COMMUNICATIVE DYNAMICS OF ARTISTIC COLLABORATION

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Abstract

In his 2001 writings on artistic collaboration, art theorist Charles Green describes how some artistic duos and teams developed a 'phantom' element— a 'third hand' or collaborative identity independent from and yet related to the individual identities and voices of the artistic collaborators involved. This thesis examines communicative interaction characteristic of these types of collaborations in order to explore this phantom element: what it means, what it is, how it develops and its relationship to the artistic collaborators. Ultimately, it investigates how artists can develop a collaborative author through persistent dialogue and communicative interaction.

Focusing on the communicative dynamics of collaborative art practices, the first part of this study illustrates how collaboration reworks conventional notions of authorship. Integrating communication theory and group studies, it then analyses different applications of the term *collaboration* in contemporary art theory, challenging writings that indiscriminately categorise a variety of participatory activities and roles as collaborative. In doing so, this research examines different types of collaborative relationships; it investigates the conditions necessary for collaborative communication to produce collaborative authorship, outlining various defining characteristics of collaboration.

The final portion of this study focuses on collaborative situations in which all of these defining characteristics are met. Using semiotic and hermeneutic phenomenological frameworks, it traces the development of a collective consciousness, collective identity and collective voice. Incorporating research obtained through naturalistic enquiry and questionnaires, it examines how prolonged communication, shared ownership and shared decision-making contribute to the development of these collective entities, leading up to the establishment of a collaborative author.

An accompanying DVD and booklet documents the practice-based portion of this investigation— Nomadics, a nine-month multi-media artistic collaboration. The DVD not only evidences the physical art installation that resulted from the collaboration, but also the collaborative practice, providing specific examples to help support claims made within the body of the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

> '*Hair, weight, proportion, primary colors, the verifiable third dimension, --*
> *the friendly threes—settle into their solids, their attachments, beginning.*
> *Simultaneity, like breakfast on a silver tray, oval--, crescent, heart-shaped.*
> *One eats, one smells, one feels: reunion*' (Broumas & Miller 1985:73).

When asked who wrote which poems in *Black Holes, Black Stockings*, poets Olga Broumas and Jane Miller claimed authorship over many of the same passages. Although both were able to differentiate between some of the sections, Miller, in a 1996 interview with Jocelyn Emerson, conceded: '…we delight in arguing about who wrote what.'[23]

How, one might ask, could the poets be so uncertain as to whether or not they wrote something? Did they each write parts of these poetic passages? Or did they alternate who wrote each poem? To all these questions Broumas and Miller answered *yes*:

> We wrote pieces together, wrote separately and revised together at day's end, composed aloud (Barthes' writing aloud), spoke to a tape recorder, one meditated and the other wrote in her aura (Broumas &Miller 1986).[24]

While at times a particular poet worked 'individually' on a particular passage, the poets crafted the voice with which they wrote this book collaboratively; it was neither one poet nor the other; it was both of them; it was more than them.

While the poetry in *Black Holes, Black Stockings* embodies something of both Broumas' and Miller's individual styles, this work distinctly differs from their non-collaborative works. No phrase or section identifiably belongs more to one

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[23] 12/2006] from: http://www.epoetry.org/issues/issue1/alltext/intmil.htm

[24] [11/2006] from:
http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/print_archive/broumas.html

poet than the other. Although each poet is present in the work, the voice of this book transcends the combination of their individual voices. What accounts for this difference? What is this 'verifiable third dimension'?

It was this notion of a third-dimension or voice that inspired this study. While quite easily observable as a 'voice' in a language-based medium such as poetry, I queried how this concept extended not only to the visual and auditory arts, but also to interdisciplinary works in which artists specialised in different media. Would the relationships between media mirror the interaction among artists? Do all collaborations produce this extra element?

Over the last three decades art-theorists and critics have begun to pay more attention to both collaborative teams and **collaboration**[3] as subjects of enquiry. Around the time this study formally began in 2003, 'collaboration' emerged at the forefront of artistic trends and debates: In 2003, the Chapman Brothers were nominated for the Turner Prize as a collaborative team; in 2004 *Third Text* dedicated an entire issue to artistic collaboration and Tate Modern commissioned a workshop, *Working Together,* that both practically and theoretically explored collaboration in art. Whereas only 30 years earlier, many collaborating partnerships and groups such as the Boyle Family and Christo and Jeanne-Claude concealed their collaborative efforts under individual identities in order to appease the art establishment's[4] demands for named individuals, artists now openly formed collaborations (Green 2001b; McCabe 1984).[5]

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[3] Words that appear in bold can be found in the glossary, pp.240-241.
[4] Art Establishment in this case refers to the critics, cultural and academic institutions, theorists and publications that help influence what is considered mainstream, trendy and/or acceptable in western art culture. In England, this includes funding bodies such as the Arts Council England, museums such as Tate Modern and buyers and auctioneers such as Sotheby. I would also like to

Such a development suggests that the art establishment at long last relinquished its fixation with solitary artistic geniuses-- the lonely and suffering Van Goghs. Along with this growing interest, however, considerable confusion has emerged. Whereas previous art-critics refused to acknowledge creative partnerships, contemporary art-theorists now often veer towards the other extreme— overlooking the individual and categorising various types of participation as collaboration. Writers such as Charles Green (2001b), for example, categorise both assistants and technicians as collaborators. Grant Kester (2004: 11) describes the audience-participant as a collaborator, further noting a 'collaborative, rather than a specular, relationship with the viewer.' Other theorists (Hobbs 1984; Berry & Arning 2005) describe collaborations with nature, with objects, with art institutions (Cornford & Cross) and even with artists of the past—with historical works that have influenced contemporary projects.

These so-called collaborations, however, differ from Broumas and Miller's (1985). A tree, for example, cannot interact with an artist to produce a third voice; audience members or participants, who engage with non-performance based projects, do not generally interact with the artists during the crafting of the artistic style or voice; in instances that they do, the artists generally predetermine any decision-making powers that these 'collaborators' possess. As Nicolas Bourriaud (2005: 88) explains, a work '(such as an interactive or participatory

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point out that within this thesis, the 'art establishment' refers specifically to the institutions, publications etc. within western societies including Europe and North America and/or institutions, publications etc. from other parts of the world that have gained recognition within western culture and/or possess influence within western art culture.
[5] See Appendix 1: *A Timeline of Collaborative Practices Discussed in this Thesis*

Happening by Allan Kaprow) offers the receiver certain latitude, it only allows him or her to react to the initial impulse provided by the transmitter: to participate is to complete the proposed schema.'

In part, the ambiguity surrounding collaborative and participatory art-practices arose because they became popular around the same time; art on the whole became more interactive and participatory not only in its creation, but also its form and its reception. In order to begin categorising and investigating these new works, theorists began to develop a host of new frameworks and labels. In the 1990's, for example, Suzi Gablik (1992: 2) published *Connective Aesthetics*, claiming that with the emergence of interactive and participatory works, 'a new, less specialized, less monocentric mythology of the artist is emerging that affirms our radical relatedness. At this point, we need to cultivate the connective relational self as thoroughly as we have cultivated, in the many years of abstract thinking, the mind geared to the principle of individual selfhood.'

Six years later, Nicolas Bourriaud[6] (2002/1998) first published *Relational Aesthetics*, further elaborating on this idea. In his subsequent publication, *Postproduction*, he ventured that:

> The work of art may thus consist of a formal arrangement that generates relationships between people, or be born of a social process; I have described this phenomenon as "relational aesthetics," whose main feature is to consider interhuman exchange an aesthetic object in and of itself (Bourriaud 2005/2001: 32-33)

Notably, in 2004, art-theorist Grant Kester asserted a similar theory which he coined dialogical aesthetics. 'Kester suggests that Littoral Art breaks down the

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[6] The study refers to the 2005 English translation. In order to draw attention to the original dates of publication, this thesis will at times reference the date of publication for the edition cited, followed by the original date of publication.

conventional distinction between artist, artwork and audience – a relationship that allows the viewer to 'speak back' to the artist in certain ways and in which this reply becomes in effect a part of the work itself' (Doherty 2003). [7]

While all of these participatory art-practices, both involve and draw attention to a heightened interactive and social dimension in art, it is important to note that they do so in ways that differ from collaboration. Collaboration incorporates this activity into the making of a work of art, whereas dialogical and relational art practices often do so as the subject or the medium of that art. As Kester (2003: 13) explains in his writings on dialogical aesthetics, 'I concentrate on works that define dialogue itself as fundamentally aesthetic (as opposed to works centred on collaboratively producing paintings, sculptures, murals, etc.).'

What complicates Kester's distinction is the fact that relational and dialogical works often incorporate the 'audience-participant' into the creative process; as the roles and responsibilities of the author-artist begin to overlap and resemble the changing roles and responsibilities of the spectator, it becomes more difficult to distinguish the interaction among artists and spectators from the interaction among collaborating artists. Consider, for example, groups of artists such as Gelitin or Superflex who work collaboratively as well as create relational works. Or what about instances when artists work together to create a piece, and also include information about the collaboration as part of that piece? Surely the distinctions between spectator participation, art as participation, and artist-collaboration are not always distinguishable?

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[7] [12/12/2007] from: http://collabarts.org/?p=71

Indeed, one might ask whether such a distinction is even necessary. Both collaboration and relational art practices rework traditional notions of artistic authorship by altering the communicative dynamics conventionally associated with the authoring of a work. Both redistribute ownership over the finished product. If in both cases the added communication affects similar aspects of authorship, then why go through so much trouble to distinguish between them? It is my contention that theorists such as Kester differentiate these fields because, as previously detailed, the ways in which collaboration and audience participation alter communication and ownership fundamentally differ. In order to advance the research in these areas, they must be developed as separate fields. Categorising relational works such as Beagles and Ramsay's *Blood Pudding*, in which the artists serve sausage made with their own blood to participants, along with the collaborations of artists such as Suzanne Scherer and Pavel Ouporov, for example, who focus largely on paintings and photographs, ignores the significance of the interactive element in *Blood Pudding* as part of the subject and meaning of that work. Routinely grouping the artwork/art-event and creative process together, trivialises both the collaborative efforts of art collectives and partnerships and the artwork itself. Though instances exist when the collaborative process and completed artwork or art-event overlap/coincide, these instances should not camouflage the fact that two different processes are taking place: one that primarily changes the function of the artwork and the spectator's role, and the other in which the principal changes affect the artist's role and relationship to the work. As Florian Reither (2008) of the collaborative group Gelitin explains, 'We work together every day in the studio, the audience is somebody who comes to visit' (Appendix 10).

Thus while the subject of audience participation is an intriguing one, this thesis focuses on the interaction among artists. This includes, but is not limited to, the collaborative production of '…paintings, sculptures, and murals' (Kester 2004: 13). It investigates the group dynamic in which a creative plan or idea is cultivated prior to the exhibition or execution of an art event or product. As this research applies communication theory within a particular artistic context, it is by default, at least in part a study in communication. It is equally, however, a study in collective identity formation and group dynamics. This thesis examines how sustained communication among collaborators enables artists to develop a collective identity. It furthermore investigates the ways in which group dynamics both result from and contribute to the communicative relationships that develop among collaborators. Most significantly, however, this study focuses on authorship; it queries how all of this communication and interaction among artistic collaborators can lead to the development of a collaborative author. It enters into a body of work that includes the writings of theorists such as Charles Green (2001b; 2004), Susan and Irving Sarnoff (2002), Michael Farell (2001), and Cynthia McCabe (1984), whose definitions of collaboration still remain somewhat ambiguous, but who, on the whole, investigate issues such as collective identity formation and authorial signature in relation to collaboration.

It is important to recognise, however, that while a body of contemporary work exists in this area, it is still highly limited. In his 1999 article Gregory Sholette summarises:

> … when a group of artists "self-institutionalize" themselves to produce collaborative or collective work, the critical response, if any, can fall into one of only a few distinct categories: 1. Art world duos like Gilbert & George, Komar and Melamid or Sophie and Hans Arp in which a methodology grounded on individual art is indiscriminately applied to

two; 2. Collective authorship as a backdrop for discussing the evolution of an individual's career: eg., Kiki Smith as former member of Collaborative Projects or Joseph Kosuth as cofounder of Art & Language; 3. The art collective as representative of an entire historical mise en scene, as when the 1980s became the decade of the activist art group.[8]

While a number of writings on collaboration have been published since Sholette's article, the majority of them adhere to Sholette's categorisations. The Sarnoffs (2002), for example, fall entirely into this first category focusing specifically on romantic partnerships. Michael P. Farell's (2001) work falls almost exclusively into the third category, looking specifically at larger circles of collaborative groups such as art-movements.

Perhaps the only exception to Sholette's rule, Charles Green has published the largest and most thorough body of work regarding artistic collaboration to date. Having investigated various types of collaboration, Green not only acknowledges the third entity that develops from long-term collaborations, but also identifies and names this phenomenon—the 'Phantom Third Hand'.[9] While the aforementioned theorists have greatly informed my research, I would like to draw an important distinction between this thesis and works such as Green, McCabe and the Sarnoffs'. These theorists concentrate on collaboration as a topic rather than a process: the development of collaboration within a particular historical movement (as Sholette describes); the ways in which collaboration affects authorial identity and artistic intention; the impact of collaboration on authorship. This thesis, on the other hand, focuses on the 'process of collaboration'. Thus, while Green asserts that duos such as Anne and Patrick Poirier and Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison share joint identities as artists,

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[8] [18/11/2007] from: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2479/is_3_27/ai_58470201
[9] As expressed in the title and final chapter of his 2001 publication: *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art From Conceptualism to Postmodernism*

this thesis examines on a micro level the interaction, communication, conditions and circumstances through which collaborators develop collective identities and ultimately, how they affect or contribute to collaborative authorship. While Green describes and cites examples of the inter-subjectivity that develops as artists continue to collaborate over longer periods of time, and the Sarnoffs' look at some factors which contribute to this, I illustrate more specifically what is actually taking place-- that is, how sustained communication among artistic collaborators leads to inter-subjectivity, and ultimately how these concepts contribute to and are embodied within the collaborative author.

Although Green's writings currently dominate collaborative art-theory, for the most part he writes about collaboration as a tool—a method to alter authorial identity and/or signature. This thesis, in contrast, examines identity as an aspect of collaboration. Collaboration is not a tool, but rather the focal point of the investigation. The construction of identity; the shared use of symbols; the development of collective meanings and associations for those symbols; as well as various other aspects of authorial and communicative processes, are examined as they exist and evolve within the collaborative process. In constructing the study in this way, this thesis does not only clarify concepts in existing theory; nor does it merely help fill a gap in contemporary art theory. This project also helps to define collaborative-authorship as a theoretical field; it sets a more developed starting point, creating a foundation from which collaborative-authorship can grow and expand as its own sub-discipline within art-theory.

It is also important to consider that while art-theorists have begun to experiment with and investigate 'collaboration' and 'participation' as theoretical topics, other fields such as education and sociology have acknowledged and explored collaborative relationships over longer periods of time, distinguishing between different types of participatory relationships. While several theorists in these areas have ventured definitions of collaboration (Toepell 2001; Rice 2002), it is difficult if not impracticable to pinpoint an exact collaborative formula. What these definitions tend to agree on, however, is that a certain amount of interaction and communication must occur among collaborators; collaborators must share ownership and authority; they must consciously share responsibilities. This study investigates the ways in which these factors interact to produce a third voice in an interdisciplinary setting. It examines which arrangements are most conducive to collaboration, and whether or not with conscious effort, artists can cultivate this third dimension.

From these questions birthed *Nomadics*[10], a 4,000 square foot installation constructed and designed by an interdisciplinary group of artists.[11] The practice-based component of this PhD, Nomadics functioned largely as a research experiment.[12] Although I entertained some preliminary questions regarding the possibility of a 'third voice,' as a participant-observer I took, for the most part, an interpretative approach to the project. As a researcher, I recorded meetings and saved every email and text message I received from or sent to the other

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[10] The term 'Nomadics' was the title for not only the installation, but also the artistic collective and the research project. To avoid confusion, the italicised *Nomadics* will be used from this point on to differentiate the physical installation from the overall project and group identity Nomadics.

[11] See Appendix 12, Nomadics DVD— *Video Clip 1: Nomadics—the Installation*.

[12] In addition to an accompanying DVD which incorporates recordings of both the installation and the collaboration, Appendix 12 provides a more detailed description and account of the Nomadics project and work.

collaborators.   As an artist, I argued, disagreed, was inspired by and gave inspiration to my colleagues. I lived out experiences that authors such as Irving and Susan Sarnoff and Charles Green document in their research.   All in all, Nomadics enabled me to understand better the collaborative accounts that other theorists collected; it provided essential context and insight, helping me to further expand on existing theories. The experiences and findings generated by this research are referenced throughout this thesis to provide more nuanced accounts of the communicative situations and relationships referenced by other collectives and theorists.

Structurally, this thesis is divided into four chapters. *Chapter One* covers the methodology and research and is divided into three subsections. The first two subsections in this chapter explain the significance of the practice to the philosophical frameworks, as well as the methodology that guided the creation of Nomadics as a research experiment (such as naturalistic enquiry and participant observation).   The third subsection in this chapter focuses on the theoretical frameworks that were used to analyse this research, as well as the frameworks and the particular theoretical fields that comprise the focus of the overall investigation (including hermeneutics and communication theory).

The expansion of theoretical arguments begins in *Chapter Two*: *Collaborative Authorship and the Communicative Exchange*.   This chapter looks at the historical development of both participatory and collaborative art practices, exploring the modernist myth of the isolated artist as 'genius'. Using basic communication theory, it examines ways in which artistic collaboration reworks traditional notions of authorship.   By further investigating how artist-

collaborations re-establish the communicative roles and responsibilities traditionally associated with the creative process, it situates collaboration in relation to other contemporary art practices which similarly challenge traditional models of authorship (i.e. relational and dialogical works). In doing so, it distinguishes between these practices and helps to break down some of the generalisations regarding collaboration that continue to dominate contemporary art-theory. This clarification will not only allow a deeper investigation into the communicative dynamics in which artistic groups and partnerships develop a collaborative voice; it will also provide readers a point of reference with which they can compare existing definitions and theories on participation and collaboration, allowing them to understand better how these theories relate to one another.

Chapter Two continues with an examination of basic communication theory, paralleling the traditional *artist - artwork– audience* model of authorship with the **transmission model** of communication (Berlo 1960; Laswell 1948; Shannon & Weaver 1963/1949). Taking into consideration various criticisms of this model, it examines the evolution of the roles and responsibilities associated with the 'sender' and 'receiver'--terms which theorists have long used in discussions of authorship and spectatorship (Eco, Barthes, Duchamp), and which many theorists (Bourriaud, Green, Kester) continue to use today. In doing so, this chapter sets out the more comprehensive definitions of these terms favoured in contemporary discussions and clarifies the meanings that this thesis utilises. Employing these meanings, it maps out a simplified model of collaborative communication in which individual artistic voices continually influence one another, intertwining

into what I call a **composite voice**. Thus, while writers such as Charles Green or Susan and Irving Sarnoff theorise that collaboration produces a collaborative author or collective identity and voice, this thesis contributes new knowledge to collaborative-theory by breaking down the process through which these phenomena develop, illustrating more specifically how artists interact to establish a collaborative voice and ultimately, a collaborative author.

Beginning the theoretical investigation with a comparison of these preliminary models of artistic authorship and communication helped to effect this contribution to new knowledge. In part, this comparison demonstrates the importance of utilising communication theory as part of an investigation in artistic-collaboration; the models presented in this chapter not only illustrate simplified units of communication, but also and more importantly depict the basic acts/units from which collaboration develops. Moreover, in comparing the *artist-artwork-audience* model of authorship with the *sender-message-receiver* model of communication, two fundamental points become apparent. Firstly, in considering the different criticisms and evolutions of the transmission model of communication, it becomes clear that these criticisms and developments also apply to the relationships and responsibilities traditionally associated with the artist, artwork and audience. Secondly, in applying these models to a collaborative situation it becomes clear both visually and analytically that it is (at least in part) by reworking the communicative acts and relationships that take place during the process of authoring a creative work, that collaboration complicates traditional notions of authorship. While these criticisms and complications may appear at first glance to undermine the relevance of these particular models within this context, in actuality, the criticisms raised in point

one, as well as the problems encountered in applying these models to collaborative authorship raise a plethora of questions—questions which ultimately comprise the foundation of the overall investigation. The role of the receiver, for example, has been repeatedly criticised and developed over time. If, as contemporary theorists argue, the receiver's knowledge and life experiences affect his/her interpretation of a given message, then how do collaborators establish collective meaning within their work? If the conditions within which an utterance is made affect the meaning of that utterance, then what conditions are necessary for an act of communication to be considered collaborative? Do artists need to establish shared meaning and/or collective interpretation in order to establish collaborative authorship?

In raising these questions, this chapter acts in part as a stepping-stone into the remainder of the thesis. The chapters that follow utilise additional frameworks such as pragmatics (to examine the conditions necessary for collaborative communication), hermeneutic-phenomenology (to focus on collective-interpretation) and semiotics (to focus on collective meaning). Through their investigation of these questions, the remaining chapters examine in greater detail the communicative, social and psychological factors influencing the development of a collaborative author and in doing so, mark out conditions and practices conducive to this development.

Before proceeding with this investigation, however, it is first necessary to resolve some of the ambiguity regarding collaborative art practices. It is not, after all, possible to investigate collaborative-authorship without understanding what collaboration is. What distinguishes collaboration from other types of

participation? *Chapter Three*: *Towards a Definition of Collaboration*, incorporates pragmatic[13] considerations in order to establish some basic defining-determinants of collaborative communication. It does not attempt to devise an all-encompassing definition of collaboration, but rather examines certain factors common to collaborative communication that can help to distinguish collaborative relationships from other partnerships. It contextualises Charles Green's (2001b) 'Administration as Collaboration' argument within contemporary collaboration theories (Elisabeth Rice 2002; Andrea Toepell 2001; Robert Hargrove 1998) in order to distinguish between cooperative and collaborative relationships. This section acknowledges that many types of collaboration exist, in which collaborators meet these determinants differently and to various degrees.

The final subsection within this chapter concludes with an examination of collaborations that meet all of these determinants successfully. It investigates some of the preliminary conditions necessary for artists to establish this 'verifiable third dimension' or Charles Green's (2001b) 'Phantom Third Hand.' This **phantom** exists in various guises. Husband and wife team Leo and Diane Dillon, for one, call it the 'Third Artist'. Diane explains:

> 'Our work was not something that either one of us would do ourselves…It was something that was a combination of the two of us, more like a separate entity. If we were arguing and wouldn't speak to each other, the third artist forced us to' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Dillon 2002: 117).

By examining various claims and interpretations of this third or extra dimension with consideration of the types of collaborations that tend to produce this

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[13] In this context *pragmatic* is used to indicate aspects of the linguistic field 'pragmatics', not 'pragmatic' as in *practical* or *down-to-earth*. For a more detailed explanation see the glossary.

element, this section attempts to explain what this entity actually is-- the collaborative author.

The final chapter, *Theories of Collectivity*, looks more specifically at the factors, conditions and communicative dynamics that enable artists to develop this phantom element. Exploring theories of authorship and collectivity, it traces the development of the collaborative author, taking into consideration hermeneutic, semiotic and phenomenological frameworks, as well as group studies. Concentrating mainly on theories of collectivity relating to identity and consciousness, this research looks at long-term collaborations such as Marina Abromovic and Ulay's, Beagles and Ramsay's and Gelitin's, using Nomadics to provide additional insight. Building on the notion of a composite voice (as established in *Chapter Two*), it examines how **collective consciousness** and shared ownership can lead to the development of a **collective voice**—the voice of this phantom author.

This collaborative entity is the proof that despite various differences, individuals can establish a common language and ideal. Since starting my PhD in 2003, I have been repeatedly asked why this research is important. As Annie Dillard (1989: 11-12) explains in her book *The Writing Life*, '…no one except you cares whether you do it well, or ever… everyone needs shoes more.' For me, collaboration is not just about authoring a piece of art. It is about moving towards this collective entity; about finding a way to use our differences to our advantage; about learning from one another and creating a way to work together towards a common goal. The goal of this study is not to offer a detailed model of collaborative authorship. On the contrary, I do not believe such a concrete model

could ever be valid; too many variations exist. Rather, in examining and detailing the process through which artists have established collaborative authors, this thesis sets out guidelines and examples on how to work together. Although this thesis is presented in a format intended to enter and advance collaborative-authorship as a theoretical field in the arts, this research can also service practitioners; it can inform not only individuals working together in the arts, but a wide variety of social, political and personal collectives.

CHAPTER 1:

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION TO A PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY:
NATURALISTIC ENQUIRY

The realisation of this project and thesis relied on a combination of methodologies. During the initial phase of theoretical research and while developing and researching these methodologies, I engaged in a collaborative art-making project—Nomadics. Nomadics functioned as both an artistic practice and a research experiment. I would like to clarify, however, that by 'experiment,' I do not mean that I conducted a test with the intention of generating a set of results or conclusions. Rather, Nomadics acted as a site of experimentation— that is-- a place to rehearse ideas about methodological practices and concerns pertaining to artistic collaboration. As a research project, Nomadics also provided me with an opportunity to explore and develop questions regarding the communicative and group dynamics of artistic collaboration-- two of the main subject-areas that comprise the investigative lens through which this thesis examines collaborative authorship. In this way, my experiences as a **participant-observer** informed my theoretical investigation and, ultimately, enabled me to further my contribution to new knowledge. Throughout the written-thesis, Nomadics acts as a point of reference. For this reason, an overview of the project, as well as an accompanying DVD and other supporting materials are included as an Appendix (Appendix 12). These materials offer evidence of the collaborative practice as well as documentation of the final installation-environment in which this practice culminated. The following section examines the methodology that both guided and developed from the practice-based and naturalistic portions of this study.

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To guide my role as a participant-observer in Nomadics, I relied on naturalistic enquiry. A relatively new area of study in the arts, secondary information on artistic collaboration is limited. Participant observation therefore, provided a unique opportunity to divulge the experiences and dynamics enacted by artistic collaborators. More importantly, as Alexander Massey (1998) declares, 'the requirement for direct, prolonged, on-the-spot observation cannot be avoided or reduced'—it cannot be substituted.'[14] He further explains that a human observer can detect subtleties that may at times exceed in importance the general data collected. As one of the leading ethnographic methodologies, participant-observation involves not only this on-the-spot observation that Massey (1998) describes, but also a subjective experience as part of the group under study; it allows the researcher to witness these subtleties as well as experience them. This prepares the researcher to better understand the motivations that prompt the behaviours observed, as well as the associations and emotions with which group members interpret these different behaviours. As this thesis focuses on communication and group dynamics, such knowledge is not only useful; it is essential.

As part of the initial inspiration for this thesis, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Rick E. Robinson's (1990) study *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter* also influenced many of the methods through which I gathered my firsthand data. Although their research did not centre on participant-observation,

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[14] Originally presented in 1998 at Oxford University, a written version of this talk can be viewed at www.voicewisdom.co.uk/htm/waywedo.htm . Please note that although in essay format, it does not possess page numbers.

they relied heavily on conversation and written questionnaires. Using these methods Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson investigated the participants' or audience-members' experience of art-objects, ultimately defining what they coin 'the aesthetic experience.' To guard against the 'lack of verification, over interpretation and bias' that theorists such as Jack Sanger (1996:16) attribute to naturalistic enquiry, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson rely not only on their own interpretations, but also each participant's oral analysis of his/her experience: the sensations, thoughts, associations and feelings each participant recalls in response to the artwork.

Relying largely on verbal (and/or written) responses, however, poses several dangers. As Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson acknowledge, 'words are necessarily imperfect representations of states of consciousness' (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson 1990: xv). Rather than analysing each participant's actual experience, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson analyse each participant's verbal interpretation of that experience. Moreover, language is not exact; the researchers need to hypothesise each participant's intended meaning. In their defence, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990: xv) argue that these words represent real experiences:

> These experiences, in turn, are what we believe to be the foundation of interpretive psychology. They are the basic protocol statements of what people believe is happening to them.

As we are all individuals, it is not possible to directly analyse someone else's experience. What researchers in this position can do, however, is take these dangers into consideration during the process of analysis; they can try to remain

as objective as possible in their own interpretations of the participants' accounts, and use follow-up questions to help clarify ambiguities.

In addition to their qualitative methods, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson also incorporated surveys and questionnaires into their research in order to determine the frequency of the different types of experiences each participant had in relation to the works of art. By calculating this frequency, they were able to verify four main experiences common to the aesthetic experience. While the authors relied solely on their own surveys and questionnaires in tallying this information, Nomadics could not provide me with the same expanse of data. As a single case study, Nomadics provided deeper insight rather than broader more generalised information regarding the communicative dynamics of artistic collaborations. As a participant-observer, I compared my personal experiences to the experiences and reflections of my fellow collaborators in order to gain more comprehensive and less subjective understandings of these experiences. Without comparisons with additional, unrelated artistic collaborations, however, this data could only generate conclusions specific to our situation; there was no way to discern which of our experiences typified artistic collaborations and which characterised our specific collaboration. As Massey (1998) explains:

> Any attempt to generalise findings beyond the case itself should be regarded as suspect, since statistical random sampling is rarely a feature of ethnographic research. Rather, as with other kinds of qualitative work, the intention is to achieve some kind of understanding of a specific case, whether it be a culture, people or setting.[15]

This thesis therefore relies largely on secondary research. Nomadics was, by no means, the main research component to this study; rather, it existed in relation to

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[15] [8/12/06] from: www.voicewisdom.co.uk/htm/waywedo.htm

a wide range of research methods. As a research experiment, Nomadics provided me with deeper insight into the collaborative process; it supplemented both secondary research and the communication I had with other collectives and partnerships. Initiating and developing a group-collaboration on this scale allowed me to experience the emotional, psychological, and communicative processes that unfold during the collaborative process. At times, it helped to steer me toward new research; it helped me to understand, for example, the importance of debate and disagreement, as well as spontaneity in collaborative art making. Having learned this through Nomadics, I sought out examples in secondary sources that could support and/or contradict these experiences. Other times, I encountered examples in my readings that failed to include concrete descriptions; many collaborative partnerships mention, for example, communicating non-verbally. What they do not describe is the process through which this happens—the body language; the sketching of an idea; or the changing of a symbol, colour or texture within the developing artwork. By constructing a collaborative practice on this level, I actualised the experiences described in these writings, while simultaneously researching them.

It is important to point out, however, that while Nomadics supplemented my secondary research, this additional research also played an important role in contextualising the experiences that unfolded during Nomadics. Using interviews, quotes and case studies examined in research articles and books allowed me, like Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, to deduce which of the many situations experienced as part of Nomadics more generally typify artistic collaboration. By taking into consideration conditions and factors specific to the

collaborations in which these parallel experiences occurred, I was able to draw conclusions that apply not only to the group dynamics of Nomadics, but also to more generalised collaborative structures.

Notably, my role as a participant-observer was not limited to my involvement in Nomadics. Although Nomadics comprised the majority of the naturalistic research for this study, I gained additional context and insight into collaboration as a participant in *Working Together*. Sponsored by Tate Modern and led by artists Anna Best and Kathy Battista, *Working Together* was a practical workshop that explored collaboration using collaboration. Coincidentally, the workshop took place in June and July 2004— just as Nomadics members began to meet. As both a practical and research oriented workshop, all of the collaborators simultaneously functioned as participants and observers, taking time to reflect and discuss the situations that transpired as the collaboration developed. Although this thesis does not often draw on this experience, *Working Together* supplied crucial insight and comparisons, providing me with a deeper understanding of the events that later transpired during Nomadics. It also provided me with the opportunity to practice balancing my identity as a researcher with my identity as an artist—my role as observer with my role as participant.

The need to maintain this balance significantly impacted the structure of this research project. As Colin Robson (1993: 197) explains in *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Research Practitioners*:

> Maintaining the dual role of observer and participator is not easy, and acceptance will be heavily dependent of the nature of the group and the interaction of particular features of the observer with the group.

By maintaining awareness of observational methods as 'strategies', researchers cannot participate naturally in the setting. This in turn can affect the behaviour of the group members. As Robson (1993:191-192) queries, 'How do we know what the behaviour would have been like if it hadn't been observed?' Logically, one would think it best to conceal one's identity as a researcher. Withholding this knowledge, however, poses serious ethical questions.[16] Thus, in order to observe without affecting their participation, many participant-observers 'tend to use qualitative, unstructured approaches' (Robson 1993:194).

In the case of Nomadics, participant-observation comprised only a portion of the data collection. I supplemented my experiences and observations using questionnaires and what Robson (1993: 199) describes as 'opportunistic 'on the wing' discussions.' Furthermore, I incorporated several methods of data collection to document the collaborative process. In order to participate more freely as an artist rather than an observer, I recorded the meetings on audiotape. In this way, I could interact without concentrating on the documentation; I could maintain the 'qualitative, unstructured approach' conducive to participation, without compromising the quality of the research.

Although it could be argued that the presence of a recording device promotes self-consciousness and obstructs natural behaviour, the device I used was small and did not need to be handled during meetings. Furthermore, because he already

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[16] All participants named in this thesis received a participant-consent form to sign. This form was approved by Roehampton University's Ethical Board. Additionally, I received written consent from all of the collaborators featured in video clips approving the use of the clips for this thesis.

owned the recording equipment, Dáte took over this responsibility freeing me from the direct association with this action as research behaviour. Since we did not record every meeting, I could compare the structure and behaviours at the recorded meetings with the unrecorded ones. As many of these recordings reveal, collaborators did not hold back, but rather argued, disagreed and sulked according to their moods.

As Robson explains, structured observation need not inhibit the observer's participation in group activities. 'It is, for example, feasible that a group for its own purposes wishes to have its activities observed and analysed' (Robson 1993: 202). As a natural method of collaboration, for example, Nomadics members generally took minutes and/or summarised any decisions made during meetings. While this did assist my documentation of the project, recording minutes is a common practice within driving and steering groups. Doing so enabled us to reflect on the collaboration during the week, and to update any absent collaborators on our progress. It also allowed us to review the decisions at the following meeting.

Once we established a strong working method, I introduced additional documentary methods. During the construction of the installation, for example, we took turns videotaping the evolution of the project. It is important to point out that we shared this responsibility; I did not set myself apart from the group as the sole documenter and therefore maintained a more balanced relationship with the other collaborators. Although Orbach found the video-recording disconcerting at times, she simply voiced her opinion on tape. Similarly, during

his participation with the project, Dáte occasionally videotaped our work— not to aid my observation, but as a beginning video artist. When Nomadics received an opportunity to collaborate on an additional project for the Hayward Gallery in late October 2004, Dáte videotaped and edited the installation of the work out of personal interest and in order to supply collaborators with stills for their portfolios. These procedures provided unambiguous documentation without intruding on the collaboration; because collaborators shared in these activities, they did not specifically affect my role as an artist/participant.

Unlike anthropologists who immerse themselves in the cultures or societies they observe, it is important to consider that my participation in Nomadics occurred for limited durations of time—at meetings, during the construction of the project, and via email, phone conversations and text messaging. Although I performed my identity as an artist outside of meetings by carrying-out managerial and artistic duties, I regularly set aside time away from the group to reflect on both my experiences and the documentation. In this way, I could generally bury my role as observer in the presence of the group, and record and reflect on the events directly afterwards. The fact that I could withdraw and reflect at regular intervals, however, raises important questions regarding the nature of this project. As part of a research project, rather than a pre-existing group, did my participation with Nomadics truly constitute *naturalistic* enquiry? Was it not, in actuality, constructed? Artificial?

In some situations, naturalistic methodologies require that researchers not only consider information gathering strategies, but also how they construct their

experiments. Although Robson (1993) consciously and emphatically excludes laboratory experiments from the scope of naturalistic enquiry, he does acknowledge field experiments as a viable environment for participant-observation. Notably, the difficulties encountered through field experiments, parallel the difficulties experienced in balancing participation with observation:

> The line between the natural and the artificial is again blurred with this type of study; particularly so when some aspect of the intervention or change is modified to suit the needs of a research design, or the experience of participants is modified by the presence of researchers or by the demands they make (Robson 1993: 83-84).

In forming a research design for Nomadics, I needed to carefully review these considerations without maintaining conscious awareness of them throughout the duration of the project. I needed to act as an instigator without acting as a controller. In other words, in order to develop a situation conducive to my research, I could not let my research dictate the situation.

The following section provides a brief account of the methods employed during the initial development of Nomadics as a research project. It addresses how the development of this project accounted for many of the difficulties common to naturalistic enquiries and ultimately culminated in a genuine artistic collaboration.[17]

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[17] For additional information on the development of Nomadics as a research project see pp. 216-226.

CREATING A RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Although many considerations influenced the formation Nomadics, one of the most significant concerned the relationship of the research to the development of the collaboration. Observably, many types of collaboration exist. Collaborations can, for example, involve large groups or single partnerships. Artists can collaborate on two-dimensional objects, audio projects or experiential projects. They can share all decision-making power, or else limit the areas over which authority is shared. At times collaborations involve artists engaged in pre-existing relationships; however, artists also establish social relationships through collaborative interaction. As the instigator of the project, I had to establish preliminary guidelines. Selecting too particular a situation would reduce the applicableness of the research to other collaborative formats. Without any determinants, however, no project would exist.

In order to refrain from over-influencing the group dynamics, I chose to remain open to different types of collaboration with the stipulation that at least a portion of the group avoid dividing into subgroups. As Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson explain:

> Only by knowing what the encounter with art can be at its fullest will it be possible to deduce from that ideal type forms of involvement that will make the experience more accessible to everyone
> (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson 1990: xv).

Thus when the opportunities arose, I chose to incorporate various types of collaboration— artists with pre-existing relationships (i.e. my sisterly relationship with Jessica Lehrman) as well as artists who had not previously met;

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artists interested in collaborating on the overall thematic development and design (i.e. Emily Orley and Orly Orbach), as well as artists interested in medium-specific participation (i.e. Eileen Botsford).   In this way, I accounted for two methodological concerns.   Firstly, because the project encompassed various types of interaction, it embodied, as Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson suggest, collaboration 'at its fullest,' setting the grounds for a more extensive investigation.   Secondly, without considerably restricting the collaborative roles, I prevented myself from over-influencing the communicative dynamics; although the nature of my research required some loose guidelines, I generally let the rest fall into place.

On the whole, these types of more extensive, less focused projects favour what Colin Robson (1993: 19) describes as an interpretive research approach-- an approach in which 'theories and concepts tend to arise from the enquiry.' Especially beneficial to researchers participating in field experiments, this approach helps participants to avoid subconsciously evoking behaviours desirable or conducive to their theories; researchers can more easily act independent of specific expectations and therefore more genuinely participate in group activities.

In the case of Nomadics, I set out with a thematic lens—namely, the communicative dynamics and roles in collaborative art—rather than specific assumptions or ideas. In order to better comprehend the situation at its fullest, as Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson suggest, I did not greatly limit the area over which I passed this lens; I participated in and documented many different aspects of the communication, conducting audience research as well as research into the

relationships among the different media. Although I did not directly incorporate all of this research into the final thesis, collecting a greater expanse of data ensured a more comprehensive examination of the collaboration. As Robson (1993: 19) explains, with this approach theories 'come after data collection… Because of this, it is often referred to as 'hypothesis generating' (as opposed to 'hypothesis' testing) research.' This approach allowed me to better contextualise the data and increased the likelihood of producing more sophisticated theories. It not only helped me to answer my initial questions; it also changed these questions, prompting new inquiries along the way.

An interpretive approach in combination with supplementary documentary techniques to ensure efficient observation, also promotes a consciousness more conducive to natural participation. I could, as described above, interact independent of both theoretical expectations and research pressures. Before entering this project, however, I needed to decide how to instigate it and which aspects in particular to initiate. How, in other words, should I solicit participants? Should I predetermine an artistic format? What 'loose guidelines' did my research truly mandate?

In order to prevent themselves from manipulating participants' behaviours, researchers often provoke situations, rather than structure them. Thus, in selecting participants, I endeavoured to let the project develop as organically as possible. I started, for the most part, on a first come first serve basis, replying to emails as they appeared. Once I received a response back to my reply, I generally met up with the artists, discussed the project and viewed the artists' work. On the whole, these interviews were organized loosely and approached

with minimal expectations. I was interested in hearing what the artists felt their contributions to the project could be and how they, considering the guidelines my research suggested, would personally like to collaborate. Permitting the artists to explain their own ideas about their roles prevented my personal ideas on (and definitions of) collaboration from controlling the project. If the artist was still interested in participating at the end of the meeting, I offered him/her a chance to take part; hence, rather than screen artists based on their personalities and/or my own artistic preferences, I took on a relatively large group of participants and let the collaboration succeed and fail according to the natural group dynamics.

Arguably, the very act of 'inviting' or 'selecting' suggests a hierarchical structure—for there must be those (or this case the one) who invite, and the ones who are invited. As discussed in *Chapter Three*, however, hierarchy does not necessarily preclude collaboration; although decision-making must be shared to a significant extent, it is extremely difficult if not impossible, to share all decisions equally. Furthermore, this initial distance is common to ethnographic research methods in which researchers often rely on participant-observer techniques:

> There is an assumption that, as the researcher becomes a more familiar presence, participants are less likely to behave uncharacteristically… The idea is that participants 'perform' less, and, as trust builds, reveal more details of their lives (Massey 1998).

As the instigator of the project, and therefore the 'inviter,' my role to begin with was slightly set apart from the other collaborators; as Massey suggests, however, this distance diminished over time—and by the project's end, I would argue, ceased completely within the core group of collaborators.[18]

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[18] See *Initiating a Research Experiment*, pp.216-220 for additional supporting evidence and explanation.

Though selecting collaborators in such an open manner helped me to reduce researcher-bias and supported a more natural project-evolution, it is important to consider that it also impacted the design and structure of the artwork. Allowing artists skilled in areas as diverse as fashion-design and net-art to participate in the same collective, demanded an interdisciplinary approach. This, also, however, worked to my advantage as interdisciplinary projects often favour interactive and collaborative working methods. Artists must rely on one another's expertise and establish a sense of trust in order to physically realise the different aspects of the projects:

> Moreover, Wageman (1995) found that a group task requiring high task interdependence makes salient a collective sense of responsibility, increasing the need for collaboration and mutual adjustments among members (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 43).

This shared sense of responsibility, as described in *Chapter Four*, often underlies they types of collaborations in which artists establish collective identities; it unites collaborators and helps to strengthen group bonds.

Although I welcomed artists skilled in different areas, I did, admittedly, take into consideration how these areas might affect the manners in which collaborators communicated. How might a painter interact with a fashion designer or a sound-artist? In what ways would the relationships between the artists and the work be affected by the different media and disciplines involved? Because I took an interpretive approach, when I first initiated Nomadics I had not yet narrowed down which communicative relationships or which aspects of communication to use as the focus of this study. I was curious about the ways in which

collaboration affected all of the communicative roles: the artists, artwork and audience. Without a more specific focus, I had to be cautious; I had to create an open situation that was still conducive and feasible for research. What format would best enable me to conduct the appropriate research, while still allowing for a large group of artists collaborate using mixed-media?

