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Merging Modest with Complexity

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Mark Garry

Merging modest with complexity

PHD

Technological University Dublin.

2022

Merging modest with complexity.

**Mark Garry. MA in Visual arts Practices, B Des
Interactive media, Dip Fine Art.**

PHD

Technological University Dublin.

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Dublin School of Creative Arts.

April 2022.

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Abstract

This thesis will enable a retrospective critical examination of aspects of my practice as an artist from 2005 - 2020. The research question addresses the implication of multiple forms of inter-reliance enabled in the practice. This will be enabled by opening a discursive space that retrospectively, integrates and critically examines the role and function of inter-reliance as a structural methodology and how this is implicated in the practice over this period.

This thesis will use term inter-reliance to define a play of relations where individual art works when viewed in isolation exist only in partial illumination as a form of penumbra. The art works are inchoate as separate entities only becoming activated or fully realised when engaged with collectively and interdiscursively, as a set of enabled relationships. In each of the chapters inter-reliance is manifested as a set of specific enabled reciprocal relationships between artistic mechanisms and physical, perceptual, associative, sonic, contextual and cinematic space. Rather than make art for art's sake or art that specifically engages with trends or tendencies within the art world, it will elucidate how the practice is relational and empathetic, facilitating an inter-reliance between artist and viewer and artist and society, the practice engages with and reflects upon broader society where articulations of ideological positions are subtly embedded.

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for graduate study by research of the Technological University Dublin and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the TU Dublin's guidelines for ethics in research.

Introduction

The practice under consideration stems from and is informed by a number of diverse fields of research. The practice is concerned with the cultural, physiological, associative and perceptual characteristics that shape our understanding of the world and the subjectivity inherent in our negotiation of defined space. It is multidimensional and uses a wide variety of media, mechanisms and processes. These include sculpture, painting, printmaking, photography, film making, outdoor sonic sculptures, performance and collaborative music projects. Often engaging multiple artistic responses to a set of conceptual concerns. In many instances a number of these elements are combined in a singular or multiroom exhibition situation to form installations. These installations respond to architecture space and combine physical, visual, sensory and empathetic analogues, creating arrangements of elements that intersect the space and relate to the physical characteristics of the space and each other.

In many instances the practice is site-specific and context responsive, while there are consistent apparatus and material interests, each opportunity/exhibition/film/performance involves my responding to a new set of conceptual criteria that relates to a broader social situation or set of phenomena. The practice is simultaneously research and process driven, enabling open situations where ideology is subtly posited or embedded, enabling forms of modest emersion. It involves the stretching and consolidating of the physical and associative capabilities of the materials and objects engaged with, both in isolation and when combined with other materials and objects, concerned with engaging and narrating physical and associative space. The practice prioritizes forms of engagement where associations, while formal and structured, are not fixed; rather than make finite statements it is concerned with enabling situations that are at simultaneously modest and complex, foregrounding the poetic over the didactic.

This thesis iterates and re-iterates a series of claims that have to do with the implication of forms of inter-reliance in the practice. Inter-reliance is persistently apparent in the diverse research techniques, generative processes and artistic devices that are made manifest in the practice and retrospective critical locating of the practice. The implication of critical positionings around the work is reflective of the multi-faceted nature of the practice and integrates a range of philosophical, psychological, sociological, musicological, semiotic, contemporary and art historical and film theory perspectives. Each chapter also integrates discussions of artworks by other visual artists, musicians and filmmakers. Using my artworks to frame a discursive space where a set of ideas and values are subtly embedded in the formation of encounter. This retrospective examining of the practice involves the implication of the forms, roles and uses of inter-reliance within a number of key artistic strategies of the practice.

Chapter one engages with Inter-reliance as apparatus, where inter-reliance is apparent as an apparatus of participatory dynamics enabled in; A: specific devices, generative process, and methodological characteristics of the installation element of the practice and; B: Drift an environmentally activated contextual sound/musical performance work. Each of these elements involve a harmonising of physical, sonic and perceptual space. This chapter locates where an inter-reliance of perceptual and associative elements is facilitated in the installation and sonic elements of the practice. Inter-reliance is observable in the installation and sonic elements of the practice discussed in this chapter via the enabling of a series of material associations and perceptual mechanisms. Each element acts as part of a mutually informing set of components that are reliant on one another. These elements involve participatory dynamics that are observable in the installations as a set of reciprocal relationships between architecture and artistic intervention, enabled temporality, material signifiers, perceptual mechanisms and experienter. In the musical elements reciprocal relationships are enabled between aeroacoustic devices, environment, musical performer and improvisation as a practice.

Chapter two engages where site-specificity and context responsiveness are enabled as forms of inter-reliance. This chapter integrates two examples of site-specific socially responsive installation within the practice, Revoir Un Printemps, that took place at Galerie du 5e in Marseille, France and A Winter Light that took place at The Model, home of The Niland Collection in Sligo, Ireland. These two exhibitions are implicated within a broader discussion of site-specificity and context responsiveness as methodology. In this chapter inter-reliance is observed in the enabling of forms of research located, context responsiveness, that are manifest in my practice as gallery based installations. The artworks discussed in this chapter enable a reciprocal inter-reliance between art and social responsiveness, a dialectic between an artwork and its context/surroundings. Initially engaging where context responsiveness is played out in socially engaged, dialogical practices and then where gallery based installations behave as context responsive socially engaged spaces, merging the phenomenological and the contextual.

Chapter three engages with the filmic elements of the practice. Engaging where temporality enables forms of inter-reliance between cinematic time and attention. Enabling a discursive situating and critical locating of two of my films, Landscapes from 2005, and North of the West from 2015. This chapter implicates Landscapes and North of the West within a broader cinematic practice known as Slow Cinema. In this chapter each film is discussed in relation to Slow Cinema, where Slow Cinema is viewed as a movement, set of stylistic tendencies and contingent characteristic of a thematic lineage. It explores the motivations and implicated devices in slow cinema as a means to question the inherent value structures of temporality in film, and the cognitive potentials of slowness in enabling

open contemplative encounters. This in turn acts as a strategy to question the inter-reliance between enabled temporality and cinematic experiencing played out in my two films.

Chapter four differs from the three preceding chapters. The first three chapters employ a reflective approach to prior practice. Chapter four acts as a means of re-iterating the persistence of forms of inter-reliance within the practice, but from an artistic research perspective, where the research, questions and concerns of the thesis are mobilised in the making of new art works. These concerns were manifested as a major new exhibition entitled *Songs and the Soil* that took place at the MAC in Belfast in January of 2020 and a publication also entitled *Songs and the Soil*. This body of work involved a period of research that engaged with the mutually informing, related subjects of landscape and music/sound, looking at each element from historical, social and culturally associative perspectives. Where landscape is recognised as a fluid term articulating physical, idealised and social space that reflects a convergence of physical process and cultural meaning, and where song act as a response to, or archive, of personal, historical or socio-political instances.

Inter-reliance is located as both a comprehensive framing of the practice but also as a fluid set of mutually informing elements. Inter-reliance informs the research sources and generative techniques of the practice. Inter-reliance acts as a crucial means of enabling inter-connection and inter-consideration between the artist and society. The practice merges modest (subtle) and complex (conceptually rigorous) means to implicate inter-reliance as a heuristic device, or rather as a heuristic vehicle that enables understated perceptual, semiotic, and associative situations that enable generous, open ended encounters. This thesis implicates inter-reliance, not to retrofit a definitive reading of the practice, but rather uses inter-reliance as a means of enabling a moment through which clarity could be glimpsed.

The research question of the thesis addresses the implication of multiple forms of inter-reliance enabled in the practice by opening a discursive space that integrates and critically examines the role and function of inter-reliance as a structural methodology and how this is implicated in specific aspects of the practice over this ten-year period. The thesis discusses the implication of inter-reliance as a mechanism in the integration of research within the practice and as a characteristic of a generative process. This is manifest in the critical examination of the material choices and the forms of associative and participatory dynamics enabled in the installations. In the use of sound, music and performativity within the practice. In forms of site and context responsiveness, and enabled temporality both within installation settings and the filmic elements of the practice

The contribution to new knowledge in this thesis is articulated in the practices contribution to contemporary art as a field of knowledge. The thesis specifically engages the role of inter-reliance in the practice, where inter-reliance simultaneously acts as a methodology and a position, enabling a multidimensional dialogical relationship between artist and other humans and art and society. This contribution to new knowledge occurs via a reflective analysis of the prior activities of the practice in the first three chapters of this thesis. In chapter four the contribution to new knowledge occurs via artistic practice, here the research and broader concerns of the thesis are made manifest as a series of new Art works.

The methodological approach in the thesis involves a merging of mutually informing practice based and theoretical contributions. This is consistent in each of the first three chapters. This involved a merging of mutually informing practice based and theoretical contributions. In the first three chapters this involved a discussion of elements of my practice, the practices of other artists and cultural generators and a range of relevant theoretical positions. Each of these elements were specific to the subject of each chapter. Chapter four differed in its methodology in that it implicated the concerns of the thesis in practice as a form of artistic research that was manifested as an exhibition and related publication. These characteristics persistently combine in each chapter to position inter-reliance as a structural methodology, isolating where and how inter-reliance occurs in the motivations and manifestations of the practice. As already noted the practice is comprised of multiple activities and whilst this retrospective examination has a consistent methodology structure, there are deviations and specificity in the critical location and discussion of the subjects in each chapter. These deviations and specificities acknowledge the diverse characteristics of the practice and the limitations of encapsulating this multiplicity using a singular critical position or perspective.

Chapter 1: Inter-reliance as apparatus

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one is concerned with the situating of forms of inter-reliance in two characteristics of the practice, spectrums made from thread and the use of Aeolian wind harps. Locating within my practice and the practices of other artists and musicians where Inter-reliance is implicated as apparatus. Here the term apparatus acts as a means of articulating both a conceptual device and a characteristic of generative technique or making process.

The first element to be discussed is a specific set of apparatus within the practice that is implicated in the gallery-based installations. This involves making architecturally responsive spectrums out of coloured threads, pins and beads. The second element is the use of Aeolian wind harps, and environmentally activated sound in the practice, with a specific focus on an outdoor musical performance entitled Drift that took place in 2012. Although each element may appear formally and mechanically divergent the two mechanisms involve a set of activities whose commonality lies in specific types of participation and forms of collective inter-reliance. It is useful to explain the genealogy, uses and implications of installation art as a genre, as installation plays a pivotal role in necessitating forms of participatory dynamics and inter-reliant forms of encounter enabled in the experiencing of an art work. It will be a recurring element throughout the thesis and has particular pertinence as a discursive element in this chapter.

Installation is a relatively new genre of art making, developing and establishing itself during the 1960's and 70's. Installations are three dimensional formations. Anne Ring Peterson posits that installations differ from sculpture in that rather than be shaped as isolated objects, installations are characterised by being formed as spaces or spatial sceneographies which convey meaning and sensory experience through imagery¹ and sound. Installations are often large-scale art works that are engaged with experientially, that one enters and is enveloped by. Installation represents a fundamental shift in the role of the viewer in the experiencing of an art work, moving from a passive participant to an active participant, a shift from a role as a spectator to that of an experiencer. Installation artworks involve a situation where the audience or participant become crucial character's in the work's activation. They emphasize sensory immediacy and physical participation.² Their guiding principles are site specificity where there is always a reciprocal relationship of some kind between the viewer and the work, the work and space, and space and the viewer.³ Images and objects combine to form physical, visual, sensory and empathetic analogues, creating inter-reliant arrangements of elements that intersect the space and

relate to both the characteristics of the space and each other. The next section will deal with how the reciprocally enlightening nature of installation is utilised in my practice.

In this chapter Inter-reliance is understood as a set of mutually informing relations enabled in the thread spectrum element of the installations. In these work's there is a merging of materials' physical and associative properties, making process, an artworks psycho-perceptual properties, engagement with architecture, environment conditions and participatory dynamics. In the music/sonic projects inter-reliance is also apparent as a mutually informing set of relations that implicates subject, site, text, instrument, performer and performer and performer and audience member, environment conditions and participatory dynamics.

The spectrums made from thread and the use of Aeolian wind harpse engage subtle forms of ritual cooperation that combine to enable social acts. Social acts such as engaging with an installation or listening to a musical performance, where subtle forms of empathy are embedded and manifest as apparatus, activity, generative process or aspiration. In the music/sound projects, empathy and generosity are crucial where personal and plural narratives are at play in the relationship between the musicians, where they assume both roles as dynamic performer and listener at the same time. While there are considered structures at play in each activity their outcomes are dictated by improvisational process. Each activate and narrate multiple forms of space, creating dynamics through sets of relationships. Implicating value structures into a set of activities, that combine to articulate a spatial or sonic encounter. Forms of inter-reliance are apparent in the visual, perceptual and associative characteristics of my artworks. Inter-reliance is manifest in the generative process and public manifestation of each form of work. The thread spectrum elements of the installations and the performative sonic works integrate attuned strings as a mechanism to activate space, employing forms of visual, spatial, sonic and perceptual harmonics. In each of these situations specific physical and sonic materials and methodologies are used to collectively enable the simultaneous activation of space and context⁴, where forms of relational indexicality, collective inter-reliance, and responsiveness are played out as apparatus and/or performative instrument. In each of the activities, meaning is assigned via a coalescing of material and activity in both individual artworks/performers and how they act collectively. Declan Long when discussing my practice in a catalogue essay spoke about how the work "thrives on a potential for connectivity: open to new collaborations and new translations between forms and ideas. These are tentative, tender realisations of evolving ideas: fragile forms based on unorthodox affiliations."⁵ The practice enables what Anne Ring Peterson calls "Shaped spaces, spaces which combine four aspects: an aesthetically organised space; spatiality: theatricality and fictional space."⁶ The combining

1 Peterson, Anne Ring. Installation Art between Image and Stage. Museum Tusulanum Press. 2015. p 9

2 Bishop, Claire. Installation Art A Critical History. Tate. 2005. p 16

3 Reiss, Julie H. From Margin to Centre. The spaces of installation art. 2000. The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts.2000. p 42

4 Peterson, Anne Ring. Installation Art between Image and Stage. Museum Tusulanum Press. 2015. p 41

5 Long, Declan. Catalogue essay. All Humans Do. White Box New York. p 2

6 Peterson, Anne Ring. Installation Art between Image and Stage. Museum Tusulanum Press. 2015. p 16

of a series of dynamics of perception can act as carriers of expression,⁷ where context is crucial and space itself becomes a performer, an active agent in completing the work.

This chapter will isolate and discuss a number of artworks and cultural situations by myself and other artists, that engage with various forms of collective inter-reliance as an apparatus. The thread spectrum elements of the installations and the performative sonic works will be discussed independently and this discussion will involve; a description of the mechanics of the practice, a historical and contemporary locating of these elements of the practice, a deconstruction of the conceptual aspirations of the practice and the manner in which they are played out in each element. This will be framed by an interpretation of a range of art historical/musicological, aesthetic and critical positions and perspectives. Simultaneously integrating texts/thinking that relate to both contemporary art and music/sound practices. The two elements involved in this chapter whilst they occurred in different spatial situations, each use lines to harmonise space, the installations use lines of thread and the sonic performance uses lines of musical string to activate space. The chapter will be broken into categories. The thread spectrum element of the installations will be discussed under three categories; Participatory Dynamics, The perception of colour, Craft and time. The use of Aeolian wind harps, and environmentally activated sound in the practice will be discussed under four categories; Sound and inter-reliance, Deep Listening, Aeroacoustics and Instrument as Instrument.

1.2 Participatory Dynamics

This first part of the discussion will look at where forms of inter-reliance are facilitated in the thread spectrum installation element of the practice. (Figure 1 and 2) This discussion

is reliant upon a proposition that involves the enabling of specific forms of participatory dynamics that are historically recognised as beginning with Installation Art in the 1960s. Installation art addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space. Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer.⁸ Rather than focus solely on the dynamic between artwork and recipient/participant, I want to expand this to enable a discourse that also encapsulates perception, participatory dynamics and forms of inter-reliance as they occur between materials, generative process, and site. While I engage in a diverse range of activities in the practice, the thread spectrum aspects of the installations have become a common trope synonymous within the practice. This mechanism is combined with additional elements, objects, and signifiers to form installations and the structure and conceptual positioning of the installations in totality will be discussed in subsequent

⁷ Arnheim, Rudolf. *Art and Visual Perception. A Psychology of the creative eye.* University of California press. 1977. p 331

⁸ Bishop, Claire. *Installation art: A Critical History.* Tate. 2005. p 11.

