Swailes named *Field Sketching and the Experience of Landscape* published by Routledge in 2016.<sup>7</sup> Digital drawings were made with my fingertips rather than a stylus; a tactility and gestural quality that brought me closer both to the subjects I was sketching and the embodied nature of live song performance.

---

<sup>7</sup> Swailes, J. (2016) *Field Sketching and the Experience of Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge.

Piano



8

My relationship with singing started as soon as I can remember, adding harmonies to songs on the radio. I then learned piano, following in the footsteps of my Great Grandma who was the pianist for silent films at a local picture house improvising live accompaniment during matinee screenings. I grew up playing piano recitals for grade examinations and joined the school orchestra playing violin alongside my older brother. However, everything changed on my thirteenth birthday when I got a Casio keyboard, and made my first 'demo', a mix of lo-fi pop and electro-indie compositions that

---

<sup>8</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, September 2017.

cemented my relationship with songwriting, singing and audio experimentation. At sixteen I taught myself a few chords on the guitar to go busking and this led to meeting other musicians, playing open mics, and touring as a support act for more established bands. After this I made a period of travel in India, to find my Goan Grandmother's house of birth, and to explore the music, art and diversity of culture. In Kolkata I met Rabindranath Tagore's granddaughter who invited me to her art exhibition after which there was an 'Indian classical music marathon' where I heard live tabla playing for the first time.<sup>9</sup> I also attended the school of Bharatanatyam, a classical Indian dance form, in Kerala.<sup>10</sup> These two experiences made a huge impression on me, in terms of rhythm and emotion, and I returned to Scotland to study Bharatanatyam with Priya Sri Kumar and Indian classical tabla with Vijay Kalanguta, later going on to study the full drumkit.<sup>11</sup>

The East Neuk of Fife where I live has also played a key role in my development as a musician and performer. Art school peer and local musician Gordon Anderson aka 'Lone Pigeon', introduced me to his older brother Kenny aka 'King Creosote', founder of the 'Fence Collective', who had started hosting open mics in Aikman's bar in St Andrews, then releasing DIY compilations of the musicians who played. Artwork was a feature of these compilations as they were often made from collaged papers and spray painted,

---

<sup>9</sup> An Indian tradition where classical musicians play an all-night concert into the next day as the audience listens with them. Often performed outside, 'music marathons' provide insight into subtle cultural differences between East and West; emphasis is on the gradual development of the music over many hours and this requires a longer attention span and willingness to flow with the music as it meanders and wanders.

<sup>10</sup> I went to India to find my maternal Grandmother's house in Goa, leading to the visit to South India where I joined the Bharatanatyam (South Indian classical dance) and Music School.

<sup>11</sup> Jewel and Esk Valley College, Edinburgh, ran a popular music course; I specialised in vocals and drums.

however the DIY aesthetic went further as Fence itself was a self-organised venture with no record company backing, gathering its own momentum through a focus on live performances made in the East Neuk of Fife. As Fence blossomed into a twice-yearly festival, a diverse range of local establishments were adapted into music venues including the Scottish Fisheries Museum, libraries, and village halls of Anstruther and Cellardyke, becoming a hub that as well as retaining support from a local audience attracted musicians and audiences from far and wide.<sup>12</sup>

Around this time, Gordon founded 'The Aliens' and after recording vocals on the band's debut album I was invited to open for their UK tour with a final date at Glastonbury Festival.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, growing up attending Fence gigs, Cellardyke local and music fan Emily Roff founded 'Tracer Trails' music promotions after moving to Edinburgh. Roff created an alternative space in which folks could escape the frenzy of the Edinburgh Fringe called 'Retreat'; a fringe from the fringe. As Tracer Trails gigs grew into a regular underground celebration of up and coming music with a dedicated audience, I played alongside Edinburgh songwriter Withered Hand and local band Eagleowl, as well as visiting musicians from the States such as Jeffrey Lewis, Diane Cluck and Little Wings.

DIY sensibilities continued in this venture too with most musicians, including myself, making their own handmade CD's and badges, however the aesthetic of self-organisation seemed to be symbolised by a beautiful Tracer Trails banner in the form of a crest handstitched with felt by ECA graduate Craig Coultard and pinned up at every

---

<sup>12</sup> I was encouraged to play at Fence Collective gigs and featured on Fence CDR compilations.

<sup>13</sup> After the Beta Band, Anderson, Maclean and Jones formed The Aliens in 2006. I recorded vocals for two of their albums and made two UK tours as the opening act. Gordon's twin brother Een, a songwriter and luthier, joined the first tour as 'Third Part' in which I sang harmonies after my own set.

gig. Live music enthusiast Stephen Marshall came to many performances in Edinburgh and the East Neuk of Fife, telling me of his hopes to start 'the tiniest record label in the world' where everything would be released on vinyl and feature artists he had discovered through live performances. This led to my debut single with 'Triassic Tusk Records', established in 2015 by Stephen Marshall and musician Lomond Campbell, as part of their 'Tiny Vinyl' series featuring King Creosote, Withered Hand, myself and Lomond Campbell.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> The Tiny Vinyl Series was a typically 'Fence Collective' style affair; a double A side featuring one original song each and one reworking of a song by another songwriter in the series. I covered a song by King Creosote and Withered Hand covered one of my songs.



15

Description, no matter how 'objective' it seeks to be, involves selection to the exclusion or diminishment of certain aspects of experience, with inclusion and emphasis placed on others. As the content of this thesis has been generated through practice, the voice of the artist speaks directly from first-hand experience to reveal invaluable insights from within the practice. To convey something of these direct experiences throughout this thesis I make use of a 'narrative' style of writing in which anecdotes play an important role in 'making sense' of experience and getting 'as close as possible' to the actuality of encounters as they happened. This not only adds texture to the thesis but draws attention to the value of anecdote to shed light on experience in turn, highlighting a need for artists to talk about their practice in their own words.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Foster. J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Douglas. A., in conversation with Foster. J. Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

In discussion with American artist Suzanne Lacy, Anne Douglas recalls that Lacy's own description of 'The roof is on fire'<sup>17</sup> brought the seminal situationist work 'to life' in a way that critique, distanced from the actuality of the experience, could not.<sup>18</sup> Lacy lamented that while much was written regarding the work's societal impact, accounts omitted to reveal the way in which the work had developed through the reality of sensorial experience witnessing the setting sun deepen from orange to red; this acted as a balm to open dialogue between police and local teenagers on the roof causing a shift from tension to ease felt by all present. This personal anecdote by the artist herself provides direct insight into the experience of 'being there at the time' significant for interpretations of the work and underlining an essential difference between experience and subsequent analysis.

It is intentional that this thesis submission is not regarded as a *finished* work, but rather as a process-based exploration that draws certain lived experiences into critical analysis to cast light on them. In the context of becoming a troubadour this thesis is primarily concerned with the interconnectedness with others that comes about during real-time activity than any work created thereafter. However, the opportunity to reflect on my practice as an artist and a troubadour has brought to the fore key insights that through the course of this thesis will be relayed by the artist's own voice, and that will, I hope, be of interest to other practitioners and audiences.

---

<sup>17</sup> Lacy, S., Jacoby, A. & Johnson, C. *The roof is on fire* (1993-94) part of *The Oakland Projects* (1991-2001).

<sup>18</sup> Douglas, A., in conversation with Foster. J. Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

## Definition of Terms

The title of this thesis: *'The Artist as Troubadour'* makes a reference to the title of John Dewey's seminal work 'Art as Experience' to emphasise that research unfolds from experience.<sup>19</sup> This part of the title also highlights my multi-disciplinary approach, implying that a particular critical reflection on being a travelling musician has developed through the perspective of also being a visual artist.

This thesis reinterprets the term 'troubadour' in the contemporary context of my own practice and that of my peers as travelling musicians. However, there are resonances with the origin of this term that underline my choice of this descriptor and relate to song as a mode of travel in itself. Therefore, the chapters 'Song', 'Travel' and 'Story' each include select historical and etymological definitions to position, and contribute understanding towards, the context of my own practice.

Three key terms and areas of research are *'Creative Encounter'*, *'Conditions of Encounter'* and *'Creative Exchange'*. As well as a chapter exploring the initial point of contact between a performer/audience/environment, 'Creative Encounter' is also the title of this thesis. As such, it is the 'umbrella term' that encompasses these three key areas of research that flow into one another. From one perspective, 'Creative Encounter' is a meaningful idea in itself which requires thinking into ideas to do with liminal space and the embodied act of feeling one's way through an environment; from another

---

<sup>19</sup> Dewey, J. (2005) *Art as Experience*. New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group.



perspective 'Creative Encounter' has a more general character than the other two terms, which it can be seen to 'contain'. So, 'Creative Encounter' retains its place as one of three interconnected terms, but, seen differently, becomes the container of the other two.

*'Conditions of Encounter'* is the term I am using to describe the particularities in which a live performance takes place and that have influence as to how it will develop. Both the performer(s) and the audience have agency in how they undertake the journey of performance as there isn't always a formal distinction between performer and audience; sometimes everyone can occupy either position. The qualities of 'liveness' are explored under this heading, as are the skills that precede a live performance as there is a relationship between anticipation and actualisation that contributes towards how the next performance will unfold. Depending on how real-time conditions interact, *'Creative Exchange'* is the potential for live song performance to become a transformative experience. 'Transformative' is a term I am using to describe a process of movement and correspondence between the performer, audience and environment that becomes more than the sum of its parts.

*'Song', 'Travel'* and *'Story'* are three key areas of practice that are interwoven between the above chapters at a pace that can allow insights from within the practice to unfold during a reading of the thesis. These headings include an exploration of 'Song' as a container and conduit, 'Travel' as a form of empathic movement and correspondence and 'Story' as a descriptor of community developing through a network of song performance, DIY aesthetics and self-organisation.

'Song' will not necessarily contain words, let alone be defined by them. In this context 'Song' is defined in an expanded sense as a melodic character, a narrative personal to oneself and/or connected with others, environment, animals, nature; a theme, an essence and an on-going process of expression - in the sense of utterance or sounding. I also consider song performance to be an expanded notion of drawing; in its gestural quality, immediacy, and as a real-time activity, also in the sense of drawing people and place together. In the context of troubadouring, as a process of engagement and adaptability the shape and form of a song does not remain static or fixed during any performance; intonation, melody, words or sounds are produced within a stream of adjustment in relation to the particularities discussed in 'Conditions of Encounter'.

The concepts of 'Travel' and 'Journey' will be taken as having meanings including but not limited to literal physical movement. For example, there is the journey of practice development and the journey of a song during its performance. These terms will also be used to describe the transformative flow between performer, audience and environment experienced in 'Creative Exchange'. In this context, 'Travel' is a relational process of discovery between participants and location (understood also to mean the atmosphere of a particular experienced environment). This is a significant point as key subjects of my research are relations and modes of connectivity.

'Story' involves a number of key elements; one story I am telling is called 'The Artist as Troubadour' which mixes narrative elements from history, autobiography and recognised affinities with my own personal experience and that of other musicians and artists. What I am doing at the level of practice is 'living' this story, as a process of telling it to myself and sharing it with others; whereas at the critical level of this thesis, I am

digging into it, to find out *what* it is and *how* it makes sense. So, underpinning this thesis (and the terms used for critical analysis above) is a need to make this thesis coherent as a story of what's involved in becoming a troubadour. 'Story' is also used as a term to describe both physical return and memory; and the 'community story' created through connections established through song performance. There are stories within this story, for example my songs are stories; and there are other people's stories, which is why anecdotes take their place within the larger story as 'mini-stories' that can contribute insights. First person narrative and selected anecdotes are used as a method of getting as close as possible to first-hand experience, embedding analysis and abstract ideas back into concrete experience.

## Review of Sources

This thesis draws on a cross-disciplinary canon that I have developed to position my practice. Not only through a review of relevant literature, but in listening and looking to the voices of practitioners in the fields of art practice and song performance. With experience at the heart of this thesis, I have chosen to bring into dialogue a number of sources based on my first-hand experience of them. These include critical voices in the fields of contemporary art practice, anthropology and musicology discovered through conference attendances and workshop participation. Key voices from a range of grassroots sources including peers and contemporaries, as well as from popular culture including musicians, artists, crafts people and performers, have relevance to this investigation. I acknowledge the tension of using differing voices, however these voices have been selected to work together with recognised sources to speak more fully to the subject of this thesis. Furthermore, the voices of contemporary practitioners encourage a reading that keeps in mind the value of practical activity to provide first-hand insights that can resonate with philosophical source material.

As my research focus is on the creative process, the background to this thesis relates to the relatively recent shift in contemporary art practice from the creation of objects towards non-object-based works where the interaction between artist, people and place is in itself significant, as described by Suzanne lacy: *'What exists in the space between the words public and art is an unknown between artist and audience, a relationship that may itself become the artwork.'*<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Lacy, S. (ed.) (1995) *'Cultural pilgrimages and metaphoric journeys'* in *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art*. Seattle: Bay Press, p.20.

In relation to ideas around 'performance' and 'audience' I have looked to Jaques Rancière and the emancipation of the audience in 'The Emancipated Spectator',<sup>21</sup> however I have been further drawn to the work of Yve Lomax whose exploration of 'Sounding the Event'<sup>22</sup> comes closer to my definition of the 'event' occurring during the actuality of live song performance. I have wanted to stretch the meaning of performance, or rather get away from its established meaning, towards an understanding of performance as 'play' where a relationship with the environment and each other is developed through a process of openness. This definition is also closer to my first-hand experience of developing art and music projects as artist-in-residence with the traditionally nomadic Dene community of Samba K'e in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

Therefore, this has naturally led me to seek relevant sources further afield, where the wider context of anthropology has provided key insights into embodied learning and a relationship with the environment. In particular, the work of Tim Ingold has played a pivotal role in my research development as he has spent time within aboriginal communities of the Western Arctic, with experience of the traditional practices and relationship with the land held by nomadic peoples. Key texts by Ingold that are relevant to my research investigation and to which I refer in this thesis are: 'The Perception of the Environment', 'Being Alive', and 'Making',<sup>23</sup> as they provide a critical

---

<sup>21</sup> Rancière, J. & Elliot, G. (2009) *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso.

<sup>22</sup> Lomax, Y. (2005) *Sounding the event: Escapades in dialogue and matters of nature*. London: I.B.Tauris.

<sup>23</sup> Ingold, T. (2010) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Oxon: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Oxon: Routledge.

source of dialogue on the subjects of embodied learning, the interconnectedness of all living beings, the value that resides in practical activity, and the role of skills and development of care in relation to practice. Ingold himself is both a musician and a sketcher; sensibilities affording certain insights that resonate with my own multi-disciplinary approach to this thesis.

However, it has been the first-hand experiential insights that developed through my involvement as both an attendee and contributor to the 'Beyond Perception' conference held in Aberdeenshire in 2016, that cemented my understanding of Ingold's key ideas.<sup>24</sup> The conference marked the fifteen-year anniversary of 'The Perception of the Environment', to discuss the publication's reach not only within the field of anthropology but for artists, craftspeople and other practitioners. Based around a number of activities and workshops as well as talks, participants could get an understanding of ideas through the actual source from which they came.<sup>25</sup> I took part in a group walk led by Ingold himself, with a single gold twine that each participant held onto; in which the movement of participants walking in different directions revealed a 'drawing' of connections created through interaction.

At the same conference, contemporary artist Simone Kenyon also led a walk, to be discussed within the main body of the text. However, once more real-time activity

---

Ingold, T. (2013) *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Oxon: Routledge.

<sup>24</sup> *Beyond Perception '15* was held at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>25</sup> The symposium addressed and debated the influence of anthropologist Tim Ingold's work over the past fifteen years since the first publication of '*Perception of the Environment*' in 2000. Five themes were covered: i) *Humans, Animals, Environment*; ii) *Sensibilities Beyond Science*; iii) *Experience, Education*; iv) *Creativity, Correspondence, and Description*; v) *Movement, Becomings, Growth*.

revealed insight into her research presentation about following in the footsteps of Nan Shepherd. I myself delivered a 'blind drawing' workshop, in which I invited participants to draw portraits of each other without looking down at the paper they were drawing onto.<sup>26</sup> All three activities involved a process of developing attention and becoming present to the actuality of real-time experience with discussion thereafter. Therefore, this conference was a turning point in my understanding of embodied learning.

I return throughout this thesis to the insistence of an embodied relationship with the world; key philosophers that have informed ideas to do with embodied learning are Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel and Pierre Bourdieu. John Dewey's seminal publication 'Art as Experience'<sup>27</sup> has informed not only the title of this thesis but an exploration into live song performance as a 'meeting place'. In correspondence with this idea, the work of Patrick Geddes has helped clarify a meaning of 'place' created through real-time activity. Also, the writings of Michel de Certeau relating to place as a sensorial experience.

As my practice and research are founded in a process of discovery through concrete experience, I have also looked into ideas to do with process-relational philosophy as put forward by Alfred North Whitehead. In particular, Whitehead's theory of 'becoming' in relationship with the environment; crucially the idea that reality is a continually-unfolding event.<sup>28</sup> Research around process thinking has heightened my awareness of

---

<sup>26</sup> The 'blind drawing' workshop explored approaches to drawing, gesture, observation and movement.

<sup>27</sup> Dewey, J. (2005) *Art as Experience*. New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group.

<sup>28</sup> Mesle, Robert., C. (2008) *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead*. West Conshohocken: Templeton Press.

experience as a creative transition from past into future, a transition which requires the mutual inter-dependence of all things.

Both the work of contemporary artist Alberta Whittle, and the ongoing practice of sound installation artist Susan Philipsz to uncover possibilities of the human voice, have complimented my own research of voice and song as a conduit for connection. The work of Walter Ong, in particular 'Orality and Literacy' has provided insight into music as its own language. The BBC Radio Series 'Sound Lines' with broadcaster Verity Sharp, in which musicians from around the world have spoken in their own words about music, sound, the environment and community, has been a valuable source for understanding relationships created through song and sound.<sup>29</sup>

Musicians who have spoken about a relationship between live musical performance and social connection contribute valuable insights to this thesis. These include Jazz musician Jamie Cullum, and Iggy Pop whose John Peel Lecture described music developing at the periphery of mainstream culture as a fermentation ground and catalyst for change.<sup>30</sup>

Hearing musician Peter Gabriel speak about writing songs contributed to reflection on my own process of songwriting with ideas around 'repetition' and song performance as an ongoing process.<sup>31</sup> Further to this, peers and contemporaries have furthered my

---

<sup>29</sup> Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines* (Episodes 1 – 4) (Online) First broadcast: (1) *The Tropic of Capricorn* 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018, (2) *Equator* 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018, (3) *33 Degrees North* 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018, (4) *The Arctic Circle* 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000mjk> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May - 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>30</sup> Pop, I. (2014) *Iggy Pop's BBC Music John Peel Lecture* (Online) First broadcast 26<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04lcj6z> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

<sup>31</sup> *Lessons from A Rockstar: Peter Gabriel in conversation with Alain de Botton* hosted by The School of Life, The Emmanuel Centre, London, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Attended in person.



understanding of music as a form of connection. The practice of the troubadours I met in Canada provided insight into performance as a self-organised endeavour developed collaboratively between travelling musicians and audiences, thereby building a community through song performance.

With a 'Travel Guide', a 'Journal' and a 'Journey', research has naturally led to exploring song in relation to expanded notions of mapping in which connections are made across a number of topographies and layers not solely physical. In particular, the writing of Clarissa Pinkola Estes whose background in psychology provides insight into the multiple experiential layers that link song with identity, informing ideas around an ephemerality of performance that nevertheless leaves a trace. Warlpiri Dreaming songs as embodied maps of the land; and art historian Lucy Lippard's exploration of aboriginal sensibilities that emphasise process over object again linking to my first-hand experience with the Dene community of Samba K'e. Lippard recounts how an Inuk Elder belonging to an Inuit community told an anthropologist working with them that he had: *'drawn intricate maps of an area but then had thrown them away, because it was the act of making them that was important'*.<sup>32</sup> I also draw on what it means to be 'passing through' a place as a travelling musician and artist in relation to ideas expressed by Grant Kester about the role of 'artist' as a 'mantle';<sup>33</sup> in turn leading to ideas to do with 'place' explored by contemporary artist Tacita Dean.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multi-centered society*. New York: The New York Press, p.76.

<sup>33</sup> Kester, Grant, H. (2004) *'The Eyes of the Vulgar'* in *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.11-12.

<sup>34</sup> Dean, T. & Millar, J. (2005) *Place*. London: Thames and Hudson.

To ground an investigation of creative flow and gain further insights into musical performance, I attended two key conferences in 2015 and 2016; 'Music and Consciousness' at the University of Oxford, and 'Performing Knowledge' at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.<sup>35</sup> The work of Catherine Foxcroft in particular was informative in an understanding of 'flow-state' that I could relate to Whitehead's theory of a creative 'on-flow'. Conference research into rhythm, melody and shamanic drumming linked with my research into the work of drummer Layne Redmond,<sup>36</sup> who has explored links between rhythm and altered states of consciousness. Also, to the work of sound therapist Joanna McEwan who has researched the vibrational properties of sound and how vibration effects all beings.

While an investigation of 'flow' may include aspects of musical improvisation, 'improvisation' is a loaded term with specific associations (for example with jazz and stand-up comedy), connotations which would unbalance or divert this thesis from its real concerns around the broader notion of 'openness'. Furthermore, there is a weight of association to do with certain levels of improvisatory technique, for example, in jazz and classical Indian ragas that nevertheless adhere to strict musical form.<sup>37</sup> So, for the sake of cohesion and clarity, I have chosen not to engage with literature specific to improvisation as such, in preference of my own descriptors such as 'empathic travel' and therefore, 'feeling through an environment' to highlight a broader notion of 'flow' in

---

<sup>35</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015, and *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Redmond, L. (2018) *When the Drummers Were Women*. Brattleboro, Vermont: Echo Point Books & Media.

<sup>37</sup> Widess, R. (2013) 'Schemas and Improvisation in Indian Classical Music' in Kempson, R., Howes, C., Orwin, M. (eds.) *Language, Music and Interaction*. London: College Publications, pp. 197-209.

relation to connecting with an experiential unity that can be applied to multiple forms of activity or arts practice.

I have steered away from referring to my practice as ‘socially engaged’ as while live performance is very much engaged and social, this term also carries a weight of association, and with my background in drawing, painting and printmaking I am more interested in bringing qualities of drawing and printmaking into a conversation that usually leaves them out. The gestural qualities of these media provide a refreshing counterpoint that can generate unexpected insights into the live process of song performance. Key visual artists included in this text in relation to ‘liveness’ are the painters Cy Twombly, David Hockney and Maggie Hambling and the printmaker Norman Ackroyd. Also, the collage period of the Cubists, Cezanne and Picasso in particular, and the teaching practice of printmaker Sister Corita Kent, in relation to viewing the world from multiple perspectives. Also, Andy Goldsworthy, for the gestural quality of his earlier works, in particular his series of thrown stick drawings.

Two conferences helped develop my understanding of the relationship between singing and drawing: ‘Research Through Design’ led by Jon Rogers of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design with Dr Jane Wallace of Northumbria University;<sup>38</sup> and

---

<sup>38</sup> *Research Through Design*, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

I was one of a team of six ‘scribes’ from multi-disciplinary backgrounds including creative writing, ceramics, drawing, design technology and music to document conference proceedings. To be discussed further within the main text.

Following the conference, I co-authored an article juxtaposing the scribe team’s sketchnotes, analysis and anecdotes of our experience: Wallace, J., Rogers, J., Foster, J., Kingsley, S., Koulidou, N., Shorter, E., Shorter, M., Trotman, N. (2017) ‘*Scribing as seen from the inside*’ in *Design Issues*, Vol. 33 (3) Cambridge MA: MIT Press, pp.93-104.

‘Artistic Research: Is There Some Method?’ an international multi-disciplinary conference discussing ideas around performance at the Academy of Arts in Prague.<sup>39</sup> Throughout conference attendances I made sketchnotes, that appear throughout this thesis, to highlight key ideas I discovered and realised as a result of the subjects being discussed. These drawings and notes form part of the body of this thesis, not only as texture, but as a way of condensing information through an alternative language that, like music, is more fluid and therefore able to allow room for interpretation.

A wider source of practitioners outside art and music circles inform this thesis as they contribute to an understanding of the flow and connection developed through real-time activity. These voices include philosopher and mountaineer Arne Naess, solo rock climber Alex Honnold and tightrope walker Phillip Petit. My research is influenced by Eastern philosophy, in particular Buddhism and the Japanese sensibility of Kintsugi,<sup>40</sup> again relating to Whitehead. Further to this, the work of cultural ecologist David Abram has provided key insights into aboriginal perspectives of time. Ideas to do with memory and time relate to recent discoveries in neuroscience, sound therapy and the writings of psychologist William James.<sup>41</sup>

Special mention must also be given to the work of Patrick Scott, whose publication ‘Stories Told’ revealed the impact of telling and hearing one’s own stories. This relates directly with my experience within the community of Sambaa K’e in which stories and

---

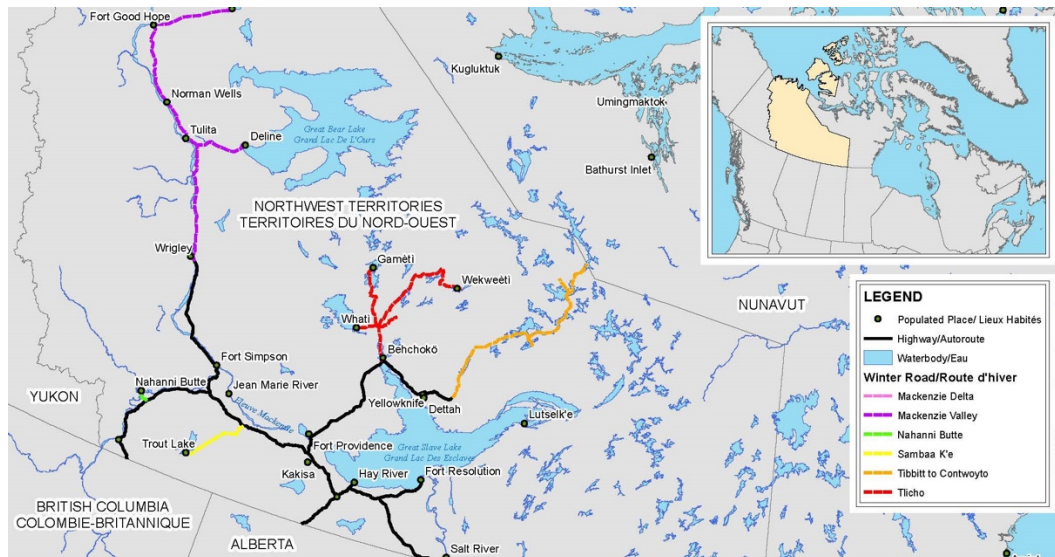
<sup>39</sup> *Artistic Research: Is There Some Method?* Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Kintsugi’ is the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold; the philosophy behind these ‘repairs’ speaks of the separation and union of the part and the whole.

<sup>41</sup> James, W. (1950) *The Principles of Psychology*. Volume One. New York: Dover.

creative practice were integral to everyday life, reinforcing a sense of identity, community and connection to the environment.

## Introduction to Samba K'e



42 43

Placing practice firmly at the forefront of my research investigation, at the beginning of my PhD in May 2014, together with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design graduate Madeline Mackay and University of Alberta Masters candidate Amanda Forrest-Chan, I travelled to the Northwest Territories of Canada in the Western Arctic for a period of two months with the Dene community of Samba K'e; a significant experience that I return to throughout this thesis.

As an experienced printmaker I was invited by Professor Gavin Renwick to participate in the first artist's residency at Samba K'e Print Studio, established in 2010 by the

---

<sup>42</sup> Although 'Trout Lake' is used on this map as the English translation of 'Samba K'e', throughout this thesis I will use 'Samba K'e' as the Slave name has now been re-instated by the Dene community.

<sup>43</sup> North American Bird Conservation Initiative (2018) *Stories from the Field*. Summer Newsletter (Online) Available at: [nabci.net/wp-content/uploads/map2.jpeg](http://nabci.net/wp-content/uploads/map2.jpeg) (Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

community of Smbaa K'e in collaboration with Professor Gavin Renwick, Associate Professor of the University of Alberta, Dr Paul Harrison of the University of Dundee, and Scott Hudson of Dundee Contemporary Arts. The residency formed an extension of this collaboration, devised to encourage the interchange of artistic and cultural practices between visiting artists and the Dene, who had expressed a desire to promote understanding of their way of life and to sustain traditional community values through creative practice.

The Smbaa K'e Dene Band are a small community of less than one hundred members<sup>44</sup> of traditionally nomadic Dehcho First Nations Canadians living in a remote area of Boreal Forest by the lake of Smbaa K'e.<sup>45</sup> Only accessible overland during Winter, when the Mackenzie River is frozen, the melting ice of Spring dictates travel by charter plane. Smbaa K'e translates as 'Trout Lake', the vast body of water that seemed to possess a presence befitting the stories I would later hear from the Elders about a giant who 'formed the lake with his footprint'. These stories were containers of knowledge, wisdom and forewarning – a form of spiritual and practical guidance rooted in actuality; relating to the land, water, animals and elements, in combination with the physicality of the human body, senses and feeling.

During the residency, these stories knitted with my own first-hand experience of being among the community as traditional skills were practiced and maintained; forming a

---

<sup>44</sup> The Dene community of Smbaa K'e numbered ninety-two in 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Smbaa K'e lake and the Boreal Forest surrounding it have been home to the Dene since time immemorial, however the community made permanent residence on one side of the lake following Canadian government intervention in the 1950's to 'settle' the indigenous nomadic peoples of Northern Canada. The Smbaa K'e Dene retain their nomadic practice with the yearly tradition of 'Fall Hunt'.

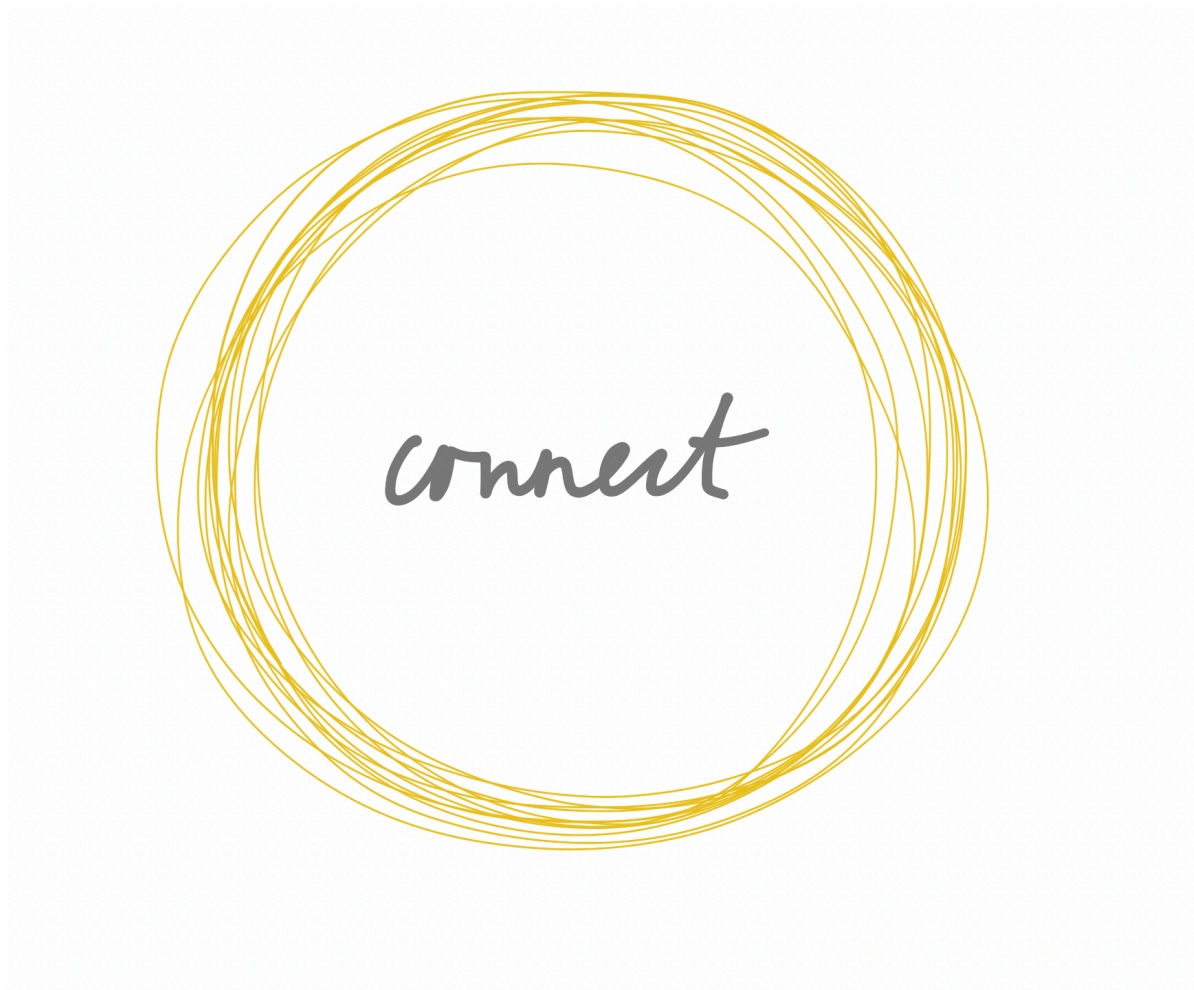
turning point in my research as I gained a deeper understanding of the embodied nature of learning with insight into the ways in which experience is lived and re-lived through the body.

During the residency at Samba K'e my multi-disciplinary practice opened up communication in a way I do not think would have come about had I not had a musical background to guide me. The experience of developing live music and art events with the community of Samba K'e led to my subsequent journey as a travelling musician throughout British Columbia and Alberta; setting in motion a process of experiential encounters that have shaped this thesis and the ways in which reflection has unfolded.



## **Creative Encounter**

## Unfolding



46

What is a creative encounter? Artist and writer Yve Lomax speaks of *'starts that happen before you and I can know of them'*, reminding us of a start that *'cannot be known and understood ahead of time'*.<sup>47</sup> Is it the embodied skills I carry with me as an artist and musician that make an encounter creative? In part, but that is not the whole story; for creative practice is *unfolding* in real-time in relation to its environment and this returns to a question from Lomax: *'will there be comings about that enable me to continue becoming?'*<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, January, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Lomax, Y. (2005) *Sounding the event: Escapades in dialogue and matters of nature*. London: I.B.Tauris, p.4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p.6.

Creative:

*'The ability to create; characterised by having or showing imagination.'*

Encounter:

*'A meeting with someone/someplace/something that is unexpected or significant.'*<sup>49</sup>

Taking these dictionary definitions as a starting point, 'creative encounter' is my own interpretation used to describe a *meeting* between myself as a troubadour and the people and places I have encountered on my journey as a travelling musician and artist. A fuller definition is that this meeting is *activated* through live song performance as an interdependent experience; co-created in real-time and subject to the degree of participation and openness of all involved.

Encounters happen all the time however, we don't always notice. We can easily forget and misplace a sense of connection to where we are or who we are with. For not only are the forms of people, places, animals, nature and things of importance in this definition of connection, but the space *between* people, places, animals, nature and things; the undocumented movements, gestures, atmospheres and emotions that hold and shape activity. Threads of interplay between one and other - an invisibility of *relationship*.

---

<sup>49</sup> *Collins English Dictionary* (1994) 3<sup>rd</sup> Updated Edition. Glasgow: Harper Collins.



Woman embroidering 1817  
George-Friedrich Kersting

50

What makes an encounter 'creative' is the degree of attention placed towards that which we are in constant correspondence with but can go unnoticed. Within infinite experiential layers, a song acts as a fluid and adaptable framework through which meanings of 'environment', not solely topographical but *landscapes within ourselves*, and that of others, can communicate and exchange. In this way, live song performance contains the potential to become a means of empathic travel; in which a *connection* or rather a *re-connection* can be made with those around us.

---

<sup>50</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, April, 2016; after seeing the painting 'Woman Embroidering' (1817) by Polish artist Georg Friedrich Kersting. I was struck by the light in the painting; like a Vermeer, with the open window, the woman's activity could not be removed from the space in which she was working. There was a relationship between her contemplation and the quality of light coming through the window. In my drawing, I have drawn portraits of two women and the undrawn stillness between them created through their shared concentration.

Live song performance is an open-ended journey where an *openness* not predetermined or deterred by outcome or destination allows the song to become; for the encounter to become creative. Perhaps Jaques Rancière can elaborate: *'the third thing that is owned by no-one, whose meaning is owned by no-one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform 'transmission', any identity of cause and effect.'*<sup>51</sup> This openness of approach can set in motion a form of *travel*; of exchange and recognition, that allows us to 'continue becoming', so that we might, as Lomax describes *'come to exist differently.'*<sup>52</sup>

This is why 'creative encounter' is my chosen descriptor; because to really *meet* someone, someplace, something, you need to let go (of a part that wants to know what's going on) in order to uncover a creative part (that was there all along and *feels* its relationship with the world rather than thinks it), as artist Richard Long describes: *'it is always about the human scale; my body, which I use as a measure of the land and myself.'*<sup>53</sup>

In the following sub-chapter, I will explore embodied learning in relation to the environment and how this relates to my practice as a troubadour.

---

<sup>51</sup> Rancière, J. & Elliot, G. (2009) *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso, p.15.

<sup>52</sup> Lomax, Y. (2005) *Sounding the event: Escapades in dialogue and matters of nature*. London: I.B.Tauris, p.6.

<sup>53</sup> Long, R., speaking at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



54

*'Walking a circle is walking a path to heaven.'*<sup>55</sup>

This beautiful Dene saying hints at the innate capacity of the body to become a medium for feeling, learning and knowing. It draws attention to the importance of movement and repetition also, to the power of human imagination grounded in and evolving out from concrete experience. In this descriptor, physical movement opens up a state of mind and body where spiritual transformation might occur in turn, acknowledging an embodied connection to being in the world that emerges through first-hand encounter.

---

<sup>54</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J., during a walk in the Boreal Forest, NWT, Canada, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014.



Direct experience involves a myriad of particularities. Cézanne's paintings of apples from all angles serve as a reminder of the multiple layers of subjectivity involved in real-life. To embody a complexity of experience is to inhabit not only an environment but our consciousness of becoming part of the world as the world is becoming part of us. Breathing, for example, acts as an ongoing mediator between external and internal landscapes. Cézanne himself states: '*The landscape thinks itself in me, and I am its consciousness.*'<sup>56</sup> In this way, edges between the self and the environment blur into what might be described as a 'creative encounter'.



57

---

<sup>56</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945) quoting Cezanne, P. in '*Essays on Paintings: Cezanne's Doubt*' in *Sense and non-sense*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern, p.67.

<sup>57</sup> Foster, J., photograph of the moss of the Boreal Forest, Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, May 2014.

This idea relates to the Dene perception of land as being integral to the self. For the traditionally nomadic indigenous peoples of Northwest Canada, the human body and psyche absorb elements of their surrounding environment. Water, moss, forest, bird and animal spirits define characteristics of themselves, including given birth names. Through nomadic practice, a dialogue between the body and the land has been passed across generations of Dene as they travelled on foot and by canoe, taking the environment into themselves. Thus, a deeply empathic relationship is maintained through ongoing experience of being 'one among' the land.

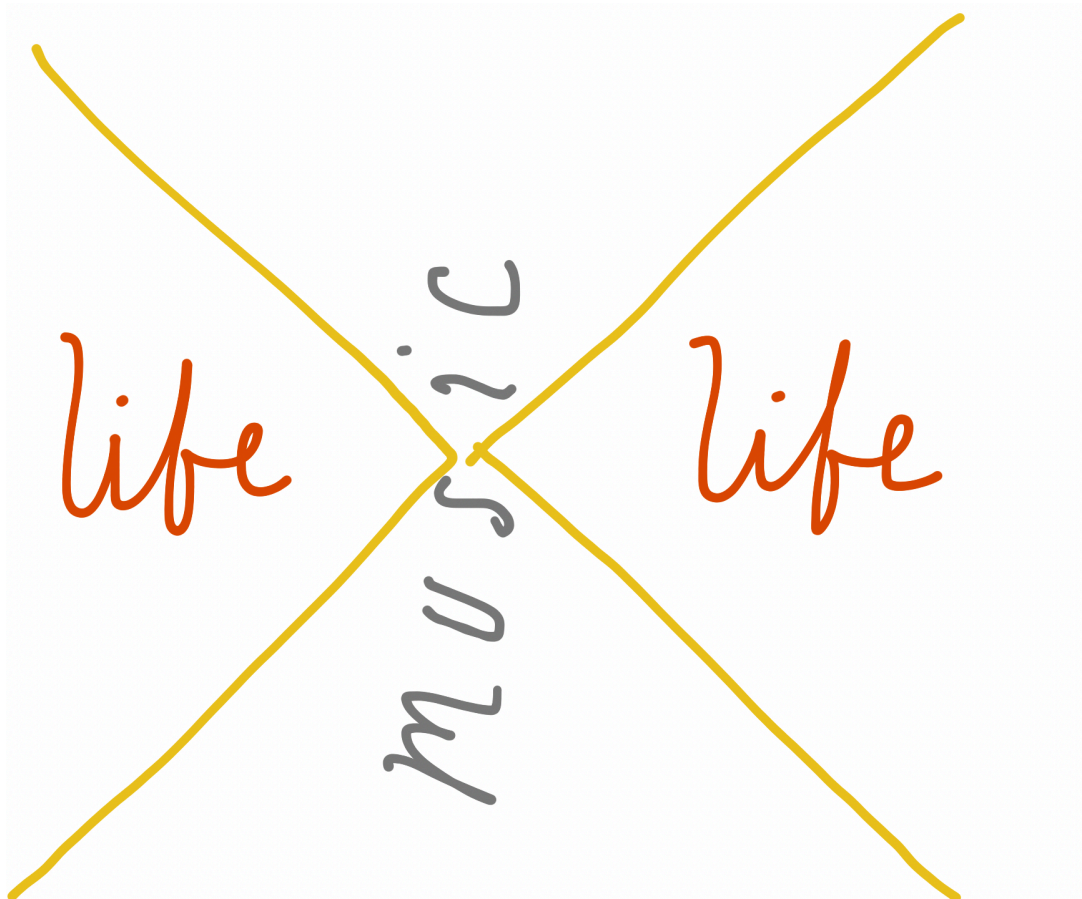
Similarly, as a troubadour I am both method and medium.

As method, I embody my practice; and as medium, practice develops through musical performance as I engage with a variety of audiences. The primary characteristic here is that learning is 'lived' through a process of first-hand experience and discovery. This relates to John Dewey's proposition of '*art as experience*'.<sup>58</sup> Here the body becomes a medium for learning, but what is embodied learning? Taking each word consecutively, the first deals with the body we inhabit; a form with edges. However, the fabric of this body is porous. The second deals with comprehension; the acquiring of knowledge. Embodied learning then, stems from a relationship between the body and its environment, but there is more to this relationship than the mere acquisition of facts. Rooted in actuality it is a process of exchange founded in experience rather than observation.

---

<sup>58</sup> Dewey, J. (1958) *Art as experience*. New York: Capricorn Books.





59

Gabriel Marcel reminds us that experiencing precedes analysis; that *'being-in-the-world'* is an act of participation.<sup>60</sup> Marcel argues that subsequent interpretation inevitably creates distance: *'to build defences around myself and raise walls between me and the other'*. However, in my practice as a troubadour, interpretation develops in hand with participation almost simultaneously in the moment and guided by an act of *feeling through*.

---

<sup>59</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing showing life informing music practice and music practice projecting back into life; inspired by a drawing by Tim Ingold at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Rogers, P. (2002) (trans.) *Awakenings, by Gabriel Marcel (Gabriel Marcel's Autobiography)* Milwaukee: Marquette University, p.33.

Like a snail's antenna sensing its way through an environment, this is a process of physical, sensorial, emotive and cognitive travel between one self and another. A process of sensing, feeling, knowing and learning takes place between me as a performer together with the musicians playing with me, the audience and the environment, during the actuality of a live performance. While taking a distinct role, the audience participates creatively in the performance, determining the way in which a live performance will take shape. One example is the emotional energy that an audience can contribute; song performance then, is an interdependent experience.

Pierre Bourdieu describes the effect of relations between people, environments and things as 'Habitus', an ongoing process of being constantly reshaped in experience, allowing individuals to find new solutions to new situations.<sup>61</sup> As a travelling musician performing to differing audiences in various locations and venues, both as a solo performer and with other musicians, my practice is based in the concrete reality of a range of habitus. I encounter events in real-time as they take shape within an ever-shifting landscape of 'unanchored flows'<sup>62</sup> that might be described as 'unmediated', in that the particularities of each situation are neither known to me beforehand nor under my control.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold describes Bourdieu's 'Habitus' as a pattern of internal thoughts and feelings applied in direct relationship with external experience: *'For thinking and feeling, in Bourdieu's account, do not go on in an interior subjective (or*

---

<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.159-197.

<sup>62</sup> Kwon. M. (2004) *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p.59.

*intersubjective) space of images and representations, but in the space of people's actual engagement in the settings of practical activity.*<sup>63</sup> Song performance, jamming with other musicians, and the sometimes-private process of songwriting, are 'practical activities' that consciously and subconsciously accumulate embodied stores of perception, knowledge and skill through the actuality of ongoing practice. Gavin Renwick has highlighted the importance of 'doing' by aligning his architectural practice with Buckminster Fuller's well-known expression: 'I am a verb, not a noun'.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the grounding of my own practice as an artist and musician resides in the 'liveness' of real-time activity.

In 'Former and Form' visual artist Graham Fagan revealed, together with the form, the mould used to make it, according equal importance to the space that shaped the form as much as the concrete form itself.<sup>65</sup> This example demonstrates that 'positive' and 'negative' are interfused, each depending on the other, and can be taken as an image of the bodily and mental interfusion at work in embodied learning and creative practice. As a troubadour, the activity of song performance takes shape or it might be said, is formed, in real-time; responding to multiple 'formers'. Charged by the relationships between people and place that entwine, jut up, tug and tease out an entirety of experience, this is a lived mode of practice, simultaneously inhabiting method and medium, space and place, linking with what Michael Polyani describes as 'tacit

---

<sup>63</sup> Ingold, T. (2010) *Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Oxon: Routledge, p.162.

<sup>64</sup> Renwick, G. (2002) *Spatial Determinism in the Canadian North: a theoretical overview and practice-based response*, citing Fuller, B. (PhD Thesis) Dundee: University of Dundee Press.