After careful consideration I decided to propose an artist genre to the artists: installation art. Especially conducive to interdisciplinary works, installation art provided an ideal format through which Nomadics' participants could coordinate their different areas of expertise. I would like to specify, however, that while I did set out with installation art in mind, I did not forcibly push this decision onto the collaborators. Although predetermining an artistic format or genre may appear, at first glance, to have undermined my authenticity, in actuality, this decision became a natural part of our creative process. For one thing, Orley and I, as described in Appendix 12, bonded over our joint interest in installation art; in part, she joined the collaboration because it provided the opportunity to work on an installation-environment. For another, I did not specify the layout, size or type of installation—whether it would emphasise experiential, visual or tactile elements. Rather, the collaborators collectively decided that the installation would involve a landscape; we jointly decided the location and size of the installation—two of the deciding factors in determining the final structure. Moreover, many of the artists requested that someone suggest a starting point— to come together without any purpose, they argued, felt overwhelming and uncomfortable.

Arguably, suggesting this format may have influenced the ways in which collaborators participated in Nomadics; shared interests in installation art, for example, provided a rallying point around which many of the core collaborators could identify and communicate. As discussed in *Chapter Four*, collaborations often develop around shared interests. Although installation art marked a point of shared interest, the fact that we decided on installation did not predetermine which collaborators partook in the project; artists such as Guiterrez and Chan, for example, who had previously worked in installation, dropped out of Nomadics despite this shared interest.

As described in the evaluation, collaborators had to overcome various obstacles in establishing a working method; unlike groups such as Gelitin or long-term partnerships such as Beagles and Ramsay, we had not previously worked together; nor did we decide to work together in order to fulfil a shared idea or plan. We knew little about each other's aesthetics or working methods. Though 'installation' provided a starting point, it was a hazy one. Wanting the project to develop collaboratively, however, I was hesitant to supply too many additional guidelines.

Arguably even this decision—to refrain from setting guidelines—was in itself a guideline that challenged the authenticity of the project and influenced the development of the collaboration. Massey (1998) argues, however, that this is a regular part of ethnographic and naturalistic research methods:

> Above all the ethnographer must try to articulate the assumptions and values implicit in the research, and what it means to acknowledge the researcher as part of, rather than outside, the research act. For Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:192), reflexivity, which demands 'the provision of ... a 'natural history' of the research' as experienced and

influenced by the researcher, is a 'crucial component of the complete ethnography.

Massey contends that the researcher's awareness of her influence on the participants and research equals in importance the researcher's attempt to reduce this influence. By considering my position as a researcher when reflecting on my observations and experiences as a participant, I could take into account ways in which I might have affected the natural course of the project, allowing for more reliable data.

To help verify this data, I also conducted a considerable amount of secondary research, taking into consideration other theorists' and artists' accounts of collaboration, as well as relevant theoretical frameworks. Because I used additional recording and observational techniques as well, my role as a researcher predominantly took place outside of the collaborative interaction; I designated specific times outside of the meetings in which to enact my role as researcher. It was during these times that I reviewed, analysed and reflected on the data I collected. Arguably, there were occasions in which the two roles could not be reconciled. During the building of the installation, for example, we often interviewed one another on video, recording each other's reflections on the project—a practice we enacted specifically to aid my research. On the whole, however, these methods (i.e. using recording devices and setting aside separate times for each role) helped me to balance these two identities; firsthand observations with secondary research; the theoretical with the practical. As a result, I could participate more freely as an artist within the collaboration, allowing (for the most part) my personal aesthetic perspectives to guide my artistic decision-making.

The following section examines the theoretical frameworks that I applied to my data on collaboration. It examines how these two types of research combined to provide a comprehensive method of investigation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Because it relies largely on the researcher's subjective experiences and interpretations, participant-observation can often come under scrutiny as a research-method. As Massey (1998) explains, however:

> Whether the researcher's subjectivity is a weakness or strength is not the issue. Experiencing the world subjectively is a way of life, and not one that we can choose, and is therefore an inevitable feature of the research act.

In order to account for this innate subjectivity, Sanger (1996: 16) promotes the use of 'mixed methodologies.' Incorporating additional research methods into one's study 'should increase research validity (Fox and Hernandex-Nieto, 1981; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: Price 1981)' (Sanger 1996: 16). Comparisons with other theorists' observations, for example, can help to expose wrongly interpreted or overly subjective accounts in one's own research. Additionally, research into related theoretical frameworks provides insight into the experiences recorded, allowing researchers to build on previous studies.

Based in the qualitative methods of **hermeneutic phenomenology**, this practice of utilising mixed methodologies in conjunction with experiential data is known as triangulation:

> Like most forms of qualitative inquiry, hermeneutic phenomenology sources for triangulation include a review of extant literature on the topic, observing the topic in its own environment, and gaining data on the topic from in-depth interviews with research participants. In addition, hermeneutic phenomenology considers descriptions and reflections of the topic in the form of art, fiction, poetry, film, or any source in the "lived world" (van Manen, 1990) that may deepen understanding of the topic (Ferch 2000: 155).

Notably, the hermeneutic phenomenological writings of theorists such as Hans Maurice Halbwachs (1992) and Jürgen Habermas (1984) comprised a considerable portion of my secondary research and functioned as an investigative lens for the latter portion of this thesis. The use of this particular framework reflects the interpretive and experiential qualities inherent in both collaborative and communicative interaction. Considering that, as a methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology welcomes different artistic disciplines and genres as viable data, this framework especially suits a project like Nomadics.

In accordance with Shannon R. Ferch's theory of triangulation, this thesis relied not only on my experiences as a participant-observer, but also a wide range of investigations including additional experiences in the 'lived world (ibid.) such as art-events, talks, conferences and films, as well as a considerable amount of secondary research including books, websites and journal articles. These writings fall more-or-less into three main categories: general narrative accounts of existing collaborative practices, theoretical analyses or investigations of artistic collaboration, and relevant theoretical and philosophical frameworks (including hermeneutic-phenomenology, communication theory and semiotics). This

section details how these additional modes of research supported this investigation; it examines their relationships to the participant-observation and how/why the theoretical frameworks chosen play an important role in furthering research in this field.

As detailed in the introduction, critical investigations of collaboration remain spare. Although Charles Green's (2001b) investigation *The Third Hand*: *Collaboration in Art From Conceptualism to Postmodernism* remains the most comprehensive publication on collaboration to date, several theorists have criticised his approach:

> Green tends to be anecdotal rather than analytical when describing the concrete processes of collaborative work… Green's approach is more theoretical than practical.... Unless one is willing to get into factual details of the creative and production processes, how art works come to be made matters less than what they are (Rochette & Saunders 2002).[19]

Anne Rochette and Wade Saunders argue in their review of Green's book, that writings on collaboration must focus on the actual details of the collaborative process; it is, they contend, in these details that the significance of collaboration lies. While Green's investigation posits some interesting theories regarding collaboration, he ultimately neglects these details and in doing so, fails in his examination of collaboration as a process.

My experiences as a participant-observer, as well as my additional secondary research into this area, allowed me to project the 'factual details of the creative and production process' that Green omits from his accounts (ibid.) These

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[19] This article originally appeared in Art and America in November 2002. I obtained an electronic copy [7/2004] from:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_11_90/ai_94079415

experiences, as well as the information I gathered through my contact with other collaborative groups and duos, provided points of comparison. Examining all of this information comparatively allowed me to contextualise my research as a participant-observer; it also allowed me to evaluate the claims and theories posited in Green's research. Like many of the critical writings that informed this thesis, Green's work provided a foundation from which several of the main concepts in this thesis developed. It was, for example, Green's 'phantom third hand' that laid the groundwork for my investigation of the 'collaborative author.' He asserted that this phantom possesses its own identity—that it involves joint mental processes in which collaborators share mutual knowledge, experiences and even feelings (Green 2001b: 180). I picked up these concepts and explored them. I examined more thoroughly the relationship of the artists' individual identities to the identity of this collaborative author. Using additional frameworks such as communication theory and hermeneutic-phenomenology in conjunction with additional research into collaboration, I was not only able to develop Green's theory; in working to explicate the process through which collaborative authorship arises, I also uncovered previously-unexplored relationships, practices and transformations that occur as part of the development of the 'phantom,' contributing new knowledge to my field.

Critical studies of collaboration, however, did more than create theoretical groundwork for this study; at times, the concepts and theories posited by other writers helped to direct the analysis of my experiences as a participant-observer. Just as I used my experiences with Nomadics to build on existing theory, I also used these critical studies to help substantiate theories I derived from my

experiences as a collaborator. I noticed, for example, that during the construction

on Nomadics we created a shared set of ideas and images- a sort of collective

language. I hypothesised that this language developed through regular

communication, the sharing of ideas, experiences and inspirations. I further

hypothesised that steady interaction and communication led us toward a shared

understanding of how to exercise these images and ideas in our work—a

collective consciousness and/or collective voice. In my theoretical

investigations, I later came across Michael P. Farrell's (2001) *Collaborative*

Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work. In his writings on creative

groups, Farrell proposes seven stages of collaborative development. He describes

amongst them a 'Quest Stage' in which collaborators 'share their ideas,

experiences, and ways of thinking' before 'merging cognitive processes' (Farrell

2001: 23). Although not wholly relevant to the types of collaborations this thesis

examines, Farrell's theories parallel several of my own, lending credibility to my

arguments and helping me to determine which of my subjective experiences as a

collaborator typify artistic collaboration.

While critical investigations of collaboration helped me to develop the theories

generated from the participant-observation, it is important to keep in mind that

Nomadics, as previously stated, constituted only a single case study. A wide

range of collaborative practices exists and the data I gathered from Nomadics

could in no way cover the scope of these practices. For this reason, I also

researched other artistic groups and partnerships, investigating narrative and

descriptive accounts of different collaborative practices. The writings I found

included both raw factual data as well as other artists' subjective accounts of

their collaborative experiences. This information not only helped me to contextualise the data I gathered from Nomadics; it also supplied important examples that at times challenged and at times supported my theories. It helped me to evolve my theories and influenced my perceptions of existing theories and concepts in this field.

On the whole, I came across four main types of publications that included this kind of information: catalogues that accompanied collaborative exhibitions (e.g. Jeffrey 2003; McCabe 1984); articles, essays and biographical writings on artists' websites (e.g. http://www.beaglesramsay.co.uk/; http://www.gelitin.net/mambo/index.php); video clips that often included brief interviews with the artists amongst their work; and descriptions embedded within historical overviews and critical writings that focus on related subjects such as participation, space and new media (e.g. Rush 1999; Popper 1975). Rather than focusing on the collaborative process, most of these publications concentrated more directly on the artists' work or, at times, the chronological development of the individual artists as a collaborative group. Collectively, these sources present an overview of collaboration in contemporary western society. Although they often remain quite general, these narrations provided me with a broader understanding of the types of experiences that characterise collaboration-- of the different types of collaborative groups; the varied ways in which collaborators choose to practice; the different conditions under which collaboration develops. I was able to discern similarities and differences within these practices. Taking into consideration the conditions and factors that might have accounted for these similarities and differences, I was able to generate new conclusions and theories. Applying relevant theoretical frameworks to these

theories and conclusions furthermore helped me to expand collaboration as a field of research.

In addition to researching existing literature on collaborative artists, I also contacted several duos and groups directly. Though not all of the groups I contacted responded, I was able to communicate and question collaborating duo John Beagles and Graham Ramsay; the collaborative curatorship of Sophie Hope and Sarah Carrington as B&B; and the Austrian collective Gelitin. I first read all of the online information I could find regarding their collaborative works and processes. Whenever possible, I also obtained written publications about these collaboratives. I attended multiple exhibitions of Beagles and Ramsay's work, and had the opportunity to talk with them in person during their performance of *Blood Pudding* (May 2005) in Brixton, London. I also had the opportunity to meet with Gelitin during the performance of their work *Yes Ok Ex*, at the Rochelle School in East London (May 2008). In addition to speaking with Florian Reither (a member of Gelitin) about their collaborative practice, I was invited to watch the collective prepare during the 20 minutes leading up to the exhibition-performance. Although I did not have the opportunity to meet B&B in person, I entered into an email exchange with Sophie Hope, who forwarded me information about past projects as well as a paper she had written on the collaborative role of the curator.

In order to help me further my research Hope, Reither, and Beagles and Ramsay all filled out questionnaires similar to the questionnaires Nomadics members

filled out.[20] The artists kindly reflected, narrated and analysed their practices, supplying me with immediate and direct information with which I could compare and contrast the information I gathered through secondary sources. This information more directly addressed the questions and theories investigated in this research. Although each questionnaire was detailed specifically to the artists being questioned, many of the questions overlapped. In this way, I could compare and contrast the responses.

While many theorists op for in-person interviews because of their spontaneity and flexibility, I felt that written responses best suited my research. In part, I used questionnaires because of their practicality. Most of the artists I contacted had little time for face-to-face interviews; on the occasions when I met the artists featured in this research, they were hastily passing through London for exhibitions or performances. Although I attempted an in-person interview with Reither, the commotion surrounding the art-event made it difficult to maintain any serious discussion. With too many distractions and interruptions, he found it difficult to respond. We therefore jointly decided to continue the interview via email. In this way, we both benefitted; Reither could have more time to think over his answers and respond at a time more suitable to his busy schedule; because he had more time, I received more thorough responses.

Questionnaires allow, on the whole, for more thought-out and complex answers. Though I could not observe firsthand the artists' reactions and responses to questions, I was able to witness both Beagles and Ramsay and Gelitin in the

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[20] See Appendixes 7-11.

execution of their work; as detailed above, I met with Reither in person and observed the collaborative preparation for a Gelitin event. I could have easily asked the artists more general questions in these environments; general information on collaborative practices, however, already exists. In order to further research in this field, I needed to ask more specific and analytical questions regarding the artists' collaborative practices—questions that ultimately required a considerable amount of reflection. For this reason, I believe that questionnaire-style interviews best suited this research.

In his writings on methodology, David S. Walonick (1993) argues that questionnaires play yet another important role—one that is, perhaps, especially conducive to research that relies heavily on subjective research methods such as participant-observation:

> Written questionnaires reduce *interviewer bias* because there is uniform question presentation (Jahoda, et al., 1962). Unlike in-person interviewing, there are no verbal or visual clues to influence a respondent to answer in a particular way. Many investigators have reported that interviewer voice inflections and mannerisms can bias responses (Barath and Cannell, 1976; Benson, 1946; Boyd and Westfall, 1965, 1970; Cahalan, 1951; Collins, 1970; Dohrenwend, Colombotos, and Dohrenwend, 1968; Franzen and Lazersfeld, 1945). [21]

A considerable amount of my firsthand research already relied on my in-person interaction with Nomadics members; using questionnaires provided an alternative. The artists I emailed had only a general idea concerning my research and did not know what types of answers I might be hoping for. Though my questions were quite detailed, I tried to use wording that would not prejudice or guide the respondents in anyway. Without any verbal or visual clues, as

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[21] [3/4/08] from: http://www.statpac.com/research-papers/questionnaires.htm

Walonick describes, there was a greater probability that I did not subconsciously influence the responses.

In comparing the data and information I gathered through the questionnaires, participant-observation and the aforementioned secondary research, I formed numerous preliminary questions, ideas and conclusions. I observed, for example, that my role as a collaborator involved a reciprocal and ongoing communicative exchange with the other artists, which evolved throughout the duration of the collaboration and culminated in the final installation. I also observed a trend in contemporary art theory in which authors borrow terminology from communication theory when describing the function of an artwork. Bourriaud (2002: 88-89), for one, refers to the 'transmission and reception' of artwork, referencing theorists such as Umberto Eco and Pierre Levy. Kester (2004: 90) further argues that we need to 'understand the work of art as a process of communicative exchange rather than a physical object.' I also experienced and read about miscommunication as an important part of the collaborative process— about the need to sustain dialogue despite discrepancies and misunderstandings. In order to explore these preliminary ideas and observations, as well as to deepen the critical investigation, I researched a variety of theoretical frameworks.

Chapter Two predominately incorporates communication theory and theories of authorship. Shannon and Weaver's (1963) model provided a basic framework with which to both compare and explicate the communicative responsibilities traditionally associated with artists and spectators. Having both studied and taught linguistics, I immediately recognised a parallel between the artist-artwork-

audience model of authorship and the transmission model of communication. Comparing the two allowed me to illustrate more specifically how collaboration reworks traditional notions of authorship.

Because the linearity of the transmission model is often criticised for undermining the fluidity and dynamism of communication, it is best used in context of its criticisms. In order to consider a systemic approach more applicable to collaborative dialogue and conversation, this thesis assimilates changes presented by more recent theory and models such as Berlo's 1960 SMCR (Source Message Channel Receiver) model and Robert L. Heath, Jennings Bryant's (2000) study, *Human Communication Theory and Research: Concepts, Contexts, and Challenges*. This thesis acknowledges contemporary criticisms, and adjusts the applications and definitions of the terminology (i.e. receiver, sender, message) accordingly.

Although most scholars agree that the transmission model underestimates the full complexity of the roles and relationships present in communicative interaction, the fact that so many theorists continue to reference this model suggests that it still performs and important function in contemporary communication theory. In his book *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, Don W. Stacks (1996: 400) explains that Shannon and Weaver's 'information theory model standardized the terminology of basic communication study.' Thomas E. Harris (1993: 287) argues that a model (such as the transmission model):

> …offers us a means for appreciating the complexity of the transaction process, outlining areas of potential communication difficulties, and isolating variables… The graphic display of components allows us to

identify factors and understand more fully the issues involved in communication.

It was for largely for these reasons that I used the transmission model; mapping out the collaborative process accordingly makes clear the complexities of collaborative communication. Simplifying the communicative process into these terms also draws attention to the different communicative roles that collaborators perform. In breaking down the communicative process, this chapter set the foundation for the remaining chapters, which use additional frameworks such as semiotics, pragmatics, sociology and hermeneutic-phenomenology to develop a more comprehensive examination of the communicative roles and dynamics.

While the transmission model helps to illustrate the actions that occur in a communicative exchange, it does not take into consideration the ways in which contextual factors impact the role, function or nature of a communicative act. It is important to consider that the communicative roles that artists and other participants perform depend, in part, on each person's authority and decision-making power within the collaborative context; one artist's utterance may not bear the same weight as another; if a technician or outside assistant voices a criticism, it is likely that it would not impact the artwork in the same way as it would have if a collaborator had voiced it. To investigate the conditions and circumstances conducive to collaborative communication, *Chapter Three* incorporates aspects of **Pragmatics**. Pragmatics distinguishes between performative speech (speech acts) and non-performative speech; it investigates whether or not a particular 'sending' or 'message' performs an act, what type of effect it produces in the receiver and how the context of the message contributes to this effect.

Although *Chapter Three* does not directly cite any pragmaticians or utilize linguistic jargon, pragmatics largely influenced the aspects of communication examined in both this chapter and parts of *Chapter Four*. While various different models and approaches to pragmatics have been argued for, many of their core principals overlap.   The aspects of communication investigated in *Chapter Three* most closely follow an integrated approach.

> An integrated theory of verbal interaction must describe (1) the functions an utterance performs, (2) the contextual conditions necessary for that utterance to perform those functions, and (3) the appropriateness of the utterance. These conditions must apply to language as it is used in normal settings (Haslett 1987: 7).

Of the three stipulations described above, the first two play the largest role in the third chapter. This chapter investigates the conditions necessary for communication to be considered collaborative. It furthermore examines the function of the communication—whether or not the utterance or exchange performs or influences the project artistically, managerially or curatorally. It considers influencing factors such as the identities of the speakers, as well as issues concerning authority and intention.

While pragmatics considers how contextual factors and conditions affect the meaning and purpose of a communicative action, various other communicative factors still need to be accounted for. Although she advocates a pragmatic approach to communication, Beth Haslett (1987) explains that the underlying principles of various fields within communication theory and linguistics converge. She argues for an integrated approach to communication studies citing linguist Teun Adrianus van Dijk, who specialized in critical discourse analysis and textual linguistics:

> Van Dijk concludes that pragmatic theories need to be integrated with theories of cognition and social interaction in order to construct an overall theory of communication (Haslett 1987: 8).

In accordance with both Haslett and Van Dijk's argument, this thesis incorporates a variety of philosophical, sociological and semiotic frameworks, drawing on the writings of theoreticians such as Roland Barthes (1977), Emil Durkheim (1982) and Jürgen Habermas (1984), Bourriaud (2005) and Umberto Eco (in Bishop 2006) among others.

These different theoretical frameworks come together in the final chapter, *Theories of Collectivity*. More specifically, this chapter incorporates aspects of these frameworks that relate to communication theory and hermeneutic-phenomenological philosophy.[22] Within the context of this study, hermeneutic phenomenology not only addresses how the context of an utterance affects meaning, but also how individuals project past experiences, perspectives and knowledge into new encounters as part of the interpretive process. As interpretation affects the ways in which collaborators respond to one another— when, how and *why* they communicate— understanding the development of collaborative dialogue and a collective voice, requires an investigation into collaborators' **horizons of understanding** (Gadamer 2004).

The manners in which collaborators perform the different or overlapping facets of their identities also affect interpretative and communicative behaviours. Different sets of experiences, social backgrounds and expectations in accordance with different or overlapping memberships to societal subgroups can affect how

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[22] This is as opposed to hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology.

an individual perceives and interprets information, as well as the preferred manner in which that individual communicates:

> When individuals are attuned to differences among group members, they may feel greater social attraction to and exhibit favouritism toward members perceived as similar and, in turn, isolate themselves from those perceived as different. Such fragmentation within the group may lead to implicit intragroup rivalries and negative stereotypes and distrust of out-group members, which blocks members from identifying with the work group as a whole (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 40).

For this reason, frameworks considering group and identity politics play an important role in analysing collaborative dynamics. Communication in this case not only involves what is said and/or the reaction that the saying evokes, but also how collaborators combine their voices and the overlapping aspects of their identities into a phantom author.

Although many ethnographic studies focus specifically on societal subgroups categorised by determinants such as race and gender, or marginalized cultures as compared with dominant cultures, I want to impress that in this case the societal subgroup at focus consists of artists with an interest in collaboration. Within this focus group, I chose to concentrate on the superordinate categories of similarity and difference rather than to examine specifically how one or more of the many identities present in the group altered the communication. The focus of this research was whether or not these factors overlapped to produce common ground around which collaborators could identify and communicate. In other words, this thesis concentrates on whether or not these similarities and differences provide points of convergence or divergence. To fully examine how each of these sub-identities (i.e. race, gender, age) affects communication would necessitate several additional studies; the communicative behaviours of each subgroup or identity deserve their own research investigation. Thus this study examines, group

dynamics and identity politics specifically as they relate to theories of collectivity. This choice of frameworks helps to explicate the process through which a group of collaborators forms a third, or rather, collective voice as a sole identity—a phantom author.

While this study incorporates a diverse range of frameworks, it is important to note that communication occurs on many levels and that examining communication in an interdisciplinary context requires additional theoretical considerations. In this type of setting, for example, artists communicate not only via written and spoken language, but also through the media at hand. The communication therefore involves both interpretative and experiential elements and must consider hermeneutic and phenomenological theory in relation to one another. One must also consider that, with various modes of communication used, the signs typically employed to transmit messages between collaborators extend beyond written and spoken language. As part of the interpretative process, one must examine not only the experiences and knowledge with which collaborators understand these signs, but also the meanings that collaborators attach to the images, textures and sounds that comprise the artwork.

The final chapter of this thesis therefore examines how artists collectively use and attach meaning to different signs, referents and symbols at various stages of the collaborative process. Kester (2004: 20) explains that:

> We are constantly framing our experience of the world through representational systems. To interact with others we require a shared language, and even our visual experience involves a kind of literacy as we learn to interpret the conventions associated with photographs, cinema, paintings, street signs, and so on.

For Kester, these systems possess an illusory nature that art is uniquely suited to challenge. In collaborating, however, artists not only challenge these conventions, but also borrow from them. At times they create their own sub-representational systems—a collective set of signs or language that they articulate through their work.

To explore the relationships of these signs to the meanings that collaborators assign them, *Chapter Four* draws on the writings of semioticians such as Roland Barthes (1977), Umberto Eco (in Bishop 2006) and Charles Pierce (in Hoopes 1991). Paying particular attention to the aspects of their theories that relate to authorship, this chapter considers how different factors and practices help influence both the development of a collection language and the ways in which collaborators articulate this language in their work. Arguably, an investigation into the methods that collaborators use to establish shared meaning and ownership over these signs is, by default, also an investigation into the collective interpretation of these signs. By examining the communicative dynamics from both of these perspectives, *Chapter Four* unites a semiotic approach with a hermeneutic one.

This thesis ultimately considers the aspects of pragmatics, hermeneutic-phenomenology and semiotics that interrelate under the broader subjects of communication and authorship. It is important to recognise that these frameworks examine many of the same communicative issues from different but related angles. In his study *Semiotics and Thematics in Hermeneutics* T.K.

Seung (1982: 51) explores the relationships between these fields, explaining how:

> …the scientific enterprise of investigating language can be conducted on two different levels, the semantic and the pragmatic. The science of language limited to semantic issues is semantics; it becomes pragmatics when it is extended to pragmatic issues. Hence the notion of using linguistics in hermeneutics can mean the notion of using semantics or pragmatics in it.

Seung also cites Charles Morris who, in accordance with C.S. Peirce's theories of semiosis, contends that semiotics consists of three main divisions: syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. This suggests that semantics and pragmatics exist not only as subfields within hermeneutics and linguistics, but also semiotics. Of significance is the fact that Pierce stresses the importance of the interpreter as part of the signification function of a sign (Seung 1982: 76). Once an interpreter is implicated as part of the relationship of a sign to a meaning, hermeneutics becomes an important aspect of the semiotic investigation.

While the relationships among semiotics, pragmatics and hermeneutics may appear convoluted at best, the main point to consider is that they are intrinsically related. To explicate the communicative dynamics from which collaborative authorship develops, all three of these frameworks must be considered; furthermore, they must be considered in relation to one another. This thesis relies on the combination of these theoretical frameworks to develop and expand the concepts and theories that that arose from the combination of naturalistic enquiry with my research into critical and factual investigations of collaboration. In this way, I was not only able to uncover more detailed information regarding the collaborative process; I was also able to more extensively analyse the

communicative relationships and processes that occur during the production of the collaborative author, extending my investigation of collaboration into a theoretical domain previously unexplored at this level in the arts.

CHAPTER 2:

COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP
AND THE COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGE

Collaboration is awarded good marks for challenging the Modernist myth of the artist as solitary creative genius working in a studio (Cornford 2004: 661).

Artists, critics and theorists have long challenged the stereotype of the lonely artist slaving away in a quiet studio (Green 2001b; Sarnoff &Sarnoff 2002; Hobbs 1984; Gablik 1992). Along with collaborative art, a variety of participatory art-practices have emerged at the forefront of recent artistic trends, exposing creative processes and shifting attention away from the art-object to the actions and interactions surrounding it. While these trends may not have developed in a purely sequential order— there are always artists ahead of their times— definite examples can be traced back to the both the Surrealists and their precursors the Dadaists who, as early as 1916, began experimenting with collaboration and creating participatory works; by encouraging participants and/or other artists to partake in the creative process, the Surrealists and Dadaists highlighted the actions and interactions involved in the making of the art. Although the myth of the 'solitary artist' continued to dominate art theory throughout most of the 20th century, these projects helped to instigate a shift in the artist's image from 'lonely genius' to that of a more socially integrated member of society (McCabe 1984).

Fluxus, a direct antecedent of Surrealism and Dadaism, emerged in the 1950s. Characterised by participatory works and actions such as Happenings, Fluxus went one step further often obliterating the art-object entirely, diverting attention to the creative processes and behaviours of both the artists and (at times)

participants. In Alan Kaprow's work *Words* (1962), for example, participants were invited to post their own words on walls and partitions. This not only shifted the perspective from the art-object to the process, but also transferred a degree of authority over the creative process and product to the participants (O'Doherty 1999).

On the other extreme, artists such as Ian Gregorescu, Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci sometimes performed their work without witnesses. Not only did they isolate themselves in the manner of the stereotype described above, they also isolated the work itself, denying the importance or even the relevance of a primary audience, to which artwork would typically be exposed. In other words, '…the physical process of art-making became the work itself' (Rush 1999: 49). Instead of a live audience, Michael Rush (ibid.) writes, 'the video camera represented "the other", or the audience.' Even though Acconci and Nauman exhibited some of their videos, many of them they kept private, which meant that knowledge of the creative acts became known through other avenues. Much like the researcher or reader who experiences historical art events through documentation and oral recollection, these secondary audiences witnessed neither a visible product nor the actions and processes surrounding the alleged products or performances. In these cases, the absence of the work became the art itself; it was not the subject of the videos which comprised the premise of the art, but rather the audience's knowledge that these performances were created and kept in isolation.

This shift in attention from product to process has a significant bearing on the relevance of collaboration. Throughout the first half of the 20th century,

structuralism dominated critical readings of literature and art, calling for a severing of process and product and omitting from the interpretive process knowledge of both artists'/authors' biographies as well as knowledge of the circumstances and conditions under which texts and/or art works were created. Post-structuralism, on the other hand, maintains that a given work holds a variety of meanings and must be considered in context of the conditions, cultural factors and processes present and influential in both the making of that work *and* the reception of it. While it is obviously possible to view the art product of a collaborative process without knowledge of that process or consideration of it, a poststructuralist reading would require, in this case, one to consider how the absence of this information affects the interpretation of the work. By calling attention to the creative methods behind the work as well as the historical and cultural context in which these methods were used, poststructuralism not only called attention to collaborative authorship, it also recognised the relevance of this process to the meaning of a text or work. [23]

Traditional views of the isolated artist support models of authorship and spectatorship in which the author and audience were connected only through the audiences' reception of the work. In his writings on dialogical aesthetics, Grant Kester (2004: 10) explains that this conventional '… object-based artwork (with some exceptions) is produced entirely by the artist and only subsequently offered to the viewer. As a result, the viewer's response has no immediate reciprocal effect on the constitution of the work.' Kester later references artist Stephen Willats-- an early practitioner of dialogical art - who proposed what I refer to as

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[23] Please note that this is my personal interpretation of the structuralist/poststructuralist debate, based off of a variety of studies. More information regarding this can be found in Hawkes, Terence. (2003) *Structuralism and Semiotics*. Routledge, New York.

the *Artist-Artwork-Audience* model. This model denotes a linear sequence of communication in which the artist or author creates a message or experience that is then decoded and interpreted by the audience. According to this model, the artist receives full credit as author of the work.[24]

Figure One: '*Conventional Relationship of an Artwork between Artist and Audience*'
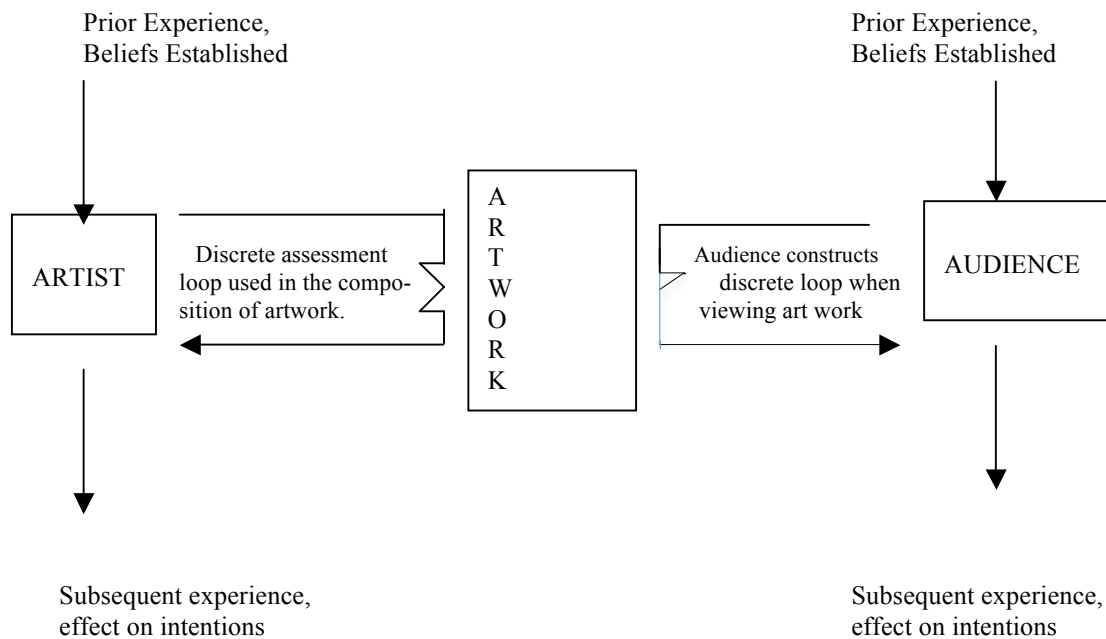
(Kester cites Willats 2004: 93)

It is important to consider, that the art-public clung to these traditional notions of authorship long after artists began creating participatory and collaborative works. The fact that collaborative teams such as The Boyle Family concealed their early collaborative endeavours under an individual identity (John Boyle's) not so much dismisses the relevance of the collaborative process as confirms its significance. According to Green (2001b), the Boyle family's decision to do was based on the negativity with which audiences and critics of that time received

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[24] Please note that this model will be explored in greater detail in the section titled *A Brief Look at Communicatin Theory*, pp. 71-76.

collaborative works.   Susan and Irving Sarnoff (2002) describe how other partnerships such as Christo and Jeanne-Claude were also intimidated.   The artists rationalised that, 'one newcomer was enough of a threat' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Christo & Jeanne-Claude 2002: 85). For this reason, according to the Sarnoffs, Christo and Jeanne-Claude waited 25 years before publicly acknowledging their collaborative relationship. Like the Boyle family, they disclosed their partnership only after the art establishment had begun to accept joint authorship (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002; Green 2001b).

Arguably, other factors exist as to why collaborating couples and teams concealed their collaborative efforts. In a 2005 interview with Ian Berry, artist Mel Zeiger attributes Christo and Jeanne-Claude's acknowledgement of their collaboration to this post-structural emphasis on process. Jeanne-Claude's role, Zeiger explains, was mainly 'behind the scenes,' and included, among other tasks, administrative duties and procedures. According to Zeiger, Christo and Jeanne-Claude came to realise that these activities comprised 'as much a part of their work as the final product' (Berry & Arning cite Zeiger 2005: 31). Recognising Jeanne-Claude as a collaborator was therefore a recognition of these activities as an integral part of the art.

 The belated recognition of Jeanne-Claude as a collaborative partner, it must be pointed out, also reveals the extent to which gender played a role in the acceptance of certain collaborative art practices. In the cases of both the Boyle Family and Christo and Jeanne-Claude, the female identities were subsumed, while the male collaborator (in the case of the Boyle family, the patriarchal figure) accepted sole accreditation. As Christine Battersby explains in *The*

Clouded Mirror, 'the achievements of women who have managed to create are obscured by an ideology that associates cultural achievement with the activities of males' (Battersby 1999: 129). One must consider that the acknowledgement of many male-female collaborative partnerships coincided not only with the acceptance of collaborative methods, but also with society's growing acceptance of the female artist.

Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron's (1993) publication, *Significant Others: Creativity & Intimate Partnership*, explores several sets of artistic couples including Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin, and Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Whether or not all of these couples did in fact collaborate remains debatable. Of significance, however, is the fact that the male identities within these artistic partnerships received precedence. In the introduction to their collected essays, the authors point out that:

> Links between productivity and creativity are gender-bound at a deep level...The hierarchy that is often assumed to be the "natural" order reinforces the notion that women do not do "serious" work, that they paint when they are "bored in bed," as in the case of Frida Kahlo…' (Chadwick & de Courtivron 1993: 10-11).

Despite the fact that some female artists such as Kahlo receive wide recognition today, until the latter portion of the twentieth century, gender stereotypes often interfered with women's credibility as artists. As the title of a 1933 article in *Detroit News* summed up, Frida Kahlo was considered merely the 'Wife of the Master Mural Painter [who] Gleefully Dabbles in Works of Art.' (Herrera in Chadwick & de Courtivron 1993: 122). It is not difficult to project how this perspective influenced the seriousness with which audiences and art-critics assessed the contribution of female artists to works on which they collaborated with men, let alone with one another.

While gender perception accounts for that fact that some collaborations went unrecognised, Cynthia McCabe (1984) offers another practical reason as to why many teams intentionally concealed their partnerships: finance. The inability to generate income through collectively authored works discouraged some collaborative teams that might have otherwise braved hostile reviews and criticisms:

> In Russia in 1920, the Stenbergs made an assessment that would prove prophetic: they realized that experiential art by more than one artist simply would not sell (McCabe 1984: 25).

This is not to imply by any means that *all* collaborating artists during this time period concealed their collaborative efforts; brothers Vladmir and Georgii Stenberg, for example, did not. What this does illustrate is that in general, the art-market disapproved of collaboration enough for it to devalue the finished art product. The fact that the art establishment and market accepted these same collaborative works when the artists involved concealed their joint efforts, further supports the idea that when publicised, knowledge of the collaborative process interfered with the audience's reception of the work; the creative processes through which the work was made, to all intents and purposes, eclipsed the quality and/or subject of the art.

Clearly the art-public disapproved of collaboration; the question that remains is why? What provoked such negative reactions to collaborative art? In response to this line of enquiry, Hobbs (1984: 64) posits the 'great person theory,' what David Shapiro (1984: 46) refers to as the 'myth of the hero.' Both theorists believe that people tend to attribute significant historical changes and accomplishments to individuals in order to enhance the role of the individual in society:

> We so desperately want to believe that individuals do control the world and that history is not mindless attrition, some effect caused by innumerable people unsuspectingly reacting to a sequence of events (Hobbs 1984: 64).

Hobbs (ibid.) further explains that this mentality empowers individuals; 'it makes us feel that if these people can impact events, then so can we!' Following this line of reasoning, Hobbs elaborates on this theory, explaining that:

> If we fetishize a work of art into a masterpiece and an artist into a genius, we break off the dialogue because we remove the art from the level of discourse and make it absolute (Hobbs 1984: 65).

In other words, the 'great person theory' contributes to the illusion that the art creates.

During the Dadaist and Surrealist movements, however, when artists more actively began to experiment with collaboration, many artworks and performances purposely set out to challenge this sense of illusion. As McCabe (1984: 17) describes, 'Dada was born as a direct literary and artistic response to the carnage and upheaval in Europe'; it was, in many ways, a reaction to World War I. By embracing the savage and chaotic nature of war in their work, the Dadaists challenged romantic and heroic images of war and the war-hero; discounting aesthetics, they advocated not art, but 'anti-art'—a movement meant in part to abolish quixotic notions of both art and the art-genius. The art-public, on the contrary, clung to both the illusion of the masterpiece and the belief that amongst the 'carnage and upheaval' an individual could still make a difference (ibid.).

Despite the fact that many artists concealed their collaborative efforts, it is important to bear in mind that others braved public criticism, paving the way for

the acceptance of collaborative works today. As early as 1952, for example, John Cage initiated *Theater Piece No 1,* a mixed-media artistic event involving among others: Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and Charles Olson. Often credited as the first 'Happening,' the collaborative event took place at Black Mountain College- an alternative arts school and a hub for experimental artists founded in 1933.[25] Authors Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman (1997: 163) explain 'Black Mountain wasn't simply a place where creative collaboration took place. It was *about* creative collaboration.'

Other early teams such as Helen Harrison and Newton Harrison, and Gilbert Prousch and George Passmore, also braved potential criticisms, exhibiting collaboratively as early as 1969. Although the Harrisons received considerable criticism when they first started out, they claim that as time went by, 'People got used to it. By 1976, no one was worried' (Green cites Harrison & Harrison 2001b: 99). More immediate success came the way of Gilbert and George who won the Turner Prize as a collaborative duo in 1986, an event that preceded Christo and Jeanne-Claude's disclosure of their collaborative process. While the performative nature of their early works such as *Singing Sculptures* (1969-1973) may have contributed to their initial success as a collaborative team, Gilbert and George continued to receive recognition as a joint identity even after they moved into object-based disciplines such as photomontage and paper-sculptures.[26]

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[25] This reference is from an online article that did not include page numbers: Gena, Peter (1992) *Purposeful Purposeless Meets Found Order* [4/2007] from:
http://www.petergena.com/cageMCA.html

[26] For more information regarding the historical evolution of collaborative works, see Appendix 1: *A Timeline of Collaborative Practices Discussed in this Thesis.*

The performative aspects of the aforementioned works, however, must be taken into consideration. The majority of Black Mountain's collaborative productions involved plays, theatrical performances and interactive art-events such as Cages' *Theatre Piece no 1,* which was performed among the audience members. The collaborative Fluxus works that followed in the 1950s and 1960s heightened the performative elements further by inviting participants to interact with the artists during the execution of the events. Although Gilbert and George categorise their *Singing Sculptures* as visual art rather than performance art, the performative nature of their early projects likely made their debut as a collaborative duo easier. As Susan Sollins and Nina castelli Sundell explain in their essay *Team Spirit*:

> Most forms of art, theater, film, dance, architecture and music are inherently collaborative. With rare exceptions, all involve the participation of more than one individual. Only those forms of art - such as literature, painting sculpture and musical composition – that we think of when we speak of the author, artist or composer are generally taken to be the work of one extraordinary human being.[27]

Performance-based works offended public sensibility less because they were, for the most part, already accepted as collaborative.

On the whole, performance based and non-performance based collaborations have different ways of altering conventional notions of authorship. *Singing Sculptures,* for example, like many performative projects, modified *the artist-artwork- audience* model by converting the artist(s), formerly the maker(s) /**sender**(s) of the art-object/message, into a channel or **transmitter** of the art. Additionally, performers' visual and auditory characteristics contribute to the overall presentation of a performance, effectively incorporating the performers into the artistic 'message' itself. Consider, for example, Laurie Anderson's

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newest work *Homeland* (2008). A musical composition, visual experience and performance, Anderson uses lighting, sound and storytelling. As the dominant maker of the work, she continues to perform the primary role of 'sender.' At the same time, her facial expressions, subtle movements, countenance and voice enact the work; along with the lighting and musicians, she physically transmits the piece to the audience. From another perspective, however, she makes her body and voice part of the work. Having seen this piece recently, I not only recall the sounds, lighting and text but also her figure behind the synthesiser; the timbre of her voice; her dark clothing and her short hair. In this way, she not only transmits the work with her body and voice, but in doing so she also comprises part of the work itself; she literally becomes an artistic medium.

On the other hand, artists like Acconci and Nauman, who performed without witnesses, not only undermined the significance of the audience or '**receiver**,' but also the significance of the art-object, shifting the content of the artistic-message from the performance or art-object, to the circumstances in which the art was created. When one considers that 'audiences' learned and continue to learn about their performances through alternative sources, it follows that Acconci and Nauman also challenged the role of the artwork or art-object as the primary transmitter for the message.