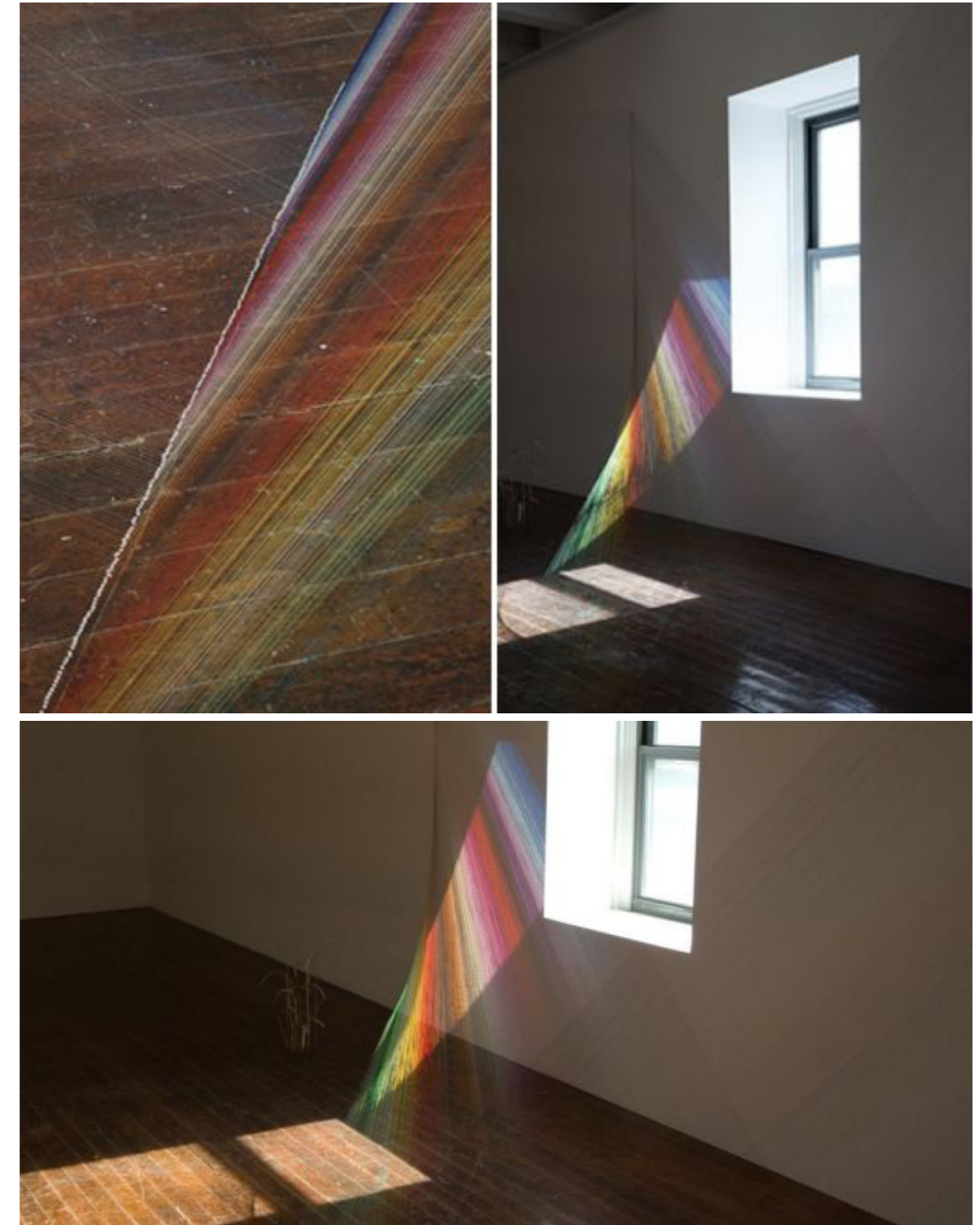


Figure 1 & 2.
Mark Garry. *Being Here.* The Mattress Factory Art Museum. Pittsburgh.

chapters. This chapter will discuss this element as a separate entity. This mechanism involves the use of specific analog materials to enable subtle illusion as a means to activate space. They employ specific forms of inter-reliance where they both activate and are activated by architectural space, geometric logic, and natural and artificial light sources. It involves making location-specific responsive, fragile, temporal interventions in architectural space using a combination of thread, beads, and pins. Where lines of coloured cotton threads intersect architectural space, normally fixed at three points the lines of sequentially arranged colour travel from horizontal to vertical fixing points and become bisected hyperbolic paraboloid's. They employ a miniature pulley system where the pins and beads act as a method of locating and tensioning the threads.

Prior to an installation I assess the space, engaging in a series of aesthetic and practical considerations. I look at the scale and architectural make up of a space, its natural and artificial light sources, the materials that make its walls (i.e. are they made of plaster board, wood, concrete.), the entry and exit points of the room. I spend a day looking at different configuration possibilities, using brightly coloured elastic cord, I make provisional set ups of the way in which the lines might activate this space, looking at the way in which the work might curve or be shaped, how it might be activated by light and interact with angles and architectural details. The choice and amount of colours in each sequence are dependent on the conceptual framework of the exhibition, the size, and location of the room, the amount of natural light in the room and the time of year an exhibition takes place. These works often apply the sequential logic of a spectrum observable in a rainbow, but have at various times referenced other artworks and have incorporate colour ranges implicated in specific paintings, such as *Four Element Composition* (1929) by the Irish Modernist artist as part of the exhibition *A Winter Light at The Model Home of the Niland Collection*, *Sligo and Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (1925) by J.M.W. Turner as part of *Rain, Steam and Speed at Sommer & Kohl*, Berlin.

The works normally employ over three hundred and fifty lines of thread spaced five millimetres apart from one another. The installation of these works involve a slow, repetitive, labour intensive process where specific forms of inter-reliance and social orchestration are integral. Social orchestration occurs in that their installation involves a situation where a number of people have to combine and choregraph their movements to enable the work to be made. There are normally four people involved in making the works. Three people on a ladder or scaffold, one at each fixing point and one person who walks between them handing the thread to be fixed at one point and returned to them to be brought to the next person. Each person is in constant motion, slowly moving the thread along with each other, carefully maintaining a gentle tension that is enough to stop the thread from knotting but not enough to break it. In the transition between colours I do a final tensioning again carefully ensuring that the lines maintain their form without snapping. Depending on the space this ritual is repeated for eight hours a day for up to three weeks. The lighting of these works is one of the most complex elements of the install. I try to engage as much natural light as possible to activate the work and when this is not possible I use artificial lighting in a way that replicates natural light. The thread works are predominantly located high up in a room and are engaged with by looking up from below, and because of this I have to try and find a way to subtly illuminate the works that ensures the light source (fittings) are not disrupting the line of vision of the work and crucially are not shining down into the eyes of the viewer. In order to do this I normally use broad-beamed floodlights that have a wide and even throw which allows me to locate the lights as far away as possible from the art work, where this is not possible I light the

works by bouncing the light off its opposing walls. These factors align to orchestrate a flow through a space where there is an enabling of specific forms of visual and motion related interaction and perception, where space is dynamically transformed by materials and activated by people moving in relation to these elements.

As one physically engages with them the works are simultaneously reductivist and illusionistic, optically transformative, moving between being barely perceptible to an almost kaleidoscopic array of colour, enabling a situation where they are simultaneously subtle and dramatic, merging neuro-science and aesthetics. They are reliant on motion, activated by your physical interaction with them. The American Psychologist James J Gibson described a theory of retinal motion that could be applied as a mechanism to describe the nature of reception involved in an interaction with these specific artworks from a perceptual perspective. When speaking about the co-perception of one's own movement⁹ Gibson explains how forms of ambulatory transformation make a recipient aware of what he calls their locomotion.¹⁰ He denotes how perceptual signals can have two meanings at once, a subjective meaning and an objective one, where signals yield an experience of self-movement and experience of the external world at the same time.¹¹ He, like Rudolf Arnheim suggests that vision is kinesthetic in that it registers movement of the body as much as does the muscle-joint-skin system and the inner ear system¹² Enabling a situation where the (static) object feels as though it were in motion,¹³ and that vision is not exteroceptive, that it obtains external information only. Vision obtains information about both the environment and the self.¹⁴

Contemporary American artist Mary Temple also engages subtle illusion as a means to activate space. Temple has made a series of particular types of site-specific installations since 2002. (Figure 3). Temple calls this series of works *Light Installations* and they involve a situation where Temple paints a cast shadow of a tree or natural object on the walls and floors of an art space.

9 Gibson, James J. *The Ecological approach to visual perception*. Psychology Press. 1986, p 82.

10 Ibid. p183

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Arnheim, Rudolph. *Art and Visual Perception. A Psychology of the creative eye*. University of California Press, 1954, p 413

14 Gibson, James J. *The Ecological approach to visual perception*. Psychology Press. 1986, p 183.



Figure 3:
Mary Temple. Northwest corner Southeast Light. Acrylic paint on existing architecture. Hardwood stain, urethane, 40x42. Site-specific installation with hardwood floor.

When one engages with these pieces they are wonderfully disconcerting in that it is not initially apparent that they are painted, the process is revealed by a slow engagement with the work. There appears to be a light source that is casting shadows in the space from the outdoors and one attempts to use one's hands and body to interrupt or affect the light source and it is only after this occurs that one becomes aware that they are a painting.

Light and shadow from nearby windows seem to be raking the walls of the gallery. The illusion, however, is a hand-painted trompe l'oeil shard, often situated in rooms with little or no natural light. In this work, I rely on the viewers' knowledge and memory of light intersecting space to raise questions of belief and doubt. These pieces are meant to give the viewer time to enjoy not-knowing and to privilege questions over answers.¹⁵

Temple continually photographs trees and other natural elements on slide film and has built up a large database of images to choose from. Temple projects her chosen composition using a slide projector and she and a number of assistants painstakingly apply thousands of tiny brushstrokes for eight to ten hours a day for up to three weeks to complete an installation. Before studying art, Temple studied psychology and from this developed an interest in the nature of perception. In these works, Temple uses these very simple, elemental devices to activate where memory collides with experience causing the viewer

¹⁵ Temple, Mary <http://marytemple.com/texts/> accessed 9/10/2018

to question what is real.¹⁶ This celebrates the pleasure of trying to understand those things that occur just outside the grasp of physical intelligence.¹⁷ This aspiration of Temple's as she puts it, celebrate the pleasure of trying to understand things that occur just outside of the grasp of what she describes as physical intelligence is also an aspiration of the thread installation aspect of my practice. Where for a split second when one engages with the thread installations one is reminded of their motor functions and encouraged not to think about experience but to feel it.

From an art historical perspective the artist that is closely aligned with this aspect of my practice is the minimalist conceptual-based North American artist Fred Sandback. Sandback practised from the late 1960s until his death in 2003 and became synonymous with a way of working that involved his intervening in space using lengths of coloured yarn. He located straight, parallel lines of yarn and geometric logic within architectural space as a means to activate and rationalize space. (Figure 4) Sandback wanted his interventions to have the volume of sculpture without the opaque mass¹⁸. He also referred to his sculptures operating in pedestrian space, acknowledging the viewer's movement through space as something to be engaged actively.¹⁹ Making works that are quiet and strong, illusionary and real, fundamentally collective and inter-reliant, what he described as;

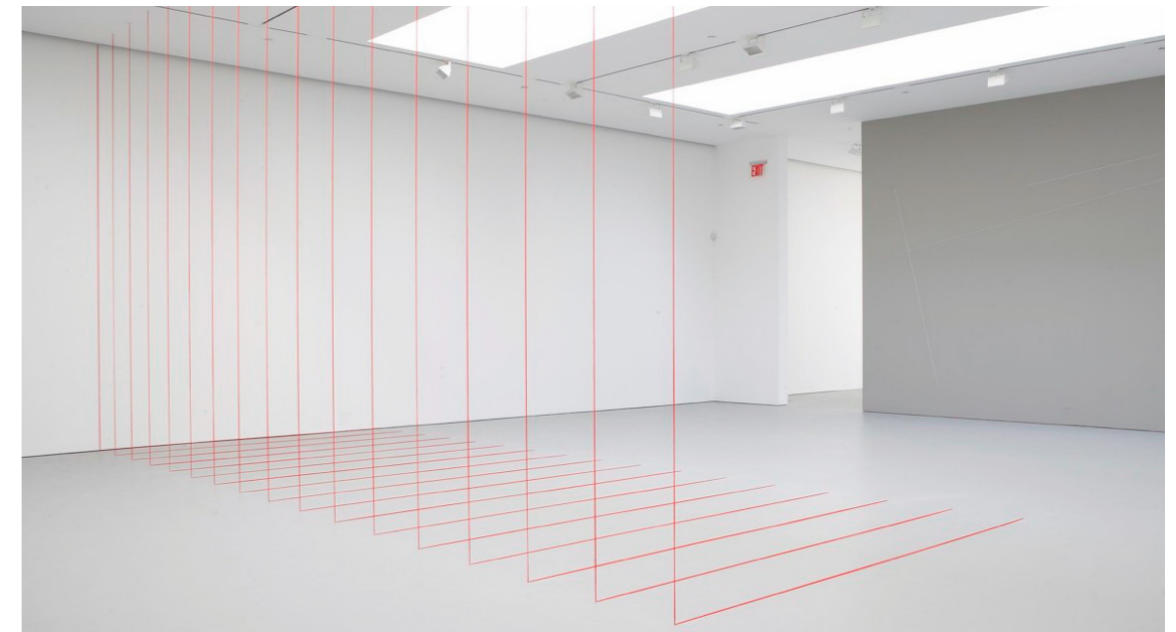


Figure 4: Fred Sandback. Installation view. Large Scale Sculpture. David Zwirner. New York, 2006.

[...] a diffuse interface between myself, my environment, and others peopling that environment, built of thin lines that left enough room to move through and around. Still, sculpture, though less dense, with an ambivalence between exterior and interior. A drawing

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Temple, Mary. <http://marytemple.com/texts/> accessed 9/10/2018

¹⁸ Sandback, Fred <http://www.fredsandback.com> accessed 5/2/2020

¹⁹ ibid

that is habitable.²⁰

While Sandback's works are structured and formal, crucially they are non-prescriptive. Sandback engages with physical space and movement as a means to enable perceptive and associative space. Their enabling of physical movement locates them in what Umberto Eco calls an "informal art"²¹ a method of artistic engagement that is open.

Open in that it proposes a wider range of interpretive possibilities, a configuration of stimuli whose substantial indeterminacy allows for a number of possible readings, a "constellation" of elements that lend themselves to all sorts of reciprocal relationships.²²

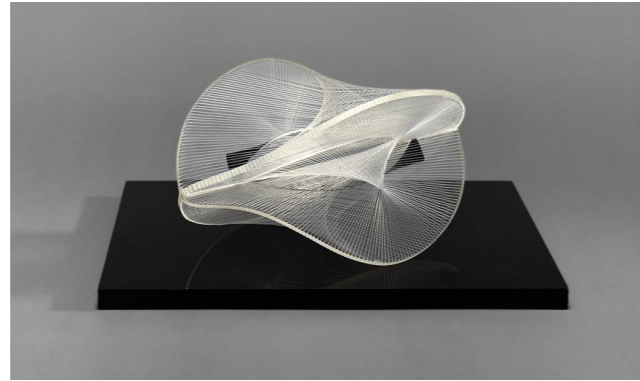


Figure 5:
Naum Gabo: linear construction in space. Linear Construction in Space No. 2. 1958. Plexiglas and nylon monofilament. 14 1/2 x 8 x 8 inches.

Eco uses the work of two sculptors to articulate his understanding of an 'Open work'. Each in a similar fashion to my own work and Sandback's. Eco's examples engage line and geometry as operational methods. The first is Russian Artist and theorist Naum Gabo who was an important figure in Russia's post revolution avant-garde. His work, initially located within Geometric Abstraction, evolved into pioneering kinetic works. He used geometric logic and line as a means to activate space, both as discreet small scale sculptures and in larger public art works. In the 1920's Gabo began using a number of non traditional art materials, such as nylon, as a means to articulate space. (figure 5) Like Sandback he believed that the exploration of space could be done without having to depict mass.²³ Gabo's Realistic Manifesto became a key text of constructivism, outlining what he perceives as the limitations of early modernity. Here he foregrounds a series of progressive principles for art making, including that art needed to exist actively in four dimensions including time.²⁴

The second example Eco employs is the work of American artist Richard Lippold. Lippold began making sculptural works that incorporated many of the principles of the constructivist tradition twenty years later, In his work he created delicate sculptures using a variety of thin metal wires. (figure 6) Like Gabo he employed methodologies that engaged

20 ibid

21 Eco, Umberto. The open work. Translated by Anna Cancogni: with an introduction by David Robey. Harvard University Press. 1989. p 84

22 Ibid p 84.

23 <http://www.poeticmind.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Inspiration-Gil-PhD-Thesis.pdf#page=92>

Dekel, Gil (May 2009). "Inspiration: a functional approach to creative practice" (PDF). Thesis. Poetic Mind. p. 92. Archived (PDF) from the original on 2011-10-04.