<sup>65</sup> Fagan, G. *Former and Form*, (1993) Wood, Cement and 2 G-clamps, 80 x 40 x 40cm.

knowledge.<sup>66</sup> The troubadour's 'know-how' is developed through direct experiential encounters where 'form' and 'former' meet.



In 1980, running down a Cumbrian hillside, artist Andy Goldsworthy made a series of drawings by throwing bunches of hazel sticks into the air.<sup>68</sup> The movement between sticks and air created playful interactions, differing each time, yet with a connective

---

<sup>66</sup> Polanyi, M. (2009) *Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

<sup>67</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk by Sheila Guymer: 'Performer's Analysis and Genre: researching performers' use of tacit and explicit knowledge' at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Guymer referred to Harry Collins' tripartite model of tacit knowledge.

<sup>68</sup> Goldsworthy, A. *Hazel Stick Throws*. Performance. Banks, Cumbria, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1980.

synergy afforded through the act of repetition. When Goldsworthy photographed these 'stick drawings' he included himself in the frame, thereby acknowledging the significance of his body in producing the work and the momentum it took to throw the sticks, rather than presenting the drawings as something separate, abstracted, from the physical action his body had undertaken to make them.

I align my own practice as a musician and performer with the observation by French philosopher Marcel Merleau-Ponty that the mind arises through the body.<sup>69</sup> My body is at the heart of how I create music, in what feels quite a miraculous way. When I sing, my body becomes an instrument not only of sound but exchange. When singing, there is no time to consider how factors such as the clinking of glasses in the distance, the rich silence of an audience listening intently, or how my emotions of the moment, will affect my performance. Among the ongoing flow of life, it is the bodily feeling rather than the cognitive mind that is capable of keeping up to speed with any number of external and internal variables happening within and around me. This all takes place very fast: my voice simultaneously *sounds* and *absorbs* the environment, making split-second adjustments that influence and direct the performance.

While Merleau-Ponty places the body at the centre of creative practice, layers of interaction go further still; there is *porosity* to existence as the body not only comprehends its surrounding but also exchanges part of itself in relation to the environment it is in. It is through practical activity that I *inhabit* a creative process as the troubadour, taking new experience in *and* becoming part of the environment.

---

<sup>69</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M., trans Colin, S. (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*. London and New York: Routledge.

It is interesting to note that in 1945, the same year that Merleau-Ponty was exploring ideas to do with embodied connections to the environment,<sup>70</sup> nature writer and walker Nan Shepherd was venturing into ‘the living mountain’;<sup>71</sup> an experience that would later become the foundation for her writings about walking in the Cairngorms. Shepherd writes: ‘Here then may be lived a life of the senses so pure, so untouched by any mode of apprehension but their own, that the body may be said to think’;<sup>72</sup> revealing a remarkable and intuitive similarity to Ponty’s theories around embodied perception.

Contemporary artist Simone Kenyon has been tracing the footsteps of Nan Shepherd, herself walking parts of the Scottish landscape. Kenyon has described the distance she felt from the environment when cocooned inside cold weather clothing,<sup>73</sup> that created a physical barrier between her body and the elements. In contrast, Flammarion, an 18<sup>th</sup> Century hot air balloonist, would venture into the night sky in ordinary attire with the aim of heightening his senses. Sensorial information gathered through the direct experience of feeling the changes in wind direction and temperature on his skin proved an adept system to navigate through the pitch dark.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Macfarlane, R. (2008) *I walk therefore I am*. (Online) First published 30<sup>th</sup> August 2008. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/aug30/scienceand-nature.travel> (Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019).

<sup>71</sup> Shepherd, N. (2011) *The Living Mountain* Edinburgh: Canongate.

<sup>72</sup> Shepherd, N. *The Living Mountain* quoted by Wiggins, R. (2017) in *Mudpath* (Online) Available at: <https://mudpath.wordpress.com/2017/07/27/walking-thus-hour-after-hour-the-senses-keyed-one-walks-the-flesh-transparent-nan-shepherd> (Accessed 2nd December 2019).

<sup>73</sup> Kenyon, S., speaking at *Being in Place: The Highs and Lows of Sited Practice*. University of Dundee, 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> McKenna, T., in conversation with Foster, J., discussing French astronomer and hot air balloonist Nicolas Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

At *Beyond Perception*, a conference exploring the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold,<sup>75</sup> I took part in a group walk facilitated by Kenyon, in which blindfolded participants were paired with a sighted partner and led through an area of dense forest. As the blindfolded participant, walking between the trees required me to place trust in my assigned guide for us to work together. Echoing the Dene saying that begins this chapter, a process of sensing and feeling was initiated through movement. As we settled into a mutual pace, my guide and I began to syncopate, not only the rhythm of our footsteps, but in an unspoken sensory communication that could be 'felt' by both of us. With it I experienced a shift from trepidation towards assurance. Similarly, a move from anticipation to actualisation takes place during live song performance.

My awareness of creative practice evolving in relation to its environment developed greatly during the residency at Samba K'e. In the following sub-chapter, I will explore the significance of the residency and influence this had for my practice as a troubadour.

---

<sup>75</sup> *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

## Sambaa K'e

*The hub of indoor activity at Sambaa K'e was located in the 'Gathering Hall'; one venue adapted to serve multiple roles including school for the children, home of Sambaa K'e Print Studio, sport and recreation hall, kitchen facility with provision for community meals, area to sit together and relax, and meeting place for the Elders to discuss Dehcho affairs.*



76

*Arriving in Sambaa K'e, Gavin Renwick introduced me as 'a musician.'<sup>77</sup> This caused much excitement as expressed by Ruby Jumbo, manager of community affairs: 'We never get musicians to come up here!'<sup>78</sup> This response echoed among the community, with an impromptu jam taking place when Denelee Deneron brought his acoustic guitar to the recreation hall. This led me to realise that, like the 'Gathering Hall' itself, I could adapt in*

---

<sup>76</sup> Foster, J., photographs of the 'Gathering Hall', Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, May 2014.

<sup>77</sup> As an appreciator of 'indie' (independent) music, Renwick expressed keen interest in my practice as a singer-songwriter and performer.

<sup>78</sup> Jumbo, R., in conversation with Renwick, G., and Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014.



*what I was there to do and I suggested a music evening; moving from my role as visual artist-in-residence to accommodate the anticipation of having 'a musician in town'. This received an overwhelmingly positive response with community members Robert and Rebecca, Denelee, Tyler and Carielyn, setting up a drum-kit, keyboard, guitars and full PA system.*

*That morning Sambaa K'e Chief Dolphus Jumbo knocked on the door of the wooden cabin where Madeline, Amanda and I were staying, asking me to join him on Sambaa K'e lake.*

*Searching for a way to promote the first evening, I asked people for a name and collectively we came up with 'Music and Coffee.'<sup>79</sup> The evenings were a collaborative venture between members of the Dene community, Amanda Forrest-Chan, Madeline Mackay and myself, as we each took roles to facilitate the evening and to invite participation. Amanda provided hospitality in the form of home-baked 'bannock', surprisingly the Scottish speciality was an already popular snack with the community.<sup>80</sup>*

*Following the music evening, Chief Dolphus said he had something to tell me. I was a little apprehensive; wondering whether my choice to play 'Imagine' had been the right one.*

*Musical jamming and song performances were made by a large number of the community, not only by those with considerable musical ability, but children, Elders, and community members who just wanted to have a go at playing the instruments. The idea of a 'performance' in the traditional notion of an audience all facing in one direction, listening,*

---

<sup>79</sup> The Sambaa K'e Dene Elders took the collective decision to become a 'dry' community (where alcohol use is prohibited) following issues with alcohol in neighbouring Dene settlements. As a result, coffee was the drink of choice with a make-your-own coffee bar available in the community centre.

<sup>80</sup> An association between Scottish and Dene cultures dates back several centuries when Scottish emigres and explorers (such as Alexander Mackenzie 1764-1820, who the Mackenzie River is named after) began to trade with the aboriginal peoples of Northern Canada.

*as a group of musicians play, was turned on its head, as while a seated area was provided for people to listen, and another area for people who wanted to play instruments and sing, the boundaries between the two melted away as members of the community crossed between both areas to perform and listen at different times throughout the evening.*

*We walked to the mouth of the lake; Chief Dolphus untethered his boat and we climbed aboard.*

*Following such positive response by the community, 'Music and Coffee' became a regular event during our stay. Music brought the community together in a way that extended communication out from the print studio. As a continuation of drawing sessions begun outdoors, music evenings included a multi-disciplinary element of 'live' drawing as an optional activity for people to explore, with drawings and prints made in response to live music as it was performed. The result being that those who had not ventured in to print prior to the music evenings, came in subsequently to re-engage with a feeling of community that had been initiated through music.*

Journal Folder 1: Samba K'e – Music and Coffee <sup>81</sup>

*In the following weeks the print studio, which had hitherto been the realm of children and adults already familiar with using the printmaking facilities, grew busier with new faces coming in, people who had attended the 'Music and Coffee' evenings. A particular surprise for print studio manager Carielyn Jumbo was when Denelee (who had initiated the first jam), came in to the studio to make his first print, showing a natural aptitude for carving*

---

<sup>81</sup> Foster, J., montage of photographs and musical recordings of the 'Music and Coffee' evenings at Samba K'e, NWT, Canada, during May 2014.

*to produce a beautiful feather lino-cut. While printmaking provided a valuable connection between ourselves as visiting artists and the community of Samba K'e, creative exchange was significantly informed by the shared experience of live musical performance and improvised jamming taking place during the music evenings.*

*As we approached the centre of the lake, two bald headed eagles flew out of the Boreal Forest and Chief Dolphus stopped the boat.*

*I had made an ink drawn poster to promote the initial music evening, however for subsequent evenings I realised that the print studio could be utilised to make a poster in-house. Using lino-cut, the poster included a space so that the day of the week could be changed to accommodate to everyone's schedule. This DIY method of making relates to independent music culture where musicians and communities self-organise to promote music through homemade visualisation such as badges, hand-drawn flyers and printed materials. Printing the posters became another avenue of connection as the poster campaign also brought the community together in anticipation for the next music evening.*

*We were in the middle of the lake; so vast and still it reflected the sky like a mirror. I felt as though we were floating between worlds, heaven and earth.<sup>82</sup>*

*The promotional materials provided a mantle to get out into the community to speak with people face to face, to ask to put up a poster and explain why. When the community discovered I was a musician it seemed to invite conversation and openness; while the live*

---

<sup>82</sup> Floating between worlds in the middle of Samba K'e lake, links to David Abram's experience one evening in Bali, when he saw the reflection of the milky way in the pools of water between the rice paddy fields where he was standing. With hundreds of fireflies whirring all around, their light also reflecting in the water; the combination of stars, reflection and fireflies produced in Abram the feeling that he was 'falling through space. I was no longer simply beneath the sky, but also above it – the immediate impression was of weightlessness. Falling, floating and drifting.' Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.3-4.

performances seemed to act as a portal to develop a feeling of familiarity. It seemed that 'music was the music language',<sup>83</sup> with its own vocabulary to draw out emotions and connections. One particularly memorable conversation that developed from the poster campaign was with Marilyn the shop owner who opened up about her own connection to music; how music: 'helped you through the bad times'.<sup>84</sup>



85

*Music evenings attracted the whole community from mothers with their babies, primary school children, teenagers and adults of all ages, to Elders. Like many of the Elders, Makayla's Grandmother solely spoke her native language of Slavey and I wondered*

---

<sup>83</sup> *Music is the Music Language* was the title of a two-day music festival organised by DIY promoters *Cry Parrot* and *Tracer Trails*, held at SWG3, Glasgow, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

<sup>84</sup> Jumbo, M., in conversation with Foster, J. Samba K'e, NWT, Canada, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

Marilyn Jumbo ran the only food store in Samba K'e; speaking face to face about music facilitated conversation so that we were able to talk openly.

<sup>85</sup> Foster, J., photographs of ink drawn and lino-cut posters by Foster, J. Samba K'e, NWT, Canada, 2014.

*whether singing songs in English would be inclusive enough. However, not only were the musical performances well received, but after a few weeks, Makayla's Grandmother, who had not shown interest in the print studio prior to the music evenings, ventured in to make her first lino-cut, a drawing from memory of two rabbits that would later inspire the development of a printmaking project to visualise a community gardening initiative.<sup>86</sup> The 'Music and Coffee' evenings were well attended, with interest sustained throughout the residency, developing a synergy between the print studio, live music jams, and outdoor drawing sessions by the lake. A deepening sense of connection between ourselves as visiting artists and the community was re-affirmed during each music evening so that by the end of the residency we felt 'like family'.<sup>87</sup>*

*Chief Dolphus told me that my voice came 'straight from the creator', gesturing the movement with his hands: down, through and out.*

*Music was a magnet for community; while the print studio and the community centre were architectural and material facilities within which to meet, it took the directness, the sound, the emotion, the joy in the shared immediacy of music to open communication between ourselves as visiting artists and the Dene community during the residency. Even as a musician, this made a huge impression on me as I realised the possibility of song performance to bring people together and promote a feeling of interconnectness. I was discovering that song performance was developing in relation to its surroundings. Furthermore, that while surrounded by instruments, it was the human voice that*

---

<sup>86</sup> There will be further detail about the 'Sambaa K'e Community Gardening Project' in 'Return to Sambaa K'e'.

<sup>87</sup> Forrest-Chan, A., in conversation with Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

*resonated in the hall; lifting to float around the room like an invisible thread of connection between each player, singer and listener.*

*Looking me straight in the eyes, Chief Dolphus told me to: 'Go out and sing!'*<sup>88</sup>



89 90 91

---

<sup>88</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Foster, J., photograph of Chief Dolphus Jumbo on his boat travelling towards the centre of Sambaa K'e lake with Foster, J. NWT, Canada, May 2014.

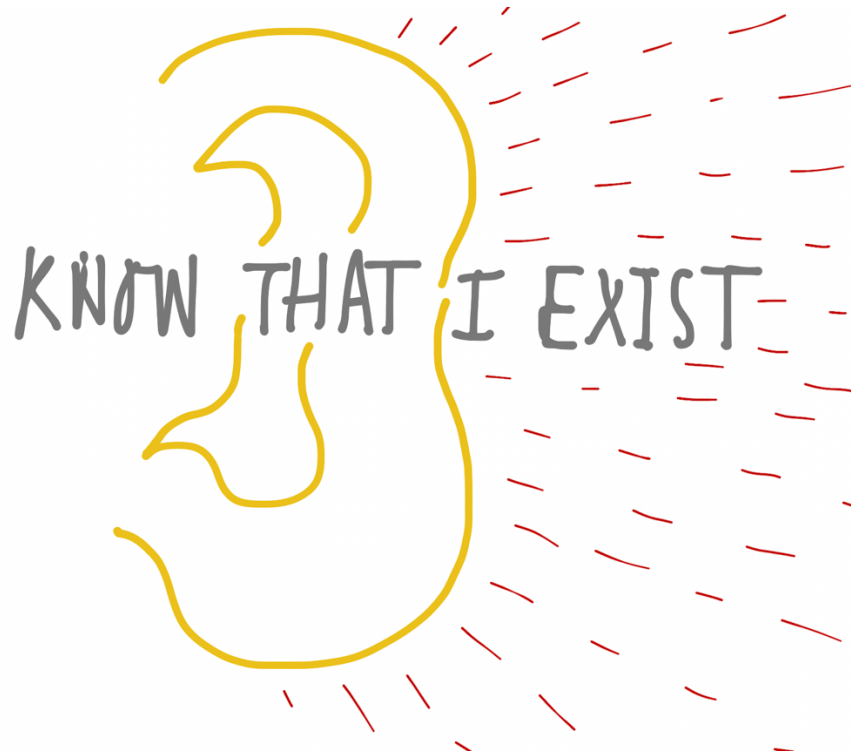
<sup>90</sup> Foster, J., photograph of Sambaa K'e lake, NWT, Canada, May 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

In the following chapter I will explore the properties of song and the ability of the human voice to connect on an innate level; beginning with an exploration of the utterance and receiving of sound.

**Song**





92

To hear and be heard. American novelist and psychoanalyst Clarissa Pinkola Estes describes '*singing over the bones*'<sup>93</sup> as a process of remembering one's own voice. Finding identity through 'making sound' is the primal cry as the umbilical cord is cut. The call to attention, for one's voice to be heard not only by others but by oneself; as these lyrics by Congolese-Scottish spoken word poet Zenga the Titan demonstrate:

*'What goes out into the aether comes back into the speaker.'*<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

<sup>93</sup> Pinkola-Estes, C. (2008) *Women Who Run with The Wolves: Contacting the power of the Wild Woman* London: Rider, p.24.

<sup>94</sup> Makangu, J. (2017) *What Goes Out Into The Aether* (Lyrics) Glasgow: Harvestree Sessions.

Writing about orality, sociologist Nick Crossley highlights Merleau-Ponty's assertion that thought is an occurrence that comes into being *through* the body, in other words not separated from it: *'We can only know what it is that we think by way of speech; by formulating our thoughts in words. This process may be sub-vocal but sub-vocalisation is dependent upon and derivative from normal speech such that we can rightly say that we know our own thoughts only by the embodied means of speech.'* <sup>96</sup> This is poignantly explored by Barbadian-Scottish artist Alberta Whittle in her multi-media exhibition 'How Flexible Can We Make The Mouth' <sup>97</sup> in which the physicality of the mouth as an apparatus for breathing and vocalisation represents a stuttering limbo between emotional expression (agitation, fear, release) and oppression under colonial rule. Whittle uses the term '*sonic cosmologies*' <sup>98</sup> to emphasise orality as a means to '*physically stitch and hold together many bodies and overlapping cultural histories*' <sup>99</sup> underlining a link between vocalisation and identity; that a process of oral expression and auditory reception is essential to piece together parts of ourselves.

---

<sup>95</sup> Keren, T. & Makangu, J. (2017) Musical recording of Makangu, J. (aka Zenga the Titan) MC-ing with Keren, T. (aka fnuf) on beatbox, guitar and fluegelhorn. Glasgow: Harvestree Sessions.

<sup>96</sup> Crossley, N. (2013) '*Mead, Merleau-Ponty and embodied communication*' in *Journal of Pragmatics* 5. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, pp.39-51.

<sup>97</sup> Whittle, A. (2019) *How Flexible Can We Make The Mouth* (Exhibition) Dundee Contemporary Arts, 14<sup>th</sup> September – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Attended in person 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

<sup>98</sup> Whittle, A. (2019) *Between A Cry and A Whisper* (Film) Margaret Tait Award Commission 2018/19.

<sup>99</sup> Dundee Contemporary Arts (2019) Booklet published on the occasion of the exhibition by Whittle, A. *How Flexible Can We Make The Mouth* at Dundee Contemporary Arts, 14<sup>th</sup> September - 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

In 'Orality and Literacy' Walter Ong reminds us that '*oral discourse has commonly been thought of even in oral milieus as weaving or stitching – rhapsodein, to “rhapsodize”, basically in Greek meaning “to stitch songs together”.*'<sup>100</sup> Within this definition, an association can be made with 'freestyle' rap, (also with the phonetic vernacular of the word 'rap' itself), where bars and beats are literally stitched together in real-time in a 'free flow' of imagination and rhythm. The term 'weaving' points to the 'texture' of sound and song, and a song's ability to traverse emotional states to vocalise and express invisible threads of connection. Furthermore, 'weaving' implies 'moving between' which links with the travelling musician and the way songs are 'passed along' between musicians, audiences; changing hands, changing places, and 'stitched together' through the actuality of bringing songs 'into being'. Therefore, Ong's use of the word 'weaving' expands Crossley's definition of 'speech' from being limited to linguistics towards a more sonorous description that includes melody and rhythm as forms of oral language in themselves: '*“to weave”, is, in absolute terms, more compatible etymologically with oral utterance than is “literature”, which refers to letters of the alphabet.*'<sup>101</sup>

Journal Folder 2: Song – Lighthouse<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Ong, W. (2002) *Orality and Literacy*. Oxon: Routledge, p.13.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Foster, J. & Keren, T. (2018) Musical recording of Keren, T., and Foster, J., singing and clapping, building layers of melodic harmony and rhythm. Glasgow: Harvestree Sessions.

The idea of music as its own language is supported by the philosopher Suzanne K. Langer,<sup>103</sup> whose seminal publication 'Feeling and Form' proposed that: *'art, especially music, is a highly articulated form of expression symbolizing direct or intuitive knowledge of life patterns, for example: feeling, motion, and emotion, which ordinary language is unable to convey'*.<sup>104</sup>

*Fingertip Feeling*

1941 Suzanne Langer

105

Historical examples highlight value in oral/aural experience undertaken with openness and awareness: the act of 'sounding out' and 'hearing in' as a way of playing, creating and connecting with the world we inhabit. Judaic tradition holds the idea that the world came into being through active listening; bringing the outside in and thereby hearing the world into consciousness.<sup>106</sup> Indian classical music is based around the concept of

---

<sup>103</sup> One of the first females in American history to establish an academic career in philosophy, interestingly Langer undertook her bachelor's degree under the tutorage of Alfred North Whitehead at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 1916-1920.

<sup>104</sup> The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2019) *Suanne K Langer: American Philosopher and Educator*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Susanne-K-Langer#ref222446> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>105</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made of a theory by American philosopher Susanne K Langer discussed during *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>106</sup> Jay, M. (1994) *Downcast Eyes*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.589-590.

Jay discusses the contrast between the dominant western philosophic tradition, inherited from the Greeks, which privileges vision over the other senses, with the Judaic tradition which gives the primacy to hearing (e.g.

sounding the world into existence through the act of utterance. As a former student of classical tabla, an Indian percussion instrument,<sup>107</sup> during group lessons my tutor would instruct students to sound out the tones of the drum vocally while learning to play: *'Say it so you can play it!'*<sup>108</sup>

### Journal Folder 3: Workings-out – Speech Rhythms<sup>109</sup>

Each voiced syllable corresponds to an area of the drum to produce a particular sound in relation to precise movements by finger, thumb, or palm. These 'speech rhythms' are as varied in tone as those produced by the instrument itself. With practice, vocal soundings can be delivered increasingly swiftly, with the fingers following suit.

Vocalisation is an integral part of tabla playing, not confined to rehearsal. It is used as a method of call and response to create momentum during live performance and invite playful interaction between players. The act of sounding out and hearing in might be described as an 'aural pathway', deepening connection between the performers and their environment.

---

"in the Beginning was the Word..."). The contrast is to do with the idea of vision objectifying the world and hence separating us from it, and sound, by which the world enters into us and we project into it in an act of reciprocity.

<sup>107</sup> A classical Indian paired percussion instrument consisting of a rounded copper 'durga' and rosewood 'tabla', tuned drums corresponding to the left and right hands.

<sup>108</sup> Kalanguta, V., in conversation with Foster. J. Tollcross community centre, Edinburgh, 2006.

<sup>109</sup> Foster, J. (2019) Musical recording of tabla speech rhythms. Fife: Weem Sessions.

to voice

to shape

to resonate

During a frame drumming masterclass,<sup>110</sup> musician and historian Layne Redmond demonstrates four soundings that evoke the elements: Ka (considered to be the sound of the earth energy), Doum (considered to be the sound of water), Ta (said to be the sound of fire) and Cha (said to be the sound of air).<sup>111</sup> Corresponding directly with the natural world, these soundings also provide an audible link to the body in nature as a source of fluidity, energy and movement. Redmond has revealed that across cultures and continents the frame drum was traditionally played by women, with a red dot painted at its centre to signify blood; a reminder that the first rhythm humans experience is the heartbeat from inside the womb.<sup>112</sup>

As a female I am especially aware of the body as a place of creative potential; every month my body prepares for pregnancy, discarding the protective lining that would nourish an embryo. The miracle of birth shares some similarity to vocalisation; as be it human, or the birdsong I am listening to now in my neighbour's garden, a song comes

---

<sup>110</sup> A 'frame-drum' is a hoop-shaped drum with a diameter greater than its depth, for example a tambourine. Handheld frame drums are among the oldest known musical instruments; depicted with female players in Egyptian murals, Greek vase painting and Mesopotamian stone carving.

<sup>111</sup> Redmond, L. (2002) *Layne Redmond: Tambourine Lesson* (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/OIBxrpelaUE> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>112</sup> Goldenseedmusic (2012) *When The Drummers Were Women with Layne Redmond* (Online) First published 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Available at: <https://youtu.be/8oOnwYrsWE0> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

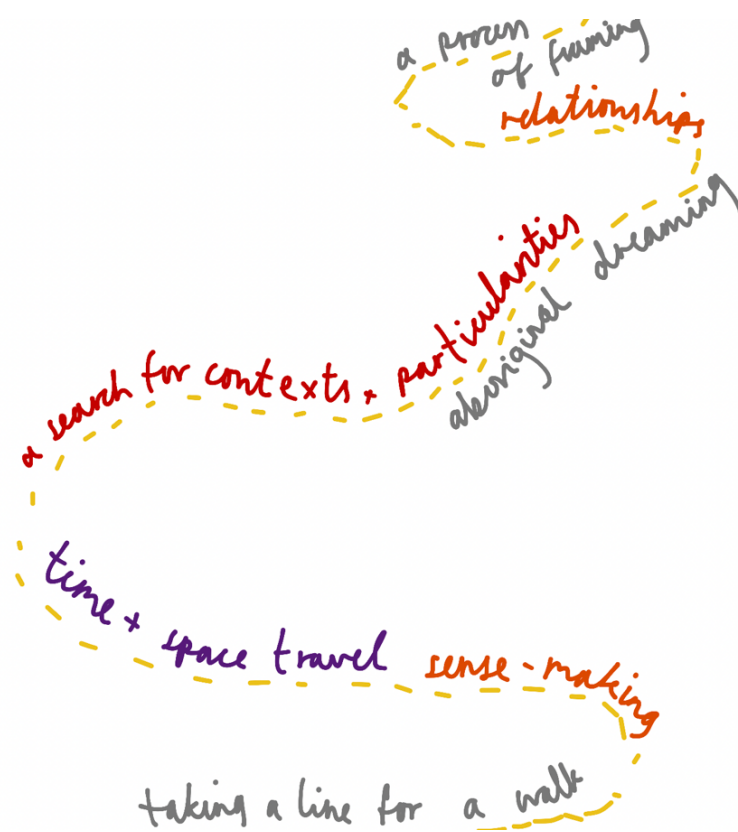
out of a body and into the world. As a singer, my voice ‘sounds out’ from my body in an act of reciprocity with an environment that comes with its own particularities, ‘*allowing the world to enter as I project into it.*’<sup>113</sup> My voice comes from within *and* is shaped by the locations I find myself in. Contemporary artist Susan Philipsz describes the act of singing as ‘*a sculptural experience*’ moving between one’s ‘*inner space and what happens when you project sound into a room.*’<sup>114</sup> Singing activates a multi-way communication between myself as the singer together with the audience and the environment.

Hearing happens simultaneously with the creation of sound; however, it is through the skill of *listening* that we allow sound to ‘speak’ and reveal something to us. How and what we hear is dependent on the way we receive sound; emphasis equates to presence, and therefore there is a practice to ‘hearing in’. The Dene know this well. As skilled hunters, they use their hearing together with their other senses to catch changes in the direction of the wind, cracks in the muskeg that might indicate the footsteps of caribou or moose, the flapping of wings, falling leaves that can denote changes in the health of the forest. By paying close attention to the sounds of their environment, the Dene have attuned to an auditory field that facilitates an intimate relationship with the land.

---

<sup>113</sup> Jay, M. (1994) *Downcast Eyes* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.589-590.

<sup>114</sup> Tate (2016) *Who Is Susan Philipsz?* (Online) <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/susan-philipsz-war-damaged-musical-instruments/philipsz-introduction> (Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019).



115

There remain indigenous communities in which aural shapes and metaphors describe and guide perceptions of, and relationships to, the environment. In a neighbouring region of the Western Arctic, the Inuit women of Nunavut Territory create sounds with their throats that imitate the birds, animals, weather and environment around them. *'One of the songs that is pretty common is 'the wind'; it's an imitation of what the wind would sound like from inside an igloo'* says Christine Tootoo,<sup>116</sup> who explains that the deep guttural sounds the Inuit women make *'vibrate on the back where the baby would be sitting and when you do that it helps lull the baby to sleep.'*<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing following in the footsteps of Paul Klee's well-known expression 'taking a line for a walk', May 2016.

<sup>116</sup> Christine Tootoo is an indigenous Inuit woman from Rankin Inlet, a Nunavut Territory of Northern Canada.

<sup>117</sup> Tootoo, C., in conversation with Sharp, V. *Sound Lines*. (Episode 4) *The Arctic*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0000mjk> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).



As traditionally nomadic hunters the Dene's ability to fine-tune and 'hear in' the environment has enabled them to survive long Winter months when temperatures drop well below zero.<sup>118</sup> Moose, caribou and beaver not only provide food but warm clothing, tools and shelter by using all parts of the animal. Similarly, the Inuit singers of Nunavut use their vocal chords, throats and '*all the available cavities of the body to conjure up sounds that belong to the natural environment.*'<sup>119</sup> These practices serve as a reminder that human identity is formed in relationship with its surroundings; that adaptive and responsive processes of communication maintain our survival in the world, not only in terms of meeting challenges, but as a way of reconnecting to ourselves.

Across another continent, a relationship between land and voice can be heard in the Aboriginal Australians' practice of 'Songlines' in which the '*melodic contour of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes.*'<sup>120</sup> While in Northern Europe, the Sami peoples of Finland have developed a complex system of vocal 'yoiks' that recreate a '*multi-dimensional living image*'<sup>121</sup> by mimicking animals and elements in nature such as the wind to express the essence of the environment as well as pass on information. Among these traditionally nomadic communities a relationship with the land is maintained, renewed and brought into being via oral and aural routes of travel; 'sounding out' and 'hearing in'.

---

<sup>118</sup> Sub-zero Winter temperatures can reach minus 50 Celsius. Animals the Dene hunted during Fall become the primary source of nutrition and are also used to make moccasins, jackets, gloves and other essential items.

<sup>119</sup> Sharp, V., *Sound Lines*. (Episode 4) *The Arctic*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0000mjk> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

<sup>120</sup> Chatwin, B. (1988) *The Songlines*. London: Pan Books, p.58.

<sup>121</sup> Lansman, U., quoted by Burke, K. *The Sami Yoik*. University of Texas (Online) Available at: <https://www/laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/giella/music/yoiksunna.htm> (Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019).

In a contemporary context, this could be seen as a form of psychogeography, communicating and playing with the architecture and spaces around us, as Philipsz herself has explored in 'Lowlands Away' featuring a recording of her singing three versions of the Scottish lament installed under three bridges that cross the River Clyde in Glasgow. Describing her use of sound as a *'layered experience'*,<sup>122</sup> Philipsz points to its emotive quality: *'Sound is visceral, and you respond to it immediately according to how it works spatially, to how it resonates within your body. It's something that you cannot help.'*<sup>123</sup> Sound therapist Joanna McEwan invites us to consider that: *'we live in a vibrational universe; you are a vibrational being whose cells and organs all vibrate at a particular frequency.'*<sup>124</sup> Elaborating that: *'Ancient teachings view of how the world is created is through sound; while the truth of these views can be debated, what is clear from modern research is that sound can at the very least effect matter.'*<sup>125</sup>

When sound takes form to become a song, this response seems to go further still; like the Inuit babies who are lulled to sleep, song speaks deeply to the human psyche on an innate level, a point Philipsz is aware of in her work: *'It's true that sounds, and particularly song, can trigger memory. People have strong associations with the human voice.'*<sup>126</sup> In 1972, French philosopher Roland Barthes published an essay entitled 'The

---

<sup>122</sup> Buhmann, S. (2017) *In Search of Resonance: A conversation with Susan Philipsz*. Sculpture Magazine, Vol.36, (9), pp.42-47.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> McEwan, J. (2018) *Why Raising Your Vibration Increases Serendipity*. TEDx University of Brighton. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/SL5sqC17NIE> (Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Buhmann, S. (2017) *In Search of Resonance: A conversation with Susan Philipsz*. Sculpture Magazine, Vol.36, (9), pp.42-47.

Grain of the Voice' in which Barthes describes 'grain' as: '*the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs.*'<sup>127</sup> Vocalisation is both a gesture and an action;<sup>128</sup> therefore, song performance mediates the internal and the external in a process of exchange that shapes and reshapes identity as an expression of self in relation to its environment (both present and remembered). A song might be considered a form of navigation in its flexibility to adapt to multi-layered definitions of people and place. Easily transported, a song can move between territories, invoking emotional and sensorial characteristics of places that have been passed through – 'place' used here to describe both the physical environment and a landscape of emotion, feeling and comprehension within ourselves. In the following sub-chapter, I will explore song as vehicle of connection, starting with etymological origins to ask - when does sound become a song?

---

<sup>127</sup> Barthes, R. (1972) '*The Grain of the Voice*' quoted by Lentjes, R. in *Against The Grain: The Essence of Voices* (Online) Available at: <https://van-us.atavist.com/against-the-grain> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>128</sup> Musicologist Nina Sun Eidsheim states that vocalised sound is focused on action or gesture; quoted by Lentjes, R. in *Against The Grain: The Essence of Voices* (Online) Available at: <https://van-us.atavist.com/against-the-grain> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



129

Travel-light while the content can be weighty, a song can transport and transmit emotion and meaning. Furthermore, a live song performance carries the singer's own voice and interpretation of the song, in turn becoming part of the song itself.

Journal Folder 2: Song - Freight Train <sup>130</sup>

The Norse word for incantation is 'galdr', specifically something to be spoken aloud or sung; from galdr we have 'nightingale' for the bird's song, as it is not only humans that make songs. In *'The Spell of the Sensuous'* David Abram describes the practice of Native

---

<sup>129</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, January 2019.

<sup>130</sup> Foster, J. (2017) Musical recording of Macdonald, L. (steel string guitar, harmonica and voice) and Foster, J. (voice and percussion) with an interpretation of *Freight Train* composed by Elizabeth Cotton between 1906-1912. Live recording made outdoors on digital tablet, Falkland, Fife.

Americans who imitate birdsong during shamanic rituals.<sup>131</sup> The Germanic word for magic is also 'galdr', derived from 'galan', meaning 'to sing', but especially referring to bird calls, hence to the nightingale.<sup>132</sup> It is interesting that in the Icelandic 'Galdrabok'<sup>133</sup> a person would draw to achieve a desired outcome, accompanied by a spell to be spoken aloud or sung;<sup>134</sup> so here we find the voice being used to cement and send an intention on its way, and song as an invocation. To invoke is to call something into being, with the voice. In this way the voice becomes a conduit between internal and external realms.

## When does sound become a song?

Singing a song summons sound into a shape that holds meaning and character within it. A song involves the arrangement of sound as melody and rhythm. Concomitantly linked to movement, both melody and rhythm possess a certain hypnotic quality. For the Sambia K'e Dene, like many indigenous peoples of North America, the drum dance is a sacred ritual where entering an altered state of consciousness is reached through communal drumming in a circle. As each drummer beats out a rhythm in a repetitive motion together with a swaying movement of the body in time to the beat, a steady rhythm ricochets around the circle and resonates within the body to induce a

---

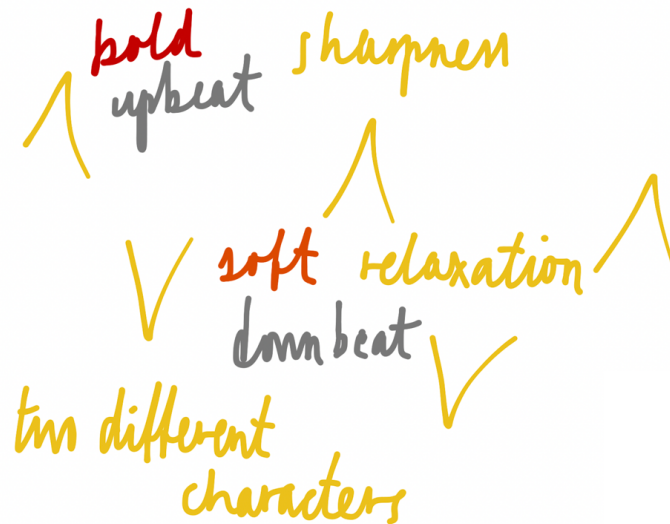
<sup>131</sup> Abram, D. (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous* New York: Vintage, p.28.

<sup>132</sup> Lehmann, W.P. (1986) *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, p.157.

<sup>133</sup> Icelandic spell book of 'sigils' i.e. drawn symbols considered to have magical power.

<sup>134</sup> Sharp, R., in conversation with Foster, J., on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

meditative state. From her experience as a sound therapist Joanna McEwan reveals that: *'a steady rhythm allows the mind to latch onto it, slow down, and relax.'*<sup>135</sup>



136

In 'When the Drummers Were Women', Layne Redmond describes the ability of rhythm to entrance and transport: *'the drum was a primary trance-inducing instrument in transition rites. Initiates who concentrated on its rhythmic patterns could transcend ordinary consciousness.'*<sup>137</sup> This is explored by artist Alberta Whittle in her film 'Between A Whisper and A Cry' where a congregation at Mount Pigby Baptist Church on the island of Barbados enter a state of emotional release through repetitive rhythms

---

<sup>135</sup> McEwan, J. *Why Raising Your Vibration Increases Serendipity*. TEDx University of Brighton. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/SL5sqC17NIE> (Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

<sup>136</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk by Livio Marcaletti: *'Correcting prosodic errors in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century vocal music: singers' implicit knowledge vs composers' notation'* at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>137</sup> Redmond, L. (2018) *When The Drummers Were Women*. Battleboro, Vermont: Echo Point Books, p.21.

played on djembe drums that seem to enter the body to punctuate bodily movement. Melody shares a similar ability to affect us on a deeper level of consciousness as McEwan herself discovered: *'Pachelbel's Canon was my go-to when in the throes of teenage angst. I have subsequently discovered that the perfect fifth harmonic as found in Baroque music is one of the most healing harmonic arrangements there is being both expansive and stable.'*<sup>138</sup>

Therefore, in the form of 'song' rhythm and melody make a potent combination, however the live performance of a song has further influence on the human psyche as the act of singing possesses a *directness* that reaches the very core of our being; speaking on an innate level that can open emotional connection. Philipsz again: *'I am particularly interested in the emotive and psychological properties of sound and how it can be used as a device to alter individual consciousness.'*<sup>139</sup> In this way, a song becomes both a 'container' and a 'conduit' through which emotion and meaning can move, exchange and attach.

The word 'movement' can be used to describe emotions: 'I was moved, that was very moving'; also, as the descriptor of a section of musical composition, referred to as a 'movement'. Movement implies that there is travel, about to happen or already begun. The fluidity of song to move across physical space and time to enter an emotional inner landscape, can act as a charm to draw us in. Returning to etymological origins, we also have enchantment, enchanting, and of course incantation and chant itself; from the

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Buhmann, S. (2017) *In Search of Resonance: A conversation with Susan Philipsz*. Sculpture Magazine, Vol.36, (9), pp.42-47.

Latin 'incantare' to utter magical words to be spoken or sung. From 'chant' we get the French *chanson* meaning song, and in Italian musical terminology 'cantabile' which denotes when an instrument is to be played in a 'song-like/voice-like manner'. In all these definitions, there is a connection between singing and captivating; from *chant* to *enchant*, with an invitation to be enchanted through the voice. Both the song and the voice can mesmerise; think of the Selkies of Scottish folklore, and Homer's Sirens who lure Odysseus to shipwreck on their rocky isle. In a more urban context, the 'barrow boys' of markets across Britain still practice a tradition where 'calling' to proclaim the value of wares on their stalls becomes a performance of invitation.

Whether a spell, a ritual or a rite of passage, a song is a *framework* through which to channel attention and activate exchange within a specific duration of time. During a live performance, the start and the end of a song act as bookends within which attention can be focused to co-create meaning between the performer, the audience and the environment. This is a process of *additions*; where each song undergoes a fresh interpretation that develops in hand with the specific actualities of the performance that will shape its meaning at that particular time.

collaboration



---

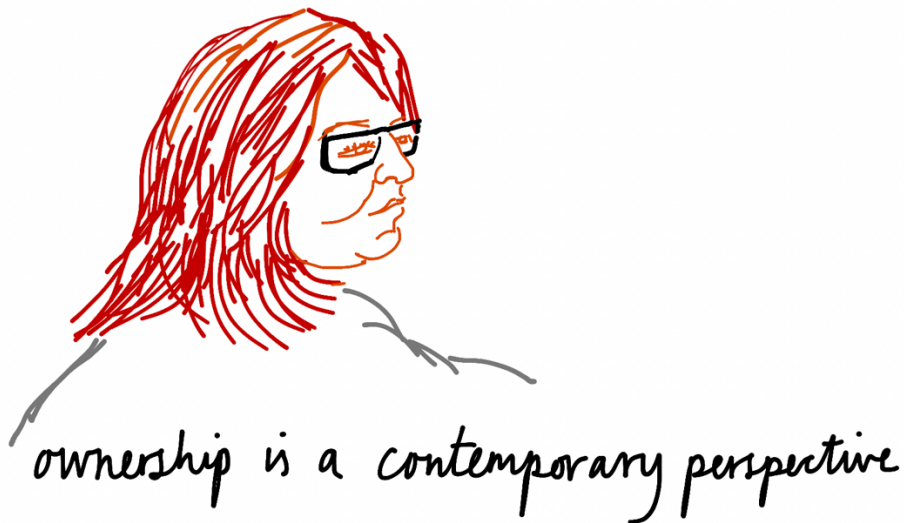
<sup>140</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Dundee Commons Festival*, Dundee, 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 2015.



Interpretation is an integral part of oral culture and denotes an interesting feature of the tradition; rather than relying on one individual to maintain a particular 'folk-song', as the word suggests, responsibility is shared among many 'folks' to pass it along. This offers an alternative meaning to authorship and questions the idea of originality resting solely in the hands of one creator. As a songwriter, I may be performing songs that I have written, however, the live performance is still co-authored; live performance is an act of shared creation where many 'voices' shape the essence of a song. This links to Dene culture and language where no concept or word for 'my' exists. During the residency in Smbaa K'e, Chief Dolphus recalled the time a man who had come to the drum dance without a drum saw one placed at the side of the circle. Picking it up he began to play, until another man returned and reacted angrily. This other man had spent time in the cities outside indigenous land and had forgotten their ways. The Elders spoke: 'it is not your drum' they told him; 'you brought it with you, then went away and now you have returned and can use it again. This man gave it life while it was sitting without a player.'<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J. Smbaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014.



142

The idea of song as an essence rooted in community and open to reinterpretation by new voices within a growing vernacular can also be traced in the history of hip hop with the 'mix' tape where rappers deliver 'bars' over well-known beats borrowed from other songs.<sup>143</sup> In rock music, 'All Along The Watchtower', originally written by Bob Dylan, was famously re-worked by Jimmy Hendrix, then the Dave Matthews Band, and more recently Mumford and Sons. Despite the original composer, song is a framework that can accommodate fresh contributions. Scottish audio archive, '*Kist'o'Riches*',<sup>144</sup> contains

---

<sup>142</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Dundee Commons Festival*, Dundee, 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

As a co-organiser of Dundee Commons Festival, activities, talks and workshops were based around the idea of 'a commons' i.e. a piece of land held in common use; not owned by anyone but used by everyone. We invited speakers to debate 'the commons' and this sketchnote was made when people were discussing ownership as a relatively new concept resulting from western models of commerce. Further information about the festival is available at: <https://dundeecommonsfestival.wordpress.com/welcome/about>

<sup>143</sup> 'Bars' are lines of lyrics that a rapper (also known as an MC) has either written or will often 'freestyle' (i.e. improvise live) over music.

<sup>144</sup> *Tobar an Dualchais* (Kist'o'Riches) is a Gaelic/Scottish online archive of oral recordings from the 1930's (songs, stories, music, poetry and factual information) made both in Scotland and further afield. (Online) Available at: <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

hundreds of songs that have been passed along and reworked through many voices among Scottish communities. A typical song among the fishing villages of the East Neuk of Fife where I live, would be the working songs sung among 'the herring girls' as they gutted the fish after the catch was landed. These songs became a melodic and rhythmic vehicle to lighten heavy work and bond the girls together. A song could tease, express longing for a handsome fisher lad, poke fun at characters in the village, and become an outlet for overwhelming grief when a fisherman was lost at sea.<sup>145</sup> The malleable medium of song was able to broach many aspects of everyday life and hold the emotional weight of a community. After the death of her husband John Lennon, Yoko Ono's grief was shared with fans around the world. When asked how she managed to cope in the years following Lennon's death, Ono said: *'life gets easier if you dance through it.'*<sup>146</sup>

A song is a generous medium that can accommodate a range of emotions connected with life's joys and ills and help us on the journey to remember to 'dance through life'. While dancing is inextricably linked to music and song, the degree of expression can vary from person to person with the type of music, the location in which it is played, and the cultural context. For example, bodily movement to popular music played in a festival field differs greatly to a seated orchestral concert. However, both forms of song can unleash strong emotion in the listener and it is a matter of personal and cultural context as to how much physical movement is made to demonstrate a wealth of emotion nevertheless felt within.

---

<sup>145</sup> Foster, J., archival research made at Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther, between May and July 2015.

<sup>146</sup> Ono, Y., speaking during an artist's talk given for Ono's exhibition: *Odyssey of a Cockroach*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 5<sup>th</sup> February - 7<sup>th</sup> March 2004. Attended in person 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

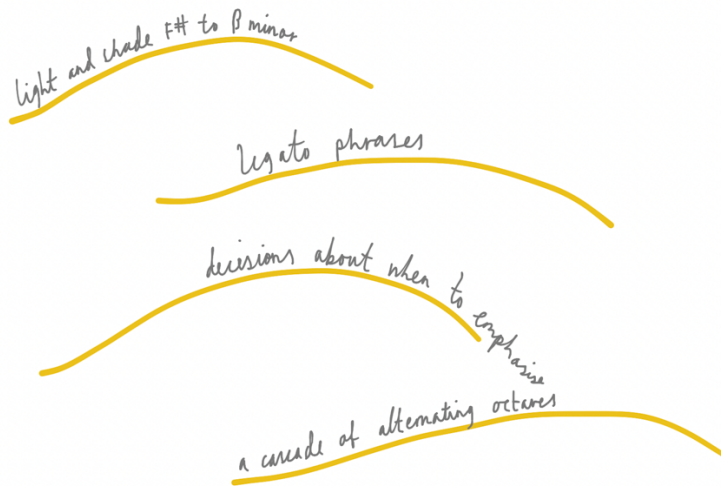
Footage of the Caribbean tradition of limbo dancing in Whittle's film 'Between A Whisper and A Cry',<sup>147</sup> reveals the physicality of 'falling back' into a state of surrender to contort the body under a low pole balanced between two sticks, then 'rising up' to full body height after passing under the threshold. The dancer's movement is propelled by rhythmic drumming that maintains momentum. Furthermore, rhythmic repetition forms the framework through which to enter and exit a heightened state of concentration and emotion.<sup>148</sup> In the following sub-chapter I share insights from my own practice of song development to explore the role of repetition as a way of imprinting practice within the body and how this contributes towards emotional expression.