In the collaborative situations on which this thesis focuses (i.e. Nomadics, Beagles and Ramsay, Gelitin, the Boyle Family), artists rework traditional communicative responsibilities by playing multiple roles. They become at times sender/creator, and at other times receptors of other collaborators' ideas and physical creations. Although some collaborative groups and duos create works

that also invite audience participation, the initial collaboration alters the communicative model not from the integration of the artists and the audience into a single situation, nor from a controlled situation in which an artist seeks or solicits actions from a participant, but rather from a situation that merges the artist's responsibilities with those more typical of an audience. Like a solo artist, these collaborators maintain decision-making power over the art, but like an audience, collaborators must at times step back and 'receive' the ideas and physical changes that their colleagues make to the work, perhaps later altering these changes, but receiving them nonetheless.

According to this collaborative model of communication an uncountable number of *collaborator-collaborator* exchanges occur during the realisation of the work—that is, prior to the completion of the art-object. Hence, in the case of collaboration, the 'artist' denoted in the *artist-artwork-audience* model does not signify an individual communicator, but rather all of the exchanges leading up to the creation of the work-- a collective communication.

This is further complicated by the means through which collaborators communicate. Typical communication involves verbal or written language, and to a certain extent body language. Collaborators often communicate through a variety of media. In the latter stages of Nomadics, for example, we often used the materials out of which we built the installation to communicate our ideas. Even in the early stages, Dáte communicated partially through sketches and sound recordings. In this way, the experiential nature of the communication was heightened. Rather than encoding an idea in verbal or written language, we shaped and experimented with the media at hand to illustrate the idea itself.

Additionally, we used this media to help explain our verbal communications. As the installation involved auditory, olfactory and visual elements, we appealed directly to multiple senses. Without having to encode these ideas in language, we omitted a level of interpretation and, more importantly, clarified and helped prevent miscommunication.

A better explication of these claims, however, requires further investigation into the communicative process. While the traditional *artist-artwork-audience* perspective appears, at first glance, to epitomise more linear communication theories such as Shannon and Weaver's (1963) transmission model, a closer analysis reveals that even in the case of non-collaborative work, the solitary artist is not as isolated as once perceived. Furthermore, as Green (2001b) explains, even in the absence of collaboration, an exchange often precedes the exhibition of the work. Many artists, as discussed in *Chapter Three*, communicate with friends, editors, institutions and agents about the work prior to its completion. What this thesis attempts to clarify, and what many theorists such as Green and Kester fail to differentiate, are the separate ways in which collaborative communication, spectator participation and these other outside communications affect the communicative roles and responsibilities traditionally associated with artistic authorship.

The following section provides a brief history of communication theory in order to provide a clearer understanding of the contemporary uses of terms such as 'receiver' and 'sender,' and to clarify the ways in which this thesis employs this terminology. By taking a more nuanced approach to communication, it illustrates more specifically how collaborative relationships rework conventional models of

both communication and authorship. Examining how changing conceptions of the sender, transmitter and receiver correspond to the changing roles and responsibilities associated with the artist, artwork and audience, this thesis aims to shed light on claims made by contemporary theorists such as Green and Kester. Ultimately, this chapter sets the theoretical foundation for the rest of the thesis, which builds on these models and claims by investigating and applying additional communicative frameworks such as pragmatics, hermeneutics and semiotics to collaborative authorship.

A BRIEF LOOK AT COMMUNICATION THEORY

Collaboration, it should by now be apparent, alters the communicative relationships surrounding the art experience/ art object. In order to more thoroughly investigate the ways in which it does so, it is important to examine not only the historical notions of authorship which collaboration challenges, but also how collaboration causes artists to experience different communicative roles and responsibilities. How specifically do the acts of 'sending' and 'receiving' relate to authorial responsibilities? What exactly occurs during collaborative communication to change the responsibilities associated with these acts? How does collaboration rework conventional understandings of these terms?
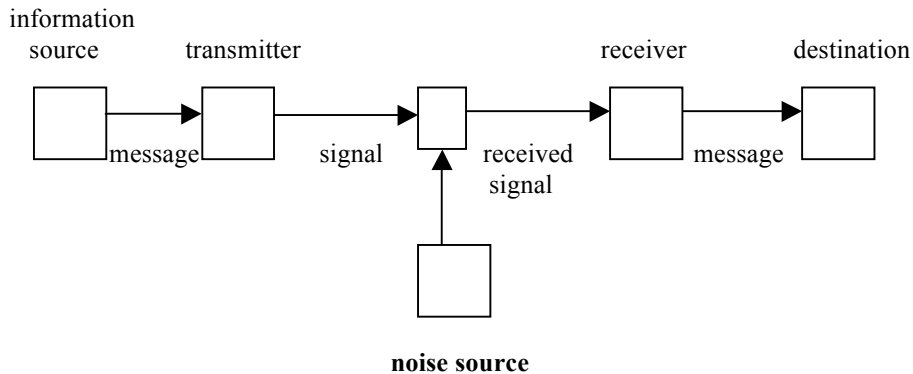
Although communication and information theory have undergone various changes in the past 50 years, the basic terminology has remained constant. Even in linguistic fields such as Semiotics and Pragmatics, theorists have continued to

draw on the terminology put forth in early communication models such as the Transmission Model (Sender/Transmitter/Message/Receiver, etc.) (e.g. Saussure 1983/1916); Danesi 1994). Many contemporary art theorists such as Bourriaud (2002; 2005) and Kester (2004) do so too. Over time, these terms have evolved to incorporate more comprehensive understandings of the responsibilities and influences each communicative role performs or is able to perform.

Like traditional views of the *artist-artwork-audience* relationship, the transmission model simplifies the communicative process into a linear equation. Most simply put, transmission models view communication as 'the process or act of transmitting a message from a sender to a receiver, through a channel and with the interference of noise' (Heath & Bryant 2000 cite Devito: 46). Arguably, among the different models (Shannon and Weaver's 1963; Laswell's 1948; Berlo's 1960), the responsibilities and significance assigned to each of these roles differ. Berlo, for example, describes how the knowledge, past experiences, cultural background and skills of the receiver help to determine the information received. He also emphasises that these factors influence not only the encoding of the message, but also the structure of the code and the channel that the sender chooses. Shannon and Weaver's model, on the other hand, infamously simplifies the role of the 'receiver,' allotting more control over the message to the sender, with consideration for possible outside interference which they describe as 'noise.' Despite these differences, however, these theorists, for the most part, divide the equation into parallel components, focusing on a linear model with a start and a finish, in which communication proceeds in a single direction.

Originally fashioned by Shannon and Weaver (1963), *Figure Two* represents the

basic foundation of all transmission models.

Figure Two: Shannon & Weaver's Transmission Model

information
source　　　　transmitter　　　　　　　　　　receiver　　　destination

message　　　　signal　　received　　　message
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　signal

noise source

(Shannon & Weaver 1963: 7 & 34)

It is important to consider that both Laswell's (1948) formula and Shannon and

Weaver's (1963) model were first published just after WWII when the art-public

strongly favoured a similarly linear perspective of the creative process.[28] Weaver

(in Shannon & Weaver 1963: 3) further specifies in an addendum to the original

publication that their model applies to 'not only written and oral speech, but also

music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballet, and in fact all human behaviour**:**

> When I talk to you, my brain is the information source, yours the
> destination; my vocal system is the transmitter, and your ear and the
> associated eight nerve is the receiver (Weaver 1963: 7).

Appropriated into an artistic situation, the artist constitutes the information

source. This artist encodes his/her work into a chosen medium (channel), which

then transmits this work via light or air depending on whether the artwork is a

visual or auditory experience (ibid.).   The audience or participant then 'receives'

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[28] See Appendix 1: *A Timeline of Collaborative Practices Discussed in this Thesis.*

and decodes this work. More regularly, this equation is shortened to that of 'sender,' 'transmitter' and 'receiver'.

Berlo's (1960) interpretation of the transmission model even better supports this relationship in an artistic context. For Berlo, the five senses comprise communication channels. The receiver not only receives a linguistic message, but like the audience/participant of an artistic work, 'sees,' 'touches,' 'hears' and 'smells' the experience created by the artists. While Berlo contends that the 'source' must choose which of these channels is most effective in reaching the target audience or receiver, this investigation allows for multi-sensory modes of communication in which a variety of media interact simultaneously in order to relay an art 'message' or experience.

Introducing multiple methods of reception, however, raises several important questions. In the case of multi-sensory works such as *Nomadics*, for example, participants (receivers) can receive multiple messages (i.e. audio, visual, tactile) simultaneously which interact to create a cumulative message. *Figure One* and *Figure Two*, on the other hand, signify a single exchange that occurs along a particular channel rather than a series of exchanges that interact across several channels. How, then, do we map-out a multi-sensory exchange? Must several transmissions be noted within the cumulative transmission? One for each sensory path? Do we divide the overall message into its sensory constituents? Like the collaborative situation, a multi-sensory exchange complicates the transmission model. It does so, however, by altering our understanding of the 'message' and the 'channels' rather than our understanding of the roles of the artists.

Collaboration, on the other hand, not only complicates the relationship between the 'message/ art object' and the 'receiver/participant,' it also defies the linearity of these more traditional models, challenging conventional notions of authorship and redistributing the responsibilities and roles traditionally associated with both the artist *and* the audience-participant. Consider again *Figure One*. When compared with *Figure Two* it becomes clear that traditionally artists were associated with the role of 'sender' and the audience with that of 'receiver.' Once the solitary *artist*, however, is substituted with *artists,* the 'great person theory' that dominated perspectives on authorship during the modernist period collapses. This plurality implies that a series of exchanges and 'messages' precedes the 'message' embodied within the finished artwork. In order to collaborate, artists must both *send* and *receive*, taking on responsibilities traditionally associated with the audience-participant. As such, the communicative roles and responsibilities conventionally associated with the artistic-authorship are reworked.

Consider the following scenario, when 'a' 'b' and 'c' represent artists within a collaborative group as in *Figure Three*. A communicative exchange among all, or between any two of the artists may occur at any time during the creative process within this scenario. While this exchange takes place, each communicator takes turns acting as 'sender' and 'receiver'. During this time, the artwork or artistic media may or may not be used as a channel of communication. When for example, one collaborator interacts with the artwork to demonstrate an idea, the other collaborators become momentary 'audiences' of this proposed idea. All of this interaction, however, precedes the completion of the 'message'

or 'work'. For this reason, within the more conventional, simplified version of this model, all of this communication would be subsumed under the label 'artist'.

Figure Three: Simplified Collaborative Example of the Artist-Artwork-Audience Model

Artists
engaged in ongoing reciprocal communicative exchanges that build off of and feed into each other.
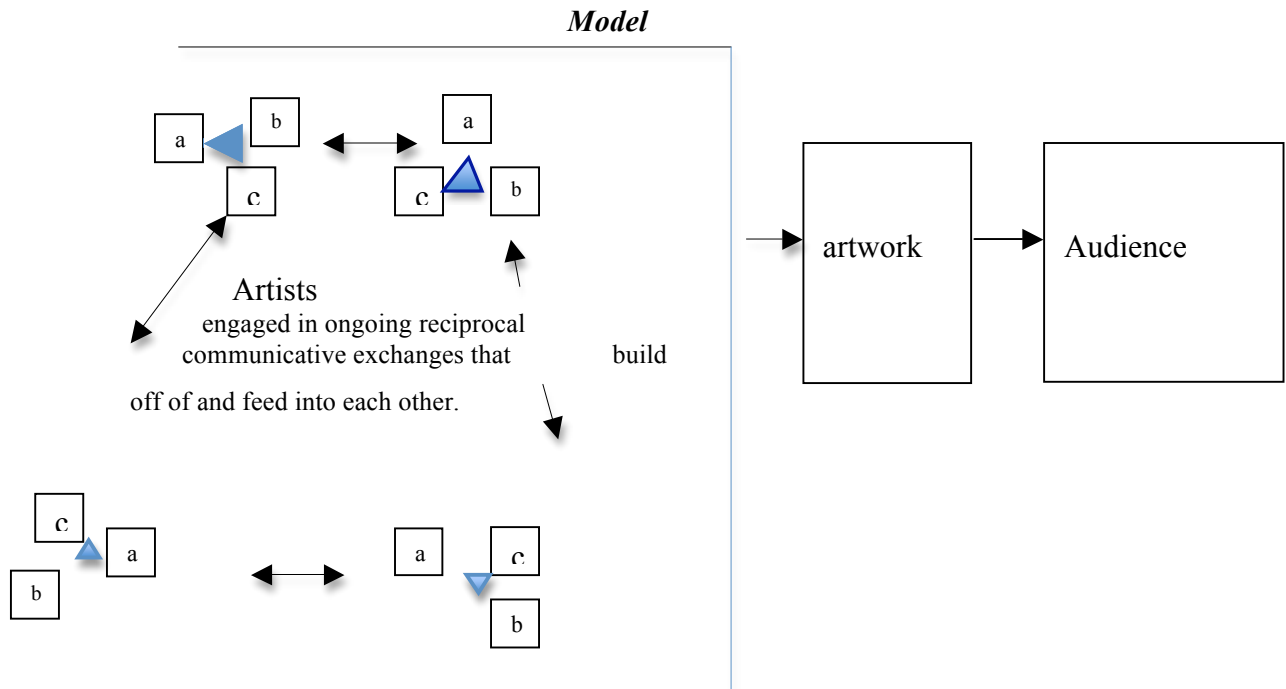
If one considers that the collaborators communicate not only through language, but also through the media, this exchange/series of exchanges becomes further complicated; communication among collaborators may act on or directly interact with the artwork. Media-channelled communication might involve, for example, shifting a pillar or changing a particular sound. One might argue that a degree of interpretation is removed. Rather than merely encoding the idea in language, collaborators can, at times, use the media at hand to demonstrate the idea itself. In collectively determining the structure and form of a message, they do not always need to choose an additional channel of communication (e.g. drawing or verbally describing an idea); they can directly interact with the artistic 'message'. As a result, the other collaborators become observers of this event; they not only

receive verbal and written messages about the artwork, but like the audience, they receive information from the work itself. Thus the collaborative 'artist' that this model expresses contains within it, all of the communicative roles associated with the *artist-artwork-audience* model.

ARTIST AS RECEIVER

Although artists have long been associated with the communicative act of 'sending,' both 'sending' and 'receiving' share equal significance in the making of a collaborative artwork. In a sense, the communicative exchange exists on multiple levels in this situation—both cumulatively and individually. On the one hand, there is the cumulative 'sending' in which we view the completed artwork as the 'message,' and the audience-participants as the main 'receivers' of this message. On the other hand, all of the exchanges leading up to the completion of this work exist—exchanges in which collaborators encode and send information, as well as receive, decode and interpret messages. It is therefore important to consider that a significant portion of the criticism concerning the transmission model (Heath & Bryant 2000; Danesi 1994) has targeted the role of the 'receiver,' particularly as Shannon and Weaver's model portrays it. In his reconfiguration of this model, for example, Berlo (1960) purposely emphasises how the knowledge and skills of both the receiver and the encoder affect the message. He notes that the information extracted from 'messages' depends on the knowledge and skills of the receiver, thereby taking into consideration that elements other than 'noise' may affect the information transmitted.

Generally, criticisms relating to the role of the 'receiver' focus on the largely passive role which Shannon and Weaver's model projects. Heath and Bryant (2000: 46) explain, for example:

> This view postulates that communication works properly when the message received is the same as the message sent. This linear transmission view of communication assumes that the source "injects" information and other influence into the receiver's mind.

This model, in other words, addresses the structure and form of the message—the structure of the exchange. It does not consider the meaning of that message or how that message creates meaning within a context or for a particular person.

Though not by any means an extensive study in semiotics, Berlo's (1960) SMCR model (Source-Message/Channel-Receiver) did take a step towards contextualising the message and considering the receiver's abilities in decoding it. Around the time he published his theory, artists and art-theorists began to make similar claims concerning the role of the audience, or more accurately at this point in history 'the participant' in relation to the artwork. Most famously, Duchamp (1957) asserted that the spectator completes the work of art. He further specified that:

> …the creative act is not performed by the artist alone. The spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act (Duchamp 1957, *The Creative Act*).[29]

At this time, the emphasis on the genius of the artist or 'sender' began to shift. A new awareness grew concerning artists' dependence on their audiences—the 'receivers' of their work. Moreover, this shift marked a changed perspective

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[29] *The Creative Act* was originally presented at the *Convention of the American Federation of Arts* (4/1957) Houston, Texas. I obtained a copy online [1/2007] from: http://members.aol.com/mindwebart3/marcel.htm .

regarding artists' authority, and therefore the significance of the making of the message (crafting of the art) within the communicative equation.

Many theorists still draw on this shift in contemporary art theory. In his 2005 book *Postproduction*, Nicolas Bourriaud also cites Duchamp. He notes how this growing emphasis on the 'receiver' has altered perceptions on authorship, and equally importantly notions of the author: 'Since we write while reading, and produce artwork as viewers, the receiver becomes the central figure of culture to the detriment of the cult of the author' (Bourriaud 2005: 88). Even in a conventional art situation the author's or single artist's authority is challenged. The author or 'sender' is responsible for the structure of the message, text, or artwork, but the receiver/reader is responsible for injecting or drawing meaning from that message. Only in the act of 'receiving' is the work or message actualised.

In collaboration with Rick E. Robinson, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) further investigates audiences' relationships to artwork in a co-authored study designed to expound the viewer/participant's experiences. Commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum, the authors use naturalistic enquiry, conversing with and interviewing various art professionals in order to uncover commonalities in the structures of their reactions to well-known works of art. Ultimately, their research concludes that, 'The aesthetic experience is not a gratuitous epiphany; viewers must bring their knowledge and training to the encounter with the work of art' (1990: 79). The authors further state that the 'senses must be cultivated and disciplined' (1990: 1). The familiarity and education of a 'receiver' often affects both 'how' that person experiences the

work, as well as how much and what information that person extracts or projects into the work.

Morgan and Welton (1992: 137) attempt to explain this phenomenon in a more scientific manner, appealing to Gestalt psychology and theories of hermeneutics:

> What is happening in perceptual terms is that the brain is riffling through the stored information about the medium of the subject-matter, and making comparisons with the painting being observed.

In other words, experiences that the receiver has already had influence which information s/he derives from the message. As Berlo states in relation to his transmission model, 'What we see is partly what is there. It is also partly who we are' (Morgan & Welton 1992 cite Berlo: 75).

In the collaborative situation, this not only affects how different participants or audience members receive and interpret work, but also how artists do. While an audience/participant extracts and projects information into a given art piece in order to experience it, under conventional circumstances this participant does not alter the structure of this message in a way that physically affects the chosen channels, signs, symbols or structure of this message. In other words, under typical conditions, the coding of the original message remains unaltered for future participants. When a collaborator 'receives,' on the other hand, she possesses the authority to redesign or physically alter the message if so desired. Additionally, the collaborator possesses the opportunity to reply to this message, engaging in additional and often ongoing interaction with the 'sender' of the message, thereby converting that person's role to that of 'receiver.' In the case of object-based practices, the artists are generally absent during the audience's reception of the work. Consequently, the audience-participant cannot address the

artist directly. The model cannot be reversed. Arguably, there are occasions in which artists solicit audience feedback or witness changes that participants have made to their work; as discussed in *Chapter Three*, however, as 'senders' these participants do not share the same authority as collaborators; the 'messages' they convey through their feedback do not automatically affect the work and therefore do not carry the same weight as the 'messages' that collaborators send.

Undeniably, art-situations exist in which the audience-participant can directly interact with the artwork, affecting the artistic 'message' that other participants receive. Consider again, Kaprow's *Words*; in allowing participants to post their own words on the wall, the participants helped shaped the message for future participants. Similarly, Carolee Schneemann's 1996 installation *Snows* depended on the participants' movements:

> Underneath randomly chosen seats in New York's Martinique Theatre (a broadway house) Schneemann and her engineers fixed microphones that transferred signals into a silicon controlled rectifier switching system. Any motion by an audience member in these seats would set off the system, which, in turn, activated the media elements (Rush 1999: 41).

Although the audience-participants did not interact with the artists, they altered the experience for other participants. In effect, they contributed to the making of the 'message.'

In *The Poetics of The Open Work*, Eco (2006/1962) makes an important distinction between the receiver's ability to project a variety of meanings and associations into a 'finished' text or work, and situations in which a receiver physically interacts with the message or artistic materials in order to both structure the message or artwork and to help establish meaning. On the one hand, he proposes the 'mental collaboration of the consumer, who must freely

interpret an artistic datum, a product which has already been organized in its structural entirety (even if this structure allows for an indefinite plurality of interpretations)' (Eco 2006: 30). In this instance, Eco refers to object based works— works made in what Kester (2004: 10) describes as the traditional 'banking' style of creation (the *artist-artwork-audience* model). Like Berlo, Duchamp and Bourriaud, Eco asserts that even in this more conventional art situation, the audience or receiver possesses influence over the meaning extracted from the work.

Eco also, however, writes of participatory works such as Henri Pousseur's *Scambi*, which, like Kaprow's *Words*, relies on the audience's participation to enact the work. Composed of 16 sections which a performer (or ideally a listener) can reorder in any sequence, in Pousseur's words *Scambi* offers 'a field of possibilities' (Eco cites Pousseur 2006: 20). Thus, while theories such as Duchamp's, Heath and Bryant's and Berlo's offer greater responsibility to the conventional receiver through the act of interpreting a text or artwork, Eco explains that in these types of 'open works' (i.e. *Scambi*) the '…auditor is required to do some of this organizing and structuring of the musical discourse. He collaborates with the composer in making the composition' (Eco 2006: 30). In other words, as Claire Bishop (2004: 52) explains in *Antangonism and Relational Aesthetics*, '…rather than the interpretations of a work of art being open to continual reassessment, the work of art itself is argued to be in perpetual flux.'

Such works cannot necessarily be seen as 'collaborative'. Even so, this expanded notion of the receiver—one in which the receiver has the authority to not only

inject a variety of meanings and associations into a given statement, text, symbol or artwork, but also to interact with the media and the structure of the message-- more closely resembles the communicative responsibilities associated with the type of collaborator on which this thesis focuses. While audience members or participants in works such as *Words*, *Snow* and *Scambi* are able to participate in structuring and polishing the messages that the artists created or instigated, it is important to remember that these audience-participants interact with the artwork according to the situations set up by the artists. Furthermore, the fact that the participants are able to influence the project in these particular ways helps to define these projects —much in the way that, for a secondary audience, the private nature of Acconci and Nauman's secret performances was, to a significant degree, the point of the performances.

Bourriaud (2005: 88) elaborates on this idea, explaining:

> …how the "open work" (such as an interactive or participatory Happening by Allan Kaprow), offers the receiver a certain latitude, it only allows him or her to react to the initial impulse provided by the transmitter: to participate is to complete the proposed schema. In other words, "the participation of the spectator" consists of initialising the aesthetic contract which the artist reserves the right to sign. That is why the open work, for Pierre Levy, "still remains caught in the hermeneutic paradigm," since the receiver is only invited to "fill in the blanks, to choose between possible meanings."

Despite the fact that participants alter the message for future participants and/or other participants present at that point in time, this alteration is solicited from and within a context created by the artist. The participants or 'collaborators' as Eco and Green would describe them, do not share the same decision-making powers as collaborators such as Beagles and Ramsay, Scherer and Ouporov, or Austrian

collaborators Gelitin.[30] By interacting with the media, they do not automatically alter the artist's role to that of receiver. (This can only happen when the artists are present during the audience's reception of the work.) The artist-collaborator on the other hand, can engage in ongoing dialogue or conversation, repeatedly alternating between the roles of sender and receiver while collaboratively deciding on the situation, theme, subject and/or structure of both their communications and the artwork.

Frank Popper (1975: 19-20) offers another perspective on this situation by describing the artist as an 'intermediary,' shifting attention from the relationships between the artist and the audience, to the relationships among the participants and the art-object. He refers in these instances to a 'trigger' rather than an 'art object'—a device or situation specifically designed to solicit or evoke a reaction from the participants. The term 'intermediary' suggests that the artist, in this context, merely provides the means to the creation of the trigger; an encoded message has not, necessarily, been 'sent.' Similarly, Berlo (1960) describes the message as a 'stimulus,' shifting attention to the viewer's reaction and interpretation. He further indicates that the reaction the message provokes may or may not correlate with the intentions of the sender. Even within this situation, however, the participant does not directly communicate with the artist or 'sender' of the message. The artists' deliberate decision to allow interaction between the participants and the artwork, or to solicit a reaction from the participants as part of the artwork, does not alter the fact that they are 'receiving' or reacting within a situation determined by the artist(s).

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[30] See *Chapter Three* for a more detailed investigation into the significance of shared decision-making and shared authority.

All in all, the ability of a collaborator to reverse the direction of the exchange at will by engaging in dialogue or conversation not only distinguishes between the artists and the audience, but also sets the foundation for the collaboration. The artwork develops over time from this series of exchanges, as does the identity of the collective. There is no definitive beginning and end to the communication as the transmission model might suggest. Rather, the manner in which the communication proceeds influences the finished artwork. Terms such as 'sender' and 'receiver' as employed by this thesis are not static; communicative responsibilities associated with these roles can be exercised differently according to the situation and individuals at hand.

COMPOSITE SENDING

A better understanding of the collaborative author requires a closer examination of the exchanges leading up to the creation of the artwork. It is important to consider, for example, that in acting as both 'senders' and 'receivers' collaborators share control and ownership over the work. Whereas the 'great-person theory' attributes sole credit and responsibility to individuals, in the collaborative situation decision-making is shared. The message/art-work with which the audience-participant engages does not originate from a specific individual. It is, rather, a collective 'message'— the product of the exchanges that lead up to its completion; it depends on the ways in which each of the transmissions, interpretations and replies made during the collaboration influence each other. Ultimately, the individual interpretations—the particular information

and associations that each collaborator projects into the stimuli/messages that the other collaborators provide, helps to shape this cumulative or composite message.

Continuing along this line of reasoning, it follows that collaborative communication often centres on the collective development and refinement of ideas. In their study *Group Creativity: Innovation through Collaboration*, Bernard A. Nijstad and Paul B. Paulus (2003: 145) refer to 'brainstorming' – the 'repeated search for ideas in associated memory.' Furthermore, they maintain that the projections and associations that occur as part of the interpretive process promote the generation of ideas:

> Ideas are generally new solutions to a problem and therefore cannot be directly retrieved from memory… previously acquired knowledge must be used (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 145).

Each message acts as a stimulus for information previously stored. Collaborators regularly project their individual associations and information into one another's statements as part of the interpretative process. Because the communicative relationship is usually reciprocal in collaboration, 'replies' often ensue, continuing this process of interpreting and re-interpreting one another's statements and ideas. In a collaborative brainstorming session, each artist not only projects their distinctive associations and experiences into one another's ideas; each collaborator's unique interpretation of a given statement or idea triggers another idea which is also based on that collaborator's associations and knowledge.

As Craig D. Parks and Lawrence J. Sanna (1999) explain, in theory each individual calls out or writes down ideas relating to a particular problem or

project at hand. According to the guidelines set out by Oslo in 1957, however, brainstorming prohibits criticisms and opinions relating to these ideas, 'even one that was self-generated' (Parks & Sanna 1999: 47). Although criticism often characterises collaborative exchanges, in the case of Nomadics, altered versions of these ideas often accompanied these criticisms—a phenomenon that Oslo also describes in relation to brainstorming. 'A group member may, however, take an idea and expand upon it. This is known as "idea building" or "piggybacking"' (Parks & Sanna 1999 cite Oslo: 47). In other words, the 'receiver' does not necessarily generate a new idea; rather, s/he interprets and then adjusts the 'message' or 'stimulus' that another collaborator transmitted. Another collaborator may, in turn, modify the adjusted idea, and so on, eventually resulting in a composite or collective idea.

In the construction of *Nomadics*, idea building played a central role. We continually reacted to and built on one another's ideas and opinions; we digested, reworked and re-introduced ideas, establishing joint ownership over the work and often arriving at new ideas altogether. Consider for example, *The Door Room*. Orley first proposed the idea, describing a 'door warehouse', with all sorts of doors piled in heaps and propped against walls. When we did not obtain enough doors to carry out this vision, she imagined we could create one large pile in the centre of the room; otherwise, she explained, we could attempt to incorporate smaller doors: cabinet doors, dresser drawers, shutters. Orbach, on the other hand, imagined a door maze—doors standing at different angles that the participants would have to walk around—a three-dimensional space. "What about a revolving door?", Dáte offered in response. I advocated the idea of an

exhibition hidden behind the doors; participants would open the doors to reveal a work of art, eventually making their way into the main installation—an idea which, I thought, Orley had originally proposed, but which in retrospect she thinks I may have come up with.

We began construction by fixing the doors to the walls, carefully selecting which ones would open, which doors would appear to open but remain fastened shut, and which would have frames. Around this time, a group of artists exhibited a series of works behind doors in the space adjacent to ours, at which point we abandoned that idea altogether. Without this added dimension, we all felt the room lacked something… It was too symmetrical, Orley explained… too one-dimensional. In the end, Orley suggested hanging some of the doors from the ceiling at different angles, in effect using a different vocabulary to re-introduce Orbach's maze idea. We borrowed from the warehouse idea, propping some doors against the walls. Because Orbach was still dissatisfied, we experimented with lights behind several of the doors, thus integrating elements of the 'art behind the door' idea. It is important to note that we formed each of these ideas *in reaction* to one another's criticisms. It was not uncommon for one collaborator to dismiss an idea, only to re-introduce it later in a different context or vocabulary. While this constant flux may appear on the one hand to sacrifice the quality or coherence of the work, as artists we took considerable pride in our project; for this reason, these alterations did not compromise ideas, but rather developed and changed them. Ultimately, it was this remixing and blending of

ideas that both led to and characterised the finished artwork, 'message' (Shannon & Weaver 1963) or 'stimulus' (Berlo 1960; Heath & Bryant 2000).[31]

Nijstad and Paulus (2003: 148) also describe this phenomenon, arguing that 'ideas generated by others serve as external stimuli.' Idea generation, according to the editors, depends on this outside stimuli. 'It is,' they assert, 'a two-stage process, in which a cue-based activation of knowledge is followed by the generation of ideas in a semantic domain' (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 48). It is therefore far from surprising that many other collaborative groups and partnerships also attest to this phenomenon. Long term collaborating partners Kristen Jones and Andrew Ginzel note, for example, how 'the concepts they exchange during their endless conversations are totally interwoven' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 30-31). As described further on in *Chapter Four*, this continual exchange can eventually lead to shared associations and shared knowledge resulting not only in **composite sending**, but also shared interpretation.[32] In other words, as ideas intertwine and collaborators continue to respond and build on one another's responses, intersubjectivity results.

Observably, this phenomenon does not characterise all collaboration. It is possible to collaborate without establishing any sort of collective interpretation. Communication may only focus on specific aspects of the project. Furthermore, outside influences act as stimuli for individual artists as well. In both her collaborative and non-collaborative work Orbach, for example, readily incorporates research activities into her creative process; the information, imagery and artwork to which she exposes herself provide 'cues'— information

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[31] See Appendix 12, Nomadics DVD- Video Clip 4: *The Door Room Evolution*
[32] See *Collective Interpretation* pp.144-157.

that evokes particular associations, and helps her to modify her ideas. While this informs her artwork, however, she cannot generally respond to or directly communicate with the artists and writers of these stimuli. Similarly, communication may occur within a creative situation in which one individual possesses authority over another, or in which an artist hires a helper or technician. In this situation, their statements/gestures regarding the work do not carry equal weight. If the artist voices a demand or direction it will impact the message differently than it would if the subordinate voiced an opinion or direction. Are these situations collaborative? What constitutes collaboration and what does not? Do degrees of collaboration exist? If so, how does the communication differ accordingly?

The following chapter will borrow from this terminology to investigate these, as well as other, questionable situations. In using this terminology, however, I do not mean to suggest that the creative, art-making or collaborative processes plug into any sort of linear equation, or that such fixed roles exist; as described above, collaboration challenges this notion. Rather, I borrow this terminology to help explain communicative relationships, considering not only the particular roles, but also the contexts in which these exchanges occur. Taking into consideration contemporary criticism of Shannon and Weaver's model, I progress beyond communication and information theory, into pragmatics and semiotics. This is not an attempt to reach an all-encompassing definition of collaboration; many types of collaboration exist. In investigating both the context and the meaning that an utterance or communicative gesture holds, as well as the relationships among the different communicators, the following chapter attempts to move toward a definition of collaboration.

CHAPTER 3:
TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF COLLABORATION

In his book *The Third Hand*, Charles Green (2001b) describes how conceptual artists in the 1960s used collaboration as a method to obstruct the ego and decrease their control over their work. It is important to specify, however, that while a particular group or pair of artists may have chosen a process which inhibits their authorial influence over their work, this does not necessarily indicate that the artists have collaborated. One must take into consideration, for example, whether or not that control is dispersed among them, shared by them, or relinquished to an outside party. Has this new vulnerability resulted from increased randomisation in the creative process? Or, have the artists jointly influenced the style of the work?

It is my contention that to establish collaborative-authorship the artists must, to some degree, collectively approach the theoretical level—the ideas, themes and/or concepts on which the art is based. In order to successfully examine how artists are able to develop a collaborative author, however, it is important to determine which of the parties involved in the making of an artwork actually perform the role of the artist-collaborator. How do we distinguish between collaborators and assistants? Collaborators and contributors? Do different degrees of collaboration exist and if so, how do we determine or compare them? Do all collaborations result in collaborative-authorship?

Although I do not attempt to establish an all-encompassing definition of collaboration, I do maintain that certain types of interaction must occur in order for collaboration to take place. I propose that this interaction must involve a communicative dynamic in which all parties involved act as both sender and

receiver. Furthermore, I contend that it is not enough for one collaborator to inadvertently suppress another collaborator's artistic signature,[33] as Green (2001b) implies in his book *The Third Hand*; rather, all collaborators must influence to some degree the artistic 'style' or the 'subjectivity' of the piece.

Although reviews of Green's book have criticised his definitions of collaboration (e.g. Rochette & Saunders 2002), *The Third Hand* remains one of the most comprehensive studies on artistic collaboration to date. The following chapter examines Green's theory of the 'assistant' as 'collaborator' in context of the communicative models established in the previous chapter. Using specific examples, it compares and contrasts the different communicative roles and responsibilities that develop during the creation and production of an artwork, designating several of the communicative features that characterise collaboration. These features, in turn, can also be taken as preliminary guidelines—conditions favourable to the establishment of the phantom third hand. All in all, this chapter draws on group studies and communication theory, incorporating pragmatic concerns in order to distinguish collaboration from other participatory relationships. In doing so, it provides a clearer understanding of both the collaborative and non-collaborative interaction that takes place in the development of artistic works; by clarifying which of this interaction and communication promotes collaboration, as well as which conditions and factors influence the collaborative nature of this communication, *Chapter Three* uncovers the groundwork from which collaborative authorship develops.

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[33] See pp. 103-106 for further explanation of signature.

The final section in this chapter, examines various guises of the collaborative author-- the phantom third hand; the third artist; the separate or third entity that arises through collaboration. It compares various descriptions and claims of this phenomenon, analysing the different ways in which it inhabits collaborative projects and practices. Ultimately, by exploring numerous connotations and meanings associated with collaborative authorship and/or the phantom third hand, this section clarifies the ways in which this thesis employ these terms and sets up the investigation for *Chapter Four*.

ASSISTANTS VS COLLABORATORS

Fabrication by others was not just a simple adaptation of the ready-made as a matter of pragmatic convenience. It represented the elimination of a certain type of overinflated subjectivity signified by an artist's personal touch or signature. This was a type of long-distance artistic collaboration- or delegation- in which the assistants' work was essential to the project's very success and integrity…

(Green 2001b: 10).

Among the types of collaboration Green (2001b: 1) examines in his book *The Third Hand,* he includes a section entitled 'Collaboration as Administration.' In this chapter he examines Joseph Kosuth's work as an archivist, with particular attention to his project *Second Investigation* in which, according to Green, Kosuth used delegation as a form of collaboration. Kosuth, like many artists of his time, attempted to minimize intentionality in his work, and it is this motive on which Green focuses. Green describes in detail how this aim subverted traditional roles of authorship and classifies this subversion as one of the distinguishing characteristics of this type of collaboration. However, he fails to discuss or even name the collaborative aspects of Kosuth's work. Rather, he

focuses on the artist's work as an archivist and describes how Kosuth selected, arranged and/or reinvented random phrases, dictionary definitions, and occasionally other artists' and writers' work as his own.

Whilst this may involve administrative and editorial activities, it does not necessarily constitute collaboration. More closely, it resembles the creative process through which 'found poetry' is created. In the case of 'found poetry,' a poet will choose a particular book, article or in some cases another poem, and reorganize carefully selected phrases from within the text until it becomes his/her own piece. Although the original sources are credited, found poems are considered entirely the work of the poet. No physical or verbal communication takes place between the original author and the poet, nor does the poet communicate with the original author via any form of print technology excepting his/her interaction with the given text.[34]

In his introduction, Green (2001b: xii) captures the theory behind this accreditation when he writes that Kosuth 'managed to construct a certifiable, well-policed signature style from the bare bones of typography.' If Kosuth did manage to develop an individual style using this method, however, it follows that he undermined his own attempt to minimize his authorial intentionality. In a sense, Kosuth's style (at this time in his career) was characterised by the intention to minimize authorial influence. With the explicit purpose of doing so, Kosuth often randomized the art-making process with the use found words and objects, and regularly incorporated external factors and stimuli into the processes

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[34] For a recent example of found poetry see: Dillard, Annie. (1996) *Mornings Like This: Found Poems*. Harper Perennial, New York. Additional information about found poetry can be found in the Author's Note, p. ix.

of both creation and transmission. Moreover, if Kosuth did convey a signature style in works such as *Second Investigation*, then Green's claim invalidates his later emphasis on the suppression of the artist's signature as the distinguishing characteristic of this type of collaboration. I ask, what collaboration?

Green (2001b) only mentions one occasion in which Kosuth solicited outside assistance. In publishing/exhibiting his *Second Investigation*, Kosuth employed the help of assistants in order to publish 15 found selections from *Roget's Thesaurus* 'in advertising spaces of public media from different countries such as billboards and handbills, as well as in the advertising pages of newspapers and magazines' (Rorimer 1999: 17-19). Green (2001b: 9) writes that these assistants 'had mediated for him, had willingly negotiated payment from their own funds.' While the 'assistants' may have influenced how Kosuth's advertisements eventually came to appear in the media, their participation in the publishing process does not in any way demonstrate influence over the idea itself. The fact remains that Kosuth *chose* to transmit his work in this way; it was *his* decision to use public advertising spaces and *his* decision to use assistants.

If we refer back to the communicative models discussed in the previous chapter, Kosuth's position mirrors that of the 'information source' or 'sender.' He decided on the message and composed and/or selected the pieces to be distributed. The assistants in this case, did not affect the selection of the pieces. Although it is likely that some communicative transactions occurred between Kosuth and these assistants, Green offers no evidence that sustained communication took place between Kosuth and his assistants regarding the

composition of the work or the concept. Rather, these 'assistants' aided the *transmission* of the pieces by contacting advertising spaces preselected by Kosuth on Kosuth's behalf. They placed the selected pieces as ads in accordance with *Kosuth's* directions, acting as part of the channel through which the work was transmitted-- not as artists.

Although the readers may not have known the advertisements were 'art' or how they came to be placed, the fact that Kosuth handed this decision over to assistants as well as this primary audience's potential belief that the advertisements were genuine, also contributed to the meaning of the work. When the ads subsequently appeared in museums and galleries, the new audiences were generally provided with knowledge of the context in which they were initially placed.[35] Thus, the method of transmission in this case also helped to comprise the 'subject' of the artwork; from another perspective this implies that the 'assistants' were not merely agents of transmission, but also part of the *message*; Kosuth used these assistants to create an idea much in the way some artists use found objects, paints, clay and canvas. Neither of these perspectives, however, designates the assistants as the 'sender' or 'information source' (artistic creators) responsible for the artwork or art-idea. Moreover, the exhibition of the thesaurus entries completed not the 'assistant's' visions, but Kosuth's ultimate goal.

In their 2002 review of Green's study, Anne Rochette and Wade Saunders also challenged Green's theory of 'delegation as collaboration,' with particular

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[35] An example of this is *Joseph Kosuth- Redefining the Context of Art 1968-2004*, an exhibition and printed catalogue presented at the Stedelijk van Abbemusuem in the Netherlands from 3.4.2004-18.3.2005. [4/2008] from:
http://www.artfacts.net/index.php/pageType/exhibitionInfo/exhibition/21160/lang/1

attention to his writings on Kosuth. 'Calling his projects 'collaborations,'' they argue, 'is problematic.'[36] In accordance with the arguments above, Rochette and Saunders note that these delegated and 'found' works still possess a particular style characteristic of Kosuth's other work at this time. Furthermore, they note that 'they are uniquely credited to his name…and evidence his singular handling of language' (2002). Thus, while Kosuth managed, perhaps, to subdue his artistic 'handwriting' or 'signature' by using 'found' texts rather than composing them himself, he did not, as Green suggests, significantly distance his 'individual subjectivity' from the work.

In his essay, *The Photographic Message*, Roland Barthes (1977/1961) explains the significance of context and how context influences not only meaning, but also the purpose and function of the message. He argues that in one respect, because photographic images intended for the press are not intended as art but as an objective version of reality, these photographs function as analogues of reality; without context these images are merely denotative. Barthes (1977:15) further explains, however, that:

> As for the channel of transmission, this is the newspaper itself, or, more precisely, a complex of concurrent messages with the photograph as centre and surrounds constituted by the text, the title, the caption, the lay-out and, in a more abstract but no less 'informative' way, by the very name of the paper…

The title, as he argues, even if merely seeming to annotate the photograph, is a second signifier and thus imposes a particular subjectivity. Because the photograph is positioned within this context, it becomes connotative rather than denotative. It therefore follows, that in choosing both the context in which the

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[36] (2002). *Art in America*. [7/2004] from:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_11_90/ai_94079415

selected texts would appear, and in publicising the fact that he used assistants to carry out this procedure, Kosuth imposed particular meanings on the thesaurus excerpts—a particular subjectivity.

In his theories of postproduction, Bourriaud (2005) further elaborates on the auctorial use of found objects, arguing that authorship is no longer a matter of creating an object; it is, rather, the practice of appropriating existing symbols and objects into different contexts. Bourriuad (2005: 24) contends that by using an object, one automatically interprets it. Consider, for example, Duchamp who famously exhibited various found objects in art-contexts as 'readymades.' Bourriaud (2005: 25) explains that:

> When Duchamp exhibits a manufactured object (a bottle rack, a urinal, a snow shovel) as a work of the mind, he shifts the problematic of the "creative process," emphasizing the artist's gaze brought to bear on an object instead of manual skill. He asserts that the act of choosing is enough to establish the artistic process, just as the act of fabricating, painting, or sculpting does: to give a new idea to an object is already production. Duchamp thereby completes the definition of the term *creation*: to create is to insert an object into a new scenario, to consider it a character in a narrative.

Thus, the selection and exhibition of a found object is an act of artistic creation; the artist's gaze in this case imposes a subjectivity. As Grant Kester (2004: 1) sums up, contemporary artists are '"context providers" rather than "content providers."' It therefore follows that in deciding the context to exhibit and publish his chosen excerpts from *Roget's Thesaurus*, Kosuth interpreted these selections, acting the role of the artist and creatively producing an artwork.