24 Gabo, Naum. The Realistic Manifesto, Moscow, 5 August 1920. Translated in Gabo, Sir Herbert Read & Leslie Martin, London: Lund Humphries, 1957.



Figure 6:
Richard Lippold: Installation view. Flight At the Pan Am (now Met Life) building.

with or incorporated space as opposed to displacing or filling space. Both of these artists transferred emphasis from an engagement with materials from the shaping of solid forms to the activation of spatial relations. Crucially Eco observes how these two artists used;

[...]movement to give the impression of inner animation, where the sign becomes imprecise, ambiguous. But not so the forms themselves. The ambiguity of the sign lends them a vibrant quality, and, by blurring their contours, puts them into closer contact with other forms, a source of light, and their general surroundings.²⁵

This observation by Eco on the work of these two artists was uppermost in the concerns of the thread installation elements of my practice, where the responsive interventions enable an inter-reliant, fluid dialogue between artistic intervention environmental conditions and

25 Eco, Umberto. The open work I Umberto Eco; translated by Anna Cancogni: with an introduction by David Robey. Harvard University Press. 1989. P 84

architecture.

Eco also suggests that the work of both Gabo and Lippold;

[...]invite the viewer to participate actively in the polyhedral nature of the works. The form itself is so constructed as to appear ambiguous, and to assume different shapes depending on the angle from which it is viewed.’ Thus, as the viewer walks around the work, he witnesses a continuous metamorphosis. ²⁶

The perceptual elements that Eco speaks about in relation to Gabo’s and Lippold’s art works, i.e. the visual and perceptual transformation that occurs when one engages with their works is more apparent in mine and less so in Sandback’s. This has to do with the space between the lines and the proximity of the viewer to the work. But another important commonality between Sandback’s work and mine lies in the choice of materials. Whilst engaging and activating architectural space using geometric logic, Sandback does so using a soft material and it’s the activation of soft materials that differentiate his practice from other sculptural practices of his time and confirms the relationship between his practice with mine. Sandback used wool to create the illusion of volume, because of its versatility and flexibility its very well suited to this purpose, but fundamentally it is soft and, in a sense allowed him to distance himself from much of the hard-edged minimalism that was occurring at the time, to replace the hard edge with a soft one. My decision to use a soft cotton based material (thread) also had to do with its versatility and flexibility. But also had to do with its associative potential. I chose to use thread because of our essential associative relationship with it. I also wanted a material that was essentially familiar from an associative and experiential perspective, thread is a material that we trust and rely upon in most of our everyday experiences, as Cassia St Clair states:

[...] For much of recorded history, the four principal sources of natural fibres – Cotton, Silk, linen, and wool have borne much of the strain of human ingenuity. They have been pressed into service to give warmth and protection, demarcate status, confer personal decoration and identity. We live surrounded by cloth. We are swaddled in it at birth and shrouds are drawn over our faces in death. We sleep enclosed by layer upon layer of it -and when we wake, we clothe ourselves in yet more of it to face the world and let it know who we shall be that day. ²⁷

When developing these thread works I wanted to find a material, method and form that was familiar and did not require academic or historical deconstruction. Something that acted as a form of associative democracy. Humans fundamentally understand the formal

²⁶ Eco, Umberto. The open work I Umberto Eco; translated by Anna Cancogni: with an introduction by David Robey. Harvard University Press. 1989. P 84

²⁷ St Claire.Kassia. The Golden Thread, How fabric Changed History. John Murray (Publishers). 2018. Preface p1

logic of a spectrum via our familiarity with the rainbow as an environmental phenomenon. This is why the spectrum was chosen as a form.

The next section engages with colour and while Sandback’s work also employs colour, his works generally use uniform lines of a single colour. In contrast my works engage colour and visual dynamics in a more complex way. The proximity of coloured line and their location in volumetric space make my thread works difficult to optically focus upon while transitioning around them. They appear to move as we do so, causing an illusionistic array to occur, where one’s visual engagement with them is fleeting and temporal. This use of the array and the specific colour composition of these works also enables particular forms of relational and associative potentials. The use of the sequential logic of a spectrum observable in a rainbow enables a situation which resonates with as Mary Temple’s explanation of where Memory Collides with Experience. The artworks remind us of our universal associative connection with rainbows, a sublime naturally occurring phenomenon whose beauty lies in its fleeting temporal activation by light and environmental conditions. The next section expands upon the physiological formation of colour perception.

1.3 The perception of colour

In his essay written for the artist Olafur Eliasson entitled “The Emergent Perception of Colour”, John Seigfreid claims that the nature of colour perception;

[...] is only one of numerous perceptual entities that are emergent, among them the relationship between figure and ground and our apprehension of visual motion temperature and pitch. Considered together, they serve to remind us that it is time-oriented processes in the brain that establish how we perceive our surroundings. ²⁸

Seigfreid reminds us that colour is an emergent property of vision. Colour, such as blue, green, yellow and red do not exist in the environment, but are formulated in our brains. ²⁹ Our retinas are sensitive to electromagnetic energy articulated as light that we process as three different short, medium and long wavelengths of light. Colour constancy enables us to perceive objects via activation of the three different light receptors contained within the eye. One type is more sensitive to long wavelengths, one is more sensitive to medium while another is more sensitive to short wavelengths. Neural circuitry within the retina compares these three types of wavelength and this process of comparison is the beginning

²⁸ Seigfreid, John The Emergent Perception of colour. Essay was part of Your Colour Memory by Olafur Eliasson, Arcadia University Art Gallery and Olafur Eliasson, 2006. p72

²⁹ Ibid

of our being able to see light of different wavelengths as different colours.³⁰ Siegfried contends that “Our neural visual processes have a certain time constant, so that very slow changes are often not perceived; whereas rapid changes, as from green to red are often enhanced by neural processes. This relationship between time and visual processing allows us to perceive changes in the visual environment more quickly and effectively.”³¹ There are an additional set of informative characteristics at play in the practice that will be elaborated upon in the next section.

In addition to using colour and geometric logic as a method of activating space and engaging participatory dynamics, The thread spectrum elements of the practice include a number of material and procedural elements that enable multiple readings. The thread works make an additional set of associate demands that have to do with a combination of engaged time, process, materials and associations. Where space is also activated associatively as a means to speak about inter-reliance and forms of communality and collectivity. The next section has to do with the enabling of the associative via the implication of craft materials and methods and the implication of mechanisms to facilitate temporality in the engagement with the installations.

1.4 Time and Craft

An additional concern of the thread spectrum elements of the installations has to do with the implication of time and craft methodologies, where time and one’s associative relationship with it are implicated as an inter-reliant characteristic in these art works. This section also implicates one’s associative relationship with craft and the hand-made object as opposed to the mass manufactured, machine made object. and how these two elements combine as inter-reliant factors. These thread works enable three inter-related and inter-reliant discourses with time, acting as a form of slow art. Because of their fragility as a form and their site-specific nature one becomes aware of their temporality and impermanence, that they will not exist after the exhibition closes. The use of temporality as a device began in the 1960s when artists began making temporal artworks. These works could not be easily commodified, and as such acted as a form of resistance against the museum’s institutional power.³² The creation of transient artworks was often interpreted as a political gesture by both audience and artist, where by virtue of their ephemeral nature these forms challenged the market system of the art world and by extension became a protest against the politics of the institution’s³³. Temporality as manifest in my practice is not concerned with forms

30 Seigfried, John The Emergent Perception of colour. Essay was part of Your Colour Memory by Olafur, Arcadia University Art Gallery and Olafur Eliasson, 2006. p 71

31 Ibid

32 Peterson, Anne Ring. Installation Art between Image and Stage. Museum Tusclanum Press. 2015. p 16

33 Ibid

of institutional critique or resistance in a traditional sense, its intentions are to act as a device to enable specific psychological and experiential situations.

The use of temporality in the work and the combination of characteristics that make up these works have to do with the enabling forms of open, slow encounters, where an artwork stretches out time for its own sake, so that we experience its passing viscerally³⁴ Arden Reid describes the psychological space of slow art as;

Differing from ordinary physical space. It’s the space we inhabit or create when we bring ourselves before a work and hold ourselves open to it. The space is subtle; it unfolds the more we present ourselves to a work whose contours we slowly learn to navigate- a process without closure.³⁵

The second engagement with time is as described by Redd reciprocal, where one is rewarded by prolonged engagement via focused slow encounter. When visually and physically engaging with these mechanisms, they slowly reveal potentials as one engages with them, transforming as one does so. There are a series of additional associative demands made by the thread spectrum elements of the installations made manifest through the relationship between materials and process. The three materials used in these works are beads, pins and thread. Each material is simultaneously utilitarian and decorative and in these works each element is subtly repurposed both technically and conceptually. Beads normally have an aesthetic function, used in fashion, jewellery and religious paraphernalia. Through the art-making process they are re-purposed from merely decorative use, to functional use. They are implicated as a mechanical part of a larger system given a crucial role in the works engineering. In a similar fashion, pins are traditionally used to hold fabrics together temporarily as part of a sewing process. While the works are temporary, the pins again act as an engineering element becoming part of a larger construction. Threads are used to sew, weave or repair and are a more dynamic material that the other two, both functionally and associatively and through the process of art-making, is also repurposed in a more energetic way to weave with and within space. In this way, through the appropriation and re-purposing of materials, the art-work acts as a quiet reassessment of art’s social function.

The third engagement with time has to do with process and identification, whilst engaging with the thread installations one becomes aware of the delicate, meticulous, time-consuming system of construction involved in the realisation of the work. These materials were chosen because of their ubiquity, everydayness, their ordinariness and their usefulness

34 Reed, Arden. Slow art. The Experience of Looking, Sacred images to James Turrell. University of California Press. 2017. p 32

35 Ibid



Figure 7:
Mark Garry, Blue Eyed Grass. Kerlin Gallery.

Figure 8: Susan Collins
. The Oysters our
world. 2004. Wooden
stepladder, mother of
pearl, shell, coral, fresh
water pearl, Cultured
pearls, white opal,
diamond.



and also because each of these materials are embedded within craft traditions. A tradition that has to do with skill, labour, slow time and care, and in this instance the art-works are achieved through labour and processes that mobilise the tacit knowledge of craft that negotiates the engagement between hand and thing. As Glen Adamson notes:

Where craft can be seen as exemplifying the quiet virtues of the well-made thing [...] embodying the everyday, the field of activity that lies beneath the reach of spectacular culture and therefore constitutes a realm of authentic experience.³⁶

One of the aspirations for these works was to engage craft processes and associations within a contemporary art context. Craft as a methodology is played out in other elements of the practice as can be (figure 7) Working with the proposition that because of their association with craft, one while engaging with the art work becomes aware of the time, labour and carefulness involved in the manufacturing process, where the time investment by the artist and nature of the process of transformation is understood empathetically by a participant with the work. Where slow can be read as the deliberative labour of the artist. Susan Collins and Yoshiro Suda are also artists that engage craft within a contemporary art context, both as a method and an ideological position.

English artist Susan Collins uses a range of media and methodologies to interrogate issues concerning interpretation, craft, value and labour. She presents us with ordinary, utilitarian objects such as a ladder or set of steps or a pair of overalls. (figure 8) These objects contain the hallmarks of labour, wear and tear, accidentally marked, stained and splattered.

[...]Collins is interested in the shift of perception that takes place upon discovery that they are, in fact, careful, intentional acts, and that the materials used are traditionally valued for their financial or decorative properties. A tired stepladder covered with paint drips from years of use has been simulated by the meticulous inlaying of diamonds, pearls, opals and other prized materials. Typically works involve momentous amounts of often hidden labour to create an object that may easily go unnoticed, but is replete with value, be it material

³⁶ Adamson, Glenn. The spectacle of the everyday. Britton Newell, Laurie. Out of the ordinary, spectacular craft. V&A Publications. 2007. p 16

or conceptual. Much of Collins' work can go un-noticed and this visual gamble results in a possible conceptual pay-off that rewards concerted investigation by the viewer.³⁷

Collins makes subtle interventions in objects that only partially reveal themselves upon first viewing. This slow revealing of the labour involved in the intervention and the conceptual potentials of the materials is a crucial characteristic of the engaging of materials and craft methodologies in the thread aspect of my installations. Collins and myself enable work where the artworks are simultaneously modest and complex, requiring



Figure 9:
Yoshiro Suda. Morning
Glory, 2011 Painted wood
(blue) 14 x 12 x 17 cm.

extended engagement for the associative potential of the generative process in order for it to fully reveal itself. Japanese contemporary artists Yoshiro Suda makes remarkably realistic carvings of weeds and flowers. He carves these from Japanese hardwoods using traditional techniques, where each piece is carved from one individual piece of wood. The works are then rendered even more lifelike by his painting them. (Figure 9) The weed works are often located in pre-existing cracks in the architecture of a room and the flowers are located high in the gallery space, just slightly out of reach. When one enters an installation of Suda's work you encounter what appears to be an almost empty room, punctuated by one flower emerging from a wall. As one searches one might encounter a weed or small collection of weeds emerging from a crack on a wall or floor. The works are rendered so realistically that it is also not immediately apparent that the works are carved and not natural. Both Suda and Collins make works that require forms of slow encounter, that require time to find and decipher, where meaning is slowly revealed via an aligning of material, process and conceptual device. Where forms of subtle deception and the locating of craft in a contemporary art context acts as mechanism to speak about associative potentials, material hierarchies and by proxy social hierarchies. Where craft can be viewed not as a discreet set of techniques, but as a way of being in society.³⁸

My thread works merge one's fundamental affinity with thread as a material and a

37 <http://www.seventeengallery.com/artists/susan-collis/> Author uncredited. Accessed 16/4/2019

38 Adamson, Glenn. *Thinking Through Craft*. Berg, 2007. p 209

cultural association with craft. This merging of an associatively specific material that references craft acted as a device for me to somewhat subvert the baggage of contemporary art. The threads dramatically transforming space, engaging in a kind of spectacle of the everyday³⁹ where associatively accessible materials are combined in a transformation of space, merging inter-reliant perceptual and associative modes of engagement to enable forms of autonomous encounter, where the associatively familiar and perceptually complex elements coalesce to enable situations that circumvent or transcend some of the perceived associative problematic of contemporary art. The processes involved in this activation of thread, beads and pins and their associative potentials, ordinary materials that act collectively, carefully supporting one another to enable a form a modest spectacle, a positive dynamic entity, something greater than the sum of its individual parts, by collectivizing the thread installations as a subtle analogy for broader collective social behaviours and human inter-reliance. The inter-reliance of materials, process, perception, association and time that occurs when engaging with these works enables forms of slowness to occur procedurally as a means to frame or position a particular experience. Duration is employed as a procedural device that enables slow space, where in this element of the installations, materials, process, temporality and association coalesce to facilitate specific forms of associative and perceptual encounter. The next section will all also engage time and association, where these factors are implicated in the use of sound as a vehicle to engage with forms of inter-reliance within the practice.

1.5 Sound and inter-reliance

Sound, in its very production, propagation and reception are relational.⁴⁰

The second set of art making strategies involves forms of collective inter-reliance, participatory dynamics, and temporality as a device. This section will discuss another cultural entity that has repeatedly occurred in my practice. The use of Aeolian wind harps. It will engage a series of inter-related artworks that implicate sound and music via the use of specific sonic devices. Where inter-reliant sonic engagement occurs between performer and performer, instrument, audience, environment, improvisation and time. Each of the artistic elements that will be spoken about are fundamentally inter-reliant and dependant on forms of cooperation.

In his book 'Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation', Richard Sennett suggests that we are losing the skills of co-operation needed to make a complex society work.⁴¹ Sennett argues that this loss of cooperative skill occurs via a "de-skilling of

39 Adamson, Glenn. *Thinking Through Craft*. Berg, 2007. p 209

40 Carpio, Sean. <https://www.seancarpio.com>. Accessed 2/9/2019

41 Sennett, Richard. *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*. London, Penguin Books. 2012 p 8-9

the social realm” where people are losing the ability to “deal with intractable differences as material inequality isolates them, short-term labour makes their social contacts more superficial and activates anxiety about the other.”⁴² As part of a broad discussion about the role of cooperation within contemporary society Sennett stresses the importance in listening and reflects how musicians in rehearsal need to listen to interact, to exchange for mutual benefit,⁴³ where musical rehearsal is a space of listening, re-framing and re-thinking. Sennett argues that this process of musical “re-statement makes you think again about the sound and you may adjust as a result but not copy what you have heard.”⁴⁴ Prior to discussing my sonic artworks, I will locate the work using historical and contemporary examples, highlighting a number of performative sonic artworks. Where forms of attentiveness and attended listening are crucial. The next section will discuss how sonic artworks by Max Neuhaus, Pauline Oliveros and Avdio Hostem engage collective inter-reliance and participatory dynamics, where a specific form of participatory space is enabled.