---

<sup>147</sup> Whittle, A. (2019) *Between A Cry and A Whisper* (Film) Margaret Tait Award Commission 2018/19.

<sup>148</sup> 'Limbo' can be connected to the histories of slavery where original iterations of these performances were enacted in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Trinidad to symbolise slaves entering the cramped galleys of a ship, or spirits crossing over into the afterlife. Translated to popular culture, there remains a 'rite of passage' to the limbo dance that focuses emotion within the physical movement of passing under the limbo bar driven by repetitive drumming.

## Hearing Forward



149

Related to 'sounding out' and 'hearing in', 'hearing back' is a process of *repetition*; of replay and reflection. Nothing is ever repeated exactly even if to our senses a recurrence, whether aural or visual, seemed to be identical it would still be a new occurrence: '*you can't step into the same river twice.*'<sup>150</sup> However, the role of repetition is essential to my practice as an artist, musician and troubadour.

Repetition improves the motor responses that enable the development of my musical, physical and artistic co-ordination and agility; as I draw a portrait or play piano I am developing muscle memory and embedding skills within my body. Repetition extends my ability to recall the songs I perform;<sup>151</sup> enables my vocal chords to reach the notes I

---

<sup>149</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a piano lecture-recital by Naomi Woo: "*...at the limit*": *an étude in possible impossibility*' at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>150</sup> Heraclitus, 544 BC.

<sup>151</sup> My own experience of embedding songs within my body and memory through repetition is echoed in the history of oral tradition where songs are passed on without written notation.

sing. However, repetition goes further still; as a songwriter listening back to songs as I am writing them, repetition allows me to hear the *shape* of a song.

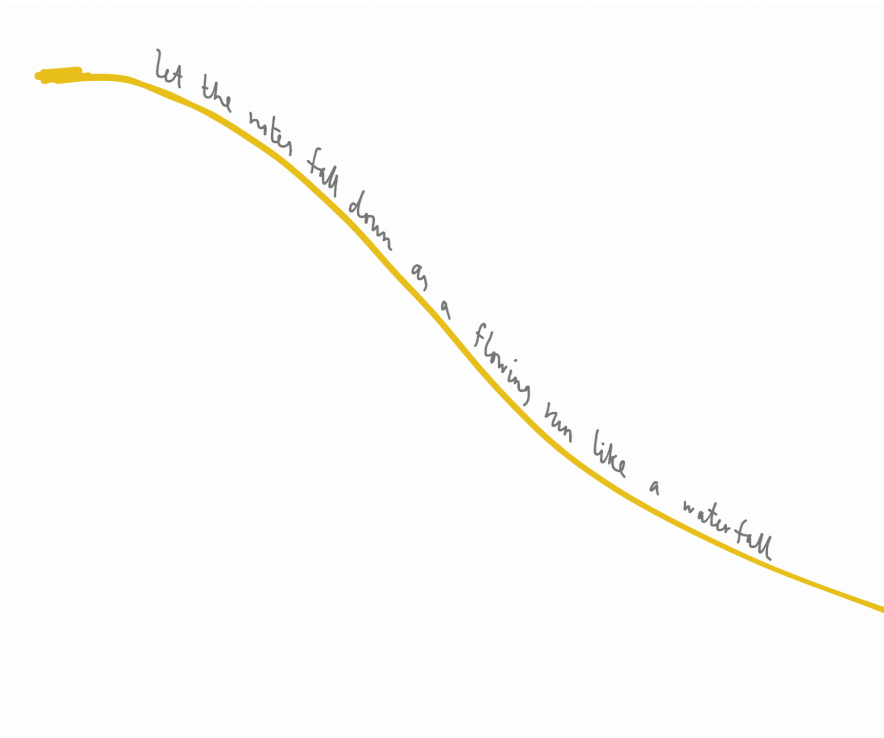
This is active listening where some things recede and some things arise, where I am *hearing through the repetition* of ongoing practice. Sociologist Richard Sennett positions repetition as a valuable learning tool that can allow the study of one's own '*ingrained practice*' to '*modulate it from within*'.<sup>152</sup> This is also a form of relational play. Speaking about the poetry of Hilda Doolittle, Helen Denning describes Doolittle's use of repetition as a process of '*stretching meaning*';<sup>153</sup> that places a word amongst others on a page to set it against a 'background' that has the ability to create '*ecosystems and worlds*'<sup>154</sup> that will then hold different meaning when set against different 'backgrounds'. Similarly, in my process of songwriting I try out a melody or rhythm and play with it until it starts to 'take shape'. This shape then changes the next time I come back to it; and changes again during the context of a live performance with an audience or through jamming with other musicians. The oscillating movement between states of doing and reflection and repetition provide an overall development of the practice. Therefore, in my practice as a troubadour a process of reflection through 'hearing back' against a number of 'backgrounds' is a necessary action in being able to repeat with further value. In this way, hearing back might be described as a way of *hearing forward*.

---

<sup>152</sup> Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London: Allen Lane, p.41.

<sup>153</sup> Denning, H., in conversation with Foster, J., St Andrews, Fife, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2018. Denning is an English Literature graduate of St Andrews University.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.



155

### Journal Folder 3: Workings-out – Hearing the Shape <sup>156</sup>

In the context of artistic development, repetition does not reproduce an identical copy of what precedes it; to repeat is to develop *familiarity* with a medium and one's own expression in hand with it. Familiarity takes practice, and practice requires repetition. Repetition applies to the honing of skills and is the same for song development as for drawing and printmaking; where the practice of getting to know a musical instrument, including the voice, or drawing materials and printmaking tools, enables what is practiced to become embedded within the body. This is intrinsically linked to memory; Indian mystic Sadhguru reminds us that according to yogic principles the body is

---

<sup>155</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a piano lecture-recital by Naomi Woo: “...at the limit”: an *étude in possible impossibility*’ at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>156</sup> Foster, J. (2019) Musical recording of Foster, J., playing a repetitive chord structure on the piano with the left hand and improvising a melody over the top with the right hand to hear melodic possibilities.

regarded as the largest and most reliable store of memory: *'You cannot remember your Great-Great-Grandfather's nose, yet there it is on your face!'*<sup>157</sup> and so it is that the body holds and carries forward an imprint of the familiar. Familiarity contains a sense of comfort in return; to become kin with, and take in, as one of the 'family'.

Vibration, reverberation, rhythm and memory are all linked because they all involve aspects of *repetition*. A song becomes a definite something in itself because it entwines all of these aspects. Without them, it wouldn't exist; and yet it extends beyond itself too, to connect to the environment, which includes the bodies of listeners (with their own vibratory and rhythmical aspects or pulses) and the inanimate environment which can influence the quality of sound in a variety of ways. Or, to say the same thing the other way round: sound responds to its environment. Familiarity also involves continuity through recognition, even though there may be a considerable temporal break between encounters; the feeling of 'there it is again'. A song has a sense of *return* that can take you back to the exact place you were when you first heard it and how you were feeling at that time. There is pleasure in rhythmic repetition, of course, but also in re-acquaintance with something that holds meaning for us; a well-loved song heard again and again without boredom. All this takes a more intense form during the act of songwriting, when the dynamic of repetition, continuity and familiarity creates a sense of being 'inside' the work I am composing, feeling it and knowing it from the inside, so to speak. Or put another way: *'All musicians inner hear.'*<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Sadhguru, Vasudev, J. (2019) *The Doorway of Memory*. Sadhguru YouTube (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/bILGsMrwF40> (Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019).

<sup>158</sup> Clarke, E., in conversation with Foster, J., during 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Conference of Music and Consciousness*. Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Discussion of 'inner hearing' in which music is embodied through ongoing practice. Clarke is Heather Professor of Music at Oxford University.



tempo  
dynamics  
intervals

when + what to emphasise -  
the unusual note in the key  
and interval... developing  
from the technicality, comes  
emotional emphasis

159

As a songwriter, some songs come easily, others are more elusive. Some take moments to write, others develop over months, years, evolving into a different song and changing shape entirely where the melody or lyric or rhythm feels more at home than it did within the original instrumentation or cadence. Song writing is a process of layers where some peel away and new ones appear; layers of repetition become layers of experience that develop through the practice of live performance.

Journal Folder 3: Workings-out – Repetitions <sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>160</sup> Foster, J. (2017) Musical recordings of composition *Warm at Night* by Foster, J. Examples of development through repetition in different settings; (i) initial idea in a corridor, (ii) trying out keyboards with Keren, T. on drums, (iii) recording on real piano, layering drums and vocals, (iv) practising chorus with Keren T. on drums.

During 'Performing Knowledge' a conference held at Cambridge University, exploring musical performance,<sup>161</sup> Margaret Faultless invited attendees to a live open rehearsal by a conductor-less ensemble of medieval instrumentalists. Through an exploration of Haydn's Symphony, 'Le Soir', the open rehearsal aimed to show that in contrast with Berlioz's assertion that the orchestra is a *'giant keyboard at the hands of the conductor'*,<sup>162</sup> Haydn's use of orchestration for a conductor-less ensemble could create *'a sonic and social instrumental community in which instrumentalists participate by performing different functions and roles through the course of a performance.'*<sup>163</sup> The ensemble made three run-throughs of the piece, breaking for open discussion between each playing, in which the musicians and the audience were invited to consider how: *'musical, social, and even political relationships differ when performing with a conductor-less orchestra'*.<sup>164</sup> My experience as a listener aligned with the consensus of both the musicians and other attendees; that the first rehearsal had been hesitant as the musicians were getting to know one another, jolting forward and hanging back without 'connecting' fully with the music or each other. The second go was more assured, and as the piece reached its crescendo the hairs on my arms prickled as I felt an emotional response to the music. By the third rehearsal confidence had tipped over into complacency, with the energy transmitted between players now distinctly lack-lustre.

---

<sup>161</sup> *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Faultless. M. (2016) *'Open Rehearsal and Performance with Margaret Faultless and the Cambridge University Collegium Musicum'* programme hand-out at *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

how musical communities  
are created

most of us just met last night  
conductor-less ensemble  
eyes looking each other  
social engagement  
shaping colour individual  
emphasis audience participants

second start smoother  
pulses move together  
realities of physical tensions  
in front of audience  
getting to know each other  
importance of gesture  
flexibility of movement  
eye contact body movement  
idiosyncrasies of older instruments

165

Opinion about the open rehearsal made me wonder about the 'feel' of a musical performance; how tangible this 'feel' was for consensus to have been reached; and how 'feel' seemed to be an essential part of 'hearing back' and therefore 'hearing forward'. Among my peers, the musicians I know often describe the 'feel' of a song or the way in which playing 'with feel' is preferable to technical ability. While a sense of 'feel' is common knowledge among musicians, an example would be the difference between pressing the 'demo' button on a keyboard that delivers a note for note 'perfect'

---

<sup>165</sup> Foster, J., digital drawings made during an open rehearsal by Faultless, M., *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

performance, compared with the unpredictable nuances created by a musician playing live. 'Feel' refers to the way in which a piece of music is played; to the fluidity and quality of expression embodied by the player. The late jazz pianist Thelonious Sphere Monk famously favoured 'feel' over 'rightness'. Monk's live recording of 'Round Midnight'<sup>166</sup> contained several dissonances that may have been the result of technical blunders and yet, perhaps because of these, was the recording Monk selected for public release and that has since been celebrated for its 'feel'.

How does a musician tune in and learn to express 'feel' within themselves? Swiss composer and music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze observed that some of his students found the reading of sheet music provided for orchestral practice stifled their ability to engage fluidly and emotionally with the music itself. He devised a method he named 'eurythmics'<sup>167</sup> to root musical sounds within the body through the use of physical movement. Dalcroze's intention was to switch emphasis from performance as the conveying of sound to an audience, to a circulatory act of response feeding *back* to the performer themselves so that they might embody their own connection with the music.<sup>168</sup> This links to artist Maggie Hambling's personal reflections on her daily practice of life-drawing as the ongoing development of a 'living flow' between the eyes and the hand.<sup>169</sup> Here again we have the themes of movement and repetition.

---

<sup>166</sup> Monk, T. S. (1957) '*Round Midnight*' on the album *Thelonious Himself*. New York: Riverside Records.

<sup>167</sup> 'Eurythmics' derives from Greek origin meaning 'good rhythm'.

<sup>168</sup> Bachmann, M. L. (1991) *Dalcroze Today: An Education Through and into Music*. Clarendon Press, p136.

<sup>169</sup> Hambling, M. (1990) *Making their Mark: Six Artists on Drawing*. (Episode 3) BBC (Online) First broadcast 6<sup>th</sup> August 1990. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p02t7k03/making-their-mark-six-artists-on-drawing-3-maggi-hambling> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

Circulating between observation, gesture, mark-making, and re-observation, a feedback loop is initiated to re-iterate an ongoing relationship between subject and practice.

Live performance, therefore, not only occurs as an interaction with an audience but as a way of playing back the music to the musician to embody the practice; a process in which solitude is sometimes necessary to instil a relationship with the music and intensify reflection during the process of song writing, as Norwegian noise musician Lasse Marhaug observes in conversation with broadcaster Verity Sharp:

*V.S: 'Your music has grown out of you working in isolation and creating the sound that you felt was missing (from the landscape in which you live). Do you think your music would have been different if you had been connected to the internet?'*

*L.: 'If anything, discovering this music by myself and doing it just by myself made me quite confident in my work; I think that if I grew up now with social media and how everything is connected, I would be much more dependent on what people thought about my work. But when you're just doing it by yourself on an island in the Arctic you don't get any kind of feedback, so I was just happy to be working by myself, and I still have that in me.'<sup>170</sup>*

In both the open rehearsal and examples of song writing development, as part of the journey from anticipation to actualisation repetition clearly shows the possibility to either cement or undo what has gone before; but where to draw the line? In

---

<sup>170</sup> Marhaug, L., in conversation with Sharp, V. *Sound Lines*. (Episode 4) *The Arctic*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0000mjk> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

conversation with Alain de Botton, Peter Gabriel describes the moment in which a mixture of fatigue and boredom dictates when to call it a day at the recording studio. Gabriel speaks of a threshold to concentration and flow that once crossed would either *'become very interesting or very useless'*. At this point, *'when you knew which you were dealing with, it was better to take a break'*.<sup>171</sup>

SOMETIMES  
POETIC INTERPRETATION  
COMES FROM  
DECISIONS MADE  
BY NECESSITY

172

Gabriel noted that sometimes the qualities of fatigue could be *'pushed through to become something creative'* but that at other times *'you can go too far'* <sup>173</sup> and at that point over-

---

<sup>171</sup> Gabriel, P., in conversation with de Botton, A. *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Attended in person.

<sup>172</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>173</sup> Gabriel, P., in conversation with de Botton, A. *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Attended in person.

repetition loses the essence of the song. This point is reinforced by an observation by Richard Sennett who reminds us that the *'length of practice session must be judged not to lose attention.'*<sup>174</sup> Once more, this draws attention to song performance as an embodied practice where the fallibility and requirements of the body need to be taken into consideration. Fatigue reminds us that an activity is *live* and that the human body is subject to the challenges of real-time activity.

#### Journal Folder 5: Jamming - Late Night <sup>175</sup>

Through the practice of troubadouring, the troubadour 'becomes'; practice allows new experience to be 'taken in' and knowledge embedded through prior experience to 'open out'. Experience accumulates through repetition; however, a performance is not reproduced but renewed in relation to a combination of particular circumstances that cannot be repeated. However, each iteration informs the next, just as a journey carries with it the memory of where it has been. During a live performance, the singer meets both external and internal factors that will influence the performance; in the following chapter I explore these factors and conditions, beginning with an exploration of the 'liveness' within which the practice of troubadouring dwells.

---

<sup>174</sup> Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London: Allen Lane, pp.41-42.

<sup>175</sup> Keren, T. & Makangu, J. (2017) Musical recording of Foster, J., Keren, T., Macdonald, L., Makangu, J., Phipps, S. *Late Night*. Jam session. Glasgow: Harvestree.

## **Conditions of Encounter**





176

'Liveness' is a characteristic, an ambience, a feeling, that describes the unpredictable nature of actuality. During any live performance or activity, creative possibilities can arise out of, and in relation to, a myriad of particularities occurring in real-time. This is what makes any practice situated in, and subject to, the reality of unknown factors a vibrant act of spontaneous creativity developing relationally through response, expression and interpretation. 'Liveness' is the reason why documentation is not comparable to being in the actuality of the moment as it occurs. This is clearly demonstrated in the following anecdote by walker and writer Robert MacFarlane, as he

---

<sup>176</sup> Foster. J., digital drawing made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Conference on Music and Consciousness*, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

recalls his experience of being on a small boat with the printmaker Norman Ackroyd during a fierce storm: *'My memory of that is of me kneeling on the front of the boat as it approached Tory Island, in what was I think a force five, and the front of the boat was hammering up off the waves I'd say seven or eight feet, maybe ten, before it slammed back down. And I was on my knees being sick in the scuppers, but with one hand, I like to think I was holding up your water holder or perhaps it was your paint-box. And you were stood there, braced against the side, painting this extraordinary work of the island as it came into view! And I've never forgotten, I think your phrase was 'getting the lines off', you said "I have to get the lines off."' Ackroyd himself responds: "There is no substitute for those lines drawn on the spot. You can't make them up. There's some things in life you can't make up.'* Going on to say: *'(It's) not just the fear that's a real physical thing; it's difficult to get fear into a picture. It's difficult to get the smell of a gannetry when you're downwind of it, the sheer row of a gannetry! You can't get that in a picture or on a page in words – you can talk about it, but the actual real thing of the scream of a gannetry...'*<sup>177</sup>

'Liveness' is what makes an encounter creative; as a troubadour arriving to perform in new places, the 'liveness' of each place, space and audience I encounter forms the emotional, physical and sensorial ground within which I work. Performances take place across a range of differing environments: house-concerts in living-rooms, impromptu jams with other musicians, huddled around camp fires, on tour in cars, vans, ferries; sounding into the almost pin-drop silence of an abandoned church, in the relaxed ambience of a café, competing with the rowdiness of a crowded pub, within the allotted

---

<sup>177</sup> Ackroyd, N., in conversation with Macfarlane, R. *Only Artists: Norman Ackroyd Meets Robert Macfarlane*. (Series 6, Episode 1) BBC Radio Four (Online) First broadcast: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08ltbhl/episodes/player?page=3> (Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018).

time-slot of a festival stage with sound engineer and crew, in community workshops, sitting cross-legged on the floor of a chai tea tent, jamming in a food queue, in a cave by the sea, in well-known establishments and makeshift music venues, in parks through changing seasons, and on pavements to a steady stream of passers-by.



Across these varied contexts, song performance develops in relation to the particularities of each environment and audience amid the directness of first-hand

---

<sup>178</sup> Foster, J., photograph, *For Fika Sake*, Coffee Shop, Glasgow, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

<sup>179</sup> Foster, J., photograph, campfire jam, *V in the Park Music Festival*, Balloch O' Dee Campsite, Kirkcowan, Dumfries and Galloway, 6<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

<sup>180</sup> Foster, J., photograph, *Robson Valley Music Festival*, Dunster, B.C., Canada, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

encounter. French philosopher Michel de Certeau draws a comparison between looking down at the city of New York from the top of a skyscraper to the experience of walking on the street in direct proximity with the physicality, noise, smell, breathing, beating, heat of the city as a teeming organism alive with many sensorial elements. Here we see de Certeau's distinction between 'strategy' and 'tactics'; strategy being the high level of objectification and abstraction, and tactics as the level of embodied action and reaction.<sup>181</sup> Participation in the visceral, messy and unpredictable reality of the city requires taking a risk to be 'on the ground'. The alternative perspective maintains a safe distance, but also separates the body and the senses from many aspects of the experience itself.

Furthermore, as a troubadour the particularities I encounter form the conditions of practice which I must necessarily negotiate. This is both a strength and weakness as conditions will complement or collide to shape the course of the performance, and outcomes will vary when meeting a number of conditions particular to each context. There can be no 'absolute' list of conditions; they are potentially infinite and unknown prior to being in the situation at the time, graduating from significant to insignificant in each situation and forming an extensive network that defies final analysis. However, out of this I have chosen to focus on five factors which, in my experience, are the ones most often felt. These are 'Fear', 'Risk', 'Vulnerability', 'Openness' and 'Trust'.

In conversation with Alain de Botton, musician Peter Gabriel recounts how as a performer he has grown more comfortable with his fear of performing, but that some

---

<sup>181</sup> De Certeau, M., trans. Rendall, S. (1984) 'Walking in the City' (Ch.7) in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.91.

fear is always necessary to 'remind yourself that the performance is live'.<sup>182</sup> Perhaps an ongoing interplay between fear, risk, vulnerability, trust and openness are the very conditions that define a performance and keep it 'live'. Both myself as the performer and the audiences I meet are inevitably exposed to a degree of risk entering into the unknown arena of live performance where there is always the possibility of being 'stung by the unexpected'. Mistakes, fumbles, technical errors, emotional, physical, practical challenges and obstacles can occur during a performance as it unfolds, affecting both performer and audience's experience and perception. In this context, notions of 'success' and 'failure' take on different meanings; there is an inherent 'fuzziness' to these definitions as any endeavour to embrace the unpredictability of a live performance is in itself of value no matter what the 'outcome'.



183

---

<sup>182</sup> Gabriel, P., in conversation with de Botton, A. *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Attended in person.

<sup>183</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Conference on Music and Consciousness*, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

With this in mind, the way a performance is perceived greatly depends upon the extent to which all participants are willing to engage in the experience whole-heartedly.

Furthermore, the measure of ongoing willingness by both the performer(s) and the audience to navigate and allow conditions to become part of the performance itself will determine what kind of performance can develop. A mutual acceptance and sharing of risk create the 'ground' from which spontaneous creativity can 'shape up' in the moment. It might be observed that the degree of 'openness' of each participant determines the measure of reward experienced by all.

One example of this can be found during a gig I played at the Glad Café in Glasgow.<sup>184</sup> In the run up I'd been under a lot of stress, and during the performance one particular song hit a nerve with how I was feeling at the time. As I began to sing the chorus, my voice cracked and I burst into tears. Somehow, I continued playing, picking up the vocal again to improvise a new section and finish the song; it was an emotional rollercoaster to say the least and I thought my performance had been shambolic. However, during the song I could feel that the audience were 'with' me; that we were all 'in it together'. A reviewer who had been in the audience told me afterwards that this gig had been one of the most satisfying experiences of live music for some time as it had been so 'alive'.<sup>185</sup> I realised then that my vulnerability had been a source of *openness* not only witnessed, but *shared* by the audience. Exposing my vulnerability had in turn encouraged a mutual

---

<sup>184</sup> Double A Side Records live album launch of vinyl compilation LP 'Play It Like A Woman' featuring female singer-songwriters with proceeds going to Rape Crisis Scotland. Glad Café, Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>185</sup> Mayonnaise, Betty. *Is This Music? Independent Music from Northern Britain 'Play it like a woman' Album Launch Review*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.isthismusic.com/play-it-like-a-woman-album-launch> (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019).



openness between myself and the audience that correlated directly to a level of engagement felt by the audience with the performance itself.



186

When looking at a drawing we can get lost in it, captured by the movement of the lines and transported to a place both of the drawing's making and of our own interpretation and imagination. However, should there be a smudge on the page, this foregrounds the hand of the artist and the material reality through which the drawing was created.

Similarly, during live song performance the 'sting of the unexpected' can suddenly *jolt* the audience 'out' from a song and 'back' into the room itself. Philipsz reminds us that:

*'public space comes with its own ambient sound, which can interfere...'*<sup>187</sup> recalling the physical realities of her installation 'Lowlands Away': *'Because the urban context was*

---

<sup>186</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College, Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>187</sup> Buhmann, S. (2017) *In Search of Resonance: A conversation with Susan Philipsz*. *Sculpture Magazine*, Vol.36 (9), pp.42-47.

*really gritty, with water, trains, and people overhead, it was hard to be completely transported or to enter into a state of reverie with the work. Different things were happening simultaneously and fighting each other, and so you remained grounded in the present moment*'.<sup>188</sup> While this might be perceived as a 'break' in any 'enchantment' a singer has sought to amplify, potentially distracting from the subject of the song; it also serves as a reminder that song performance is *a live exchange* 'shaping up' in real time and entirely dependent on the cohesion of many factors to meet and co-create a transformative experience.

Both the performer(s) and the audience have agency in how they undertake the journey of performance. There isn't always a formal distinction between 'performer' and 'audience' as at times during a live performance any one might occupy either position. The notion of agency links with a recent history of community and artist-led initiatives that have created a platform for contemporary music performance, to be explored in further detail in the chapter 'Story' under the heading 'Community Building'. In the informal contexts of house concerts and self-organised performances in everyday locations,<sup>189</sup> the barrier between performer and audience more readily dissolves to restore a mutual sense of curiosity and playfulness.

---

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Examples include '*Gathering South Sessions*' hosted by audience volunteers in tenement flats in Glasgow's southside spread solely by word-of-mouth, '*The Close Sessions*' live music in stairwells in Glasgow, '*Black Cab Sessions*' live music in taxi cabs, '*Mahogany Sessions*' live music outdoors and international network '*Sofar Sounds*' who provide a platform for local audiences and musicians to organise gigs in cafes and coffee shops.





190 191

Risk is directly related to ‘possibility’. There is no opportunity to edit a live performance as it happens, nor can prior experience fully predict how a performance will unfold; *it is in the doing* that a performance reveals its possibilities. Authenticity, then, is not to ‘over polish’ and therefore remove qualities of ‘liveness’ that define the performance lest it become ‘flat’ and lacklustre. There is a difference between ‘painting by numbers’ and directly engaging in an activity where the outcome is not pre-determined but alive to the particularities of the moment. The unpredictability of meeting conditions as they occur raises the question of control/lack of control. As a performer, if I don’t take the risk to relinquish a degree of control to open up and allow myself to become vulnerable, I remain stuck in the moment, rather than *alive to* the moment.

---

<sup>190</sup> Foster, J., photograph of Scott, S., playing a house concert organised by word of mouth in British Columbia, Canada, July, 2014.

<sup>191</sup> Foster, J., photograph of Ben Rogers playing a house concert in ‘Elliot’s living-room’, Vancouver, Canada, July, 2014.

There is significant difference in terms of engagement between these two states of being; one is in effect a bystander, where 'self' and 'other' remain at arm's length; while the other initiates a process of exchange. This cohesion relates to the Dene perception of self as part of the environment and the act of reciprocity between the two. During the residency at Samba K'e, Chief Dolphus told me how during a nomadic hunt he had taken a route where he had to walk many days wading through cold water in the rain; telling me that the best way forward was to accept the conditions and '*allow yourself to join with them*', so that the elements were no longer a separate entity that needed to be fought, but a sensation felt as part of his own existence. In this way the rain and the water became less cold and he found that he could walk much further than he had thought possible.<sup>192</sup>

A reminder of the value in letting go of prior expectations has been expressed by artist Tracy Mackenna in her drawing of a ladder with the words: '*Fail so you can take risks*'.<sup>193</sup> Or as Samuel Beckett states: 'Fail; fail again; fail better'.<sup>194</sup> <sup>195</sup> The practice of the troubadour is an act of foregrounding creativity that thrives in part because of its inherent *uncertainty*. The transition between adapting and allowing is the moment when anything can happen; where the 'liveness' that makes a performance so rewarding is the same source that can break it apart. There will be occasions when a performance fails to 'click', however deviation from pre-conceptions can also be a

---

<sup>192</sup> Jumbo. D., in conversation with Foster. J., Samba K'e, Northwest Territories, Canada, NWT, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<sup>193</sup> Mackenna, T. (2011) *Fail so you can take risks*. Pencil on graph paper. Artist's own collection.

<sup>194</sup> Beckett, S. (1983) *Worstward Ho*. New York: Grove Press.

<sup>195</sup> Beckett's phrase links with a monthly music event named '*Fail Better*' organised by independent promoter and songwriter Mark McGhee and hosted by rapper 'Lodzilla' in various venues across Glasgow throughout 2017. Events emphasised 'freestyle' where music and words were improvised live.

freeing experience, unlocking further creativity. Like the Japanese practice of Kintsugi,<sup>196</sup> where gold is used to join pieces of broken pottery and highlight the point of vulnerability; the possibilities of cohesion and splitting remain open and are perhaps required in order for a performance to remain 'live', as Whitehead points out: '*there needs to be separation as well as unity in order for existence.*'<sup>197</sup> Or in the words of songwriter Leonard Cohen: '*There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.*'<sup>198</sup>

Mutual openness and the sharing of vulnerability might be perceived as an emotional bond, where the degree to which the performer/audience is willing to accept risk draws a distinction between 'performance to' an audience and 'performance with' an audience. In a more formal context, for example singing an aria at La Scala, a technical mistake would be judged harshly; whereas gigs for performers and audiences that move in contemporary music circles can often be self-organised, resembling 'gatherings' that invite mutuality. House concerts, open mics and festival performances imbue an informality and familiarity that lend themselves to a sense of shared camaraderie and community.

During several performances I have made, mutual openness has fuelled spontaneity, encouraging a flow of song improvisation created in real-time 'with' the audience. Especially in the context of the house concert, involvement by those organising and then attending the event becomes an integral part of the performance itself. Here, 'liveness'

---

<sup>196</sup> *Kintsugi* in Japanese translates as 'golden joinery' and refers to the repair of broken pottery with a lacquer mixed with gold powder.

<sup>197</sup> Whitehead, A. N. quoted by Mesle, Robert. C. (2008) *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead* West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press.

<sup>198</sup> Cohen, L. (1992) '*Anthem*' from the album *The Future*. New York City: Columbia Records.

casts aside notions of 'success' or 'failure' based on technical prowess. Any concept of 'failure' is nothing to be feared, in fact, an audience may laugh along with technical errors and offer support and encouragement to a nervous player. Furthermore, the role of trust between the musicians, the audience members and the concert organisers shifts perception away from performance as passively received towards performance becoming a 'community event' reliant on active engagement where each participant plays their part in the outcome.

During live musical performance, an agreement of trust is silently entered. For a performance to develop with mutuality, participants need to reach a consensus to enter into the experience and allow it to become what it will. This enables the performance to grow through an act of community between all those present. Vulnerability and openness are qualities of liveness that stem from risk, transforming fear into trust. This is acutely demonstrated in the 'free solo' climb of El Capitan by Alex Honnold in 2018 when he became the first person to climb the route alone without any protection or safety harness.<sup>199</sup> Honnold recalls the moment he had to throw his leg into an extended kick across the rock-face to reach a foothold that without securing would result in a fatal fall. It had taken years of meticulous practice and repetition to develop the skill and agility to undertake this manoeuvre, however as the moment itself arrived Honnold had to take a (literal) leap of trust. Fortunately, the odds are not as great in live performance as free solo rock climbing! However, conditions of encounter still require skill to

---

<sup>199</sup> While following an established route named 'Freerider', Honnold remains the only person to ascend El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, California, 'free solo' i.e. without any safety device, guy ropes or harness.

navigate. In the following sub-chapter, I will explore a tension between the novelty of performance and the role of skills in mediating real-time conditions of encounter.



200

---

<sup>200</sup> Foster. J., digital drawing of audience members listening to 'A Musical Commons' music event that I organised as part of *Dundee Commons Festival*, Dundee, 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 2015.



201

As a 'newcomer to town', a travelling musician carries the weight and advantage of anticipation. Exploring the development of art practice in the public domain as an arena of negotiation, art historian Grant Kester proposes that the role of the artist is a 'mantle' that affords the bearer certain liberties and privileges within a social context through perceived artistic status. Kester proposes that through the 'novelty' of their role, the artist can initiate a unique framework to facilitate dialogue and encourage cultural exchange; to explore content personal to the artist and/or the public which would be otherwise difficult to draw out.<sup>202</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College, Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>202</sup> Kester, G. (2004) *'The Eyes of the Vulgar'* in *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.18-19.

Anticipation arises from 'novelty' and therefore skills are required by the troubadour to navigate such promise; to 'tune out' expectation and 'tune in' to the experience at hand. However therein lies the challenge as highlighted by Alfred North Whitehead: '*The paradox which wrecks so many promising theories of education is that the training which produces skill is so very apt to stifle imaginative zest. Skill demands repetition, and imaginative zest is tinged with impulse. Up to a certain point each gain in skill opens new paths for the imagination. But in each individual formal training has its limit of usefulness.*'<sup>203</sup> However, Whitehead maintains that skill and novelty are entwined and 'must not really be disjoined', elaborating that: '*It is by reason of the body, with its miracle of order, that the treasures of the past environment are poured into the living occasion.*'<sup>204</sup>

The point is underlined by Ingold: '*If the wind is its blowing, and the river its flowing, then the body is its growing. It exists in the continual movement of its coming-into-being, its ontogenesis.*'<sup>205</sup> Therefore, in 'wearing the costume' of 'troubadour' it is necessary to develop certain skills to allow the novelty of the occasion to unfold, as excessive trepidation would block a creative on-flow of the experiential. Furthermore, this involves remembering that real-time activity carries its own *momentum* that will travel a more interesting path if included in the conversation. In so doing, the troubadour can 'speak with the spirits' to enter and facilitate a process of co-creation between all present.

---

<sup>203</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (1985) *Process and Reality*. New York: The Free Press, p.339.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ingold, T. (2017) 'Correspondences' in *Knowing From The Inside* (p.38 in PDF) (Online) Available at: <https://knowingfromtheinside.org/files/correspondences.pdf> (Accessed 12th October 2019).

performance as truth  
of the moment  
entering new contexts  
the performer becomes  
a novice again to  
see with fresh eyes

206

Interpreting live performance as a *dialogue* between elements supports an argument to approach ‘novelty’ (used here to describe the particularities of live performance that cannot be known beforehand) as a co-author. Herein lies a further paradox, as while entering each new performance with a store of knowledge and prior experience, it is also necessary for the troubadour to approach each performance as ‘a novice to see with fresh eyes.’<sup>207</sup> This applies not only to the social context but to the way the music and songs themselves are performed. Peter Gabriel warns fellow musicians not to ‘over-polish’ a performance; ‘*or the initial spark goes missing*’.<sup>208</sup> Similarly, ‘unmediated’ conditions of practice can be mediated not through exerting effort, but in *allowing* the encounter to shape itself. The process of printmaking provides an apt comparison; a print develops partly intuitively, partly through the practice of getting to know the tools

---

<sup>206</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>207</sup> Ideas discussed by musician and anthropologist Tina K. Ramnarine during *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>208</sup> Gabriel, P., in conversation with de Botton, A. *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Attended in person.



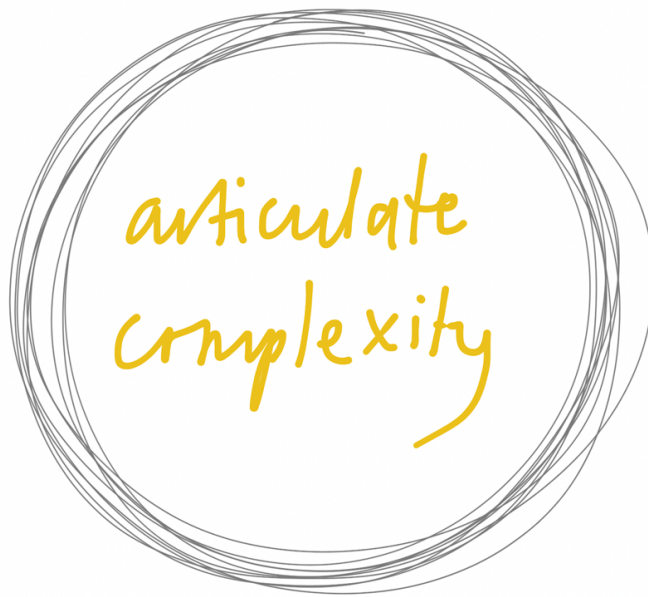
and materials involved, and partly through the skill of allowing *the movement of the process itself* to guide the outcome. No exact outcome can be predicted; to make a print means working with materials that have *their own agency* in the making process and therefore require inclusion. Similarly, as a troubadour, there is a skill in allowing the process of live performance to ‘speak for itself’, to work *with* rather than wrestle the conditions within which the practice develops.

This relates to collage, where many pieces make up the whole. Following Cezanne’s lead, the Cubists’ used the medium of collage to literally paste in perspectives from multiple vantage points; a further reminder not only of the subjectivity of experience, but, like Cezanne before them, to notice the often-overlooked elements that make up everyday life, such as pages from ‘le Journal’. Cubism also seems to nod in the direction of musical performance as encapsulating a spirit of ephemerality and multi-layeredness; with several collages inspired by musicians for example ‘Three Musicians’ of 1921 by Pablo Picasso.<sup>209</sup> Picasso himself moved between many different styles and mediums in his life including printmaking, ceramics, poetry and of course painting and drawing: ‘going back and forth’ between subjects and media.<sup>210</sup> Wholly committed to all the media he used, Picasso did not subscribe to the notion that an artist should have one or two media, or one ‘signature’ style, thereby acknowledging a complexity to existence and the need to interact with life along different frequencies at different times.

---

<sup>209</sup> Picasso, P. (1921) *Three Musicians*. Oil on canvas with collaged papers. 200.7 x 222.9cm. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

<sup>210</sup> The Art Assignment (2019) *Art Cooking: Picasso*. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/2TIBAVm2vvU> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2019).



211

In her teaching practice, American printmaker and social activist Sister Corita Kent introduced her students to the idea of ‘working with’ rather than ‘pre-ordaining’ relationships between materials when developing collage. Initiating field trips to study the atmosphere, visual play of light, textures, sounds and smells particular to specific urban locations; Kent advised her students that adhering to a concept could only produce a ‘predictable’ image. Whereas, grounded in the experiential, images and text placed side by side *intuitively*, could develop their own dialogue that would always be more insightful than if it had been thought up beforehand.<sup>212</sup> Sister Corita reminds us that the human imagination develops in *relationship*; that infinite possibilities present

---

<sup>211</sup> Foster. J., digital drawing, September, 2016.

<sup>212</sup> Kent, Corita, S. (1968) *We have No Art*. The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/-VjyvgCGrWg> (Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019).

‘*There Will Be New Rules Next Week*’, the title of a retrospective exhibition of the printed works of Sister Corita Kent at Dundee Contemporary Arts 20<sup>th</sup> July – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013, referenced Sister Corita Kent’s teaching method of challenging established patterns of perception to make fresh associations between images and text.

themselves when working *with* things as they happen, allowing experience to *speak for itself*. To allow what is not yet, but may be, to become; or as contemporary artist Jeremy Deller suggests, to: '*allow the irrational as well as the rational to come in.*'<sup>213</sup>

Not confined to intellectual reasoning, the 'irrational', in the context of live performance, side-steps cerebral thought to make room for alternative methods of connection that are more emotional and physical in nature. Furthermore, the 'irrational' can be understood here to be that which is not known to the performer or the audience prior to the performance but that will inevitably be encountered through the 'novelty' of conditions as they reveal themselves. Acknowledging that the 'unmediated' is an essential component of live performance with its own agency relates to the 'paranoiac critical method', a sensibility and way of perceiving reality pioneered by Salvador Dali during the Surrealist art movement. Defined by Dali as 'irrational knowledge', and informed by Freud's then new psychoanalytic theories,<sup>214</sup> Dali used the method to deliberately disorientate his state of mind towards confusion in order to look at the world in a new way.<sup>215</sup>

At the Academy of Arts in Madrid, Dali was close friends with the poet Federico Garcia Lorca, with whom he shared an interest in live performance. Lorca famously went on to describe 'El Duende', the 'goblin wind' or 'spirit of evocation' that may show itself

---

<sup>213</sup> Deller, J. (2019) *Jeremy Deller* (Online) Available at: <https://www.jeremydeller.org> (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019).

<sup>214</sup> Dali met the psychologist Sigmund Freud in London in 1938.

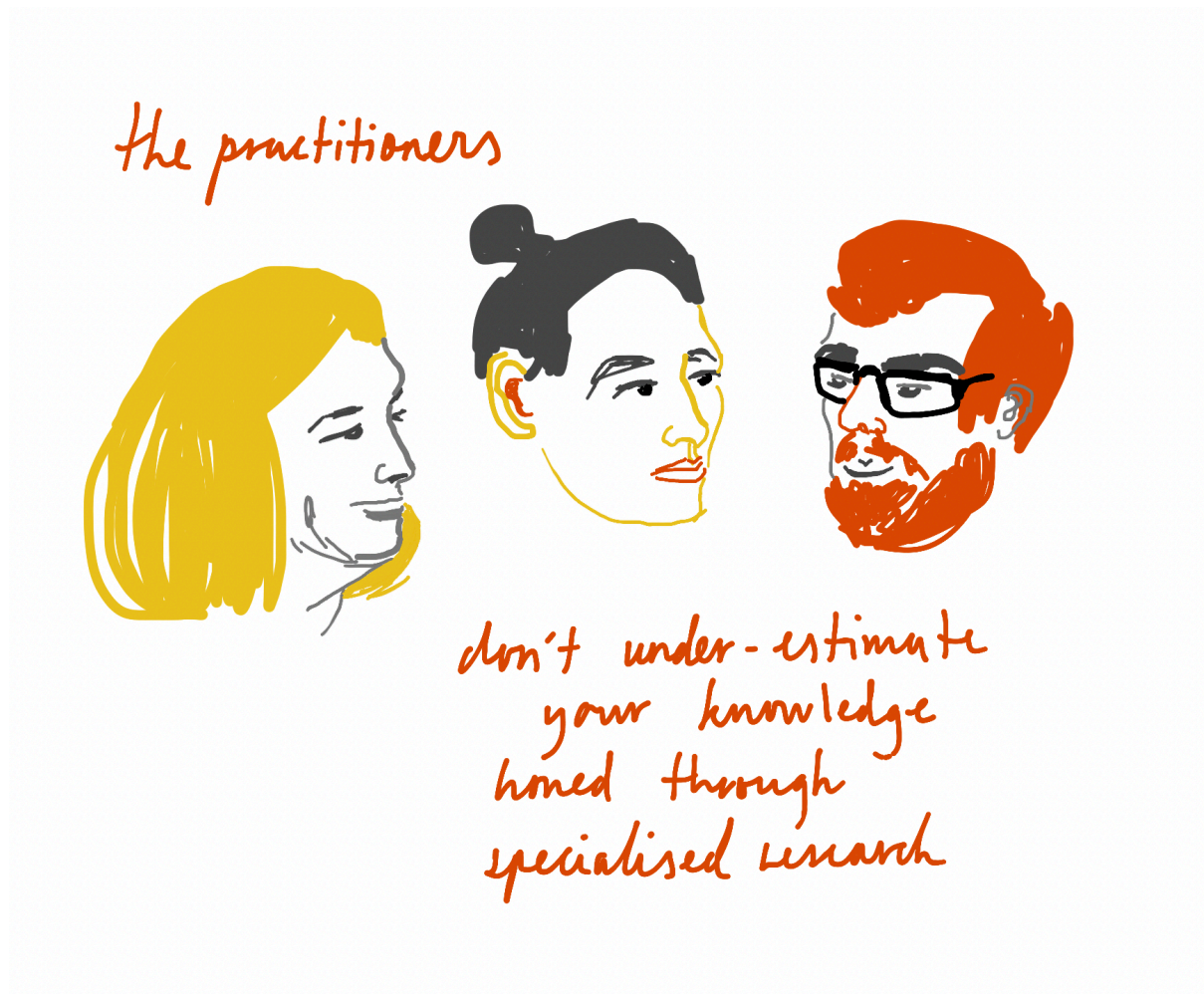
<sup>215</sup> Dali, S. (1935) '*My Pictorial Struggle*' in *Conquest of the Irrational*. New York: Julien Levi, pp.15-16.

during a live performance through the heightened emotions of both the performers and the audience; pushing beyond the *'limitations of reason'* in *'connection to nature's soil'*.<sup>216</sup>

In the following sub-chapter, I will explore the key abilities that the troubadour carries into a live performance to 'mediate' (allow) the 'unmediated' (conditions and factors particular to a performance being 'live') and that can facilitate a dialogue between the performer(s)/audience/environment in real-time.

---

<sup>216</sup> Lorca, F.G. (1933) *Theory and Play of The Duende* trans. Kline, A.S. (2007) (Online) Available at: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.php> (Accessed 2nd December 2019).



217

Stores of tacit knowledge have honed two key abilities essential to my practice as an artist and troubadour; developed through an *intimacy* of ongoing practice of singing and playing, as well as drawing and printmaking. During a live performance, I rely on *intuition* and *instinct* to 'tune in' to the present moment and a state of being that feels completely natural but has in actuality been built up through years of practice.

---

<sup>217</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Publishing Studies Network* conference at Stirling University, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

*Intimacy* implies a close relationship that in the context of practice development might be interpreted as a 'friendship'; an ongoing dialogue between practice and practitioner that any craftsperson would understand. Like the bookbinder who knows which way the grain runs through a piece of paper by bending it slightly and feeling its texture; the pianist who has embedded Bach into her fingers so that the sheet music is no longer required; the Japanese tile maker who measures by eye the proportion of shrinking that will occur in the kiln, having worked with a particular clay and gotten to know its properties. These are the skills of the craftsperson, and also of the troubadour; where craft is embedded and carried forward into the next performance.

While the practice of musical instruments and playing with musicians among audiences develops musicianship, for example pitching in tune, keeping time; ongoing practice embeds a 'second nature' of *intuition* that develops the ability to connect with others. Intimacy is required to understand another; details that might be considered superfluous to the untrained eye, can hold meaning to the practitioner and enhance an awareness that might be considered 'intuitive'. I don't always appreciate the practical skills that have been developing my whole life; honing one's craft as a musician and artist can sometimes be overlooked as it seems to come about 'naturally' through immersion in 'doing'. However, it is this very act of *immersion* that serves to accumulate and embed knowledge that can be called upon during the actuality of live performance.

The Dene have developed an intimate relationship with the land over many generations through proximity with, and getting out into, the environment in which they live. Each year, the Dene of Samba K'e encourage an immersive method of learning through the

nomadic practice of 'Fall Hunt' in which the whole community leave their settlement beside the lake to camp within the forest throughout the Autumn months.