One must consider, however, that whether or not Kosuth's subjectivity or authorial intentionality pervaded the work does not necessarily determine whether or not he used collaborative methods. On one hand, as McCabe (1984)

and Green (2001b) argue, collaboration can be used as a method to limit authorial intentionality. The limiting of authorial intentionality, however, does not necessarily indicate that collaboration took place. Many other exercises exist which an author or artist can use to influence or interrupt her intentions in the making of the work. In the case of collaboration, this occurs because each artist's ideas and/or intentions are influenced through a preliminary series of communicative exchanges. As described in the previous chapter, these exchanges affect the encoding of the message or possibly messages that ultimately reach the audience-participant; in other words, they affect the design and construction of the art idea and/or object. In Kosuth's case, however, these preliminary exchanges did not occur. Communication occurred subsequent to the conception of the project. Thus, he not only failed to limit his intentionality; his methods also lacked a much more basic element of collaboration—interaction.

In the making of *Nomadics*, on the other hand, assistants played a much more interactive role. The doors, the corridor walls and the exit from *The Shavings Room* to *The Pole Room*, for example, were all erected with the help of builders. Furthermore, if as Green (2001b: 10-11) describes, signature is exercised through gestures as simple as brushstrokes, it follows that either the personal signatures of the builders appeared within the installation, or that the builders impacted the overall signature-style of the work. One builder, for example, had the idea to screw the hinge of the doors directly into the wall, rather than into a frame. This technique impacted the way we eventually rearranged the room. Although we took many of these particular doors down in the end and suspended them from the ceiling, we were able to secure a couple of the doors to the walls ourselves using his method. If he had not ventured this idea, the room would have

appeared considerably different: more doors would have had frames; we would have had to either prop others against the wall at angles, or nail them to the wall so that they couldn't swing open. More importantly, we would not have been able to undo as much of the builder's work to rearrange the room; it was much easier to take out a couple of screws than to dismantle an entire frame.[37] Without question, a certain degree of interaction with the builder preceded the completion of the work; furthermore, this interaction influenced our working methods, impacting the final product. Does this, however, make him a collaborator?

A closer examination of the communicative dynamic reveals that the builder, (Builder Y) like us, acted as both sender and receiver; as described above, there was a short but sustained period in which we interacted with one another. Also like us, Builder Y impacted the main transmitter in question—the installation. Thus, according to the premise that communication in the artistic context includes direct alterations to the media at hand, it follows that Builder Y also communicated in a way which, at times, altered our roles as artists, to observers and receivers of our own work. Bearing in mind Green's (2001b) 'collaboration as administration' theory, it seems probable that he would categorise the builder's role as collaborative. It is important to consider, however, that as artists Orly, Emily and I controlled Builder Y's influence. Although he impacted the main transmitter, he did not contribute to the message thematically or alter the audience's reception of the piece to any significant degree. This disproportion of power continued throughout his employment and as 'employers' we not only supervised the methods he used, we also determined the duration of his employment. Orbach, Orley and I, on the other hand, communicated, for the

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[37] See Appendix 12, Nomadics DVD- *Video Clip 4: The Door Room Evolution.*

most part, on all aspects of the installation. We engaged in a complex and ongoing communicative exchange prior to the physical realisation of the work and it was through our **composite sending** that the work resulted. Although the builders used their own techniques and styles to help us physically construct these spaces, we –the artists— decided the location of each door; the builders only proceeded with construction after we approved of the methods they planned to use. In this respect, the subjectivity and authority remained ours. Therefore, in a sense Builder Y was a tool that enabled us to clarify and transmit the experience we designed. Although he influenced the work, it was our decision to let him do so—our decision to employ this technique.

In my conversation with the art collective Gelitin at their exhibition *Yes Ok Ex,* Florian Reither drew a similar distinction between the role of the collaborating artists in Gelitin and the roles of the assistants, technicians and musicians that participated in the exhibition. For the performance, Gelitin members dressed in white skirts, which fluttered as they continuously jumped on trampolines, at times revealing their lack of under-clothing. While jumping, they painted images of people on sheets of paper that covered the full expanse of the nearby walls as well as part of the ceiling. Live music played in the background as crowd members occasionally joined in the jumping and occasionally shrunk back to avoid the splatters of black paint. Reither explained that they (the members of Gelitin) had previously worked with these musicians and, having confidence in their work, allowed the musicians to decide which music to play. Despite the fact that the musicians possessed authority over the final music selections, however, Reither commented that these musicians, like the other assistants, were 'employed' by Gelitin. They were not, according to Reither, collaborators in the

same respect as Gelitin members. In his argument, Reither reasoned that Gelitin had raised the funds to hire these assistants/musicians; he, Ali Janka, Tobias Urban and Wolfgang Gantner had worked together to conceive this plan.

What Reither's remarks ultimately insinuate, is that in regard to auctorial authority, the employer-employee relationship is an imbalanced one; the musicians in this instance, were hired to carry out a specific task that aided the completion of Gelitin's vision. Thus, while the musicians may have impacted stylistic aspects of the piece, the interaction in this case was not collaborative in the sense that the musicians became part of the collaborative identity 'Gelitin.' Though the musical aspects of the project may have contained their unique style or signature, the musicians did not compose the signature-style of the overall work; they merely helped Gelitin to express it.

1. *Yes Ok Ex.* Rochelle School, London. 30/5/2008. Photo by Michael Smythe.

This analysis suggests an understanding of signature that differs from Green's (2001b). In critical writings, signature has come to signify various different aspects of an artist's style. In it's most literal sense it signifies the artist's name signed or written on the work. Some theorists, such as Green (2001b) attribute minute gestures such as brushstrokes to the artist's signature, equating signature with the artist's 'hand.' Others theorists have used 'signature' synonymously with style, while still others, such as theorist Jan Jagodzinski (1997), recognise a relationship between the two, but also distinguish them from one another. Jagodzinski (1997: 92), for one, specifies that 'Style is the presence of the human body as it is traced on the art object. It forms the bedrock of the modern artist's signature.' Notably, Jagodzinski (1997: 95) also offers an interpretation of Derrida's 'signature,' appropriating his linguistic theories into an artistic context and in Derrida's words explains that '…for a signature to be validated it must be iterated (repeatable) and imitable.' For Derrida, (1971) this repeatability constitutes one of the defining characteristics of signature; its authenticity is verified by the fact that it can be copied or forged.[38]

On the whole, this thesis most closely adheres to Michael Wood's definition of 'signature,' which Green (2001b: xvi) cites in his introduction:

> Wood describes a writer's "signature" as the characteristic signs and tropes by which readers recognize the identity of writers. This signature, he argues is the writer's visible subjectivity, but "style," on the other hand, is the more complex deployment of tropes, metaphors, structures and devices within which signature is contained.

In order to characterise an artist's work, it follows that the 'signs and tropes' of an artist's signature must be repeatable (ibid.); this is not, however, the

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[38] [4/2008] from: http://www.hydra.umn.edu/derrida/sec.html

repeatability of forgery or imitation. Rather, as Janet Staiger (2004: 1) explains in her writings on the authorship of film director Gus Van Stant, '…throwing in references to other works or one's own texts is part of creating an authorial signature (repetition creates the signature) and is part of the requirements necessary for the author-function to work.' This repetition, then, is the reappearance of certain stylistic features or thematic references that help to characterise an artist's style—that make his/her style recognisable. This may include, as Green states, an artist's brushstroke-- or it may not. An artist's signature may exist within reoccurring themes or meanings or it may, as in Kosuth's case, involve the use of found objects and found writings—the repeated practice of techniques intended to subdue authorial intentionality. Ultimately, within the context of this study 'signature' refers to the essence or aspects of the art that make it identifiably the work of a particular artist.

It may be possible, however, for an artist's signature-style to involve aspects of the technicians or assistants' work without those assistants taking part in the actual collaboration. Hobbs (2984) arrives at this conclusion in his analysis of different participatory roles. On one hand, like Green, he attributes significance to the different errors or idiosyncrasies that technicians may bring into the work:

> 'Warhol depends on the so-called mistakes his assistants make with a squeegee, causing Marliyn's face to be blotted out in sections and thus giving the work a mechanical, mass produced look…Warhol's collaboration made an entire range of participative creation possible' (Hobbs 1984:71)

On the other hand, however, Hobbs clarifies that while the artist may depend on the technician, the technician does not artistically collaborate:

> 'To have a woman stitch a design is no different from having Lippincott industrially fabricate it. Whether the workers have ideas about French knots or welds matters little; their participation is limited to that of

technician and the art is still very much the prerogative of the artist' (Hobbs 1984:80).

Notably, in both instances Hobbs refers to the assistants' roles as participatory rather than collaborative. Furthermore, it is the inequality in authority, according to Hobbs, that precludes artistic collaboration. Following this line of reasoning, collaborators must not only engage in reciprocal communicative exchanges, but also share some decision-making power with regard to the art.

Ultimately, it is this difference in authority that distinguishes between artist-collaborators and assistants or technicians. The artist-collaborator not only communicates and takes part in shaping the theoretical and conceptual development of the artwork, but also possesses the decision-making authority to alter both this process and the outcome of this process—the art. Unlike the assistant, the collaborator plays an authorial role, influencing the signature and style of the work.

COLLABORATION OR COOPERATION?

Administration, as maintained by Green (2001b), is not limited to delegations such as Kosuth's. Green also considers curatorial and editorial interaction as collaborative. He places, for example, Lucy Lippard's 1969 project *Groups* within this category. Green (2001b: 11) explains that Lippard sent out specific guidelines asking participants to photograph a group of five or more people in the same setting and positions for a week. She then arranged, exhibited and published the results. Like Kosuth, Lippard's primary role was to 'frame' these

images. She did not interfere with the images beyond the setting of the initial guidelines. Her communication with the participants was limited to a single exchange regarding the making of the work. Whereas Kosuth merely delegated production tasks to his assistants, Lippard's guidelines thematically influenced the photographs, affecting the shape and substance of the project. Was Lippard, like Kosuth, the sole or lead artist in this case? Did she curate the project? If so, was her role collaborative?

According to Judith Tannenbaum (1994:47), the curator creates a perspective with which to view the art; the context that the curator chooses can cause the artwork to 'reveal unknown secrets and take(s) on new meaning.' As previously discussed, the relationship of the context to the selected texts superseded the texts as the primary message in Kosuth's case. For this reason, Kosuth's position was artistic rather than merely curatorial. In the curator's case, however, this relationship affects the reception and interpretation of the work without substituting it.   Rather than substitute the artist, the curator exists in a relationship with the artist and/or artwork. For Tannenbaum, this relationship is collaborative. Unlike Kosuth's assistants, the curator possesses decision-making authority and can choose the context in which to exhibit the art without direction from the artist. In altering the context of the art, Tannenbaum believes curators can encourage the participant or receiver to extract particular information from the art, in a sense altering the message the participant receives.

Tannenbaum (1994:47) further explains that the curator can, as in Lippard's case, 'help bring into being a new body of work or a specially commissioned project.' Like Green and Tannenbaum, in a special issue of *Third Text* (2004) devoted to

collaboration, the editors[39] categorise this as a collaborative action. As an introduction to Cornford and Cross' article, they include a short excerpt from a brief they originally presented to the artists, in which they outlined the areas they wanted the artists to discuss:

> We would like you to write on the nature of collaboration in relation to the institution; with particular attention being paid to the 'pressures' you yourself place on institutions in formulating your projects…In a sense we want a discussion about how collaboration is produced in and through the institution and your part in this. (Editors 2004: 657).

Despite these instructions, it is important to note that the artists use the term 'collaborative' to describe their relationship with institutions only once and only to specify that their 'practice is to collaborate with institutions not in the sense of generating ideas with them, more of generating (critical) ideas out of them' (2004: 661). This explanation does not refer to guidelines or restrictions as part of that 'collaboration.' Rather, the institutions' behaviours and actions, as well as their interactions with the artists, thematically inform the artists' work. 'The form of a project may develop through negotiation with the limits imposed by an institution,' Cross (2004: 662) explains, 'but we keep intact its core proposition…'

For this reason, theorists such as Elisabeth Rice (2002), and Bosworth and Hamilton (1994) classify these types of relationships as cooperative rather than collaborative. Rice (2002:55) explains that 'Many researchers have identified a hierarchy or ladder of qualities that helps to distinguish collaboration from cooperation (Black & Kase, 1963; Elder & Magrab, 1980; Hord, 1986).' Arguably, curators and institutions interact with artists in different ways and to

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[39] This issue was guest-edited by John Roberts and Stephen Wright. Within the article, however, they refer to themselves solely as 'Editors;' their names are not used.

different degrees; I do not mean to imply that curator-artist relationships are never collaborative. However, as Cameron Cartiere (2003:23) explained in her thesis *Re/Placing Public Art: The Role of Place-Specificity in New Genre Public Art,* 'a curator must never confuse the art of exhibiting with art.'

Arguably, the acts of curating and art making have become increasingly intertwined. For this reason Sophie Hope (Appendix 11) of the curatorial collaborative B&B, explains 'I am not very comfortable with the labels artist and curator and while I use them when it suits me, I think it's more about what you do rather than what you call it.' It may be possible, as in the case of B&B, to collaborate curatorially without collaborating with the artists; equally, there may be instances when artists and curators perform multiple roles—collaborating on or communicating about both the art-making and the curatorial aspects of the creative and exhibition processes. In reference to her curatorial practice with Sarah Carrington, Hope (Appendix 11) explains:

> we have tried to provide productive, critical spaces for artists and non-artists to question the role and responsibilities of art and activism in society. By 'hosting' various occasions in different contexts, we tried to invite diverse groups of people who have various, perhaps conflicting approaches to their practices and invite them to present and share their work and ask questions of each other. There's always quite a lot of research that goes into the projects, to provide a context but hopefully it's not too didactic (e.g. Trading Places and Real Estate) - I think we wanted the projects we 'curated' to be conversations between people, art, activism and that is why we always wanted to provide opportunities to present, develop and reconsider other people's work.

B&B, as Hope describes, creates contexts into which artists can place works and from which dialogue and communication ensue—in many ways, like a dialogical work of art; she and Carrington engage in regular communicative interaction to develop these contexts and situations. The real issues regarding the collaboration in this instance pertain not so much to the interaction, as to the purpose of that

interaction. Does the collaborative interaction influence the development of the authorial voice, signature or style of the artwork? Do the collaborators and/or participants share and work towards a common artistic vision?

For the relationship to truly be collaborative Andrea Toepell (2001) asserts that acting on or influencing the artwork is not enough. 'When people work together collaboratively,' she explains, 'they participate to meet a common goal' (Toepell 2001: 63). Additionally, she cites McTaggart's (1991) definition that collaboration also involves 'sharing in the way research is conceptualised, practiced and brought to bear on the lifeworld. It means ownership' (2001:63). Cooperation, on the other hand, involves participatory relationships that neglect one or more of these aspects. She further explains '…an arrangement is one of cooperation and not collaboration because not all contributors have control over the research or make decisions concerning it' (2001:63). It therefore follows that, according to both Toepell and McTaggart, collaboration requires a sharing of authority; it demands that collaborators establish mutual ownership over the work through shared decision-making.

This stipulation also comprises one of the determining factors of Rice's definition of collaboration:

> Collaboration in this study, was defined as a process that utilizes resources, power, authority, interests and people from each organization to create a new organizational entity for the purpose of achieving common goals' (Rice 2002: 55).

She sets her definition in relation to S. Kagan's who similarly emphasised that 'resources, power, [and] authority are shared' (Rice cites Kagan 2002:55). While this may at first glance appear identical to Rice's definition, one important

distinction exists. Kagan's definition implies that each collaborating body possesses some authority over the overall project— an authority that they share. Rice, on the other hand, implies that each organisation or body *lends* its authority to the collaborative situation. From this perspective, it follows that each collaborating member might have her own area of expertise—an area over which she has control. A curator, for example, possesses authority over the exhibition and display of the work, while the artist maintains authority over the art. Thus, according to Rice's (2002) definition, the distribution of authority that exists between artist and curator can at times be conducive to collaboration.

Although Kagan and Rice's definitions vary with regards to authority, they both stipulate an additional condition, which is absent in the situations that Green uses to support his administration theory. Their theories also necessitate that a common goal or purpose unites the collaborators. In making *Nomadics*, for example, our purpose was to embody certain emotions and to evoke certain sensations and experiences relating to loss, change and movement. Although we often discussed these thematic notions, in the making of the work we did not always hold them in our consciousness. Once we established these goals, we often worked intuitively. The builder's and technicians who aided the construction, on the other hand, worked with the purpose of carrying out our instructions. Similarly, Kosuth's assistants worked to carry out his instructions. They did not collaborate when deciding the goal.

To further distinguish cooperation from collaboration, Toepell (2001:63) cites an example that Bosworth and Hamilton used in their 1994 study, in which a teacher conducts an interactive learning activity. According to Toepell, the

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teacher first provided the class with the information needed to learn the subject matter, and then allowed the students to divide into groups and to choose their own approach to complete the learning. The students, in this instance, controlled their working methods; unlike the builders that assisted in the making of *Nomadics*, they did not require any additional authorisation to work in the manners they selected. Toepell, like Bosworth and Hamilton, however, classifies this as a cooperative rather than a collaborative situation explaining that 'the students work cooperatively, as they have had no influence over the teacher's agenda or material to be learned' (ibid.). While the students could control how they went about completing the activity, they could not control the purpose or goal within this situation.

It therefore follows that in the making of *Groups*, Lippard interacted not collaboratively with the photographers, but cooperatively. Like the teacher in Bosworth and Hamilton's example, Lippard set the purpose for the project. She acted artistically, although as Cartiere's (2003) statement indicated, in performing the duties of a curator she did not take on the role of artist. Thus, in this instance, the finished artwork was not definitively Lippard's; as artistic merit was not a prerequisite for the photographic images, neither could the work be attributed solely to the photographers. Accreditation in a collaborative or cooperative situation may not always be clear and does not necessarily determine the nature of the relationship. What this suggests, however, is that neither party acted in this instance as the primary 'artist.' In order for an artistic collaboration to take place, the members must collaborate not just artistically, but *as* artists.

During the making of *Nomadics*, a similar distinction developed between Botsford and the core collaborating group: Orbach, Orley and me. Although Botsford engaged in some of the theoretical discussion, she decided early on to concentrate her efforts on the net-art piece, *The Journey*. For this reason she withdrew, for the most part, from the theoretical discussions, keeping the notes from the meetings in mind as possible inspiration for *The Journey*. As the project evolved, however, our purpose diverged from Botsford's. We set out to create a landscape that embodied absence and loss; we consciously decided to indicate remnants of a journey using suggestive rather than explanatory information. Botsford, on the other hand, designed *The Journey* based on her own associations and interpretations of the term 'nomadics.' She used identifiable images of people and places— something we had intentionally decided to omit from the landscape. More importantly, we did not have any access to *The Journey* during the making of the installation, and therefore could not take any of the imagery or text she created into consideration; because Botsford did not inform us about or show us *The Journey* until its completion, we had no decision-making power regarding its creation. Although on occasion Botsford offered an opinion about the physical installation, she did not possess enough ownership to challenge our ideas and did not participate often enough to really enter this part of the communicative exchange. Thus, in adopting a specific role, Botsford cooperated, rather than collaborated with us.

Orley, Orbach and I, on the other hand, shared equal decision-making power during not only the conceptual development of the project, but also the physical construction of the piece. We enacted all aspects of the definitions mentioned above, sharing as Rice (2002: 55) demanded, 'resources, power, authority, (and)

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interests.' By uncovering mutual interests, we established a goal over which we all felt ownership. We developed the collaborative and communicative methods together; we drew on one another's talents and resources as if they were our own, sharing ownership over not just the work, but also the creative process. More than that, as McTaggart (1991) stipulated, we endeavoured to share in the way we conceptualised our work; as described in the following chapter, we examined one another's unique interpretations in order to build a shared understanding of the 'message' which we strove to create.

Not all collaborations, however, share this type of equality. As Rice (2002: 55) wrote, 'within the collaboration process, there are differing levels of collaboration.' In the case of Nomadics, for example, Dáte collaborated for a specific period of time, yet did not follow through to the completion of the work. Although he shared in a common goal and helped to form the theoretical foundations for that goal, he did not help construct it. He acted as both a sender and a receiver during the theoretical stage of the collaboration. Because he departed before the physical construction began, however, he did not 'receive' the work in its various stages; upon withdrawing, Dáte conceded his decision-making power. Since we did not require his approval, we evolved the installation considerably during his absence. He experienced the final work only after we completed it, more as a knowledgeable audience member or participant than an artist. It therefore follows that collaborations can progress for different lengths of time and can occur during different stages of the artistic realisation.

Jessica Lehrman, on the other hand, played a considerably different role within the project. While Dáte shared equal decision-making power for a limited period

of time, a hierarchy of sorts existed between Lehrman and the rest of the group. Although at times she attempted to collaborate on the visual and spatial elements of the installation, her decision-making power was limited to a specific aspect of the installation-- the auditory components. When she arrived in London and joined us in the space, she attempted to engage in the theoretical development in order to establish a sense of ownership over the work. Orbach, Orley and I, however, had already communicated regarding the issues she raised. In having already discussed these elements, we had already experienced the idea building and brainstorming sessions concerning them; they were no longer part of our discussion. In attempting to discuss these issues with us, Jessica Lehrman interacted with the result of prior conversations; she did not enter the conversation itself, nor did she often communicate with us as individual components of this voice. Unable to impact the theoretical grounding of these aspects at this stage, Lehrman instead interacted with the non-auditory aspects as an assistant, following our instructions—working toward our vision. As a result, she did not share equal influence or ownership over the installation in its entirety.

In many ways, this hierarchy prevented Lehrman from collaborating on the spatial and visual aspects of the installation. She could not communicate freely, and what she said regarding these aspects did not possess the same significance, as it would have if Orbach, Orley or I had said it. In his writings on dialogue David Bohm explains that (2003/1989: 334), '…hierarchy organized on the principle of authority…is contrary to dialogue;' it limits free communication. True to Bohm's theory, in Lehrman's instance this hierarchy limited her ability to impact the elements of the installation that Orbach, Orley and I owned; the fact that she played a limited communicative role in the development of these

aspects, however, helped to produce this hierarchy. As a distance-collaborator, she was not present during the discussions leading up to this stage of the project and therefore did not share equal ownership of the ideas we had put into effect. In the designing and recording of the auditory tracks, on the other hand, Lehrman's authority matched Orley, Orbach's and mine.[40] Arguably a slight hierarchy still existed in the fact that the sound pieces had to interact with the construction Orley, Orbach and I created. For the most part, however, Lehrman enacted the aspects Toepell (2001) set forth in her definition of collaboration; she co-conceptualised the sound pieces; she helped develop the practice—the working methods through which we designed these pieces, and she shared equal ownership over them. One might conclude that in some respects Lehrman cooperated, while in others she collaborated; at times she assisted us in carrying out a vision we had already imagined; at other times she helped develop and create aspects of that vision.

It is also important to consider, that hierarchical roles and different communicative positions develop not only because of outside circumstances or media-specific roles, but also at times because of the collaborators' personalities. In 2004, I participated in *Working Together*— a workshop at Tate Modern designed to explore collaboration both practically and theoretically. During this time, participants noted how certain personalities tended to dominate the discussions, while others remained less vocal. In other words, some participants/collaborators interacted more as 'senders,' while others interacted predominantly as 'receivers;' others still adopted both roles and responsibilities in a more balanced way. It therefore follows that in some groups, certain

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[40] See Appendix 12: Nomadics DVD- *Video Clip 2: Sound Collaboration.*

collaborators will play more dominant roles than others; they will work more actively to affect the project or to take on more of a leadership role while their less vocal colleagues choose to interact more passively. Nevertheless, artists can still collaborate in these instances, if they maintain a common purpose and establish ownership over the project. As Bohm (2003: 323) asserts, these roles '…sort of work together.'

Although counterproductive to dialogue then, it follows that hierarchy does not necessary preclude collaborative interaction. Robert Hargrove (1998: 161) explains that collaboration involves both dialogue *and* collaborative conversation:

> Dialogue is not about building community, but about inquiring into the nature of community. Collaborations, in contrast, are based on inspiring visions and are deeply purposeful but are focused on practical, down-to-earth, day-in/day-out accomplishments that are carried out in conversations.

Hargrove recognises that Bohm's definition of dialogue opposes many qualities attributed to collaboration. Bohm explains, for example, that while dialogue can occur around a particular purpose, having a specific goal or aim in mind limits this type of communication. The purpose of dialogue is not idea building; nor is it, according to Bohm, to arrive at consensus or to come up with new ideas. Rather, Bohm (2003:334) explains that the purpose of dialogue is 'to get people to come to know each other's assumptions,' and ultimately to explore the thought processes behind these assumptions.

Arguably, as William Isaacs (2001: 709) observes in his article *Toward an Action Theory of Dialogue*, 'Dialogue is a term used in increasingly widespread repute;' both critical theory and popular culture attribute a wide range of

meanings to this term. While this thesis largely adheres to Bohm's understanding

of dialogue, I do not use it in as quite as strict a fashion. Isaacs (ibid.), like

Bohm explains, that dialogue:

> focuses on transforming the quality of tacit thinking that underlies all
> interactions. It implies developing a capacity to interact in a way that
> "suspends" the habitual processes of thought and meaning that typically
> control us… Dialogue consists of a process that in effect pierces
> collective illusion and allows fundamentally new insights to emerge. [41]

This thesis acknowledges these characteristics of dialogue, but does not impose

Bohm's restrictions regarding the conditions and intentions necessary for

dialogue to take place. Dialogue, as employed by thesis, refers to a deeper more

extensive form of communication than conversation—a communication that

challenges speakers presuppositions and habitual communicative practices;

conversation, on the other hand, refers (within the context of this study) to a

more casual correspondence that may/may not affect the development of an

artwork and does not necessarily explore, uncover or challenge collaborators'

individual assumptions and interpretations.

Collaborations can involve varying amounts of dialogue and conversation. As

both Hargrove (1998), like Rice (2002) assert, not all collaborations will reach

the same depth of communication; different intensities and types of collaboration

exist. As with the core collaborators of Nomadics, for example, some

collaborations will involve a considerable amount of dialogue. On the other

hand, collaborators such as Jessica Lehrman might enter predominantly into

conversations. Ultimately, communication will differ depending on how much

responsibility each collaborator takes, and depending on how each artist

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[41] Please note the copy of the article that I obtained included only numbered only the page on
which the article began: p. 709.

collaborates. Factors such as distance, expertise or even the nature of the project can affect communication. Depending on such factors, collaborators might share ownership over all aspects of a project, or possibly only over particular aspects.

From his experiences taking part in the collaborative project and research investigation *Rivets + Denizens*, Ron Goldin arrives at two distinct types of collaborators:

> …a rivet, who is an integral, functional part of the structure it resides in, and a denizen, who lives on a collaborative structure as an inhabitant. A Rivet is more deeply set in the architecture of the system, providing a greater personal investment in the collaboration at the cost of sacrificing a panaromic view of its own inhabitance. A Denizen remains outside the structure, detached, still maintaining a distinction between the self and the system. A Denizen has a more defined blueprint of the terrain, but maintains a greater distance from the intimate relationship amongst Rivets.[42]

Continuing with this metaphor, it follows that a Rivet will more likely participate in the development of a collaborative identity and author; the rivet, after all, is an essential part of the collaborative machine, carrying authorial responsibility and regularly communicating and interacting with the core group. Denizens, however, are not excluded from impacting the artistic vision. Each collaborative machine differs. Collaborations may consist of any mix of Rivets and Denizens. There is no one set formula for collaboration.

For this reason, it is important to keep in mind that while the diagrams in the previous chapter can help to depict the different roles collaborators enact during their communicative exchanges, they do not portray contextual information. They do not, for example, note whether the communication is taking place between a rivet and a rivet, or a denizen and rivet. Neither do they illustrate *how*

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[42] [1/2008] from: http://switch.sjsu.edu/nextswitch/switch_engine/front/frong.php?art+46

the communication takes place— whether collaborators are communicating through the actual media, or whether they are communicating through email or conversation. Without taking into consideration contextual information, these models cannot illustrate the nature of the communication-- whether or not the communication even pertains to the artwork. Moreover, these models cannot, without taking into consideration pragmatics, express differences in authority among the speakers. One participant's exchanges might possess the authority to impact the artistic 'message,' while another's may not. Thus, acting as both senders and receivers does not necessarily indicate a collaborative relationship.

The following section will focus on art-practices that meet all of these aspects of collaboration—that is, collaborations in which artists engage in not just collaborative conversation, but also ongoing dialogue, uncovering each collaborator's unique interpretations and assumptions and establishing common meaning. In these collaborations the decision-making processes and authority are shared. The artists do not just intertwine their ideas through ongoing communication, but in regularly communicating and working toward a common goal, are able to develop collaborative authorship. This subsection examines the collaborative author—Green's (2001b) *phantom third hand*-- what it is and how it is embodied within the both the practice and the work.

THE PHANTOM

'As a way of overcoming their creative disputes, Leo and Diane Dillon, painters and book illustrators have invented the 'third artist'—a personification of their relationship and professional identity as a team.'

(Diane) '...It was something that was a combination of the two of us, more like a separate entity…"

(Leo) '...It's kind of weird to talk about it, but the third artist is a very real entity for us. It sounds bizarre, but we never knew what the hell it was going to do next.'

(Diane) ' We're really one artist'
                    (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Dillon & Dillon: 117-118)

Diane and Leo Dillon are one of several sets of collaborating artists who have described the emergence of a 'separate entity' or unidentified 'third artist' in relation to their collective practices. Charles Green (2001b: 181) similarly cites, for example, Marina Abromovic and Ulay who 'insisted that their [collaborative] actions created a third hermaphroditic energy… a phantom body… a third entity.' Based on an accumulation of these types of references, the Sarnoffs (2002) deduct that through these deeper collaborations, collaborators 'virtually create a new being' (44) -- 'a psychological entity that did not exist when they first met' (26). Simultaneously, however, they acknowledge the intangible essence of this energy. Thus despite the fact that artists continually personify this phenomenon and attribute a physical dimension to it, it remains intransient. What, then, is this third artist or element? Where does it come from?

According to Charles Green:

> … [one possibility] is that the double identity created in artistic collaboration could be described as a phantom extension of the artists'

joint will, rather like a phantom limb… the artists' phantom appendage or third hand (Green 2001b: 186).

A third hand in this case does not imply a third artist; nor does it imply merely a collectivity or joining in aesthetic or purpose; rather, it develops from where the artists overlap and therefore belongs equally to both or all of them. They each, in this metaphor, still possess their own bodies-- their own two hands. The third hand is not a replacement, but an addendum. Nevertheless, to inhabit this hand the artists must in some way join with one another, for only in this joining does the hand exist. Thus, Green rightly describes the third hand as a *phantom* limb— it feels, but cannot touch; it can move, but cannot be seen. In part, its absence makes it what it is— it is perceived by the mind, but remains unembodied.

The Sarnoff's on the other hand, raise another possibility-- that this 'phantom' element is the collaborative relationship itself:

> It is common place to hear people refer to their intimate connection as 'it'—as if their relationship were some alien object imposed on them by an unfathomable and capricious source beyond their control, a 'thing' they had no part in creating and have no further personal responsibility for directing… "It is working," or "It isn't working"
> (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 25).

The use of the impersonal pronoun implies that this entity is 'other' than the artists—that it possesses its own identity or its own will. If, however, it also derives from a 'connection,' it must to some degree rely on the artists' individual identities and practices, taking shape not only from those aspects that overlap, but also from where they diverge. By suggesting that the artists lack control over this entity, the Sarnoffs imply that the collaborative context supersedes the individual. In other words, the collaborative context 'defines and elaborates the individual rather than vice versa' (Kasulis 1981:8).

Compared with Japanese linguistic and communicative etiquette, this concept mirrors the relationship of a conversation to its speakers. In *Zen Action, Zen Person*, T.P. Kasulis (1981:8) explains how 'In Japan the context is given primacy over the individual.' Thus, where English emphasises language as a means to an end, in which the goal is to relay a message as accurately as possible to the intended 'receiver,' in Japanese the context or conversation defines its speakers and listeners. Understood as a metaphor for collaboration, this suggests that the identity of the collaboration or communicative exchange subsumes the artists' individual identities. Rather than individual consciousnesses, each speaker represents a ''direction' (*kono kata*)' or 'orientation' within the communicative exchange (ibid.). This is not merely an act of the other, but also an act of the self. Each speaker acknowledges both herself and the other speakers (collaborators) not as individuals, but as a part of the communicative relationship—as part of the collaborative 'it.' Thus, as with the 'third voice' described in relation to Miller and Broumas' (1985) collaborative writings cited in the introduction, the voice of the collective conversation supersedes the artists' individual voices.

As mentioned in the previous section, however, not all collaborative conversations share equal depth. It therefore follows that not all collaborations can develop a phantom element. As Green (2001b: xiii) observes:

> Many short-term collaborations preserve each individual's authorial signature-style, even though the participating artists might all contribute to each area of work…But such short-term collaborations that preserve authorial style rarely occupy much more than an incidental position within an artist's oeuvre.

Thus, for a group of artists to produce a phantom element, the collaborative exchange must act on the artists' individual voices. In other words, it cannot

merely develop from an interweaving of the collaborators' exchanges into a composite sending; it must also simultaneously influence each individual artists' communication, helping to define the artists' identities within the collaboration until a new voice is created--- a voice that is born out of this interweaving and influencing. It must possess a new authorial signature.

In a sense, this new authorial signature *is* this phantom element; it is born out of an intermingling of ideas, voices and identities while, as described above, it also depends on specific individual factors. It remains distinct from each collaborator's individual artistic signature or voice, but also consists of these voices. Many collaborating groups additionally claim that at times, this 'signature' acts on its own. To paraphrase the Dillons, they do not know what it will do next. In other words, the phantom possesses not only an authorial signature, but also a will of its own. Although this signature belongs to a third hand, this third hand belongs to a third (or additional) artist. This artist, however, is not merely another collaborator; the collaborators, after all, produced this artist. As the Poiriers explain, rather, the third artist is 'a new invented author'—the author of the collaborative work (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Poirier &Poirier 2002: 90).

Ultimately, this phantom entity exists in all of these guises: it is the collective voice, and the collective author; it is the third hand, and the shared authorial signature. Most notably, it inhabits the qualities of the collective work that do not exist in the artists' individual practices. It exists as well, in the evolution of the individuals toward a collective identity. In the same way that the rhythm of a

poem can eventually lead its writer to certain words in certain orders, this phantom can lead its artists toward certain decisions and ideas.

In the case of Nomadics this rhythm guided us, just as we guided it. For us, the phantom existed in shared feelings of authorship; it was the merging and re-vocalisation of ideas; the sudden inspirations which certain ideas or images sparked; the connection between different ideas; the feeling of collectively losing ourselves in the project; the feeling of collectively owning the project; the red walls of *The Shavings Room* and the randomness of finding a plush red couch and armchair on the side of the road; the red velvet fabric in a skip that caught our attention and became the exit of *The Corridor*. More than anything else, it was the balance between all of these things; between leading and being led; between giving and taking; between letting the rhythm carry us, and creating it ourselves.

The remainder of this thesis will focus on how these deeper, more communicative and more interactive collaborations develop this phantom dimension. It will examine how a collective identity, collective voice and collective consciousness develop through prolonged and intense communication. It will also explore the evolution of the collaborative relationships—how a group of individuals such as the participants involved in Nomadics, evolve a collective identity and ultimately produce a phantom author.

CHAPTER 4:
THEORIES OF COLLECTIVITY

COLLECTIVE AUTHORSHIP / COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

> *Artistic collaboration is a special and obvious case of the manipulation of the figure of the artist, for at the very least collaboration involves a deliberately chosen alteration of artistic identity from individual to composite subjectivity* (Green 2001b: x).

As discussed in the previous chapter, many contemporary writers on authorship and/or collaboration have described and emphasised the emergence of creative techniques that attempt to impede the creator's 'subjectivity' from controlling the work. Like Green (2001b), Cynthia McCabe (1984) categorizes collaboration as one of these methods. While Green embeds his theory in conceptualism, however, McCabe traces the emergence of collaboration further back to Dadaism and Surrealism. She examines how artists in these movements influenced one another both by collaborating directly, and by working under shared principles toward a common goal. According to McCabe, these artists not only strove to thwart the amount of control and influence they exerted over their work, they also tampered with the role of subjectivity in art, fundamentally altering the authorial responsibilities traditionally associated with the artist.

In part, these methods helped to free artists from the limitations of their own creative processes. In the case of collaboration, the collaborators shared both success and failure; individual identity was often subsumed not merely by the artists involved, but also by the work itself. Thus, as Roland Barthes (1977/1968: 145) declared in *The Death of the Author*, artists and their work were no longer 'a single line divided into a before and an after… a father to his child.' While Barthes argues for the author's death, however, I propose that the author not so much died, as metamorphosed; from its shell, a new authorship has

emerged— one in which the roles of individuality, consciousness and ultimately accreditation, have shifted from a model centred on the individual, to a more inclusive model that takes into account the many minds, perspectives and historical associations influential in the making of a work. In phantom oriented collaborations, this results not only in the impediment of individual intentionality, but at times the creation of a 'collective consciousness,' in which collaborators maintain a hoard of dismissed ideas: collectively established symbols, themes and meanings that re-emerge and re-work themselves throughout the collaborative process.

In *The Death of the Author*, Barthes (1977: 147) argues that the traditional Author has been replaced by the Modern 'Scriptor' who 'no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt.' From Barthes' perspective, authorial influence, or perhaps, authorial genuineness is polluted by the history that precedes it. The contemporary writer or artist's intentions inevitably originate from or at least in part contain a historical presence—a legacy that contextualises both structure and meaning. The Modern Scriptor not only reiterates particular collocations, themes and insignia present in the '**dictionary**;' this scriptor is prisoner to the mythologies, associations and metaphors that have accumulated and attached themselves to these symbols over time.

It is important to note that while Barthes (1977/1968) may have first attached a name to this modern writer, this theory is neither unique to Barthes nor to semiotics. Hans-Georg Gadamer also described this phenomenon; 'old and new

are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other' (Gadamer 2004/1960: 305). More recently, Bourriaud has developed this concept in his theories of postproduction, taking into consideration the ongoing critical response that Barthes' claim has generated in theories of semiotics, art-theory and authorship. Rather than prohibit authorship, Bourriaud believes that authorship has evolved into this practice of appropriation. The artist's job, according to Bourriaud (2005: 25), has changed from the maker of an object to the author of definition; 'the issue' he continues, 'is no longer to fabricate an object, but to choose one among those that exist and to use or modify these according to a specific intention' (ibid.).

In the same way that past ideas, art movements and practices influence and are embodied within contemporary art practices, past communicative experiences and exchanges will influence subsequent communicative behaviours. Heath and Bryant (2000: 52) explain that:

> …communication efforts leave a residue of interaction patterns, experiences, ideas, meanings and feelings that become part of subsequent encounters. How you communicate is a product of your communication in the past as well as the past communication of the persons with whom you interact.

Considering that communication, as described in *Chapter Two*, includes not only spoken and written language, but also the reception and interpretation of communicative works such as art, dance, drama, music and film, it follows that to some degree, artists are always in 'conversation' with past and even future voices and movements, regardless of whether or not they directly interact with their contemporaries. Furthermore, this communication affects not only the works created, but also the perspectives with which other art works are received and interpreted. In other words, communication is not isolated; what we see,

hear, say and write influences not only ourselves and those with whom we directly interact but rather, as Heath and Bryant imply, it functions as a chain. A particular communication affects each party's future communications and therefore can affect the future communications of the people with whom they communicate as well. Ideas can span across different discourses and frameworks; artists both knowingly and unknowingly build on past works, borrowing from and assimilating ideas, insignia and language encountered through previous communications—whether those communications involve conversation, reading, writing, or the artworks themselves. In this way, they create their own specialised 'dictionary'—a collection of the ideas and techniques that they have encountered, as well as their reactions to these ideas, and which they incorporate consciously and/or subconsciously into their creative works.

This theory bears additional significance in context of artistic collaboration, in which artists engage in intense and often prolonged dialogue. Through regular exchanges, collaborators expose one another to ideas, values, insignia, techniques, and influences. It therefore follows that a group of collaborators share a more complex and developed history of communication, which in turn feeds their future communication. This includes not only the ways in which they 'receive' ideas and/or artwork but, as described further on in this chapter, also the content of their 'messages' and how they choose to 'send' them. In other words, it affects both thematically and technically the art on which they collaborate.

It is with this frame of mind that McCabe (1984) categorises the Surrealists not only as members of an artistic movement, but also as a group of collaborators. In

the case of Surrealism, a group of artists and writers bound themselves by a single set of principles that they used to guide their aesthetic. If we surrender the idea, as Barthes (1977: 145) described, of the author (artist) as 'the subject with the book (artwork) as predicate' and shift our attention to the ways in which specific artworks both evolved and developed from the Surrealist movement, then our focus becomes not an individual but, as William Rubin described '…the spontaneous expression of affinities between independent collaborators' (McCabe cites Rubin 1984: 30).

McCabe (1984) supports this perspective by noting that many of the Surrealists interacted over a sustained period of time, often collaborating artistically as well as socialising and theorising together. Furthermore, they incorporated many of the same techniques in the creation of their work. These techniques developed from shared philosophies and resulted, to a degree, in a common 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' that often penetrated their individual artworks. In other words, these shared techniques and insignia comprised the subset of the 'dictionary' specific to the Surrealists.

While I do not, for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter, necessarily agree with McCabe's classification, her argument does touch on some important characteristics common to phantom collaborations: interaction, shared practices and ultimately (though she does not use the terminology herself), a collective consciousness. In addition to occasional professional collaborations such as Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel's short films *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien Andalou*, the Surrealists entertained themselves with creative and sometimes collaborative exercises (McCabe 1984). Some of these 'games,' such as automatic writing, not only helped them to pass time socially, but also comprised the connective tissue

underlying the philosophical and sometimes thematic theory behind their individual practices. Robert Desnos and André Breton's poetry, for example, both depend on associative connections rather than logical ones; both artists revered the practice of automatic writing because of its believed ability to tap into the subconscious. Thus, they shared both influences and methods; similar themes and ideas motivated them, and they therefore attached similar meanings and importance to these artistic techniques. In other words, these exercises not only enabled the Surrealists to establish a shared dictionary, but also encouraged an overlapping of their perspectives. This overlapping, in turn, allowed them to attach to these practices both individual meanings as well as shared ideas and understandings.[43]

This is similar to the method in which the collaborators involved in Nomadics developed a shared dictionary and later on, a collective consciousness. Like the Surrealists, Nomadics members interacted both socially and professionally. As we unpacked the theme for our project, we began to form similar associations, slowly building not only a store of shared symbols and ideas, but through practice, also attaching shared associations and contexts to these symbols and ideas. We developed, in a sense, our own verbal shorthand and codes to represent them—phrases and words which, if removed from the context in which we had established them, would mean either very little or something considerably different to an outside listener than they did to us.