Inter-reliant forms of sonic engagement can be traced back to expanded notions of sculpture and performance that emerged in the 1960s where the sonic activation of public space was first recognised as an intermedial⁴⁵ art form and assigned the name Sound Installation Art. The term was coined in 1967 by the American artist and classical musician Max Neuhaus to describe a work of his called Drive-in Music (1967–68). This work involved his locating twenty radio transistors in the trees along the side of a road in Buffalo, New York. They pointed in different directions and produced different sounds, thus producing seven overlapping zones with various sound components.⁴⁶ The people who drove past them found themselves privy to a rich combination of sine tones that emanated from their car radios for no apparent reason. The amplitude, frequency and duration of the tones changed according to weather conditions, the time of day and other environmental factors.⁴⁷ Drive-in Music was preceded by a series of public listening walks that Neuhaus called LISTEN, where he advertised a location in New York where people were met by the artist who would stamp the word ‘Listen’ on their hands and would lead them outdoors on a walk where they would collectively, silently engage in their familiar everyday aural environment. Neuhaus explains that his interest in these walks was to ‘refocus attention on the sounds that we live with every day’.⁴⁸ Through these listening exercises, Neuhaus hoped to permanently alter listeners relationship to their everyday environments, by introducing them to focused modes of listening that they

42 Sennett, Richard. *Together. The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*. London, Penguin Books. 2012 p 9

43 Sennett, Richard. *Together. The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*. London, Penguin Books. 2012 p 18

44 Ibid

45 Ouzounain, Gascia. (Sound installation art: from spatial poetics to politics, aesthetics to ethics). *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*. Cambridge University press. 2013. p 82

46 Golo Föllmer, «Töne für die Straße.» in: *Akademie der Künste* (eds.), *Klangkunst*, Munich 1996, p 216–218

47 Ouzounain Gascia.(Sound installation art: from spatial poetics to politics, aesthetics to ethics). *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*. Cambridge University Press. 2013.p 82

48 Ibid

could integrate into their everyday lives.⁴⁹ Around this time forms of aural attentiveness to the environment were being proposed by a research group that was established by R. Murray Schafer at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This research group became known as The World Soundscape Project (WSP). The group’s objectives were not aesthetic but ideological emerging out of ecological concerns, highlighting noise pollution and aspirations to preserve acoustic ecologies. The WSP expanded to integrate a series of written publications and field recordings. These field recordings acted both as archive and research document. WSP was initially confined to Canada and eventually becoming an international organisation. Its ultimate goal is “to find solutions for an ecologically balanced soundscape where the relationship between the human community and its sonic environment is in harmony.”⁵⁰ Forms of inter-reliance are fundamental in the WSP’s ideological position and use of terminology, where:

[...] the term “soundscape” indicates how the environment is understood by those living within it. Indeed, the individual listener within a soundscape is part of a dynamic system of information exchange. Soundscape ideology recognizes that when humans enter an environment, they have an immediate effect on the sounds; the soundscape is human-made and in that sense, composed. A soundscape is the acoustic manifestation of “place,” in the sense that the sounds give the inhabitants a “sense of place” and the place’s acoustic quality is shaped by the inhabitants’ activities and behaviour..... that listening and sound-making stand in a delicate relationship to each other.⁵¹

An attentiveness to the sonic environment and the locating of listening as a characteristic of a generative process can be linked to the work and approaches of American composer, educator and theorist Pauline Oliveros. Oliveros was specifically interested in forms of ‘sonic awareness’⁵² describing them as “the ability to consciously focus attention upon environmental and musical sound”, requiring “continual alertness and an inclination to be always listening”⁵³

Another foregrounding of listening can be traced to a specific collective performative encounter between Oliveros and experimental musicians David Gamper and Stuart Dempster. Collectively these three musicians called themselves Deep Listening Band. They performed and recorded music in spaces that had very particular or extreme resonance or reverberant qualities such as Cathedrals and underground cisterns. A seminal moment in the band’s development occurred at the Dan Harpole Cistern at Fort Worden in Port Townsend, Washington State on the Eight of October 1988. The three musicians

49 <https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/WSP/index.html> Author uncredited. Accessed 7/12/2019

50 <https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/WSP/index.html> Author uncredited. Accessed 7/12/2019

51 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/world-soundscape-project/> Hildegard Westerkamp, Adam P. Woog, Helmut Kallmann. Accessed 2/9/2019

52 Von Gunden, Heidi *The Music of Pauline Oliveros*, Scarecrow Press. 1983. p105

53 <http://www.paulineoliveros.com> Pauline Oliveros. Accessed 14/6/2020

crawled down fourteen feet through a manhole with their instruments; an accordion, a conch shell, a didgeridoo, a garden hose, metal pieces, a trombone and whistling pipes into a cavernous underground water tank that has a forty-five second reverberation time. The three musicians engaged in a series of improvisations using the aforementioned instruments and each of their voices. What was remarkable about this particular session was that because of the reverberation time, the physical space itself became an additional performer and this required particularly focused forms of listening and response from the improvisers. While the activity of responding to specific resonant qualities has always been a characteristic of public musical performance the act of performing and recording in this specific space led the group and in particular Oliveros to posit listening as a fully embodied pursuit, a position of attending to specific sound and by proxy attending to each sound that makes up the world.⁵⁴ This mark's an interesting moment in terms of the role of listening with cultural situations. Whilst active listening had been a characteristic in the formation of sonic experiences between sets of musicians, this foregrounding of listening by Oliveros related to the specific physical and sonic environment. In this instance, in addition to listening to each other as musicians or improvisers, the musicians had to be cognisant of how the physical environment was also shaping the music, which leads her to thinking about listening in a much broader sense outside of the confines of music making.

1.6 Deep Listening

Oliveros went on to explore the difference as she understood it between hearing and listening. She coined the phrase Deep Listening and her work as a composer, educator and theorist explored the difference between the involuntary nature of hearing and the voluntary nature of listening. She went on to develop a series of guiding principles exploring how consciousness may be affected by profound attention to the sonic environment.⁵⁵

Deep Listening for me is learning to expand the perception of sounds to include the whole space/time continuum of sound – encountering the vastness and complexities as much as possible. Simultaneously one ought to be able to target a sound or sequence of sounds as a focus within the space/time continuum and to perceive the detail or trajectory of the sound or sequence of sounds. Such focus should always return to or be within the whole of the space/time continuum (context).⁵⁶

Another musical collective that while employing very different technological

⁵⁴ The concept of listening as a fully embodied pursuit could be traced back to John Cage's composition 4.33 from 1952. This work was composed for any instrument or combination of instruments, and the score instructs the players to not play their instruments for the entire duration of the three movements of the piece. This work also foregrounds listening as a fully embodied pursuit, but rather than listening to constructed sound in the form of music one's awareness of the acoustic environment outside of the social contract of the performance is what becomes focused via the performance.

⁵⁵ Oliveros, Pauline Improvising with spaces. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*. 119 (5) July 2002

⁵⁶ Oliveros, Pauline Deep listening. <http://www.paulineoliveros.com>. Accessed 1/3/2019

mechanisms employs a number of similar procedural characteristic to the work of Deep Listening Band is Avdio Hostem. Avdio Hostem was developed between 2016-2017 by the Irish/Peruvian composer and drummer Sean Carpio. The work was developed as part of Carpio's post-graduate studies at The Rhythmic Music Conservatory (RMC) in Copenhagen Denmark. The band is made up of Sean Carpio, Karl Burke and Sharon Phelan and they use an apparatus that involves three floor tom drums, each of which has contact microphones attached to the skin/head of the individual drums, these contact microphones are linked to a mixing desk which are in turn attached to three self-amplified speakers.

Each performer sets up a positive feedback loop by pointing a contact microphone towards a speaker in a closed-circuit. The drums are not played with a brush or stick in the conventional sense, while the performers can subtly physically manipulate the drum skin by pushing on it with their fingers the performers are mainly playing the mixing desks, affecting the volume and amount of frequency of the feedback loop. The sequence involves the drums making a feedback loop within themselves and that signal begins to push the air above it and spills on to one of the other two drums. Those three drums through the activation of the air between them make an additional feedback loop, a closed circuit and the three drums basically become one inter-reliant instrument connected through the air that surrounds them and when the band members push that signal enough the room becomes part of that circuit as does everyone in the room. This feedback loop can then be sculpted by physical and/or digital means to achieve various timbres and psychoacoustic by-products. Sharon Phelan describes the process involved in an Avdio Hostem performance,

[...] It starts as a vibration, an oscillation of pressure that propagates through a medium, such as air. This oscillation or wave is then received by the human ear, resulting in the perception of sound. However, these vibrations are modified along the way by several factors—from the physical properties of the body that initiate the sound, to the way the vibrations are created or played, to the properties of the environment that are imposed on the sound before reaching a listener.”

The physical characteristics of architectural space—from its shape, size, number of surfaces, material—and objects or people within the environment, merge with a sound source to create a unique spatial sonic event. The environment thus becomes an extension of the sound played in it. Phrased differently, space itself becomes an instrument. The architecture, environmental sounds, and performed or articulated sounds, all constantly contribute towards what the listener perceives in any given space and time. This piece is a site-specific exploration of the relational properties of sound and space. It is an exploration of audio feedback, sculpted through various resonant drums, objects, and processing techniques, in order to articulate the reverberant characteristics of architectural space. The result is a room of sound, achieved through an open and dynamic system, that exists as a sonic ecology.

The piece aims to illuminate a space through sound, by considering the architecture of the room — size, material, surfaces — and working with the immediate surroundings. Through deep listening, each performer tunes their feedback loop system, working through a series of predetermined factors, such as duration, periods of improvisation between performers, and stasis. It is in the moments of stasis that the system becomes most alive.⁵⁷

This piece uses listening, instruments, performers, improvisation, electricity and vibration to enable a situation where a spatial environment becomes simultaneously activated and an activator. The next section will engage with situations where the environment also becomes an active participant in the manifestation of sonic art works.

1.7 Aeroacoustics

The sonic projects that will be spoken about in this section engage with specific musical instruments/sonic sculptures that involve aeroacoustics. Aeroacoustics is the process whereby sound is activated via aerodynamic forces interacting with surfaces within natural environments. These characteristics are apparent on a grand scale in *Sea Organ* (2005) and subtly articulated in the ongoing work of artist, biomedical research scientist and composer Alan Lamb. Alan Lamb has been exploring the resonant potential of wind-activated telegraph wires within the Australian landscape since 1976. These explorations began with his discovery of a one-kilometre stretch of abandoned telephone wires on a farm in the Great Southern region of Western Australia.⁵⁸ Lamb learned how to record these wires and later devised compositions from the recordings.

Another example of an instrument that employs aeroacoustics is *Sea Organ*, a permanent sonic sculpture designed by Architect Nikola Basic located along the seafront in Zadar, Croatia. This seventy-meter long sonic sculpture involves thirty-five organ pipes located in concrete underneath a set of large marble steps. Each musical organ pipe is activated by a column of air, pushed in turn by a column of wave-moved water, through a plastic tube immersed into the water. Seven successive groups of musical tubes are alternately tuned to two musically cognate chords of the diatonic major scale.⁵⁹ Air Holes along the top row of the steps let the *Sea Organ* breathe in air to be transformed into musical sounds as the next wave plays it. The tuned pipes emanate sounds to the surroundings via slits in the vertical planes of the uppermost steps. This human engineering of the acoustic properties of an environment or natural occurring phenomena, became something that I wanted to implicate in my work.

The specific forms of aeroacoustics activated in my practice occur via the employment

57 <http://www.seancarpio.com>. Author; Phelan, Sharon. Accessed 1/1/2019

58 <http://scanlines.net/person/alan-lamb> Accessed 7/10/2019.

59 <https://www.insideflows.org/project/sea-organ/> Accessed 15/11/2019.

of Aeolian harps. I have worked with Aeolian Harps in a variety of ways since 2008. Making sonic sculptures/instruments that replicate or adapt upon traditional versions of wind harps. Aeolian (from Aeolus the Greek god of wind) harps are musical instruments that are played by the wind. The activation of stringed instruments by wind has a rich history. According to legend, King David hung his Kinnor (a kind of lyre) above his head at night to catch the wind and in the 10th century, Dunstan of Canterbury produced sounds from a harp by allowing the wind to blow through its strings. The first known Aeolian Harp was constructed by the German Priest and Scholar Athanasius Kircher and described in his *Musurgia Universalis* (1650).⁶⁰ The manufacture of Aeolian Harp's became popular during the Romantic movement of the late 18th and 19th centuries in Germany and England.

Aeolian harps have often been referenced in musical and literary works, and when approaching this opportunity, I was particularly interested in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *The Aeolian Harp* written in 1795.

**And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all? ⁶¹**

For Coleridge the Aeolian Harp becomes a metaphor for human consciousness, especially the consciousness of a perceptive poetic mind.⁶² Likewise my artwork functions metaphorically similar to Kyle Grime's reading of the harp, where he relates the harp to the human mind:

[...] the human mind is analogous to the harp itself—well-made and finely strung perhaps, but inert and passive unless activated by some external force. Taken literally, this external force is, of course, the breeze that causes the strings of the harp to vibrate; metaphorically this breeze is the flow of visual, auditory, even olfactory perceptions that inspires the thoughts and musings of the perceptive human mind.⁶³

The traditional versions of these instruments take the form of a type of box zither on which sounds are produced by the movement of wind over its strings.⁶⁴ It is essentially a long thin rectangular wooden box, that integrates two bridges and holes to allow it to act as a sound box or resonating chamber and a sounding board, with strings, stretched along its

60 Crane, Frederick Baron. "Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650): the section on musical instruments." MA (Master of Arts) thesis, State University of Iowa, 1956. p 77

61 Samuel Taylor Coleridge's. *The Aeolian Harp*. Lines 44-48

62 Grimes, Kyle. <http://romantics-uab.blogspot.com/2009/05/coleridges-eolian-harp-lines-44-48.html>. Accessed 18/12/2019.

63 Grimes, Kyle. <http://romantics-uab.blogspot.com/2009/05/coleridges-eolian-harp-lines-44-48.html>. Accessed 18/12/2019.

64 <https://www.britannica.com/art/Aeolian-harp> Accessed 12/7/2019.

length and across two bridges. The strings when tuned to the same pitch and activated by the wind vibrate collectively to produce harmonic overtones of the fundamental note. The quality of sound made by the harps is dependent on a number of variable factors, including the length, gauge, and types of strings, the material of the resonating chamber and the strength, character and direction of the wind.

My first use of Aeolian Harps happened in May 2008 as part of an exhibition entitled *Concourse Offsite* which involved the curators Carolyn Brown and Claire Power inviting three artists Aoife Desmond, Alan Phelan and myself to create site-specific artworks for the outdoor location of Blackrock Park. The artists were invited to respond to ideas of transience and impermanence. As Brown and Power describe the exhibition was envisaged⁶⁵ '[...] a transitional setting, Concourse Offsite in Blackrock Park touches on ideas of time, memory, change and impermanency specific to a particular location and setting.'⁶⁶ For this exhibition opportunity I located four traditional wooden Aeolian Harps about thirty feet up in trees throughout the park. At the time I felt:

[...] sound seemed the most interesting analogy for this exhibition concept, in that sound implants a sensory impression in one's mind without existing visually. This work emanated a series of sounds that could be heard periodically at all times of the day and night by people passing through the park. A subtle intervention into the landscape of the park, it both activated the location and perhaps reminded people of the potential of the world that surrounds them.⁶⁷

As part of the mediation of this work the curators note how:

[...] within his site-specific installation practice, Mark Garry places less emphasis on finite statements and is much more interested in opening up the imaginative possibilities of one's interaction with an artwork. With this in mind, he has developed an artwork that is an ephemeral and mysterious presence in Blackrock Park. A sound art piece, Wind Harps is activated by the environmental conditions of the park itself so it is site-specific in an almost literal sense. Depending on wind speeds, the artwork is activated momentarily to emanate beautiful, ethereal sounds that then disappear again. The effect is a subtle, almost imagined impression upon the consciousness of the people who pass through the park. While Mark often uses natural and craft materials such as thread, beads, origami and plants in his installations, Wind Harps is a part of Mark's practice that sees music as a way to engage with and imaginatively navigate viewers through physical spaces.⁶⁸

This piece opened up an enduring interest in the sonic properties of environments and

65 Brown, Carolyn Brown and Power Claire. *Concourse Offsite catalogue*. Dunlaoire Rathdown Arts Office. 2008. p 2

66 *ibid.*

67 Garry, Mark. *Concourse Offsite catalogue*. Dunlaoire Rathdown Arts Office. 2008. p 3

68 Brown, Carolyn Brown and Power Claire. *Offsite catalogue*. Dunlaoire Rathdown Arts Office. 2008. p 3



Figure 10:
Mark Garry Wind harps. Public Sculpture, Carrick on Shannon.

their possible activation within my practice. Where the environment becomes an active participant in the formulation of artistic experiences.