218 219

In the company of the Elders, the young develop their own relationship with the land, as the entire community relies on embodied skills to source nourishment, make shelter and traverse rough terrain. Lessons are taken without a safety net; equipped with

---

<sup>218</sup> Lamalice, V. (2011) *Golo* (Lino-cut print) *Sambaa K'e Print Studio Archive* (Online) Available at: <https://sambaakeprintstudio.wordpress.com> (Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

<sup>219</sup> Foster, J., photograph of moose tracks discovered during a trek into the Boreal Forest with Chief Dolphus Jumbo, NWT, Canada, May 2014.

stores of first-hand knowledge passed from generation to generation. Chief Dolphus reflected that there had to be room for practice to: *'become rooted in the body'*;<sup>220</sup> that sitting in a classroom could do little towards the development of practical skills as it was through spending time with the land itself and in the company of the Elders that questions could arise naturally, demonstrations be given, wisdom passed on and lessons picked up through trial and error.<sup>221</sup>

In Dene culture, the Elders act as a guide to the community; younger members learn through their own experience of meeting new situations but know that guidance can be called upon. Similarly, in my practice as a travelling musician, intuition is an integration of aspects of deeply embedded practice and experience made available as a natural part of knowing rather than something inherently mysterious. The environment is changing all the time, nothing is 'ready-made'; therefore, there will always be a tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar in which intuition plays a crucial part. Ingold recalls that when the Sami herd reindeer: *'if fog comes down, you stay put. Even in the most familiar place something can flip and you need to adapt'*.<sup>222</sup> Meeting new conditions of performance constantly challenges the creative process in differing environments.

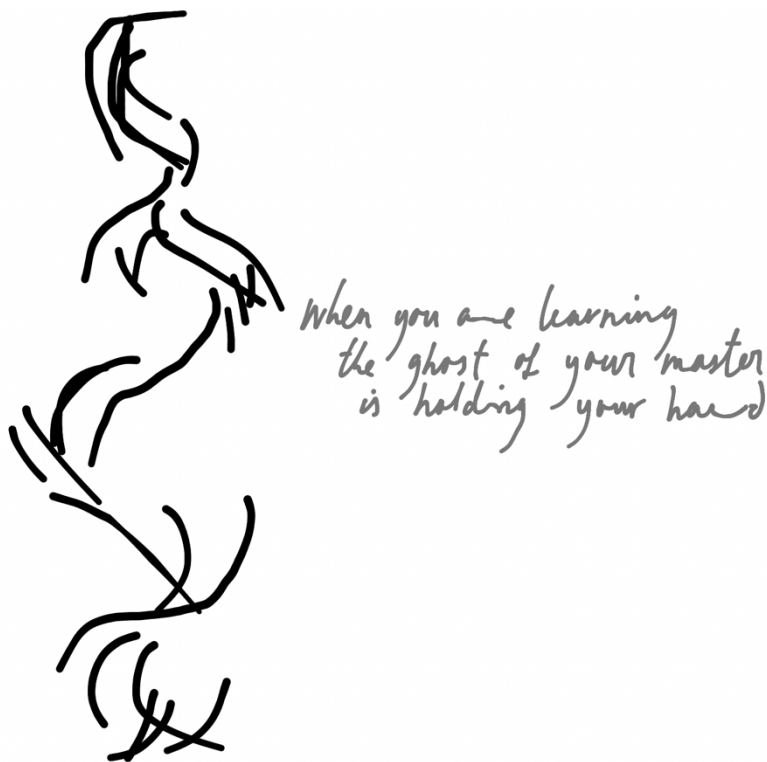
---

<sup>220</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<sup>221</sup> Chief Dolphus was referring to his experience of being sent to a 'residential school', a source of ongoing grief among all First Nations communities of the Northwest Territories; to be referenced in further detail in 'Return to Sambaa K'e'. Chief Dolphus is actively involved in healing his community by maintaining traditional nomadic practice, holding regular gatherings in which the community have a safe space to speak, and through ongoing talks with the Canadian government to protect Dene sensibilities, language and cultural practices.

<sup>222</sup> Ingold, T. (2014) speaking at the *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, hosted by Deveron Arts, Tomintoul, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014.





223

Intuition involves the act of being *present* to the moment. Stating that '*music is a universal language of intuition*', psychologist Connor Forsyth invites readers to take a few moments to: '*take note of the sounds around you and how they make you feel; to critically analyse these things and be present.*'<sup>224</sup> Similarly, at the end of her residency in Cupar, artist Judy Spark presented a 'target' diagram revealing the ratio of sound in

---

<sup>223</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

This drawing was made during a talk given by Tim Ingold speaking about the relationship between master and apprentice in craft practice. Ingold's talk resonated with my mother's phrase 'our friends in history' used to refer to our ancestors and teachers (these can be any form of inspiration), from whom we learn and that seem to 'walk with us' through life and act as guides. 'Master' here refers to a guide rather than any authoritarian figure; my Indian classical tabla teacher would be considered a 'master' as he had reached a certain level of intuition within his own practice that he could now impart to his students.

<sup>224</sup> Forsyth, C. (2018) *Music is a universal language of intuition* (Online) Available at: <https://medium.com/@connorforsyth/music-is-a-universal-language-of-intuition-905f5a1b426c> (Accessed 14th October 2019).

proximity to her ears during a series of woodland walks. Spark's walks were an exercise in heightening awareness to *notice* what was happening in the environment in relation to herself.<sup>225</sup>

Intuition therefore, is an act of *sensing* what is around us and where we are in relation to another. Furthermore, sensing is a combination of feeling and perception; pointing to the way a musical or emotional dynamic or shift can be felt 'before' it happens.<sup>226</sup> This is demonstrated when a group of musicians jamming together for the first time seem to 'fall in' together; 'following' an invisible lead, which is in fact the intuitive process of sensing what direction the music is going before it has got there. In so doing, musicians are able to play together with cohesion. I have experienced this myself; during the Boathouse open mic in Anstruther, a drumkit was provided and I picked up a pair of brushes to accompany two musicians I had not met before playing a song I did not know. Intuition enabled me to add texture to the chorus, simmer down during the verses and create a bit of interest in the mid-section without prior instruction. Afterwards, a regular attendee told me how he found it: '*wonderful the way musicians could communicate with each other*'; that he knew I was feeling the music because the dynamics and textures of the music had carried through my playing to the audience.<sup>227</sup>

---

<sup>225</sup> Judy Spark was Cupar Arts artist-in-residence, 2011.

<sup>226</sup> Interestingly, 'Sensei' is the honorific prefix given to a martial arts master, who after decades of training has developed the ability to anticipate the moves of their opponent.

<sup>227</sup> Unnamed regular at *The Boat House Sunday Sessions*, The Boat House, Anstruther, Fife, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018.



228

During a live performance, I need to be able to trust myself; to trust in my ability to respond in real-time. Intuition is a *compass* signalling when to play, when to hang back, how to engage and ways to listen. Moreover, intuition is a practice of *care* where close attention to what is happening is essential for communication and response. In ‘The Craftsman’ Richard Sennet reminds us that: *‘Virtuosity in a player can diminish from the will of the group if that player is withdrawn from collegiality. It’s more about how a player behaves than how much technical prowess they have.’*<sup>229</sup> Intuition works in hand with others so that the ‘spirit’ of live performance can be expressed through real-time interaction.

---

<sup>228</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk by musician and artist Martin Creed at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Intuition and instinct are *invisible* faculties that have evolved through an intimacy of practice development and accumulation of tacit knowledge. Like a ‘ghost’ (my earlier drawing inspired by Ingold’s ‘ghost of the master’); intuition is not visible but *sensed* and therefore involves an act of trust in something that cannot be seen.

<sup>229</sup> Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London: Allen Lane, p.37.

Instinct is the ability to take a split-second decision, however this could be interpreted as unconsidered; a brash 'first response' to a situation. While fast responding, instinct is even more remarkable for its speed and *agility*. When I am drawing, I need to put aside any barrier of doubt, in other words critique, and allow myself to become one with the action of making a mark on the page. Similarly, when singing there can be *no distance* between my body and what I am doing, no internal dialogue to *get in the way*. I am in, and present to, the moment; allowing that moment to flow and communicate.

feel good factor to playing  
in time with others **classical**  
**jazz** folk **rock** rhythmic  
leadership when to assert  
time + when to hang back  
**embodied awareness of**  
**perceived time, so far behind**  
**the beat you're lying down**  
often a reflective component  
but it is not cerebral it is  
**embodied taking place physically**

230

Instinct needs to remain open and fluid, however it is grounded in an intimacy of practice and guided by the intuition of sensing. The instinct to respond, to follow my 'gut', to take a leap of faith, trust in a musical note, a gesture, a mark, a physical movement, a situation. Live performance requires an immediacy of response that is

---

<sup>230</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk by Mark Doffman: 'Being in time together: joint action and tacit knowledge' at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

*reflexive* rather than reflective; when only an instinctual response can keep up to speed with what is happening.

POROSITY  
THROUGH  
SUBJECTIVITY

231

Both instinct and intuition are difficult abilities to defend among critical discourse; prone to dismissal on grounds of being wholly subjective, rather than objective, guides. However, subjective response and knowledge does not develop in isolation; this is clearly demonstrated in the relationship involved in developing an intimacy with materials and practice; a point underlined by artist and musician Martin Creed: '*Materials bring about their own consciousness*,<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, both intuition and instinct are more connected to 'objective' reality than they first appear; while the subjective response of each individual practitioner (craftsperson, musician, artist) might indeed be based upon the individual's own experience and thereby be deemed selective, the *interconnectedness* involved in a *real-time exchange* of live activity will necessarily be reflected in the decisions that are taken in direct response to what is going on at the time.

---

<sup>231</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, September 2016.

<sup>232</sup> Creed, M., speaking during a talk at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Attended in person.

In this way, the novelty of real-time negotiation tests the flexibility of intuition and instinct in differing environments. These attributes are not specialism-specific, for they apply as much to rock climbing, surfing, kung fu, carpentry, nomadic hunting, craft practice, fine art practices, or musicianship as to any other practical activity that involves a direct relationship being developed with the subject of practice. To know which way to go; to know when to act and when not to, these are patterns and footholds that are etched within the skin of the practitioner's memory through ongoing practice and real-time exchange. In the context of a travelling musician's life, this requires setting out 'on the road'. In the following chapter I explore 'travel' as both a physical and non-physical mode of connectivity, beginning by tracing the background of the contemporary troubadour.

## **Travel**

## The Travelling Musician



233

From antiquity, musicians and singers have travelled, both with groups of players and alone. References to bardic performances can be found in Homer's 'Odyssey'<sup>234</sup> and there has long been an oral tradition of song recital among Scottish traveller communities. Families of travelling 'gypsies' etched a musical route from India through the Middle East into Europe,<sup>235</sup> while the European troubadours of the middle ages toured a circuit of noble dwellings with a repertoire of romantic song.

---

<sup>233</sup> Dore, G. (1876) *Family of Travelling Musicians*. Relief print, Spain. First published in 'Travels in Spain by Gustave Dore (1832-1883)' in *Journal of Geography, Travel and Costumes*, Volume VII, Issue 5, 1867.

<sup>234</sup> Homer's *Odyssey* itself being a story through song to be recited.

<sup>235</sup> Broughton, S. (2000) 'Gypsy Music: Kings and Queens of the Road' in *World Music, The Rough Guide, Vol 1: Africa, Europe and the Middle East*. Ellington, M., Duane, O., Dowell, V. (eds.) London: Penguin, pp.146-148.



Several of the musicians I met in Canada referred to themselves as ‘modern day troubadours’. The aspect of travel is central to this self-chosen identity, whether spatial (the life on tour) or social (traversing social contexts). Allied with that is the romance of the creative life led ‘in-between’ stable locations, ‘romance’ both as story and pathos. Like their contemporary counterparts, mediaeval troubadours were songwriters; the first to use ‘vernacular’, a move from Latin to everyday language, with songs speaking to matters of the human condition.<sup>236</sup> It is fitting then, that ‘The Troubadour’ is the name of the venue in California where singer-songwriters of the early seventies, such as Joni Mitchell, found a platform to try out original song material in front of an audience, songs that have now become the soundtrack to key moments in many people’s lives.

This relates to a further definition of *song as a mode of travel in itself*, linking with an etymological origin of the word ‘troubadour’ found in Arabic and Andalusian musical practices, where the Arabic word ‘Tarab’, means ‘to provoke emotion’.<sup>237</sup> Taken into the practice of the travelling musician, this extends a definition of ‘travel’ to include the shared feeling *between* the players and the audience during a live song performance. This expanded definition of travel is the subject of the upcoming section, ‘Movement and Correspondence’.

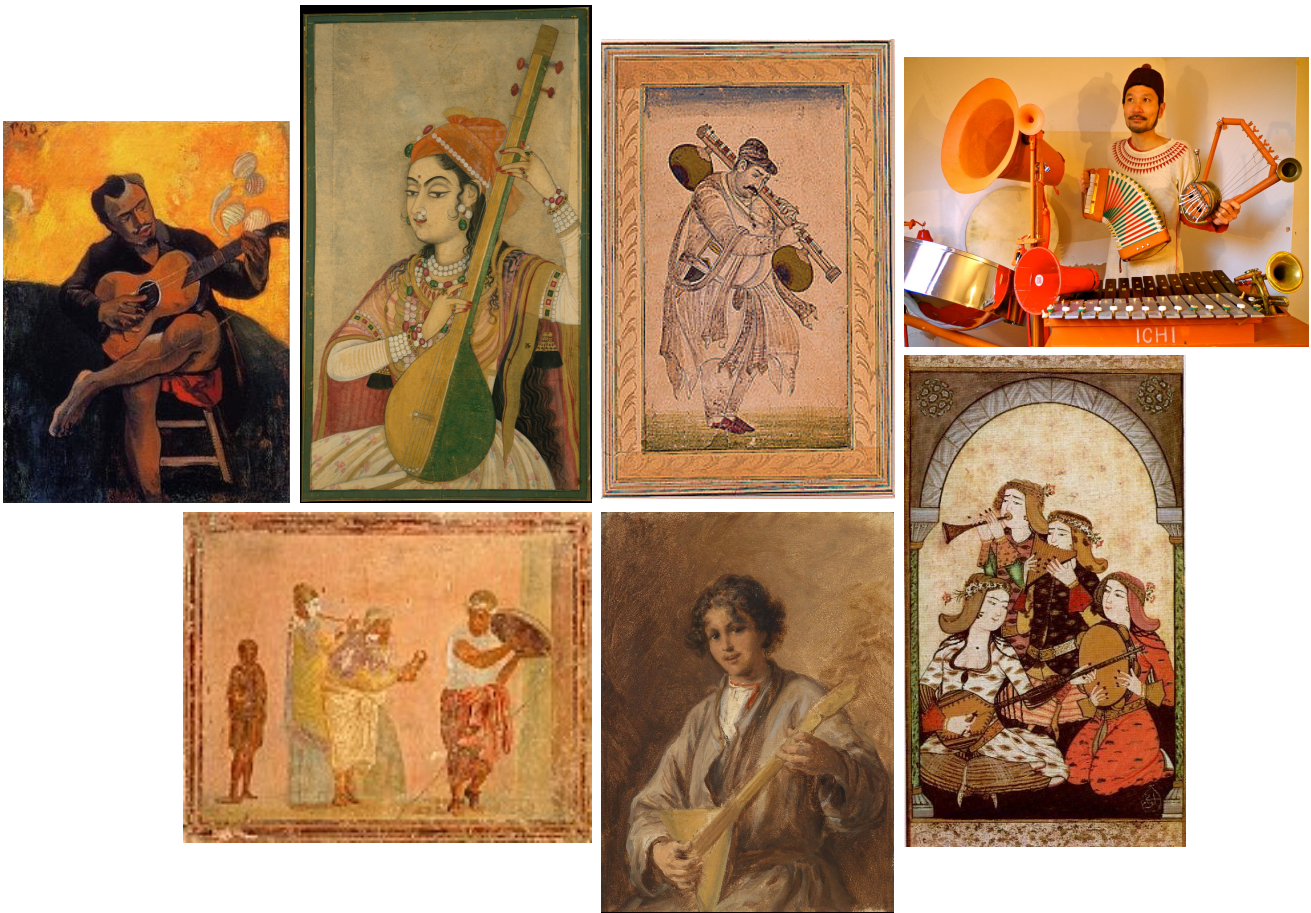
---

<sup>236</sup> Karen, G. (2018) *The Occitan Troubadours: The Beginnings of Vernacular Poetry in the Middle Ages*. (Online) Available at: <https://textingatceu.wordpress.com/category/the-occitan-troubadours-the-beginnings-of-vernacular-poetry-in-the-middle-ages> (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020).

The troubadours’ use of vernacular links directly with my own practice and that of my peers, such as Zenga the Titan, in our use of freestyle and everyday speech; aligning with my choice to use everyday language to describe key terms in this thesis. Vernacular also relates to the notion of folk music coming from the people.

Occitan poetry spoke of love, in particular journeys to reunite with a lover. Other poems waxed lyrical on social and political matters. As such, troubadours were a primary transmitter of information and medium for feeling, not dissimilar to the contemporary folk singer.

<sup>237</sup> Joris, P. & Tengour, H. (2012) *Poems for the Millennium*. (Vol.4) Berkeley: University of California Press, p.4.



238

Historical portraits of musicians are not so far from present-day figures of popular culture, where travel remains embedded in the practice. Among my contemporaries, these figures include the buskers, singer-songwriters and performers of eclectic and evolving musical genres who regularly tour a self-made circuit of city streets, parks, festivals, music venues and house concerts. Tash Sultana began busking on the streets

<sup>238</sup> Clockwise: Gauguin, P. (1894) *The Guitar Player*, Paris, France. Unknown. (c. 1735) *Lady Playing the Tanpura*, Rajasthan, India. Unknown. (Mughal Era) *Portrait of Naubat Khan Kalawant*, Rajasthan, India. Ichi. (2019) *Ichi one-man band*, Bristol, England. Vehbi, I. (c.1720) *Female Musical Players*, Topkapi Palace, Turkey. Beer, W.A., (1889) *Russian Boy with Balalaika*, Smolensk Gubernia, Russia. Unknown. (1<sup>st</sup> Century) *Fresco depicting travelling musicians*, Pompeii.

of her hometown in Australia, with now scaled-up stadium performances still using the same instrumentation of guitar pedals and vocal effects previously wheeled about on a trolley and set up in the street.<sup>239</sup> Among my peers, many musicians continue to busk and travel a circuit of self-organised gigs and summer festivals; for example, Ichi who takes to the road with his customised instruments in the style of a one-man band.<sup>240</sup>

Musician Iggy Pop proposes that the 'edges' are '*where the interesting stuff happens*';<sup>241</sup> where the challenges of everyday life meet and ferment with music. Or as writer Allan Kaprow observes in his 'Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life': '*the edge between the end of the canvas and life does not end*.'<sup>242</sup> By extension, this sense of creative fusion and in-betweenness can be applied to the travelling musician who brings a sense of anticipation with the prospect of music; able to reflect back aspects of society through an adaptation of the spaces in which they play. For example, busking in front of retail establishments transforms entrances normally associated with commerce into openings for an exchange not solely based on monetary value.

Journal Folder 4: Travel – Kutapita <sup>243</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Busker Stories (2016) *Tash Sultana: Busker Stories* (Episode 1) *Street Music Documentary Webseries*. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/L2BSetAUL20> (Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>240</sup> Ichi played at several 'Fence Collective' gigs in the East Neuk of Fife.

<sup>241</sup> Pop, I. (2014) *Iggy Pop's BBC Music John Peel Lecture* (Online) First broadcast 26<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04lclj6z> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

<sup>242</sup> Kaprow, A. (1993) *Essays on the blurring of art and life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.5.

<sup>243</sup> Foster, J., video footage of Kutapita playing in front of commercial shops in Vancouver, Canada, 2014.

A sense of shared feeling between the audience and the musicians relates to the foundations of music itself; as a folk culture. The term 'folk' here refers not only to a musical genre, for example of contemporary folk singers such as Bob Dylan and Billy Bragg, but also to the grassroots communities and environments from which the music has evolved. Iggy Pop goes on to say that musical genres often begin as a subculture, rubbing against mainstream cultural positions.<sup>244</sup> Viewed another way, music is central to the social contexts from which it arises, giving voice to multiple identities within a wider society. Examples include indie bands formed in garages,<sup>245</sup> early hip hop performed on the streets of New York,<sup>246</sup> and songwriters such as Jeffrey Lewis, whose 'lo-fi'<sup>247</sup> approach to writing songs about everyday life in his neighbourhood re-ignited interest in the singer-songwriter genre.<sup>248</sup>

As a catalyst for emotional and cultural travel, the practice of the travelling musician evokes the idea of a journey containing potential for transformation of mind, body and spirit. In the following chapter I recall my own rite of passage as a travelling musician in Canada and the key factors that shaped my understanding of live song performance as a mode of travel in itself; a meeting place between the audience and the performers that blurred the boundaries between notions of 'public' and 'private' space.

---

<sup>244</sup> Pop, I. (2014) *Iggy Pop's BBC Music John Peel Lecture* (Online) First broadcast 26<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04lclj6z> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

<sup>245</sup> 'Indie' is shorthand for 'independent music'. 'Garage' is a descriptor of both a musical genre and the name of home recording software used by musicians to produce music independently.

<sup>246</sup> Hip hop rose from the South Bronx in the late 70's, voicing everyday issues and community struggles. Hip hop uses its own 'vernacular' in the form of freestyle and rhyming words.

<sup>247</sup> 'Lo-fi' translates as low fidelity and refers to DIY methods of making music such as home recording.

<sup>248</sup> 'Alt-folk', 'anti-folk' and 'indie folk' are musical genres of the late nineties and noughties as folk and indie rock combined, paving the way for the subsequent popularity of folk-rock bands like Mumford and Sons.

*'Go out and sing!'*



249

*As I stood on the platform waiting to board the train from Edmonton to Vancouver, I noticed a girl with a banjo case covered in stickers from various music festivals. Did I notice her because Chief Dolphus had told me to 'go out and sing'? Dolphus' words had been a powerful affirmation and they stayed with me like a talisman.*

*After a month in Samba K'e, with the community and the bond we had developed through the music evenings, arrival in Edmonton had been bewildering; my senses felt bombarded by the cacophony of city noise and the rush of everybody in a hurry. Now I was leaving for Vancouver to attend 'StoryStorm', a collaborative workshop with researcher Mel Woods.<sup>250</sup>*

---

<sup>249</sup> Foster, J., drawing of Tomek, T., and Scott, S., made in the car en route to Hootstock, Canada, 2014.

<sup>250</sup> I had been invited to present my publication *Ticketline/Just Passing Through* (2012) at *StoryStorm: A Collaborative Exchange of Methods of Storytelling* hosted by Woods, M., Maxwell, D. and Abbot, D., at DIS'14,

*Corinna Rose was also travelling to Vancouver, her final stop on a music tour from Toronto as part of Via Rail's 'Artists on board Program' that offered musicians rail travel in exchange for playing between meals in the relaxation car.<sup>251</sup> With the window behind her a flickering reel of trees and river, Corinna Rose began to sing a homely tale and the yearning in her voice was carried by the movement of the train, transforming an otherwise anonymous through-fare into a place of connection.*

Journal Folder 4: Travel - Corinna Rose <sup>252</sup>

*A breakfast of garlic scapes and pan-fried potatoes sets us on the road.  
Grande Prairie spreading out on either side;  
Two golden wings catching the sun.*

*The bustle of Vancouver felt even more disorientating; I attended the workshop and found accommodation on the University of British Columbia campus where the green space provided a welcome retreat. My trip was coming to an end, scheduled to fly home in a few days, with a stopover to see my brother. As I used the campus reception phone to confirm travel plans, my brother explained our dates had got crossed. 'Don't worry' the curly-haired receptionist introduced himself; reaching behind the desk for a guitar case. Gabe reassured me that 'everything would work out'; he was heading to a rehearsal with his band 'Kutapita' who would be busking in Vancouver the following day if I was around...*

---

Vancouver, Canada, 2014. Available to view at: <https://sites.google.com/site/wearestorystorm/foster>

<sup>251</sup> Canadian Railway Service 'Via Rail' offered complimentary or reduced fare travel for approved professional musicians (solo or duets) in return for performing on board the Montréal-Halifax and/or Toronto-Vancouver trains.

<sup>252</sup> Foster, J., video footage of Corinna Rose playing her composition *Born On A Mountain* on the train from Edmonton to Vancouver, June, 2014.



*Hay bales, tightly wrapped parcels, summer's bounty.  
Towards Fox Creek, following a single telegraph wire  
To the lilting sounds of Jenny Ritter*

*...waking up I was in a daze; should I still take my flight? Chief Dolphus's words seemed to guide me and I set off to find Gabe's band, after all I had a couple of days to think things over. Playing in a busy retail district, Kutapita had drawn a big crowd of people with the vibrancy and energy of their music. The uplifting melodies and mesmerising rhythms had alleviated my anxiety and I decided to browse around, stopping at a stall set up down the street for a local radio station.<sup>253</sup> 'Was I a musician?' The girl on the stall asked, giving me a flyer.<sup>254</sup> As we talked I received an invitation; CJSF Radio would love a Scottish musician to play a 'live song circle' with two Canadian folk musicians on Canada Day.*

*Purple wildflowers on the grass verge.  
Following a slow line of motor homes;  
Three troubadours in a red car.*

---

<sup>253</sup> CJSF 90.1 FM broadcasts from the Burnaby campus of Simon Fraser University in greater Vancouver. As a community radio station, their mission statement reads: 'CJSF takes pride in being an alternative to mainstream media and offers the public a forum for expressing points of view that otherwise may not be heard. We are always on the lookout to promote meaningful music from socially-inspired musicians.' (Online) Available at: <https://www.cjsf.ca/about-us> (Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>254</sup> The city of Vancouver was holding a festival at the time called 'Buskerville' showcasing local buskers and the girl manning the stall thought I was one of the musicians involved in the festival, I'm still not sure why... but it got us talking and she was delighted to discover that I was a musician from Scotland.



255

*At the radio station two female musicians were standing by the water cooler, one holding a mandolin and the other tuning her guitar on one knee; Tereza Tomek and Samantha Scott. 'Melodies in Mind' would be broadcast live, running for two hours with a performance by each musician, an interview, and an improvised song circle.<sup>256</sup> We got to know each other as we played; by listening to each other's songs and jamming together during the song circle. Following the broadcast, Canada Day fireworks were starting and we went outside to watch. Tereza and Sam were about to embark on a music tour across British Columbia and Northern Alberta and would I like to join them?*

---

<sup>255</sup> Foster, J., photograph of 'Melodies in Mind' host Ryan Fletcher, producer Erika Furukawa, musicians Tereza Tomek and Samantha Scott, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014.

<sup>256</sup> A song circle is when musicians each take a turn to play a song. Other musicians in the circle will either listen or join in. The rapport between Tereza, Sam and I was so natural that we immediately added harmonies, mandolin, guitar, without knowing each other's songs beforehand. Ryan the host then gave us a print-out of the day's radio log to improvise a song on the spot, a 'Melodies in Mind' special; using the print-out as the basis to freestyle lyrics and jam a song together on live radio was definitely an ice-breaker!





257

*Tereza and Sam pulled up at UBC campus in a car packed with musical instruments and sleeping bags. I had postponed my flight and was ready to go. Our first gig would be a house concert in the countryside, hosted by a couple who ran a DIY music festival named Hootstock. Rehearsals were made in the car and so I got to hear, and sing, the songs of troubadours that I would later meet throughout the tour.*

- Journal Folder 4: Travel – Tereza and Sam <sup>258</sup>

<sup>257</sup> Foster, J., montage of photographs taken while on the road with Tomek, T., and Scott, S., British Columbia and Alberta, June 2014.

<sup>258</sup> Foster, J., video footage of Tomek, T., and Scott, S., rehearsing 'This One's on the House' by Scott Cook, in the car, British Columbia, Canada, June, 2014.

*We played a number of house concerts on the tour, welcomed into a shared house or family home, often the living-room with a makeshift performance area. Family and friends, including children, grandmothers, dogs and other animals, would gather on sofas and cushions on the floor to listen to the performances. Homecooked food, 'potluck' suppers,<sup>259</sup> and special touches added to living spaces created a welcoming ambience for the travelling musicians that came to play and the audiences coming to listen.<sup>260</sup> During house concerts, children would run to get a tumbler of water, or the dog would bark and rollover on the floor. Between songs people would be catching up with the latest community news. These experiences reminded me of the music evenings in the community centre at Samba K'e, where music and life seemed to interact with ease.*

*House concerts often had no amplification, and an intimacy of proximity that blurred the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' space. When I started to sing, I was so close to the audience that I could feel the connectivity; a creative on-flow that seemed to create a meeting place between people within the environment.*

*Pitstop for cherries on the outskirts of Beaverlodge.  
Passing through Little Smokey;  
Red barn, Dutch architecture.*

---

<sup>259</sup> A 'potluck' supper is when guests bring homecooked food to share, often there are several dishes so people get to try a variety of foods.

<sup>260</sup> Cloth backdrops were pinned to walls, fairy lights strung between windows, candles lit on tables.



261

*A memorable stop on the tour was the 'Rolla Pub'. Patti Martin, the proprietor, was helping to maintain a rich heritage of troubadouring with the photographs and memorabilia she had used to cover every inch of the pub. On one wall there were several portraits of musicians painted by Sam's sister, and on the jukebox Tereza Tomek's handmade CD nestled between AC/DC and Bob Marley. On the way in I spotted a handmade sticker on the door by the Canadian folk singer Scott Cook who I would later meet at Robson Valley Music Festival, travelling in his van that doubles up as his house. It was traditional for all troubadours that played to sign the ceiling and I clambered up a rickety ladder to add my name.*

---

<sup>261</sup> Foster, J., montage of photographs taken of the 'Rolla Pub', with Tomek, T., and Scott, S., Dawson Creek, Canada, June, 2014.

*Rolling in to the tree planting camp.  
Our host, Tim, setting up for an outdoor show.  
Supermoon forecast tonight.*

*Another aspect of the tour was playing at a number of tree-planting camps located deep in the forest, accessible by a single dirt track that opened onto a temporary shelter of pitched tents, resembling a nomadic camp.<sup>262</sup> The music performances gathered the transitory workers together, who would join us afterwards to jam and talk around a fire. Saul smiled, flicking back his golden dreadlocks to tell me that he was planting trees to earn money to continue surfing the rest of the year. As troubadours we were travelling within, and part of, a subculture of mainstream society in which people were building their own communities and finding ways of living that resonated with them. Moving between these communities, the performances were linking them together through song; and something else was happening - connections were forming in real-time as songs were being sung.*

In the following chapter, I will explore the significance of movement in the practice of troubadouring and how this relates to live song performance as both a meeting place and a form of correspondence.

---

<sup>262</sup> Planting trees is a method utilised by forestry companies to regenerate areas of land. Planting species such as Aspen ensure natural regeneration after harvesting and is seen as playing a key role in combating climate change. However, in comparison with the Boreal Forest, a natural self-generating ecosystem, no irony is lost that trees must now be re-planted in areas that would have originally been self-sufficient ecosystems.

Tree-planting is summer work throughout British Columbia and Northern Alberta. Hard work with long hours, workers can plant between 1500 to 4000 trees per day. Areas designated for reforestation are remote as described on 'treeplanter.com': 'Tree planters may find themselves living in remote bush camps with daily helicopter support to move camp, boxes of trees, quads and planters.' (Online) Available at: <https://www.treeplanter.com/2016/05/about-planting-in-alberta-northern-b-c> (Accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



## Movement + Correspondence



263

Nomadic practice is at the heart of Dene culture: *'We never used to stay in one place; we used to follow the moose'*.<sup>264</sup> Similarly, the troubadour dwells in translocation; moving between environments. With each live song performance what does the travelling musician take with them and what do they leave behind?

A musician is always saying hello and goodbye.

---

<sup>263</sup> Foster, J., photograph taken in a mirror reflecting a painting in the Tate Modern, London, 2016.

<sup>264</sup> Jumbo, C., Samba K'e Print Studio manager, in conversation with Foster, J. Samba K'e, NWT, Canada, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

Artist and performer Pauline O'Connell reminds us that: *'artists are often invited places they've never been.'*<sup>265</sup> In the context of the travelling musician this raises questions around the meaning of 'place'; is it a fixed entity, or indeed *identity*? Or something more malleable and if so, how does pliability and plurality relate to the practice of the troubadour? In conversation with art historian Jeremy Millar, artist Tacita Dean asks: *'If identity itself is fluid, the identity of place as much as that of ourselves, is it not natural to be in a constant state of movement rather than standing still?'*

J.M: *'So how can artists begin to deal with (place) as a subject; this thing that is so unknowable?'*

T.D: *'Because they can work in a way that is associative; they can use media and techniques that can describe a place tangentially, for example with sound or narrative.'*<sup>266</sup>

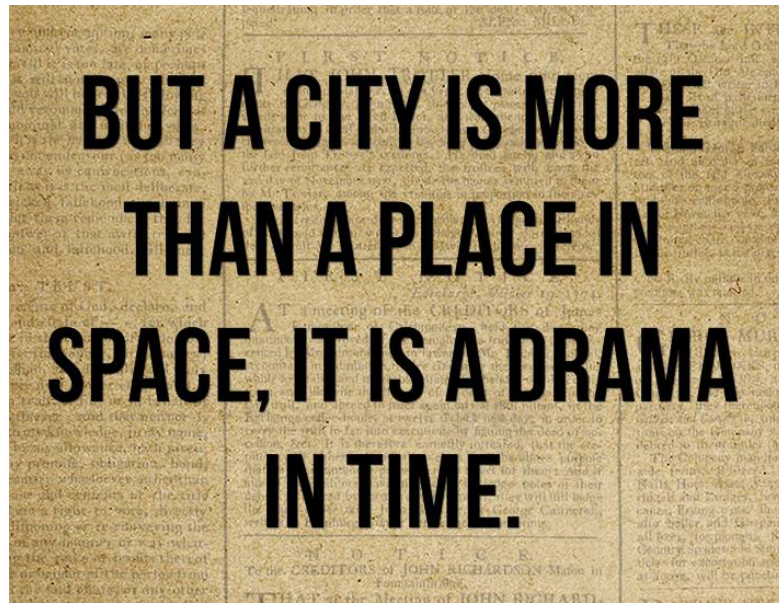
Live song performance is an active site where emphasis is on the journey rather than the destination. The movement of being on the road as a travelling musician serves as a metaphor correlating to further modes of connectivity occurring during the live performance itself; expanding the meaning of 'journey' and 'travel' which, while rooted in the physical, encompass a *movement* and *correspondence* between the audience, performer and environment that is co-created in real-time. This notion of place is much closer to a meaning proposed by Patrick Geddes, of place as a location *and* a situation; of place as an event happening in time.<sup>267</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup> O'Connell, P. (2014) Artist's talk at Taigh Chearsabhagh, North Uist, 2014. Attended in person.

<sup>266</sup> Dean, T. & Millar, J. (2005) *'Entrance'* in *Place*. Thames & Hudson, p.12.

<sup>267</sup> Geddes, P. (1972) *Patrick Geddes: Spokesperson for man and environment; a selection*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.



268

Geddes' description of place links with ideas expressed by Virginia Button in 'Social Systems', addressing the multiplicity involved in any location. Button makes the case that as artists work with multiple publics and environments, definition of place might be seen as: *'Something more fluid than had been previously understood.'*<sup>269</sup> This further links to a description of place by social geographer Doreen Massey as: *'a constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together.'*<sup>270</sup> Therefore, the practice of the troubadour is nomadic, yet it is also a *meeting place* where communication exchanges across, and in relation to, particularities as they are encountered. A duality observed by Gaston Bachelard: *'The nomad moves, but he is always at the centre of the desert, at the centre of the steppe.'*<sup>271</sup>

---

<sup>268</sup> Geddes, P. (2019) 'HD Image Quotes' (Online) Available at: <https://www.quotehd.com/quotes/patrick-geddes-scientist-quote-but-a-city-is-more-than-a-place-in-space-it-is-a-drama-in-time> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

<sup>269</sup> Button, V. (ed.) (2007) *What is a place, a site?* in *Social Systems: published on the occasion of 'Social Systems 7th July - 2nd September 2007'*. England: Project Base, p.11.

<sup>270</sup> Barnes, T. & Gregory, D. (eds.) (1997) *'A Global Sense of Place'* in *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry*. London: Arnold, p.315.

<sup>271</sup> Bachelard, G. cited by Dean, T. & Miller, J. *'Territories'* in *Place*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2005, p.14.

Live song performance is a *correspondence* between people and place in which a sense of an event *unfolding* in relation to its environment links to key ideas in process-relational philosophy to do with a process of 'becoming' as put forward by Alfred North Whitehead; from whom we can derive the idea that nothing in nature is isolated, that individual and environment condition each other.<sup>272</sup> The meeting place of live performance might be considered to be a 'third space' rooted in physical reality, engaging the imagination, and yet somewhere between the two as it comes into existence through an act of participatory interconnectedness of all parties involved. Or, put another way – an experience that is more than the sum of its parts. As Ortega y Gasset states: 'I am I *and* my circumstances.'<sup>273</sup>

The '*meeting place*' created through live song performance can be compared to a campfire around which people gather. When I travelled to play a newly established music festival in 2018, it transpired that the license required to use the PA system had not been granted in time and musicians were invited instead to sing around a fire. However, this was serendipitous, as the informality of sitting in a circle around the warmth and ambience of crackling wood softened any barrier between 'performer' and 'audience', so that people felt at ease to join in; rattling cutlery, banging cooking pots and adding harmonies here and there.

Furthermore, the idea of place as a participatory event shaped symbiotically between a complexity of multiple elements connects with Massey's assertion that place is not

---

<sup>272</sup> North Whitehead, A. The 'organic' principle that part and whole influence each other runs through all of Whitehead's later work, from *Science and the Modern World* (1925) to *Adventures of Ideas* (1933).

<sup>273</sup> Ortega y Gasset. (1914) *Meditations on Quixote*. New York: Norton, p.322.



'fixed';<sup>274</sup> resonating with a conversation I had with Chief Dolphus Jumbo regarding nomadic hunting practice. Through the Dene's heightened awareness of an interconnected ecology of forest life, tracking the moose is a respectful process working in tandem with the animal's natural reproductive cycle, designed not to over-hunt or waste the life of any animal needlessly; while seasonal wild blueberries, frogberries and tea-berries foraged from the muskeg provide essential vitamins and ingredients for medicine. Custodianship is entwined with cultural practice as the animals of the forest (eagles, moose, bear, and beaver) enter into stories passed on through generations of Dene ensuring that interactions with nature develop in harmonic balance.

Daeen Manney

A longing for place can be dismissed as nostalgia, however place links to identity...

275

Chief Dolphus is acutely aware of the pressures his community are under to maintain their nomadic traditions despite ever-encroaching private company interest in the land as if its precious resources were a 'blank canvas' for exploitation. Since gas company activity began only 60 km from Sambaa K'e, the Dene have noted decreasing numbers of

---

<sup>274</sup> Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage

<sup>275</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk by Judith Tucker and Dr Harriet Tarlo at 'Vibrant Matters: A Land2/PLaCE International Conference', Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee, 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.

moose and worrying ecological disturbances to the muskeg. Even with such an extensive knowledge of and intimate connection to the land, Chief Dolphus stated that the Dene never claimed to ‘own’ the land; only that they had been there first, but that: *‘We cannot believe how those who came after us have treated the forest.’*<sup>276</sup>



277

---

<sup>276</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J. during a walk into the Boreal forest, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

<sup>277</sup> Foster, J., photograph taken during the charter flight to Samba K'e; passing over the Boreal Forest and Mackenzie River, May 2014. This photograph shows one of hundreds of seismic ‘cut lines’ made by prospective gas companies, this particular cut driven through the river itself. These unnaturally straight and deep trenches are treacherous to wildlife and humans and cannot be seen underneath a layer of permafrost during Winter months. Seismic lines have injured members of Samba K'e community, notably Denelee's Grandmother who fell and broke her arm when her skidoo suddenly dipped into a trench. Seismic lines are made and then abandoned with no provision to restore the natural habitat destroyed as a result of prospecting for gas.

Reminding us that *'an encounter is always with something on the move;'*<sup>278</sup> social geographer Doreen Massey expands: *'Movement is also temporal; a meeting up of trajectories as you entangle yourself in stories that have begun before you arrived. This is not the arrival of an active voyager in an awaiting passive destination but an intertwining of ongoing trajectories from which something new may emerge.'*<sup>279</sup> Within an interconnected ecology of movement and correspondence there will always be a 'butterfly effect' in which responsibility for the formation and continuation of place and identity rests firmly in our own hands and how we use them.

Movement, however, carries a contradiction: the moment something moves, the preceding moment has already gone; and the ephemerality of live song performance seems to epitomise this. In neuroscience, anticipation and actualisation are linked to 'prediction' where the brain and body predict a response to circumstances based on prior knowledge. This is an act of inner searching for knowledge based on similar experience that can be brought forth to signal possible ways in which to proceed; if a prior learned prediction is unhelpful to a particular situation, neural plasticity allows 'new' knowledge to be gathered that can spark alternative, more desirable predictions next time. Neural fluidity suggests that a non-linear relationship between 'before, during and after' takes place during a live performance, blurring distinct concepts of 'past, present and future.'

---

<sup>278</sup> Massey, D. (2003) *'Some Times of Space'* in May, S. (ed.) *The Weather Project*. Exhibition Catalogue. London: Tate Publishing (Online) Available at: [http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence\\_files/Some\\_times\\_of\\_space.pdf](http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence_files/Some_times_of_space.pdf) (Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

In his study of the hippocampus, neuroscientist David Foster has observed '*the exquisite pathways of the brain*'<sup>280</sup> in relation to memory; internal cogs re-member and re-assess, re-enact and realise the what, where, when, and how. All living beings carry internal maps that not only navigate spatially, but inform feelings towards, and relationships with, the places and people they encounter.

This links directly with William James's description of the 'present moment' as having temporal 'thickness'; or as he put it: '*we sit on a saddleback of time*'.<sup>281</sup> Following James, Whitehead proposed that we live in *periods* of time, durations rather than 'instants' which are mathematical abstractions; we can artificially divide these periods into instants, but they are *experiential wholes*.<sup>282</sup> Hence, the boundaries between past, present and future are blurred. Therefore, the co-creative nature of live performance overlaps landscapes of physical actuality, memory, emotion and feeling to expand definitions of time and place.

To be a troubadour then, is to be a time traveller.

This relates to indigenous perceptions of time as non-linear; incorporating past, present and future simultaneously. Described by cultural ecologist David Abram as a difference between: '*the experienced world, or worlds, of indigenous vernacular cultures and the*

---

<sup>280</sup> Foster, David., (2010) *Spatial Representation and Architecture in Science of The Arts Lecture Series* (Online) Available at: <http://webcast.jhu.edu/mediasite/Catalog/pages/catalog.aspx?catalogId=e33c6f06-bfb0-4156-a506-f99acc2394cc> (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019).

<sup>281</sup> James, W. (2001) '*The Sense of Time*' (Ch.8) in *Psychology: A Briefer Course*, Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, p.147.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

*world of modern European and North American civilisation'*<sup>283</sup> in which there is: *'the indistinction of space and time in the oral universe.'*<sup>284</sup> For the Dene of Smbaa K'e, the presence of the ancestors is a reality of present-day life in which they speak directly through stories told among the community.<sup>285</sup> For the aboriginal peoples of Northern and Western Australia, the land is part of a broader ecology, a cosmology of the distant and the now, developed as a sophisticated map evolved over a long time.<sup>286</sup> *'You are the map'* Mona Napaljarri Rockman tells us about 'Warlpiri Dreaming';<sup>287</sup> <sup>288</sup> *'the ancestors carried (it), for you to sing your way around the land'*.<sup>289</sup> Abram points out that while used as a *'memory tool'*<sup>290</sup> to recall physical routes, a further layer of meaning runs through aboriginal 'songlines': *'there is another mnemonic structure at work in the Dreaming... the telling of specific stories or the chanting of particular songs is itself prompted by the sensible encounter with specific sites.'*<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>283</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, p.31.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. p.188.

<sup>285</sup> Jumbo, C., in conversation with Foster, J. Smbaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

<sup>286</sup> Cartographer Vanessa Collingridge speaking at the *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, hosted by Deveron Arts, Tomintoul, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Attended in person.

<sup>287</sup> The aboriginal Warlpiri are from Tanami Desert in Northern Australia. Songs, stories, dances, and paintings are 'songlines' or 'dreaming tracks' forming part of the 'Warlpiri Dreaming'; a sophisticated body of spiritual, practical and cultural knowledge/guidance linking with 'Jukurrpa' (an animist belief system). One example is the 'Warlpiri Water Dreaming' that entwines the locations of water sources in the desert within its songline.

<sup>288</sup> Rockman Napaljarri, M., is a renowned painter and ceramicist from the Tanami region of North-western Australia. Rockman's sister Peggy Rockman Napaljarri is also a well-known painter.

<sup>289</sup> Collingridge, V. quoting Rockman, M., N., during a talk at the *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, hosted by Deveron Arts, Tomintoul, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Attended in person.

<sup>290</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, p.175.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid. p.175.

# PERCEPTIONS of TIME

time philosophy music temporality art  
wordsworth freedom subjectivity hearing  
self-consciousness schelling objectivity  
primal rhythm painting reflection meter  
succession infinite finate being entity  
multiplicity dichotomy interconnection theory  
primordial schema activity flow inner pure  
outer sense seperation intuition ponus  
real reality perception effects transcend  
subject object grounding aristotle mind one  
unity awareness kant cognition space forms

292

In St Andrews I encountered a busker playing the 'shakuhachi',<sup>293</sup> however the sound produced had the yearn of a raga and suddenly I was no longer in the Scottish coastal town but contemplating the sun setting over another sea, with the familiar sandstone cathedral beginning to resemble a pagoda. The musician paused and I was transported back; to the chatter of a seagull overhead. Ingold reminds us that: *'the landscape roots us in the here and now.'* However, while rooted in physical reality, the movement and

<sup>292</sup> Foster. J., digital drawing made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

<sup>293</sup> The 'shakuhachi' is a Japanese wooden flute tuned to the minor pentatonic scale.

correspondence of live song performance becomes a form of *travel* so that we might, as Ingold goes on to suggest: '*come to worlds we have not seen before; this can be far from home, also on your doorstep.*'<sup>294</sup>

If one definition of place is a site within which a sense of connection between self and other can develop in real-time, then it is interesting to note that Massey has described 'place' as 'space' and space as 'process':<sup>295</sup> '*Every "here" is a here-and-now. Space has time/times within it. This is not a static simultaneity of a closed system but a simultaneity of movements.*'<sup>296</sup> In 'Body Weather', a series of dance workshops hosted by improvisational Japanese dancer Min Tanaka with the aim to re-establish the body as: '*omni-centered, anti-hierarchic, and acutely sensitive to external stimuli*';<sup>297</sup> the environment becomes the body's 'teacher' reinforcing: '*the body as an energetic part of nature.*'<sup>298</sup> Therefore, during the embodied, temporal and nomadic practice of the troubadour 'energetic nature' and 'process' combine. In the following chapter I explore the moment of realisation when 'energetic nature' and 'process' meet and unfold during a live song performance; when an 'encounter' becomes 'creative'.