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[43] For more information see: McCabe, Cynthia Jaffee. (1984) Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century: The Period between Two Wars. In: McCabe, Cynthia Jaffee (ed.). *Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. pp. 15-44

The discrepancies that first occurred in our individual interpretations of this verbal shorthand exemplify how we had to work toward a common understanding; it was only through intense communication and interaction that we arrived at collective interpretations of the ideas and images that comprised *Nomadics*. Initially, for example, we had discussed ideas for a 'light space,' a 'dark space,' a 'dough area' and 'a cave'. Orley envisioned the 'light space' and the 'dough area' as one space, and the 'cave' and 'dark space' as another. I, on the other hand, paired these terms differently. To me, the 'cave' was both the 'dough area' and 'the light space,' while the 'dark space' remained something separate. Ultimately, our personal and geographical experiences determined the ways in which we had initially interpreted these terms. Orley imagined 'caves' as dark and damp, with stalagmites and stalactites—a stereotypical cave somewhere close to the sea, a river, or an underground body of water. My image stemmed from my time in the Sonora Desert, where bone and red coloured rock jutted out of the mountainsides and foothills in strange house-like cave structures.

2. Desert Rocks- Tucson, Az

Bohm (2003) maintains that these instances of conflicting interpretations or 'assumptions' as he calls them, comprise important and inexorable junctions in dialogic development. He (2003: 297) describes them as 'part of a given participants 'unconscious' infrastructure.' By this he means that, although members of the same society or even subsections of that society share numerous experiences and assumptions, as in the case of Orley and I, our unique experiences inevitably led to moments of miscommunication, disagreement and confusion. For Bohm (ibid.), this confusion not only signifies opposing assumptions, it also marks a 'gulf' between 'social consciousness' and 'individual consciousness.' It therefore follows that in rectifying miscommunication, collaborators bridge this gulf; each individual consciousness absorbs a new meaning—one that may now pertain to the individual and/or the social, or more specifically to communications with the particular group of people or correspondents involved. In the event of the latter, the particular communicative situation not only bridges the social and individual consciousnesses, it demands its own unique mix of associations, what Bohm (2003: 300) calls a 'consensual mind'. In other words, it evokes a collective consciousness, but also an alteration in the 'unconscious infrastructure' underlying each participant's communication in the collaborative context.

As recorded on 'Nomadics DVD: *Audio Track 1*,' through prolonged discussion, Emily and I eventually realised that our envisionings of these different rooms largely coincided and that it was, in actuality, merely our interpretations of these labels that differed. As a result of this confusion, we had each argued in favour of similar conceptual images without realising it, projecting our own associations

and experiences into our interpretations of each other's linguistic descriptions. Thus, in our case, this confusion occurred solely on the linguistic level; it did not result directly from differences in our personal ideologies or aesthetics.

Within the artistic context, this type of linguistic miscommunication plays a significant and unique role in the creation of a collective consciousness. While our typical communications rely primarily on language, as described in *Chapter Two*, artistic collaborations often include other means of communication. In their writings on Habermas, Eriksen and Weigard (2003: 48-49) refer to C.S. Peirce's theory that:

> Our cognition never has direct access to objects; it is always mediated through signs, or symbols. The central category of such signs or symbols is language. This means that the basis for our cognition cannot be anything private or individual (as previously assumed); rather it has to be something social and collective.

Whether or not our cognition relies solely on signs and symbols has yet to be determined. Theorists (Danesi 1994; Gadamer 2004; Saussure 1983) have posed a spectrum of theories over the last 70 years. Many of these theories, however, including Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984) and Bohm's 2003 theories on dialogue, take for granted that language itself is a social system that relies on signs and symbols rather than, as Pierce established, physical objects.

In the case of Nomadics, however, the collaborators used tools, objects, drawings and photographs to supplement verbal communications, not only specifying the broader pool of social and cultural meanings that could be attached to the terms at hand, but creating new meanings as well. In this way, we individualised meaning neither on a personal level, nor a societal one, but rather on a collective level limited to the particular collaborators and project at hand. It is for this

reason that Bohm emphasises the importance of shared meaning, rather than the importance of a shared language. Bohm acknowledges that while society is founded upon shared meaning, it simultaneously includes myriad disparate meanings. He claims that 'if all the meanings can come in together, however, we maybe be able to work towards coherence' (Bohm 2003: 322). While this appears to call for an 'obliteration of difference'—a circumstance Charles Green (2004) ascribes to phantom oriented collaborations, Bohm's dialogic regulations call for a suspension of assumptions—a method in which each collaborator maintains the different meanings put forth in his/her consciousness without preference or condemnation— a situation that is unlikely if not impossible on a societal level, but one which smaller groups, with persistent communication, may at times achieve.

Notably, the terms that comprised Nomadics' shorthand (i.e. 'cave' and 'dough') exist outside of the particular context in which we used them. As Orbach later proved by bringing in photographs and drawings of caves and fossils, our particular conceptions stemmed from pre-existing and culturally shared images. Similarly, while 'dough' and 'area' may enact an unusual collocation, both of these terms pre-dated our compounding of them. We did not so much coin new words and images, as borrow, broaden and blend pre-existing ones—much in the way Barthes' Modern Scriptor 'borrows' from the historical dictionary. Thus, the picking and choosing of these images, terms and ideas, and later on certain techniques, resulted in the creation of our own particular subset of this larger dictionary. In developing definitions and contexts for these images, we developed shared meanings for them. In a sense, we created a unique artistic dialect with both a particular dialect vocabulary and a dialect grammar; thus, we

not only, as recently stated, shared perceptions and associations, we established a collective understanding of how to exercise our shared dictionary.

While this type of miscommunication did occur throughout the duration of Nomadics, it became much less common over time. As we gathered knowledge of each other's unique associations and perspectives, we both consciously and unconsciously adapted not only our use of verbal terminology, but our creative methods and techniques as well. From one perspective, these arguments and differences may appear counterproductive. Each time we encountered this type of difference, however, we worked through it, unveiling the different associations and meanings we each held, and learning more about one another's past experiences. Although learned in a secondary manner, these past experiences became part of the project's **collective memory**. Furthermore, our arguments and differences helped us to better gauge one another's reactions; by holding in 'suspension' the many angles and views we had discussed, we both drew on shared associations and experiences to explicate new ideas, and we began to naturally gravitate toward word choices and manners of expression that the others could more accurately translate. Similarly, by gaining more insight into one another's manners of expression, we could more accurately interpret each other's descriptions—even on occasions that did not refer to the associations we had already collectively established.

In actuality, these concepts, images, symbols and ideas entered each collaborator's consciousness during both collaborative dialogue and the physical making of the work, literally enacting a 'collective consciousness' in such instances. As outlined above, during the earlier stages of the collaboration, our

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collaborative dialogue did not always relate to overlapping or similar pictorial images.   Once we established our images, either through drawing or by discussing them within the exhibition space, our references to them created specific moments in time in which we each entertained parallel or even identical images in our minds. Once we began construction and these images began to manifest materially, even less room for opposing interpretations existed. In working together on *The Corridor*, for example, Orley and I physically and mentally focused on the same image as it existed visually and tactilely in front of us and thus shared similar content in our consciousnesses during this time.

 The collective consciousness to which I am referring, however, transcends a mere sharing of 'contents.' It is not simply an overlapping of images at a given moment in time. Nor is it the repeated overlapping of these images. Complete strangers, for example, may watch the same T.V. programme at the same time each week. In these instances, the strangers act primarily as 'receivers', allowing identical outside stimuli to penetrate their thought contents. Although Wilson (1993) would argue that they inevitably impose and enrich these images with their own life experiences, they do not, to any significant degree, carry out the types of processes associated with artistic authorship.   The collective consciousness to which I refer, on the other hand, takes for granted a shared 'dictionary' of images.   Occasions of corresponding or identical cognitive content do not rely solely on identical input— though common influences and understandings help establish the grounds from which this consciousness grows; rather, this collective consciousness is rooted in the act of sending—collective actions, driven by corresponding intentions.

Ultimately, collective consciousness is that shared code; it is the knowledge of a particular set of guidelines that initiates the 'grammatical' dialect and the particular 'articulation' unique to a particular project or group of collaborators. Though elements of these guidelines exist in the conscious minds of the collaborators, it is the deeper, preconscious and possibly even unconscious knowing that prompts collaborators to 'articulate' in this way, and which truly unites collaborators and establishes collectivity.

This notion of an underlying code is not, however, in any way unique to my study. According to Emil Durkheim (1982/1895), for example, 'collective consciousness' refers, like Barthes' dictionary, to a pre-established collective code. In Durkheim's case this code ranges from a culture's more casual values and norms, to its systemised rules and laws. Like Bohm (2003/1987;1989), Durkheim believed the majority of people within a particular culture possess knowledge of this code. Both Durkheim and Bohm specify, however, that within a given culture, multiple and even opposing meanings exist. Durkheim (1982:100) attributes these opposing meanings to the fact that '…the immediate physical environment in which each of us is placed, our hereditary antecedents, (and) the social influences upon which we depend, vary.' Bohm, on the other hand, like Jürgen Habermas (1984/1981) and Maurice Halbwachs (1992/1925), utilises a vocabulary that emphasises the existence of subgroups and subcultures. Despite these variations in reasoning, however, all of these theorists agree that on a general level members of these different subgroups, or in Durkheim's case the majority of individuals, partake in and share knowledge of this larger societal code; rather than contradict this collective code or consciousness, the existence of subgroups and the differences in our 'immediate physical environments,' help

to explain in Durkheim's (1982) words, the 'pathological' or, more generally, the miscommunication and differences that occur among members of the same culture.

Consider for a moment, Richard Schechner's (2002) writings on restored behaviour, which state that all behaviours have previously been behaved; we merely adapt them to different circumstances. In other words, as with the particular trends, fashions, materials, themes, techniques and insignia that comprise Barthes' dictionary, a 'dictionary' of behaviour exists. Durkheim's collective consciousness, in a sense, deterimines how and when we exercise these behaviours. In contemporary western culture, it would go against this consciousness, for example, to walk into a stranger's home, open his/her cupboard, and set oneself up on his/her couch with a snack to watch television. These same actions, however, might be acceptable if it were one's own home, or the home of a particular friend or family member. Durkheim's code determines how, when, and in what context we exercise these actions. Thus, while two individuals may hold different assumptions as to what this couch looks like, or whether or not it's appropriate to eat a snack on the couch at all, the more general issues at hand—the issues of privacy and trespassing which, in this instance also relate to the laws in our society, are generally understood and accepted.

It is important to note, that most of us do not need to consciously study this code or learn these behaviours. If we understand Bohm's (2003) assumptions to include not only the images and specific knowledge that underly our interpretations and communication, but also assumptions concerning this behavioural code, then as Durkheim (1982: 221) explained in a 1908 debate on

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Explanation In History and Sociology, '…if there is a collective consciousness, it must include conscious facts and account for them, as well as unconscious facts.' Notably, when we encountered moments of miscommunication during Nomadics, we did not consciously contemplate our terminology or the possibility that we possessed different understandings of these terms; we only discovered this fact through persistent communication. In other words, a shared code in conjunction with a shared 'dictionary' of both artistic and linguistic meanings and symbols, helps to comprise the collective consciousness in an artistic collaboration. Hence, in the collaborative context, collective consciousness includes not only the conscious thought levels, but consciousness as a whole: the deeply embedded unconscious, the preconscious thoughts just below the surface which are sometimes called into consciousness, as well the thoughts of which we are consciously aware.[44]

In the case of artistic collaboration, individual assumptions and societal assumptions interact to create a mix of associations unique to the particular collaborative situation at hand; they must relate to the specific dictionary subset chosen by collaborators. In addition to establishing shared meanings of linguistic and symbolic terminology, however, the artists must share a sense of importance and aesthetic. As Bohm (2003: 298) declares, '…'meaning' is not only significance but also *intention, purpose*, and *value*.' If, as Bohm (2003) also

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[44] This model of consciousness is supported by Antony Easthope's (1999) study *The Unconscious*, which was published by Routledge as part of a series of volumed works intended to clarify, historically contextualise and theoretically situate key terms favoured in contemporary literary criticism. Regarding consciousness, Easthope (1999: 25) explains that: 'Something you actually have in your mind *now* obviously is conscious. Something you know but are not actually thinking about has to be somewhere else, where you can get hold of it when you want—the preconscious. Ideas from the preconscious can slip into the unconscious, though unconscious thoughts can only enter the preconscious if subject to the usual censorship. For example, if you can't remember the name of someone you know, it has temporarily slipped from the preconscious into the unconscious.'

asserts, shared meaning is a characteristic of culture and subculture, it follows that in order to create a context in which collaborators share meaning on all of these levels, they must, in a sense, create a subgroup within that society—what Habermas (1982) would describe as a '**lifeworld**.'

Initially, Edmund Husserl coined the term 'lifeworld', to distinguish the 'artificially constructed objective view of science" from the prescientific world that he believed provided the basis for true experience (Eriksen and Weigard 2003: 46). Habermas uses the term, however, more in line with Alfred Schutz, who first exercised it in a sociological context. Thus, Habermas' 'lebenswelt', much like Durkheim's collective consciousness deals with a common understructure that influences both individual and group experience. Like Durkheim's theory, Habermas' theory specifies 'a culturally transmitted framework, which … communicates a common stock of ideas…' (Eriksen & Weigard 2003: 46). While, Durkheim (1982: 221) stresses that his collective consciousness 'must indeed be conscious in some respects' and that 'the unconscious can be entirely indvidiual,' Habermas (1984: 335) on the other hand, specifies that 'It is present to them [participants] only in the prereflective form of taken-for-granted background assumptions and naively mastered skills.' In other words, this knowing, according to Habermas, exists beneath the surface, not so deep that it lies dormant in the unconscious mind, but rather just out of awareness, ready to move into conscious thought if so provoked.

This perspective is not limited to theorists; many artists also recognise the social nature of art— hence the increasingly participatory elements in contemporary works, the growing trend in artistic collaboration, and the advent of public art. In

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a recent interview, artistic collaborators Cornford and Cross (2004) not only distinguish the art world as a separate 'lifeworld,' they acknowledge its interaction with other discourses, suggesting that the art world itself possesses a particular discourse:

> MC: … Our collaboration is located across a number of overlapping institutions, discourses and art worlds, all of which involve degrees of social interaction.
> DC: The artworld is a subset of the world. Whether or not it involves collaboration, all artistic activity is a form of social practice in so far as it relates to cultural production, ideology, and lived experience
>
> (Cornford & Cross 2004: 665).

Note that Mark Cornford uses the plural 'art worlds,' suggesting that the macro-art world consists of a multitude, if not an indefinite number of smaller, more specialised worlds. In describing their practice as a crossover of these different discourses, Cornford implies that their collaboration possesses its own particular blend of institutions and practices- its own subset of the macro-dictionary. It does not require considerable effort to conclude that their practice—their collaboration, in borrowing from different discourses, constructs its own subset of rules and codes and therefore, perhaps, enacts its own world within the lifeworlds of art.

Ultimately, the development of a collective consciousness depends on the development of a particularized lifeworld. During the initial stages of collaboration, before this world coheres, artists often have to strive consciously toward a shared working method. After they uncover an overlapping of their individual practices and influences, these working methods tend to either evolve organically without conscious deliberation, or not at all. Thus, in comparing the early stages of their collaborative career to their current collaborative endeavours, Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9) described how:

> At first there were occasions when the work we produced was a kind of fusion of our individual practices but after some time working together we felt as if it was impossible for us to tell what idea had come from who...

On one hand they imply a letting go of their personal practices, whilst on the other, they describe both a merging of their individual voices and ideas as well as the evolution of this merging into something more. The inability to consciously distinguish their ideas from one another suggests not merely a collective consciousness, but also a deeply rooted shared subconscious, which likely influences their more deliberate, conscious efforts.

On the whole, each of these elements: the dictionary, the shared perspective, and the collective consciousness (to name a few) interrelate to such a degree that they each feed one another even as they draw from and build on one another. For this reason, the occasions in which collaborators further the development of their dictionary may also be the occasions in which they contribute to the formation of a lifeworld or shared perspective. The following section attempts to trace the development of this collective consciousness, starting from the initial formation of the 'meeting grounds,' through the development of a shared lifeworld and a common horizon of understanding.

COLLECTIVE INTERPRETATION

In his article *The Delicate Essence of Artistic Collaboration*, Stephen Wright (2004) stipulates three main principles regarding the foundation and development of artistic collaborations. The first more generally asserts that 'collaboration emerges and flourishes under certain sets of circumstances' (Wright 2004: 534).

In other words, collaboration is not arbitrary; factors exist which bring together and encourage the communicative dynamic. The second and third claims he makes, however, more specifically address these circumstances. Notably, while his second tenet emphasises the need for diversity and difference, the third, and perhaps most obvious of the three, asserts that collaboration is 'founded upon mutual interest' (ibid.). While these two dictums may appear, at first glance, contradictory, a more thorough investigation reveals that in order to develop a collective consciousness, collaboration requires first an overlapping of interests in order to provide a platform for communication, and then an element of difference to evolve this overlapping into something new.

For this reason, many collaborations develop out of pre-existing relationships. Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9), for example, met each other in London before moving to Glasgow in the same year to study on the same MFA course. They described, in response to the first question, how before they began collaborating, they used to assist one another in the making of their individual works— much like would-be Nomadics collaborators Matt and Ross did when completing their MFAs together. Though, as discussed in *Chapter Three*, this type of assistance does not constitute collaboration, it exposes artists to one another's creative processes as well as elements of their indivualised artistic 'dictionaries,' thus preparing them for potential future collaborations. It also suggests an overlapping of interests and provides a space within which artists can build on this overlapping, potentially forming the 'meeting grounds' for a collaboration.

Meeting grounds refer, essentially, to that initial overlapping of interests and/or an overlapping of lifeworlds that provides a platform for communication among artists. As artists establish meeting grounds, they build a basis for collaboration. As Tony Wilson (1993: 18) asserts in his writings on hermeneutics, 'communication producing factual or evaluative agreement presupposes a common starting point.' Thus, in order to successfully carry-out the type of collective decision-making that characterises collaboration, the artists involved must establish this initial common ground. In effect, it provides a reference point, which not only, as described further on in this section, has the ability to act as an explanatory aid to elucidate opinions and ideas, but on a much more basic level, provides content around which conversation and possibly debate can develop.[45]

Wilson (1993) goes on to specify how interests constitute 'special worlds'—in other words, subsets of the larger societal lifeworld. While on one hand, the 'artworld' alone comprises a 'specialised lifeworld,' additional overlapping interests in multiple social discourses signify either multiple shared lifeworlds, or possibly, more closely overlapping practices and aesthetics within the artworld.

Substantiating both Wright and Wilson's claims, Beagles and Ramsay credit their shared influences as a founding factor of their collaborative practice, noting that:

> We share a large amount of the same influences and have pretty similar tastes in music, literature, TV, politics, film and art. This was one of the things which brought us together (Appendix 9).

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[45] Please see pp. 172-178 for a more in-depth investigation into the significance of debate in the development of a collective consciousness.

In addition to providing a common starting point, however, these sort of mutual interests influence one's experiences and interpretations of the world. Thus, in Beagles and Ramsay's case they possessed similar knowledge in which to contextualise new experiences and ideas prior to their collaborative relationship. These shared influences and experiences provided them with a common store of associations to project into and aid their interpretations of previously unencountered films, artwork and concepts, and more importantly— images and ideas which consequently arose in the collaborative exchange. Not surpisingly, Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9) note that they share and have shared similar reactions to contemporary artworks as well.

Similarly, in their study on collaborating couples, the Sarnoffs (2002) cite several pairs of husband and wife teams that admitted to purposely reading whatever the other reads. Robbins and Becher both declare, 'If you're so passionately interested in a subject, then I should look into it too' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 109). Katleen Sterck and Terry Rozo describe how they encourage one another to read 'whatever stirs either of them' (ibid.). Notably, these teams have collaborated over long periods of time and already share a considerable amount of common ground. The fact that they still emphasise the need to actively and continually share interests and influences further highlights the importance of not only common ground, but as previously described, a shared store of associations on which to draw in the collaborative context.

McCabe (1984) both supports Wrights' claims and elaborates on them, proposing several additional circumstances conducive to collaboration:

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> Camaraderie, friendship, mutual interests and ambition, the dynamism of nascent art movements, and proximity amid wartime or other disruptive conditions are all incentives toward the creation of collaborative works of art (McCabe 1984:15).

According to McCabe, societal circumstances can and do promote shared influences and interests. Like Beagles and Ramsay, she attributes these shared interests to the initial formation of a collaboration; they do not, as indicated by McCabe, merely provide a platform for communication after the collaboration has already begun. This suggests that a history of communication often precedes the collaborative exchange—a history in which collaborators uncover commonalities and arrive at either an idea that ignites a collaborative project, or the concrete decision to work together.

It is important to distinguish, however, between these pre-existing conditions, and the continual sharing of influences and experiences that charactersises collaborations such as Robbins' and Becher's. On one hand, as McCabe insinuates, mutual interests and common life-circumstances provide a reason to communicate—something to draw individuals together and to enable them to understand one another in the early stages of a collaborative relationship. This includes the similar perspectives on politics and film that Beagles and Ramsay shared prior to their friendship, as well as the early stages of the communicative dynamic in which they uncovered these similarities-- as 'friends.'

Likely, as with Orley and me, the communicative exchange artists such as Beagles and Ramsay and Robbins and Becher first enacted as friends, family, and/or lovers, uncovered particular interests conducive to collaboration. In our case, similarities in circumstances and overlapping interests first brought us

together as friends; we were both students at the same university in the same department focusing on installation art. Over time, however, as we discussed our ideas, we discovered that we were both focusing on practice-based PhDs; we both preferred experiential art to conceptual art and (at that particular stage of our PhDs) both planned to research spatial aspects of installation environments. This more specific information evolved into the platform around which the collaborative context developed. We enacted a new dynamic between us, exercising aspects of our selves not previously demonstrated in one another's presence. In other words, common circumstances and mutual interests provided the meeting grounds for friendship; once we established a friendship, we uncovered and helped create meeting grounds for a collaborative relationship as well.

An established collaborating team or partnership, on the other hand, no longer needs to uncover or develop 'meeting grounds' in order to initiate or sustain the communicative exchange. While a continual and active sharing of interests may result in a platform for a new project, these artists already share a history from which they can draw inspiration for future works. At this point in the collaborative relationship, this sharing not so much initiates as intensifies their connection; it permits collaborators additional insight into one another's perspectives. By reading the same books, attending the same exhibitions and subsequently discussing their ideas with one another, collaborators store similar facts and information in their preconscious, conscious and subconscious minds. Since people do not possess fixed identities, continual sharing allows collaborators to update their store of collective information and associations as each collaborator changes individually. This enables collaborators who have

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already established a collective consciousness, to maintain collective interpretation by fusing, what both Gadamer (2004) and Habermas (1984) describe as their 'horizons of understanding'— everything that comprises an individual's vantage point— all of the associations, memories, facts and experiences with which an individual interprets the world.

In some cases, these shared associations and values can provide strong enough meeting grounds to overcome even spoken language barriers. Consider, for example, husband and wife team, Suzanne Scherer and Pavel Ouporov. American and Russian, they did not at first share a common spoken language; they discovered, as the Sarnoff's (2002: 109) described, however, 'their common approach to art.' Equally drawn to one another's artistic practices, they communicated using dictionaries and drawings, waiting 'sometimes for half an hour,' Pavel joked to decipher what one another said (Sarnoff & Sarnoff: 79). Hence, we return to a point made in *Chapter Two*; artistic collaborators rely not solely on written and verbal language, but often on other media as well: sketches, outlines, sculptures and computer imaging among others. Scherer and Ouporov's peristence to communicate despite a common language, suggests that within this particular context, a common artistic language and/or aesthetic possesses, at the very least, equal importance to a common spoken language; it is not in any way secondary to verbal communication in the dialogic or communicative process.

Similarly, in the case of Nomadics situations arose in which similarities in aesthetic and creative expression superseded in importance the ability to communicate verbally. Although not nearly as extreme a situation as Sherer and Ouporov's, both Dáte and Guiterrez had some difficulty communicating in

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English. While Guiterrez's English surpassed Dáte's technically, her artistic practice differed considerably from the suggestive and atmospheric projects on which the rest of us focused. When discussing *Nomadics*, Orley, Orbach, Dáte and I concentrated on the sensual and experiential elements—including imagery, sound, touch and even smell; we collectively gravitated towards images related to absence and loss, such as footprints, fossils, discarded belongings and walkways. While the majority of our ideas and practices tended towards the lyrical side of art, Guiterrez's ideas and her personal artistic practice embodied a more conceptual style. Though Dáte and I welcomed her ideas, Orbach and Orley did not. Differences in opinion with Orley led to a rift between the two, and eventually between Guiterrez and the majority of the group.

Arguably, additional factors influenced Guiterrez's decision to leave the collaboration. Her inability to word her criticisms sensitively, for example, contributed to the tension between her and Orley**.** Furthermore, as these differences and tensions unfolded, her commitment to the project wavered; her constant absences led to her exclusion from the decision-making process, denying her a sense of ownership over the ideas. Likely, our contrasting aesthetics and influences contributed to this change in commitment; as noted in Appendix 4, Guiterrez's final email commented that '…none of my inputs has been considered.' This theory is further supported by the fact that similar language barriers did not exclude Dáte from the meeting grounds or the project. Intrigued by one another's areas of expertise, he and Orbach began to socialise and work together outside of the collaboration, experimenting with dough (Orbach's medium) and fabric (Dáte's). In addition to helping establish a greater platform for communication, their shared interests helped to solidify a

relationship between the two, and ultimately, their positions as part of the main collaborating group.

This initial uncovering of mutual interests and beliefs also prepared us for differences in opinions later on. When a similar tension arose among certain members of the group because Satoshi did not take on as active a role in the practical side of the work, the connection we had previously established changed what could have been grounds for another departure, to grounds for further debate and complaint. Thus, despite the additional factors that contributed to Guiterrez's departure, the fact remains that she was unable to fully enter the meeting grounds established by the rest of the group and that this inability impacted both her dynamic with the group and her decision to leave. 'Finally, and unsurprisingly,' as Spencer and Pahl (2006: 50) explain, 'people are considered important if they have things in common or feel 'on the same wavelength.' Guiterrez's 'wavelength', it seemed, was not compatible with the rest of ours.

It is important to consider, however, that although several of us established meeting grounds, common interest did not play a considerable factor in the initial coming-together of the group. While Orley and I, and Lehrman and I shared pre-existing relationships, the majority of the collaborators only met for the first time after they had already made the decision to collaborate. In our case, the uncovering of common interests and the founding of friendships occurred after this decision; it instead marked the difference between Dáte's relationship with

the group and Guiterrez's, between Matt and Ross's and Botsford's.[46] In other words, the meeting grounds did not so much bring us together as keep us together. Thus, while mutual interests constitute an important factor in the evolution of collaboration, it is important to remember, as Wright (2004: 544) declared, that 'collaboration cannot be reduced to common interest.'

Collaborations develop out of various circumstances and for many reasons; the uncovering of meeting grounds via a pre-existing communicative dynamic, in actuality, characterises only one of many types of collaboration. In theatre and film productions, for example, many if not all of the artists, are 'hired.' Similarly, some collaborating groups employ the help of outside artists who specialise in a particular medium, and therefore take on limited, more specialised roles within the collaborative dynamic (e.g. London Fieldworks). In these cases, the relationships are what Spencer and Pahl (2006: 41) describe as 'ascribed' or 'given' rather than 'chosen.' As with family, co-workers and neighbours, these relationships arise from outside circumstances; they do not include any relationships in which individuals intentially 'choose' to collaborate with or associate with one another.

Moreover, traditional performance-based disciplines such as theatre and film often include another important influential factor: scripts. Unlike projects that develop through collective conversation or dialogue, performances often centre on a pre-written storyline or idea that acts as a focal point or brief for the artists

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[46] Like Dáte, elements of Botsford's practice overlapped the rest of ours. Although she did not drop out of the 'collaboration,' neither did she collaborate on the installation. Matt and Ross, like Guiterrez, never really interacted with the group. Their aesthetic differed from the rest of ours and their limited communication prevented them from taking part in the meeting grounds. They dropped out close to the end of the project, never having met any of the collaborators other than myself. See Appendix 12 for further information.

involved. Although artists share the collective vision of enacting the script; the script is not a product of their collaborative or collective authorship. Furthermore, actors, actresses and technicians often take guidance from a 'director.' Hence, while artists such as Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9) describe how their work '…was and is being produced from a constant exchange of ideas, conversations and studio time,' artists involved in these disciplines often begin with a specific idea already intact; ultimately, this idea provides a sort of artificial meeting ground. Rather than casually uncovering common interests or ideas around which to initiate a collaborative dynamic or the platform for a project, the script supplies these artists with a framework through which they can communicate.

Like these performance-based productions, large-scale projects such as London Fieldworks' often involve predetermined roles. More significantly, they involve hierarchies. The art-duo behind London Fieldworks-- Jo Joelson and Bruce Gilchrist, often hire on a large number or technicians and artists to help develop and realise their projects. While these artists and technicians often possess a considerable degree of autonomy and control over their area of expertise, Gilchrist and Joelson generally present a clear idea of the project at the start of the collaboration. As participant Oliver Bennet (2001: 16) remarked in his essay *Kites*:

> Syzygy is the product of artists Bruce Gilchrist and Jo Joelson, who pulled together a team of 12 including one 'techie', one composer, three kite flyers (part of a team called AirKraft) and four writers.

Notably, he credits Joelson and Gilchrist alone; the remaining team members are distinguished solely by their fields, emphasising how each 'fieldworker' was allocated a specific role according to his/her expertise; writers participated as

'writers'; kite flyers as 'kite flyers.' The advice and criticism each participant offered related specifically to the portions of the project in which he/she each engaged. Like the actors and actresses in a play, they did not need to initiate meeting grounds; both a thematic subject and a communicative dynamic largely pre-existed their participation.

Arguably, shared interests and circumstances do play a role in drawing together artists involved in these types of projects. In the case of Nomadics, for example, we were all artists in our mid-twenties with a strong desire to collaborate and an interest in both installation and interdisciplinary arts. Similarly, the actors and actresses of a play share personal and professional interests in theatre arts, not to mention parallel schooling and training experiences. As Spencer and Pahl (2006: 181) explain in their writings on friendship:

> … it seems clear that factors such as gender, social class, age and stage in the life-course, geographical mobility, and cultural background all represent contexts which play a part in influencing the development of personal communities and the way people perceive the importance of friends and family.

Regardless of these preliminary shared interests, however, actresses do quit; Guiterrez, Chan, and Matt and Ross left the collaboration. In other words, while these more general grounds help draw artists into situations in which they could potentially uncover more specific and unique similarities— as Spencer and Pahl assert, they only 'play a part;' other parts are needed. They are not sufficient to complete the meeting grounds if more specific perceptions and values differ too greatly.

Perhaps it was for this reason that, despite our ability to uncover more detailed common ground, many Nomadics collaborators initially felt overwhelmed and

unsure of how to proceed with the project.[47]   While artists such as Beagles and Ramsay gradually enacted a collaborative relationship, we were in a sense, flung into it. Though we initiated social relationships outside of the project, we did so along the way, simultaneously attempting to clarify our artistic direction. We had a task, but no defined goal, and for the first month or two only a vague idea of one another's working methods. All in all, the dynamic we enacted was a precarious one; it possessed neither the organicness of Beagles and Ramsay's collaboration, nor the security provided by a director or brief.

 Although we had already established particular images and ideas by the end of the first month, Orbach, Orley and Botsford advocated the need for a 'reference point'—something or someone to guide and focus the communication.   As Botsford declared at a meeting in early September 2004, "Everybody's got all of these great ideas, but there's no one there to go 'right.'" Like Orley, she had studied set-design and generally worked around a script or brief.   After a prolonged debate, Orbach accepted the duty of writer, and presented the group with a short brief entitled *Museum* (Appendix 5). Despite her efforts, however, we never used it. After looking over the brief, we continued to work as we had before—according to the imagery and drawings we had already established. In discussing the need for a focal point, we had, in a sense, established one; we learned more about one another's preferred working methods and better familiarised ourselves with each other's communicative style.

This overlapping of interests not only provides common grounds for communication, it sets the grounds for the development of a common lifeworld

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[47] See Appendix 12, Nomadics DVD- *Audio Clip 2.*

and a store of shared associations and influences to project onto that world. Often, in the case of longterm phantom collaborations and collaborations involving partners, siblings and/or friends, the artists continually evolve these grounds over time, as they evolve their individual interests. The exposure to one another's ideas, feelings, and influences affects and develops collaborators both individually and collectively. Consequently, the changes each collaborator undergoes individually, simultaneously influence the other collaborators and at times stem from changes and ideas other collaborators undergo. In this way, over time, collaborators' ideas, thoughts, and lives intertwine building from the initial meeting grounds, a collective consciousness and a shared lifeworld or worlds, ultimately resulting in a collective perspective with which to interpret these new experiences, influences and ideas- a common horizon of understanding.

ESTABLISHING COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

As explained above, it is important to consider, not only the formation of meeting grounds, but also the sharing of experiences that many times continues after this initial meeting ground has formed. Mutual interests bring about, as described, platforms for communication through which social relationships develop; they allow collaborators to accrue additional shared associations and to update pre-existing ones. What, however, happens once a shared experience has ended? Where does this knowledge go? What happens to the associations, ideas and emotions that have gathered around the particular concept or experience at hand?

In actuality, during the collaborative exchange, we call upon stored information; experiences we have already encountered and which we have programmed into our subconscious minds for future use. As Bohm (2003: 305) describes in his writings on dialogue:

> It is important to see that the different opinions that you have are the result of past thought—all your experiences, what other people have said, and what not. That is all programmed into your memory.

In other words, the preconscious 'assumptions' and 'associations which enable collective interpretation and which partially comprise a collective consciousness, are in actuality, memories. Collaborators that have experienced more in common, that have worked together or known one another for longer periods of time, will therefore share a greater number of collective memories. Following Bohm's logic, this better prepares collaborators to arrive at consensus—common 'opinions.'

The term 'collective memory' was originally coined by the French Social theorist Maurice Halbwachs (1992/1925). In accordance with both Habermas' (1984/1981) *Theories of Communicative Action*, and Durkheim's (1982/1895) theories on collective consciousness, Halbwachs maintained that individuals accrue these memories as members of the same society. Like the pregiven associations of Habermas' lifeworld theory, Halbwachs' (1992: 38) collective memory exists primarily sub-consciously; memories, he continued, remain subconscious until provoked into consciousness by social encounters, conversations, questions and statements made by others-- much in the way Bohm's (2003: 297) assumptions 'can be brought out and examined' through prolonged dialogue.

In the context of artistic collaboration, these memories comprise a significant portion of the communicative exchange. In the case of Nomadics, for example, Orley would often come up with an idea, which would then spark an association with an experience or book that Orbach had read; in turn, I would generally supply another association related to my own experiences and influences. As Wilson (1993: 26) maintained, in order to interpret or understand a new text or experience, we draw associations with information and experiences already familiar to us—a process he referred to as 'appropriation.' Thus, in these dialogues, Orley, Orbach and I evoked one another's memories not only in reaction to one another's ideas, but also as part of the interpretative process. As this process progressed over time, we built on each other's recollections to arrive at seemingly new amalgamations of previous thoughts and ideas—much in the way that Barthes' (1977) Modern Scriptor borrows from a 'dictionary' of pre-established historic traditions.

Barthes' theory possesses special significance in relation to collective memory theories. In her article *For a Sociology of Collective Memory*, for example, Marie-Claire Lavabre (1994) writes how:

> Collective memory can be defined as an interaction between memory policies—also referred to as 'historical memory'—and the recollections—'common memory,' of what has been experienced in common.[48]

Lavabre also cites Marc Bloch's theory that historical memories are often 'handed down'. Referring back to Barthes' (1977) claims, it then follows that the

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[48] I obtained a copy of this article from an online source that did not include the original page numbers: Lavabre, Marie-Claire (1994) *For a Sociology of Collective Memory*. [9/5/2006] from: www.cnrs.fr/cw/pres/compress/memoire/lavabre.htm

artists and writers of today share a social memory of previous artistic traditions and movements; though they did not form these memories firsthand, they have been 'handed down' over generations, ultimately becoming 'historical memories.'

Based on the logic established in the previous two sections of this chapter, it follows that, as with the more specialised collective consciousnesses established by societal subgroups and groups of collaborators, these groups also possess both a greater number of, as well as more specific and detailed, shared memories. Halbwachs (1952: 141) maintains that:

> …there are at least as many collective memories as there are functions and that each one of these memories is formed within each of these groups of functionaries, through the simple play of the professional activity.

As a 'group of functionaries' that focuses on the 'professional activity' of artmaking, a collaborating partnership or team must, according to Halbwachs' statement, possess a more specialised collective memory which, at that very least, pertains to the professional projects and activities they undertake.

Halbwachs focuses his theory not only on professional groups, but also groups that share deeper social relationships. Like Green and the Sarnoffs, Halbwachs (1992) places special importance on family relationships devoting an entire chapter of his writings on collective memory to the family situation:

> …just as every family quickly acquires a history, and just as its memory becomes enriched from day to day since the family's recollections become more precise and fixed in their personal form, the family progressively tends to interpret in its own manner the conceptions it borrows from society (Halbwachs 1992: 83).

In other words, within the family structure, a more specialised collective consciousness along with a particular collective perspective develops. Families, therefore, both establish shared memories through common experiences and pass down their own perspectives of past events, helping to create a collectively shared interpretive framework.

This notion also upholds the idea that collaborating family members and friends create more comprehensive collective consciousnesses and therefore more accurately interpret one another's statements and ideas. As Spencer and Pahl (2006: 45) describe, 'Our families often provide us with our earliest associations; As such,' they continue, 'personal communities provide a kind of continuity through shared memories. This 'continuity' implies that family members, to a significant degree, share overlapping realities; they collect similar experiences over time forming common memories, and in having experienced them together, can reference these memories in ways that individuals who have not previously met, cannot. In other words, this continuity means that at times, family members, partners or in some cases even friends, can use these experiences as a sort of shorthand in order to convey a particular meaning, emotion or idea.

In both *Group Soul* (2004), and *The Third Hand* (2001b), Charles Green describes how collaborating partners and friends not only share experiences, but through continual sharing often begin to form similar reactions to these experiences. In *The Third Hand*, for example, he describes how the Poiriers often experienced similar reactions when confronted with identical or similar stimuli:

> Even though they frequently gathered resources and documentation on site individually, they found that they always ended with the same reponses and inspirations (Green 2001b: 91).

Similarly, he describes Abromovic and Ulay's travels to Australia in a joint search to 'develop heightened sensitivity' which, after a prolonged camping experience in the desert, they both claimed to be 'the most important experience we felt' (Green cites Abromovic and Ulay 2001b: 597-598). Collaborating family members, couples and friends then, not only receive similar stimuli through continual joint experiences, but over time begin to direct their attention in similar ways toward these experiences; they tend to focus on similar elements of these events, causing the actual experiences initiated by these occasions to more greatly overlap. Furthermore, the actual cognitive re-ordering of this stimuli, more often results in similar or at times even identical thoughts and emotions, not to mention, as in Abromovic and Ulay's example, a shared sense of importance and meaning.

This theory is especially applicable in the case of siblings who, rather than having to work to establish a common lifeworld through social interaction, are born into one. From their earliest formative years, siblings often share a common environment, and therefore not only share common memories, but are also exposed to common values, ideas, environments and teachings. Moreover, siblings may share these experiences during the process of forming their artistic voices, witnessing one another's early successes and failures, in some cases forming an asethetic together-- a collective artistic vocabulary or even, identity. Collaborating twins Jane and Louise Wilson, for example, completed their A-Level in art together; they recollect having had their friends pose for them,

'Usually in their underpants' (Adams cites Wilson, Louise 1999).[49]   Similarly, on their personal website, Mike and Doug Starn recall 'Working collaboratively in photography since the age of 13.'[50] Arguably, not all siblings share such strong bonds or similarities in aesthetic and perspective.   In actuality, few siblings grow-up working in the arts together. Relationships such as the Starn Twins' and the Wilson Twins' suggest, however, that when the two relationships do coincide, they often nourish one another to produce both-- a shared store of associations and memories from which to draw, as well as an overlapping or joint aesthetic.

It is therefore not surprising that, even though we had not previously collaborated, the relationship Jessica Lehrman and I share as siblings significantly impacted the ways in which we communicated during the course of Nomadics. Although she did not interact directly with the collective during the formative stages of the collaboration, our pre-existing relationship as sisters provided the necessary overlappings in perspective that the rest of us had to work to establish. In our discussions of the sound pieces, for instance, Lehrman made comparisons with composers such as Philip Glass and Laurie Anderson with whom she knew I was familiar. More significantly, her ideas generally coincided with my own from the start—a coincidence that only rarely occurred among the rest of us until after we had collaborated and communicated for several months. Without having to go through any of the preliminary sharing of influences and past works, we immediately built off of one another's ideas, so that, as Beagles

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[49] I obtained this article from an online source that did not include page numbers: Adams, Tim. (10/10/1999) Jane and Louise Wilson. *Guardian Unlimited.* [5/2007] from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/turner1999/Story/0,12119,201739,00.html

[50] Starn, Doug and Starn, Mike. Career Narrative. *Starn Studio*. [6/5/07] from: http://www.starnstudio.com/

and Ramsay (Appendix 9) observed, 'it was impossible for us to tell what idea had come from who.'

Because Lehrman collaborated long-distance, she did not have the opportunity to meet any of the other collaborators until after we began physically actualising the project in December. Although she did, at times, exchange email with Dáte and post on the web forum, Lehrman mainly communicated with the collaborators through me. Having grown up together, we shared intimate knowledge on how best to approach one another; we knew what our preconceptions and prejudices would be, as well as which ideas and concepts we would each more likely favour. With this knowledge, I could more easily explain the other collaborators' ideas to her. Similarly, because I had established a communicative dynamic with the other collaborators, it was easier for me to explain her ideas to them. All in all, our pre-existing relationship and the memories and knowledge we shared, allowed her to participate in the collaboration without taking part in the collective establishment of meeting grounds.

While this closeness helps account for shared experiences and perspectives among collaborating families and partners, it is important to note that these shared memories accrue both directly through shared experiences, and indirectly through conversations, films, music and books to name a few. In a passing statement, Charles Green (2001b: 601), for example, refers to a 'collaborative consciousness' in relation to Deleuze's 'world memory.' World memory, like Halbwachs' (1992) collective memory includes both significant historical events that are handed down to subsequent generations (generally through conversation), and the significant 'world' events people live through (Deleuze

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1989). While Halbwachs emphasises the similitude that common experiences and memories generate, Deleuze (1989) acknowledges the differing and even contrasting perspectives that comprise a world memory. Thus, in *Cinema Two*, he describes in relation to director Alain Resnais' films how '… the different levels of past no longer relate to a single character, a single family, or a single group, but to quite different characters as to unconnected places which make up a world-memory' (Deleuze 1989: 113).