The second occurrence of Aeolian Harps in the practice is a permanent outdoor public artwork commissioned by Leitrim County Council. The work entitled Wind Harps (2009) are made up of four, fourteen foot Aeolian harps. The harps are located in the River Shannon outside of Carrick on Shannon in County Leitrim. (Figure 10) The works are sonic sculptures made up of a stainless steel stands, frames and resonating chambers with titanium strings. They are reliant upon the environment in which they are located, activated by the strength and direction of the winds traversing the river. The tone they generate differs each season and at different times of the day, enabling a situation where each individual listener experience is completely unique. They enable a situation where some of the broader concerns of the practice are integrated into a permanent public artwork, that speak about one's relationship with the natural world and one's perception of it. The final activation of the harps involved the alignment of a more complex set up of systems. These works also enable a situation where the environment becomes an agent in the works activation, but rather than functioning autonomously, they are combined with additional performers, conceptual framing, context specificity, generative processes, associative signifier and performance situation and via a coalescing of these inter-reliant characteristics subtly engage a position.

The musicologist Christopher Small coined the term Musicking⁶⁹ (From the verb to music), meaning any activity involving or related to a music performance. In expanding the ideas presented in his earlier book (Music, Society, Education, 1977), Small extended his use of this term to act as a mechanism to speak about relationships and inter-reliance within sonic situations;

The act of Musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society. ⁷⁰

The term Musicking became a crucial characteristic in the evolution and generative process

⁶⁹ Musicking. To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance. Small, Christopher Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening. (1998). Wesleyan University Press. p 9

⁷⁰ Small, Christopher Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening. (1998). Wesleyan University Press. p 13

of the next project that will be discussed. In particular Small's use of 'relationships', relationships between performer and context or more broadly music enabling an inter-reliant relationship between performer environment and audience. Historically there is very little recognition of this inter-reliance between music/sound and environment as Eric F Clarke posits.

[...] Music theory, the aesthetics of music and the psychology of music have all tended to treat music as if it were a phenomenon radically separate from the rest of the auditory environment. But music is inextricably bound up with that wider auditory world, since it sounds within it, incorporates environmental sounds into its own material.⁷¹

Drift was an outdoor performance work that took place in 2012. This work was a collaboration between myself and Sean Carpio. The project's inception began a year earlier when Sean and I were invited by Cave Gallery in Detroit to undertake a residency that would culminate in my making an installation and additionally, Sean and I made a related outdoor acoustic performance. This performance and installation were collectively entitled Making and Meaning. This performance took place at a boatyard on lake Michigan and Cave's gallery in 2011. This performance involved a wooden sailboat that was transformed into a resonating chamber for a hammer dulcimer and four music boxes, where four performers used musical devices to play a scoring system transferred onto punched paper. These scoring systems were based on mappings of four islands of West Cork in Ireland and were played in sequence by four performers and one performer improvised a percussive work on a hammer dulcimer.

Drift involved a series of interrelated and inter-reliant elements. An outdoor performance work, related film and a vinyl recording⁷². The performance involved our transforming a traditional Irish wooden sailboat into a floating sonic sculpture. We designed a large-scale metal Aeolian harp that was fitted to this boat in a way that both suited the architecture of the boat and maximized its sonic potential. This boat with a harp attached was located in the middle of a natural amphitheatre called Horseshoe Bay, a natural amphitheatre that is part of Sherkin island, which is located in the North Atlantic Ocean off the Southwest coast of Ireland. Carpio wrote a score for a brass quartet which was located on the water's edge located fifty feet from the boat. The audience were located on a series of passenger ferries adjacent to the boat. (Figure 11 and 12 .)

As part of a period of research prior to the project, I came upon a series Sumerian

⁷¹ Clarke, Eric F. Transformations of Public and Private Experience. (Music, space and subjectivity) Cambridge University Press 2013. p 90

⁷² This project also involved a related yet independent film work where all of the characteristics of the performance were set in place at night in the same location. This film rather than documenting the performance attempts to evoke the essence of it.

*This film was subsequently presented as part of an exhibition entitled Islands, Galleria Civica di Modena in Modena, Italy.

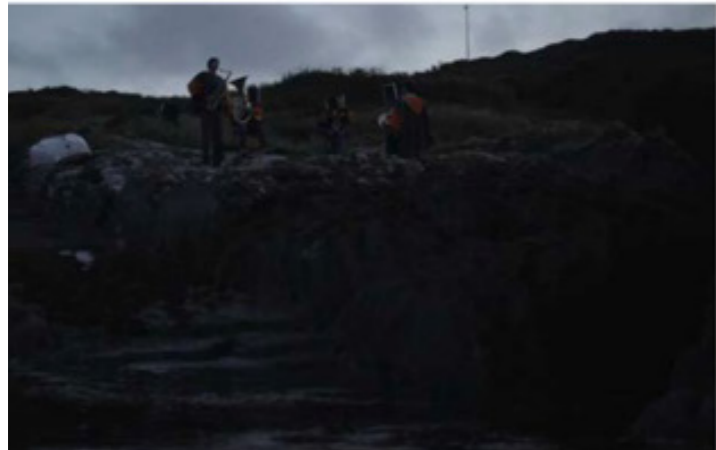
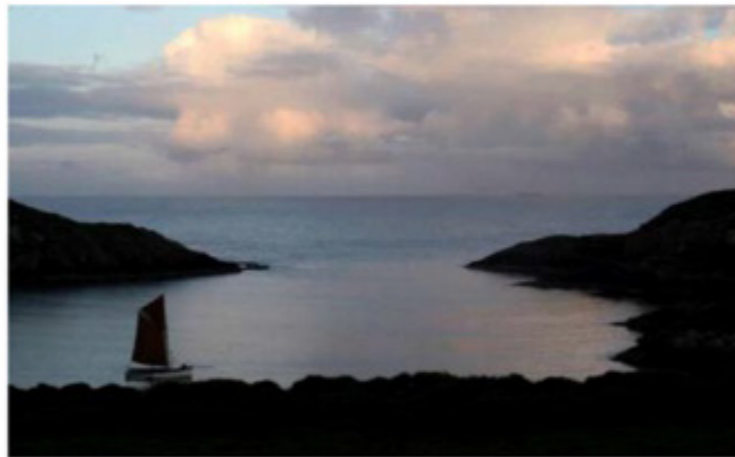
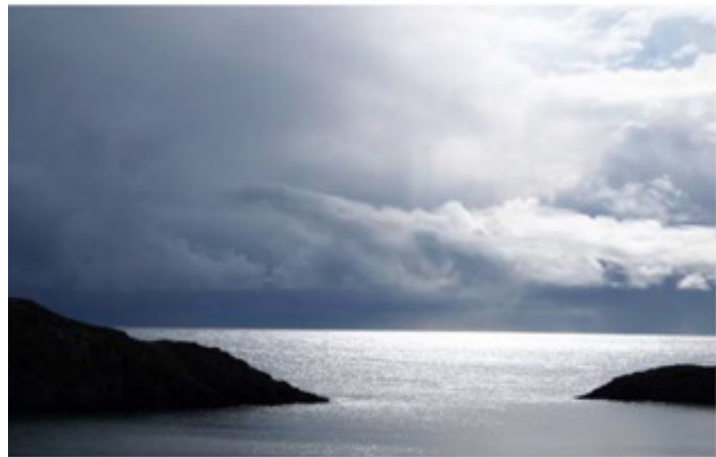


Figure 11:
Mark Garry and Sean Carpio . Drift. Sherkin Island. Performance documentation.

Hymns. These hymns are the first known documented song, cuneiform texts from Babylonian tablets that were translated by the British Museum and first published in 1908. This volume contained hymn's addressed to Bel, Nergal, Adad, Sin, Tammuz, Bau and Nigirgilu.⁷³ The project integrated two hymns that addressed Bel where Bel was understood as both a god and as part of a landscape. Sean composed a musical work in response to these hymns where he:

[...]took the Sumerian hymns, in their current physical state as the model for the written music and wrote fragments that suggest a larger complete piece, if you imagine a narrative-driven piece of brass music in the western tradition, with a theme, variation, recapitulation. I cut out the moments where they develop from one to the other, you just hear the end of one section, the middle of another, the moment just before the peak of one section and the tail end, afterglow or shadow from another. (Figure 13)⁷⁴



Figure 12: Mark Garry and Sean Carpio. Drift. Sherkin Island. Performance documentation.

The work responds to this context by employing cultural mechanisms that engaged with, responded to and was reliant upon the environment conditions (wind) as a means to speak about the interdependence and relationship between island dwellers and environmental conditions. By engaging the boat's multiple resonant possibilities, it's sonic resonance potentials, it's functional use in an environmental/social situation, the artwork articulates a poetic mechanism to speak about music as an art form. In particular the piece speaks of music's fluidity as a form that can travel around the world as an ever-evolving container of histories and social moments.

⁷³ Vanderburgh, Frederick Augustus, Sumerian hymns from cuneiform texts in the British Museum, of the Sent chapters, nbows, a naturally occurring y light and environmental conditions. illusionistic array to nce ge with the an1908. p 2

⁷⁴ Carpio, Sean. <http://www.seancarpio.com>. Accessed 16/5/2020

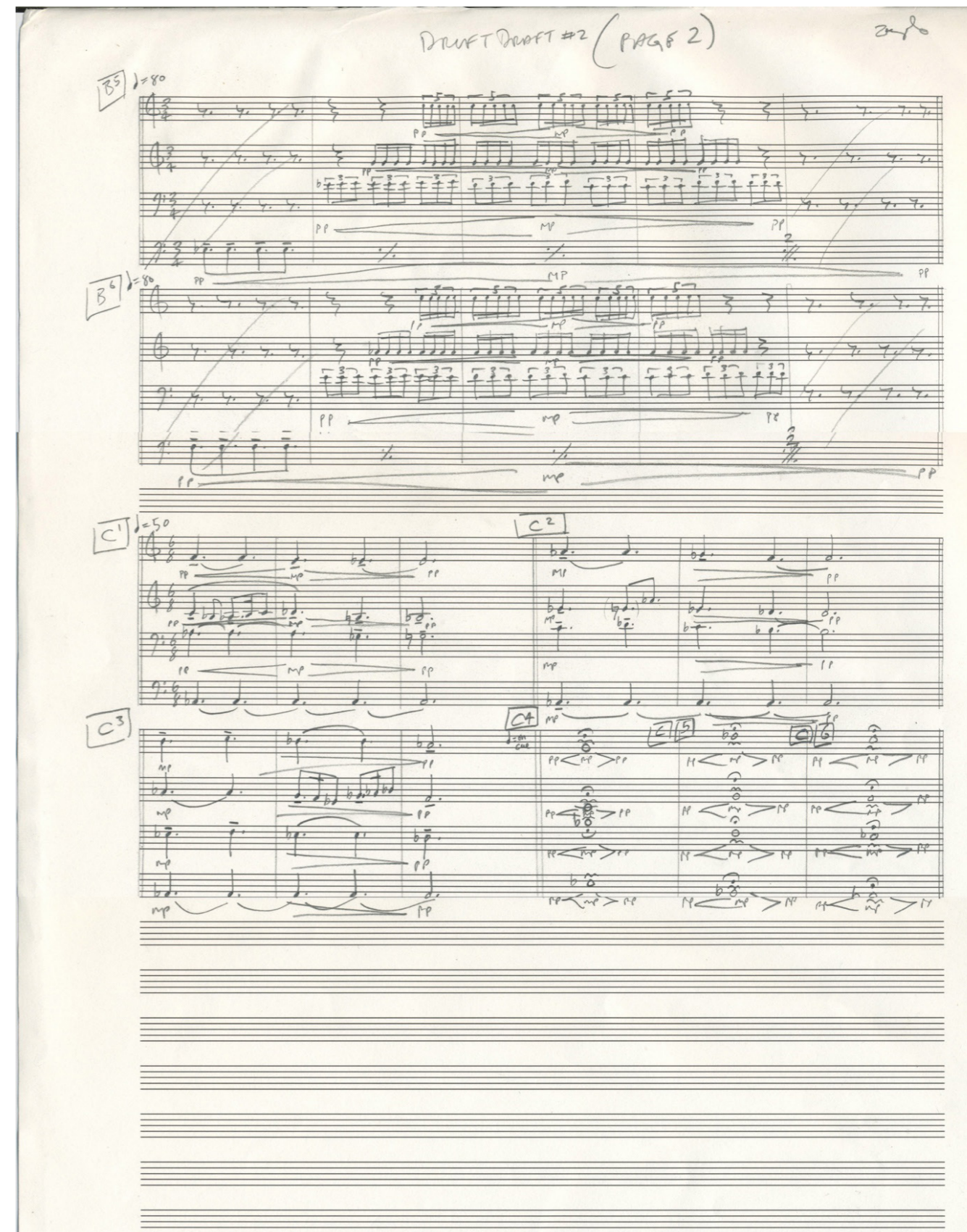


Figure 13: Sean Carpio. Drift Score. (score)

This composition was written for and performed by a brass quintet and was made up of three themes that moved down through a cycle of fifths and structured as three separate arrangements. Sean conducted the piece which was dictated by and responded to the sonic output of the harp. The number of times and location of these themes was controlled by this form of improvised conducting that dictated both the pacing and experience of the brass performance. We also engaged a Jazz Tenor Saxophone player Robin Fincker whom we asked to improvise around what was occurring sonically with the Aeolian harp and in doing so act as a link between the Aeolian harp and the brass quartet. The volume and type of sound made by the Aeolian Harp are dictated by the strength, direction and type of wind that passes through it and as such required improvisation and flexible responsiveness from both the performers and conductor. The choice of instrumentation was essential to the work from both pragmatic and conceptual perspectives. We wanted to use instrumentation that would be effective without amplification in this particular outdoor setting. But the choice of instrumentation also had associative significance.

1.8 Musical instrument acting as a social instrument

Brass instruments are a particularly autonomous type of multicultural instrument, largely due to their simplicity, affordability and durability they cross both national and class boundaries. Used in traditional symphonies, by marching bands and in folk music. The Drift performance combined brass instruments with the saxophone because of their specific associations with jazz music. A key feature of the performances were its associations to Jazz music. The performance integrated improvisational techniques as a means of referencing jazz and the progressive generative processes that developed through the evolution of Jazz in North America and the importance of this art form in moving away from the dominance of the western post-Renaissance tradition. The choice to implicate improvisation and instruments that are synonymous with Jazz stemmed partly from a perception that up until recently jazz was omitted from a broader discussion of musical evolution. George E Lewis point out jazz was discussed, observed—and above all, consumed—but the musicians rarely appear as participants in any aesthetic or political discussions.⁷⁵

Lewis points out how LeRoi Jones in his, *Blues People* from 1963:

[...] brought out the fact that “the young Negro intellectuals and artists in most cases are fleeing the same ‘classic’ bourgeois situations as their white counterparts.” Accounts of the early 1960s New York avant-garde, however, seem unable to assimilate Jones’s point, preferring to exceptionalize the black artists and their concerns. Indeed, in the majority of

⁷⁵ Lewis George. E. *A Power Stronger Than Itself*. The AACM and American Experimental Music, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 2008. P 30

these accounts, the marginality of African Americans, in particular, is assumed, even as the transgressive new black music of Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and others was influencing artists around the world.⁷⁶

This locating of African American ideas and culture making in the project was part of a series of subtle and more apparent social contracts at play in the work. These contracts were crucial for Sean and I in the formation of the experience of the performance for the audience. The audience sailed out from the mainland to engage in the performance on a number of passenger ferries, they remained on the ferries for the duration of the performance and were returned to the mainland afterwards. On this journey they first had to sail out into the open ocean before turning into the relative seclusion of Horseshoe Bay. This engaging in the grand dynamics of nature, of being on a journey, of being in flux, being part of a drama, a narrative played out with the environment. Attending the performance was free of charge but in order to board the ferries, the audience had to leave their mobile telephone and any cameras or recording equipment on shore. We wanted to enable a situation that was somewhat similar to a conventional piece of interior theatre where rather than thinking about documenting or recording the surrounding or event, the participants were fully engaged in their individual and collective experiencing the interconnected environment and performance. The specific mechanics of Drift also enabled a particular form of audience attentiveness, because all of the factors involved in the performance were weather dependent. The work’s activation was reliant on their being wind and ideally wind from a particular direction. Rain would also cause problems, as the rain would dampen the harp strings making them silent. It would also mean that the Saxophone player could not perform, so the potential for failure was quite acute.

This was also the case in terms of the improvised nature of the performance, where in improvisation the potential for devastating failure in a specific performance is considerably greater. As Gary Peters points out:

[...] because it dispenses with pre-composed material, passed on by notation or oral tradition, and relies instead entirely on the uncertainties of construction at the moment of performance, it renounces the support and coherence that a score or memorized structure can provide.⁷⁷

The weather prevailed and the performance passed off as hoped. Drift set up a cultural situation while relying on adaptable controllable elements, would ultimately create a situation where the experience of the performance was original and unique for the audience, performers and the conceivers of the project.