---

<sup>294</sup> Ingold, T. (2014) speaking at the *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, hosted by Deveron Arts, Tomintoul, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Attended in person.

<sup>295</sup> 'Space' is defined by the Collins English dictionary as an: 'area or expanse which is free'. Therefore, 'space' does not translate as 'blank'; space is still a place, consisting of many individual and interconnecting elements.

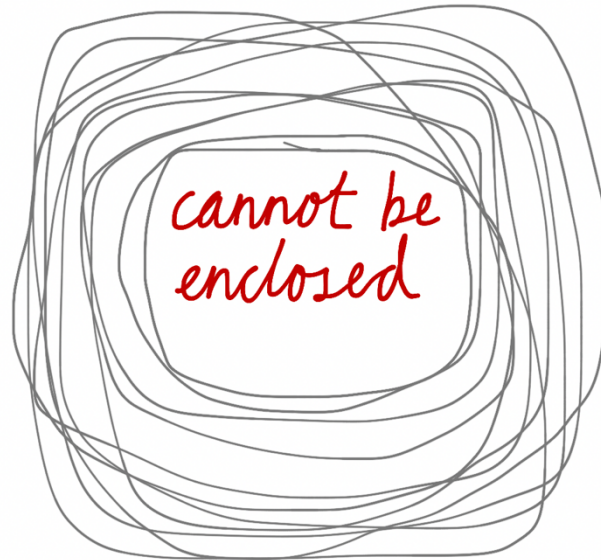
<sup>296</sup> Massey, D. (2003) '*Some Times of Space*' in May, S. (ed.) *The Weather Project*. Exhibition Catalogue. London: Tate Publishing (Online) Available at: [http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence\\_files/Some\\_times\\_of\\_space.pdf](http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence_files/Some_times_of_space.pdf) (Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>297</sup> Fuller, Z. (2014) *Seeds of an anti-hierarchic ideal: summer training at Body Weather Farm*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19443927.2014.910542> (Accessed 12th January 2020).

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

## **Creative Exchange**





299

Musician and artist Martin Creed draws out the essence of live music as immediacy because you: *'listen to it being made'*,<sup>300</sup> a process that might be described as an audible *sketch*; an impression created in the moment. A sketch implies something 'raw' and therefore incomplete. However, grounded in the deeply-embedded skills (of intuition and instinct) that enable a fluidity of response, a 'sketch' is no less considered and can reveal an energetic character particular to the moment in which it was created.

---

<sup>299</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Dundee Commons Festival*, Dundee, 25<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

<sup>300</sup> Creed, M., speaking during an artist's talk at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Attended in person.

American painter Cy Twombly's characteristic mark-making has been described as 'freely-scribbled' and 'graffiti-like' with *'the unfurling gestures of these paintings made, like Henri Matisse's works in old age, with a brush affixed to the end of a pole, which lends them their vitality and scale.'*<sup>301</sup> The stick loosens and enlarges the gesture of the hand towards a more expansive movement that is necessarily unsuppressed; comparable to a scope of possibilities that can be explored through the directness of live performance.

liveness  
= directness

302

Picasso famously noted that it takes: *'a lifetime to paint like a child.'*<sup>303</sup> Unthwarted by over-thinking, the child-like qualities of directness and openness can be harder for an adult to re-access. However, the temporality of live performance involves an *immediacy* and *spontaneity* that can access an energy and connection to the moment as the music is created through an act of *improvisation*; aligning with David Abram's assertion that: *'the body is not a programmed machine but an active and open form, continually improvising in relation to things and to the world.'*<sup>304</sup>

---

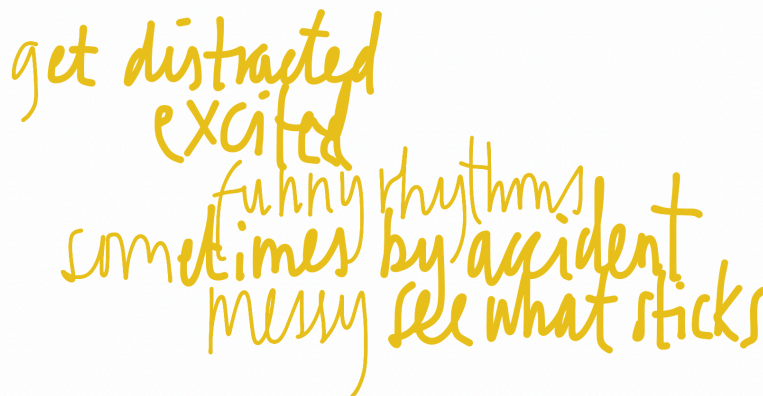
<sup>301</sup> Tate Online (2019) *Energy and Process: Cy Twombly* (Online) Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/display/cy-twombly> (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>302</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during a talk at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

<sup>303</sup> Picasso, P., quoted in Erskine, P. & Mattingly, R. (eds.) (1998) *The Drum Perspective: Writings, Wisdom and Musings on the art of making music* Winona, Minnesota: Hal Leonard, p.73.

<sup>304</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, p.49.

Growing up in Wales, pianist and composer John Cale recalls when the BBC came to his village in the Amman Valley to showcase up-and-coming talent; Cale, then a boy, had composed a toccata and during the performance ended up improvising the last section: *'I was so amazed by what you could do if you let yourself go.'* In later years, this allowed Cale to 'let go' experimentally when he co-founded The Velvet Underground<sup>305</sup> with fellow band member Lou Reed: *'having spent a year and a half holding a drone with La Monte Young, and the discipline of that... we took that drone as a tapestry and the idea was to just do concerts, not make a record, but just do (live) concerts in new places where I'd play the drone and Lou would improvise over the top.'* Cale emphasises that: *'it was all about live performance and new songs all the time.'*<sup>306</sup>



get distracted  
excited  
funny rhythms  
sometimes by accident  
messy see what sticks

307

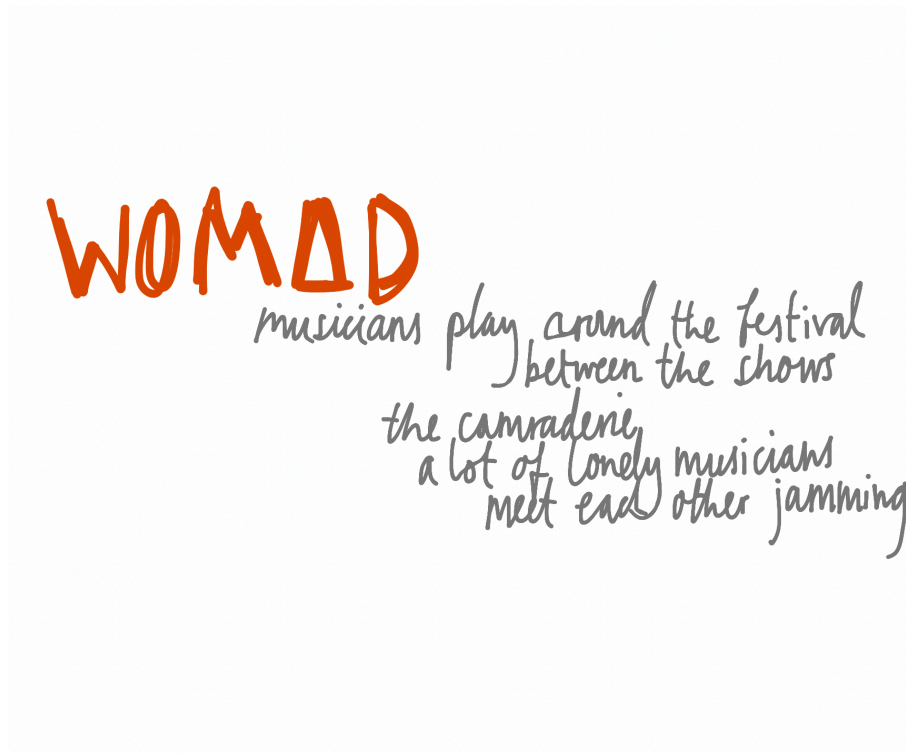
---

<sup>305</sup> The Velvet Underground were a ground-breaking music group formed in New York City in the mid-sixties amidst the avant-garde art scene of 'The Factory'; a cross-disciplinary studio founded by artist Andy Warhol to invite collaboration and frequented by singer Nico and sound artist La Monte Young among others.

<sup>306</sup> Cale, J., interviewed by Sakur, S. (2017) *Hardtalk* (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3csy4w8> (Accessed 24th February 2017).

<sup>307</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

In the Winter of 2014, I set off by bus from mainland Scotland to begin a micro-residency on the Hebridean island of North Uist.<sup>308</sup> The weather was particularly wild, as these lyrics by North Uist singer-songwriter Julie Fowlis describe: *'Oh the howling wind and rain.'*<sup>309</sup> Arriving at the port in Skye, rough seas thwarted the scheduled ferry crossing and stranded passengers sought shelter at the local hostel, which happened to have a guitar and keyboard. Discovering several musicians among my fellow travellers, a spontaneous jamming session ran into the 'wee small hours' with accompaniment from the rattling windows.



310

---

<sup>308</sup> As printmaker-in-residence at Taigh Chearsabagh Museum and Arts Centre in 2014, I met artist Pauline O'Connell who was coming to the end of her own artist's residency on the island.

<sup>309</sup> Fowlis, J. (2009) *'Wind and Rain'* from the album *Uam*. Machair Records. (CD) (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015).

<sup>310</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

Musician and founder of WOMAD world music festival Peter Gabriel noted that spontaneous jamming taking place during the festival provided musicians who travelled alone with a way to meet others and communicate.

Musical jamming seems to exemplify the qualities of immediacy and spontaneity. A jam is *unscripted*; an improvised *conversation*; an oral transmission happening in real-time between the unfolding what, who and where. Motifs and themes develop in response to prompts made and picked up through a complexity of call and response, playing and listening, expression and energy. Despite such intricacy, a jam can take place anywhere, and often in everyday locations for example around a kitchen table. During my time on-the-road as a troubadour in Canada, jams evolved between performances during ‘down-time’, often as a way to communicate with and meet other musicians. At Robson Valley Music Festival, a group of musicians sitting down at a table for lunch in the performer’s canteen, and who did not know each other beforehand, spontaneously struck up a musical ‘conversation’ to introduce one another.

#### Journal Folder 5: Jamming - Kitchen Conversation <sup>311</sup>

Spontaneity is categorically different from a polished note-perfect performance, and yet is directly related to often countless practice development sessions. Jazz musicians, for example, demonstrate a remarkable ability to improvise riffs suggested by one musician and picked up by the rest with an immediacy of expression. Thinking into new ways to invite participation and encourage spontaneity in a contemporary art setting, curator Sophia Hao has taken inspiration from: ‘*the improvised excitement of musical jamming*’<sup>312</sup> as a springboard for communication between multiple art forms. An

---

<sup>311</sup> Foster, J., video footage taken at Robson Valley Music Festival, Dunster, British Columbia, 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

<sup>312</sup> Hao, S. (2014) in conversation with Foster, J., referring to *Studio Jamming: Artists’ Collaborations in Scotland*, an exhibition at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee culminating in a ‘12-hr Jamming Symposium’ held on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

improvised response is a playful and open act of participation, making room for others to join in.

improvisation  
lose a sense of self  
physical + sonic  
without linguistics  
perceptual agency  
embodied  
re-think learning

313

Among musicians, 'vibing' is a term used to describe musical jamming; more descriptive of the atmosphere created through impromptu playing and spontaneous expression including the mood, energy and ambience of a location, even what people are wearing. This links back to the initial idea of live performance as a 'sketch' able to capture a range of expression through a few gestural marks. As well as playing music, I am a compulsive drawer; sketching on train journeys, in cafés; keeping a digital and paper sketchbook close at hand to jot down 'sketchnotes', some of which run through the text of this thesis. I draw people and environments directly from life to engage with a wholeness of experience; while sketch-notes are jotted down among the hubbub of real-life comings and goings to draw out an essence of what is happening in the moment.

Journal Folder 7: Sketches – Notes <sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>313</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Conference on Music and Consciousness*, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

<sup>314</sup> Foster, J. (2015-2017) *Notes*. Series of photographs showing a selection of sketchnotes by Foster, J.

*'It's always back to the drawing board'; artist David Hockney jokingly states, underlining the importance of retaining a fresh perspective through an immediacy of drawing directly from life: 'at Bradford School of Art I was there from nine in the morning to nine at night. You could stay for the evening classes and you could draw every evening, so I spent four years drawing. That's from (the ages of) sixteen to twenty, and you learn a lot and you learn fast... when you sit down to draw a model, and after half an hour someone would come in and draw a shoulder; I'd see immediately he saw more than I did and so I'd think "you have to look harder" and you do improve.'*<sup>315</sup> However, Hockney's contemporaries debated the value of drawing at all: *'In the seventies when they were trying to get rid of it, well I didn't teach, so I was no influence, but I'd say "Well, how can you give up drawing after 50,000 years? You can't just give it up now." They said "Oh, it's always back to the life room with Hockney." I said "no, no, you've got it wrong; it's forward to the life room - forward!"'*<sup>316</sup>

Journal Folder 7: Sketches – Journeys <sup>317</sup>

In 2015, I was invited to meet with Jon Rogers<sup>318</sup> to discuss the idea of taking a party of 'scribes' to 'Research Through Design', a conference exploring the role of making in design practice.<sup>319</sup> At the time, Jon was living in the East Neuk of Fife so the meeting was

---

<sup>315</sup> Hockney, D. (2014) in conversation with Naughtie, J. *At Home with David Hockney* (Online) First broadcast 27<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b04w0b2v> (Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016).

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Foster, J. (2014-2019) *Journeys*. Series of photographs of sketches made during journeys by Foster, J.

<sup>318</sup> Professor of Design and Craft at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee.

<sup>319</sup> *Research Through Design*, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

arranged at home with his young children being ushered to an early bedtime. Noticing a very sleepy but stubborn child, I picked up a guitar to improvise a song about a bear and a frog, how they were growing sleepy...



320

...some weeks later Jon rang me up. Inspired by the unfolding tale of 'brown bear' Jon thought there was a role for improvised music at the conference. I joined a team of 'scribes'<sup>321</sup> invited to visually, and in my case musically as well, interact with elements of the conference *as it took place*. I chose to sketch during conference lunch and tea breaks to capture something of the in-between gestures, ambience, feeling, and sensorial qualities that also contributed to the meaning and learning taking place during scheduled talks and workshops. On the last day of the conference, sketch-notes were presented in a slide-format to attendees and I was invited to improvise songs as the

---

<sup>320</sup> Wallace, J., photograph of Foster, J. improvising to a slideshow made by the scribe team at *Research Through Design*, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

<sup>321</sup> The other 'scribes' on the team led by Wallace, J., and Rogers, J., were Sean Kingsley (Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design), Nantia Koulidou (Northumbria School of Design), Erika Shorter (Northumbria School of Design) Mike Shorter (Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design) and Natasha Trotman (Royal College of Art).



slides were projected. I thought of my Great Grandma improvising on the piano to the silent matinee films at her local picture house. While the tiered amphitheatre did not welcome informality, the immediacy of musical improvisation and spontaneous songwriting invited a fluidity and openness to engage and connect with the audience, initiating a shared journey through pages projected on the screen.



A word cloud consisting of several terms in various colors and orientations. The words are: 'cognition' (red, top left), 'embedded' (yellow, top right), 'embodied' (orange, middle left), 'extended' (grey, middle right), 'extensive' (grey, middle right), 'enactive' (yellow, bottom right), and 'engagement' (orange, bottom left).

322

Vibrations are fundamentally what sound is made of. Electrical engineer Nikola Tesla reminds us that to discover a secret of the universe we must think in terms of '*energy, frequency and vibration*.'<sup>323</sup> The point is underlined by sound therapist Joanna McEwan who states that vibrations do not end at the skin's edge but: '*continue out from the body into the shared space between all living beings on a vibratory continuum connected by an energy field or matrix of waves*'.<sup>324</sup> Percussionist Evelyn Glennie has developed a heightened receptivity to the vibrations created in the environment and by her own

---

<sup>322</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

<sup>323</sup> Tesla, N., (1942) quoted by Molina, E. (2019) *Energy, Frequency and Vibration*. (Online) Available at: <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/energy-frequency-and-vibration> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

<sup>324</sup> McEwan, J. (2016) *Why Raising Your Vibration Increases Your Serendipity*. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/SLsSqCI7NIE> (Accessed 20th September 2019).

body; able to steer the dynamic of an entire symphony when performing timpani with an orchestra despite being profoundly deaf. Thinking of sound as vibration, musical improvisation or 'vibing' is an outgoing and incoming gesture that communicates and receives. Furthermore, aligning with Tesla, vibration is shared with all entities, living and non-living, organic or inorganic; and so, vibration connects us to the total environment.

Performing music with an audience involves a shared *momentum* that gathers into a flow of *articulation*, and this is where expression of feeling together with the actuality of live performance really takes off. Cale elaborates: '*playing is the pay-off because there are things in the air when you play in front of an audience that really change the way the music sounds and the way it feels; it's kind of magical.*'<sup>325</sup> The point is expanded by Ingold: '*If sound is like the wind, then it will not stay put, nor does it put persons or things in their place. Sound flows, as wind blows, along irregular, winding paths, and the places it describes are like eddies, formed in circular movement around rather than a fixed location within.*' Ingold goes on to say: '*To follow sound, that is to listen, is to wander the same paths.*'<sup>326</sup> Therefore, the immediacy and spontaneity of a live performance facilitates receptivity to the vibrations of the moment, connecting with life as it happens to initiate what I would describe as a 'creative exchange' between the performer and the audience; a mutual connectedness and transference of energy that transforms an encounter into a 'creative encounter'.

---

<sup>325</sup> Cale, J., interviewed by Sakur, S. *Hardtalk*. (Online) First broadcast 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3csy4w8> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

<sup>326</sup> Ingold, T. (2007) '*Against Soundscape*' in Carlyle, A. (ed.) *Autumn leaves: sound and the environment in artistic practice*. Paris: Double Entendre, pp. 10-13.

This links with John Dewey's distinction between an experience that takes place without awareness and *'having an experience.'*<sup>329</sup> Dewey suggests that this could be the challenge facing process-based practitioners: *'The real work of an artist is to build up an experience that is coherent in perception while moving with constant change in development.'*<sup>330</sup> In the following chapter I will explore the key components of 'creative exchange' that transform an encounter into a 'creative encounter'. However, Cale has the last word:

*'straight off the street  
someone (singing)  
with a beat behind it  
man, that's healthy...  
it all comes out through the music  
you want to be there -  
where it's raw.'*<sup>331</sup>

---

<sup>327</sup> Video footage taken by a member of the audience on their phone. While the audio/visual quality is rough and blurry it captures something of the energy of the moment when the Yellow Flame Gang (vocals), Zenga the Titan (vocals), fnuf (piano), Fionnlagh Ballantine (violin) and Jo Foster (percussion and vocals) began freestyling and improvising a song live with an audience at Tchai Ovna House of Tea in Glasgow, 2018.

<sup>328</sup> This 'bootleg' is included in this thesis despite its 'low' quality, rather than a more polished piece of documentary footage that can be 'hyper' real and therefore an artform in itself. Rather than distracting attention from the actuality of the experience, the 'raw', unedited footage draws attention to it; providing a 'sketch' of what happened as it happened and a 'no frills' blurry window into the reality of the experience.

<sup>329</sup> Dewey, J. (2005) *Art As Experience*. New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group, pp.35-58.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid. p.51.

<sup>331</sup> Cale, J., interviewed by Sakur, S. *Hardtalk*. (Online) First broadcast 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3csy4w8> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

Play, Apply...



332

For mountaineer Arne Naess: *'philosophy begins and ends with wonder - profound wonder'*.<sup>333</sup> Similarly, 'play' begins with a mixture of wonder and curiosity that can initiate a transformative journey of self-discovery. This links with the Dene expression: *'wah-weh'* translating as 'amazement', literally: *'I am amazed by what I can do!'*<sup>334</sup> This sense of discovery both in what is around us and in our own abilities to interact with the world, is an essential ingredient of the 'ready-ness' to try things out.

---

<sup>332</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made of musician and anthropologist Tina K. Ramnarine during *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>333</sup> Naess, A. (2002) *Life's Philosophy: Reason and Feeling in a Deeper World*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, p.1.

<sup>334</sup> In the Slavey Dehcho language of the Dene peoples of Smbaa, K'e in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

Playing involves a relationship between oneself and another. David Abram reminds us that: *'humans are tuned for relationship. The eyes, the skin, the tongue, ears and nostrils – all are gates where our body received the nourishment of otherness.'*<sup>335</sup> Furthermore, playing is a method of exploration that can connect us with: *'the sensuous world in which our techniques and technologies are all rooted.'*<sup>336</sup> Used as a term to describe the ways in which young humans and animals learn about the world, 'play' is associated with a transitional stage of development; of trial and error. Therefore, there is the implication that play is not serious. However, to be in *transition* is to process a period of change; a powerful state of consciousness that contains the potential for growth.

From Buddhism to Christianity, retaining a 'child-like' openness is a veritable pathway to deepen awareness.<sup>337</sup> In the *Bodhichitta*,<sup>338</sup> 'Chitta' translates as mind but also heart or attitude, and 'Bodhi' as awake or open; therefore, the mind is always available and completely open. This state of consciousness is sometimes known as the *soft spot* as from vulnerability and tenderness comes the capacity to empathise.<sup>339</sup> In Zen Buddhism, *Shoshin* or the 'beginner's mind' refers to having an attitude of openness and eagerness willing to learn and consider all pieces of information, like a child discovering something for the first time.<sup>340</sup> The attitude of the beginner is therefore unbiased as Zen

---

<sup>335</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, preface ix.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid. preface x.

<sup>337</sup> A child shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>338</sup> The account of the Buddha.

<sup>339</sup> Chodron, P. (2019) *Lions Roar: Bodhichitta the excellence of awakened heart* (Online) Available at: <https://www.lionsroar.com/bodhichitta-the-excellence-of-awakened-heart> (Accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

<sup>340</sup> Suzuki, S. (2006) *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications.

teacher Shunryu Suzuki observes: *'in the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few.'*<sup>341</sup> This links with Alice Legat's account of Dene learning practice as: *'always running two or more knowledge systems simultaneously to get a whole picture and grasp of the reality.'*<sup>342</sup> Therefore, 'play' can be a sophisticated avenue through which to explore the world in an open and unbiased way.

A series of cross-disciplinary talks at the 'Hielan Ways' symposium held in 2014, investigated *'the many perceptions of exploration'*<sup>343</sup> with mountaineer Doug Scott suggesting that there was no-where left in the world to explore. Ingold, however, challenged this statement: *'children are seeing with fresh eyes and maybe they see differently;'* reminding us that when thinking about exploration: *'natives went there before and so this idea of originality comes from colonial ideology.'* Furthermore, Ingold suggests that we swap the word 'exploration' for 'connection': *'for each of us (lived experience) is different, so in this way we are all original.'*<sup>344</sup>

Play connects to a deeper notion of exploration as *engagement*; not only with the situations or places we encounter but with the capacity within ourselves to remain open to experience, a quality we are prone to forget as these lyrics by French musician fnuf describe: *'I always, always forget, to remain a child.'*<sup>345</sup> This reminds me of the morning

---

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

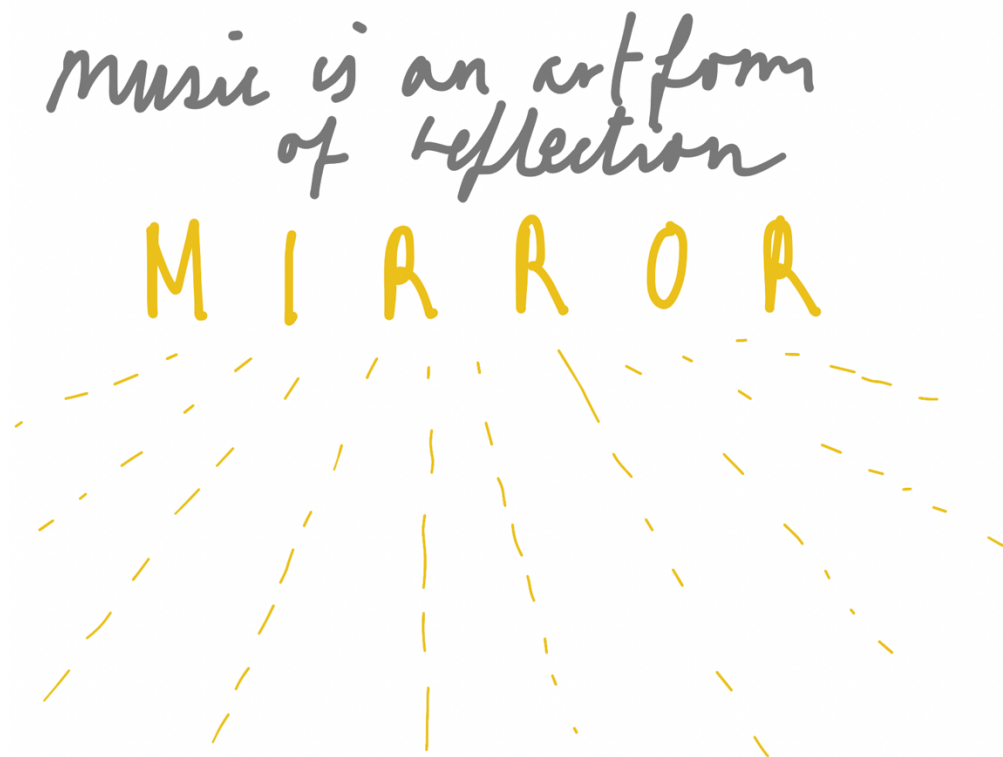
<sup>342</sup> Legat, A. (2012) *Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire: Walking and Stewardship among the Tlicho Dene*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, p.30.

<sup>343</sup> Deveron Arts conference description for *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November, Tomintoul, 2014. (Online) Available at: <https://www.deveron-projects.com/events/hielan-way-symposium> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

<sup>344</sup> Ingold, T., speaking at the *Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, hosted by Deveron Arts, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November, Tomintoul, 2014.

<sup>345</sup> Keren, T. (2017) *Always Forget*. (Lyrics) Glasgow: Harvestree Sessions.

that the only guitar I had to hand was missing its top string, and I began playing with shapes of chords in an entirely new way to compensate. There was something about my curiosity towards the missing string that sparked the creativity to produce a series of harmonic tones with an entirely unique character. Describing a self-recorded album of songs improvised during a live concert and released in the order the songs came out,<sup>346</sup> Canadian troubadour Doug Koyama states that: *'each impromptu composition is the expression of the moment in which it exists'*; elaborating that: *'improvised acapella is the art of getting out of the way of the music that naturally wants to come out of you. All you need to remember is take a breath, make a sound, keep going.'*<sup>347</sup>



348

---

<sup>346</sup> Koyama, D. *Into the Light*. Album self-released 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2017.

<sup>347</sup> Koyama, D. (2014) *Doug Koyama*. (Online) Available at: <https://dougkoyama.bandcamp.com> (Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>348</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, Oxford University, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.



349

'Spectral Verses' was initiated in 2018,<sup>350</sup> by singer-songwriter Emily Scott and cellist Pete Harvey of the band Modern Studies as: '*a week of experimental collaborations and performances*'.<sup>351</sup> Invited to participate in an afternoon workshop, I worked with nine other musicians to co-create a three-piece musical movement based on three prints by the artist Tessa Lynch. In addition, each musician was given a 'lucky dip' keyring which suggested 'ways of working' such as 'your heart skips a beat', 'you paint a picture with one finger' and 'you listen to no-one'. These prompts provided an improvisatory tool to encourage a sense of play while the group simultaneously interpreted a semi-composed graphic score sketched from the prints. Performed with an audience the same day, live

---

<sup>349</sup> Foster, J., photograph of the 'lucky dip' keyring provided by Emily Scott and Pete Harvey for the 'Spectral Verses' workshop.

<sup>350</sup> Scott, E. and Harvey, P. *Spectral Verses*, held at The Glad Café, Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

<sup>351</sup> Scott, E. (2018) Statement on Modern Studies webpage for *Spectral Verses* (Online) Available at: <https://modernstudiesband.com/spectralverses> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).



interpretation revealed a process of co-creation as Scott explains: *'There is a myth that 'inspiration' is supposed to strike us artists like some sort of thunderbolt from a higher source. I think sometimes people don't like to discuss their process as it demystifies the art, and spoils the image of the tortured creative genius. We feel the contrary!*<sup>352</sup> Scott underlines the point that in making room for improvisation and collaboration: *'we gather inspiration from community, we discover we're not alone, we generate more as we let go of more.'*<sup>353</sup>

Therefore, can play re-engage with a part of ourselves when faced with a creative impasse? When playwright David Greig found himself unable to: *'write with any fluidity'*,<sup>354</sup> he decided to visit Carole Day, shaman and founder of 'The Little Red Drum' in Fife, where he underwent a drum trance to: *'recover a sense of play'*.<sup>355</sup> Subsequently writing again, Greig reflects that all creative forms are ways of finding: *'new metaphors to help guide us through the world; imaginary interventions into an interior world to unblock blocks and unravel knots.'*<sup>356</sup> However, Greig's imagination was unlocked through real experience; the drumming ritual that enabled Greig to shift his 'writers block' was also a form of 'play' within an actual environment; experiencing the ways in which different sounds, tones and vibrations liaised between himself and the world. This relates to Ingold's assertion of the marked difference between 'building' upon an

---

<sup>352</sup> Scott, E. and Harvey, P. *Spectral Verses*, held at The Glad Café, Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Greig, D. (2017) *Butterfly Mind*. BBC Radio Four. (Online) First broadcast 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b080wbrz> (Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019).

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

environment with that of 'dwelling' *among* an environment;<sup>357</sup> an observation Legat confirms aligns with the Dene perception that: "*de*" - translating as "land, ground, dirt, earth" - is a living entity and is in constant flux as a result of the lives and interactions of all beings, including humans.<sup>358</sup> Therefore, play is *interplay*; formed in and of interaction, re-establishing a relationship between the self and the environment.

Among my peers, 'playing' is the term used to describe the activity of making music; 'playing a gig tonight', 'playing the guitar', 'playing a song'. During 'Performing Knowledge', a conference debating various methods of musical practice and performance,<sup>359</sup> musician and anthropologist Tina K. Ramnarine used the example of a traditional pub-performance session to suggest that 'play' rather than 'performance' might be a more apt descriptor of musical activity to include the social context in which the music is made.<sup>360</sup> Furthermore, 'play' can be considered an *approach* to making music that invites openness and exchange. Returning to Naess, this highlights the need to: *'preserve the childlike, imaginative wonder about life'*<sup>361</sup> which children demonstrate through: *'a less defined, fuzzier attitude to the divide between reality and imagination.'*<sup>362</sup>

---

<sup>357</sup> Ingold, T. (2010) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Oxon: Routledge.

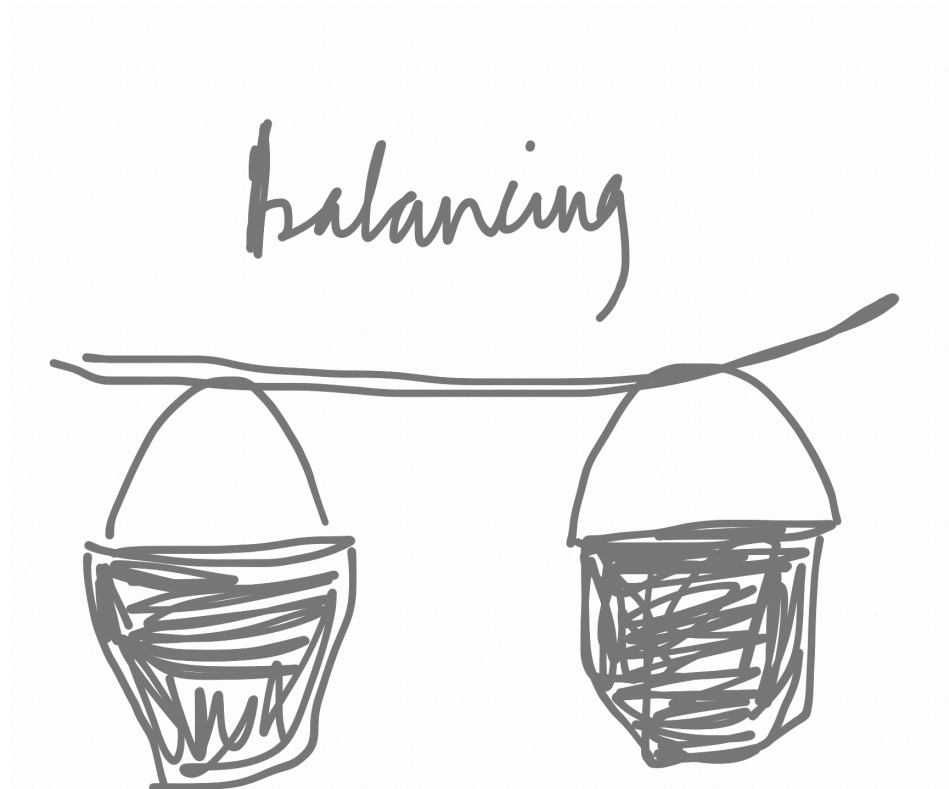
<sup>358</sup> Legat, A. (2012) *Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire: Walking and Stewardship among the Tlicho Dene*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, p.2.

<sup>359</sup> *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>360</sup> Ramnarine, T., K., speaking at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>361</sup> Naess, A. (2002) *Life's Philosophy: Reason and Feeling in a Deeper World*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, p.18.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*



363

From the Latin *applicare*, 'apply' translates as 'to fold'.<sup>364</sup> A fold is a crease that brings surfaces closer together; *sur* from the French meaning 'on' and *face* meaning 'area'. Therefore, a fold narrows attention from a broader area to focus in on the detail; closing perspective from the surface to a single point of interest. In the context of live song performance this involves the wholehearted commitment of body, mind and spirit to the moment of activity; a *fold* that channels attention to allow creative action to *unfold*. Herein lies the paradox; as connecting to a creative on-flow requires complete 'focus' and at the same time an ease with which to 'let go'. Therefore, is the attention given to a particular aspect of activity at the expense of its context, or can there be another dimension of focus entered into during real-time activity?

---

<sup>363</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Being in Place: The Highs and Lows of Sited Practice*, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Conference in Arts & Humanities. 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

<sup>364</sup> Oxford English Dictionary (2012) (7<sup>th</sup> Edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.30.

On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 1974, tightrope walker Phillip Petit stepped on to a wire stretched between the twin towers of New York City without any safety measures in place. Solely reliant on the balance of his own body to prevent a fall, Petit recalls that stepping on to the wire was only possible with a narrowing of perspective: *'the whole world does not exist; only the wire was there in my mind.'*<sup>365</sup> Petit's singular application of focus demonstrates the power of deep concentration; in which a kaleidoscope of real-time activity is filtered through a telescope directed towards a single star that shines more brightly for the emphasis it is given.

However, Petit crossed the wire eight times that morning, at one point sitting down in the middle of the wire to take in his particular vantage of the city below. When asked how it was possible not only to step onto, but play with and enjoy balancing on a wire hundreds of feet above the ground, Petit describes entering a state of body and mind that he calls the *'open focus'*.<sup>366</sup> This is a simultaneity of 'folding' and 'unfolding' in which attention to detail interacts with real-time factors to allow an openness to be able to 'go with the flow'. As Petit describes: *'completely closed and completely open – I have to be both'*.<sup>367</sup> Now 'in the zone', Petit was able to switch between 'open' and 'closed', observation and focus, to enjoy what he was doing.

---

<sup>365</sup> Petit, P., interviewed by Mason, A. (2015) *CBS This Morning*. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/ofY-TjaVd8> (Accessed 21st September 2019).

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

< broaden out  
> narrow in

368

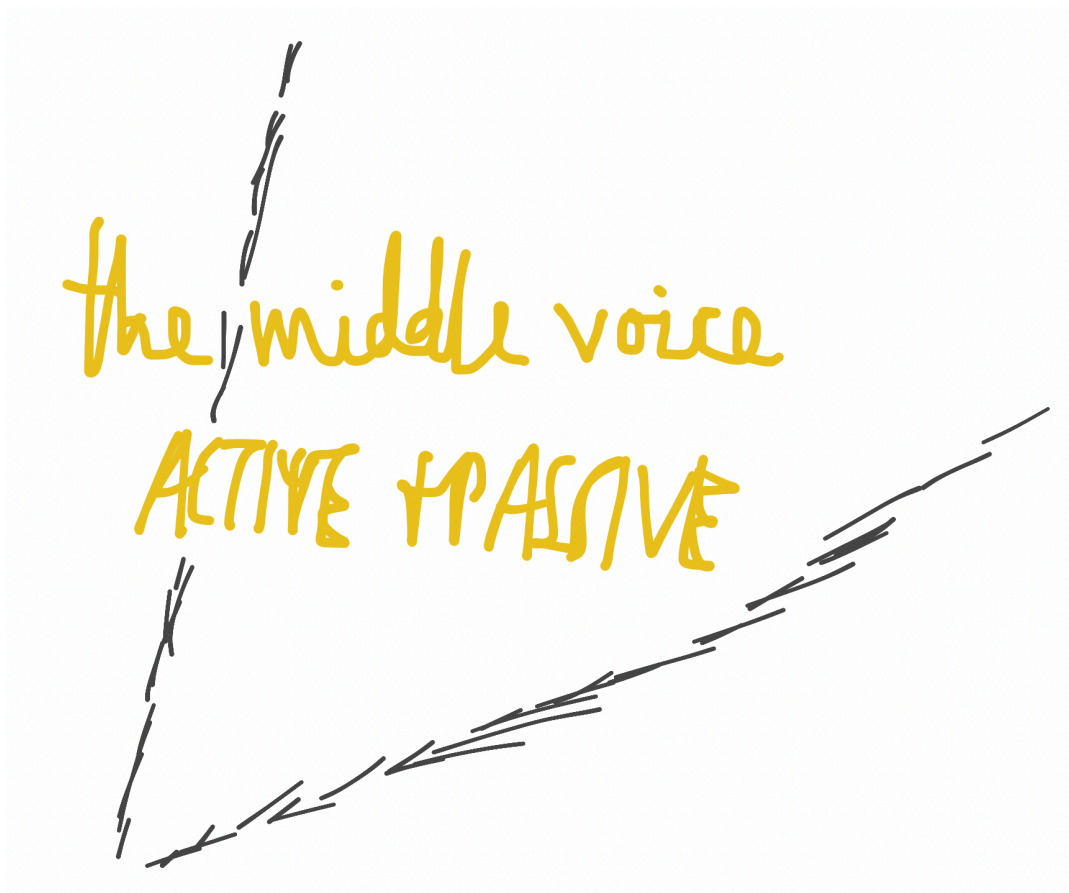
There is a saying that you can be ‘so close to something, you don’t see it’. This is what makes Petit’s *open focus* so interesting, as it allows what is within *and* what is outwith to flow and communicate. Similarly, in the context of live song performance, my attention is a commitment to what I am doing *in engagement with* the context within which the music unfolds. This is a form of relational play between the internal and the external, a state of heightened *presence* and attention towards a particular activity, at the same time open to the realities of the moment and the conditions within which that activity dwells. There is nothing forced about this approach, on the contrary, in the words of Lao Tzu, there is a *softness* that is both ‘doing’ and ‘not doing’.<sup>369</sup> An attention that might be considered a form of *deceleration*, a ‘worked through’ process that ‘slows time’ to allow connection to develop. Researcher Simon Hoffding highlights the role that passivity

---

<sup>368</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing January 2016.

<sup>369</sup> Tzu, Lao., trans. McDonald, J.H. (1996) *Tao Te Ching, by Lao Tzu*. (Verse 43) (Online) Available at: <https://simplybeing-sw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Tao-Te-Ching-J.H.-McDonald-1996.pdf> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

plays during a live performance, describing the notion of *'hover thought'*; a state of agency that is 'clued-in' but also open to what is happening around and about.<sup>370</sup>



It is interesting to note that Petit had previously been a street performer, juggling for tips across Europe, encountering a variety of people in different places. Petit now holds creativity workshops for children in which he encourages attributes such as: 'Passion', 'Tenacity', 'Intuition', 'Courage' and 'Inspiration'. What makes both Honnold's rock climb and Petit's walk so daring and incredible is that they defy the rational odds to let the irrational in to sculpt a new path through reality. The possibility that reality is fluid

---

<sup>370</sup> Hoffding, S., speaking at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, Oxford University, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

<sup>371</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made at *Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College, Aberdeenshire, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

becomes real through first-hand experience if we continue to play and challenge the limitations of previously perceived perimeters, as Petit reminds us: *'Improvisation is empowering because it welcomes the unknown; I want to share with you a flash of the impossible.'*<sup>372</sup> While these aerial gestures stand out, equally significant are the experiences that can develop through encounters on the ground once we begin to connect and flow...

---

<sup>372</sup> Petit, P., interviewed by Mason, A. (2015) *CBS This Morning* (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/ofY-TjaVd8> (Accessed 21st September 2019).



373

For the German philosopher Kierkegaard, it remained imperative that each individual ‘walks their own path as a separate entity’, with the idea that getting lost in the crowd equates to losing oneself.<sup>374</sup> However, Dene wisdom offers a less polarized view of identity in which ‘self’ and ‘other’ are essential to each other’s development.<sup>375</sup>

Chancing upon a network of spiders’ webs, David Abram had the impression that he was

---

<sup>373</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, October 2019.

<sup>374</sup> Academy of Ideas (2015) *Introduction to Kierkegaard: The Existential Problem* (Online) Available at: <https://academyofideas.com/2015/04/introduction-to-kierkegaard-the-existential-problem> (Accessed 3rd December 2019).

<sup>375</sup> Dolphus, J., in conversation with Foster, J., Sambaa K’e, NWT, Canada, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014.



watching: *'the universe being born, galaxy upon galaxy'*;<sup>376</sup> a reminder that all aspects of life are *interconnected*. Abram's first-hand experience relates to the Hindu tale of 'Krishna and the plums', in which, the young Krishna has eaten too many of the ripe fruits growing from a tree in his garden. Asking the boy to open his mouth, his mother looks inside to witness the entirety of the universe;<sup>377</sup> a reminder of the potential to connect with a wholeness of experience once a capacity for openness is engaged within. Or, as Zenga the Titan intimates: *'find your flow'*.<sup>378</sup>

In the context of troubadouring, 'play' and 'attention' have set in motion a simultaneous process of folding and unfolding that are now connecting the spaces between; making 'Kinsugi' joins between the visible and the invisible. It is now that the practice begins to *flow*. In ancient teachings this can be considered as 'Wu Wei' the state of 'how'; action without striving, moving effortlessly, where things seem to run a 'natural' course. In the Tao Te Ching, the 'book of the way', Lao Tzu states:

*'That which offers no resistance,  
Overcomes the hardest substances.  
That which offers no resistance  
Can enter where there is no space.'*<sup>379</sup>

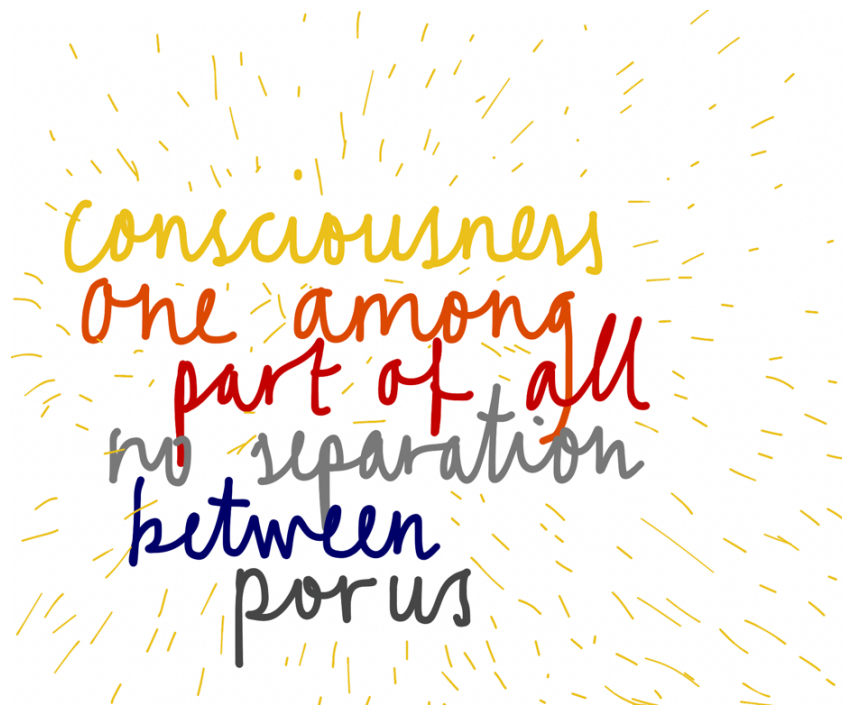
---

<sup>376</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.18-19.

<sup>377</sup> Krishna's story is part of the Bhagavad Gita, part of the epic tale of the *Mahabharata* in Sanskrit scripture.

<sup>378</sup> Makangu, J., in conversation with Foster, J. Glasgow, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017.

<sup>379</sup> Tzu, Lao., trans. McDonald, J.H. (1996) *Tao Te Ching, by Lao Tzu*. (Verse 43) (Online) Available at: <https://simplybeing-sw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Tao-Te-Ching-J.H.-McDonald-1996.pdf> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019).



380

Therefore, live song performance is a form of *empathic travel*; closing the distance between individual entities and at the same time opening the possibility for each individual to retain its character and communicate with the other. Humanities lecturer Neil Francis Pembroke writes: *'The original meaning of empathy... is the act of feeling oneself into the experience of another person.'*<sup>381</sup> This is demonstrated in the emotive form of Portuguese folk-song named 'Fado', and in the Spanish concept of 'El Duende'; a heightened state of expression and emotion described by the poet Gabriel Garcia Lorca during his lecture in Buenos Aires in 1933: *'I have heard an old maestro of the guitar say, "the duende climbs up inside you, from the soles of your feet." Meaning this: it is not a question of ability, but of true, living style, of blood, of the most ancient culture, of*

---

<sup>380</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, October 2019.