More significantly, however, Deleuze writes about Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, focusing on the scene in the bar in which the Japanese gentleman and the woman discuss the bombing of Hiroshima. Although they discuss what is generally considered a 'world memory,' Deleuze (1989: 113-114) emphasises how such memories are comprised of varying and even contrasting perspectives: 'There are two characters, but each has his or her own memory which is foreign to the other. It is like two incommensurable regions of past...' As these two characters continue to converse, however, they open up to one another's experiences. The woman, in particular, Deleuze notes, opens her memory world to the man. 'Is this not' Deleuze (1989: 114) continues, 'a way for each of them to forget his or her own memory, and make a memory for two, as if memory was now becoming world, detaching itself from their persons?'

What Deleuze ultimately insinuates is that, in verbalising their experiences, the recollections and retellings become a shared memory. This notion takes on heightened significance in the case of collaborations such as Nomadics. As the majority of us had not met before, we could only share distant past memories

through speech and writing. Orley, for example, had experienced Mike Nelson's (2004) installation environment *Triple Bluff Canyon*, which challenged the participants' relationships to 'place'. Participants walked through each of the three segments of Nelson's installation, entering a new reality that translocated them across time and space.   In between each room of the installation environment, however, participants entered a space from which they could see the unfinished outside of the structure they had just exited. This challenged the illusion that each room created, reminding participants that the art experience is a constructed one.

Although no one other than Orley had seen this installation, her description of it strongly impacted our own memories and ideas. Later on in constructing our own installation, Dáte and I also referred to this structure. I, for one, imagined the discarded 'belongings' that Chan had described positioned around the perimeters of the installation; participants could exit the world we created, and enter this other space. Dáte described a fabric hallway which participants could push their arms through from within the installation, into an outside space, where other participants observed them. We collectively imagined using a two sided mirror or a sheet of glass, playing with light to create a side through which participants could see, and a side through which they were seen. Thus, the concepts and images that Orley described to us became an active part of our dictionary; we reiterated these ideas in altered contexts and played with their meanings, indicating that we had each stored this information, forming a collective memory.

In his writings on collaboration, Stephen Wright (2004) also refers to memory in the making of art; the memory to which he refers, however, is the socio-historical memory 'handed down' within a particular community. An *escrache*, he describes, is 'a collective performance in which memory and knowledge are inseparable from the production of form' (Wright 2004: 539). He goes on to say that in exercising these performances, the Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC) aim to 'constitute a sort of social memory and popular understanding at the neighbourhood level' (Wright 2004: 540). Wright distinguishes between the larger societal lifeworld and the local smaller subworlds we create within it. By fusing memory with artistic creation, Wright emphasises the importance of a common lifeworld; the memory to which he refers is a deeply embedded cultural history shared by the collaborating artists. Furthermore, the fact that this shared memory determines the form and structure of GAC's projects, suggests that collective associations and images are intrinsically related to the signature style, as well as the specific techniques and materials used by a group of collaborating artists; in other words, collective memories as part of a collective consciousness, not only affects collaborators' receptions and interpretations of outside stimuli, but in doing so also affects the 'sending' of the collaborative messages, emotions or projects they wish to convey.

All in all, the 'social memory' to which Wright (2004) refers epitomises Halbwachs' collective memory; it implies a knowing embedded in the social structure of particular communities which imparts not only information regarding historical events, but often perspectives with which to view these events. This, in turn, affects their interpretations of new experiences and stimuli. Thus, according to Wright (2004), Bohm (2003), Halbwachs (1992) and Spencer and Pahl's

(2006) studies, collaborators who engage in the same communities and interact over longer periods of time, share both more historical memories and more common memories. Taking into account, that these memories, as Wright insinuated, affect the style and composition of the artwork, it follows that family members and long term collaborators whose memories more closely overlap, will more likely produce a collective voice and are therefore more likely to evoke the phantom element.

COLLECTIVE VOICE

When asked about the development of their collaborative ideas, Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9) noted that while on occasion they can trace an idea back to its originator, that 'other times it's difficult to remember how stuff got decided.' This does not, however, pertain solely to the blending, borrowing and building off of ideas, which as explained in *Chapter Two*, often results in composite sending; rather, as the collaborating duo explained, there is 'a certain amount of osmosis' (ibid.). Their ideas, in other words, no longer carry their individual signatures or styles; the artists do not, according to this statement, always require a spoken dialogue to exchange ideas. This 'osmosis' implies, rather, that an exchange occurs on a pre-spoken level, so that the ideas that they each voice during these instances stem from a collective source. Rather than weave together and blend their individual voices to create a composite sending, these ideas signify the existence of a collective voice-- a voice that springs from their collective consciousness.

While on one hand, a 'collective voice' implies collective sending; this phenomenon is not to be confused with the 'composite sending' explained in *Chapter Two*. Composite sending, as previously described, refers to all of the communicative exchanges leading up to the completion of the work; it emphasises that the message or experience that the audience-participant 'receives' results from a series of 'sendings' that precede the finished piece, and which act on one another to shape the final product.

A collective voice, on the other hand, results from the development of a collective consciousness. In receiving and interpreting common stimuli and information over a prolonged period of time, and in witnessing and receiving one another's reactions to those stimuli, collaborators begin to not only 'receive' similarly, but also, as described in the previous section, to respond similarly—an action ultimately characterised by 'sending.'   A collective voice, then, involves collective sending in that each collaborator both contributes to and channels the collective consciousness as it relates to the particular project at hand; collaborators draw on, in these instances, the associations and images stored in their shared dictionary. Collective sending refers not to a joint effort, but in this context, to a common practice directed toward a common goal.

Taking into consideration the fact that grounds for communication and collaboration often stem from mutual interests, it follows that the communication that ensues appeals more directly to those aspects of the artists' individual voices that already overlap or which most closely relate. In the case of Nomadics, for example, our mutual preferences for atmospheric and suggestive artworks, our joint thematic interests in loss and absence, as well as the performances,

artworks, books and films we had all previously viewed and could therefore reference during our collaborative dialogue, helped to form first the meeting grounds for communication, and later on a shared dictionary and collective consciousness. Our collaborative relationship, therefore, developed from and more readily employed those aspects of our identities, memories and practices that we shared in common; hence, we slowly merged these facets of our individual artistic voices into a common voice—a particular artistic dialect that we extracted and evolved from these commonalities.

Irving and Susan Sarnoff (2003) claim that this phenomenon both continues and strengthens long after collaborating couples first establish their working relationship:

> As their needs and desires change, couples eliminate from their collective identity features that have ceased to be gratifying. They formulate new goals and objectives that promise to be more consonant with their growing abilities and desire for greater intimacy (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2003: 71).

In this reformulation and elimination, collaborators emphasise aspects of their individual identities and abilities that benefit the collaborative relationship; they specifically choose to bring into that relationship those elements of their personal developments which promote this consonance. Accordingly, Diller and Scofidio note how after years of collaboration 'We're so completely intertwined, sometimes, we don't know where one begins and the other ends' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Diller & Scofidio 2003: 30). Notably, they refer to themselves-- 'We,' not their ideas; subsequently, they describe this process as putting their 'thoughts together,' indicating that this development occurs at least partially on a non-verbal level, unlike the conversational intertwining described in *Composite Sending*. It therefore follows, that as the collective consciousness deepens and

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changes over time, so does a collaborating couple's collective voice; as their individual identities converge, the ideas and artistic preferences that they voice also converge.

Notably, these claims are unique neither to the collaborative situation nor to 'artistic' language. Linguists, for example, use the term 'convergence' to describe a similar dialectic phenomenon, when one or both speakers adapt their speech during a conversation to become more like the others'. Linguist Jean Aitchison (2001) notes how on a larger scale, phonological changes occur through sustained interaction between groups with different accents, emphasising that these changes often occur unconsciously. Similarly, Alan Gardiner (2000) describes how at times, communication and/or interaction among groups with different dialects, can result in a new dialect altogether. He notes how, for example, Estuary English has spread because '…some Cockneys have modified their speech and moved it closer to RP'[51] (Gardiner 2000: 88). Thus, if we understand these trends as metaphors for the convergence that can and does occur between or among collaborating partners, then the development of a collective 'voice' is not only possible, but also likely.

It is not surprising that this phenomenon develops not only out of a continual exchange of information and influences as described above, but much like the dialectic convergence about which Gardner and Aitchison write, from habitual communication patterns that artists often internalise over time. Repeated collective decision-making exposes artists to one another's reactions to artistic

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[51] RP stands for Received Pronunciation— an accent of the English language also known as 'the Queen's English,' 'BBC English' and 'High British.'

situations, ideas and decisions. In the case of Nomadics, we began to predict which ideas the others would accept; we knew how to word an idea to promote its acceptance, and could better gauge how much and in what ways we could change or build off of someone else's idea. After a while, this changing and rewording began to happen more and more subconsciously. As Bechers described in relation to her collaboration with Robbins, 'we can guess each other's interests before we even start. And we have each other's voices in our heads' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 99). Thus, the building and interweaving that characterises the 'collective sending' described in *Chapter Two*, over time, occurs automatically—naturally on a pre-verbal level, so that the ideas vocalised are more in tune with the group, and better represent the collective voice.

This is not to say that differences never occur among artists who have established a collective voice or collective consciousness. On the contrary, this voice develops as much from common visions as it does from contrasting ones. As Cross (2004: 658) wrote regarding his collaboration with Cornford, ' What unites all our projects is that they are developed through prolonged, intense, and often adversarial discussion and debate. Notably, Cornford and Cross are not in the minority; in their study on collaborating couples, the Sarnoffs (2002: 40) devote multiple subsections to argumentation and debate citing for one, Mary Buchen who remarked, 'we're not known as the 'Bickermans' for nothing.' More importantly, the Sarnoffs note the importance of debate and argumentation; they explain that it is both a healthy and natural part of the communicative process and that it in no way undermines the intimacy or trust among collaborating partners. On the contrary, the Sarnoffs (2002: 109) propose that collaborators actually '…advance their projects by stimulating opposing views in each other.'

Habermas also recognised the importance of debate to communicative development and in particular to the development of a lifeworld. In his explanations of a cognitivist version of rationality, for example, he describes 'the bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views' (Habermas 1984: 10). From this perspective argumentation is not only unavoidable, but also as Wright's (2004) third principle asserts, necessary to collaborative development. Ultimately, it is in reconciling and exploring these differences that speakers can substantiate 'the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld' (Habermas 1984: 10). In other words, argumentation and debate provide a forum through which these differences can act on one another and change one another. As the Sarnoffs (2002: 109) declare, 'This opposition lays out the specific differences they need to reconcile in further conversations.' In doing so, collaborators produce something new, something that is neither one view nor the other— something collective.

Notably, this was the case with Nomadics. Although several of us shared similarities in aesthetics and artistic tastes, our ways of working as well as our ways of understanding and voicing our mental images, varied considerably and at times even opposed one another. It was, however, the tension in these contrasts and differences that ultimately shaped the voice of Nomadics. In learning how to express our ideas to one another, as well as how to interpret each other's descriptions, we underwent an important process of adaptation. In adapting our ways of expression we 'gave' much in the same way we occasionally 'gave' thematically, altering our own idea to correspond better with someone else's. Similarly, we expanded our individual perspectives in order to more easily interpret the other collaborators' descriptions. Thus on one hand, we adjusted

ourselves to bring out those parts of us that overlapped more with the other collaborators' personalities, vocabularies and perspectives. On the other hand, we also *changed* ourselves—each gravitating toward an invisible centre through which we had borrowed from one another and to which we lent parts of ourselves. These two efforts combined helped us to gravitate towards a common understanding—a way of communication that derived from all of us, but which exceeded our individual contributions.

Differences, then, not only lead to the development of a collective consciousness and collective voice, they occur long after these phenomena come into existence. What distinguishes between the debates that take place prior to the development of a collective voice and the ones that occur later on is often simply the method/s with which collaborators address these instances. While in the beginning, collaborators need to establish a dynamic and approach with which to handle and solve these conflicts, after a time it becomes second nature. As the Sarnoffs (2002: 40) describe regarding the long-term collaborations on which they focus, collaborating partners 'accept regular dissension as normal and predictable.' This does not mean that they do not get frustrated or angry, but rather that they have methods in place to help deal with that anger and with which to resolve the situation. Furthermore, because these methods determine the aesthetic outcomes of these instances, the particular approach with which collaborators handle dissension helps to define a particular group of collaborators' collective voice.

While these methods differ from group to group, they generally fall into two main categories: those who seek to find consensus on each individual idea and those who hold their differences in check, proceeding with the work and at times

readdressing their arguments later. According to the Sarnoff's however, this latter category does not necessarily constitute collaboration. Clear advocates of the former, they argue that a total collaboration mandates that 'participants discuss and reach consensus on every point' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 103). The exception to this rule would mean the collaborators that opposed a particular idea, altered their position not merely to give-in to the idea they opposed, but to 'explicitly agree that one or the other's position is the way to proceed' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 215-216). Hence, they venerate collaborators Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich who work 'to achieve consensus on literally every word,' describing this as 'the final and most complete form of collaboration' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 104).

It is important to realise, however, that while consensus *may* indicate an idea over which all of the collaborating artists feel ownership, this is not always the case. Even though collaborators may agree, the degree to which collaborators agree may vary considerably; as Orbach and Orley insisted, collaboration inevitably involves compromise—a bit of giving and taking. At times, such compromises indicate a level of trust; a sort of knowing that, however something is realised, it will embody the collective voice. As Bohm (2003: 325) explains, 'there is no conflict in the fact that the individual does not agree. It's not all that important whether you agree or not.' Bohm's (ibid.) theory mandates that participants hold these differences in 'suspension,' so that each collaborator maintains her/his awareness of the different opinions, but continues to proceed with the dialogue, ultimately working towards a 'common meaning.' Dialogic participation in and development of this meaning he believes, initiates the development of a 'common mind…which, nonetheless would not exclude the

individual. The individual' he continues, 'might hold a separate opinion, but that opinion would be absorbed into the group, too' (Bohm 2003: 321). In other words, this conflicting opinion even if not actualised would become part of the collective, and would at the very least influence, if not help comprise, the collective voice.

Notably, while Dorris and Erdrich reach consensus on every word, poets Olga Broumas and Jane Miller did not feel the need to do so when collaborating on their book *Black Holes, Black Stockings*. Instead, they *first* established a collective voice, and *then* individually channelled it into sections of their book. According to the Sarnoffs' writings, this kind of independence does not promote collaboration. Interestingly, however, the poets experience the same shared sense of ownership that Dorris and Erdrich claim. When asked which sections they worked on in a 1986 interview, neither could remember. On separate occasions they both recalled having worked on many of the same sections. Furthermore, an examination of their individual works reveals that their collaborative voice did not overtly resemble either of their individual voices.

In the case of Nomadics we exercised both methods, sometimes labouring to reach consensus on each minute detail, other times siding with ideas of which we did not whole-heartedly approve. Overall, we reached a balance—a knowing that told us what the other collaborators would accept, what they would disagree with but give in to, and what was wholly outside of the collective voice. Because we jointly shared this knowing, we could trust that on the occasions when we gave into either a collaborator's desire to work on an area alone or her faith in an aesthetic decision about which the rest of us remained hesitant, the work would,

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for the most part, stay within the limits of the collective voice. As the Sarnoffs (2003: 30) wrote of Kristen Jones and Andrew Ginzel, once this trust is established 'it doesn't matter…who does what.'

Thus, despite the fact that Orley and I worked to achieve consensus on nearly every decision for *The Shavings Room*, and though we all eventually played significant roles in the construction of *The Door Room*, Orbach almost entirely excluded Orley and me from the creative construction of *The Dough Room*. At a time when she could have turned to us for help, she instead used her friends and partner as assistants, knowing they lacked the authority to challenge her aesthetic decisions. Moreover, Orley and I learned of her new designs only after she had begun actualising them. This not only prevented us from offering or advocating any alternative ideas, it also prevented us from entering into any sort of collaborative exchange or exerting any authority over *The Dough Room* at this time. Rather than 'receive' Orbach's theoretical plans, and then subsequently enter into a communicative exchange regarding them (as a composite sending would require), we received her work visually in its various stages. It was from looking in at the work rather than from verbal agreement that Orley and I became aware of Orbach's decision to scrap the 'dough floor' idea. From one perspective, our authority was undermined; we were in this sense more like a privileged audience peeking in on the artist's unfinished work, than equal collaborators. From another perspective, however, this merely comprised a particular stage of the collaboration—one that weakened our communication, but which did not break our collaborative bond or extinguish the collective voice.

One might wonder how, if Orley and I had imagined and advocated slightly different ideas to Orbach's, could Orbach's work have stemmed from the collective voice?   As both Orbach and Orley repeatedly commented, disagreements inherently exist within collaboration. A collaborative relationship does not depend solely on negotiation and collective triumph over theoretical differences; it involves, at times, the ability to compromise—to learn when to let-go and when to hold one's ground. Though the Sarnoff's (2002: 113) favour consensus as described above, they place considerable importance on differences in opinion citing, among others, Becher who proclaimed 'You can't always have things your own way. But…that's a good limitation.' Ultimately, Orley and I could have continued to press Orbach over the matter. Our decision not to, illustrates on our part a 'letting go', just as Orbach and Dáte let go in the argument over *The Door Room*. Furthermore, this occurred during the latter stages of the collaboration, after we had already established a collective consciousness and to a significant degree, a collective voice. Thus, while Orley and I regretted the loss of the dough floor we had both so strongly advocated, the finished product embodied many of the concepts we had collectively generated. We did not need to approve each of Orbach's artistic decisions in order for them to reflect and channel the collective voice.

In this way we reached our balance; we experienced occasions marked by conflict and difference, but also times when all of our ideas coincided. For this reason, despite occasional or even regular differences, long-term phantom oriented collaborators often channel, as Broumas and Miller (1985) did, a common dialect and language founded upon common ideas. At times, this not only produces continuity and cohesiveness in the ideas which each collaborator

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voices, but also, to borrow and blend Green's (2001b) terminology with Beagles and Ramsay's (Appendix 9), a sort of '**psychic osmosis**' through which collaborators simultaneously arrive at not just similar, but identical ideas and decisions.

> Sometimes you may find that you are about to raise a question, but someone else brings it up. In such a case, that thought is probably latent in the group as a whole, implicit.   And one person may say it, or somebody else may say it. Then another person may pick it up and carry it along. If the group is really working, that would be thinking together— a common participation in thinking—as if it were all one process. That one thought is being formed together (Bohm 2003: 331).

There is no longer, in this case, individual ownership; one collaborator's idea is everyone's idea—not because they modified or influenced it, but because they actually formed the same idea themselves.   This phenomenon is perhaps, the closest evidence to the existence of a collective consciousness; it demonstrates how 'one thought' can literally become 'everyone's thought,' launching 'one voice.'

Relating back to the theories of collective consciousness posited earlier in this chapter, it follows that of the collective presumptions, understandings and experiences that generate collective interpretation also encourage the likelihood that collaborators will independently arrive at identical or nearly identical artistic decisions. Notably, several other collaborating couples and theorists describe this phenomenon. Green (2004) explains, for example, how Abromovic and Ulay intentionally strove to 'gather psychic energy' through collective meditation. They isolated themselves in the Australian desert, insisting that the solitude enabled them to cultivate 'psychic power.' While, for the most part, the psychic power they described embodies a more mystical dimension and perhaps, possesses a less substantial foundation than the psychic osmosis I am writing

about, the artists did acknowledge an exchange: '…you just function as a sender and receiver of certain energies…' (Green 2004: 598). From a literal perspective, one might argue that Abromovic and Ulay exposed themselves to identical or nearly identical stimuli with a shared sense of purpose in mind and therefore both 'received' these similar stimuli and interpreted their experiences of that stimuli similarly; this, in turn would more likely provoke a common response—a shared or maybe even identical 'sending' in relation to this shared experience. All in all, this interpretation of their experiment ties in with Green's, who omits any mystical references in favour of a more analytical approach. He writes not of their energies, but of their 'psychic communion'—in other words, a synergy of minds—a coming together of their conscious and unconscious thoughts (Green 2004: 604).

The Sarnoff's (2002: 99) also describe this phenomenon, asserting that collaborators', '…desire to be open with each other fuses into a steady charge of synergy.' Like Green, the Sarnoff's described the Poirier's joint reactions to their shared research and experiences. 'They often go off alone to look at the ruins, but when they meet again to talk over their notes and observations, "always we have the same impressions—separately, but together"' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 76). Notably, while the formation of identical impressions indicates shared interpretation, it does not necessarily imply a collective voice or the spontaneous develop of identical ideas to which I refer; what the Sarnoff's (2002: 244) did imply, however, was that this 'removal of psychological barriers' unleashes the synergy that underlies all of these phenomena— that this synergy, whether it results in identical idea development or not, evolves not only through shared

experiences, but also because of collaborators' willingness to let their partners or colleagues influence them. Collaborators must, in other words, 'open' themselves; they must exist in a slight state of vulnerability.

Despite our limited time together, Nomadics' collaborators did, on occasion, experience a sort of psychic osmosis. On several occasions, Orley and I finished voicing each other's ideas, having already formed corresponding ideas ourselves. While arguably, some details differed in our various versions, the basic structure of these ideas coincided. In constructing *The Shavings Room*, for example, we adapted many of the earlier ideas we had voiced in the same manner: the forgotten objects, the blurred voices and lamplight to name a few. More significantly, Jessica Lehrman commented, 'some of my ideas have overlapped with other collaborators. When this happens I feel much more confident about my work in the collective' (Appendix 8). Because Lehrman did not have any direct communication with the group prior to her arrival in London, the 'overlapping' she experienced holds special significance. While Orley and I adapted preconceived ideas in nearly identical fashions, Lehrman had not received all of the early ideas; nor had she witnessed our reactions to these ideas. Though this 'overlapping' does not likely match the experiences that occur between artists who have collaborated for years, it suggests that she somehow received impressions of these ideas and our reactions indirectly and that despite her distance, she shared in the collective voice of the project.

While these independent accounts and descriptions of 'psychic osmosis' suggest that it exists, how and why one must ask, does this synergy develop? In their

book *Group Creativity: Innovation through Collaboration*, Nijstad and Paulus
(2003: 23) describe several experiments into idea generation led by Smith, Ward
and Schumacher (1993). In these experiments, the theorists presented only some
of the participants with specific examples, before asking them to generate ideas
under a particular theme. The studies ultimately indicated that the individuals
presented with the examples incorporated many of the same characteristics that
the examples had possessed; the individuals who did not see the examples, on the
other hand, generated an equal quantity of ideas, but with more varied and
imaginative results. In other words, once an idea is presented in one form or
another, collaborators will likely incorporate, at the very least, characteristics of
that idea in their future designs. Thus, Nijstad and Paulus (2003) contend that:

> …exposure to others' ideas can actually limit one's ability to think
> divergently. That is, it may be difficult to think of novel ideas when
> previously expressed ideas are very salient (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 6)

It therefore follows that because collaborators share many ideas in common
through their constant communication, they are more likely to voice similar or
identical visions.

Psychic osmosis, then, develops not only from ongoing verbal communication
and/or repetitive exposure to one another's ideas, but also from the unspoken
dialogue that takes place. According to Bohm (2003: 309):

> …a group which has sustained dialogue for quite a while in which
> people get to know each other, and so on—then we might have such a
> coherent movement of thought, a coherent movement of communication.
> It would be coherent not only at the level we recognize, but at the tacit
> level, at the level for which we have only a vague feeling.

For Bohm (2003: 310), this tacit level is subconscious, 'that which is
unspoken… like the knowledge required to ride a bicycle.' More importantly,

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however, this tacit process is shared and this '…sharing is not merely the explicit communication and the body language and all that, which are part of it, but there is also a deeper tacit process which is common' (ibid.). Thus, Bohm implies that collaborators share not only a collective consciousness, but also a collective subconscious or unconscious; he indicates that they communicate on these levels without conscious realisation of that communication, much in the way that Lehrman may have indirectly communicated with the group. It therefore follows, that psychic osmosis may derive, in part, from these tacit exchanges.

Nevertheless, one must consider that while these arguments and examples help to support the idea of a collective voice and a sense of synergy, the possibility still exists that these instances of 'psychic osmosis' are merely coincidental. As Green (2004: 602) wrote in reference to Abromovic and Ulay:

> Remember also there is no logical means of either proving or disproving the work's implicit claim that a heightened experience involving either psychic communion or psychic self-absorption—one or the other—through group meditation was under way, or if you disprove my correct intuition of their experience.

Possibly, these 'psychic' instances occur only after careful consideration—after the dismissal of several ideas that previous experiences have led individuals to believe the collective would dismiss. Maybe, in these instances, collaborators subconsciously adapt their ideas to one another. Although it is impossible to say for certain, the evidence suggests that at the very least, collaboration encourages individuals to think more like each other within the collaborative context, that collaborators begin to form similar, if not identical reactions because of this interaction, and that shared experiences and exposure to similar concepts and

stimuli penetrate their future ideas, ultimately improving the chances that these ideas will overlap.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

As collaborators continue to share experiences and cultivate synergy through their creative processes, they often begin to experience a conscious sense of unification that encompasses all of the collective dimensions previously described—the collective consciousness, collective interpretation and collective voice. It is with this feeling that Lilla LoCurto and Bill Outcault describe in relation to one of their early collaborative efforts 'we had no ego…we were working for the piece… not for ourselves…We do so much better as a team. We're so one' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite LoCurto & Outcault 2002: 31). Similarly Beagles and Ramsay (Appendix 9) explain 'we do have a joint identity as artists, the work we produce is the result of our collaborative process.'

Considering these statements, it is not surprising that over time many of these groups subsume their individual identities under general labels like 'Nomadic-Collaborations' or 'London Fieldworks,' advertising themselves as single entities, rather than groups of individuals. Moreover, at other times the public recognises these groups and partnerships as such and acknowledges their collaborative projects as the product of one voice—one identity. Consider, for example, the compounding of names such as *Beagles and Ramsay*, *Gilbert and George*, or *Matt and Ross*. Whereas the other collective platforms such as

collective consciousness and collective interpretation develop privately among the collaborators, collective identity involves not only a relationship between the artists, but at times also a relationship between the collective and the public. It is, in a sense, a way of recognising the unity that develops through the collaborative practice.

It is important to note that like 'collective consciousness' and 'collective memory,' collective identities exist on many levels. As with Durkheim's (1982) collective consciousness and Halbwachs' (1992) collective memory, collective identity on a general level can refer to larger societal subgroups; 'identities extend to countries and ethnic communities' (Kriesberg 2003).[52] Categorising factors may include race, sexuality, gender, age and religion among others. In these cases group members may never even have met, but feel some sort of allegiance 'so that people feel injured when other persons sharing their identity are injured or killed' (ibid.). No direct interaction or communication need precede this sense of allegiance; no communication need take place afterwards. Collective identity as it applies to the collaborative situation, however, refers to a more specialised tightly knit structure, which like the more specialised collective consciousness and collective memory, derives from sustained interaction among a group of individuals. This collective identity develops not only through shared attributes, but also 'through the experience of collective action itself' (Snow 2001). Although in this situation collaborators likely share similar past experiences and similar traits and/or characteristics, these commonalities

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[52] I accessed this essay from an online source that did not include page numbers:
Kriesberg, Louis. (2003) Identity Issues. *Beyond Intractability*. Burgess, Guy and Burgess, Heidi (eds.). Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. [1/2006] from:
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_issue/:

provide, as previously explained, the platform for communication that allows them to *experience* collectively. Driven by a shared sense of purpose, individuals 'process and unify around those experiences,' enacting a sense of solidarity and ultimately, a collective identity (Jay 2003).[53]

Largely dependent on the communicative exchange, collective identity exists in a dynamic and reciprocal relationship with many of the concepts previously posited in this chapter—namely, collective consciousness, meeting grounds, collective memory and collective voice. Thus, as David Jay (2003) explained in his paper *A Look at Online Collective Identity Formation*, in order to construct a group identity:

> …individuals must find a way to communicate their interests and establish which are common, they must find a shared way to articulate their experiences, and they must forge an understanding as to the nature of their solidarity.

In other words, in order to fully establish a collective identity, individuals must first develop meeting grounds and then cultivate a collective voice. The experiences that collaborators share during this process become the collective memories that help to comprise the collective consciousness. These experiences and memories inform the collective voice, and provide common ground around which collaborators can unify, promoting as McCabe (1984) describes, a sense of camaraderie. It therefore follows that collective identity both stems from and feeds the development of a collective consciousness and collective voice; the factors that contribute to the development of one of these concepts, often contribute to the development of all.

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[53] I obtained this article from an online source that did not include page numbers:
Jay, David. (2003) A Look at Online Collective Identity Formation. Asexual Visibility and Education Network. [5/2005] from: http://www.avenpapers.identity/ip3.org/

Though many of these factors overlap, several take on additional dimensions or stand out as particularly relevant to the establishment of a collective identity. Consider, for example, the term *convergence*. As explained in the previous section, in context of an artistic collaboration its linguistic application extends to include an assimilation of artistic voices, aesthetics and styles**.** A review of this chapter in its entirety, however, indicates that in the establishment of the meeting grounds and in the development of a collective consciousness, collaborators also converge psychologically and socially; they uncover mutual interests, and gravitate towards these similarities. In doing so, collaborators also gravitate towards and emphasise those aspects of their identities and personalities most conducive to the collaboration. Hence, as Snow (2001) describes:

> identity amplification affects a change in an individual's **identity salience hierarchy**, such that an existing but lower-order identity becomes sufficiently salient to ensure engagement in collective action.[54]

Collaborators then enact those aspects of their character that best support their position within the collective, in a sense converging their identities.

It is important to consider, that differences exist in the manner collaborators perform facets of their identities that may appear to overlap such as gender, race, sexuality, age and occupation. Moreover, these different facets may affect how each collaborator communicates, as well as the different associations and meanings each collaborator attaches to the ideas presented during the collaboration. Consider again the notion of a dictionary of behaviour. According to contemporary gender theorists such as Judith Butler, 'the act that one does, the

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[54] Please note that the bold font is not present in the original quotation; it is used to emphasise that this phrase is a key term and can be found in the glossary.

act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene' (Schechner cites Butler 2002: 131). It therefore follows, that the behaviours one performs in order to enact one's identity, much like the symbols, ideas and insignia to which Barthes refers, exist in a predetermined 'dictionary.' The point in this case is not *how* or *why* each of these performances affects the communication that takes place among collaborators, but rather that most often, those aspects held *in common* among collaborators provide the meeting grounds from which the collaboration and communication develop. For this reason, the manners in which collaborators reshuffle their identity salience hierarchies will more likely depend on which of these factors they share—which identities and identity performances are either common or compatible within the group.

Although 'social identity theory asserts that a shared group membership accentuates attitudinal, emotional and behavioural similarities between the self and in-group members,' it is important to keep in mind that at times, it is the differences between an individual and the collective that determine and ensure that individual's role within the group dynamic (Nijstad & Paulus 2003: 46). Consider, for example, Orbach's particular skills and talents. While she, like Dáte, could illustrate and draw, it was her ability to sculpt and her knowledge and experience using the unique medium of dough that defined her position within the group. Similarly, though Dáte's drawing and musical abilities overlapped Orbach's and Lehrman's, the group more readily focused on his experience in fashion design. While his interactions with the group incorporated

other artistic fields and abilities (i.e. *The Dark Room Light Room*), the majority of his designs developed from ideas that incorporated fabric.

Once again, Wright's (2004) dictums come into play; a collaborator's position and involvement in the group identity develops from both 'mutual interests,' as well as an 'element of difference.' In other words, Orbach and Dáte's differences helped define their roles within the group, while their overlapping interests and similarities helped them enter the communicative dynamic, ultimately allowing them *membership* to the group. Although similarities play an important role in identity convergence and the establishment of a group identity, it is the balance between these similarities and differences that determines which aspects of their identities they amplify within the collaborative context. Thus, while collective identity depends in part on the reshuffling of each individual's identity salience hierarchy, it also relies on the different roles this reshuffling reveals. Ultimately, the dynamic among the members depends in part on the interaction between the identities they bring to the group; both the general communicative dynamic, as well as the relationship of these roles to one another, shape the collective identity.

Arguably, each collaborator must understand and accept each of these roles; each collaborator must, share ownership over all of them; s/he must influence and help define them. In this way, collaborators' responsibilities and behaviours remain interconnected— a part of a whole rather than individual efforts. Moment and Zaleznik (1964: 43) observe, for example, that:

> The particular behaviors involved in role taking are defined by the activities performed by a member of a group <u>and</u> the style of interaction expected from group members.

In other words, the rest of the group influences and at times may even determine the manner in which a particular collaborator's role is performed. Nomadics' collaborators, for example, exercised authority over one another's skills. Though Orbach alone possessed the ability and knowledge to carry out *The Dough Room*, in our preliminary theoretical discussions, we all exercised equal authority over decisions and ideas related to this medium, ultimately arriving at the idea of a dough room. On one hand, this interaction demonstrates a collective voice; on the other, it illustrates how the group in part determined Orbach's role within the project. Thus, Orbach noted that while the collaboration provided 'an opportunity to try out different roles and do things we are not familiar with…' she also stated that '…our roles were established in the start of the project…we judged people according to their past projects and portfolios (as one would)' (Appendix 7).

In addition to an individual's skills and talents, a collaborator's personality affects the role(s) she adopts. Orley and I, for example, both exercised leadership roles. Although we shared some managerial duties with Orbach, we accepted slightly more responsibility in this area. Dáte, on the other hand, played a more submissive role during his participation on the project. He contributed ideas, drawings and sketches, but did not take on managerial duties. As Moment and Zaleznik (1964: 43) contend, 'How much of active-dominant as against passive-submissive behaviour is expected varies with positions in the group.' Accordingly, Orbach (Appendix 7) observed how:

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> As well as artist roles…there are group roles, such as leaders, communicators and followers, or people who have less initiative. This is determined by peoples personalities and the social interaction of the group.

As we became aware of one another's tendencies towards certain roles, we began to associate one another with different ideas, working methods and behaviours; we could predict how we each would react, and would therefore behave accordingly ourselves. Over time, this pattern became intuitive; we shared an unspoken understanding regarding how our group worked. Our collective identity reflected this pattern; it was, in a sense, the heartbeat-- the breath that channelled the life of our project.

Known to identity theorists as 'entrainment,' this type of embedded behavioural pattern possesses considerable importance in studies on group behaviour. Paul B. Paulus and Bernard A. Nijstad (2003: 48) explain that:

> … members synchronize their behaviour to fit one another, establishing rhythms or patterns of activity that persist within a group despite changes in the surrounding context.

On a general level, our preliminary meetings set up the rhythms and patterns that defined Nomadics up until the point when we began the physical construction of the installation. We first reviewed the previous week's discussion and updated the rest of the group on the tasks we had agreed to accomplish during the previous meeting. We discussed and argued over methods and themes until we came to at least a temporary consensus. In a sense, the product of these repetitive actions comprised the collective identity.

Although collaborators may experience this shared identity in various ways, and while it may not develop at the same stage of collaboration for each group or

partnership, the majority of collaborating groups who experience collective identity describe a unity— a sense of 'oneness.' As collaborating duo Sterck and Rozo claim, 'the word 'self' means both of us. We're one entity' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Sterk &Rozo 2002: 78). Similarly, in defining collective identity Snow (2001) cites Melucci's study emphasising that '… collective identity is 'an interactive and shared definition' that is evocative of a 'sense of 'we.'' While, on a literal level, these statements indicate identity convergence, they also signify both the conscious acknowledgement of a shared purpose and the loyalty this acknowledgement produces among collaborators. Many of the collaborating partnerships that Green and the Sarnoffs cite reflect this sense of unity in their pronoun use, emphasising 'we,' 'our' and 'us' as opposed to 'I', 'mine' and 'me.' Encompassing her partner Becher, Robbins explains, for example that 'We feel so lucky to be able to do what we want to do' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 78). Nearly all of the collaborators these authors interviewed spoke on behalf of their collective identities without input from the other constituents. It therefore follows that each collaborator who participates in a collective identity possesses the authority to speak on behalf of that identity. In this way, collaborators perform their 'we;' they act as parts of a whole, rather than as individuals. Ultimately, as the Sarnoffs declared (2001: 70) '…this 'we' or 'us' is the conceptual shorthand they use to symbolize the entirety of their relationship.'

Often, the manner in which the public and/or the artists label themselves also reflects this unity. Consider, for example, the references I make to collaborative partnerships throughout this thesis: 'Sterk and Rozo,' 'Abromovic and Ulay, 'Matt and Ross,' 'Beagles and Ramsay.' Rarely do I mention one collaborator without the other. Both Green and the Sarnoffs write, for the most part, in this

fashion. More importantly, however, the collaborating artists generally support this labelling. Beagles and Ramsay, for example, advertise themselves as 'Beagles and Ramsay;' the writings supporting their exhibitions do occasionally mention their first names, but generally adjacent to one another, 'John Beagles and Graham Ramsay.' They do not reveal any individual identity in their responses to the questionnaire I sent them (Appendix 9); in no way can one distinguish which artist answered which question, whether all of the questions were answered entirely by one of the artists, or whether both artists conferred on each answer. Furthermore, in their response to question six, they acknowledge a 'joint identity' and explain that they 'maintain that identity in our (their) work with other artists' (Appendix 9). This labelling reinforces a sole identity shared by the artists—a collective identity, for which each artist possesses, the authority to speak.

In his book, *The Third Hand*, Green (2001b) devotes an entire chapter, 'Negotiated Identities,' to this phenomenon. Much like the collective identity to which I refer, his negotiated identities subsume individual identities under a unified label. Green focuses on a collaboration in which one of the artists initially accepted sole credit for the work, and whose name is still often used as a title for the artists' now public partnership: Christo. How, one might ask, can such a partnership exemplify a collective identity? Does collective identity not require shared accreditation?

Despite the sole use of 'Christo's' name in reference to many of his early collaborations with Jeanne-Claude, Green (2001b) argues that shared accreditation did, in fact, exist in those instances. Although Christo formerly

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claimed sole authorship under his name, Green (2001b: 129) argues that 'up to the renaming of their collaboration, Christo was almost certainly distinguishing between his authorial name—the name 'Christo' for which he had become famous—and the names of the two artists behind that brand name.' Thus, 'Christo' in these instances, according to Green (ibid.), refers not to an individual, but rather to 'a corporate and transnational artistic identity'—in the same way, as described above, that two artists' names merge into a single title, or a group of artists selects a name to act as a label for the author that develops out of their collective efforts. Although I do not agree that Christo made such a distinction, from this perspective one might argue that the collective identity he shared with Jeanne-Claude was, in actuality, complete; the artists truly worked as one entity—one person, and the public accepted them as such.

In the case of Nomadics, we adopted a group identity before we had truly established one. As early as the second meeting, Orly proposed that we use the title of the exhibition as a title for the group. According to the Sarnoffs (2002: 70), a collaborating duo's (or group's) decision to publicise themselves as a couple 'offers(s) other people a coherent means of relating to them as a pair.' We, however, did not yet have a public. The choice to present ourselves under a collective label instead provided us a means of thinking of ourselves as a group. Furthermore, because 'Nomadics' doubled as the title of our project, it reinforced a common purpose. It helped us solve, what Moment and Zaleznik (1964: 24) describe as 'One of the initial crises in group development.' In other words, it helped us achieve 'an identity common in the minds of group members' (Moment & Zaleznik 1964: 24-25). Choosing a label, in our case, constituted the first step towards self-definition. It provided a common theme around which

members could unify, and reminded us of the task set before us. Ultimately, as Snow (2001) contends, the shared sense of purpose that generates 'the shared 'sense of we' motivate[s] people to act together in the name of…the collectivity, thus generating the previously mentioned sense of collective agency.'

Using the title of the installation as the title for our group also reinforced our connection with the images, drawings, and symbols that comprised the installation—a connection, which according to Moment and Zaleznik, encourages the development a collective identity: 'Objects in the environment,' they declare, 'play an important part in formulating a group identity, particularly in establishing the expectations' (1964: 48). It is therefore not surprising that Nomadics members focused quite heavily on these drawings and symbols; they became part of our dictionary; as we shared these images in common, they also became reference points in our communication and helped to comprise the collective consciousness. More importantly, these images actually comprised *Nomadics* the installation and thus, in a literal sense, defined the identity of the group.

The visual and conceptual vocabulary that we established also helped us to define our roles within the collective. Elizabeth Burns Coleman explains how, 'Understood as insignia, the claim that the appropriation of art is an appropriation of identity makes perfect sense: it is literally true' (Green cites Coleman 2001: 603) According to this statement, an artist or group of artists must project their identities, or at least aspects of their identities into their work. It is of heightened significance then that, as previously described, we appropriated one another's artistic ideas, building off of them in the making of

both a composite sending and a collective voice. In a sense, this process mirrored the blending and evolving of our individual identities into a collective one.

It is important to consider that even though this appropriation led to shared ownership over the various portions of the installation, the drawings and ideas we each proposed, regardless of how they evolved or who exercised authority over them, each marked an individual role or voice within the collective. Hence, Jessica Lehrman (Appendix 8) commented:

> I have associated different parts of the project with different artists. Emily is constructing the tunnel, Orly is creating the dough floor, Rachel and Satoshi seem well rounded…

Only a sentence later, however, Lehrman explained how the totality of the installation 'will be a compromise of those ideas.' From this perspective it follows that, the relationships of the individual components within the installation symbolised the relationship of our individual identities to the collective identity. Although Orley worked equally on all aspects of the installation, with perhaps the exception of *The Dough Room*, we often thought of her as especially tied to *The Corridor*; in part, therefore, it symbolised her identity in context of the collaboration—much in the way that the installation in its entirety—the sum of all of these different components and evolutions— embodied the collective identity.

Despite my continual emphasis on a 'balance' between the individual *and* the collective, it is important to note that many theorists emphasise the collective *in place of* the individual. As previously described, Green (2004: 601) asserts that '… collaborative consciousness might not involve sharing—not even the sharing

of difference—but something more radical, the obliteration of difference.'

Similarly Shapiro (1984: 48) remarked that:

> Part of the darker task of any aesthetic of collaboration is to underline
> modes in which the collective derives none of its power from the
> individual but tends toward the desiccation of the individual.

Even the Sarnoffs (2002: 73) comment that, 'What makes Gilbert and George truly unique is how thoroughly they have obliterated their individual differences and re-created themselves as a single entity.'

In a sense, these statements imply a complete collective consciousness—one in which psychic osmosis penetrates each decision, abolishing argumentation. How else could the individual cease? Did not, however, these same authors stress the importance of debate in the development of a collective voice? Are these theorists contradicting themselves? How can collaborators maintain individuality while abolishing difference? What, in other words, is the relationship of the individual to the collective?

Referring back to Wright's (2004) dictums, difference constitutes not merely an important, but an essential part of the collaborative process; collective identity formation could not truly obliterate this difference. It is therefore not surprising that despite their reference to Gilbert and George's singularity, the Sarnoff's (2002: 70) also acknowledge the survival of individual identities within the collaborative:

> In creating the 'we' that designates them as a couple, they do not lose
> their individual identities. Instead, they expand the boundaries of their
> separate selves to include one another in a new collective identity.