⁷⁶ Lewis George. E. *A Power Stronger Than Itself*. The AACM , The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 2008. p 36

⁷⁷ Peters Gary, *The Philosophy of Improvisation* The University of Chicago Press. 2009, Clarke, “Improvisation, Cognition and Education,” p 64.

1.9 Conclusion

The role of this chapter was to situate where forms or inter-reliance are apparent in two specific elements of the practice. The making of architecturally responsive spectrums out of coloured threads, pins and beads and the use of Aeolian wind harps, and environmentally activated sound in the practice with a specific focus on an outdoor musical performance work entitled Drift that took place in 2012. While mechanically divergent there are commonalities apparent in each element. Each activity enables harmonised spaces via forms of collective inter-reliance and participatory dynamics. The harmonising of gallery spaces via a coalescing of architectural space, geometric logic, line, material, colour, light, process, association and perceptual dynamics. The contextual sound/musical performance works harmonize space via an interweaving of context, environment, composition, instrumentation, mechanical device, performer, temporality association and perceptual dynamics. Each exercise is intermedial in that they are a coming together of (two) things in time, place or character. They engage forms of collective inter-reliance that Jacques Rancière refers to as ‘the distribution of the sensible’. The distribution of the sensible refers to the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it.⁷⁸

For Rancière:

[...] Distribution of the Sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.⁷⁹

Claire Bishop in her introduction to Participation (2006) points out how Walter Benjamin argued that when judging a work’s politics, we should not look at the artist’s declared sympathies, but at the position that the work occupies in the production relations of its time.⁸⁰ What I am proposing is that the set of inter-reliant activities in these two elements of my practice, facilitate an ethics of empathic inter-subjectivity, where the combination of motivations and mechanisms work in opposition to certain social behaviours that capitalism has facilitated. They individually engage with ideological specifics. For example, Drift subtly speaks about the positioning of jazz within broader musicological discussion over the last century while the Thread Works attempt to enable situations that circumvent the perceived coded exclusivity of contemporary art. Each element is situational and improvised, each utilise association and perception as a means to enable forms of enabled

⁷⁸ Rancière, Jacques. The politics of Aesthetics, The Distribution of the Sensible. Bloomsbury. 2013 p 12

⁷⁹ ibid

⁸⁰ Bishop, Claire. Participation. The MIT Press. 2006. p 6

subjectivity. These characteristics enable a situation where physical, collective experience is fundamental. The gallery-based installations and contextual sound/musical performance works both engage new forms of collective attention, or rather a heightened attentiveness to being in the world using harmonics and harmonised space.

I argue that materials, mechanisms, devices and performers are activated to implicate forms of egalitarianism, engaging inter-reliant discourse with material hierarchies and socio/cultural association. Guy Debord suggests that forms of separation are fundamental to the triumph of the spectacle where separation is itself an integral part of the unity of this world, of a global social practice split into reality and image.⁸¹ My work takes a position that works in opposition to this separation on a number of levels where perception or rather forms of co-perception are employed as empathetic analogy. Where a heightened perceptual sense of one’s self and one’s place in the world acts as a means to amplify one’s awareness of the other in the world, where collective activity can be reconciled with individual identity.⁸²

Each element whilst gesturing at ideological positions, for example the implication of improvisation and instrument choices as a means to reference African American culture making, and participatory inter-reliance between the environment and the performers, they do so in a modest, subtle way, foregrounding the poetic over the didactic. Each situation is simultaneously structured and open. Umberto Eco describes art as an epistemological metaphor,⁸³ where there is the possibility of a unified, definitive image of our universe and where:

[...] art suggests a way for us to see the world in which we live, and, by seeing it, to accept it and integrate it into our sensibility. The open work assumes the task of giving us an image of dis-continuity. It does not narrate it; it is it. It takes on a mediating role between the abstract categories of science and the living matter of our sensibility; it almost becomes a sort of transcendental scheme that allows us to comprehend new aspects of the world.⁸⁴

The thread spectrum and Drift are immersive and simultaneously collaborative and dialogical, engaging in a dialectic interplay between the symbolic and the semiotic, enabling collaboration and dialogue between object, association, colour, movement, space and time, performer and participant. These elements of the practice engage improvisation and temporality, improvisation occurs in the responsiveness between materials and architecture in the installation aspects, and temporality, improvisation occurs between

⁸¹ Debord, Guy. The Society of the spectacle. MIT Press. 1967. p 4

⁸² Cass, Brian. Mark Garry. Musical acts. From A New Quiet. Royal Hibernian Academy and Mark Garry, 2015. p 106

⁸³ Eco, Umberto. The open work I Umberto Eco; translated by Anna Cancogni: with an introduction by David Robey. Harvard University Press. 1989. p 90.

⁸⁴ Eco, Umberto. The open work I Umberto Eco; translated by Anna Cancogni: with an introduction by David Robey. Harvard University Press. 1989. p 90

performers and Aeolian harp in this sonic aspect. Improvisation is implicated in the generative process of the two elements discussed in this chapter as a means to facilitate a purposeful fluidity, enabling forms of conscious responsiveness where as David Borgo suggests:

Perhaps improvisation as a not deterministic, non-rehearsed engagement and expansion can show us a different way of being in the world, one in which our very notions of ourselves and our relationships with the social-material world we inhabit are constantly in flux, under continuous negotiation”.⁸⁵

Crucially each engage in modest modes of complexity, temporality, ephemerality and forms of slow encounter. They engage with what Lutz Coepnick calls extended structures of temporality, with strategies of hesitation, delay and deceleration, in an effort to make us pause and experience a passing present in all its heterogeneity and difference.⁸⁶ They engage in forms that are site specific, temporal and improvised and are impossible to replicate precisely and by proxy negate transactional conventions. They articulate and affirm forms of subjective, collective inter-reliance. Where the works engage the participant not as a consumer but as associative and perceptual inter-reliant producer.

The installation and outdoor aeroacoustics works discussed in this chapter implicate site as a crucial characteristic in the work. The site acts as both performative location and responsive vehicle. The next chapter elaborates upon the implication of inter-reliant site specificity and context responsiveness within the practice.

⁸⁵ Borgo, David, Schroeder Franziska; O’Haodha, Michaeál. *Sound-weaving: Writings on Improvisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014. p 48

⁸⁶ Koepnick, Lutz *On Slowness. Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary*. Colombia University Press.2014. p 15

Chapter 2: Site and context responsiveness

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two engages with artistic situations where forms of inter-reliance are enabled in relation to site specific and context responsive artworks as forms of social practice. This chapter will engage two artworks of mine and a series by other artists that integrate site specificity and engage context as forms of social responsiveness. Site-specificity is generally understood as a characteristic of installation practices. As discussed in chapter one site-specificity involves a situation where an art work is manifest in and for a particular architectural situation, engaging with and activating that specific space. Context responsive forms of expression are characterised by the artists use of the locality or a broader social situation as a generator for the production of meaning in an art work, where an artwork simultaneously comments upon and is commented upon by its context or surroundings.⁸⁷ This set of simultaneously site-specific and context responsive works enables a situation where art-making is not viewed as an autonomous activity but involves inter-reliance between artwork and architectural setting, and art work and social context. This chapter critically locates and questions the make-up and scope of site specific and context-responsive practices as an inter-reliant contemporary art making mode. Site specific practices are fundamentally reciprocal; Robert Irwin describes this set of dynamics as a force:

[...] that supplies the work with a structure. The site shapes the works material and content matter, while conversely, the works interpretative response to the locality manifest itself as a distillation of its numerous distinct features.⁸⁸

In 2008 I took part in a residency and exhibition at The Mattress Factory Art Museum in Pittsburgh PA entitled Inner and Outer Space. The Mattress Factory is exclusively dedicated to the commissioning and exhibiting of Installation art. The Museum is unusual in that rather than displaying existing artworks, it asks that the works created for the exhibitions are created on-site during a residency period within the gallery spaces. It has residency accommodation and three separate gallery buildings and the museum encourages artists to come and visit the city of Pittsburgh prior to engaging in a residency, to familiarise themselves with the historical, social and cultural characteristics of the city. When an artist begins their residency, the museum closes a section of the galleries to the public and this becomes the artist’s studio and eventual exhibition space. This enables a situation where the work that is displayed in the space is developed and constructed on-site. This process allows a situation where the artist’s responses have the scope to be both site responsive and site and context-specific. Crucially artists are encouraged to respond to both the architectural space of the museum and Pittsburgh as a social space.

⁸⁷ Ring Peterson, Anne. *Installation Art. Between Image and Stage*. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015. p 352.

⁸⁸ Irwin, Robert. *Being and Circumstance: Notes towards a Conditional Art*, New York and San Francisco: The Pace Gallery and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.1985. p 27.

This experience was foundational in the development of my practice and I have applied this method of working ever since. The installations are site-specific in that they respond both to the architectural characteristics of the gallery or museum and context-specific in that they respond to historical, social or cultural attributes of the geographical location of the gallery or museum. Furthermore, two years after this exhibition I was invited to undertake a curatorial residency by The Mattress Factory where I programmed exhibitions for another two years and this experience further confirmed the value of this methodology. The site-specific context responsive installation works of mine discussed in this thesis employ this methodology.

This chapter engages with art works that take place both within and outside of conventional gallery contexts, each of which prioritise forms of inter-reliance and site-specificity as crucial characteristics of both an artwork's generative process and the situation it enables. The projects of mine are two solo exhibitions that took place in France, and Ireland during 2014. *Revoir Un Printemps*, at Galerie du 5e, Galeries Lafayette, in Marseille, and *A Winter Light* at The Model, home of The Niland Collection in Sligo. This chapter locates the site-specific and context responsive installation elements of my practice within a broader discussion of site-specificity and context responsiveness as a methodology. The artworks enable situations that activate space by responding to and engage a series of inter-reliant elements where three forms of participatory dynamics occur simultaneously. 1: Site, where the site is viewed as architectural space. 2: Context, where context is made up of the geographical location of the Gallery or artwork. 3: History and social/cultural makeup of that geographical location. Where the artistic responses enable reciprocal, participatory dynamics between artwork and context, and between artworks and audience. Where site-specificity enables a reciprocal conditionality between artwork and its surroundings⁸⁹

This chapter will engage with two forms of artistic production that engage inter-reliance as a mechanism. The first are socially engaged practices that are, site and context-specific. Art that was commissioned to occur or to be located outside of a conventional gallery setting. Social or socially/engaged practices focus on artistic engagement that occurs through human interaction and forms of discourse, engaging participatory models and/or involving people as the medium or material of the work, each of which are site and context responsive. The second is gallery located, site and context-specific. Art that is presented in a conventionally gallery setting and is site and context responsive.

There are three terms that are fundamental to this chapter, Site-Specificity, Context Responsiveness and Social Practices. I will begin by explain the genealogy of these terms and their uses in this chapter. Each term will be explained separately but in the artworks discussed in the chapter these terms are inter-related and simultaneously informing.

⁸⁹ Irwin, Robert. *Being and Circumstance: Notes towards a Conditional Art*, New York and San Francisco: The Pace Gallery and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.1985. p 352

The term Site-Specificity essentially refers to an artwork that is created to exist in a specific location. In most situations the specific location of the artwork is considered while planning or creating the work. In essence all historical public monuments or sculptures are site specific. The use of the term site-specificity when employed in this thesis refers specifically to artwork where site specificity and installation intersect. Site-specific denotes an artwork or artistic intervention made for and to exist in one location as opposed to a transportable autonomous artwork. This practice began as part of the evolution of installation practices in the 1960's and 1970's, in artworks such as Daniel Buren's installation *Within and Beyond the Frame* at John Webber Gallery in New York. In this work Buren hung nineteen banners painted on both sides, nine of which were inside of the gallery and Nine hung inside the gallery and nine banners suspended outside of the gallery across West Broadway Street in New York. Another important work from this time is Michael Asher's *Untitled* which took place at Claire Copley Gallery in Los Angeles. In this work Asher removed a wall in the gallery revealing the galleries office and storage space. These interventions enabled temporal experiential encounters that were specific to these location at this particular time, a dialogue with location where spectatorship unfolds in real time and space. ⁹⁰

The term Context Responsiveness can also be applied to the works by Buren and Asher. They respond to the gallery as a context but while Buren and Asher act as form of institutional critiques the artworks discussed in this chapter when engaging context responsiveness do so to engage with, or respond to, not just the architectural or institutional conventions but also engage the gallery or non-gallery situation as a socially engaged space. Using site to engage the broader social world. James Mayer makes a useful distinction between these two types of spaces, he refers to the first as a literal site and the second as a functional site. He suggests that the literal site is a location, a singular place. The artists intervention conforms to the physical constraints of this situation even if it would subject this to critique.⁹¹ Mayer suggests that:

[...]The works outcome is thus determined by a physical space, by an understanding of the space as an actual. Reflecting a perception of the site as unique, the work itself is unique.⁹²

In contrast Meyer suggests that the functional site may or may not incorporate a physical space. Instead it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). ⁹³ He posits that the functional site is an informational site, physical places and things. It is a temporary

⁹⁰ Meyer, James. *The Functional Site*. Suderburg, Erica.(editor) *Space Site Intervention. Situating Installation art*. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. p 26

⁹¹ Meyer, James. *The Functional Site*. Suderburg, Erica.(editor) *Space Site Intervention. Situating Installation art*. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. p 24

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid p 25

thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories: a place marked and swiftly abandoned.⁹⁴

The artworks noted in this chapter engage context responsiveness via two forms of social practice. Whilst the works of mine discussed in this chapter engage site specificity and context-responsiveness in gallery based situations, it is crucial to acknowledge the use of context-responsive in relation to socially engaged art practices. In order to engage fully with all forms of context-responsiveness as cultural mechanism. Socially engaged practices are reliant upon the enabling of forms of social discourse between an artist and a community or social situation. In these socially engaged art practices the intentions and aesthetic of an artwork is made manifest in forms of social engagement. They often implicate engagement through human interaction, and fluid interplay between artist and community and by proxy an interplay between art and society.

Grant Kester recognises these forms of social practice as ‘dialogical aesthetics’. Dialogical aesthetics involve dialogue-based socially engaged creative practices that as Kester notes “involves the creative orchestration of collaborative encounters and conversations well beyond the institutional boundaries of the gallery or museums”.⁹⁵ Crucially these practices are reliant upon dialogical exchange between the artist and the participants of a social situation, where this dialogue dictates the forms of aesthetic encounter that are enabled by the project/process.

The chapter then looks at the gallery as a socially responsive space where artworks are manifested in institutional settings that engage with social and political considerations. In these institutional located installations there is responsiveness and inter-reliance between what manifests in the gallery space and the broader social world. Revoir Un Printemps, (Seeing spring again) and A Winter Light are then discussed as situations where the gallery is instrumentalised as a socially responsive space.

2.2 Dialogical Practices

Stephen Willats has developed a collaborative socially engaged practice over the past four decades, producing a series of extended projects with the residents of public housing estates in England, Germany, Finland and elsewhere in Europe. In many cases, he returns to these projects and sites over a number of years. Willats is particularly concerned with the social and somatic experience of living in public housing (especially in isolated, high-rise buildings) and with identifying and facilitating modes of resistance and critical

94 Meyer, James. The Functional Site. Suderburg, Erica.(editor) Space Site Intervention. Situating Installation art. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. p 25

95 Kester, Grant. Conversation Pieces. Community + Communication in Modern art. University of California Press/Berkley Los Angeles. London.2004. p 14

consciousness among the residents of these estates. He seeks to challenge what he calls the “New Reality” promulgated by the bureaucratic planning apparatus that was developed in Britain during the early post-war period.⁹⁶

One of Willat’s main objectives is to acknowledge and honour a process of autonomous decision making and self-reflection among communities that are typically treated by both state and private sector as a kind of inert raw material to be processed and regulated spatially, in the architecture of state-subsidised housing and ideologically, through the mechanisms of consumer society. As Willats puts it;

My practice is about representing the potential self-organising richness of people within a reductive culture of objects and possessions. In a society that reduces people, I’m working to celebrate their richness and complexity. I see this as a kind of cultural struggle.⁹⁷

Willat’s practice used dialogue as a means to better understand one’s surroundings and the social and political characteristics of a given situation. This practice serve as a means to intellectually empower people to recognise their function within a number of societal processes. It recognises a shift in the focus of art from the phenomenological experience of the creator fabricating an exemplary object, to that of the phenomenological experience of their co-participants.⁹⁸

As noted above Grant Kester refers to this type of practice as dialogical. The concept of ‘dialogical art’ is derived from the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argued that the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation – a locus of differing meanings interpretations and points of view.⁹⁹ Grant Kester uses the term to define the interactive character of practices and projects that replace the conventional situation where an artwork is created (in most cases) in isolation by the artist and only later offered to the audience. Kester notes that with this approach,

[...] The viewer’s response has no immediate reciprocal effect on the constitution of the work. Dialogical projects in contrast, unfold through a process of performative interaction.¹⁰⁰

Dialogical Practices are research-based, collaborative, consultative approaches to art practice. These collaborative consultative approaches involve the development of projects organised around a collaborative rather than specular relationship with the viewer and have

96 Willats, Stephen. Exhibition catalogue. The New Reality, The Orchard Gallery. Derry, Northern Ireland. 1992.

97 Kester, Grant. Stephen Willats and the pragmatics of public art. Afterimage19.May 1992.

98 Kester, Grant. Conversation Pieces. Community + Communication in Modern art. University of California Press/Berkley Los Angeles. London.2004 p 118

99 Gablik, Suzi. The Re-enchantment of Art. Thames and Hudson. 1991.

100 Kester, Grant. Conversation Pieces. Community + Communication in Modern art. University of California Press/Berkley Los Angeles. London.2004 p 118

deep and complex roots in the history of art and activism. A generation of practitioners and collectives such as Ala Plastica in Buenos Aires Superflex in Denmark, MuF and Stephen Willats, both from London, Huit Facettes in Senegal, Ultra Red in Los Angeles and Temporary Services in Chicago have championed this approach. These mechanisms and approaches have also become increasingly prevalent in the practices of several Irish based practitioners such as Sarah Browne, Jessie Jones, Sarah Pierce (Metropolitan Complex), Seamus Nolan Rhona Byrne and Glen Loughran.