<sup>381</sup> Pembroke, N. (2007) 'Empathy, emotion, and ekstasis in the patient/physician relationship' in *Journal of Religion and Health*. Vol.46 (2) (Online) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-006-9071-4> pp.287-298 in PDF. (Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020).

*spontaneous creation.*<sup>382</sup> Lorca elaborates: *'All arts are capable of duende, but where it finds greatest range, naturally, is in music, dance, and spoken poetry, for these arts require a living body to interpret them, being forms that are born, die, and open their contours against an exact present.'*<sup>383</sup>

Professor of music Erin Heisel,<sup>384</sup> posits that *'empathic experience in music can be transformative, particularly in the field of vocal performance.'*<sup>385</sup> Heisel supports her argument with the observation by theoretician of performance Herbert Blau that: *'performance may transform the one performing. That it has the capacity to transform seems to be universal.'*<sup>386</sup> Not solely the requisite of the individual performer, empathy has been demonstrated by groups of drummers who experience a collective energy known as 'entrainment' and similarly when musicians playing together experience a feeling of being 'in the pocket'.<sup>387</sup>

---

<sup>382</sup> Lorca, F.G. (1933) *Theory and Play of The Duende* trans. Kline, A.S. (2007) (Online) Available at: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.php> (Accessed 2nd December 2019).

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Heisel trained in vocal performance and is chair of 'Play Studies' for the Mid-Atlantic Popular American Culture Association. Heisel's research includes 'play theory', 'the unaccompanied voice' and 'theories of space and culture'.

<sup>385</sup> Heisel, E. (2015) *'Empathy as a Tool for Embodied Processes in Vocal Performance'* in *Empirical Musicology Review*. Vol.10 (2) (Online) Available at: <https://emusicology.org/article/view/4601/4163> (Accessed 24th October 2019).

<sup>386</sup> Blau, H. (2007) cited by Heisel, E. (2015) *'Defining Empathy for Vocal Performance'* in *'Empathy as a Tool for Embodied Processes in Vocal Performance'* in *Empirical Musicology Review* Vol.10 (2) (Online) Available at: <https://emusicology.org/article/view/4601/4163> (Accessed 24th October 2019).

<sup>387</sup> A term used by musicians to describe music as 'tight' referring to two or more musicians playing 'as one', especially in reference to the bass and drums.

During 'Performing Knowledge', musicologist Catherine Foxcroft presented her research into 'flow-state' conducted through a series of interviews with concert pianists to ascertain their subjective experiences of performance. Foxcroft observed that the musicians described: *'an entirely unified cognitive-emotive-physical experience which engaged all their mind-body faculties at once.'* Foxcroft elucidates: *'When performers become totally absorbed in their performances, they may experience a transcendent, altered state of consciousness referred to as being 'in the zone'. Performers experience the zone as a space in which they feel fully concentrated, calm, relaxed, inspired... creative. This leads to an exhilarating sense of freedom, where the performers engage with music in a different, almost improvisatory, way.'*<sup>388</sup>

However, is the transformative experience of flow the reserve of musicians or a feeling experienced by all? I align my position with this description of El Duende by Clarissa Pinkola Estes: *'literally the goblin wind or force behind a person's actions and creative life, including the way they walk, the sound of their voice, even the way they lift their little finger. It is a term used in flamenco dance, and is also used to describe the ability to think in poetic images. Among the Latina curanderas who recollect story, it is understood as the ability to be filled with spirit that is more than one's own spirit. Whether one is the watcher, listener, or reader, when el duende is present, one sees it, hears it, reads it, feels it underneath the dance, the music, the words, the art; one knows it is there. When el duende is not present, one knows that too.'*<sup>389</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> Foxcroft, C. 'Exploring the Role of Pianists' Emotional Engagement with Music in a Solo Performance' talk made at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Attended in person.

<sup>389</sup> Pinkola-Estes, C., (2008) *Women Who Run with The Wolves: Contacting the power of the Wild Woman*. London: Rider, p.480.

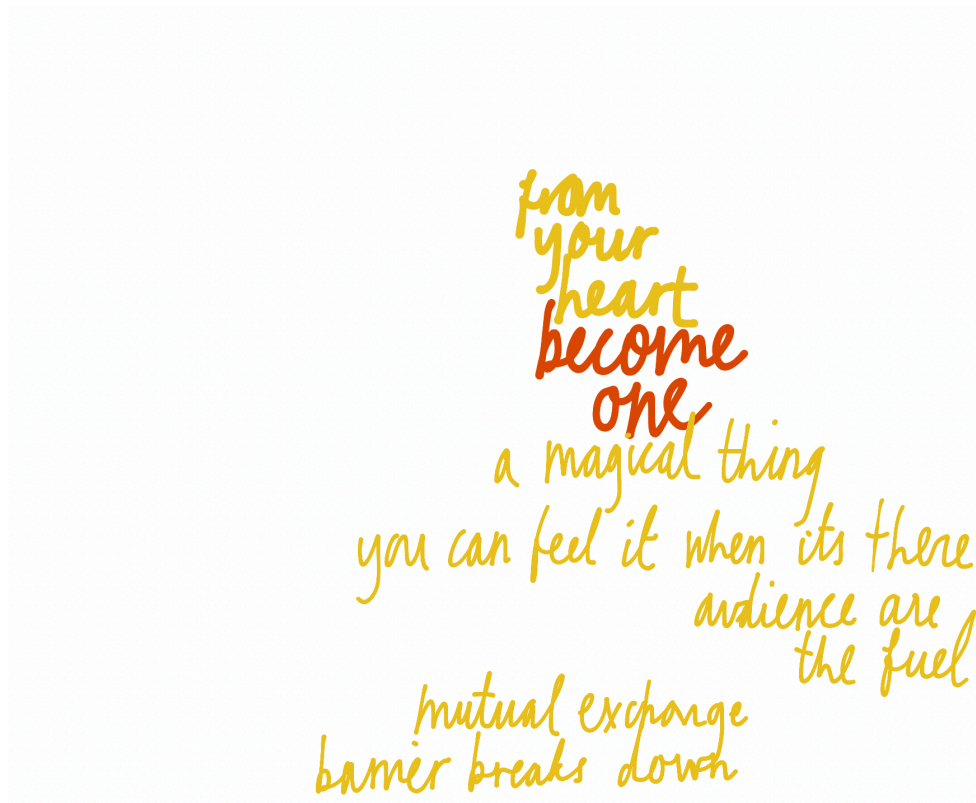
Pinkola-Estes' observation regarding the *presence* of duende is interesting to note as sensing the 'flow' was clearly demonstrated by Phillip Petit in knowing: '*when to stop*'.<sup>390</sup> Without the 'goblin wind' Petit might have wrong-footed with fatal consequences. Flow, therefore, is *attuned* to the present conditions of the body and the environment; conditions in constant flux as Lao Tzu states: '*Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; Let things flow naturally forward.*'<sup>391</sup> Flow, therefore, is a relationship. In 'Making', Ingold describes a correspondence between kite and air as: '*a dance of animacy.*'<sup>392</sup> The flow between the performer and the audience is like holding on to the string of a kite as it darts in the wind, tugging at your wrist; sometimes the kite disappears from view, behind the clouds, but the string lets you know it is still there. Let go, or hold too tight, the string may fly away or snap, and the relationship will be lost.

---

<sup>390</sup> Petit, P., interviewed by Mason, A. (2015) *CBS This Morning*. (Online) Available at: [https://youtu.be/ofY-\\_TjaVd8](https://youtu.be/ofY-_TjaVd8) (Accessed 21st September 2019).

<sup>391</sup> Tzu, Lao., trans. McDonald, J.H. (1996) *Tao Te Ching, by Lao Tzu*. (Verse 43) (Online) Available at: <https://simplybeing-sw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Tao-Te-Ching-J.H.-McDonald-1996.pdf> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>392</sup> Ingold, T. (2013) *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Oxon: Routledge, p.101.



From my classical piano studies, I continue to learn from the preludes and fugues of Johann Sebastian Bach where the interplay between harmony and counterpoint draws a comparison with live song performance. Thinking of the right hand as the performer and the left hand as the audience, what is so marvellous is that the left hand often holds the melody and the two positions in effect ‘swap roles’. The fugues really demonstrate this when a melody, initiated by the right hand, is then taken and reshaped by the left, with both hands nevertheless playing in conversation *with* each other. Once more this aligns with Eastern philosophy in which flow relates to the idea ‘of being at one with things’ and in which distinctions between self and object are less polarised.<sup>394</sup>

---

<sup>393</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during ‘*Lessons from a Rock Star*’. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

<sup>394</sup> Nagatomo, S. (2020) ‘*Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy*’ in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Spring Edition) Zalta, N., E. (ed.) (Online) Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/japanese-zen> (Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020).

Therefore, live song performance is not the sonic transmission from one *to* another with an agenda to transmute, rather, it is the uncertain process of creative exchange. A marked differential that musician and writer Matthew Guerrieri examples with a composition by Wagner which seems at first to elicit an empathetic response among an audience but is in fact the contagion of feelings.<sup>395</sup> However, the *empathic travel* that can, but is not guaranteed to, occur during a live song performance goes further than mimicry; it is a ‘process of reality’<sup>396</sup> that carries the potential to open the ‘universe of Krishna’ within us all. Therefore, it is the *connection* between musicians, performer(s), audience, environment, that co-creates the encounter; opening a creative on-flow so that *the encounter itself becomes the song*.

In this way, each song is a form of travel, and each travel a story, in which a network of connections is formed between people and place. In the following chapter, I explore the sense of community that is developed through live song performance, beginning with my return to Smbaa K’e with Amanda Forrest Chan.

---

<sup>395</sup> Guerrieri, M. (2018) *On Empathy*. New Music Box (Online) First published 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Available at: <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/on-empathy> (Accessed September 2019).

<sup>396</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (1985) *Process and Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

**Story**



## Return to Smbaa K'e



*'There is something about return'* Mandy reflected, *'it means a lot to visit, and a great deal more to return.'* When the community heard we were coming back, Chief Dolphus organised a charter plane departing from Fort Simpson. We just needed to get there. *'I'll drive'* suggested Mandy.



*We arranged to meet at the tree planting camp where I was to play my final show on the music tour with Tereza Tomek and Samantha Scott. An outdoor gig with a supermoon forecast that evening. I could see the huge moon rising behind groups of young workers settling down to relax after weeks planting saplings by hand.*



*The camp was located in northern Alberta, on the border with the Northwest Territories. It felt like that last stop of the tour was leading us back to Smbaa K'e. After the gig, Mandy and I set off under the moonlight on a road long and straight like an arrow. It would be a 22hr drive to Fort Simpson.*

397

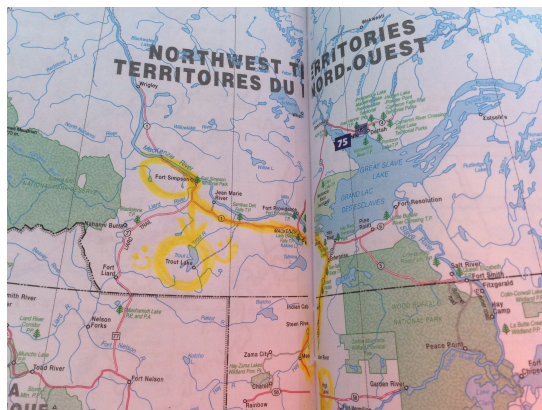
---

<sup>397</sup> Foster, J., series of photographs taken while travelling overland in the Northwest Territories with Forrest-Chan, A. 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

*We found a hotel to stay, to make a fresh start in the morning. Setting off early, we entered the Northwest Territories and there it was, the beginning of the Boreal Forest. Uneven, untamed; 'like a mangey dog', was Mandy's description. As we reached the 66<sup>th</sup> Parallel, the forest was growing thicker the further north we travelled.*



*Overland return was a completely different experience from our first visit flying to Fort Simpson with Gavin and Madeline from Edmonton. This time, we were travelling within the land, enveloped by the forest on either side of the road; so close I could feel its wildness.*



*The sky was peppered with clouds, swooping towards us like a daytime aurora; we kept stopping the car to take in the wonder, to smell the forest. We broke for lunch at the only café the whole way, with snow shoes and beaver skins on the wall. A little gallery in the back displaying handmade moccasins and birch baskets stitched with porcupine quills.*







*Reaching Fort Simpson, we met the pilot who loaded our printmaking supplies into the four-seater plane. Mandy and I were bringing materials to restock the Smbaa K'e Print Studio. We had asked print studio manager Carielyn Jumbo what was running short and had drawn up a list of papers and inks, lino blocks and carving tools that would be useful.*



*From the air, the forest zoomed out to become a pattern, losing its smell and texture. Coming into view; remote, nestled beside the vast glistening lake by which the Dene community are named - Smbaa K'e; tucked under a wing of the forest.*



*Madeline had stayed on at Smbaa K'e to continue working in the print studio, and Mandy and I were looking forward to hearing how things had been going. Landing on the dusty single airstrip, a couple of trucks were arriving in the distance and we could see the children coming to greet us.*

*'People have lived on this land for thousands of years, but still there is very little sign of them having passed through. They have looked after the land and used it without destroying it. We want the land to remain clean and natural. The ways of the people are from the land. The ways are clean and human and free and we want to continue this way of life. What I mean is that there is no politics in our way of life. We share everything, our whole culture is based on people and not – since we share everything there is no need to cheat each other, exploit each other, we just live naturally, that's what I meant by clean living.'*<sup>398</sup>

- George Barnaby, Fort Good Hope

*It was July, and the sun did not set; darkening to a deep orange-pink, before a lighter yellow hue brought in the next day. The continuous sunlight provided energy and everyone stayed up much later. In May, I had held a monotype workshop with the children, picking vegetation from the banks of the lake to run through the printing press, creating imprints directly from nature. Now, with the 'midnight sun', Mandy, Madeline and I held drawing sessions by the lake. Sessions were popular with the children and we began to draw each other. At first some people were unsure about the 'big blank paper' so we tried 'blind drawing' where you don't look at the paper but kept your eyes on the person you are drawing; a way to engage with someone else and the powers of your own observation without pressure about how your drawing 'should' look. In the print studio Mandy introduced us to 'Chine Colle'<sup>399</sup> and we used this technique to overlay the drawings on top of each other forming a portrait of community.*

---

<sup>398</sup> Barnaby, G., quoted by Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.18.

<sup>399</sup> From the French, 'Chine' meaning tissue and 'Colle' translating as 'glue'; 'Chine Colle' is a printmaking method in which papers can be bonded together when run through the printing press. Rice glue is used to

*At the same time, I began sketching portraits of the Elders and members of the community, which provided the opportunity to spend time with people one-to-one and to hear their stories.<sup>400</sup> I used a 'puzzle-block' technique to develop some portraits, made by carving and inking separate pieces of linoleum that interlocked and could be run through the printing press together. A process that highlighted the relationship between the 'part' and the 'whole'; how each element retained its own character, with overall cohesion formed when connecting the pieces.*

Journal Folder 1: Samba K'e – Community Portraits <sup>401</sup>

*'The whole experience, up until now, has been that we Dene should forget who we are and we should now assimilate into a 'superior' way of life. We should become Canadians. We should forget our special difference.'* <sup>402</sup>

- Georges Erasmus, Fort Rae

*I was beginning to understand the power of people's stories, and how many stories there were. We had heard from Gavin and Chief Dolphus about the increasing pressure on the community to protect their way of life among the land, a relationship stretching back to the beginning of time. Chief Dolphus spoke of recent changes to the forest that he had*

---

adhere separate papers, however as a water soluble medium, each piece retains its integrity with the opportunity to soak the paper and separate the pieces.

<sup>400</sup> Drawings were given to the Elders and the children, with prints archived in the growing Samba K'e Print Studio archive.

<sup>401</sup> Foster, J., selection of community portraits drawn and printed at Samba K'e, NWT, Canada, July 2014.

<sup>402</sup> Erasmus, G., quoted by Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.51.

witnessed in his lifetime. How the caribou were no longer coming to the same areas, as those areas were now polluted by rainfall bringing chemicals from nearby production plants. How the lake had rising mercury levels and fewer fish each year, how fresh water was now threatened by chemical company activity. How long the Dene have maintained a balance with nature, and how swiftly this balance was being eroded by corporate greed.

*'When the seismic comes around and blasts holes, they leave wire. They say clean it up, but it isn't. There is lots of blasting wire laying around, and then the damaged lakes.'*<sup>403</sup>

- George Edwards, Aklavik

*During a drawing session by the lake, around one of the many campfires we lit to sing songs and share stories, Carielyn told me how recent the concept of money was for the Dene; how the community are neither used to money as a system nor think it makes good sense. Carielyn expressed her concerns about fracking proposals that would be: 'cutting open the arteries of the world to take the earth's blood, upsetting nature's balance and who knows what damage that will do.'*<sup>404</sup> *Carielyn had initiated a 'Community Gardens Project' in Sambaa K'e to ease the community's increasing reliance on packaged foods flown in at great expense to the community. While maintaining hunting practice during Fall, the vegetable gardens would enable the community to be as self-sufficient as possible at other times of year, and with the hours of daylight during the Summer months there would be plenty of vegetables to preserve for the Winter.*

---

<sup>403</sup> Edwards, G., quoted by Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.23.

<sup>404</sup> Jumbo, C., in conversation with Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014.



FOOD SECURITY  
CARIELYN  
COMMUNITY  
GARDENS  
PROJECT

405

*Through the conversations I had with Carielyn, we wondered whether the print studio might be able to visualise the project, making gardening more appealing to those who had not undertaken vegetable growing before. Using strips of Spruce from the forest, carved illustrations of vegetables were printed directly onto wood and after some experimentation with materials to achieve a weather-proof bond, printed spruce sticks were erected in the community gardens to indicate what vegetables were growing.*

Journal Folder 1: Sambia K'e – Sambia K'e Print Studio <sup>406</sup>

---

<sup>405</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, July 2014.

<sup>406</sup> Foster, J., photographs taken in Sambia K'e, NWT, Canada, May and July 2014.

CLEAN  
WATER HIGH  
COST  
OF  
ENERGY

407

*Chief Dolphus told me about the time Samba K'e were suddenly cut off by the electricity board, how astonishing this was after twenty years of paying bills, just because they couldn't pay one bill on time; how there was no relationship with a company; it was solely about the money. Dolphus explained that in Dene culture when someone was unable to meet an obligation, the Elders would ask what was wrong and the community would help that person through a difficult time.*

*'And my first feeling about school was that it was a foreign place, just like being plucked out of one picture and put entirely in a different picture. There wasn't no idea of the surroundings at all.'* <sup>408</sup> <sup>409</sup>

- Chief Paul Andrew, Willow Lake and Fort Norman

---

<sup>407</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, July 2014.

<sup>408</sup> Chief Andrew, P., quoted by Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.26.

<sup>409</sup> Chief Paul Andrew refers to the 'Residential School System' initiated by the Canadian government in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and persisting until the last school was finally closed in 1996. The lives of all First Nations peoples were profoundly affected by the enforced separation of 150,000 children from their families, culture, language and land. Furthermore, mistreatment and abuse occurred during this period that has brought lasting damage. Legal action taken by former pupils led to the forming of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2008. The Commission released its final report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2015, having collected over 7,000 testimonies, concluding that the government policy of taking children from their communities had been a 'cultural genocide' designed to eradicate aboriginal culture, language and beliefs.



*One afternoon as I walked back to our cabin, I saw a truck parked outside and a face I had not seen before. Wayne rolled down the window to say hello. His face was etched with lines and there were stories written all over it. We got talking and I asked Wayne what had brought him to Smbaa K'e. 'The airstrip' he said. Smbaa K'e were having a new airstrip built and there were mixed feelings about it. Managed by outside contractors with decisions being taken by government officials who had little knowledge of the land. People were describing the airstrip as a 'sinkhole' as contractors had not listened to the Elders' advice to reinforce the ground, instead tarmacking the surface which was now sinking even as they tried to finish the job. 'They didn't listen to the Dene' Wayne sighed and rolled his eyes. Wayne told me that for twenty years he had worked for various companies throughout the Northwest Territories and didn't take any pleasure in the way the land was being treated. He told me he had a great deal of respect for the Dene people, and I asked him why he was involved in construction in the North. He told me simply that he had a family and without the work he could not feed his family.<sup>410</sup> It seemed that Wayne was caught up in a story that made no sense to him either, that he didn't know how to change.*

*'(Being Dene) means living with the land, with the animals, birds and fish as though they are your sisters and brother. It means saying the land is an old friend and an old friend that your father knew, your grandfather knew, indeed your people have always known.'*<sup>411</sup>

*- Richard Nerysoo, Fort McPherson*

---

<sup>410</sup> (Surname unknown) W., in conversation with Foster, J. Smbaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

<sup>411</sup> Nerysoo, R., quoted by Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.49.

*The return to Smbaa K'e was connecting the dots between the community of musicians and audiences I had met during the music tour across British Columbia and Alberta, and the community of Smbaa K'e; how each were practising a way of life founded in relationship rather than transaction. Seemingly disparate, both communities were at the heart of their own story and at the same time 'outsiders' in another, maintaining their identity and connection through the creative practice of their stories with a commonality of resilience. One song I heard countless times throughout the music tour, with variations sung by different singers, was 'Ain't goin' back to old Fort Mac' originally written by Rob Vaarmeyer who taught the song to Canadian troubadour Corin Raymond.<sup>412</sup> Corin told Vaarmeyer: 'I can guarantee that twenty years from now you'll hear 'Old Fort Mac' at every campfire where there's guitars in this country.'<sup>413</sup> The song describes life in 'Fort McMurray' located on the Athabasca River. Formerly land inhabited by the aboriginal Cree peoples of Alberta, Fort McMurray is classified as an 'urban service area' constructed for workers on the Athabasca Oil Sands. An environmental and cultural wasteland; the song tells a story of corporate greed:*

*'I ain't goin' back to old Fort Mac, no matter how much they pay.*

*You can live and work in old Fort Mac,*

*but there ain't no place to stay;*

*no there ain't no place to stay.*

---

<sup>412</sup> When Raymond started playing 'Old Fort Mac' in coffee houses, the song was so popular with audiences that they gave him their 'Canadian Tire Money' (a form of retail coupon) that Raymond then used to pay a studio to record the song on his album *'Paper Nickels'* released in 2013 in celebration of Canadian folk artists.

<sup>413</sup> Raymond, C., in conversation with Cooper, A. (2013) *Corin Raymond celebrates Canadian folk artists on latest album*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.revelstokereview.com/entertainment/corin-raymond-celebrates-canadian-folk-artists-on-latest-album> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

*Yeah, the clouds always hang over you, even when the sky is sunny,  
for to cast a shadow costs them cash,  
in good old Fort McMoney;  
good old Fort McMoney.'*<sup>414</sup>

-----

The stories quoted throughout this section are only a handful of the stories told by the Dene, Metis and Inuit communities of the Mackenzie Valley during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, brought together in a publication by Patrick Scott entitled 'Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger Inquiry' published in 2007.<sup>415</sup> Companies backing the proposal touted that the pipeline would provide Canada with gas and employment for several decades.<sup>416</sup> In comparison with the thousands of years the Dene have lived harmoniously with the land, any 'advantage' would be over in 'the blink of an eye' inflicting a legacy of devastation on the land, wildlife, muskeg, lakes, river, as well as the culture and spirit of its peoples. As a cameraman for CBC North,<sup>417</sup> Scott followed the inquiry, travelling to all the communities Berger visited, hearing people's stories first-hand. Arriving in Sambaa K'e (then named Trout Lake) Scott noted the community to be one of the most traditional the inquiry had visited:

---

<sup>414</sup> Vaarmeyer, R. *Old Fort Mac* (Lyrics) Recorded by Raymond, C. (2013) *Paper Nickels*. Canada: Local Rascal.

<sup>415</sup> Judge Thomas Berger was commissioned by the Canadian Government to lead an inquiry into the social, environmental, and economic impact of building a large diameter gas pipeline through the Mackenzie River Valley of the Northwest Territories. Beginning in March 1975, Berger travelled from community to community along the Mackenzie River to hear stories voiced by the people themselves concerning the impact of the proposed pipeline on the land and their way of life. The inquiry took two and a half years to complete with Berger recommending a ten-year moratorium to address Aboriginal land rights and conservation.

<sup>416</sup> Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.11.

<sup>417</sup> Canadian Broadcasting Company.



418

*'Our journey to Trout Lake graphically expressed the extreme difference between traditional lifestyle and the ways of the outside world, the world I had come from. At that time Trout Lake, although a permanent community, seemed like a bush camp. There was no power. A few log homes nestled on the shore of Trout Lake made up the community. Fish and meat were drying on racks scattered around the village.*

*It was a beautiful sunny August day. It felt like we were in the Garden of Eden. Home to about fifty people, most of the families were from the same clan, the Jumbo's. Some*

---

<sup>418</sup> Jumbo, B. (2012) *Dry Fish* (Lino-cut print) *Sambaa K'e Print Studio Archive* (Online) Available at: <https://sambaakeprintstudio.wordpress.com> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

*Denerons. Punches and Lomens made up the balance of the community. A small log transient centre/community hall became the meeting place.*

*Everything about the Trout Lake hearing, told us that these people were really traditional in their way of life. More than any other community that we had been in, this group of people chose to live like their ancestors had and held closely to all their traditional practices and beliefs.<sup>419</sup>*

Over a decade later, I have included these stories to underline that the issues then threatening the wellbeing of the Aboriginal communities of the Northwest Territories remain a pressing concern,<sup>420</sup> with a subsequent pipeline proposal and ongoing corporate interest in the land that is at the heart of Dene identity and culture.<sup>421</sup> These stories are also included to highlight the power of stories; the resilience of community and culture that is actively maintained through the telling of stories and in the listening of stories. Patrick makes an important point: *'The more people told their own stories, and the more stories they heard, the stronger was their sense of who they were.'*<sup>422</sup> In the following chapter I will explore the significance of telling and remembering, beginning with an introduction to the practice of storytelling.

---

<sup>419</sup> Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, pp.71 -75.

<sup>420</sup> In 2004, debate resurfaced with the 'Mackenzie Gas Project', the proposal of a new pipeline through the Northwest Territories.

<sup>421</sup> The Mackenzie River is known as the 'Dehcho' in Dene language, spanning nearly 2000 kilometres of the Northwest Territories from the Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean.

<sup>422</sup> Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute, p.50.



The way we tell, and listen to, a story affects the way it will be remembered, in turn affecting who we become, as writer Ben Okri cautions: *'It is easy to forget how mysterious and mighty stories are. They do their work in silence, invisibly. They work with all the internal materials of the mind and self. Beware the stories you read or tell; subtly, at night, beneath the waters of consciousness, they are altering your world.'*<sup>424</sup>

---

<sup>423</sup> Foster. J. (2019) Digital drawing of lyrics by the now disbanded but influential music group 'Khaya' with whom I shared my debut release on a compilation by 'SL Records'. Ed Pybus started the independent label with his student loan, hence the name, founded to champion local independent music in Edinburgh, Scotland.

<sup>424</sup> Okri, B. (1996) *'Aphorisms and Fragments'* (Verse 58) in *Birds of Heaven*. London: Phoenix, p.34.



425

Among oral traditions, stories are kept alive through the ongoing act of telling and re-telling; an interaction between the storyteller, the listeners and the story itself.<sup>426</sup> From the Maggid enlivening passages of the Torah, to the Chinese performers of ‘Pingshu’ translating as ‘book speak’ and ‘Tanci’ meaning ‘plucking rhymes’; the South Indian folklorists of ‘Burrakatha’,<sup>427</sup> and the Urdu ‘Dastango’<sup>428</sup> in which the storyteller’s voice is central to recreating the many colours and characters present in the ‘dastan’ or oral history. The practice of storytelling is itself a story ‘as old as the hills’; a story that runs through all cultures and societies as far back as we know.

---

<sup>425</sup> Unknown. (1911) ‘Photograph depicting a female ‘Dastango’ standing and telling a story while an audience sits around her’ in *Travellers in the Middle East Archive*. (Online) Available at: <https://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/10306> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>426</sup> Killick, S. and Frude, N. (2009) *Eye on Fiction: The Teller, The Tale and The Told*. (Online) Available at: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-22/edition-10/eye-fiction-teller-tale-and-told> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>427</sup> ‘Burra’ refers to a South Indian musical instrument made from a gourd, and ‘Katha’ translates as ‘story’.

<sup>428</sup> Originating in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century as an Urdu form of oral storytelling, ‘Dastangoi’ has undergone several developments: 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian poet Rumi was a practitioner and the practice evolved as a Persian form of oral storytelling in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, dying out with the death of storyteller Mir Baqar Ali for a substantial period until its revival nearly one hundred years later by Mahmood Farooqui in 2005.

Whether one of Aesop's fables, a 'wonder' tale <sup>429</sup> or the nursery rhyme told at bedtime by 'mother goose', stories serve a variety of purposes. From cautionary tales imparting wisdom, to eliciting fear, joy or comfort; stories encompass a breadth of experience and interpretation of the world. Stories serve the deeper purpose of meeting human need and desire, an idea supported by Okri who claims that: *'without stories we would go mad. Life would lose its moorings or lose its orientations. Even in silence we are living our stories'*.<sup>430</sup> Therefore, stories function as both a compass and a mirror, navigating and reflecting the relationships we construct, imagine and live out with each other, the environment and ourselves. Stories link back to the notion of 'play' where relationships can be explored within a framework. There can be the false sense that 'this is only a story' when in actuality a story engages real feeling; working its magic to reconnect with, and unearth, a forgotten part of ourselves.

Among Dene culture, stories are told by the Elders, whose lived experience has developed their ability to tell. Ingold stresses that storytelling is not about: *'how much you know but how well you know'*, emphasising that: *'someone who knows well is able to tell.'* Ingold describes the storyteller as someone who: *'can tell not only in the sense of being able to recount the stories of the world, but also in the sense of having a finely tuned perceptual awareness of their surroundings. Thus, knowing is relating to the world around you, and the better you know, the greater the clarity and depth of your perceptions.'*<sup>431</sup>

---

<sup>429</sup> Better known as 'fairy tales' the term 'wonder tales' includes a wider context of European folklore in which magic and humour were mixed with recognisable aspects of local life.

<sup>430</sup> Okri, B. (1996) *'Aphorisms and Fragments'* (Verse 30) in *Birds of Heaven*. London: Phoenix, p.25.

<sup>431</sup> Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. Oxon: Routledge, p.162.



Ingold proceeds to describe storytelling as: '*a world of movement and becoming, in which any thing – caught at a particular place and moment – enfolds within its constitution the history of relations that have brought it there.*'<sup>432</sup> Highlighting that: '*In such a world we can understand the nature of things only by attending to their relations, or in other words, by telling their stories.*'<sup>433</sup>

Storytelling is a journey in which the *telling reveals the tale*; be it one of celebration, forgiveness, challenge and hardship, grief or love - the telling of a story is both a sharing and an *opening* of buried emotions, hidden connections, vulnerabilities; a vocalisation of the universal stories within all of us. However, care is required as stories not only form but reinforce the patterns of behaviour that shape our relationships with the world and each other.<sup>434</sup> Therefore, it is the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves that hold the greatest power.<sup>435</sup> For the Dene of Smbaa K'e, stories play a pivotal role in feeding an ongoing relationship between the land and the community. As a traditionally nomadic people, Dene stories contain lived histories of *cohabitation* with the land, thereby transmitting a sense of responsibility for the environment that nourishes them, to future generations of Dene.

---

<sup>432</sup> Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. Oxon: Routledge, p.161.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Rose, F. (2011) *The Art of Immersion: Why Do We Tell Stories?* (Online) Available at: <https://wired.com/2011/03/why-do-we-tell-stories> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>435</sup> Killick, S. and Frude, N. (2009) *Eye on Fiction: The Teller, The Tale and The Told*. (Online) Available at: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-22/edition-10/eye-fiction-teller-tale-and-told> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



436

In 'Monoculture: How One Story is Changing Everything' author F. S. Michaels proposes that market capitalism is the overarching story driving our interactions with the world;<sup>437</sup> in which: *'society is increasingly run on an economic logic that speaks, reasons, and assigns value in terms of productivity, cost, and return'*.<sup>438</sup> Living within the bounds of a dominant narrative in which it can be difficult to perceive individual agency can be dispiriting and disempowering, however political scientist Robert Joustra provides a welcome caveat: *'stories are not complete, unambiguous, or necessarily coherent'*.<sup>439</sup> Therefore, there is room for manouvere as no matter how singular or dominant one narrative appears to be it is: *'not the only story, and even that particular story for all of its power and privilege is incoherent and inconsistent'*.<sup>440</sup> There is always a complexity of stories running simultaneously in which any one can have influence.

---

<sup>436</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, November 2019.

<sup>437</sup> Michaels, F.S. (2011) *Monoculture: How One Story is Changing Everything*. Canada: Red Clover Press, pp.23-31.

<sup>438</sup> Joustra, R. (2012) *One Story To Rule Them All: Is there such as thing as a monoculture?* (Online) First published 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Available at: <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/one-story-to-rule-them-all-is-there-such-a-thing-as-a-monoculture> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

This is what makes Samba K'e such a remarkable community. Squeezed on all sides by ever-encroaching corporate interest in the lake and land for commercial exploitation, this Dene community of less than one hundred people continues to not only survive but maintain their identity, culture and connection to the land, as well as protecting the forest in which they dwell; in large part because of the power of their stories. Dene stories act as the *intermediary* between lived experience of the land, that directly informs the stories, and actual contact with the land to be experienced after hearing the stories. Therefore, stories are shaped and reshaped through real experience; in which each member of the community has agency, and which function as a dialogue formed through interaction and connection with the land which is at the heart of all stories.



441

---

<sup>441</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August 2018.

Stories require concrete experience in order for them to hold meaning. Our stories are increasingly being diverted to the realm of fantasy, in which lived experience and imagination have separated from one another; unhinged by desires created for things we have no stories of or relationship with.<sup>442</sup> Through a subtle permeation into nearly all aspects of life, introductions to people and places and things are initiated by audio-visual simulation prior to real experience-in-the-world. One example is Disney in which even the physical sites<sup>443</sup> are generic fantasy palaces that bend first-hand experience towards a conceptual blueprint. This is a themed interpretation of existence rather than the forming of one's own stories through direct contact with a messy reality in which, as David Abram recalls: *'every scrape or blunder was a meeting.'*<sup>444</sup> Alain de Botton laments that the greatest oversight of capitalist society is: *'the use of advertising solely towards the human desire for things we don't need, rather than meeting the needs of becoming a human being in the world.'*<sup>445</sup> For the Dene, there is no fantastical world separate from the land - the land is already 'super-nature'. The point is underlined by Abram: *'that which is regarded with the greatest awe and wonder by indigenous, oral cultures is, none other than what we view as nature itself.'*<sup>446</sup>

---

<sup>442</sup> I do not refer to 'wonder' or fairy tales or any stories of the imagination that contribute towards a deeper understanding of the world and each other; rather I refer here to the arbitrary aspirational stories of commercialism that imply a life is fulfilled only when certain material possessions have been attained.

<sup>443</sup> Disney 'World' now has six 'theme parks' around the globe.

<sup>444</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, p.9.

<sup>445</sup> De Botton, A., (2013) *Emotional Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. CDI 2013 (Online) Available at: [https://youtu.be/U2YcC\\_H66XY](https://youtu.be/U2YcC_H66XY) (Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019).

<sup>446</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, p.9.

Chief Dolphus recounted the trips he has made to Edmonton, for meetings with government officials to discuss Dehcho affairs. At first the city was exciting, but after a day of sensory overload and anonymity, its sheen had worn off, and Dolphus longed to be back on the lake where an intimate relationship with the land was always self-renewing. Dolphus compared the city to an 'all-you-can-eat buffet' where you could get a huge plate – that at first seemed incredible, but after a few bites it was too much and didn't taste that great.<sup>447</sup> Abram wonders whether Western culture's separation from nature is not the result of some sinister design but rather an inability to see beyond that which is human.<sup>448</sup> However, Abram points out that: '*culture is open to change and therefore this too can change.*'<sup>449</sup>

De Botton suggests that artists might play a key role in re-directing attention back to experience, noting the existence of an established route predating secular culture in which artistic practice provided guidance to meet with the challenges of everyday life.<sup>450</sup> Ecological artist Jonathan Baxter re-enforces this idea with the suggestion that an artistic framework can: '*break reality into manageable chunks*' to facilitate a re-engagement: '*amidst the chaos of the world*'.<sup>451</sup> Michel de Certeau proposes adopting 'La Perruque', a method of 'writing of one's own narrative' within systematic and

---

<sup>447</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J. Sambaa K'e, NWT, Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

<sup>448</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, p.27.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> De Botton, A. (2013) *Emotional Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. CDI 2013 (Online) Available at: [https://youtu.be/U2YcC\\_H66XY](https://youtu.be/U2YcC_H66XY) (Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019).

<sup>451</sup> Baxter, J., in conversation with Foster, J. Dundee, Scotland, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

architectural restrictions,<sup>452</sup> while simultaneously acknowledging a patchwork of collective experience. The practice of parkour demonstrates this well,<sup>453</sup> in which participants use their bodies to dynamically appropriate city structures towards their own lived experience of geography. Within a mirage of extensively constructed versions of reality, how can we re-establish a sense of connection to each other, to our environment and to our own stories?

PLAY  
using a framework  
to explore the  
in-between

454

There seems to be room for manoeuvre in a position outlined by Abram: *'Perhaps (if) we make our stand along the edge of that civilisation, like a magician, or like a person who, having lived among another tribe, can no longer wholly return to his own. He/she lingers half within and half outside of his/her community, open as well, then. To the shifting voices*

---

<sup>452</sup> de Certeau, M., trans Rendall, S. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.27.

<sup>453</sup> 'The word 'parkour' derives from the French phrase: 'parcours du combattant' translating as 'obstacle course' and refers to an increasingly popular form of free running, climbing, swinging, vaulting and jumping developed in France by Raymond Belle and his son David in the seventies.

<sup>454</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, May 2018.

*and flapping forms that crawl and hover beyond the mirrored walls of the city*'.<sup>455</sup> Can song performance provide one such route of travel between the landmarks of overarching narratives; to reconnect with an actuality of experience, like the stories from the Elders?

Abram resumes his proposition: *'And even there, moving along these walls, he/she may hope to find the precise clues to the mystery of how those walls were erected, and how a simple boundary became a barrier, only if the moment is timely – only, that is, if the margin he/she frequents is a temporal as well as spatial edge, and the temporal structure that it bounds is about to dissolve, or metamorphose, into something else.'*<sup>456</sup> Songs are not solely stories the troubadour tells; song performance is a live 'encounter' of exchange with real people in real places including all life forms; therefore songs are tales of community and connection. A live song performance *amplifies* the particularities with which it interacts; whereby real experience is opened up to imaginative interpretation in real-time. Perhaps through song we can listen more closely to our stories, to hear what they are telling us about an environment and each other - what 'sketch' they are creating in the moment and what impression and imprint they impart. By re-attuning to our own stories, we become active participants in the stories we share with the world, rather than subject to a dominant narrative that does not include our stories.

---

<sup>455</sup> Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.28-29.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

In 'Sound Lines' broadcaster Verity Sharp hears the story of 'song collector' Morup Namgyal, from Ladakh in Northern India: *'I have spent my whole life singing melody. I remember 1300 songs and 900 word by word.'*<sup>457</sup> Spending hours in the company of village Elders, listening to their songs, Namgyal describes music as: *'part of his body'*.<sup>458</sup> A similar story can be heard across another continent among the Scottish Traveller communities of North East Scotland, where the practice of unwritten narratives goes back many generations. One of the most well-known oral storytellers was Stanley Robertson who had hundreds of hours of ballads, songs and folk tales committed to memory. Before his death in 2009, Robertson performed stories and songs regularly, not only in Scotland but as far as North America where Robertson was known to: *'hold schoolchildren, pensioners, folk clubs and university conference delegates alike in thrall'*.<sup>459</sup> Similarly, it is what takes place when Namgyal sings that makes the biggest impression on Sharp: *'his chest resonates, and those vibrations create the energy of connection'*.<sup>460</sup>

The vocalisation of a song or story is an improvised interaction between the storyteller, the listeners and the environment, that together bring the story 'to life'. Therefore, as a song reverberates, it connects, in turn forming *echoes* that become part of our memories, both individually and collectively. In her thesis 'Trahere; The Sense of

---

<sup>457</sup> Namgyal, M., in conversation with Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines*. (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds. (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrsc2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> *Obituary in The Times* (2009) (Online) Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/stanley-robertson-storyteller-singer-and-writer-p8dknmdmqg6> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>460</sup> Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines*. (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrsc2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



Unease in Making a Mark', Aileen Stackhouse explores the processes involved in remembering with an introduction of the word recognition as 're cognition.'<sup>461</sup> The addition of a pause places emphasis on 're', the remembering part of the word, the part connecting to that which has already been experienced. A further reminder that stories connect with lived experience; moreover, that stories reside in both an actual and remembered landscape. The point is underlined by Ingold: *'In storytelling, past occurrences are drawn into present experience. The lived present, however, is not set off from the past of the story. Rather, past and present are continuous.'*<sup>462</sup> Therefore, orality is neither bounded by, nor locked in to linear progression; songs and stories shift location, memory and imagination to reside someplace in-between; revealing an interlacing of subjective experiences. Ingold again: *'For stories, as a rule, do not come with their meanings already attached, nor do they mean the same for different people. What they mean is rather something that listeners have to discover for themselves, by placing them in the context of their own life histories. Indeed, it may not be until long after a story has been told that its meaning is revealed, when you find yourself retracing the very same path that the story relates.'*<sup>463</sup> In this way, both songs and stories are maintained through their *tellings and rememberings*, as artist Tacita Dean alludes to when describing Janet Cardiff's audio walk 'The Missing Voice': *'The power of these walks resides in your own perceptions.'*<sup>464</sup>

---

<sup>461</sup> Stackhouse, A. M. (2006) *TRAHERE: The Sense of Unease in Making A Mark. Bk 3 (Part iii) Prose Contemplation: Kennispecki*. (PhD Thesis) Dundee: University of Dundee Press, p.3.

<sup>462</sup> Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. Oxon: Routledge, p.161.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid. p.162.

<sup>464</sup> Dean, T. & Millar, J. (eds.) (2005) *Place*. London: Thames & Hudson, p.152.



465

Herein, unwritten narratives can fall foul of their written counterparts; when people's subjective experiences are made to disappear via their omission from written accounts. In 'Spiral Lands',<sup>466</sup> artist Andrea Geyer highlighted the overwriting of oral cultures and histories through an exhibition of texts and photographs relating to land previously inhabited by Navajo Indians. Geyer juxtaposed transcripts of Navajo navigational stories, with colonial mandates, laws and treaties to do with land ownership, to draw a historical portrait from a number of perspectives. A poignant part to the exhibition was Geyer's decision not to include place names in the knowledge that these sites would be immediately recognisable to indigenous attendees.<sup>467</sup>

---

<sup>465</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<sup>466</sup> Geyer, G. (2007) *Spiral Lands/Chapter One*. Installation comprised of nineteen fibre-based photographs and text: brochure with footnotes, three panels, 70 x 170 cm. New Jersey: Princeton University Art Museum.

<sup>467</sup> Baum, K. (ed.) (2010) *Nobody's Property: Art, Land Space, 2000-2010*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, p.110.

Re -

Re-writing histories

Re-wiring connections

Re-routing experiences

Namgyal warns that people have grown: *'a little bit careless of the value of our ancestral traditions'*,<sup>468</sup> no longer listening to the advice of the Elders. With the conversion of previously uninhabited land in Ladakh into shopping malls, hotels and attractions to accommodate tourists, Namgyal has borne witness to a: *'shallow representation of a rich cultural tradition'*.<sup>469</sup> However, armed with first-hand experience of song as: *'a powerful conduit to channel the energy present in an environment'*,<sup>470</sup> Namgyal is optimistic that: *'like the remains of the curd can make fresh curd, similarly we can revive our cultural traditions once again.'*<sup>471</sup>

Song performance is multi-modal, underpinned by real-time exchange and therefore more fluid than its written counterpart. Furthermore, a living vernacular can challenge the hierarchy of language from within, thereby bringing to question what accounts have been written. Through orality, language can be re-shaped to express subjective

---

<sup>468</sup> Namgyal, M., in conversation with Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines* (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrccs2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines* (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrccs2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>471</sup> Namgyal, M., in conversation with Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines* (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrccs2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

experiences and insist on their inclusion. In a song, lyrics are not always formed out of established words, they can be nonsense words, shaped sounds; lyrics can push past an established order to collage new relationships between words and form new words altogether. One example is freestyle rap in which words created in real-time through live performance form new associations and therefore new meanings. Another example can be found in the use of 'verlan',<sup>472</sup> a form of slang originating from housing projects on the outlying edges of Paris; in which the first half of a word is interchanged with the second causing a linguistic disruption that demands consideration of alternative perspectives. Sociolinguist Rebecca Stewart observes that: '*verlan is not a grammatical practice but rather a social one*'<sup>473</sup> and moreover, that vernacular particularities are markers of identity.<sup>474</sup>

Song, therefore, is a form of 'corporeal inscription' written, not as manuscript, but within the memory and body of communities and environments with whom the songs have been created, and who share and maintain the stories. Musician and historian Layne Redmond emphasises that no matter how deeply buried an unwritten narrative, its essence can still be revived and transformed into a: '*living history*'.<sup>475</sup> Redmond highlights the positive impact an actuality of live performance can have, citing the example of a group of contemporary musicians on the island of Crete who have revived

---

<sup>472</sup> The word 'verlan' itself is an inversion of the French expression 'l'envers' meaning 'upside'.

<sup>473</sup> Stewart, R. (2010) *A Sociolinguistic Study of Verlan in the town of Oyonnax, France*. (Online) Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/10776956/A\\_sociolinguistic\\_study\\_of\\_Verlan\\_in\\_the\\_town\\_of\\_Oyonnax\\_France](https://www.academia.edu/10776956/A_sociolinguistic_study_of_Verlan_in_the_town_of_Oyonnax_France) p.12 in PDF. (Accessed 15th November 2019).

<sup>474</sup> Ibid. p.12.