From their perspective, the eradication of difference is not a defining characteristic of collaboration; rather it is 'unique' to Gilbert and George who in

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the exhibition of their *Living Sculptures*, as Green (2001b: 147) describes, eliminated 'all signs of private personality or individual interaction, preserving only a public persona.' More specifically, the aesthetic foundation of these works depended on this obliteration: it was a part of the artistic message.

It is important to specify that while Green too associates collective consciousness with an elimination of difference it is not, as he describes it, at the cost of the individual. He explains, for instance, that Helen and Newton Harrison created their collective identity 'by eliminating the signs of their identifiable, individual personalities in favour of many roles and voices' (Green 2001b: 113). Green further explains that they:

> 'identified their artistic self with the projection of will through constructive fantasy and positive commitments, rather than through the perpetuation of inherited cultural patterns or personal expressive subjectivities' (ibid.).

Green refers then, not to the actual abolishment of difference, but rather to a suspension of 'individual personalities,' or 'personal expressive subjectivities'— what Bohm refers to as 'assumptions.' This does not preclude the debates that occur along the way; on the contrary, it mandates that collaborators move past their own opinions and establish true consensus, eliminating ideas that they do not collectively embrace— in other words, moving past the 'sharing of differences' (Green 2004: 601). Accordingly, the artwork produced would illustrate only those ideas that belong to *all* of the collaborators— the ideas which demonstrate aspects of the artists' identities that overlap, so that the 'art could be the embodiment of a personal union' (Green 2001b: 120).

In line with Wright's theory, Moment and Zaleznik's (1964) study indicates that differences in opinion, background and perspective generate more creative projects. Collaborators who give in to 'premature consensus' rather than propose a different idea or confront an idea they do not truly support, produce 'suboptimal and noncreative solutions' (Moment & Zaleznik 1964: 4). The authors further contend that:

> …a wider range of perspectives is more likely when several members approach an issue or problem from different angles or backgrounds…. products generated in groups with at least two perspectives represented are more original (Moment & Zaleznik 1964: 34).

It therefore follows that this element of difference is not only possible within collaboration, but also necessary. Difference, as described in previous sections, feeds the collective voice; it helps develop the collective identity by acting as a catalyst for change and promotes deeper, more complex ideas and choices.

Argumentation, as previously described, comprises an essential ingredient in a successful collaboration. Reaching a false consensus does not erase differences—it merely ignores them. Thus Diller and Scofidio describe how they realised the necessity of uncovering their individual ideas and opinions. Otherwise, Scofidio claims:

> There is always the possibility that they will inhibit themselves from developing and articulating independent ideas….'that would be censoring each other unconsciously. That's a danger. I really have to put forth my own ideas (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Scofidio 2002: 115).

What Diller and Scofidio imply, is that this may occur without conscious awareness; while their first impulse might be to accept the other's idea, they specifically state the need to 'uncover' their own opinions, implying that this first impulse might mask their deeper feelings.

In his writings on dialogue, Bohm (2003) offers a solution to this situation. These differences in opinion, he explains, must be held 'in suspension' where each collaborator can examine them without emotional attachment. In a sense, all of the opinions become general opinions; they belong to no one, and to everyone, similar to the way that the Harrison's, according to Green (2001b), shed their particular individual vantage points and shared multiple perspectives and roles in their creation of a collaborative identity. If these vantage points were, in fact, a comprisal of their individual opinions, then they too, in a sense, held these perspectives in 'suspension.' 'So' Bohm (2003: 315) declares, 'the whole group now becomes a mirror for each person. The effect you have on the other person is a mirror, and also the effect the other person has on you.'

In accordance with Bohm's metaphor, many artists describe how collaboration provides both a sense of connection, as well as increased knowledge of one's self. In other words, while collaboration promotes consensus and convergence, it also promotes individuality. Sammy Cucher exclaimed in reference to his collaboration with Anthony Aziz, for example, 'It's amazing how the relationship becomes a mirror for yourself, how much you learn by seeing yourself reflected in the other person' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Cucher 2002:114). Similarly, Cross (2004:660) declares, '…it is through collaborative interaction that I form my sense of self.' Collaboration, then, allows individuals entryway into their colleagues' perceptions and interpretations of their statements and actions, providing as Bohm and Aziz describe a 'mirror;' this mirror may or may not alter individuals' perceptions of themselves. Moreover, as the collaborative process provides constant exposure to other one another's ideas and opinions, it

provokes constant reactions, which in turn help collaborators to better understand their individual positions and opinions. As Cross (2004:660) describes, collaborative projects provide means of testing both 'my limits, and the tolerances of our collaboration.'

According to Cross' statement, the testing and learning that occur through collaboration help to develop the collective identity. In learning how far he can push the collaboration, what he can tolerate and what he cannot, Cross implies that he not only learns his individual limitations, but also tests the group's limitations. If a collaborator does reach a limit and leaves a collaboration, as Guiterrez did in relation to Nomadics, the voice of that particular collaboration will change—if not immediately, then overtime. As this occurred fairly early on in the evolution of Nomadics, it did not jeopardize our artistic voice or vision; rather, Guiterrez's withdrawal removed the greatest element of difference, strengthening our collective identity. Moreover, her decision to pull out suggests that a collective identity already existed—one that could not balance her differences with the rest of the group's—one of which she was not truly a part.

It is important to consider, however, that while group collaborations such as Nomadics can withstand the loss of a collaborator, collaborative duos more greatly depend on the ability of the artists to stay within their tolerance levels. If one out of a total of two collaborators pulls out, then their collaboration ceases to exist; tolerance levels have been breached. Although one might argue that the identity of group collaborations such as Nomadics inevitably change when a member withdraws, the remaining collaborators have the choice of whether or not to continue working together; they can choose whether to pursue a new

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identity, or to evolve the old one. All in all, the survival of a collective depends on the relationships among the individual group members; it cannot exist in their absence.

Interestingly, neither the collective's nourishment of, nor its dependence on the individual, makes the strongest case for the individual's survival within the collective identity. Rather, the individual's endurance lies in its multiplicity. For, as Shapiro (1984: 48) cites, 'there is no such thing as death for an individual exactly because we are multiple individuals constantly changing in our various roles.' Identities, in other words, are not only dynamic, but also multi-faceted and these facets undergo constant change, constant development and persistent persuasion. Whereas Green argues that collaborators sidestep individuality by performing multiple roles, Shapiro asserts the contrary; individual identities consist of multiple roles that cannot be exterminated, only changed. Thus, the individual must continue to exist in one form or another within the collective identity.

To understand this relationship imagine for a moment—a wall. Attached to that wall are several other walls, a door, a ceiling, and a floor. The wall is still a wall, but together with these components, it is also a house. Thus it lends its individual identity 'wall' to the collective identity 'house.' In this way, the individual relates to the collective. In establishing a collective voice, collaborators not so much eradicate difference, as work through their differences, evolving and changing as they evolve and change the collective. Like the individual, the collective is dynamic, constantly changing and evolving beyond the collaborators' individual identities— beyond their specific contributions to

the project. To borrow Rozo's words, 'the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Rozo 2002: 79). Thus, the collective identity becomes an entity in its own right, dependent on, and yet different from, the individual identities that interacted to establish it—the identity of the collaborative author. It is, ultimately, in this difference that the phantom exists.

EVALUATION

'It is the beginning of a work that the writer throws away. A painting covers its tracks. Painters work from the ground up. The latest version of a painting overlays earlier versions, and obliterates them. Writers, on the other hand, work from left to right… How many books do we read from which the writer lacked the courage to tie off the umbilical cord? How many gifts do we open from which the writer neglected to remove the price tag?' (Dillard 1989: 5-7)

When I first began this research project in 2003, I was interested not only in the ways that collaboration affects artistic authorship, but also how collaboration affects the participants' or spectators' experiences of that work. In addition to documenting the collaborative interaction that occurred during the realisation of Nomadics, I conducted audience research using questionnaires and surveys. I supplemented these findings with pre-existing studies and relevant theory. I queried how the interaction among the collaborators affected the relationships among the different media within the artwork. This initial project also examined the ways in which interdisciplinary art-forms such as installation-environments alter the relationships between the artists and audience-participants by replacing codified messages or themes with sensory experiences (Oliviera 2003). As part of this investigation, I considered the broader field of phenomenology independent from its connection to hermeneutics and communication. I envisioned a thesis that investigated the ways in which collaboration affected all parts of the communicative exchange—the artists, the artwork and the audience-participants.

By contemplating a wider range of communicative relationships, I developed a deeper understanding of the overall communicative dynamics involved in artistic collaboration. I was better prepared to contextualise the data on which I

eventually focused and could make informed decisions about the areas I chose to omit. It was through audience research, for example, that I first gained insight into different types of participatory relationships. I realised after reading through the surveys and short-answers collected from the *Nomadics* exhibition, that audience-members can consciously decide whether to act out the role of a participant, or whether to more subtly experience the artwork as a spectator. I learned that each individual's background and previous art-related experiences affect the ways in which s/he chooses to interact with the installation. Applying this knowledge to my analysis of the collaborators' interactions, I could see how our unique experiences and personalities prepared us for the roles that we played during Nomadics. Similarly, researching the experiential aspects of installation art made me aware of the importance of hermeneutic-phenomenology when considering not only the audience, but also the artists' interactions. Focusing on the different media involved helped direct my attention to the varied ways in which artists communicate during collaboration— to the instances when we used drawing, painting, photography and installation to relay ideas that we could not fully explain with words.

Although I eventually narrowed the topic of the thesis to focus more specifically on the initial interaction among the artist-collaborators, I now realise that when I first submitted my work for examination in 2007, I had not yet erased those faint tracks—I did not, as Annie Dillard warns, 'remove the price-tag' (Dillard 1989: 7). As I wrote in the first evaluation, '…I spent so much time investigating these other areas, that I compromised the degree to which I researched collaborative and cooperative theory.' Though researching such a large scope enabled me to develop a broader understanding of my field, I did not refine my topic until after

I had completed the majority of my research. Thus, I only came across several key sources toward the end of the initial writing-up process and did not have time to fully investigate them. Moreover, it was not until I read through my examiners' comments that I understood the difference between narrowing my topic and refining the purpose of the study. While I had largely succeeded in the former, I had not revised the latter to appropriately correspond. In lamenting the fact that I could not include everything I had originally planned, I unconsciously retained vestiges of initial ideas and methods that were no longer relevant. This diverted my readers' attention away from the main points of the investigation, obscuring the focus and purpose of the research.

In the earlier part of the writing-up period, I had devised a title for one of my chapters: *Reworking the Communicative Equation*. In the current version of this chapter (Chapter Two), I compare traditional models of communication with traditional models of authorship, paralleling the role of the artist with the communicative role of 'sender' and the spectator with the communicative role of 'receiver.' By applying the transmission model of communication to a collaborative situation, I illustrate not only changes to the communicative relationships among the artists, but simultaneously the ways in which collaboration alters traditional notions of authorship. Although this chapter also focuses on the 'artist' as a 'receiver,' the fact that I used 'communicative equation' as part of the chapter title suggested an explication of the ways in which collaboration reworks the spectator-receiver's role; it implied that the collaborative communication produced some sort of calculated result. Perhaps even more misleading is the fact that the communicative exchange is not the

main focus of this chapter; although it examines the ways in which collaboration alters communicative relationships, the primary purpose of this chapter is to investigate how, by changing the communicative responsibilities of the artist/sender, collaboration affects authorship. Thus, in order to emphasise 'authorship' as one of the main subjects of this chapter, I have retitled Chapter Two: *Collaborative Authorship and the Communicative Exchange*. I have also added and clarified the models presented, relating them more clearly to concepts and traditions relating to artistic authorship.

In retrospect, I understand that I had also restricted my research by using methods designed to help clarify issues that no longer pertained to my thesis. When I considered investigating how collaboration among artists affects the relationship of the artists to an audience-participant, for example, I had decided not to include performance-based practices. In such cases, the communicative dynamics alter not only from the initial interaction among the artists, but also because of the artists' presence during the exhibition (or execution) of the work. The artists in these instances become part of the artwork. In some situations, audience members may even talk directly with the collaborators; the artists' bodies and voices act, in a sense, as transmitters. Thus, the communicative dynamics fundamentally change for reasons other than the development of a collaborative author. Under these circumstances, it would have been difficult to determine how/whether the interaction that occurred during the development of the work impacted the audiences' relationships with the artists. Once I decided to focus specifically on the initial collaboration, however, these concerns no longer applied. I felt my research pulling me towards relational and dialogical practices and even included references to duos such as Beagles and Ramsay and

Gilbert and George who work in both performative and object-based disciplines. Because I failed to accept that I no longer needed to consider the spectators' experiences, however, I did not fully embrace this research and purposely omitted groups such as Gelitin and Superflex from my research. Thus, at the time I originally submitted this thesis for consideration, I had not taken into account several important types of collaborative practices.

In order to rectify this gap in my research, I have spent the last year examining different types of collaborative groups. As discussed in the methodology chapter, I interviewed and maintained a brief email correspondence with the Austrian collective Gelitin. I investigated collaborative curatorships such as B&B and read about examples of Jeremy Deller's practice. Rather than avoiding research into performative works, I purposely looked at examples of collaborative projects that culminated in relational and dialogical events in order to better understand the relationship between the initial collaboration and the subsequent interaction that occurs among the artists and participants. Although I did not directly incorporate all of this information into the body of the thesis, it was through this research that I finally recognised the distinction between these two types of interaction. With this understanding, I could perceive with clarity and confidence the purpose of this study. By researching various types of collaboration, I also gained a more comprehensive understanding of my subject-area and consequently, how I could with the extra time given to me best deepen my theoretical investigation.

At the advice of my examiners, I also began additional theoretical research. Although it pertains to the audience-participant's experience of conversational artwork rather than the dynamics among collaborators, Grant Kester's (2004) *Conversation Pieces: Community & Communication in Modern Art* similarly examines art as a communicative process. In a sense, Kester's study functioned as a counterpart to mine; he focuses on similar aspects of communication and authorship, but applies his investigation to the spectator rather than the artist-author. Citing artist Stephen Willats, for example, Kester (2004: 92-93) diagrams the *artist-artwork-audience* model in an almost identical fashion to the model I originally used in Chapter Two of this thesis;[55] moreover, Kester employs this model for the same purpose-- to illustrate both traditional views of authorship and conventional notions of the communicative processes surrounding the development and reception of an artwork. Kester's study did not so much change my theories, as support and contextualise them. His work along with Bourriaud's (2002) *Relational Aesthetics* and Gablik's (1992) *Connective Aesthetics*, provided me with a deeper understanding of art as a communicative process; these works supplied vocabulary and theoretical frameworks with which to describe artistic and communicative practices which, though related to the concepts explored in this thesis, did not directly fit into the scope of this study. With a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the communicative roles and responsibilities of the spectator-participant change, however, I could more easily recognize the ways in which the artist-collaborators' communicative roles change. Similarly, in understanding more fully the ways in which the changing roles of the spectator affect traditional

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[55] I have since replaced my original model with Willats.'

notions of authorship, I could better comprehend the ways in which the changing roles of the artists affect authorship.

Once my understanding of my field and purpose developed, I was able to steer my research investigation in ways that more directly informed and evolved the theoretical investigation of this thesis. I realised, for example, that while this thesis applies communication theory to a collaborative context, the actual focus of the study is collaborative-authorship. Although I had already researched obvious sources such as Foucault (1998) and Barthes (1977), as well as a few more specialised sources such as Jochen Gerz's (2004) *Toward Public Authorship,* I had not greatly penetrated this subject-area. This additional year gave me the opportunity to seek out sources in this area. Thus, I came across works such as Bourriaud's (2005) *Postproduction* and Eco's (2006) *The Poetics of the Open Work*, which examine aspects of artistic-authorship such as ownership, interpretation and participation—the aspects of authorship examined within the scope of this thesis. This additional research not only helped me to frame my existing investigation, it also evolved my way of thinking about and interpreting both my own work, and the larger field in which my work is situated.

Even with all of the additional research that I conducted over the past year, however, it is important to consider that a single study cannot include an in-depth examination of all the types of collaborative practices mentioned within this thesis. To do so would not only compromise the depth of the analysis, but would have to take into account such a wide range of issues and fields that it would jeopardise the cohesiveness of the investigation and fundamentally alter the

purpose of this project. Although I involved my sister, for example, I only marginally touched on sibling-sibling collaborations. Considering the multitude of present-day collaborations that fall into this category (e.g. The Wilson Twins, The Starn Twins and The Chapman Brothers), this subject area could produce several studies in and of itself. I chose, rather, to concentrate on our familial relationship insofar as it affected our participation in Nomadics. I examined, for example, how our common experiences and influences enabled us to communicate effectively despite her geographical distance—how our tie as siblings motivated Jessica to continue with the project despite circumstances similar to the ones that influenced Chan and Schmidt's withdrawals. Ultimately, I looked at the aspects of familial relationships conducive to the development of a collaborative author.

It is also important to consider, that many of the areas I chose to condense or omit have been previously explored; the Sarnoffs, for example, focus on romantic partners; several catalogues and articles have been published on The Starn Twins (e.g. Richards 2005); McCabe (1984) historically contextualises collaborative authorship. In four years of researching artistic collaboration, however, I have not encountered any writings that focus specifically on communication in an artistic context. Arguably, as an inherently social and interactive activity, most investigations into artistic collaboration contain by default, at least a general discussion or mention of communicative and authorial activities. The Sarnoffs (2002) and Green (2001), for example touch on several issues relevant to the communicative dynamics such as shared experiences and the importance of debate. Neither study, however, *concentrates* on these aspects. Hence, while this thesis may only touch on some subjects such as familial

relationships, it focuses on areas not previously investigated. By interweaving different theoretical frameworks with naturalistic enquiry, I have therefore not only expanded-on existing theories in this field, but have also bridged new territory, establishing a theoretical foundation on-which future art-theorists can build.

Arguably, as Barthes (1977) explains, this 'new territory' might merely consist of a reworking of concepts historically articulated— the amalgamation of a modern scriptor, rather than a genuinely authored work. This particular combination, however, provides an important resource. Although both practitioners and researchers could physically retrieve many of these historical sources and possibly even interweave many of the ideas presented here, this particular study supplements these existing frameworks with more detailed and factual information gained through both my experiences as a participant-observer and my contact with various collaboratives. It bridges, in other words, the theoretical with the practical, providing a more accessible resource for both practitioners and researchers in this area. It is also important to consider that these pre-existing theories in combination with this factual evidence comprise the foundations of an analytical framework. By incorporating various discourses into contexts they have not previously been applied, these historical concepts can ultimately take on different and/or expanded meanings.

As more and more artists have recently begun to collaborate and/or expose their existing practices as collaborations, this study comes at a crucial time. Whereas previous studies have posed collaborative models for corporate, non-profit and

even educational settings, this thesis explores communicative and collaborative development specifically within an artistic setting. While this study does not purport a specific model of collaboration, it does investigate the conditions and practices conducive to collaborative authorship. It also examines obstacles that can impede collaboration, and can therefore help other artists and/or other creative groups in overcoming these obstacles. The documentation of collaborative experiences as well as the analysis and insight into collaborative processes as discussed in this thesis, can be applied not only to artistic collaboration, but also a wide range of collaborative and cooperative situations; this study can provide insight into and advice for societal, familial and even corporate group activities. As Bohm (2003) contends, society depends on cooperation, communication and the acceptance of individual differences.

AMBIGUITIES

Arguably, one of most controversial aspects of this thesis is its emphasis on Green's phantom third hand. Though many collaborating artists support its existence, it is difficult to provide concrete evidence or to truly define it. It is in a sense, amorphous, changing from collaboration to collaboration. It has been described as a '*third* artist,' a '*third* voice' and a '*third* hand,' misleadingly insinuating this phenomenon specifically emerges only from collaborative duos. Green himself, for example, attributes this phantom element to group collaborations such as the Boyle Family. Additionally, describing this phenomenon as an 'artist' or 'hand' insinuates that this phantom element is

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somehow concrete—enduring— yet, it can dissolve at a project's completion, or when a collaborating group disbands.

Equally problematic, while developing and writing-up my theory I had to consider abstract concepts such as artistic 'voice' and 'language.' These terms may refer to particular sets of insignia, re-occurring themes and/or artistic tendencies within an artist's or collaborating group of artists' practice. They may apply to artistic disciplines such as painting and sculpture, to audio based work, or even to interdisciplinary projects. Moreover, different spectators and/or participants might acknowledge different aspects of a particular work as components of the artists' 'voice' or 'language.'

Both my experiences as an artist/poet as well as my experiences collaborating on Nomadics, have significantly contributed to my understanding of these terms and concepts. My application of these terms, therefore, largely depended on my own subjective experiences and interpretations. Since participant-observation is already considered controversial because of its subjective nature, I had to be particularly careful to both support and contrast my understanding of these terms with examples from outside research. No guarantee existed, for example, that these terms would take on the same meanings as they did during the course of Nomadics, if I repeated the project. Even with the parallel and overlapping accounts that I gathered through my secondary research, no single example or instance could completely explain these phenomena. At the same time, my validity relied heavily on these parallelisms. Though they did not completely elucidate these concepts, the fact that other theorists and artists applied these

terms in similar ways, comprised the strongest evidence to their existence and supported my explications of them.

Because I used these abstract concepts in order to help build and develop my theories, the danger existed that my arguments would also become abstract. Overall, however, such ambiguity is common to philosophical and theoretical discourses; these terms are equally abstract, for example, when Green (2001 & 2004) employs them. Habermas' (1984) theory of a lifeworld as well as Halbwachs (1992) collective memory, pose similar problems. Ultimately, in attaching these abstract philosophical arguments to real world experiences, I grounded them. I bridged the gap between the theoretical and the practical. By comparing my experiences to other artists' experiences, I further increased the validity of these examples. Though some ambiguity remains, these steps helped to counteract this danger, minimalising it as much as possible.

INITIATING A RESEARCH PROJECT

One possible strategy for the participant as observer is to evoke a particular behaviour from members of the group. Essentially this involves setting up a situation which has meaning for the group and then observing what happens (Robson 1993: 197).

Unlike the traditional ethnographer, who peeks in on a pre-existing culture to observe and interpret its practices and traditions, this project involved an additional, somewhat precarious dimension. While this generic ethnographer risks influencing the behaviour of the subjects with her presence, she does not

necessarily or even likely affect the development or evolution of these cultural practices; they already exist. In the case of Nomadics, however, I not only participated and observed; I also initiated the project. Thus, I had to take significant caution not to influence or instigate the working methods or communicative dynamics when selecting participants and/or organising these preliminary stages.

As previously explained, I set out with only very rough guidelines, and attempted, like Joseph Kosuth, to impede my own subjectivity and authority from controlling the work. Like Kosuth, however, I had undertaken an implausible feat. At the same time that I wanted the project to come together organically, for example, the very fact that it originated as part of a research practice precluded this. Similarly, while I refrained, for the most part, from implementing selection criteria when considering potential participants, the fact that I was in the position to decide whether or not to impose any guidelines and if so which criteria to impose, in itself indicates an authoritative position. Thus, the best I could do was to minimise the extent to which I guided these early stages. I could draw individuals together in the least restrictive manner that would still support my research. Additionally, I could take into consideration these initial influences and attempt to account for them in my analysis and in my subsequent behaviour.

On one hand, this method posed several risks. The possibility existed, for instance, that the participants would not engage with one another or that the project would not cohere. Our aesthetics and creative processes might not have overlapped in a way that would have allowed us to develop a shared working

method. On the other hand, if the collaboration had not materialised, I would have still gained important insight from this failure. Furthermore, as Robson (1993: 149) explains, 'there is an obvious trade-off between looseness and selectivity' that has to be accounted for in the data collection; 'The looser the original design, the less selective you can afford to be in data selection.' In other words, without restricting the artistic disciplines, methods of communication, geographical data or even the method in which I solicited participants, I had to account for all of these situations and factors by documenting and observing them equally.

Ultimately, it was impossible not to impose any restrictions or to entirely refrain from making conscious decisions when selecting the participants. How, for example was I even going to solicit the collaborators? Where I placed the advertisements and how I worded them would impact who replied. Fortunately, as the first volunteer, Emily Orley undertook much of this responsibility, enabling me to relinquish some control. I still, however, had to consider how to approach the candidates that did reply. Which of the many candidates should I meet with? How many artists should I invite into the collaboration?

Because my research focused specifically on the dynamics of group collaboration, I needed more than two artists to take part. Selecting too large a group, however, would compromise my ability to thoroughly document the collaboration. I had questions regarding geographical distance and communication, as well as questions regarding artists engaged in relationships prior to forming a collaboration. Involving a distance collaborator, a friend and/or family member would therefore greatly aid my research. Thus, I set out

with these loose parameters in mind and seized the opportunities as they presented themselves. I did not specify, for example, which artistic fields I wanted involved; nor did I set out with a specific number of collaborators in mind. Rather, I put myself in touch with as many artists as possible and let the rest unfold.

Because I did not have a clear intention, however, I continued to meet with artists after having already established a sizeable group. Although three or four participants would have sufficed, I originally accepted eight, excluding Matt-and-Ross and myself. Notably, taking on so many participants not only complicated the documentation process; as the majority of participants had not previously met, it also delayed the development of the project. It is generally more difficult for a group of eight to acquaint themselves with one another and to establish a working method than it is for a group of three. Considering the fact that several collaborators later withdrew from the collaboration, taking on such a large group may seem like a misjudgement on my part. These withdrawals, however, comprised a key aspect of my research. In order to best understand the ingredients necessary for collaboration to take place, I needed to know which factors these 'failures' lacked. What circumstances, in other words, encouraged the unification of disparate voices into a third voice? Why did some artists form a collaboration as opposed to others?

Arguably, these withdrawals did affect our confidence in the work. Although involving fewer people in the project made it easier for us to establish a collective voice, the physical construction of a project as extensive as Nomadics proved difficult with such a small team. For this reason, we had to employ the

outside assistance of builders and friends. In reality, however, Schmidt, Chan and Guiterrez's withdrawals enabled us to focus better. Because they often missed meetings, we had difficulty moving forward while they remained an official part of the team. In their absence, we allocated faint ideas or tasks to them that we imagined suited their expertise; unfamiliar with their work, however, we could not fully develop these ideas. Since Guiterrez, especially, did not share the same aesthetic as the group, her formal withdrawal allowed us to abandon these hypothetical areas and to collectively design alternatives. Thus, despite the fact that the group diminished in size over time, the remaining collaborators established a strong bond, and as described in *Chapter Four*, established a collective voice and a collective identity as well.

ISSUES OF AUTHORITY

In an email just after the first meeting, Dáte wrote 'First of all, we have to decide what we going to do, and then title… and you can order our job, in each time… I guess you are the boss!' (Appendix 6). Orbach expressed a similar sentiment during the following meeting, imagining I could delegate responsibilities and perhaps even subspaces within the larger installation to each artist. Although we all asked questions at these early meetings, as the initiator of the project, many of the collaborators looked to me to provide the answers. As a participant observer, however, taking on such a role could entirely undermine my research efforts.

When using the participant observer method, the researcher faces the risk of unintentionally influencing the participants. As the instigator of a project, however, Robson (1993: 197) warns there is also 'the danger of artificiality.' This danger was especially prevalent in the early stages of Nomadics, before we had established a working method. As the project-initiator, I was the only participant to have met all of the collaborators prior to the first meeting. For this reason, many of the initial organisational duties fell to my responsibility. After selecting the artists, for example, I contacted them and arranged the first meeting; I typed up the minutes; I spoke on behalf of the absentees; I suggested we each bring images of previous work in order to introduce ourselves. On one hand, these first few meetings depended on this organisation. The more responsibility I undertook, however, the more I could potentially influence the project.

Arguably, some of the organisational responsibilities I took-on, prevented me from immediately placing myself on equal grounds with the other collaborators. In part, this may have contributed to Dáte and Orbach's leadership requests. It is important to stress, however, that while my opinions did impact the development of the collaboration, other artists voiced preferences and raised questions during these early meetings as well. Although I maintained some of these duties throughout the duration of the project, the other core collaborators soon took on similar responsibilities. Dáte, for example, recorded the meetings onto mini-disc. He often sketched our ideas, and compiled CDs and DVDs of these sketches for the group to reference. Orley first mapped out the installation and often played a directorial role during meetings. When we entered the space, she secured a significant portion of the materials and coordinated the builders

and technicians. Orbach researched background information, and supplied supporting photographs and documentation from which we developed ideas. We each, in other words, took on different leadership responsibilities and roles based our personalities and areas of expertise. I did so first, merely because I instigated the project.

Initially, I had not even planned to specify anything regarding the theme. It was only at the artists' requests that I devised the title, 'Nomadics.' I offered the title as merely one possibility, and pressed the other collaborators for suggestions. Accustomed to more specific guidelines, the majority of the collaborators found such a general title both difficult to work with, and daunting. They would not, however, venture an alternative, but instead consistently pressed me for more detailed specifications and guidelines. Although Botsford, Orbach and Orley advocated the idea of a 'brief,' they continually asked *me* to write one. In addition to requesting I take on a leadership role, Orbach and Date also suggested that we divide up and work in smaller groups on subspaces— all ideas I adamantly opposed. Thus, I refused to take on these responsibilities.

Perhaps, my refusal to design a more detailed project or to write a brief, in itself, was a guideline-- especially since it was requested repeatedly. For research purposes, however, I hoped that the group would arrive at a more specific theme collaboratively; I desperately wanted them to assume more authority and to cease thinking of the project as 'mine'. Thus, the only specifications that I did provide concerned the type of piece—an installation, the general theme— Nomadics, and that as a group we would form subsequent decisions collaboratively. This, in

itself, was perhaps the most controversial guideline as it helped steer the communication within the collaboration. Furthermore, the other collaborators contested it, in effect, undermining my original intentions. I had hoped that this method would help disperse authority among the group and establish a cooperative working method. In overriding their objections and refusing to take on these responsibilities, I exerted authority over the project—the very act I had attempted to yield.

The fact that we disagreed over this topic, however, also provides evidence to support the contrary; at the same time they requested I take on an authoritative role, the collaborators challenged my authority. Thus, my refusal did not undermine the project's authenticity or natural evolution of the collaborators' working methods. At my refusal to provide a brief, Orbach took on the responsibility herself. Similarly, although I encouraged collective decision-making, only Orbach, Orley and Dáte took on such responsibility. Although we refrained from breaking up into subgroups for the most part during the theoretical stages of the collaboration, once we began construction, Orbach limited her involvement with the first four rooms of the installation and concentrated her efforts on the dough area. Most importantly however, is the fact that we discussed these issues—discussion generally suggests shared decision-making powers. Thus, as time progressed, we settled into a comfortable dynamic, that developed out of all our different personalities and preferences.

Equally significant, is the fact that my refusal to write a brief and my disapproval of working in subgroups stemmed not only from my role as a researcher. Rather,

as previously explained, I possessed two identities within the project—both researcher and artist. As a researcher, I wanted to remain as invisible as possible; to push this identity into the back of my mind and to interact as an equal with the other artists involved. Thus, as discussed above, I preferred that someone else take on the leadership responsibilities. More importantly, however, as an artist, I prefer to work from more general themes; in my opinion, having wider guidelines provides more freedom for creativity. Unlike Orbach and Orley, I do not work from concepts; I do not generally premeditate my artistic decisions and do not feel a need to evolve my decisions from specific background information. Rather, I prefer to work intuitively, trusting that a wiser part of myself, the creative part of myself, knows what it's doing. While Orbach, Orley and Botsford enjoy working intuitively as well, they prefer a solid base—a theory, narrative or concept that lends the work meaning. Thus, my refusal to write the brief was an not only an act of 'Rachel the researcher', but also 'Rachel the artist'. In this way, my refusal was genuine; above anything else, I needed to stay as true as possible to my artistic feelings and judgements, so that I could partake in the collaboration honestly.

All in all, the cooperative dynamic I somewhat flung on Nomadics members, initially daunted us; our relationship as collaborators had not yet developed. More often than not, artists who collaborate without some sort of hierarchical structure, leadership, or without predetermined roles, decide to collaborate either after having established an idea, after having known one another for awhile and/or after having collaborated before. The commitment to collaborate in our case, however, occurred before arriving at an idea; we designated ourselves a

group, yet we had not yet established a group identity. We had a task, but no set direction. Ultimately, the situation was intimidating. Thus the artists only requested that we mirror these more common circumstances in which artists, competitions and galleries set up constructed collaborations. In our case, establishing a leader would have provided a short cut to establishing a collaborative working dynamic; a leader or a brief could function as a reference point through which to channel a working dictionary or meeting ground. As we fumbled for a starting point, however, we gradually began to know one another. We voiced different thematic and artistic ideas, and then slowly, and organically, developed a collaborative foundation.

Perhaps, however, the best proof of success lies in the fact that Nomadics-members chose to continue working as a collaborative team. Since the completion of *Nomadics* the installation in 2005, collective members have participated on three additional projects. Similarly, the original collaborators accepted the opportunity to collaborate under the title 'Nomadic-Collaborations' on a separate installation in October 2004. Since then, Nomadic-Collaborations has continued to evolve. Although new members have joined and some original members have moved-on, the identity and working methods have largely remained intact. This indicates that regardless of the reason members originally came together, Nomadics developed a genuine identity separate from its identity as a research project. Moreover, by continuing to work together and to grow as an organisation, Nomadics will carry on the ideas generated through this research, creating opportunities for artists to participate in new contexts. This, in effect, is its collective purpose—the common goal that unites the artists

involved: to bridge individual differences through collaborative communication, whilst learning from one another— to create a 'whole [that] is more than the sum of its parts' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff cite Rozo 2002: 79).

CONCLUSION

'We aim to promote communication and cooperation among different artistic disciplines, places, cultures, groups and peoples in order to create fuller, multi-media and interdisciplinary works. We believe that by working together, we can overcome personal, intellectual and artistic boundaries. Our goal is to help artists expand their practices and their perspectives, by creating opportunities for artists to collaborate, communicate and learn from one another.'[56]

The above paragraph is the mission statement of the present day Nomadic-Collaborations, which developed from the practice based portion of this doctorate. What started off as a nine-person collaboration and then dwindled to five during the course of this project, now involves a mix of international artists who work together loosely as a collective. Of the initial participants, however, only four remain. Present day members collaborate and cooperate on a variety of projects. They work in pairs, in groups, thematically and/or practically, as well as managerially and at times, with community and arts organisations.

Whereas only 30 years ago, collaborating groups such as The Boyle Family and Christo and Jeanne-Claude disguised their collective efforts under individual identities, Nomadic-Collaborations currently represents only one of many organisations/groups publicly dedicated to collaborative methods. As discussed in *Chapter Two*, from the mid-Renaissance until quite recently, individuals received precedence over the collective (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 46). Even after the Dadaists 'turned to collaborative work as a means of rebelling against the capitalist tradition of competitive individualism,'(Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 50) or as others would argue, to protest the horror of World War I (McCabe 1984;

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[56] [5/5/2007] From: http://www.nomadic-collaborations.com/home.html

Hobbs 1984), the art establishment continued to shun collaborative authorship. More than that, the market devalued collaborative works, encouraging buyers to purchase individually created products, or art objects that they at least *believed* were created individually.[57]

While some authors such as the Sarnoffs (2002) attribute this attitude to the rise of capitalism, others such as Hobbs (1984) and Shapiro (1984) uphold the great-person theory.   In fetishizing art, Hobbs suggests, the artist is made a genius. To credit the solitary artist with these great accomplishments, therefore empowers the individual. As Hobbs (1984: 64) declares 'it makes us feel that if these people can impact events, then so can we!' Thus, the conventional *artist-artwork-audience* model of authorship endured as a symbol of the empowered individual amongst the chaos of the World Wars, even as artists in these time periods collaborated as a way to rebel against the confusion of the changing and war-torn world around them (McCabe 1984).

Notably, the very nature of collaboration destabilises this honorific image of the artist. The artist is no longer merely a solitary authorial genius, but rather a participant in authorship. Whereas the artist-as-genius acts as a solitary sender whose audience 'receives' the messages encoded within the work, the collaborator, on the other hand, like this audience witnesses and receives the other collaborators' contributions and ideas. 'At every step of the way,' the Sarnoffs (2002: 98) explain, 'each is an audience for the other's contributions, and each must agree with what the other wants to do.'   Because the artist-collaborators perform multiple communicative roles in an ongoing exchange, the

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[57] See Appendix 1: *A Timeline of Collaborative Practices Discussed in this Thesis*

resultant artwork embodies a cumulative message— the composite of all the *sendings* and *receivings* that led up to its completion. Collaboration, therefore, not only challenges the role of the artist; it undermines the traditional *artist-artwork-audience* model, reworking conventional notions of authorship—or, more specifically, reworking the relationships among the artists, artwork and audience, as well as the responsibilities conventionally associated with these roles.

Investigating and detailing the communicative processes through which artists have established collaborative authors, this thesis sets out guidelines and examples on how to work together. Collaboration, in this thesis, has been clarified and characterised. It has been set apart as its own field distinct from, yet related to, frameworks such as dialogical and relational aesthetics, which examine how spectator-participation affects artistic authorship. Moreover, in clarifying which participants perform the role of the artist-collaborator as well as the conditions and practices that help to define this role, this thesis helps to contextualise existing debates on collaboration which tend to over-prescribe this term, categorising various types of interaction as collaborative. By revealing the communicative processes that underlie the development of collaborative authorship, and by further contextualising these processes in contemporary art theory, this research opens up and explores concepts posited in existing theories of collaborative practice, further developing them.

Although communication and interaction comprise not only one of the defining characteristics of collaboration but its underlying foundation, it is important to

consider that a communicative relationship does not necessarily signify collaborative interaction; other participatory relationships exist. In order to determine whether or not a communicative relationship denotes a collaborative relationship, pragmatic considerations must be taken into account. It is possible, for example, for a participant to aid an artist in the transmission of a work without collaborating-- the way that Kosuth's assistants contacted and paid for the publication of the thesaurus excerpts in *Second Investigation*. These types of assistants do not act as 'senders' and 'receivers' in the same way as the collaborators do. Moreover, they do not hold the same decision-making power. If they were to express an idea relating to the artistic vision, it could not impact that vision without the artists' approval.

Collaborative-authorship, ultimately, depends on shared authority. Artists must possess the power to influence the artistic direction and evolution of the work. Moreover, to establish a collective voice, collaborators must interact in a way that not only influences the style, subject matter or physical construction of a work, but also the authorial signature. Each collaborator must open herself to the influences and ideas of the group. As Reither (Appendix 10) explains, 'you lose the importance of personal aestetics… you don't have to protect your aestetics you can share them, you can slao copy the aestethics of the others and something new evolves.'

Theorists Elisabeth Rice (2002) and Andrea Toepell (2001) designate an additional condition: that collaborators share a common goal. Unlike Kosuth's assistants, the artist-collaborators meet to establish and/or develop a common artistic vision; not to help other artists carry out a pre-established one. Toepell

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(2001: 61) distinguishes between collaborative and cooperative participation, explaining that:

> When people work together cooperatively, they involve themselves with tasks to help each other out. When people work together collaboratively, they participate to meet a common goal.

Additionally, both Toepell and Rice attribute a sense of ownership to collaborative relationships. If, as they suggest, each participant has had an opportunity to influence the ideas through the communicative exchange, then the ideas belong not to the individual, but to the collective.

It is important to consider, however, that different levels and types of collaborative practices exist. Artists may collaborate for shorter or longer durations of time than their fellow collaborators. Additionally, collaborators may limit their interaction to a specific medium much in the way that sound-composition characterised Jessica Lehrman's role in Nomadics. In order to perform a collaborative role, however, these artists will need to meet the above criteria in relation to the particular aspects of the project relevant to their expertise:

> A participant may take on a task-related role in the research project…be accountable to the project concerning the accuracy of her/his work, own none of the data, and remain removed from the interpretation of the data. This person is working cooperatively… However, should this person be a team member who has also shared in all aspects of designing and implementing the research, participated in making decisions concerning the project, and invested in data collection and interpretation, then this person is working collaboratively with the team (Toepell 2001: 64).

Thus, collaborators such as Lehrman must share authority over not only the physical realisation of their given discipline, but also those aspects of the artistic vision to which they relate. In other words, even with a medium-specific role,

collaborators must share ownership over the work; they cannot merely lend supervisory or technical assistance.

When all of these collaborative factors are met fully and willingly, collaborations have the potential to develop what some groups and theorists have described as a 'third artist,' or 'third hand' or 'collaborative-author'—a phantom dimension that embodies the collective will and collective voice of the group. For this to occur, however, communication must penetrate the different assumptions and prejudices collaborators possess (Bohm 2003). More than that, collaborators must establish shared meaning. Only in this way, can they surpass the different interpretations, images and ideas that they attach to the visual, audio and linguistic messages they exchange and which they project into the art that they collectively make. In moving towards shared meaning, collaborators learn how to better communicate with one another; they uncover and establish common associations, and can then draw on these associations in the future. Through prolonged and exploratory communication, collaborators can begin to collectively interpret the experiences, events and ideas that they encounter. In sharing these experiences, they then continue to accumulate common associations and possibly gain a better understanding of each other's intentions and meaning. They can draw on this common ground and these shared meanings in their art. In this way, the voice of the project becomes a collective voice—a voice owned and expressed by each of the collaborators, which stems from this collective ground—the voice of the collaborative author.

As detailed in *Chapter Four*, however, establishing a collective voice and/or collective consciousness does not eradicate difference; nor does it aim to. On the whole, this collective entity exists as much in the overlapping ideas and identities of the collaborators, as it does in the opposing ones. The artists should not dismiss these differences. As Bohm (2003) maintains rather, they should hold them in suspension—examine them, and move on:

> We have to share the consciousness that we actually have. We can't just impose one another. But if people can share the frustration and share their different contradictory assumptions and share their mutual anger and stay with it—if everybody is angry together, and looking at it together, then you have a common consciousness (Bohm 2003: 326).

Thus, in choosing to examine their feelings and ideas, collaborators can share a common goal despite their differences, upholding Rice(2002) and Toepell's (2001) collaborative criteria. Moreover, as Bohm implies, they can share a common will; they can emote together, while staying true to their own emotions so that, 'there is both a collective mind and an individual mind, and like a stream, the flow moves between them' (Bohm 2003: 321). In this way, collaborators can establish a collective consciousness—that is the consciousness of the phantom author.

While as Bohm (2003) implies, a common consciousness can result when individuals collectively examine a concept, this type of consciousness depends largely on identical or similar sensory input. It can occur among a group of individuals watching a film, for example, or during an exam when students focus on identical problem solving. Arguably, however, each person's consciousness will still differ; an actor's resemblance to an acquaintance might evoke a memory

in one viewer. One student might come up with a different answer than another.

As Tony Wilson (1993) explains, how individuals interpret the information they

receive will depend on their own associations and unique experiences:

> In viewing a programme, the concepts in and through which the text is
> expressed are 'replayed' or 'reworked' in terms of the concepts belonging to
> the reader, so that even identification involves interpretation (Wilson 1993:
> 47)

To establish not just a common consciousness then, but a collective

consciousness, independent of the momentary intake of common sensory stimuli,

necessitates an established ground of shared associations and knowledge—an

unspoken dictionary of ideas, meanings, memories and associations, as well as

an understanding in how to apply these ideas and meanings. In other words, it

requires a collective intention or purpose, in combination with a shared

dictionary of associations and meanings.