What unites this disparate network of artists and arts collectives is that they engage directly with the broader mechanisms of society, questioning assumptions about the relationship between art and the social and political worlds, and about the kind of knowledge that artistic experience is capable of producing. These artists often replace the use of traditional art materials and conventions aimed towards the production of art objects, with the building of relationships and alliances, in order to directly engage with society. Concerned with the creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange they share an objective of raising direct questions about social codes and the environment that supports these codes.

Dialogical Practices engage directly with a public and social space, where there is an enabled inter-reliance between social situation, site and artwork. In these situations the community becomes the material of the art work. They are dialogical and activate space through forms of empathetic exchange. Willats suggests that these forms of artwork are where forms of counter-consciousness are enabled.

[...] A pre-requisite for an art work that manifests a counter-consciousness is that the separation which existed between the artist and the audience is closed, that they become mutually engaged, to the point where the audience becomes the rational in both the making and reception of the art work.¹⁰¹

This statement by Willats is problematic as it suggests that the kind of direct social engagement that Willats refers to, is the only meaningful form of social practice. This thinking is located within a proposition that suggests that Social Practices can be defined as practices that:

[...] avoids evocations of both the modern role of the artist (as an illuminated visionary) and the postmodern version of the artist (as a self-conscious critical being). Instead, the term democratizes the construct, making the artist into an individual whose speciality includes working with society in a professional capacity.¹⁰²

101 Willats, Stephen. *Society Through Art*. Haags Centrum voor Aktuele Kunst, Den Haag, 1990. p 4

102 Helguera, Pablo. *Education for Socially Engaged Art*. Jorge Pinto Books. 201. p 3

This suggests that social practices exist only as engagement directly within a community or social situation that is made manifest within that social situation. This limited framing of what makes up a social realm discounts many forms of artistic social engagement that occur without having direct experience of the social situation one is engaging with. What the next section of this chapter is suggesting is that Art can respond to or reflect an awareness of a situation without the artist having visited and physically experienced a specific social situation. The next section will discuss artworks that implicate installation as a mode of social practice that occur within institutional conventions.

2.3 Gallery as a socially responsive space

From a historical perspective, installations that engage in institutional site-specificity i.e. occurring in a gallery/museum context were predominantly concerned with the engaging of architectural dimensions and configurations and finding ways to activate or configure space in a way that was particular to a given gallery space. Early installation practices functioned in confrontation with the autonomous modernist sculpture.¹⁰³ Installation practices were:

[...] a conscious reaction to the modernist sculpture's site-lessness, early site-specific art took the actual location as its starting point – as an interior, an urban space or a landscape with specific individual characteristics. It subjected itself to the specific environment and let that determine the works form and content to such an extent that the work could not be removed from its site.¹⁰⁴

The use of installation as a cultural mechanism denotes a transition from the pictorial or engagement with singular object/s to the immersive and the dramatic transformation of space as conceptual device. Installation art corrupted the conventions of display and experience, acting in many cases as forms of institutional critique. One could argue that this idea of institutional site-specificity began with Kurt Schwitters work *Merzbau* from 1933 which involved his dramatic transforming of six rooms of his family house in Hanover which took place slowly over ten years. This procedure was continued by a series of pioneering artists over the next fifty years. Lucas Samaras in his installation “Room”, which took place at Green Gallery in New York in 1964, involved his moving the contents of his studio-bedroom into a gallery space where they were displayed as an artwork. One of the most dramatically transformative works from this time was a work called *Untitled (12 Horses)* from 1969 by Jannis Kounellis which involved his tethering 12 live horses to the walls of the L’Attico Gallery in Rome for the duration of the exhibition. These transformations were also apparent in the works by Daniel Buren and Michael Asher

103 Ring Peterson, Anne. *Installation Art. Between Image and Stage*. Museum Tusculanum Press.2015. p 354

104 *ibid.*

described earlier in the chapter.¹⁰⁵

The enabling of artistic situations via the gallery based site-specific installation model as discussed in chapter one involves a transference in the experiencing of an art work.¹⁰⁶ This transference involved a shift from a passive to active participant, from spectator to felt experiencer of an artistic situation. The last thirty years have seen an explosion of artists who use installation to dramatically transform space. Most notably Olafur Eliasson, Carsten Holler, Yoyoi Kusama, and James Turrell. The practices I will speak about also engage in the transformation of space in this way, however they also engage the museum/gallery as a socially responsive space. Rather than focusing on a local geographic situation as I did above, the second two artworks engage with the social-political and socio-geopolitical from a broader perspective and engage a site that enables dramatic interventions in an institutional context. Rather than elaborating upon the history of installation or site-specificity this section will engage with current installation practices where installation is viewed as a form of site-specific responsive practice, where the installation takes on the function of a visual and symbolic matrix that transforms the chosen site in both its sensory and semantic dimensions.¹⁰⁷

Ai Weiwei's Sunflower seeds and Doris Salcedo's Shibboleth both took place at London's Tate Modern both engage broad complex global issues. Each occurs in a conventional contemporary gallery and each instrumentalises the conventions and associations of the gallery and each enables both experiential situations and social commentary as a social practice. Each engage site and crucially each engages immersive installation methodologies. These two projects simultaneously engage the gallery as architectural space, where the scale and conventions of the institution are implicated as

¹⁰⁵ Miwon Kwon recognised these site specific interventions as marking a shift, where:

[...] the uncontaminated and pure idealist space of dominant modernism was radically displaced by the materiality of the natural landscape or the or the impure and ordinary space of the everyday. The space of art was no longer perceived as a blank slate, a tabula rasa but a real place. The art object or event was to be singularly experienced in the here-and-now through the bodily experience of each viewing subject, in a sensorial immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration, rather than instantaneously perceived in a visual epiphany by a disembodied eye. Site-Specific works in its earliest formation, then, focused on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site and demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the completion of the work. Kwon, Miwon. Chapter 2 One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity. (Space Site Intervention.) Situating installation Art. University of Minnesota Press. Erica Suderberg. 2000. Page 38.

¹⁰⁶ The early installation defined certain fundamental elements that have persisted. This was part of a more general phenomenological turn in art during the 1960's. An insistence that the experience of art must happen in real time and in real space. As art historian James Mayer notes:

[...]The Body of site specificity was a physicalized body, aware of its surroundings, a body of heightened critical acuity. The viewer of the modernist work, in contrast, was purportedly blind to its ideological nature. Thus the premise of site-specificity to locate the work in a single place, and only there, bespoke of the 1960's a call for presence, the demand for the experiencing of "being there." An underlying topos of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, of the happening and performance, presence became an aesthetic and ethical cri de Coeur among the artists and critics who emerged during the 1960s, suggesting an experience of actualness and authenticity that would contravene the depredations of an increasingly mediated, "one dimensional" society.

Meyer, James. "The Functioning site; or, The Transformation of Site-Specificity." In Space, Site, intervention; Situating installation art, ed. Erica Suderberg. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. p 26

¹⁰⁷ Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press.2015. p 352

socially responsive vehicles.

By manifesting these artworks as installations to be experienced on a grand scale they relocate meaning from within the art object to the contingencies of its context; the radical restructuring of the subject from an old Cartesian model to a phenomenological one of lived bodily experience.¹⁰⁸

The two projects of mine that will be discussed occur in gallery contexts and enable forms of Inter- reliance between site and context and each engage socio-political situations. The first Revoir Un Printemps engages with the regeneration of the port in Marseille and the second A Winter Light looks at the manner in which Sothern Irish citizens acted upon each other since the construction of the Republic of Ireland as an independent state.

2.4 Revoir Un Printemps, (Seeing spring again)

Revoir Un Printemps occurred in 2014 when I was invited by the curator Caroline Hancock to realise an exhibition as part of the 6th edition of Printemps de l'Art Contemporain in Marseille. The Exhibition took place at a Galerie du 5ème which is part of the department store Galeries Lafayette. Galeries Lafayette has a foundation which runs Galerie du 5ème and a much larger multidisciplinary space in Paris called Lafayette Anticipations. Marseille has undergone an enormous state-supported regeneration process. The project was called Euroméditerranée and began in 1995 under the stewardship of the then Mayor of Marseille Robert Vigouroux. The ongoing project involved the development of a business district. This area is clearly distinguished by the one hundred and forty-seven-meter-tall CMA CGM headquarters tower designed by Zaha Hadid. The development of cultural tourism included the building or relocation of Museums and cultural institutions such as The Museum of the Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean (MuCEM). The building of boulevards, the development of the old port which now is filled with lavish sailing vessels and is the location for L'Ombrière de Norman Foster (Norman Fosters Shadow) a forty-six by twenty-two meter reflective metal canopy designed by the British architect.

As with most gentrification projects it came at a cost. The one time predominantly North African market areas have been replaced by shopping districts that host a series of multinational retail chains and French department stores such as Galeries Lafayette where my exhibition took place. The Old Port area had at one time been home to a diverse range of working class North African and Middle eastern communities. These communities have been dispersed to housing projects on the outskirts of the city in areas such as D'Air Belle

¹⁰⁸ Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press.2015. p 352

on the east end of Marseille which houses between six to seven thousand people in twelve hundred high rise housing units. These areas are lacking in broader social infrastructural support, there is a prevalence of crime and poverty that is indicative of the state supported economic disparity that the gentrification process enabled.

After an initial site visit, I tried to develop art making mechanisms that could act as a form of social responsiveness, that could poetically articulate an awareness of a number of Marseilles social realities. I began researching cultural elements that are specific to Marseille and the North African and Middle eastern communities that were displaced from the docks area. I wanted to find a mechanism to enable an inter-reliance between this social context and my artists responses. One of the prominent pre-existing cultural mechanisms I found in the area was Hip Hop. French Hip Hop was also part of a pre-existing body of research that was implicated in and informed Revoir Un Printemps. This body of research begun with an earlier exhibition I curated entitled A Generous Act which took place in 2010 as part of a curatorial residence I undertook at the Mattress Factory Art museum in Pittsburgh PA. One of the elements of the research for this exhibition involved my engaging with the history of Jazz music in Pittsburgh and the rise and fall of the Hill District in Pittsburgh, which was once a predominantly Black neighbourhood and the location of many important Jazz venues. As part of this research I became aware of a book by Ursula Broschke Davis called Paris without Regret: that looked at the decision by four African American Artists to move from the USA to Paris in the 1950's and 1960's. These artists were the writers James Baldwin and Chester Himes and the musicians Donald Byrd and Kenny Clarke. Josephine Baker and Langston Hughes also lived in Paris. This coincided with an interest in French Hip hop initially with artists such as MC Solar, Rohff, Doc Gynéco, Booba and latterly IAM who's work was the subject of this exhibition. The subjects and social situations these black French rappers were implicating in their songs did not reflect the welcome that was afforded to African Americans in France. This realisation was part of my motivation to engage with Marseille as a context in this way.

Hip Hop from Marseille articulates specific elements in the city's cultural makeup and also speaks more broadly about France's colonial legacy and its relationship with African American music and the proliferation of Hip hop as an art form. I decided to respond to a song entitled Revoir Un Printemps. (Seeing Spring Again) by Marseille Hip Hop act IAM, formed in 1989. IAM is made up of five members whom each have pseudonyms, Philippe Fragione (Akhenaton), Geoffroy Mussard (Shurik'n), Eric Mazel (Khéops) Pascal Perez (Imhotep), François Mendy (Kephren).

So why hip hop here? The exhibition engages with a cultural entity that had a cultural resonance with the communities I was trying to address but also highlights the richness of Hip Hop as a cultural form and conceptual vehicle. Hip hop is a particularly fluid art form

that negates formalism:

[...]where Formalism is recognised as an analysis of culture and art that refuses to consider anything outside the work or movement at hand, including historical, socio-political or economic realities.¹⁰⁹

It is paradoxically trans-nationalist as a medium of dissent and as an associative formation of identity and is context specific in that it engages with the social realities of the geographical location where it is produced. Dublin hip hop deals with Irish Issues while hip hop made by Australian Aboriginals deals with their issues. It's musical structure is also remarkably fluid and can integrate diverse timing, rhythms, beat structures, samples, languages and voice that are particular to a specific geographical location or cultural tradition. Hip Hop also embraces Polyculturalism, a term coined by the Historian Robin Kelley. Which he recognises as:

An evolution beyond multiculturalism that accepts the intrinsic value of cultural and racial diversity, rather than a hierarchical power relationship between ethnicity and authenticity established by the dominant culture.¹¹⁰

Polyculturalism was engaged as a device specifically because it functions in diametric opposition to gentrification which generally is not concerned with integration or diversity. Robin Kelley calls it a modern form of subtle colonialism. This specific regeneration enabled in Marseille is closely aligned to what Cedric Robinson calls Racial Capitalism¹¹¹ which involves the enforcing of precarity through population transfer, and the heterogeneity of social profiles at infra-municipal level.¹¹²

The second element addressed also relates to race and paradox. Hip Hop is an African-American art form and the exhibition also explored France's paradoxical embracing of African-Americans and in particular African-American Culture Makers while marginalising their own immigrant communities, a by-product of France's colonial legacy. France has in one way or another embraced African-Americans since the 1800s. It is estimated that 50,000 free blacks emigrated to Paris from Louisiana beginning in 1803 when Napoleon sold the swathe of land to the Americans. The next influx of African Americans occurred during the First World War when segregated African-American regiments were stationed in France and fought alongside French troops, many of whom stayed in France after the war. The French also embraced jazz and Paris became recognised alongside New Orleans and

¹⁰⁹ Chang, Jeff <https://www.thenation.com/article/hip-hop-chaos-context/> Accessed March 15, 2007.

¹¹⁰ Rosenthal, Lisa; Levy, Sheri R (2010). "The Colorblind, Multicultural, and Polycultural Ideological Approaches to Improving Intergroup Attitudes and Relations". *Social Issues and Policy Review*. 4: p 215

¹¹¹ Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism*. University of North Carolina Press. 1983. p 17

¹¹² Clerval, Anne. *Paris Sans Le Peuple. La gentrification de la capital. La Decouverte*, 2013. p 89

Washington DC as a key intellectual and cultural centre of the Jazz age. African-American artists continued to emigrate to Paris throughout the last century.

I chose the song Revoir Un Printemps to respond to, because it uses the transitioning seasons as a tool to speak about change, strength and continuum. It is nostalgic without sentimentalism and I felt had an analogous relationship to the social situation I was referencing. I have included the lyrics of this song in French and English.