<sup>475</sup> Goldenseedmusic (2012) *When The Drummers Were Women with Layne Redmond* (Online) First published 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Available at: <https://youtu.be/8oOnwYrsWE0> (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

the neglected tradition of frame drumming thereby reconnecting to the stories of ancient Greece. Stories that have originated from the land, from our ancestors and forgotten parts within ourselves, can still speak to us if we maintain dialogue through a reality of practice, when, as Redmond describes: '*a performance comes home*'.<sup>476</sup>

Re -

Return

Realise

Restore

We can rely too heavily on written representations of our culture and heritage, with the perception that material and digital technologies hold greater certainty to safeguard our stories. However, writer Doris Lessing has suggested that literacy may have negatively impacted upon our ability to remember;<sup>477</sup> while political theorist Hannah Arendt reminds us that orality: '*transforms private meaning into public meaning*'.<sup>478</sup> Therefore, the vocalisation of a song or story is the *telling of an event*, not solely within that song or story's narrative, but of the event that comes into existence through its interactive experientiality.

---

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Lessing, D. (1999) cited by Killick, S. and Frude, N. (2009) *Eye on Fiction: The Teller, The Tale and The Told*. (Online) Available at: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-22/edition-10/eye-fiction-teller-tale-and-told> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>478</sup> Arendt, H. quoted by Michael, J. (2002) *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, p.36.

Namgyal worked at a radio station in Ladakh for thirty years when a fire swept in, taking away thirty years of recorded songs. Nature will remind us of her strength no matter how fully we convince ourselves otherwise. It was only the extensive memory Namgyal had developed through listening to the Elders and through the singing of songs, that helped preserve some of the recordings lost in the fire. Like the temporality of nature's elements, the ephemerality of song is its strength, as it cannot be destroyed.<sup>479</sup> However, our stories and therefore, our connections, can still be lost if we do not maintain their power through telling and remembering. Song is a *living vernacular* arising from an environment and maintained as each song is rooted back into real experience. In the following chapter I will explore live song performance as a process of community building, in which grassroots initiatives developed between performers, audiences and environments maintain a story-web of connection.

---

<sup>479</sup> Sharp, V. (2018) *Sound Lines* (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bkrsc2> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



480

The travelling musicians I met during the music tour across British Columbia and Northern Alberta were part of a self-organised network of do-it-yourself music culture, in which connections between audiences, musicians and environments were maintained through live performance. A key feature being the role of the 'house concert' in which audiences hosted musicians in their own homes. Musicians would publicise a tour schedule with possible destinations and dates, reading something like: 'arriving in

---

<sup>480</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Publishing Studies Network* conference at Stirling University, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Fort St. John around 21<sup>st</sup> July, please get in touch if you want to hear us play'. Audiences could then respond with an offer to host a gig in their homes. Self-organisation placed live music directly into the hands of musicians and audiences who promoted the events themselves, locally, via word of mouth and social media. Furthermore, the house concert inverted the idea of the performer as 'active' and the audience as 'passive', towards a mutual exchange in which live performances by musicians were facilitated by the audiences. A method of engagement that links with an approach to artistic practice outlined by Lynn Sowder who has signaled the need to shift perception: *'from an idea of bringing great art to the people to working with people to create art that is meaningful.'*<sup>481</sup>



482

Since playing her first house concert in 2011, Californian singer-songwriter Shannon Curtis has made yearly summer tours across the United States, solely playing house

---

<sup>481</sup> Sowder, L., quoted by Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society*. New York: The New York Press, p.290.

<sup>482</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, June 2017.



concerts organised in collaboration with audiences.<sup>483</sup> Curtis states always being uneasy with the term ‘fan’ and its implication of idolisation, thereby creating a hierarchy and distance between the musicians and the audiences; whereas ‘community’ seemed a more fitting descriptor for the sustained relationship between the audiences and the musicians involved in grassroots music.<sup>484</sup>



485

---

<sup>483</sup> Curtis, S., interviewed by Ilunga, Y. (2016) *The Jazz Spotlight: Building Community Through House Concerts with Shannon Curtis*. (Online) Available at: <https://podtail.com/en/podcast/the-jazz-spotlight-podcast-music-business-music-ma/tjs-085-building-through-house-concerts> (Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Forsyth, R.D. (2010) *Sarah Banjo Icon*. Forsyth’s portrait of his wife, musician ‘Sarah Banjo’ as an icon, humorously docks his painterly cap at the glorification of musicians in popular culture; as opposed to the community-led music scene to which Sarah Banjo belongs in the East Neuk of Fife.

Charting the rise of homegrown music in America, music critic Martin Chiltern reveals an established connection between independent music culture and community; from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century 'Jug Bands' of Louisville, Kentucky, in which instruments were made out of common household items, to hip hop outfit 'The Ghetto Brothers' who infamously plugged their speakers directly in to the lampposts of Prospect Avenue in New York to amplify music to the neighbourhood.<sup>486</sup> In 'Roots, Radicals and Rockers: How Skiffle Changed the World', singer-songwriter Billy Bragg describes: *'a back-to-basics movement that was about the roots of African-American music. Skiffle was grassroots. It came from below. It surprised everyone.'*<sup>487</sup> However, in the wider context of aboriginal cultures around the world - rhythm, music and song have always been integral to community life; a relationship that has never been broken.

*'Start local, right?'*; Canadian folk musician Scott Dunbar proposes, telling the story of his own realisation of community connection: *'I never liked touring bars. It's lonely, destructive. Later in the summer, after reconnecting with so many rad folks from all over, experiencing the vibe and the connectivity, it occurred to me that... I could just invite (people from) the already existing community to collab(orate).'*<sup>488</sup> Curtis reinforces the idea of independent music culture as a collaboration, reflecting that her experience of house concerts was: *'all about relationship; more of an exchange than a transaction'*.<sup>489</sup>

---

<sup>486</sup> Chiltern, M. (2019) *DIY Music: How Musicians Did It For Themselves*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/in-depth-features/history-diy-music> (Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Dunbar, S. (2014) *Scott Dunbar* (Online) Available at: <https://scottdunbar.wordpress.com> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>489</sup> Curtis, S., interviewed by Ilunga, Y. (2016) *The Jazz Spotlight: Building Community Through House Concerts with Shannon Curtis*. (Online) Available at: <https://podtail.com/en/podcast/the-jazz-spotlight-podcast-music-business-music-ma/tjs-085-building-through-house-concerts> (Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

moments  
of shared  
experience  
become  
connections  
of community

490

What, who, and where is 'local'? We each belong to various communities, embrace different roles at different times and associate with a diverse range of identities within ourselves that cannot be confined to, or contained by, any singular definition. As described by Whitehead: '*we dwell in a universe of inter-flows*';<sup>491</sup> echoed by Ingold who describes a tangle of interactions between all life forms.<sup>492</sup> Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan takes the view that both 'cosmos' and 'hearth' are required to be: '*thoroughly grounded in one's own culture but also embracing curiosity about the world*';<sup>493</sup> Therefore, it is not so much a question of picking apart what, who or where is local but rather, a question of

---

<sup>490</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August 2015.

<sup>491</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (2019) quoted in *Process and Flow: Mihaly Csikszentmihaly and Alfred North Whitehead*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.openhorizons.org/process-and-flow-mihaly-csikszentmihaly-and-alfred-north-whitehead.html> (Accessed 12th October 2019).

<sup>492</sup> Ingold, T. (2010) *The Social Brain: Part VI, International Conference at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010* (Online) Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59dg1K6xPks&feature> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

<sup>493</sup> Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1996) *Cosmos and Hearth: A Cosmopolite's Viewpoint* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forward, expanded pp.4-17 and pp.187-188.

making connections *between* people, environments, histories, sensibilities. Art historian Lucy Lippard proposes: *'Local life, in fact, is all about communicating across boundaries. Part of the process is looking around and listening to each other.'*<sup>494</sup> Perhaps all stories of community evolve collaboratively as Glenn Alteen, director of the Grunt Gallery points out: *'We all belong to a bunch of interlapping and interwoven communities, all of us.'*<sup>495</sup>

Since opening its doors in Vancouver in 1984, the Grunt Gallery has charted an evolution of collaborative projects initiated by the maintenance of an 'open kitchen' as part of the gallery. The kitchen had a communal table which acted as a space between spaces, where folks could just be: *'a place where people on the periphery who didn't feel comfortable any other place, could come and feel comfortable.'*<sup>496</sup> A place where artists, musicians, the curious, and the cold, could hang out together and start a conversation over coffee or a shared meal. A sentiment echoed by Curtis when reflecting on the relationship between the audiences and the musicians during a house concert: *'house concerts were far more intimate than club or bar gigs.'*<sup>497</sup> Community, then, is a process of *sharing*.

---

<sup>494</sup> Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society* New York: The New York Press, p.292.

<sup>495</sup> Alteen, G. Program Director, Grunt Gallery, speaking at DIS'14 Conference, Vancouver, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Curtis, S., interviewed by Ilunga, Y. (2016) *The Jazz Spotlight: Building Community Through House Concerts with Shannon Curtis*. (Online) Available at: <https://podtail.com/en/podcast/the-jazz-spotlight-podcast-music-business-music-ma/tjs-085-building-through-house-concerts> (Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019).



498

Perhaps it is a matter of scale. Artist and musician Ross Sinclair chose to organise a collaborative exhibition 'Artists who make music, Musicians who make art'<sup>499</sup> by word of mouth with: '*people I knew who I could just ask.*' Furthermore, the exhibition was hosted by an artist-run venue in Glasgow: '*I like the fact that Queens park is an artist-run space, and if an institution had asked me to do it, I don't think I'd be so keen.*'<sup>500</sup> From the 'Newport Sound' hosting gigs in 'The Rio', the local community centre in Newport-on-Tay, to 'The Space' in Glasgow, an artist-run hub providing hot meals by donation and running a programme of workshops, yoga, music evenings and daytime events, to community centres such as 'The Dreel Halls' in Anstruther and 'Kinning Park Complex' in Glasgow. Community-led initiatives like these form an integral part of the network of

---

<sup>498</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August 2019.

<sup>499</sup> Sinclair, R. (2018) *Artists who make music, Musicians who make art*. Exhibition at Queens Park Railway Club, Glasgow 2<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.

<sup>500</sup> Sinclair, R., interviewed by Cooper, N. (2018) *Ross Sinclair: Artists who make music, Musicians who make art*. Published 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018. (Online) Available at: <https://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.com/2018/02/ross-sinclair-artists-who-make-music.html> (Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

independent music culture. The sentiment is echoed by East Neuk of Fife musician Kenny Anderson who has described his frustration with the music industry, which Anderson feels is shunting music into a generic commercial formula.<sup>501</sup> Since founding the Fence Collective in 1994, Anderson has organised, hosted and promoted gigs within his local community that emphasise two key aspects of live performance; as an active channel of connection to the environment and community through the use of local venues (such as town halls and community centres) and the idea that ‘showing up’ (to an event) is what community is all about.<sup>502</sup>

In 2015, artist Jonathan Baxter undertook a flyer campaign to raise a provocation: ‘If The City Were A Commons’, inviting: ‘*anyone interested in considering what this means*’<sup>503</sup> to gather at a community venue in Dundee. This led to a year of weekly meetings between members of various communities within Dundee; culminating in the ‘Dundee Commons Festival’,<sup>504</sup> a programme of events, talks and workshops exploring ideas around ‘the commons’; including land, notions of public and private space, vegetable growing and food-share initiatives, skill-share, and community development through creative practice. As part of the core team I organised ‘An Evening of Musical Commons’, a song circle between musicians from Dundee and musicians from Fife in which communities from either side of the Tay could come together through the shared experience of live song performance.

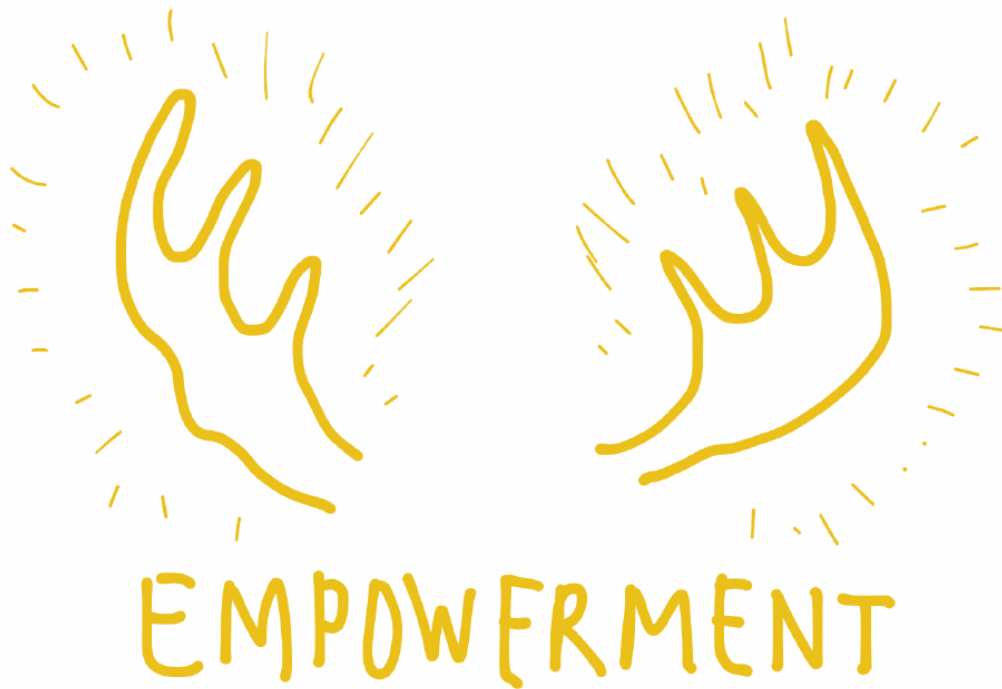
---

<sup>501</sup> Anderson, K., in conversation with Foster, J. Pittenweem, Fife, Scotland, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Baxter, J., in conversation with Foster, J. Dundee, Scotland, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

<sup>504</sup> Dundee Commons Festival 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Further information available online at: <https://dundeecommonsfestival.wordpress.com>



505

Community wellbeing is kept alive through the practices that bring people together. At Samba K'e, the community centre provided a hub through which people could spend time together on a daily basis. With increasing privatisation of 'common land' and community buildings, there are fewer public places in which people can gather without having to partake in some kind of commercial exchange. Herein, songs and stories play a vital role; like the sutures that hold a wound and allow it to heal, songs and stories can make invisible adhesions to repair breaks, communicate across boundaries, and restore community spirit; the strength of which cannot be underestimated. Describing a border as: *'a cut or bruise that needs healing'*,<sup>506</sup> electronic musician Haydee Jimenez notes that

---

<sup>505</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August 2018.

<sup>506</sup> Jimenez, H., in conversation with Carr, K. (2018) *Sound Lines*. (Episode 3) *33 Degrees North*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0bkracs2> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019).

sound can: *'travel through a boundary as if it's not there.'*<sup>507</sup> Songs travel via musicians, linking different communities together, and with the self-organisation of gigs and house concerts promote community wellbeing. Furthermore, live performance is a *celebration* of community; a locus through which community is formed in real-time through shared experience. Therefore, live song performance is a process of *community building*.

In 2017, 'Roots' formed as a collaborative project between myself, musician Tom Keren, spoken word poet and MC Joe Makangu, visual artists Stella Phipps and Sorcha Fitzgerald, musician and visual artist Martina Alberi and filmmaker Sam Mwiraguzu. We invited the local community to a series of house concerts of 'Edwin the Cyprus Tree', a musical journey developed by Keren and I after noticing a solitary Cyprus tree on Edwin Street in Glasgow; transforming Phipps' flat to tell the story of Edwin's growing awareness of his roots and their ability to spread underground leading him to find community with other life-forms. Subsequent performances were made at Tchai Ovna, Glasgow, in which members of the audience took turns with the microphone to add stories about how their own 'roots' were growing. As interest grew, we founded a collective, 'Kolo' translating as 'Elder' in Lingala,<sup>508</sup> holding a series of music, visual art, storytelling and creative writing workshops with members of Keren and Makangu's local community in Kinning Park, Glasgow.

#### Journal Folder 6: Story – Roots <sup>509</sup>

---

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Lingala is an African language of the Democratic Republic of Congo spoken by Makangu, J.

<sup>509</sup> Akehurst, S., Foster, J., Phipps, S., (2017) photographs taken at Glasgow Open House, Tchai Ovna and Kinning Park Complex, with musical recording 'Ed's Roots' by Foster, J. and Keren, T.



# COURAGE



510

A further aspect of independent music culture is the role of handmade materials and DIY publication. Growing up in a concrete tower block in the Lower East Side of New York City, singer-songwriter Jeffrey Lewis began a hand-drawn comic entitled 'Fuff' to highlight issues in his local neighbourhood such as the rising cost of food, flipping through large crayon drawings during live performances to illustrate his songs. The combination of visual artwork and music became another route of connection between the issues Lewis was directly experiencing in his neighbourhood and the audiences who were coming to the neighbourhood to hear him play.<sup>511</sup> Similarly, Sinclair reflects on the

---

Foster, J. and Keren, T. (2017) 'Ed's Roots' was recorded live during a house concert performance of 'Edwin the Cyprus Tree' at Glasgow Open House Festival, 28<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017.

<sup>510</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August, 2015.

<sup>511</sup> Lewis, J., interviewed by Purcell, A. (2009) *Jeffrey Lewis*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.guardian.com/music/2009/apr/13/jeffrey-lewis-em-are-i> (Accessed 22nd September 2019).

early days of his band ‘The Soup Dragons’ when they would make their own record covers: *‘The context of doing all that in a band, it’s the perfect way of having a conversation with the audience, and developing a relationship with them. All the things I do now I try to get back to the simplicity of that.’*<sup>512</sup>

Journal Folder 6: Story – DIY<sup>513</sup>

Many local record labels also begin as DIY initiatives with the potential to reinforce community. *‘It’s all about community’* states Stephen Marshall, founder of Triassic Tusk Records, speaking about the opening of a new music venue in Fife. *‘I wanted to create a space where the local community could get together.’*<sup>514</sup> Located within a barn, and multi-tasking as a record store, brewery and café, Marshall hosts a roster of open mics, gigs and collaborative projects to facilitate community through regular live music performance. I recorded my single for Triassic Tusk on a piano in ‘The Dreel Halls’ in Anstruther that I have played many times during live performances. Pressing three hundred copies, Marshall has no interest in mass production.<sup>515</sup> Like the prints made at Samba K’e Print Studio, and the drawings in my sketchbooks, these vinyl records provide an impression and imprint of the live experiences that have shaped them.

---

<sup>512</sup> Sinclair, R., in conversation with Cooper, N. (2018) *Ross Sinclair: Artists who make music and Musicians who make art.* (Online) Available at: <https://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.com/2018/02/ross-sinclair-artists-who-make-music.html> (Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019).

<sup>513</sup> Foster, J., photographs of hand-drawn and handmade posters, flyers, stickers and promotional materials.

<sup>514</sup> Marshall, S., in conversation with Foster, J. Bowhouse, Fife, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.



516

Journal Digital Folder 6: Story - Triassic Tusk<sup>517</sup>

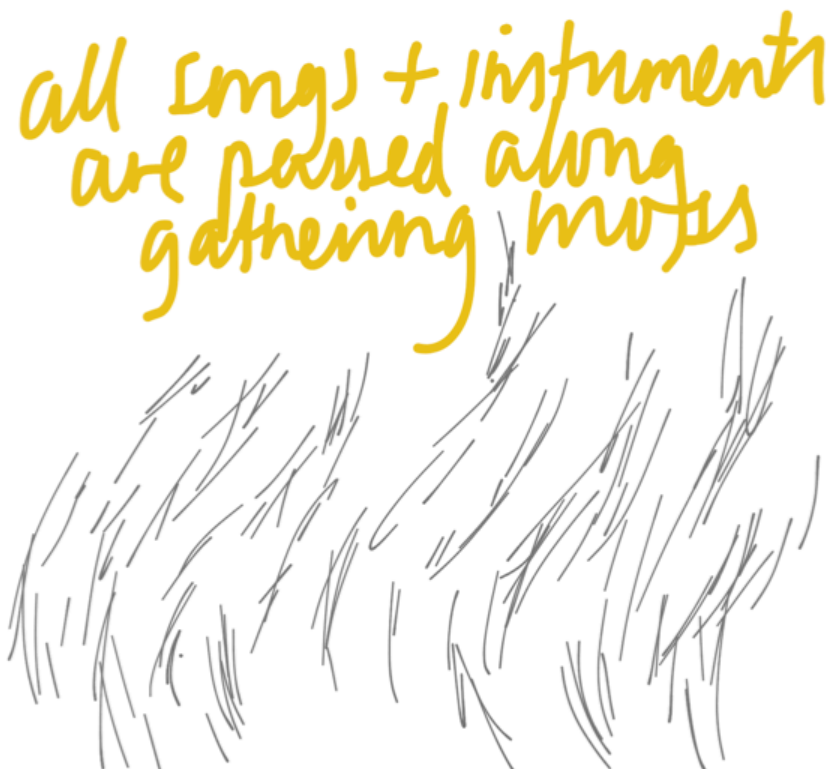
In the following and final chapter, I will reflect on my journey through the writing of this thesis and the realisations that have developed directly through creative practice.

---

<sup>516</sup> Robinson, A., photograph of Foster, J., (2015) recording a live take on the piano for a debut single release on Triassic Tusk Records. The Dreel Halls, Anstruther, Fife.

<sup>517</sup> Foster, J. (2016) *I'll Be Thinking Of You All The Time*. Fife: Triassic Tusk Records.

## Traces



518

### The moss is alive

Reaching the shore, Chief Dolphus tethered his boat. We were on the far side of the lake and Sambaa K'e could only just be seen in the distance. Walking into the forest, spruce and birch rose from a thicket of lichen, russet berries and moss; like a soft blanket drawn across the earth. Resembling a coral reef, a multitude of pale green and pink bronchial trees branched in all directions, clearing my lungs as I breathed in.

Springy and deep, each footstep felt supported, as if borne by the undulating belly of a sleeping giant. Never before had I experienced moss like this; so *alive*.

---

<sup>518</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing made during *Performing Knowledge Conference*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

Chief Dolphus shared a story about how the berries, plants, sap, bark and moss could be used to make all sorts of curative remedies. In turn, I shared a story about my Goan Grandmother who knew how to make herbal medicines for people who could not afford to go to the doctor;<sup>519</sup> Dolphus nodded and we walked further into the forest.

Dene culture is profoundly interconnected with the environment and my time at Sambaa K'e deepened my sense of the relationships *between* life-forms; how each part interacted to influence the other in a process of growth and renewal. Similarly, this feeling of interconnection carried into the music evenings and print studio activities when creative practice integrated with everyday life through a process of sharing and gathering together. My experience at Sambaa K'e had impressed on me that a rich and vibrant sense of community maintained through creative practice had, like the moss, the ability to spring back.

### An ecology of troubadouring

The body has been a recurring theme throughout this thesis. There are many bodies – a body we each grow into and out from, a social 'body' of people when we get together and the 'body' of an environment we inhabit. Like the moss, all bodies co-exist and interconnect as a living ecosystem. Therefore, this thesis is an *ecology* of troubadouring in which I have used my practice as a musician and artist to uncover a 'liveness' in which the part and the whole connect.

---

<sup>519</sup> In my Grandparent's neighbourhood, it was part of daily life to provide for those who had not. As well as medicines, my grandmother would prepare a meal each day for people who were hungry to come to the house for a plate of curry and rice.

While this troubadour's tale traverses seven chapters, seemingly travelling towards a 'conclusion', no journey is linear and this particular tale is a retelling of something that cannot really be told as it dwells in the actuality of concrete experience. Here, it can only be interpreted and anticipated. Therefore, I propose the drawing of breath, to end at the beginning;<sup>520</sup> offering insights discovered along the way as a contribution to future journeys.

*'Life may seem to be an object but it is a process.'*

- John Cage <sup>521</sup>

My research has been aimed at making explicit that which is normally implicit in the ephemeral (and yet potentially transformative) occasions of experience that I define as 'creative encounters'. To do this, my primary material, necessarily, has been my own experience of troubadouring. Rather than beginning from a ready-made theoretical standpoint or set of concepts (if such exist) and applying them *to* my experiences, instead I have *begun from the experiences themselves* as they have unfolded from the practice. My insights as a practitioner have sought in these experiences a group of key terms and ideas which seem best suited to open up aspects of 'creative encounter' for critical consideration.

---

<sup>520</sup> 'To end at the beginning' is a song by Layne Redmond, featured in the film 'When the Drummers Were Women with Layne Redmond'. (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/8oOnwYrsWE0> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019).

<sup>521</sup> Cage, J. (1973) *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage*. Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University Press, p.191.



522

A process of reflective writing (in which I include drawing, looking, listening, singing and various other forms), and research into the key terms I have identified for analysis have added insight to my experience as a troubadour;<sup>523</sup> not only for my own practice but having wider value for other fields of performance, artistic practice and activities in which these terms can offer insight. To these terms I have added philosophical, anthropological and other ideas that have been relevant and helpful to my understanding of an ecology of troubadouring. In this sense, my approach has been empirical. The test of these terms has been how truthful they seem when ‘read back into’, in other words tested against, direct experience; and I believe that the terms I have proposed and investigated do add insight into a collaborative process of creative exchange.

---

<sup>522</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, August 2019.

<sup>523</sup> Furthermore the ‘body’ of work produced is not only written within this thesis, but within the bodies that have contributed towards it i.e. social/environmental bodies and my own physical body/consciousness.



Among all the terms I have used, the most important term is 'creative encounter' itself. This is because I exhibit it to the reader as having its own character; it is not merely an aggregate of the aspects or sub-events which it contains. It has a feeling of *wholeness* about it in the same way that a song has a feeling of entirety even though at any given moment only some notes are 'live'.

*'All of my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols or science would be meaningless. We must... return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks.'*

- Maurice Merleau-Ponty <sup>524</sup>

In a 'creative encounter' there is the sense of having experienced an 'event', in which a live performance is not just a series of songs, one after another; but an event with *its own positive character* that is larger than any element of the performance that doesn't quite 'take off'. From the standpoint of the 'creative encounter', what might otherwise be perceived as 'errors', 'stumbling blocks' or 'failures', become part of a larger process of discovery. Furthermore, as signifiers that the performance is 'live', these can be seen as contributing positively, through contrast, to the whole event. This is why the key terms of 'liveness', 'feel', 'openness' and 'flow' have been identified and examined. Further terms have been identified through examination of the 'conditions of encounter' in which a performance unfolds. These have included: 'risk', 'vulnerability' and 'trust'

---

<sup>524</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M., quoted by Abrams, D. (1996) 'Philosophy of the Way to Ecology' (Ch.2) in *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage, p.36.

(as aspects of 'liveness'). Further to this, the potential 'creative exchange' that can occur between the audience and performer(s) during a live performance has been identified as a form of 'empathic travel' with certain qualities contributing towards it:

'spontaneity' and 'immediacy', both of which relate to the terms: 'play', 'feel', 'attention' and again 'openness' and 'flow'. Furthermore, throughout this thesis I root all of these terms within an exploration of 'movement' and 'embodiment' (embodied learning/practice as 'method' and 'medium') as the foundations of creative encounter; as all conditions and potential creative exchange are founded in a fluidity of interaction between the self and the other, the body and the environment, the part and the whole.

An ecological approach has developed through the lenses of multi-disciplinary practice as a visual artist and musician. Bringing voices from the fields of drawing, painting and printmaking to my research investigation has contributed insight into the idea of live performance as a 'sketch' which captures a 'wholeness' and leaves an impression.

Further to this, the idea of 'collage' and 'chine colle' in which individual parts overlap and interconnect to form the whole. Speaking about the painter Jackson Pollock, Allan Kaprow observed Pollock as having: '*a child-like spirit that could see concrete relations as if for the first time.*'<sup>525</sup> The term 'creative encounter' distinguishes between encounters (all with the potential to become creative and happening all the time) that remain overlooked, and the creativity that unfolds when we retain our sense of wonder.

Live song performance therefore, has been investigated as a framework towards 'creative encounter'. I have also investigated the ways in which 'openness' can be

---

<sup>525</sup> Kaprow, A. (2003) *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.5.

accessed. From the position of a practitioner, I have spoken about the development of 'intuition' and 'instinct', however these abilities are relevant to any activity, as creativity is not the remit of a select few but a universal of being alive. Activation of the creative spirit or 'duende' melts away any separation between 'performer' and 'audience', blurring notions of 'private' and 'public'. Each take different roles at different times: the example of house concerts reveals that audiences facilitate music, and therefore musicians, to create the ground in which a 'creative encounter' can take place. Furthermore, throughout this thesis I have questioned issues around ownership, with perspectives provided through examples of aboriginal relationships to land and community. I insist that the 'creative encounter' is not the creation of the 'performer' but *the event itself* co-created in the real and present occasion by all present.

*'Art is creative action,  
that flows, meanders and moves,  
and creative action is a process of sharing.*

- Helmut Lemke <sup>526</sup>

Perhaps the most important insight from within these key factors is the idea of the 'open focus' in which there is a simultaneity of 'open' and 'closed'; further resonating with the idea of the part and the whole. The open focus was beautifully (and terrifyingly) demonstrated by Phillip Petit and can be recognised within many activities from craft practice to surfing. The 'open focus' develops through the practice of

---

<sup>526</sup> Lemke, H., (2017) speaking during a talk about Lemke's *Manifesto On Becoming An Artist*, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee. Attended in person.

attention, presence and openness given to any one moment to allow it to unfold as a 'creative encounter'. The 'open focus' is fluid; leading to the essence of creative encounter: when the part and the whole connect and begin to 'flow'.

*'Mosses... issue an invitation to dwell for a time right at the limits of ordinary perception. All it requires of us is attentiveness. Look in a certain way and a whole new world can be revealed. But the rewards of attentiveness can't be forced into manifesting – rather, they are surrendered to. The boundaries between my world and the world of another being get pushed back with sudden clarity; an experience both humbling and joyful.'*

- Robin Wall Kimmerer <sup>527</sup>

Through neuroscientific research, linguist George Lakoff has shown that 'reason', previously taught as a form of logic is in fact *unconscious*, nevertheless structuring conscious thought.<sup>528</sup> Lakoff reveals that reason is not abstract but embodied: '*meaning comes out of experience*';<sup>529</sup> growing out of physical experience in the world that creates physical connections within the brain (also embodied). Neural pathways are made by establishing 'mirror neurons' developed from direct experience. Like the maps of the land held within the Warlpiri Dreaming, these pathways of mirror neurons 'sing' their way around an inner landscape formed from experience.

---

<sup>527</sup> Popova, M., quoting Kimmerer, R.W. (2015) *The Magic of Moss and What It Teaches Us About the Art of Attentiveness to Life at All Scales*. Available at: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/05/13/gathering-moss-robin-wall-kimmerer> (Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019).

Kimmerer is one of the world's leading bryologists, also belonging to a long line of storytellers of the Bear Clan of Potawatomi (Native Americans of the Great Lakes).

<sup>528</sup> A necessity without which we would not be able to function in the world.

<sup>529</sup> Lakoff, G, (2013) *George Lakoff: What Studying the Brain tells us about Arts Education*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpla16Bynzg> (Accessed 30th November 2019).

Furthermore, Lakoff states that ‘metaphors’ develop in *thought*, not in *language* and are connected with *direct experience*.<sup>530</sup> Describing a thing to someone who has no lived experience of that thing, cognition will search for similar ‘metaphors’ within the brain circuitry to try and grasp its meaning, however if none exist then the meaning will be lost. Lakoff underlines that first-hand experience is therefore of vital importance to develop the *imagination* to perceive *possibility*.<sup>531</sup>

Linking with Bourdieu’s ‘Habitus’, the embodied habits and dispositions that determine our relationships with the world, our perception of ourselves and each other;<sup>532</sup> Lakoff provides an example of the perception of time that utilises language to reinforce a metaphor linked with economy: ‘things are moving *forward* nicely’, ‘leave that *behind* you’, with the implication that ‘success’ aligns with forward motion.<sup>533</sup> However, aboriginal understandings of time in which past, present and future run concomitantly, provide an alternative ‘metaphor’. Herein lies a remarkable implication to Lakoff’s findings - that exposure to new metaphors has the capacity to create new meaning,<sup>534</sup> linking with Petit’s invitation to ‘imagine the impossible’.

---

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Bourdieu, P. (2013) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>533</sup> Lakoff, G, (2013) *George Lakoff: What Studying the Brain tells us about Arts Education*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpla16Bynzg> (Accessed 30th November 2019).

<sup>534</sup> New metaphors can either be formed through an actuality of new concrete experience, or in conjunction with metaphors that correspond with, but differ from, mirror neurons already formed from previous concrete experience.

Song, with its inherent ability to ‘time travel’ brings past, present and future into correspondence to create new ‘metaphors’ that can imagine new possibilities through a *reality of experience* created during its live performance. Similarly, the *open focus* is not *static*; rather, it allows a simultaneity of correspondence between past, present and future; bringing attention and focus to the *present* moment of experience, drawing on ‘intuition and instinct’ formed through *past* experience and practice (that have developed mirror neurons and pathways) and remaining open to and in communication with a *future* of constantly changing circumstances (i.e. conditions of encounter).

## Part and whole

Therefore, the process of becoming a troubadour is an organic unity in which the whole affects the part and the part affects the whole; extending indefinitely to embrace everything that constitutes the environment of the live performance. The concrete events of live performances are ‘experiential wholes’ from which elements have been abstracted for analysis. Song performance is *an open-ended process*, inheriting something from its past performances (in which some parts have been revealed) and interacting with its present environment (of which it is a part). However, a live song performance is not fully determined by these factors as something new is contributed *as the particular occasion spontaneously defines itself*. This links with Whitehead’s notion of ‘novelty’ added to inherited forms, which is the mark of *creativity*.<sup>535</sup>

During a live performance there is a feeling of ‘togetherness’ between the musician(s), the audience, the environment, that occurs without losing the specific contribution of

---

<sup>535</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (1967) *Science and the Modern World*. New York: The Free Press.

any one particular/participant. This resonates with Hua-yen Chinese Buddhist philosophy, in particular the metaphor of 'Indra's jewelled net',<sup>536</sup> that like an interlacing of dewdrops on a spider's web, reveals the interconnectedness, and integrity, of all entities. Similarly, Whitehead insists on the unified *emergence* of public (physical) and private (cognitive) states through the *relational process of unfolding events* that connect the individual part to everything else: *'The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the 'many' which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive 'many' which it leaves; it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many entities which it synthesizes. The many become one and are increased by one.'*<sup>537</sup>

Therefore, the claim underlying my work is that the live performance of the troubadour/travelling musician is a complex unity experienced (by performers and audience-participants) as a totality. The felt totality or wholeness of performance emerges from a process which embraces the interplay of subjective and inter-subjective feeling mutually modified, and performers and audience-participants as co-creators along with the physical, cultural and social environment of the event. All these, including non-human elements, such as to do with physical venues, acoustics, spatial organisation, etc., are all active agents. So too is the internal mapping of each participant's aesthetic awareness and preferences, memories and personal knowledge. In that sense, the multiple meaning of 'travel' as having both physical and emotional

---

<sup>536</sup> Indra's net is a metaphorical image of Sanskrit origin adopted by the Hua-yen school of Chinese Buddhism as an aid to help students grasp the teaching of 'the unobstructed interpenetration of universal and particular'. This teaching was developed from the Mahayana doctrine of 'the emptiness of all things'; that everything is conditioned by and conditions other things; hence nothing has reality in itself but only in and through a total environment of mutual interaction. In Buddhism, 'emptiness' is not thought of as something 'in itself' standing behind reality; emptiness is revealed only in and through the fleeting stuff of experience.

<sup>537</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (1929) *Process and Reality* New York: Macmillan, p. 21.

aspects is also a factor: people are journeying inwardly as well as outwardly. All elements have agency within the totality and all are in constant interplay. Nothing is truly passive or 'mere background'. For this reason, the whole is described as an ecology, to stress that when an aspect or element is drawn out for examination it is always to be understood that it only has its full meaning in the total complex, and indeed in the complex experience of each specific event.

*'And I shall return to that path of song.'*

- Empedocles<sup>538</sup>

## A troubadour's love song

A path of song, in various forms, can be traced through all cultures and societies, not only human. It has been noted, not only by musicians, that music can provide an immediate source of joy. Café owner and Rio de Janeiro resident Alfredinho states simply that: *'Rio without music is like Rio without sunshine.'*<sup>539</sup> In 'Piano Pilgrimage', Jazz musician Jamie Cullum traced people's responses to a project that took pianos out into the street, observing that music: *'started a sense of joy; the immediacy of music was a point of contact as people got around the piano and emotions opened up.'*<sup>540</sup> Song can express joy, but also the pain, disappointment and heartbreak at the core of existence.

---

<sup>538</sup> Empedocles, 495 BC.

<sup>539</sup> Alfredinho in conversation with Perpetua, S. *Sound Lines*. (Episode 1) *The Tropic of Capricorn*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0bh44tt> (Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

<sup>540</sup> Cullum, J. (2014) *Piano Pilgrimage*. BBC Radio Four (Episode 3) (Online) First broadcast 18<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b03q4m1x> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019).



Song can provide a release and a refuge; song can *listen*. Like the sphagnum moss - song can heal. Like the lake of Samba K'e itself, song is a life-source. Flowing between the part and the whole, to bring us back in touch with the song of ourselves,<sup>541</sup> closer to the environment, into the company of others. This points to a significant discovery about mirror neurons formed through embodied experience; that neural pathways link directly to the capacity to empathise. Lakoff states that to generate *empathy* we need more experiences where we get together and actually *meet* one another.<sup>542</sup> Chief Dolphus intimated that what had been so special about the music evenings, about coming to Samba K'e, was that we *met*. 'To meet' sounds inconsequential, but Dolphus was talking about a meeting where one being really hears and sees another, without agenda, with *openness*.

To acknowledge the integrity of another and yet *feel* another is the foundation of empathy. While this may sound straightforward, we are subject to habits, politics, narratives, that determine layers of separation. Layne Redmond demonstrates the power of music to release from the habitual and embrace growth: '*In rituals involving the archetypal patterns of death and rebirth, the drum signalled the release of outmoded behaviour patterns and the transition to a new status of life.*'<sup>543</sup> Here, troubadouring plays a vital role; travelling *between* environments and communities, live performance

---

<sup>541</sup> The capacity to hear oneself was poignantly expressed by Patrick Scott in 'Stories Told' when, through the vocalisation of their stories, the Dene reconnected to a part of themselves and therefore their identity.

Here I also reference Walt Whitman epic poem 'Song of myself' that speaks of the 'self' both in terms of the individual and the democratic whole.

<sup>542</sup> Lakoff, G, (2013) *George Lakoff: What Studying the Brain tells us about Arts Education*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpla16Bynzg> (Accessed 30th November 2019).

<sup>543</sup> Redmond, L. (2018) *When the Drummers Were Women*. Brattleboro, Vermont: Echo Point, p.21.

is a process of *sharing* that brings people together; a directness underlined by Dominic Venditozzi, musician and DIY music promoter of the 'Newport Sound', who states that: *'being moved is a fundamentally integral part of why live performance still works in these days of simplified, LCD telly or internet-based consumerism.'*<sup>544</sup> Music speaks beyond language at a visceral and emotional level, where divisions can be left at the door.

*'Songs are spirit bridges made of sound'*

- *Burnt Paw*<sup>545</sup>

And so, like the medieval troubadours before me, I sing a song of love; however, this thesis does not intend to project romance, rather it hopes to sing of the real capacity to connect and flow, create new metaphors for how we relate to the environment and each other, build community and sing a song that, like the moss, is full of life.

The act of gathering together for a live song performance is a process of *affirmation*; of the capacity of the human spirit to effect positive change and re-establish connections. A live performance may be fleeting but its gesture leaves a *trace*; all songs gather moss. Song is a *living present* however it is not 'stuck in the moment'. Abrams observes that Western culture is: *'expending a lot of time trying to hold on to the past,'* yet remains:

---

<sup>544</sup> Venditozzi, D. (2019) Email correspondence to Foster, J. *New Portsound*. Newsletter on the occasion of 'Internal Empire', an evening of live performance at The Rio, Newport-on-Tay, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019.

<sup>545</sup> *Burnt Paw* (2019) (Online) Available at: <https://burntpaw.bandcamp.com> (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019).

'oblivious to the present' with 'the civilised oblivion of linear time.'<sup>546</sup> Song performance, therefore is a process of letting go; to be willing to 'go with the flow' to trust the journey, that the archive can be maintained within the living present, to embrace the unfolding.

*This guitar came from a timber from the body of a tree,  
Through the workshop of a luthier, now it's all owned to me,  
And it's good company after dinner and it fits my hands just fine,  
But someday another singer, with a pair of hands like mine,  
Will coax out songs much prettier still hiding in its strings,  
And sing stronger braver words than I could ever sing,  
And folks are gonna love it, of this I'm almost sure,  
So I take good care of it 'cause I'm borrowing it from her -  
Pass it along,  
Pass it along,  
May it land in careful hands when we're gone,  
You carry it for a moment, but time won't own it to you for long,  
You don't own it,  
Pass it along'*

- Scott Cook, 'Pass It along'<sup>547</sup>

Reflecting on her journey around the globe listening to the connections developed through musical performance, Verity Sharp summarises: '*So, these sound lines maybe show how it's not just the big global picture that we need to be focussing on, but the fragile, crucial, often subtle details that connect all living things. And to do that we must*

---

<sup>546</sup> Abram, D. (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage.

<sup>547</sup> Cook, S. (2013) *Pass It Along* (Lyrics) from the album *One More Time Around*. Canada: Groove Revival.

*keep listening.*<sup>548</sup> And so I invite the reader to experience their own 'creative encounter'. The performance made for the examiners will not be recorded, as *it is the experience itself that is important*. Therefore, the invitation included in the sleeve of this thesis for future readers is to make or attend a live song performance in their neighbourhood, in someone else's neighbourhood, or perhaps listen to the birds' chorus that starts the day.

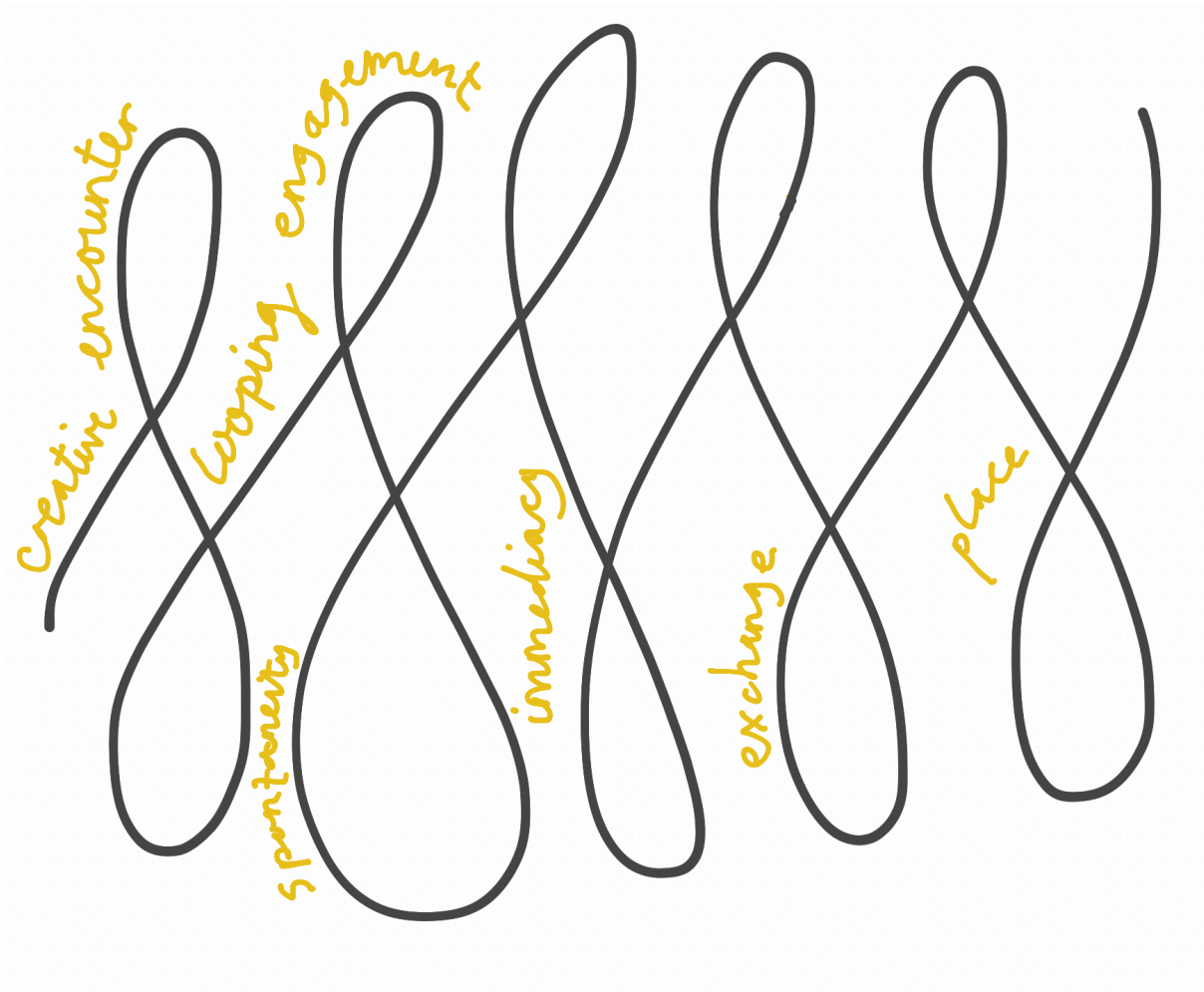
## Gathering moss

Introspection can be regarded as the feared enemy of creativity; however, an alternative view might be that *greater insight leads to deeper feeling*. I take the latter view as this period of thinking into my practice as a singer-songwriter, performer and visual artist, has furthered my understanding of these roles, how to approach them, and the ways in which these activities interrelate with the environments in which they dwell. Reflection has been a process of *looping engagement* that continues to feed forward into new performances and experiences. Furthermore, the relationship between my first-hand experiences of troubadouring and the terms I have used to analyse these experiences is *organic*. Creative practice is not constructed mechanistically; key terms identified by analysis do not automatically proceed to slot parts into place. It is only through the live and unpredictable process of undertaking the practice that parts can reveal themselves. While founded in my own experience, I believe this ecology of troubadouring has general relevance, as the parts that have been identified can have wider applicability. The subjective stories of first-hand experience by practitioners need to be heard and

---

<sup>548</sup> Sharp. V. (2019) *Sound Lines* (Episode 4) *The Arctic Circle*. BBC Sounds (Online) First broadcast 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000mjk> (Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2019).

included more often in critical discourse, however analytic ideas have emerged from social as well as individual experience and introspection.