From this connection, a deeper communicative relationship can emerge-- one in

which collaborators can reach understanding without discussion. If collaborators

know how to interpret one another, then the gesture of a hand or even the pitch of

one's voice as one begins a sentence can relay as much meaning as a spoken

exchange. These cues enable collaborators to communicate without words, at

times steering them towards common conclusions and ideas. Thus, when ideas

are eventually voiced, they belong equally to everyone, as though 'one thought is

being formed together' (Bohm 2003: 331). Additionally, in collectively

interpreting the events around them, collaborators may at times experience

identical reactions. As the Sarnoff's (2002:5) explain, 'their unwavering unity of

purpose generates a powerful charge of synergy.'   Similarly, Diane Dillon

declared in relation to her collaborative partnership with her husband Leo:

'We're really one artist now' (Sarnoff & Sarnoff 2002: 118).   Thus, they not only evoke but also embody the phantom author of the collaborative work.

Ultimately, in learning how to communicate-- how to connect through common ground while simultaneously maintaining our individuality- how to come to consensus without eradicating difference, we can not only share deeper bonds as artists, but also grow as individuals. As Ron Golding (2002) asserts:

> The transformation involves the reconsideration of the fundamental characteristics of the individual: the presence/absence of identity, the distribution of power, ownership of production and ideas, the consequences of authorship, style and other subjectivities on a final product, as well as the adoption of an identity by a group, which may or may not supersede that of the individual members.

Collaboration enables artists to expand their individual practices. In working with artists skilled in different disciplines, we can learn more about these disciplines, while simultaneously expanding the ways in which we use our own areas of expertise.   Artists can, as Nomadic-Collaborations upholds, '…realize artistic visions they would not be able to create on their own.'[58] In other words, by coming together, we can create fuller, more comprehensive works. We can combine our strengths. We can also, however, learn how others view our art and our ideas, and therefore gain perspective, evolving individually. As we evolve individually, we also evolve the collective voice—the phantom artist of the collaborative work, influencing our colleagues who in turn influence us—a repetitive learning and growing cycle.

 Through an in depth investigation of the communicative dynamics of artistic collaboration, this project details the obstacles, practices and conditions

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[58] [5/5/2007] From: http://www.nomadic-collaborations.com/connections.html

conducive to collaborative authorship, providing examples and guidelines that can inform not only art-collaboratives, but other collaborative and cooperative groups as well. Regardless of the setting, groups tend to encounter similar obstacles and turning points in collaborative and dialogic development. In working past these dialogic obstacles, however, participants can learn from one another:

> I'm suggesting that there is the possibility of a transformation of the nature of consciousness, both individually and collectively, and that whether this can be solved culturally and socially depends on dialogue. (Bohm 2003: 338).

This research, in part, looks at how to push past the biases, assumptions and opinions that can hinder collaborative dialogue; it provides concrete examples in which collaborators have succeeded in working towards common meaning, divulging the process through which this occurs. This information not only informs practitioners, it also helps to develop artistic collaboration as a theoretical field. It investigates concepts such as collective voice and collective identity in so far as they relate to the communicative dynamics of collaborative authorship, grounding these concepts within both collaborative and communicative frameworks and providing a foundation on which future theorists can build.

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GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

Collaboration: An interactive and communicative relationship in which participants form a common goal or purpose and engage in shared decision-making in order to carry out and develop that purpose.

Collective Consciousness: Adapted from Emil Durkheim's (1982) theory that members of a particular culture, society and/or societal subgroup share an understanding of its laws, norms, values and rules. As a 'subgroup' or 'personalised community,' collaborating partnerships and groups can also develop a more particularised consciousness in which they share knowledge of the rules, values, ideas, images and influences that characterise their particular collaboration.

Collective Identity: On a general level, collective identity can refer to societal subgroups, countries, or people who share defining characteristics (i.e. race, gender, age). In context of this thesis, it refers to the collaborative identity that a group of artists creates by emphasising their shared characteristics. Oftentimes such groups compound their individual names, or take on a label such as 'The Boyle Family' or 'Gelitin' to designate that they are a group.

Collective Interpretation: When a group interprets a statement, word, image, sound, etc. similarly or perhaps even identically. This can happen when collaborators build a store of common associations and references to compare with and project into subsequent encounters and statements as part of the interpretive process.

Collective Memory: Common or shared memories which can accrue through mutual experiences, working and living together, sharing the same environment or as Halbwachs (1992) maintains, living in the same culture or society.

Collective Voice: The artistic vocabulary, aesthetic and style of a collaborative group in which members share not only a collective consciousness, but also a collective understanding of how to channel that consciousness into the art.

Composite Sending: The composite/amalgamation of all of the communicative exchanges and idea building that lead up to the creation of a collaborative artwork, and which are present in the 'sending' of that artwork to the audience/participant.

Composite Voice: The voice that characterises a collaborative artwork or 'message' which results from composite sending.

Cooperation: A participatory relationship in which individuals work together to help out one another, without sharing decision-making powers or control over the purpose or goal.

Dictionary: A metaphor borrowed from Roland Barthes' (1977) *The Death of the Author*. While Barthes' uses the 'dictionary' to refer to the historical accumulation of associations, conventions, metaphors and styles which influence or infiltrate a contemporary writer's works, this thesis often refers to a 'sub-dictionary'—all of the associations, conventions, images and ideas that a group of collaborators accumulate over time and which they often draw on in the making of their collective works: a dictionary of their artistic vocabulary.

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Great Person Theory: A perspective in which significant historical events and changes are attributed to 'great people' or 'heroes.' This includes the perspective that art masterpieces are the work of artistic geniuses.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Both a practical methodology and a philosophical field, which like phenomenology focuses on descriptive aspects of lived experiences. Whereas phenomenologists would separate the individual and the experience, examining them 'in relation' to one another, however, hermeneutic phenomenologists perceive the two as interrelated; one cannot exist without the other. As a methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology emphasises, among other things, the practice of constant self-reflection in order to examine the thoughts, biases, and impressions that interact to create one's experience.

Horizon of Understanding: Everything within a particular person's vantage point—all of the associations, memories, and ideas that affect the way a particular person views the world (Gadamer 2004).

Identity Salience Hierarchy: Borrowed from theorist David Snow (2001), this phrase refers to the way in which individuals emphasise their different identities to different degrees in different contexts. In one situation, for example, someone might emphasise their identity as a 'teacher,' over their identity as a 'sister,' or a foreigner, while in another situation, the hierarchy of these different identities may shift.

Participant Observer: a researcher who participates in group work or activities and simultaneously observes the experience as a form naturalistic enquiry

Phantom: Borrowed from Charles Green's 2001b publication, *The Third Hand*. He refers to the collective entity that long-term collaborations can develop—the collaborative voice and identity, which supersedes the mixing and blending of the individual collaborators identities and artistic voices.

Pragmatics: A field of linguistics that focuses on the context in which an utterance is spoken in order to consider that utterance's function/effect.

Psychic Osmosis: When collaborators arrive at the same idea, but separately.

Receiver: The person who receives a communicative message. In the case of a conversation, this is the 'listener,' in the case of a painting—the viewer.

Sender: The person who initiates a communicative exchange. In the case of a conversation, this is the speaker. The 'artist' has been traditionally associated with this communicative role.

Transmission Model: A communication model most often associated with Shannon and Weaver (1963). Originally designed for Information Theory rather than Communication Theory, it has been appropriated by theorists and adapted to a communicative context. Most simply put, it asserts that a 'sender' who speaks/writes, the transmitter which channels the message from the sender to its designated point, and a 'receiver' who intercepts (listens, reads, sees) the message. Other models include Laswell's 1948 model and Berlo's 1960.

Transmitter: The device that carries/transmits the communicative messages to the receiver. This might include a computer, a radio, a voice, or an artwork.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: A Timeline Of Collaborative Practices—
Discussed in this Thesis[59]

2007 Gilbert & George
Gilbert &George: Major Exhibition is
the largest retrospective of any artist
to be held at Tate Modern.'[60]

2005 *Nomadics*
Nomadic-Collaborations has their first
exhibition at Trinity Buoy Wharf

2004 Third Text
Third text publishes a special issue:
'Art and Collaboration.'
Volume18 Issue 6

2004 Working Together
Collaborative Workshop takes place
at Tate Modern.

2003 Chapman Brothers
Jake and Dinos Chapman are
nominated for the Turner Prize.

2001 The Third Hand
Dr. Charles Green publishes *The Third Hand*-
one of the most comprehensive books on
Collaboration to date.

1999 The Wilson Twins
Jane and Louise Wilson are
nominated for the Turner Prize

1994 Christo and Jeanne-Claude
After several decades of working
together, Christo and Jeanne-Claude
officially publicise their collaboration.

1985 The Boyle Family
The Boyle Family publicly acknowledge their
their collaboration.[61]

1984 Gilbert and George
Gilbert and George win the Turner Prize

1984 Artistic Collaboration in the 20th Century
Cynthia McCabe curates a collaborative
exhibition at the Hirshorn Museum and
publishes an accompanying catalogue under
the same title

1976 Abromovich and Ulay.
Marina Abromovich and Ulay begin.
collaborationg.

1969 Gilbert and George[62]
'Gilbert and George first exhibit
Singing Sculpture

1962 Boyle Family
Mark Boyle and Joan Hills collaborate
for the first time but are not yet known as
'The Boyle Family.'

1952   Theatre Piece 1
An interdsicliplinary artistic event involving
among others Merce Cunningham, Robert
Rauschenberg and Charles Olson.
Possibly the first *Happening.*

1939-1945 World War 2

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1933 Black Mountain College
John Rice establishes Black Mountain College--
An experimental and interdisciplinary art school
that advocated a collaborative approach

1924 Surrealism
Andre Breton's Surrealist Manifesto is published.

to both learning, and creative practices   Reacting

1916 Dada
to the wartime chaos, artists exiled to
Zurich founded Dadaism as a reaction against
the war and the society that supported it.

1914-1916 World War 1

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[59] This model was adapted from *A Timeline Of Collaborative Practice* (2005) Mark Dunhill & Tamiko O'Brien(eds.) [6/2007] from: http://collabarts.org/?cat=4
[60] This information is cited from: Film One: Gilbert and George introduce their exhibition. Film. *Tate Online*. [May 2007] from: http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/gilbertandgeorge/
[61] This information is cited from: Schwabsky, Barry. (2003) Boyle Family: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. *Art Forum International Magazine, Inc.* [19 Jun. 2007] from:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_4_42/ai_111696448
[62] The artists first performed this work in 1968 while studying at Central Saint Martins. Though collabarts credits this as their first performances, many sources (including Tate Modern's Archives) credit 1969-- their first professional exhibition of this work.

Appendix 2- Chan Withdraws

From: suki chan
To: emily orley, rlehrman, xx7orly7x, ebnefsi, sat_date, sukichan, mattandross,
              jj283
Date: Fri, 12 Nov 2004 05:12:18 –0800 (PST)

Subject: Re: date for private view

Hi Rachel, Emily, Orly, Jessica, Satoshi and Eileen,

Hope you are all well. I'm down with a cold at the moment, must be the change in
climate. I am writing to you all as I am unsure about continuing my participation in
Nomadics for a number of reasons. I am really pushed for time with a public art project
due to be installed end of Feb 2005- the majority of the weeks in the period running up
to it are now committed to completing this project. Plus I'm moving house in Dec..!

Personally, I don't feel that I've given enough time to this project but am also unable to
rectify this. It would be unfair to continue as I can offer very little of my time in Nov and
Dec, which are the most crucial periods of the project.

I'm terribly sorry to pull out at this stage, and also for any disappointment this may
cause.

Good luck with this project, its been good to meet some of you and to have exchanged
some ideas.

Take Care,

Suki

Appendix 3- Schmidt Withdraws

From: "theron Schmidt"
To: rlehrman
Date: Sat, 9 Oct 2004 19:10:20 +0100

Subject: Re: this sunday

Hi Rachel

Apologies that we haven't been able to speak on the phone. I'm about to go to Newbury and then elsewhere in the UK on a theatre tour, and was hoping to chat before I left, but have found myself constantly trying and failing to catch up with myself. Things are really sounding exciting with your project, and I would like to stay involved if it's possible, but I won't be able to be physically present until end of January. I don't even have a sense of what your timescale is… it seems as if everything might be finished by then, anyway.

However, if a lesser commitment from me would be at all useful to you, then
let me know, and if it wouldn't, then that's totally fine. I'd be interested in contributing in a minor way—say, producing some writing—but only if it would actually be helpful to you and to the project.

Sorry again for dropping out of communication – hope everything continues to move along in its own unpredictable way.

best
theron

Appendix 4- Guiterrez Withdraws

From: Barbara Guiterrez
To: rlehrman
Date: Mon, 11 Oct 2004 07:48:27- 0700 (PDT)

Subject: Re:figuring it out

Dear Rachel: I have been thinking about it and I am not going to continue in the project.
I am sure this wouldn't affect it at all as none of my imputs has been considered. Still I
can do the notebook-comments if you needt it. The Perspex suppliers: HAMAR
ACRYLIC 238 Bethnal Green Rd E2. Best, Barbara

I wrote the brief for the benefit of the collaboration. Please forward your views regarding whether you think a brief is a good idea, or whether you think it is unnecessary or unhelpful. Please also let me know if you approve the approach, but do not like the themes suggested.

The aim if the brief is to give more structure to the theme of the project, and to help define it. This should make it easier for us to visualise the ideas behind the project and discuss the theme in a more tangible way.

The brief is not meant to stop us from bringing in and developing more ideas, but should be used a theme/subject to work against, or as a starting point.

Museum

This file seems to relate to a lot of ideas we have already discussed, and is open enough to allow room for new ideas and sub-themes to be incorporated in the future.

The word 'museum' in its broadest sense may bring about many associations. Personally I think of a museum as a place of time-travel, of preservation of objects, cultures and ideas, and at the same time of their absence.

Museums suggest exploration, to geographical travel, anthropology, ethnography, history and archaeology. This would allow any of us (ie. the collaborators) to research a more specific subject under those broad headings (should we wish to do so). The idea of objects and artefacts being excavated and removed from their origins is related to Nomadics.

A museum is a space that defines the observer and the observed. The gap between the studied and the person conducting the research can be seen as a connected to the inside/outside idea, either literally (suing the physical structure of the piece), or as a repetition of that idea in another form (sound/visual) becomes the participant or a part if the exhibition. The piece can question the roles of the researcher/researched and the power such roles suggest.

A museum can be seen as portal into the past and the future. It is a way of discovering the past, an attempt to connect with our ancestors, and at the same time an attempt to preserve the present for future generations.
Museum displays and collections reveal what we regard as precious/valuable and hold as dear. A Museum collection reflects the thoughts and values of the collector as much as the collected. What we think is worth saving and preserving indicates out value system, which can itself be the subject of the exhibition.

Although I only suggest to use 'Museum' as a theme, the installation can refer to museums in its visual content, using museum aesthetics such as the compartmentalisation of space, the theatrical lighting, objects trapped behinds glass, old, broken artifacts and the constraining blurbs and explanations-which are often shown through interactive computer technology,

threshold

A contrast between stillness and movements is present in museums (-the visitors move and the objects are no longer functional, as if frozen in time-). The feeling of stillness vs. movement can also be communicated through the piece.

July 2004

Experience of Nomadic-Collaboration

This is the first time for me to do collaboration with different artists. I had a couple of group projects in my fashion college, however on that project we were studying the same subject. Therefore, it was quite difficult work with them, because most of the creative people such as artists and designers are individual. If we are working in the same spatiality, it is difficult to reach to one specific idea or design. Compare to this project, we are specializing different subject, working in different way, using different material. Even though we sometimes have different opinion, we are developing the ideas. Now Each of us have a working space which each of us have responsibility, however we still give the ideas to the others in order to develop our creativity and ideas. When one of us had a idea which seems that would be interesting, but she or he doesn't know how to develop, that is because they don't have experience in a certain thing, so other artist who had experience develop that ideas. Which means we are sharing the ideas from different areas. I am good at working on 2 D works. Other artists who I collaborate with, Emily, Orly and Suki have many experiences working on 3D works. I have been inspired many ideas from them. It is quite amazing that we had a great number of ideas at the beginning, now we have 3 main Ideas. I think that is because we are trying to find what is the most suitable in the occasion and main our theme, and the most interesting ideas. Instead of trying to be egoistic. As my experience, I have many different kinds of way of thinking from this project. I could have fresh ideas which I have never thought, because other artists have been working in different areas from mine. I feel that this project will help my creativity of my own project in my future.

Satoshi Dáte

Please answer the first three questions before reading the rest of the Questionnaire.

1.   What do you think it means to collaborate?

To work together and to share ideas. To blend your own work, vision, style and way of thinking with someone else in order to produce a new creation. Of course this can be done to different degrees, and a collaboration can just be a way of working with other people, without learning to understand the other person's thought process, and without sharing ideas. Such collaborations can probably happen when the roles of the collaborators are known in advance, where the collaborators stick to the area of their expertise and where there is little room for risk taking and experimentation. I think that these kinds of collaborations are more superficial, as people aren't really working together, but alongside each other.

2.   In what ways is/isn't this project a collaboration?

This project is a collaboration as it involves a group of people working together, sharing ideas and learning to understand different thought processes and methods of working.

At this stage its is too early to tell whether this will continue to be a collaboration, as things might change once we move into the space and start physically working in the space. But the early and middle stages, of coming up with ideas and preparing to create the work have definitely been collaborative.

3.   What expectations did you have coming into this project? How did you think it would work?

I started with no expectations, and was just curious to see what will happen. My expectations started to grow once I got to know the members of the collaboration more, and once its seemed like there were enough people interested and committed to the project, who are inspired by similar ideas, and were dedicated enough to attend meetings and try and be resourceful and ambitious to get the project to work.

I am still not sure how the project will work. I'm waiting to see.

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4.   Do you feel there are specific roles among the artists involved? What leads you to this conclusion?

There are specific roles among the artists involved, which seems natural as artists' strengths and experience leads them to take control of certain areas which they feel

more comfortable in, or that they feel they are more able to contribute to. However, this has been an opportunity to try out different roles, and do things we are not familiar with, and we have done that to an extent, but couldn't too much, as this might have made the project suffer.

I think that our roles were established in the start of the project, as we didn't know what the others are capable of, and so we judged people according to their past projects and portfolios (as one would). I think that this did make us all pigeonhole each other, and we all assumed that we would be working in territories that are familiar to us. However, if any one expressed any interest in trying something out, they would usually have full support of the group.

As well as artists' roles (such as film-maker, web designer, light specialist etc.) there are group roles such as the group leaders, communicators and followers, or people who have less initiative. This is determined by people's personalities and the social interaction of the group.

5.   How does this collaboration differ from projects you've collaborated on in the past?

Firstly, my role in this collaboration has not been defined, which makes me feel as though I can contribute to the project in several ways, and that I am not limited in what I make for it (including tasks to do with the project as a whole, e.g. publicity, research, funding etc.)

Secondly, the end product was uncertain at the start of the project, and although it was understood that it will probably be a site-specific installation, we had o idea bout the scale of it what it might look like, and the actual content—i.e. what it was about. I usually work to briefs that are more 'close'. The fact that there was no brief has made me a little lost.

Thirdly, it has been a very larger collaboration, and the collaborators dropping out made it feel as though the project was a live entity, loosing cells as it grew into a more developed project. In that sense the project felt unpredictable, as it was impossible to guess who would stick it to the end. The other collaborations I worked on were much more fixed, with the members, deadlines and space being known prior to the start of the project.

Also, this is proving to be a challenging experience for myself, as I can usually identify my contribution to a collaborative project, and have a sense of ownership over the work I created. This collaboration demands that I leave my ego behind a little, and accept decisions which I may disagree with and disapprove of. My past experience of collaborations was that although the work is fused together, I can still pick mine out, and people can judge my work on its own merits. With this collaboration, I expect to be judged on the overall piece, including the parts I didn't work on or didn't approve of. As a self-interested artist, I find that aspect of the collaboration rather difficult. Also, not having my name next to a piece of work that I made is a strange experience, and makes me feel a little anonymous, like a person standing in a crowd, unnoticed. At the same time this is a liberating experience, and is making me work differently, and therefore pushing my artistic practise forward.

6.   Are there any parts of the installation that you feel more strongly responsible for? Why?

I feel very responsible for the cave/dough area. This is because I feel that I will be mainly working on that, despite wanting to work on the installation as a whole. I guess that it's mainly because people seem to be passionate about certain areas—not being bitchy, but for instance, when I tried to mention different possibilities to Satoshi about the light/dark room, his reaction was very defensive, and I think he felt protective of his idea. It seemed that he wasn't interested in either changing or leaving his initial idea, and wanted to settle on it. At some point we all decided the pieces we want to make and stuck to them. The feeling that people aren't willing to change the areas for which they came up with the ideas made me think that I can just leave those areas alone and concentrate on the dough area. It's mainly because several of my ideas were rejected, and that led me to believe makes that people have a sense of ownership about the spaces they decided to work on.

Also, despite my answer for question 5, I still feel a sense of ownership and pride about the dough-related work, which will mainly be in the dough room. I want to make it the best it can be. Once I realised I can go all the way with this (i.e. make a dough room) I also got a bit possessive over the space, and know that I will straggle to accept things in it/decisions about it that I may not like. So I do feel passionate about the overall space, but am more worried about the dough room at present.

I actually had a dream last week that our private view was on and the whole thing was finished and very well done, and I was very impressed with the wall that we built which directed the space, but my space (being the dough room) was not made yet. It was entirely empty and had a note saying something like 'will be here soon.' I wonder what it means.

7.   Do you feel ownership over the work? Is there a sense of ownership and if so, do you think it is shared equally among collaborators?

I think I talked about ownership a lot by mistake in the other answers. Yes, I do feel a sense of ownership, maybe even more so because I am aware that it would be unclear to the viewers how and what each artist contributed to the piece.

I feel a sense of ownership over the overall piece, and struggle with the feeling that I am part of something which to a large extent I have no control over, as many things will be made by other people, and my name will be associated with the piece as a whole.

And I largely feel a sense of ownership about the dough related part, as I will be trying to truly express myself through that part, and therefore it would be a personal part of me exposed to and judged by the public. I am also very ambitious with that part, and perhaps want it to communicate quite a lot.

I think that the sense of ownership is shared equally among the core collaborators, as we have been working on it and thinking about it together for such a long time.

8.   How does your particular artistic background impact your role within the collaboration?

I think my background makes me able to be (overall) open minded about the piece, and willing to risk take and experiment. Because the BA and MA I did encouraged

experimentation, and allowed me to move between different fields such as fine art, illustration, graphic design, film writing etc. I feel at home working on something where my role is not clearly defined. I was trained to be more concerned about the content of things, and the meaning and thinking behind them, and worry less about what they end up being (e.g. a book, a film, an art object etc.). I was also trained to research a project and then respond to a body of research, which made me feel comfortable to have all those meeting where we didn't produce any work, but just discussed ideas.

9. In what ways has this collaboration affected your process of creation?

Firstly it made me think of my work in a large scale, and not as an object but as an environment. I am currently attempting to create pieces that are not square, which break away from being art objects, and which could be incorporated to a wall.

Secondly, it had made me consider what my work is in a new context—i.e. the collaboration as a whole.

Thirdly, it had made me think about the relationship between the pieces of my work, and is currently making me create a body of work, rather than singular and disconnected pieces.

Also, since I am being a bit too concerned about the quality and meaning of the final piece, and because I am aware that the piece will be seen by the public, and we have a limited amount of time, I have become a bit too self conscious and critical, and a bit too serious about the piece.

Another way it has affected my work, is that it made me think more generally about the point and reason of making work, what I am trying to get out of this, why I am an artist in the first place, and whether there is any point in worrying about these questions, or whether I should just go ahead and do stuff, in an instinctive way.

10. Have the other artists influenced your aesthetic or creative process? If so, how?

Yes. Simply by spending time coming up with ideas for the piece, I became more aware of how differently our methods of working are, and the motivations for our work. I certainly have become aware how I restricted myself in the past, thinking in terms of exhibiting individual pieces of work, and not considering the space as a whole.

Looking at Emily and Eileen's mission statements, I realise that they have learnt to express their intention and reason for creating work in a clear and concise way. It made me compare these to my own reasons for creating work, and intentions behind my work.

11. Do you communicate with any of the artists more than others? If so, who and why?

I communicate with the main 3 artists equally.

12. What method of communication do you rely on the most?

Direct communication (when we meet up), phone and email.

13. Which areas of the project do you feel the most a part of?

The making of it, including idea generating. (At the moment) This might change soon as other tasks will need to be done.

14. Are there any parts of the project that you feel left out of? If so, has this affected your experiences (or role in) the project?

Not really, nothing that I would like to do. I think that if I really want to take a new role, no one would object.

15. Please add other comments/observations about your experiences with Nomadics.

This is proving to be an exciting experience, and a very enjoyable one too. I do care a little too much about my work, an dam concerned about the success of the project and its impact, but regardless of the final result, I find this experience has been worthwhile. It has made me question the nature of my work, my audience, the point of it all etc, and address questions that are often easier to ignore.

Please answer the first three questions before reading the rest of the Questionnaire.

1. **What do you think it means to collaborate?**

   I think collaboration exists when a group of people collectively decide how to carry out a process.

2. **Do you think of yourself as a collaborator on this project?**

   I think distance has gotten in the way of my complete involvement. I have not seen the space, so rather than design sound/write music based on my own feelings and discussing those feelings with the collective, the collective gives me more direction to what they feel is appropriate and that is the first influence of my work. I am able to express my opinion and suggestions based on what I know, and then my work becomes a comprise of ideas. It has been difficult for me to comment on ideas of other collaborators as well.

3. **Do you feel there are particular roles among the artists involved? If so, what have you observed that leads you to this conclusion? If not, then explain how you view the relationships among the artists (including yourself).**

   In terms of the work being done, I have associated different parts of the project with different artists. Emily is constructing the tunnel, Orly is creating the dough floor, Rachel and Satoshi seem well rounded with their contributions. In terms of power, I see Rachel as an organizer, but through email I noticed all of the collaborators expressing their ideas and I do believe the final project will be a compromise of those ideas.

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4. **How does your relationship with your sister affect your experiences working on this project? How does it affect the dynamic between you and the other artists?**

   Rachel and I look at emails we have sent to each other and laugh because we notice the formal approach we take when we start discussing the project. My participation in the project is only possible because of our relationship, but past that association I think we have been taking the same approach to the project as the other collaborators. Because I have never met any of the other artists, Rachel acts a bit as a go between. She encouraged me to speak to Satoshi and now we have been emailing each other a bit. The forum was a help in the beginning. When I posted, many of the collaborators responded to me and we were able to exchange ideas, but I have been without a computer for awhile and

Rachel has been including me through emails and phone calls because of the difficulty of posting on the forum.

5. **How does the collaboration affect the dynamics of your relationship with your sister?**

As I mentioned above, collaboration happens mostly through Rachel. If the dynamics of our relationship have changed, I would say that we act more as collaborating artists than as sisters when we communicate. Because of distance, it is difficult to maintain constant communication, so we use our time to discuss the project.

6. **With which of the artists do you communicate the most? Why?**
   (assuming this means someone other than Rachel)

I've communicated with Satoshi more than the other collaborators. This is definitely because we share music as a common ground. Hearing his music is incredibly helpful because I can form ideas on what is expected and learn more about what other artists think.

7. **You are one of the few long distance artists involved on this project. How does the distance affect your role in the collaboration? To the artist artists?**

Distance has been my worst enemy. I think I would have a better grasp on the project and contribute more if I could go to the meetings and participate in discussions. I feel like I am more of a secondary collaborator. The collective will discuss, and then Rachel will come to me with the results. I am a bit left out of the process, though I think my ideas have been communicated to the collaborators.

8. **How does the distance affect communication with the other artists involved?**

Since I do not know the other artists very well, communication has been a bit limited. I am most comfortable with Rachel, so I will express my ideas to her and then she will bring the ideas up at meetings and give me feedback from the collective.

9. **What method of communication do you rely on the most?**

For the entire collective, I rely on email. Rachel and I work well on the phone because we can respond to each other's comments instantly.

10. **Which areas of the project do you feel the most a part of?**

My role in the collective has definitely been as a musician/sound designer. I do not feel like a part of the layout, but my connection will be sound that is played in each room of the installation.

11. **Are there any parts of the project that you feel left out of? If so, has this affected your experiences of (or role in) the project?**

   I was not a part of the design or layout. I think that is mostly because I wasn't present to discuss the ideas that helped the project evolve.   This definitely affected my role. The collective must direct me in what to do because they have a better understanding of the installation in its entirety.

12. **Have the other artists influenced the ways in which you work? Your ideas? If so, how?**

   I know that some of my ideas have overlapped with other collaborators. When this happens, I feel much more confident about my work in the collective. Hearing Satoshi's work has been of influence as well. I felt more comfortable to take an electronic approach when initially I had been limiting myself to natural sounds and instruments.

13. **Please add other comments/observations about your experiences with Nomadics.**

   The distance factor may have affected my role in the collective and my relationship with the other artists, but I think using Rachel as a means of communication was beneficial. It is not often that artists will be incredibly eloquent about their own work, and communication will always have limitations when we express ourselves verbally. Having Rachel was important because she was able to explain details to me in a way she felt I would understand, and when I expressed my ideas to her she was able to give a more telling representation of my thoughts to the collective.

Beagles & Ramsay Questionnaire
Autumn 2004

1.   How did you begin collaborating?

We knew each other in London in the early 1990s and then we both moved to Glasgow to study on the MFA course at Glasgow School of Art in 1994/95. We began to help each other out with producing our individual pieces and then as a natural development we began to make a few collaborative works whilst continuing with our solo projects (circa 1996/97). We have been working solely as a collaborative partnership since about 1998.

2. Can you compare what it was like when you first started collaborating to what it'slike now? How long did you know each other before you began collaborating?

At first there were occasions when the work we produced was a kind of fusion of our individual practices but after some time working together we felt as if it was impossible for us to tell what idea had come from who. The work was, and is, being produced from a constant exchange of ideas, conversations and studio time. We knew each other for about 2 or 3 years before we began to work together. See question 1

3. How did your individual styles evolve? How did your creative processes change because of the collaboration?

See question 1. We have not made any individual work since about 1998. In terms of how the partnership affected the production of work – we got bolder and more ambitious.

4. Do you find that you share a lot of the same influences? How do your influences (artistic-- other art pieces, news stories, films, etc.) influence your work?

We share a large amount of the same influences and have pretty similar tastes in music, literature, TV, politics, film and art. This was one of the things which brought us together in the first place and allowed us to collaborate and to continue working together. We both have a desire for our work to have a breadth and ambition to it. We're both frequently disappointed by the 'smallness' of much contemporary art in this respect.

5. I understand that you sometimes collaborate with other artists as well. Can you talk a little about what that's like? How does it compare to working with each other?

We have worked with other artists from time to time. We curated a series of shows which often involved a certain degree of collaboration, or at least a willingness on the part of the other artists to get involved in the overall concept of the show eg Museum Magogo. A willingness on their part to submit themselves and their work to our grand curatorial vision…and in way one or two of these shows were a kind of parody or examination of the traditional power relationship between artist and curator. Often, as an artist in a large group show, it feels as if your work becomes a minor prop in the curator's career

trajectory. In one particular show, Angel Dust at the Intermedia Glasgow we collaborated more fully with everyone else in the show – about 6 or 7 people, including one dead artist James Ensor. This involved conversations or e mail exchanges with the other artists and was a pretty fluid process, and a different process for each artist.

6. I notice that people sometimes (perhaps often) refer to you as a unit-- 'beaglesandramsay'-- as if you are one artist. Do you feel like you have a joint identity as artists? If so, do you maintain that identity when you collaborate with other artists?

We do have a joint identity as artists, the work we produce is the result of our collaborative process. Yes, we maintain that identity in our work with other artists although there is obviously a bit of give and take in any group show/collaborative situation. Our artistic identity is, to a large extent, an assumed one.

7. How do your ideas evolve? Does one of you generally come up with an idea, or are they formed together?

See above. Sometimes there's a clear evolution with a piece, at other times its difficult to remember how stuff got decided. There's a certain amount of osmosis –which can occasionally be troubling for our individual states of mind.

8. What about the physical elements of your work... How do you collaborate during the creation of the material elements?

Yes, we share the workload and we are both involved in most aspects of the production of the work. We both have particular strengths in this area and so sometimes one or the other of us takes a little more control of the physical realisation of the piece but it is shared process. More often than not we have a clear idea of what the piece we are making will look like, or be made of, or whatever before we begin to make it and so it becomes more a matter of practical production in the studio. Not always but most of the time. If we are making a video we discuss the shots as we go and we edit together.

9. You tend to visually represent yourselves in your work--(Budget Range Sex Dolls, 15th December 2065, Dead of Night...). Would you consider yourselves a medium within these installations? Subject matter? Another mode of creation?

In these cases we always transformed ourselves or took on a persona. It was also a way for us to focus quite complex installations and create a sense of continuity across various works which might seem unconnected at first glance. One of our earliest impulses was always to implicate ourselves, embarrass ourselves, make things a little problematic and not so easy in terms of standing back, aloof. We have certainly used ourselves and our physical presence, and quite direct/realistic representations of us have been a key ingredient in a lot of our work but we have recently begun to move away from such direct self-representation into more transmogrified/allusive forms. For instance our new piece, Sanguis Gratia Artis - Black Pudding Self-Portrait, has involved having our blood extracted and then using to make our own brand of black puddings.

10. Do you feel this representation alters the traditional 'audience'/'artist' relationship? If so, how?

The fact that we aim to invite responses to our work which have often been regarded as illegitimate within art is important to us. It's not just a shift from a passive viewer to an active one, although this is part of it. Its also about taking sides with some of the forms of attention from other areas of culture that have been either largely policed out of the gallery or regarded as possessing a lowly pedigree. See answer to 14.

11. How do you think references or physical representations of artists within their own work compares to work in which the artists are actually present?

Presenting versions of ourselves is important in creating some distance from the whole baggage that often comes with notions of the real, the authentic and the whole collapsing of artists and artwork that has occurred with some highly autobiographical, 'expressionist' art in recent years.

12. Do you consider the role of your audience/participant/spectator/etc. when you are creating a piece? Do you have any views on this?

Yes, we always consider the way that the viewer will engage with the work, especially if we are working on a solo show where we have complete control over the gallery set up. We often try to get the viewer as physically engaged in the work as possible and think about the entire space as part of the work – obviously in the case of large scale installations but also if we are showing drawings or video.

13. In what ways, if any, does your work depend on the spectator/participant?

Well, in a way it always depends to a large extent on the viewer/participant and as we wrote above we are always keen to actively engage the viewer.

14. What about in the more participatory works like Burger Heaven?

In this case the viewer becomes much more actively engaged in the work in a very direct and physical way i.e. they smell the work and, hopefully, they eat the work. We depend on them to get involved and we try to construct the space in such a way that they have to get involved. A similar situation has arisen with our more recent work, the black pudding self-portrait, in that the viewer at the very least tastes us through their sense of smell. Legal restrictions have curtailed any actual cannibalism.

15. I am especially interested in installations environments... this feeling of entering a created reality. Your New Heads on the Block and Rope-a-Dope Production Unit seems to do this. Yet, so much of your work is based in the real world-- it comments on it, ridicules it, raises issues. How do you view the relationship of your work to reality?

It's often a skewed, absurd or satirical take on certain forms of reality. We might take the culture of celebrity, for instance, and push it to a logically absurd conclusion.

16. Do you have any sort of mission or intention that follows you through your projects-- either politically or artistically?

To spread the disease.

17. Your work has been described as 'theatrical' and likened to a movie set (by Moira Jeffrey in-- Dead Again: The Work of Beagles & Ramsay). Do you feel there is a theatricality to your work? A narrative?

We have certainly been interested in using what you might broadly term theatrical forms and approaches and this has been closely linked to our attempts (as outlined above) to actively engage, manipulate and seduce or confront the viewer. In a way we do look upon the way we work as being akin to low budget movie production, particularly when we are working on large solo projects involving combinations of installation, video, sound and performance. We are aware of how certain US independent auteurs approach making their movies eg Raimi, Rodriguez and the Coens. For us, there is a lengthy planning process which goes into these installations which is one level driven by the practicalities of the situation eg. we may have to build the piece for the first time in the gallery in the week or so leading up to the opening and on another level it's really just the only way we can see to produce complex pieces successfully. There are often elements of narrative and traditional narrative forms which we employ, most obviously in the way we plan and edit our videos.

Gelitin: Ali Janka, Florian Reither, Tobias Urban, Wolfgang Gantner.
_____

1.   **How did you begin collaborating?**

while playing together in the summercamp where we met

2. **How has your collaborative process evolved over time?**

less nervous

3.   **How do you develop ideas for projects? Individually? Collectively?**

ideas develop themselves, they exist, we only discover them

4.   **How do you share decision-making? The physical creation or execution of the works?**

do not understand that question

5.   **How do you compare your interaction with one another in the development of the project to your interaction with participants/audience members?**

we work together every day in the studio, the audience is somebody who comes to visit

6.   **Do any of you work independently as well?**

yes

7.   **In what ways has working together affected your individual aesthetics and practices?**

you loose the importance of personal aestetics
you still have them but they are not vital and you can handle it more easy
you don't have to protect your aestetics you can share them, you can slao copy the aestethics of the others and something new evolves

8.   **Do you see yourselves as having distinct roles within the collaborative/creative process?**
no

Appendix 11— B&B
Sophie Hope Questionnaire
6/2008

1. How do you distinguish your work as a 'curator' from your work as an 'artist'?

see the attached document for more info on this - I am not very comfortable with the labels artist and curator and while I use them when it suits me, I think it's more about what you do rather than what you call it. Despite this, I am really interested in the histories and hang ups with the curating label. I think my 'curatorial' work has involved aspects of hosting, facilitating and listening which I consider really important aspects of my practice

2. What exactly is 'collaborative curatorship'? In what ways do you feel this differs from the collaborative work between/among artists?

Sarah and I started working together when I was just finishing the MA in curating at Goldsmiths and Sarah was doing the MA in curating at the RCA - we realised we were interested in similar questions about the relationship between art and society and shared frustrations that not more was being done to trace the histories of community art, public art and socially engaged art and critique the current situation of new labour cultural policy in relation to these practices. It was our shared enthusiasm that got us started and our sense of urgency that this was something we wanted to investigate further. We talked to other people about our questions and concerns and one of the first events we did was at Ella Gibbs' 'Programme' as part of Temporary Accommodation at the Whitechapel where we held a public event at the end of the programme with people involved about 'moving on' - we discussed how these temporary events that created various networks of audiences, artists and others would move on in various, untraceable ways.

All collaborations are unique, whether it is among artists or curators. I think for Sarah and I it was a case of being able to support each other in developing ideas for projects through lots of conversations and pooling our different skills and knowledge to get things done. We didn't start out with a long term plan and had no idea we would continue for six years!

3. Could you describe your collaborative process? How did you come up with ideas? How did you share the decision-making processes?

At the beginning I remember lots of conversations sparked by things we were reading, issues that were really frustrating us (for example, the rising xenophobia in the national press at the time of EU integration in 2004); artists and curators we met or projects we visited and that was a way of triggering ideas for projects - we usually worked out a flexible framework for a project - that would act as a platform (e.g. for B+B at home / B+B on tour) and met with other people we wanted to work with, to explore ideas further with them (e.g. Art of Survival, Prague). As B+B progressed, our work became more about responding to invitations - for which we devised projects together. In terms of making decisions, again this was done through discussion - we tended to share most tasks and decisions.

4. How did your interaction with Sarah compare to your interaction with the artists you worked with?

As Sarah and I were working full time together for over six years we had a really close working relationship where we would write texts together and do presentations together. The busier we got, the more we had to divide certain tasks which was a shame because it meant perhaps we weren't collaborating as much. Our relationships with the artists varied depending on how closely we were working with them on a project. Most artists we worked with we tried to bring them on board in terms of developing the project as a whole, for others it was a long distance relationship via email (e.g. elements of B+B on Tour) and others it was more like a collaboration in terms of co-producing or closely facilitating the development a project (e.g. Notion Nanny or elements of Reunion).

5. Grant Kester describes the contemporary artist as a 'context provider' rather than a 'content provider'. Similarly, Bourriaud emphasises that the act of choosing an object, or symbol and placing it in a particular context, is in itself artistic creation. Do you feel this is different from the work of the curator? Why/Why not?

This is a big question! As Sarah and I through B+B have developed ongoing action research into socially engaged art we have tried to provide productive, critical spaces for artists and non-artists to question the role and responsibilities of art and activism in society. By 'hosting' various occasions in different contexts, we tried to invite diverse groups of people who have various, perhaps conflicting approaches to their practices and invite them to present and share their work and ask questions of each other. There's always quite a lot of research that goes into the projects, to provide a context but hopefully it's not too didactic (e.g. Trading Places and Real Estate) - I think we wanted the projects we 'curated' to be conversations between people, art, activism and that is why we always wanted to provide opportunities to present, develop and reconsider other people's work. Talks, breakfasts, picnics and walks were part of the projects we did as a way of animating and revisiting some of the art and politics we were investigating.

6. How does your practice as an independent curator compare to your work as part of B&B?

I consider B+B an independent curatorial partnership - Sarah and I were both freelance through the years we worked together. Until 2006 we were working full-time on B+B work doing evaluations, projects, consultation and teaching - we called everything we did B+B. Since 'going solo' in 2006 I have continued to do some work as B+B (for example, finishing off some evaluation contracts we had started as B+B) but mainly I am practicing as Sophie Hope (or Sophie Hope / B+B). I would feel uncomfortable developing new projects under the banner B+B as that is really something Sarah and I both share. Solo projects I have done include the 2007 Almanac of Political Art, a hand made book of contributions from over 80 people from around the world responding to the question 'what makes your work political?' and Het Reservaat in Holland, a one day performance with residents of a new town where I was in residence on and off over a year. I have also worked with Cameron Cartiere at Birkbeck on developing a Manifesto of Possibilities: Commissioning pubic art in urban environments and Independent Photography and Thomas Tallis School on developing a community art programme for Kidbrooke, South Greenwich. While it was difficult for me to find my feet again after having worked in collaboration with Sarah for so long, I am now really excited about developing my own work as an 'independent practitioner' which involves further collaborations with other people.

7. Why did you begin working more independently?

This was really due to practical reasons - Sarah had the opportunity of getting more full time work in a gallery and needed the security of a stable job. Despite getting more invitations and getting busier as B+B we were still not earning much money and the collaboration was not really sustainable or financially viable unfortunately. So I began working independently in 2006 quite unexpectedly, but the residency in Holland came at a really good time and allowed me head space to pursue something I'd been wanting to do for some time - put some of the things I'd been facilitating and talking to people about over the B+B years into practice myself!

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Film Three: Gilbert & George never show their sketches publicly, but here, the artists offer a private view. Film. *Tate Online*. [2007] from: http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/gilbertandgeorge/

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