549

Live song performance is social by nature and therefore other musicians and audiences have contributed insights through the sharing of the experiences and discussion thereafter. These analyses are a contribution to an ongoing live discourse which is open to challenge, revision and development, like an oral narrative. Further to this, I believe my ideas can be applied beyond the specific world of live music performance. The terms I have identified for analysis are relevant to any sort of live performance and activity

---

<sup>549</sup> Foster, J., digital drawing, October 2019.

because the essence of ‘liveness’ crosses all genres. I offer these insights as traces of experience; however, a creative encounter reverberates beyond the event itself; live song performance is *a living practice* with a life beyond this thesis. Therefore, insights from within the practice contribute towards future practice and I argue that, in so far as my terms identify real aspects of the totality of the event, they can add depth to the experience of future events.

-----

Once more in Chief Dolphus’ boat, on that vast body of water named Sambiaa K’e, I told Chief Dolphus how his words had affirmed the song of my soul, setting me on a journey of discovery. How I had met a musician on the train and we had sung together and I had felt better after the wrench of leaving Sambiaa K’e; how the buskers Kutapita had lifted my spirits and I ended up playing on the radio on Canada Day, how through meeting Tereza and Sam I had made a tour of British Columbia and Alberta, meeting other musicians and audiences and communities in places I would never have visited if I had not been a travelling musician, how Amanda had joined me for the last gig of the tour, and how this gig led us back to Sambiaa K’e. Chief Dolphus smiled and said: *‘of course’*.<sup>550</sup>

---

<sup>550</sup> Jumbo, D., in conversation with Foster, J., Sambiaa K’e, NWT, Canada, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014.

## **List of Illustrations**

## Cover Page

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph '*Sambaa K'e*' .....p.1

## A Troubadour's Toolkit

Foster, J. (2017) Digital drawing '*The world as biography*' .....p.15

Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing '*Drawing is thinking*' .....p.20

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing '*Piano*' .....p.23

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing '*My history might not look like your history*' .....p.27

NABCI (2018) '*Map of Northwest Territories*' .....p.43

## Creative Encounter

Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing '*Connect*' .....p.47

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing '*Women embroidering*' .....p.49

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing '*Feedback loop*' .....p.51

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph '*The moss of Sambaa K'e*' .....p.52

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing '*Life music life*' .....p.54

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing '*The iceberg of tacit & explicit knowledge*' .....p.57

Foster, J. (2014) Photographs '*Sambaa K'e community centre*' .....p.61

Foster, J. (2014) Video montage '*Music and Coffee*' .....p.63

Foster, J. (2014) Photographs '*Music and Coffee posters*' .....p.65

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph '*Sambaa K'e lake*' .....p.67

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph '*Chief Dolphus Jumbo*' .....p.67

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph '*Sambaa K'e lake*' .....p.67

## Song

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing '*Know that I exist*' .....p.70

Keren, T. & Makangu, J. (2017) Musical recording '*What goes out into the aether*' .....p.71

Foster, J. & Keren, T. (2018) Musical recording '*Lighthouse*' .....p.72

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing '*Fingertip feeling*' .....p.73

Foster, J. (2019) Musical recording '*Speech rhythms*' .....p.74

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing '*Taking a line for a walk*' .....p.77

Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing '*Scaffolding*' .....p.81

Foster, J. (2017) Musical recording '*Freight Train*' .....p.81



Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Upbeat downbeat'</i> .....	p.83
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Collaboration'</i> .....	p.85
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Ownership is a contemporary perspective'</i> .....	p.87
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'A cascade of alternating octaves'</i> .....	p.90
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Like a waterfall'</i> .....	p.92
Foster, J. (2019) Musical recording <i>'Hearing the shape'</i> .....	p.92
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Tempo, dynamics, intervals'</i> .....	p.94
Foster, J. (2017) Musical recording montage <i>'Repetitions'</i> .....	p.94
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'How musical communities are created'</i> .....	p.96
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Sometimes poetic interpretation'</i> .....	p.99
Keren, T. & Makangu, J. (2017) Musical recording <i>'Late Night'</i> .....	p.100

#### Conditions of Encounter

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Sting of the unexpected'</i> .....	p.102
Foster, J. (2017) Photograph <i>'Fika café'</i> .....	p.104
Foster, J. (2018) Photograph <i>'Campfire at V in the Park'</i> .....	p.104
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Robson Valley Music Festival'</i> .....	p.104
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Latecomers sit on the floor'</i> .....	p.106
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Changes under different sensory conditions'</i> .....	p.108
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Samantha Scott, Hootstock'</i> .....	p.110
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Ben Rogers, Elliot's living room'</i> .....	p.110
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Audience'</i> .....	p.114
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Wear the costume, speak with the spirits'</i> .....	p.115
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Performance as truth of the moment'</i> .....	p.117
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Articulate complexity'</i> .....	p.119
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'The practitioners'</i> .....	p.122
Lamalice, V. (2011) Lino-cut print <i>'Golo'</i> .....	p.124
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Moose tracks'</i> .....	p.124
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Ghost of your master'</i> .....	p.126
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Trust the ghost'</i> .....	p.128
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Feel good factor'</i> .....	p.129
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Porosity through subjectivity'</i> .....	p.130

## Travel

Dore, G. (1876) Relief print <i>'Family of Travelling Musicians'</i> .....	p.133
Gauguin, P. (1894) Oil on canvas <i>'The Guitar Player'</i> .....	p.135
Unknown (c. 1735) Miniature painting <i>'A Lady Playing the Tanpura'</i> .....	p.135
Unknown (Mughal Era) Painting <i>'Portrait of Naubat Khan Kalawant'</i> .....	p.135
Ichi (2019) Photograph <i>'Ichi one-man band'</i> .....	p.135
Vehbi, I. (c.1720) Miniature painting <i>'Female Musical Players'</i> .....	p.135
Beer, W. A. (1889) Oil on canvas <i>'Russian Boy with Balalaika'</i> .....	p.135
Unknown (1 <sup>st</sup> Century) Fresco <i>'Fresco depicting travelling musicians'</i> .....	p.135
Foster, J. (2014) Video footage <i>'Kutapita busking in Vancouver'</i> .....	p.136
Foster, J. (2014) Digital drawing <i>'Go out and sing!'</i> .....	p.138
Foster, J. (2014) Video footage <i>'Corinna Rose'</i> .....	p.139
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Melodies in Mind'</i> .....	p.141
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'On the road'</i> .....	p.142
Foster, J. (2014) Video footage <i>'Tereza and Sam'</i> .....	p.142
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'Rolla Pub'</i> .....	p.144
Foster, J. (2016) Photograph <i>'Blur'</i> .....	p.146
HD Image Quotes (2019) Photograph <i>'Geddes'</i> .....	p.148
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'A longing for place'</i> .....	p.150
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph <i>'Cut line through the Mackenzie River'</i> .....	p.151
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Perceptions of time'</i> .....	p.155

## Creative Exchange

Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Cannot be enclosed'</i> .....	p.158
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Liveness = directness'</i> .....	p.159
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Get distracted, excited'</i> .....	p.160
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Womad'</i> .....	p.161
Foster, J. (2014) Video footage <i>'Kitchen conversation'</i> .....	p.162
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Improvisation'</i> .....	p.163
Foster, J. (2015-2017) Montage of sketches <i>'Notes'</i> .....	p.163
Foster, J. (2014-2019) Montage of sketches <i>'Journeys'</i> .....	p.164
Wallace, J. (2015) Photograph of Foster, J. <i>'Scribe presentation'</i> .....	p.165
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Embodied cognition'</i> .....	p.166

Audience member (2018) <i>'Above the Clouds'</i> .....	p.168
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Play rather than performance'</i> .....	p.169
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Mirror'</i> .....	p.172
Foster, J. (2018) Photograph <i>'Spectral Verses'</i> .....	p.173
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Balancing'</i> .....	p.176
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Broaden out, narrow in'</i> .....	p.178
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'The middle voice'</i> .....	p.179
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'Knowledge exchange'</i> .....	p.181
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'One among'</i> .....	p.183
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'From your heart'</i> .....	p.187

## Story

Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'Return to Sambaa K'e'</i> .....	p.190
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'Return to Sambaa K'e'</i> .....	p.191
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'Return to Sambaa K'e'</i> .....	p.192
Foster, J. (2014) Drawings and prints <i>'Community Portraits'</i> .....	p.194
Foster, J. (2014) Digital drawing <i>'Food security'</i> .....	p.196
Foster, J. (2014) Photograph montage <i>'Sambaa K'e Print Studio'</i> .....	p.196
Foster, J. (2014) Digital drawing <i>'Clean water'</i> .....	p.197
Jumbo, B. (2012) Lino cut <i>'Dry Fish'</i> .....	p.201
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'We got rhymes for times like these'</i> .....	p.203
Unknown (1911) Photograph <i>'Female Dastango'</i> .....	p.204
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'Enfolding'</i> .....	p.207
Foster, J. (2018) Digital drawing <i>'Experience'</i> .....	p.208
Foster, J. (2018) Digital drawing <i>'Play'</i> .....	p.211
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Writing towards disappearance'</i> .....	p.215
Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'Don't lose sight of the local'</i> .....	p.220
Foster, J. (2017) Digital drawing <i>'A vision from within our community'</i> .....	p.221
Forsyth, R.D. (2010) Painting <i>'Sarah Banjo Icon'</i> .....	p.222
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Moments of shared experience'</i> .....	p.224
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'Community wellbeing'</i> .....	p.226
Foster, J. (2018) Digital drawing <i>'Empowerment'</i> .....	p.228
Akehurst, S., Foster, J. & Phipps, S. (2017) Photograph montage <i>'Roots'</i> .....	p.229

Foster, J. & Keren, T. (2017) Musical recording <i>'Ed's Roots'</i> .....	p.229
Foster, J. (2015) Digital drawing <i>'Courage'</i> .....	p.230
Foster, J. (2017- 2019) Photograph montage <i>'DIY'</i> .....	p.231
Robinson. A. (2015) Photograph of Foster, J. <i>'Dreel Halls piano recording'</i> .....	p.232
Foster, J. (2015) Musical composition <i>'I'll be thinking of you all the time'</i> .....	p.232

#### Traces

Foster, J. (2016) Digital drawing <i>'All songs and instruments gather moss'</i> .....	p.234
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'Writing towards reflection'</i> .....	p.237
Foster, J. (2019) Digital drawing <i>'Looping engagement'</i> .....	p.250

#### Activities

Borges, F. (2017) Book jacket <i>'Technoshamanism'</i> .....	p.271
Marshall, S. (2016) Single cover <i>'Triassic Tusk Tiny Vinyl'</i> .....	p.272
Parks, E. (2019) Album cover <i>'Play It Like A Woman'</i> .....	p.272
Foster, J. (2011) Photograph <i>'Ticketline/Just Passing Through'</i> .....	p.275
McCulloch, C. (2016) Exhibition poster <i>'Memories of Samba K'e'</i> .....	p.278

#### Troubadours

Cook, S. Photograph (2014) <i>'Canada'</i> .....	p.281
Foster, J. Photograph (2017) <i>'Scotland'</i> .....	p.282

#### Acknowledgments

Foster, J. Photograph (2014) <i>'Samba K'e'</i> .....	p.284
---	-------

## **Bibliography**

## Literature

- Abram, D. (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage
- Abram, D. (2011) *Becoming Animal: An earthly cosmology*. New York: Vintage
- Academy of Ideas (2015) *Introduction to Kierkegaard: The Existential Problem* (Online)  
Available at: <https://academyofideas.com/2015/04/introduction-to-kierkegaard-the-existential-problem>
- Ault, J. (2007) *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita Kent*. London: Four Corners
- Bachelard, G. (1994) *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon
- Bachmann, M. L. (1991) *Dalcroze Today: An Education Through and into Music*. Oxford: Clarendon
- Barnes, T. & Gregory, D. (eds.) (1997) *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry*. London: Arnold
- Barthes, R. (2010) *The Grain of the Voice*. London: Vintage Classics
- Baum, K. (ed.) (2010) *Nobody's Property: Art, Land Space, 2000-2010*. Connecticut: Yale University
- Beckett, S. (1983) *Worstward Ho*. New York: Grove
- Berger, J. (2015) *Bento's Sketchbook*. London: Verso
- Berger, J. (2005) *On Drawing*. Cork: Occasional
- Bourdieu, P. (2013) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: University
- Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Les Presses du Reel
- Broughton, S. (2000) 'Gypsy Music: Kings and Queens of the Road' in Ellington, M., Duane, O., Dowell, V. (eds.) *World Music, The Rough Guide, Vol 1: Africa, Europe and the Middle East*. London: Penguin
- Buhmann, S. (2017) *In Search of Resonance: A conversation with Susan Philipsz*. Sculpture Magazine, Vol. 36, (9)
- Burke, K. (2019) *The Sami Yoik* (Online) University of Texas. Available at: <https://www/laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/giella/music/yoiksunna.html>
- Button, V. (ed.) (2007) 'What is a place, a site?' in *Social Systems: published on the occasion of Social Systems 7th July - 2nd September 2007*. England: Project Base

- Cage, J. (1973) *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage*. Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University
- Chatwin, B. (1988) *The Songlines*. London: Pan Books
- Chiltern, M. (2019) *DIY Music: How Musicians Did It For Themselves*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/in-depth-features/history-diy-music>
- Chisholm, S. (2016) 'About Planting in Alberta & Northern B.C.' in *Tree-planter.com* (Online) Available at: <https://www.tree-planter.com/2016/05/about-planting-in-alberta-northern-b-c>
- Chodron, P. (2019) *Lions Roar: Bodhichitta the excellence of awakened heart*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.lionsroar.com/bodhichitta-the-excellence-of-awakened-heart>
- Claremont Institute for Process Studies. (2019) *Process and Flow* (Online) Available at: <https://www.openhorizons.org/process-and-flow-mihaly-csikszentmihaly-and-alfred-north-whitehead.html>
- Clarke, E. (2015) *Music and Empathy Extension*. (Paper) Presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, Oxford University, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- Clarke, E. (2008) *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins English Dictionary (1994) 3<sup>rd</sup> Updated Edition. Glasgow: Harper Collins
- Cooper, N. (2018) *Ross Sinclair: Artists who make music, Musicians who make art*. (Online) Available at: <https://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.com/2018/02/ross-sinclair-artists-who-make-music.html>
- Crossley, N. (2013) 'Mead, Merleau-Ponty and Embodied Communication' in *Journal of Pragmatics* 5. Manchester: University
- Curd, P. (ed.) (1996) *A Presocratics Reader*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett
- Dali, S. (1935) *Conquest of the Irrational*. New York: Julien Levi
- Dean, T. & Millar, J. (ed.) (2005) *Place*. London: Thames & Hudson
- Debaise, D. (2017) *Nature as Event*. Durham and London: Duke University
- Debord, G. (1994) *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books
- De Botton, A. (2013) *Emotional Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Online) Available at: [https://youtu.be/U2YcC\\_H66XY](https://youtu.be/U2YcC_H66XY)

- De Certeau, M. trans. Rendall, S. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California
- Dewey, J. (2005) *Art as Experience*. New York: Berkeley Publishing Group
- Doffman, M. (2016) *Being in time together: joint action and tacit knowledge*. (Paper) Presented at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- Encyclopaedia Britannica (eds.) (2019) *Suanne K Langer* (Online) Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Susanne-K-Langer#ref222446>
- Erskine, P. & Mattingly, R. (eds.) (1998) *The Drum Perspective: Writings, Wisdom and Musings on the art of making music*. Winona, Minnesota: Hal Leonard
- Faultless, M. (2016) *'Open rehearsal of Haydn's Symphony No.8 Le Soir'* (Pamphlet) Hand-out at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- Forsyth, C. (2018) *Music is a universal language of intuition*. (Online) Available at: <https://medium.com/@connorforsyth/music-is-a-universal-language-of-intuition-905f5a1b426c>
- Foster, David. (2010) *'Spatial Representation and Architecture'* in *Johns Hopkins: The Science of the Arts Lecture Series*. (Online) Available at: <http://webcast.jhu.edu/mediasite/Catalog/pages/catalog.aspx?catalogId=e33c6f06-bfb0-4156-a506-f99acc2394cc>
- Foxcroft, C. (2015) *'Exploring the Role of Pianists' Emotional Engagement with Music in a Solo Performance'*. (Paper) Presented at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- Fuller, Z. (2014) *'Seeds of an anti-hierarchic ideal: summer training at Body Weather Farm'* in *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19443927.2014.910542>
- Geddes, P. (1972) *Patrick Geddes: Spokesperson for man and environment; a selection*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University
- Griffin, J. (2004). *Homer the Odyssey*. (2nd Edition) New York: Cambridge University
- Guerrieri, M. (2018) *On Empathy*. New Music Box (Online) First published 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Available at: <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/on-empathy>
- Heisel, E. (2015) *'Empathy as a Tool for Embodied Processes in Vocal Performance'* in *Empirical Musicology Review*. Vol.10 (2) (Online) Available at: <https://emusicology.org/article/view/4601/4163>
- Hoffding, S. (2015) *'Embodied and Extended Approaches to Musical Ensemble Performance'*. (Paper) Presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on Music and Consciousness, Faculty of Music, Oxford University, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015



- Hoffmann, J. (2001) *The Familiar Is Not Necessarily the Known*. The Nordic Art Review. Vol.3 (2) Stockholm: 'NU'
- Hyde, L. (2007) *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World*. Edinburgh: Cannongate
- Ingold, T. (2007) 'Against Soundscape' in Carlyle, A. (ed.) *Autumn leaves: sound and the environment in artistic practice*. Paris: Double Entendre
- Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Oxon: Routledge
- Ingold, T. (2017) *Correspondences: Knowing from the Inside*. Aberdeen: University
- Ingold, T. (2013) *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* Oxon: Routledge
- Ingold, T. (2010) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Oxon: Routledge
- Ingold, T. (2010) *The Social Brain: Part VI, International Conference at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> February, 2010*. (Online) Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59dg1K6xPks&feature>
- James, W. (1950) *The Principles of Psychology*. Volume One. New York: Dover
- Jay, M. (1994) *Downcast Eyes*. Berkeley: University of California
- Jenkins, R. (2006) *Pierre Bourdieu*. Oxon: Routledge
- Joris, P. & Tengour, H. (eds.) (2012) *Poems for the Millennium*. Vol.4, Berkeley: University of California
- Joustra, R. (2012) *One Story To Rule Them All: Is there such a thing as a monoculture?* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/one-story-to-rule-them-all-is-there-such-a-thing-as-a-monoculture>
- Kaprow, A. (2003) *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley: University of California
- Karen, G. (2018) *The Occitan Troubadours: The Beginnings of Vernacular Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Online) Available at: <https://textingatceu.wordpress.com/category/the-occitan-troubadours-the-beginnings-of-vernacular-poetry-in-the-middle-ages>
- Kester, Grant, H. (2004) *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley: University of California
- Killick, S. & Frude, N. (2009) *Eye on Fiction: The Teller, The Tale and The Told*. (Online)

Available at: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-22/edition-10/eye-fiction-teller-tale-and-told>

- Kimmerer, R.W. (2003) *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*. Oregon State: University
- Kwon, M. (2002) *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT
- Lacy, S. (2010) *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics 1974-2007*. Durham and London: Duke University
- Lacy, S. (ed.) (1995) *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Seattle: Bay Press
- Lakoff, G. (2013) *George Lakoff: What Studying the Brain tells us about Arts Education*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpIa16BynZg>
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University
- Legat, A. (2012) *Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire: Knowledge and Stewardship Among the Tlicho Dene*. Tucson: University of Arizona
- Lehmann, W.P. (1986) *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill
- Lentjes, R. (2019) *Against The Grain: The Essence of Voices*. (Online) Available at: <https://van-us.atavist.com/against-the-grain>
- Lippard, L. (1983) *Overlay: Contemporary Art and The Art of Prehistory*. New York: The New York Press
- Lippard, L. (1997) *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. Berkeley: University of California
- Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multi-centered Society*. New York: The New York Press
- Lomax, Y. (2005) *Sounding the event: Escapades in dialogue and matters of nature*. London: I. B. Tauris
- Lorca, Garcia, F. (1933) trans. Kline, A.S. (2007) *Theory and Play of The Duende*. Poetry in Translation (Online) Available at: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.php>
- Macfarlane, R. (2008) *I Walk Therefore I Am*. The Guardian (Online) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/aug30/scienceandnature.travel>
- Marcaletti, L. (2016) *Correcting prosodic errors in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century vocal music: singers' implicit knowledge vs composers' notation*. (Paper) Presented at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016

- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage
- Massey, D. (2003) 'Some Times of Space' in May, S. (ed.) *The Weather Project*. Exhibition Catalogue. London: Tate Publishing (Online) Available at: [http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence\\_files/Some\\_times\\_of\\_space.pdf](http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence_files/Some_times_of_space.pdf)
- Merleau-Ponty, M. trans Colin, S. (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*. London and New York: Routledge
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964) *Sense and non-sense*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern
- Mesle, Robert, C. (2008) *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead*. West Conshohocken: Templeton
- Michaels, F. S. (2011) *Monoculture: How One Story is Changing Everything*. Canada: Red Clover
- Michael, J. (2002) *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum
- Mitchell, J. (2019) *Morning Glory on the Vine: early songs and drawings*. Edinburgh: Cannongate
- Molina, E. (2019) *Energy, Frequency and Vibration*. (Online) Available at: <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/energy-frequency-and-vibration>
- Mullan, M. (2018). *Gabriel Marcel's approach to recognising presence: Being, body and invocation*. Review of Communication, Vol.18 (4) (Online) Available at: <https://tandfonline.com>
- Naess, A. (2008) Drengson, A., Devall, B. (eds.) *Ecology of Wisdom*. London: Penguin
- Naess, A. (2002) *Life's Philosophy: Reason and Feeling in a Deeper World*. Athens: University of Georgia
- Nagatomo, S. (2020) 'Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy' in Zalta, N., E. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring Edition) Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/japanese-zen>
- North American Bird Conservation Initiative (2018) *Stories from the Field*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.nabci.net>
- Okri, B. (1996) *Birds of Heaven* London: Phoenix
- Ong, W. (2002) *Orality and Literacy*. Oxon: Routledge
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1914) *Meditations on Quixote*. New York: Norton
- Oxford English Dictionary (2012) (7<sup>th</sup> Edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Pembroke, N. (2007) *'Empathy, emotion, and ekstasis in the patient/physician relationship'* in *Journal of Religion and Health*. Vol.46 (2) (Online) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-006-9071-4>
- Pinkola-Estes, C. (2008) *Women Who Run with The Wolves: Contacting the power of the Wild Woman*. London: Rider
- Pohland, P. (1972) *'Participant Observation as a Research Methodology'* in *Studies in Art Education*. Vol.13 (3) (Online) Available at: [www.jstor.org/stable/1320100](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1320100)
- Polyani, M. (2009) *Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Purcell, A. (2009) *Jeffrey Lewis Interview*. The Guardian (Online) Available at: <https://www.guardian.com/music/2009/apr/13/jeffrey-lewis-em-are-i>
- Ranci re, J. & Elliot, G. (2009) *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso
- Ramnarine, T. K. (2016) *'Performance, Storytelling and the Politics of Musical Knowledge'*. (Paper) Presented during *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- Redmond, L. (2018) *When the Drummers Were Women*. Brattleboro, Vermont: Echo Point Books & Media
- Renwick, G. (2002) *Spatial Determinism in the Canadian North: a theoretical overview and practice-based response*. (PhD Thesis), Dundee: University
- Robbins, D. (2000) *Bourdieu and Culture*. London: Sage
- Robertson, S. (1988) *Exodus to Alford: Master Storyteller of the Traveller Folk*. Nairn: Balnain
- Rogers, P. (2002) (trans.) *Awakenings, by Gabriel Marcel: Gabriel Marcel's Autobiography*. Milwaukee: Marquette University
- Rose, F. (2011) *The Art of Immersion: Why Do We Tell Stories?* (Online) Available at: <https://www.wired.com/2011/03/why-do-we-tell-stories>
- Sambaa K'e Dene Band (2009) *Sambaa K'e Then and Now: A community Project of the Sambaa K'e Dene Band 2005-2009*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) NWT, Canada: Sambaa K'e
- Scott, P. (2007) *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger Inquiry*. Yellowknife: The Edzo Institute
- Scott, P. (2009) *Talking Tools: Faces of Aboriginal Oral Tradition in Contemporary Society: A Practice-led Exploration*. (PhD Thesis) Dundee: University
- Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London: Allen Lane

- Shepherd, N. (2011) *The Living Mountain*. Edinburgh: Canongate
- Smith, P. (2015) *M Train*. London: Bloomsbury
- Solnit, R. (2002) *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London: Verso
- Stackhouse, A. M. (2006) *TRAHERE; The Sense of Unease in Making A Mark, Bk 1*. (PhD Thesis) Dundee: University
- Stewart, R. (2010) *A Sociolinguistic Study of Verlan in the town of Oyonnax, France*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/10776956>
- Suzuki, S. (2006) *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala
- Swales, J. (ed.) (2016) *Field Sketching and the Experience of Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge
- Tarlo, H. & Tucker, J. (2015) 'Are you alive?': *Vital Materialist Practice in Modernist and Contemporary Art, Poetry and Collaboration*'. (Paper) Presented at *Vibrant Matters: A Land2/PLaCE International Conference*, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, Dundee, 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1996) *Cosmos and Hearth: a cosmopolite's viewpoint*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
- Tzu, L., trans. McDonald, J. H. (1996) *Tao Te Ching, by Lao Tzu*. (Online) Available at: <https://simplybeing-sw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Tao-Te-Ching-J.H.-McDonald-1996.pdf> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019)
- Whitehead, A. N. (1933) *Adventures to Ideas*. Cambridge: University
- Whitehead, A. N. (1985) *Process and Reality*. New York: The Free Press
- Whitehead, A. N. (1925) *Science and the Modern World*. New York: The Free Press
- Whitman, W. & Greenspan, E. (2005) *Walt Whitman's 'Song of myself': a sourcebook and critical edition*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Whittle, A. (2019) Booklet published on the occasion of the exhibition *How Flexible Can We Make The Mouth* 14<sup>th</sup> September - 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Dundee Contemporary Arts
- Widess, R. (2013) 'Schemas and Improvisation in Indian Classical Music' in Kempson, R., Howes, C., Orwin, M. (eds.) *Language, Music and Interaction*. London: College
- Woo, N. (2016) '..."at the limit": an étude in possible impossibility'. (Lecture-Recital) Presented at *Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- Zaehner, R. (1973) *The Bhagavad-gita*. London: Oxford University Press.

## Audio

Burnt Paw (2019) *Burnt Paw* (Online) Available at: <https://burntpaw.bandcamp.com>

Busker Stories (2016) *Tash Sultana: Busker Stories* (Episode 1 Street Music) Documentary Webseries (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/L2BSetAUL20>

Cale, J., interviewed by Sakur, S. *Hardtalk* (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3csy4w8>

CJSF 90.1 Radio *Melodies in Mind* (Online) Available at: <http://www.cjsf.ca>

Cook, S. (2019) *Scott Cook* (Online) Available at: <https://scottcook.bandcamp.com/album/this-ones-on-the-house>

Cullum, J. *Piano Pilgrimage* (2015) Audio podcasts of three-part series available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03ph0th/episodes/player>

Curtis, S., in conversation with Ilunga, Y. *The Jazz Spotlight: Building Community Through House Concerts with Shannon Curtis*. Podcast. (Online) Available at: <https://podtail.com/en/podcast/the-jazz-spotlight-podcast-music-business-music-music-ma/tjs-085-building-through-house-concerts>

Doolittle, H. *Garden* (1915) (Online) Audio podcast available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/h-d>

Dunbar, S. (2014) *Scott Dunbar* (Online) Available at: <https://scottdunbar.wordpress.com>

Fowlis, J. (2009) *Uam*. Machair Records

Gabriel, P., in conversation with De Botton, A. (2016) *Lessons from a Rock Star*. School of Life, London, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016 (Online) Available at: <https://petergabriel.com/news/life-lessons-rock-star>

Goldenseedmusic (2012) *When The Drummers Were Women with Layne Redmond* (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/8oOnwYrsWE0>

Grieg, D. (2017) *Butterfly Mind* Podcast (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b080wbrz>

Hodkinson, M. (2014) *The Single Life* Podcast (Online) Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04xrv9z>

Is This Music? *Independent Music from Northern Britain*. (Online) Available at: <https://www.isthismusic.com/play-it-like-a-woman-album-launch>

Keren, T. (2019) *fnuf* (Online) Available at: <https://fnuf.bandcamp.com>

- Koyama, D. (2014) *Into the Light* (Online) Available at:  
<https://dougkoyama.bandcamp.com>
- Lewis, J. (2019) *Jeffrey Lewis* (Online) Available at:  
<https://www.thejeffreylewisite.com>
- Makangu, J. (2019) *Zenga the Titan* (Online) Available at:  
<https://zengathetitan.bandcamp.com/releases>
- McEwan, J. (2018) *Why Raising Your Vibration Increases Serendipity* (Online) Available at: <https://youtu.be/SLSsqC17NIE>
- Modern Studies (2019) *Spectral Verses* (Online) Available at:  
<https://modernstudiestheband.com/spectralverses>
- Petit, P., interviewed by Mason, A. (2015) *CBS This Morning* (Online) Available at:  
[https://youtu.be/ofY-\\_TjaVd8](https://youtu.be/ofY-_TjaVd8)
- Pop, I. (2014) *Iggy Pop's John Peel Lecture* (Online) Available at:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04lcj6z>
- Raymond, C. (2019) *Corin Raymond and the Sundowners* (Online) Available at:  
<https://corinraymond.com>
- Redmond, L. (2002) *Layne Redmond: Tambourine Lesson* (Online) Available at:  
<https://youtu.be/OIBxrpelaUE>
- Sadhguru, Vasudev, J. (2016) *The Doorway of Memory* (Online) Accessed at:  
<https://youtu.be/bILGsMrwF40>
- Scott, S. (2019) *Samantha Scott* (Online) Available at:  
<https://samanthascott.bandcamp.com>
- Sharp, V. (2019) *Sound Lines* (Online) Audio podcasts of four-part series available at:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/b0bk2th5>
- Tobar an Dualchais (Kist'o'Riches) (2019) (Online) Audio archive available at:  
<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en>
- Tomek, T. (2019) *Tereza Tomek* (Online) Available at:  
<https://terezatomek.bandcamp.com>

## Visual

- Ackroyd, N. (2019) *Norman Ackroyd* (Online) Available at:  
<http://www.normanackroyd.com>
- Creed, M. (2019) *Martin Creed* (Online) Available at: <http://www.martincreed.com>
- Deller, J. (2019) *Jeremy Deller* (Online) Available at: <https://www.jeremydeller.org>
- Goldsworthy, A. (2019) *Digital Catalogue Vol 1, 1976-1986* (Online) Available at:  
[https://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/image/?tid=1980\\_168](https://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/image/?tid=1980_168)
- Hambling, M. (1990) *Making their Mark: Six Artists on Drawing* (Episode 3) (Online)  
Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p02t7k03/making-their-mark-six-artists-on-drawing-3-maggi-hambling>
- Hao, S. (2014) *Studio Jamming: Artists' Collaborations in Scotland*. Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee. (Online) Available at:  
<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/cooper-gallery/exhibitions/studio-jamming>
- Hockney, D., in conversation with Naughtie, J. (2014) *At Home with David Hockney* Podcast (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b04w0b2v>
- Kent, Corita, S. (1968) *We have No Art*. The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery (Online)  
Available at: <https://youtu.be/-VjyvgCGrWg>
- Only Artists *Norman Ackroyd Meets Robert Macfarlane*. (2018) (Online) Available at:  
<https://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08ltbhl/episodes/player?page=3>
- Sambaa K'e Print Studio Archive (2019) *Sambaa K'e Print Studio* (Online) Available at:  
<https://sambaaakeprintstudio.wordpress.com>
- Sinclair, R. (2019) *Ross Sinclair* (Online) Available at: <http://www.rosssinclair.co.uk>
- Tate *Energy and Process: Cy Twombly* (2019) (Online) Available at:  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/display/cy-twombly>
- Tate *Who Is Susan Philipsz?* (2019) (Online) Available at:  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/susan-philipsz-war-damaged-musical-instruments/Philipsz-introduction>
- The Art Assignment *Art Cooking: Picasso* (2018) (Online) Available at:  
<https://youtu.be/2TIBAVm2vvU>



## **Activities**

## Publications

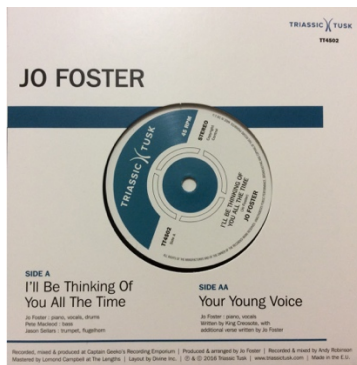


Foster, J. (2016) *'Digital Sketchbook: triangulating audio, visual and textual research'* in *Field Sketching and the Experience of Landscape*. Ed. Janet Swailes. Oxon: Routledge.

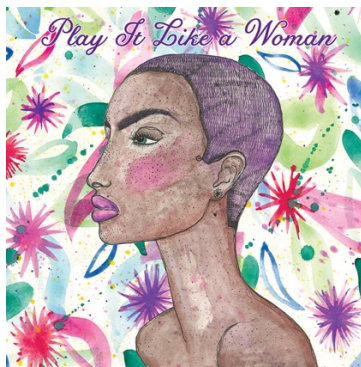
Foster, J. (2017) *'Sambaa K'e: The role of printmaking in sustaining community values, relationships to land, and traditions of hunting practice in the Western Arctic'* in *Technoshamanism*. Ed. Borges, F. Brazil: Invisiliers & The Goethe Institute.

Wallace, J., Rogers, J., Foster, J., Kingsley, S., Koulidou, N., Shorter, E., Shorter, M., Trotman, N., (2017) *'Scribing as Seen from The Inside'* in *Design Issues*, Vol.33, Number 3, Summer 2017, MIT Press.

Lewis, M., Sturdee, M., Walny, J., Marquardt, N., Hoang, T. and Foster, J. (2019) *'SketCHI 2.0: Hands-On Special Interest Group on Sketching'* in *HCI*.



Foster, J. (2016) *'I'll Be Thinking Of You All The Time'*, vinyl single, on Tiny Vinyl Series, Triassic Tusk Records. <https://www.triassictuskrecords.com>



Foster, J. (2019) *'Sometimes You Get Stronger, Sometimes You Get Lost'*, on vinyl compilation, *'Play It Like A Woman'*, Double A Side Records. <https://doubleasiderecords.com>

## Conferences + Residencies

2014

*Taigh Chearsabhagh Printmaker-in-Residence*, facilitated by Gayle Meikle (curator), Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, Lochmaddy, North Uist.

*Sambaa K'e Print Studio Artist-in-Residence*, with Madeline Mackay (Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design) and Amanda Forrest-Chan (University of Edmonton), facilitated by Professor Gavin Renwick (University of Alberta), Sambaa K'e, Northwest Territories, Canada, 9<sup>th</sup> May -20<sup>th</sup> June and 20<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> August.

*Hielan' Ways Symposium: Perceptions of Exploration*, chaired by Tim Ingold, walk led by Richard Long, hosted by Deveron Arts, Tomintoul, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November.

2015

Vibrant Matters: A Land2/PLaCE International Conference & The Third Annual Postgraduate Conference, Invited speaker Dr Helmut Lemke, University of Dundee, 29-30 January.

*Research Through Design*, facilitated by Professor Jon Rogers (Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design) and Dr Jayne Wallace (Northumbria University), Microsoft Building, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March.

*2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Music and Consciousness*, Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April.

*Beyond Perception '15*, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeenshire, hosted by the University of Aberdeen, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

*Dark Days*, participant in social experiment to negotiate consensus while staying overnight in Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, led by Ellie Harrison, GoMA, Glasgow, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February. <https://galleryofmodernart.wordpress.com/portfolio/2199>

2016

*Artistic Research: Is There Some Method?* Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April.

*Performing Knowledge*, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April.

*'Lessons from A Rockstar: Peter Gabriel in conversation with Alain de Botton'* at The School of Life, London, 1<sup>st</sup> March.

*'Transformative Practice'*, DJCAD Postgraduate Conference, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee, 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> June.

*Publishing Studies Network*, facilitated by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH), Stirling University, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September.

*Being in Place Being in Place: The Highs and Lows of Sited Practice*, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Conference in Arts & Humanities. University of Dundee, 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November.

2017

SGSAH *'Creative and Critical Voices: A Practice-Based Workshop for Performance'* Writing led by Maria Fusco (Edinburgh University), Graham Eatough (Glasgow Theatre Studies) and Rachel McCrum (Performance poet), Glasgow University, Glasgow, 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> January.

*Spaces of Uncertainty*, Workshop facilitated by Professor Tracy Mackenna (Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design), Visual Research Centre, University of Dundee, 10<sup>th</sup> February.

## Presentations + Workshops



2014

Artist's Talk and Open Studio, *'Talking Artists'*, Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, 25<sup>th</sup> February. <http://www.taigh-chearsabhagh.org>

Research Presentation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 7<sup>th</sup> May.

Research Presentation and Workshop, *'Ticketline/Just Passing Through'* at StoryStorm: A Collaborative Exchange of Methods of Storytelling. Workshop hosted by Mel Woods (University of Dundee), Deborah Maxwell (University of Edinburgh) and Daisy Abbot (Glasgow School of Art), at DIS'14 (Designing Interactive Systems) Vancouver, Canada, 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> June. <https://sites.google.com/site/wearestorystorm/foster>

2015

Workshop. *'The Scribes Presentation'*, Research Through Design, Cambridge, 27<sup>th</sup> March.

2016

Research Presentation, *'The Artist as Troubadour'*, at 'Transformative Practice', DJCAD Postgraduate Conference, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee, 6<sup>th</sup> June.

Artist's Talk, *'Memories of Samba K'e'*, hosted by Nomads Projects with Generator Projects, Generator Projects, Dundee, 19<sup>th</sup> June.

Research Presentation, '*A Troubadour's Journey: Place created through creative action*',  
*Being in Place Being in Place: The Highs and Lows of Sited Practice*, PhD Presentation  
Day, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Conference in Arts & Humanities. University of Dundee.,  
25<sup>th</sup> November.

2017

Workshop, University of Dundee Writer's Retreat, Glenesk Campus, University of  
Dundee, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February.

Workshop, '*Sounds of the City*' proposal accepted to participate in group workshop at  
BBC Quayside Studios, facilitated by SGSAH, Glasgow, 21<sup>st</sup> May.

## Community Projects

2015

### *Dundee commons Festival*

Co-creator involving year-long development with co-creators from various communities in Dundee to explore the idea of the 'commons' in terms of land, skill-share, creative practice and ecology; culminating in Dundee Commons Festival 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August. Facilitated by Jonathan Baxter. Further information online available at: <https://dundeecommonsfestival.wordpress.com>

### *An Evening of Musical Commons*

Organised a live musical performance bringing musicians from either side of the Tay together for an evening of musical commons.

### *Drawing the Commons*

Similar to my role as 'scribe' at RTD, during the Commons Festival I sketched the daily proceedings and my own interpretation of events; with sketches posted up as a retrospective of the previous day and prompt for further discussion around topics of the commons.

2017

### *Roots + Kolo*

#### *Glasgow Open House*

Week of live house concerts (musical performances) with interactive workshops, skill-share and permaculture talks. Developing from a music project with Tom Keren about 'Edwin, the Cyprus Tree', *Roots* developed collaboratively with rapper and performance poet Joe Makangu, artists Stella Phipps and Sorcha Fitzgerald, musician Martina Alberi and filmmaker Sam Mwiraguzu. Further information available online at:

Kolo: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/KoloCollective/posts/>

Roots: <http://www.tchaiovna.com/event/edwin-cypress-tree/>

#### *Tchai Ovna House of Tea*

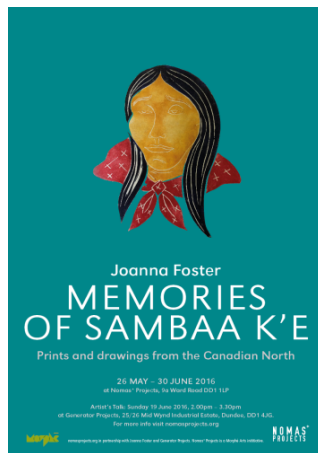
Developing from the first event, a musical performance involving the local community contributing stories about their own 'roots'.

#### *Kinning Park Complex*

*Kolo* collective formed following *Roots* with a collaborative project at Kinning Park community centre in Glasgow, with art, music and creative writing/spoken word workshops, an exhibition and musical performances.



## Exhibitions + Performances



2014

Performance, *'Melodies in Mind'* CJSF 90.1 Radio, Interview and live performance with Tereza Tomek and Samantha Scott, Burnaby Campus, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Hosted by Ryan Fletcher and produced by Erika Furukawa. Broadcast live 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014. <http://www.cjsf.ca>

Performance, *Music tour*, with Tereza Tomek and Samantha Scott, various venues across British Columbia and Alberta, Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> July – 18<sup>th</sup> July.

Performance, Robson Valley Music Festival, Dunster, British Columbia, Canada, 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August.

2016

Performance, Celtic Connections, Glasgow, Scotland, 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Performance, Newport Festival, Newport-on-Tay, Fife, Scotland, 18<sup>th</sup> June.

Exhibition, *'Memories of Samba K'e'*, Nomas Projects, Dundee, Scotland, 19<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June. <http://nomasprojects.org/shows/memories-of-samba-ke-27>

2017

Performance, *Record Store Day*, hosted by Triassic Tusk, Assai Records, Edinburgh, Scotland, 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

Performance, *'Moonhop Review'*, part of 'Open Out' Festival at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

*'Moonhop'* evenings were co-hosted by Lomond Campbell and Stephen Marshall and I played several throughout the year at various venues in Fife, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The festival saw a week of performance, film and music at the Fruitmarket Gallery, as an ongoing project to invite collaborative, performative methods of engagement into the gallery, and to showcase a diversity of DIY music projects.

Performance, *Butefest*, Isle of Bute, Scotland, 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> July.

Various open mics, gigs and jams throughout the year including *'Singing Birds'*, a monthly event that I helped to co-host with musician Tom Keren, to invite a mix of local and international musicians to play and jam at 'La Bodega', a dance studio and eatery in Glasgow's Southside. *'Above the Clouds'*, a Kolo project of monthly music at Tchai Ovna House of Tea, Glasgow. The *'Lockhouse Jam'* hosted by fnuf in Maryhill, Glasgow, and open mic performances at the *'Boathouse Sunday Sessions'* in Anstruther, Fife.

2018

Performance, *Eden Music Festival*, Raehills Meadow near Moffat, Scotland, 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> June.

Performance, *V in the Park*, Balloch'o'Dee Campsite, Galloway, Scotland, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> July.

Performance, *Bowhouse*, open mics hosted by Triassic Tusk Records, Fife, Scotland.

## **Troubadours**

## Canada



551

Special thanks to Tereza Tomek, Samantha Scott, Corinna Rose and Kutapita. CJSF Radio, Hootstock, Robson Valley Music Festival, Patti Martin and The Rolla Pub. Scott Cook, Scott Dunbar, Ben Rogers, DJ Spry Bry, Sun, Doug Koyama and Dirty Grace. To all the musicians and audiences in Canada that have helped shape this thesis.

---

<sup>551</sup> Photograph from *Scott Cook: The Hobo Travelogue*. (2014) (Online) Available at: [scottcook.net](http://scottcook.net). (Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019).

From left: Scott Cook, Tereza Tomek, Samantha Smith, Scott Dunbar and other musicians settling down to a rehearsal.

## Scotland



552

Thank you to all the musicians and audiences and venues that have shaped my journey in Scotland. On the West Coast: fnuf, Zenga the Titan, Stella Phipps, Martina Alberi, Louis Macdonald, Jam on Planet Love, Yellow Flame Gang, Tchai Ovna, La Bodega, The Glad Café, Kinning Park Complex, The Space, Eilidh Mackay and The Project Café. On the East Coast: Tara Chaloner, Emily Scott, Pete Harvey and Pumpkinfield, Stephen Marshall and Triassic Tusk, Dominic Venditozzi and the Newport Sound, and The Dreel Halls.

---

<sup>552</sup> Photograph from private collection of the author, 2014.

'Roots' team from left: filmmaker Sam Mwiraguzu, spoken-word poet and MC Joe Makangu (aka Zenga the Titan), visual artist Stella Phipps, musician and producer Tom Keren (aka fnuf), singer-songwriter and visual artist Martina Alberi, and singer-songwriter, artist and author Joanna Foster.

## **Acknowledgments**



553

Masi Cho. My heartfelt thanks to the community of Sambia K'e for making myself, Amanda Forrest-Chan and Madeline Mackay so welcome - 'like family'. Carielyn, Tyler, Maggie, Ruby, Denelee, Robert, Rebecca and everyone who helped make the 'Music and Coffee' evenings so special, an experience that continues to warm my heart and inform my practice as an artist, musician and human being. Special thanks to Chief Dolphus Jumbo, whom it was an honour to meet and spend time with, for his tireless work for the community of Sambia K'e and encouragement of creative projects developed in collaboration. Thank you for affirming the song of my soul.

---

<sup>553</sup> Foster, J. (2014) Sambia K'e, NWT, Canada DATE.

I am grateful to the Barns-Graham Charitable Trust and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design for a PhD Scholarship to make this thesis possible. Many thanks to Gavin Renwick, Scott Hudson and Paul Harrison who encouraged and enabled Madeline, Mandy and I to embark on a journey that would change our lives. Mandy and Madeline, thank you for your friendship and all the conversations and moments we shared.

There are times during the journey of writing a thesis when you feel unsure of yourself, and at that time, you need someone to believe in you. That person was Euan McArthur and I could not have completed this thesis without his unwavering support and encouragement. I am grateful for Euan's excellent supervision and have learned a great deal from the many inspiring conversations over the years. Many thanks too to Tracy Mackenna for her inspiring supervision, pointing me in thought-provoking directions, and Pernille Spence for providing enthusiasm and guidance towards completion.

Special thanks go to my family, my parents Bevinda and John and my Auntie Ann who have always been beside me, supporting me every step of the way. My brothers David and Simon, and especially, two much loved Uncles who sadly passed away in the years I undertook this thesis. Uncle Edwin who looked at the world in a unique way, and Uncle Jim, a tremendous inspiration to everyone he met.