Revoir Un Printemps

Comme quoi la vie finalement nous a tous embarqués
J'en place une pour les bouts d'choux, fraîchement débarqués
À croire que jusqu'à présent, en hiver on vivait
Vu qu'c'est l'printemps, à chaque fois qu'eux sourires apparaissent
J'revois le mien en extase, premier jouet téléguidé
Déguisé en cosmonaute, souhait presque réalisé, instant sacralisé
Trésor de mon cœur jamais épuisé, pour mon âme apaisante, Alizée

Revoir le rayon d'lumière, transpercer les nuages
Après la pluie, la chaleur étouffante assécher la tuile
Revoir encore une fois, l'croissant lunaire embraser la nuit
Embrasser mes anges, quand l'soleil s'noie, faire du sommeil une terre vierge
Converser dehors sous les cierges
Revoir son sourire au lever quand j'émerge
Sur au-delà des turpitudes, des dures habitudes de l'hiver
Peut-être mon enveloppe de môme, abrite un cœur d'Gulliver
Revoir les trésors naturels de l'univers, douce ballerine
L'hirondelle fonde son nid dans mes songes, sublime galerie
À ciel ouvert, les djouns rampent à couvert, nous à l'air libre
Mais les pierres horribles, cachent souvent des gemmes superbes sous le couvercle
Revoir la terre s'ouvrir, dévoiler la mer
Solitaire dans la chambre, sous la lumière qu'les volets lacèrent
Impatient de l'attendre, c'printemps en décembre
En laissant ces mots dans les cendres, de ces années amères

Comme quoi la vie finalement nous a tous embarqués
J'en place une pour les bouts d'choux, fraîchement débarqués
À croire que jusqu'à présent, en hiver on vivait
Vu qu'c'est l'printemps, à chaque fois qu'eux sourires apparaissent
J'revois le mien en extase, premier jouet téléguidé
Déguisé en cosmonaute, souhait presque réalisé, instant sacralisé
Trésor de mon cœur jamais épuisé, pour mon âme apaisante, Alizée

La patience est un arbre, dont la racine est amère et l'fruit doux

J'aimerais revoir mes premiers pas, mes premiers rendez vous
Quand j'pensais, qu'la vie, pouvait rien nous offrir, à part des sous
Maintenant j'sais qu'ça s'résume pas à ça, et qu'c'est un tout
L'tout est d'savoir, voir, penser, avancer, foncer
On sait qu'le temps, dans c'monde n'est pas notre allié
J'aimerais revoir, l'instant unique, qu'a fait d'moi un père, un homme, un mari
On m'aurait dit ça avant, j'aurais pas tenu l'pari
Normal dans mon cœur, y avait la tempête, les pression et l'orage
Et pas beaucoup d'monde qui pouvait supporter cette rage
J'aimerais revoir, ces pages, où on apprenait la vie, sans dérapage
L'partage d'l'évolution, à qui j'rends hommage, loin des typhons
J'aimerais revoir, l'premier sourire, d'mon fiston, mon cœur
Depuis c'jour là, j'me sens fier, c'beau gosse, c'est ma grandeur
Un printemps éternel, une source intarissable, plein d'couleurs
C'est l'jardin d'Eden, qui m'protège d'mes douleurs

Revoir l'époque où y avait qu'des pelés sur le goudron s'arrachant
Autant d'printemps répondant à l'appel d'un air innocent
Moins pressé d'aller à l'école pour les cours qu'pour les potes s'y trouvant
Revoir les parties d'bille sous l'préau se faisant avec acharnement
Tendre moment, jalousement gardé comme tous
Avènement d'une jeune pousse que l'on couvre d'amour
Pour que rien n'salisse mille fleurs jaillissent
Dès qu'son sourire m'éclabousse ça m'électrise
Cette racine va devenir chêne massif, sève de métisse annonçant le renouveau
Le retour d'mes printemps à travers les siens et construire les siens
Pour qu'un jour, il puisse les revivre à son tour
Comme volant à mon secours ces graines fleurissent dans ma tête
Quand la grisaille persiste mur d'images refoulant mes tempêtes
Voir un printemps superbe à nouveau fleurir

Comme quoi la vie finalement nous a tous embarqués
J'en place une pour les bouts d'choux, fraîchement débarqués
À croire que jusqu'à présent, en hiver on vivait
Vu qu'c'est l'printemps, à chaque fois qu'eux sourires apparaissent
J'revois le mien en extase, premier jouet téléguidé
Déguisé en cosmonaute, souhait presque réalisé, instant sacralisé
Trésor de mon cœur jamais épuisé, pour mon âme apaisante, Alizée

Revoir Un Printemps (Seeing Spring Again)

(English translation)

(Chorus)

Like what life finally took us all,
I put one for the cabbage tips, freshly landed
To believe that until now, in winter we lived
Since it's spring, every time their smiles appear
I see mine in ecstasy, first remote control toy
Disguised as cosmonaut, almost realized wish, sacred moment
Treasure of my heart never exhausted, for my soothing soul, Alizée.

Revisit the ray of light, pierce the clouds,
After the rain, the sweltering heat drying the tile
To see again, the crescent lunar ignite the night
Embrace my angels, when the sun goes down
To make sleep a virgin land, to converse out under the
Candles, see her smile again when I emerge, on
Beyond turpitudes, harsh habits of winter
Maybe my kid's envelope houses a Gulliver heart
Revisit the natural treasures of the universe, sweet ballerina
The swallow nest its nest in my dreams, sublime gallery
In the open air, jouns crawl under cover, we in the open air
But the horrible stones, often hide beautiful gems
Under the lid
To see the earth open again, to unveil the sea
Lonely in the bedroom, under the light that the shutters lacerated
Looking forward to waiting for him, see spring in December, leaving
These words in the ashes, of those bitter years

Chorus

Patience is a tree, the root is bitter and the fruit sweet
I would like to review my first steps, my first dates
When I thought, that life, could offer us anything, except for
Now I know it does not crumble at that, and that is a whole,
It's all about knowing, seeing, thinking, moving forward
We know that time in the world is not our ally
I would like to see again, the unique moment, that made me a father
A man, a husband, I would have been told that before, I would not have you bet
Normal in my heart, why was the storm, the pressure and the storm
And not many people who could stand this rage
I'd like to see again, these pages, where we learned about life, without skidding

The sharing of evolution, to whom I pay tribute, far from typhoons
I would like to see again, the first smile, of my son, my heart
Then see'jour there, I feel proud, see'beau kid, see is my size
An eternal spring, an inexhaustible source, full of colors
it is the Garden of Eden, which protects me from my sorrows,

Chorus

Revisit the time when why had peeled on tarring tar
So much of spring answering the call of an innocent air
Less eager to go to school for classes than for friends
Wishing to see the parts of ball under the yard being fiercely
Tender jealously guarded moment like all
Advent of a young sprout covered with love? ..
So that nothing spoils a thousand flowers well
As soon as his smile splashes me it electrifies me this
Root will become solid oak mixed-race sap
Announcing the renewal the return of my spring
Through his own and build his own for one day
He can revive them in turn
As flying to my rescue these seeds are blooming
In my head when the grisaille
Persist wall of images repressing my storms
See a beautiful spring again bloom

This exhibition acted as a kind of a portrait of this song. That was played out over three rooms in an installation format. Each element referencing the song or the sentiment of the song.

One element involved the deconstruction and reinterpretation of the beat structures, samples, voice and lyrical content of this song. I employed a specific methodology to visually interpret and articulate this music. This methodology was developed as part of a project entitled After Mahler. After Mahler began as a body of research undertaken in 2011

as part of a residency at Gertrude Contemporary in Melbourne, Australia. Focusing on the impact of classical music in popular culture. With a specific emphasis on the work of Gustav Mahler. This project evolved to become a series of graphic scores/interpretations of *Das Lied von der Erde* (“The Song of the Earth”) Mahler’s interpretation of an anonymous Chinese poem. These Graphic notations were further re-interpreted live by myself and New York based musicians Ted Riederer and Simon Jermyn as part of an exhibition entitled “All Humans do” that took place at White Box, New York in January 2012. These interpretations were recorded live, cut to vinyl and made available to listen to for the duration of the exhibition. For Revoir Un Printemps the elements that made up much of the installation acted as a form of graphic notation made from threads and silk ribbons which were arranged as wall based assemblages. Forms of this pictorial methodology were present in each room. (Figure 14)

“Another time”, this piece was a hand carved flower from Japanese Basswood that was suspended from the ceiling of the gallery. (figure 15)

“Here again”: This exhibition also incorporated a playable musical composition, where a section of the song was transferred onto playable punched paper which was played on a componium. (figure 16)

“Some Stories Persist”: I made an intervention that involved my pinning a section of player piano roll onto a wall. This printed content consisted of African American plantation songs such as But is it so by Scott Gatty.

Rise and Shine world: The exhibition also included a constructed garden piece entitled Rise and Shine world¹¹³, I collected soil, wild flowers and weeds from the rubble surrounding housing estates in the D’Air Belle region of Marseille where much of its displaced communities had been housed and took this soil and plants and built a garden within the gallery. (Figure 17)

Radio: As part of the exhibition I was invited by Radio Grenouille, a non-profit public radio station in Marseille to host a two-hour radio show.

The second project that will be discussed also engages an inter-reliance between site and context and is played out in a gallery setting. This exhibition also uses the gallery as a site of social responsiveness. This exhibition took place in 2014 close to the impending celebration of Ireland’s one hundred years of independence as a state. My engagement with this collection encouraged me to develop a body of research and responsive artworks that

¹¹³ The title *Rise and Shine World* was a lyric taken from a track called wake Up Everybody that was part of a Mix tape entitled *Wake up Radio* by John Legend, J Period and The Roots.

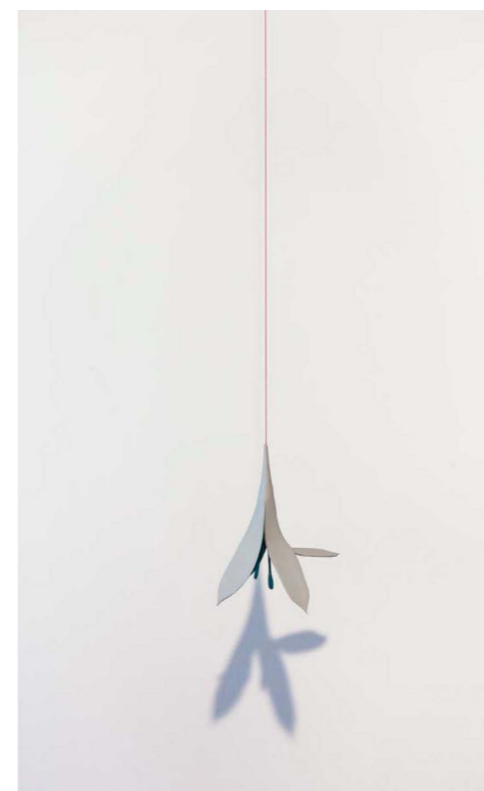


Figure 15

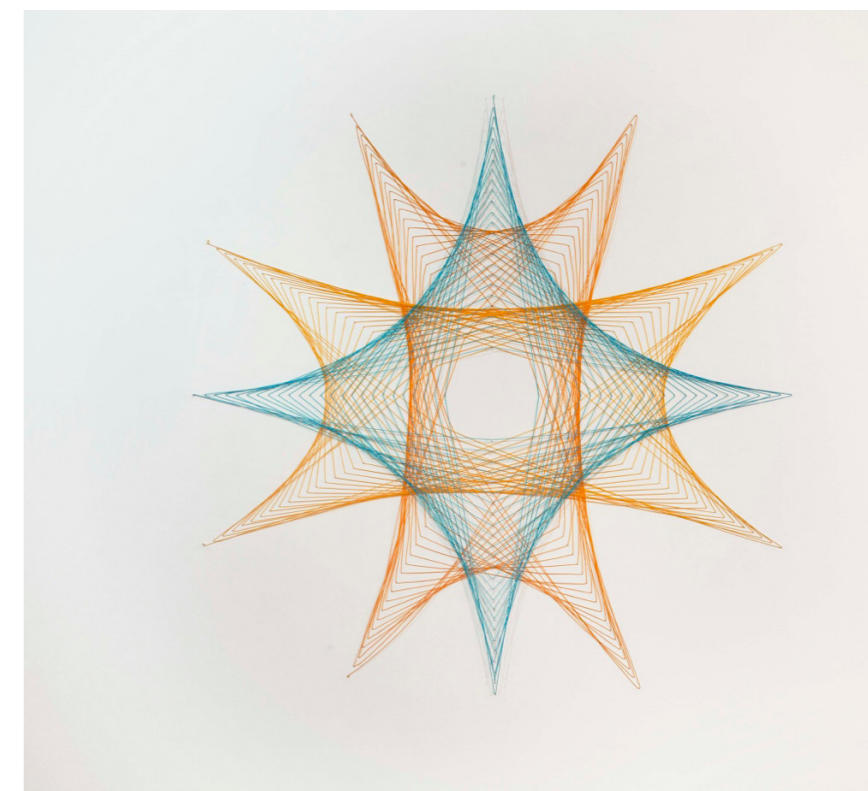


Figure 14



Figure 16:

Mark Garry. Revoir Un Printemps, (Seeing spring again) Galerie du 5e, Maseille France. 2014



Figure 17:
Mark Garry. Revoir Un Printemps, (Seeing spring again) 2014 Galerie du 5e, Maseille France

would both engage social and cultural elements of this locality and question the nature of the interaction between Irish citizens since the development of the independent Irish Republic and the inseparability of the personal from the political.

2.5 A Winter Light

A Winter Light was an exhibition at The Model Home of The Niland Collection in Sligo. The work for this exhibition was realised on site during a three-month residency at the Model. As the name of this museum intimates the Model houses a remarkable collection of early 20th-century art, that was accumulated by Nora Niland as a regional art collection for Sligo. This collection was where the research began. The collection has become remarkably diverse over the years but the reserarch for this exhibition focused on works by Irish artists that comprise the early part of the collection, a number of whom became important figures in the Irelands artistic and political history. Artists such as Jack B Yeats, Percy French. Paul Henry, Mainie Jellet and Irish artist, politician, suffragist and revolutionary socialist Constance Gore-Booth who later became known as Countess Markievicz.

The journey through the galleries broadly narrated three inter-connected elements. 1: The works in the collection. 2: The social and cultural elements of this locality. 3: Questions about the nature of interactions between Irish citizens since the development of the independent Irish Republic and the inseparability of the personal from the political. Each individual space had a series of mechanisms that dealt with specific characteristics as part of a broader discourse. The title of the show A Winter Light alluded to how I perceived the state of the nation at that time. I percieved a darkness that still hung over the nation. As a nation we had continued to enable class disparity and the exploitation of citizens by both fellow citizens beginning with the allegiances between church and state in the earlier part of the century and the collusion between the state, big business and the banking industry towards the end of the century.

Each room was also individually titled, these rooms included:

“A Winter Light”: This was a site-specific installation made up of a beaded work and a series of carved flowers and a spectrum made of tread. This room also included an artwork entitled “Assumption” by the Irish Modernist artist Mainie Jellett from the Model’s Niland collection. This work had a number of associative relationships with the other works in the space and these defined the colour range of the spectrum work. This selection of objects and the specific manner of the room’s activation combine to subtly speak about landscape and our complex relationship with it and Ireland’s relationship with the United States. (Figure 18)



Figure 18:
Mark Garry. A winter
light. The Model
home of the Niland
Collection.2014



Figure 19:
Mark Garry. A winter
light. The Model
home of the Niland
Collection.2014.

“The Moon and Other Lights”: This was a series of sixteen photographic works of taken over a three-month period. The works are depictions of moonlight and streetlights photographed at night through a mist. These works acted as an analogy for how one’s character is both innate and socially constructed.

“Karen” This space included three elements. A vitrine containing two peacock feathers, a tear shaped wooden birdcage containing a live female canary and three large screen prints of the Cherokee folk blues singer Karen Dalton. (Figure 19)

This space acted as a means to refer to the complex elements that make up the Irish psyche; Peacock feathers are viewed as signifying bad luck. These feathers acknowledged Irelands many superstitions, a legacy of Ireland pagan past. Some believe this association:

[...] began in the Mediterranean region where the ends of the feathers represented the “evil eye” of the female demon Lilith, who is the harbinger of misfortune, illness, and death. In Eastern Europe, peacock feathers are traditionally a symbol of bad luck because they were once worn by the invading Mongols in the 13th century.¹¹⁴

Karen Dalton was a Cherokee folk blues singer who was briefly prominent in the Greenwich `village folk scene in the 1960s. Dalton made remarkably beautiful music but had a particularly tragic life. Divorced twice by the age of 21, she struggled with alcohol and heroine addiction for all of her life. Estranged from her children and often homeless she died of AIDS- related illnesses aged 55 in a mobile home outside the town of Hurley near Woodstock, New York in 1993. She had no commercial success during her lifetime but tragically has gained significant recognition and record sales since her death. These depictions of Dalton acted as a means to connote Ireland paradoxical veneration of cultural elements that combine subjective beauty, melancholy and melodrama.

The third element of this installation was a meticulously constructed birdcage with the woven wire acting as bars. The cage was shaped like a tear and contained a live male canary. I chose a female canary as the female canaries do not sing. The use of the canary referenced the use of canaries in mines where their demise alerted the minors of a gas leak. This delicate silent bird also referenced the social reality of post-colonial Ireland. Where when we as a nation, when freed of our colonial oppressors engaged in the widespread incarceration of our own people, usually the poor or vulnerable elements of our society. And while all elements of society were aware of these atrocities we maintained a silence around them.

114 <https://acwm.org/blog/white-house-wednesday-peacock-feathers-mere-decoration-or-evil-eye>. Accessed 6/9/2019

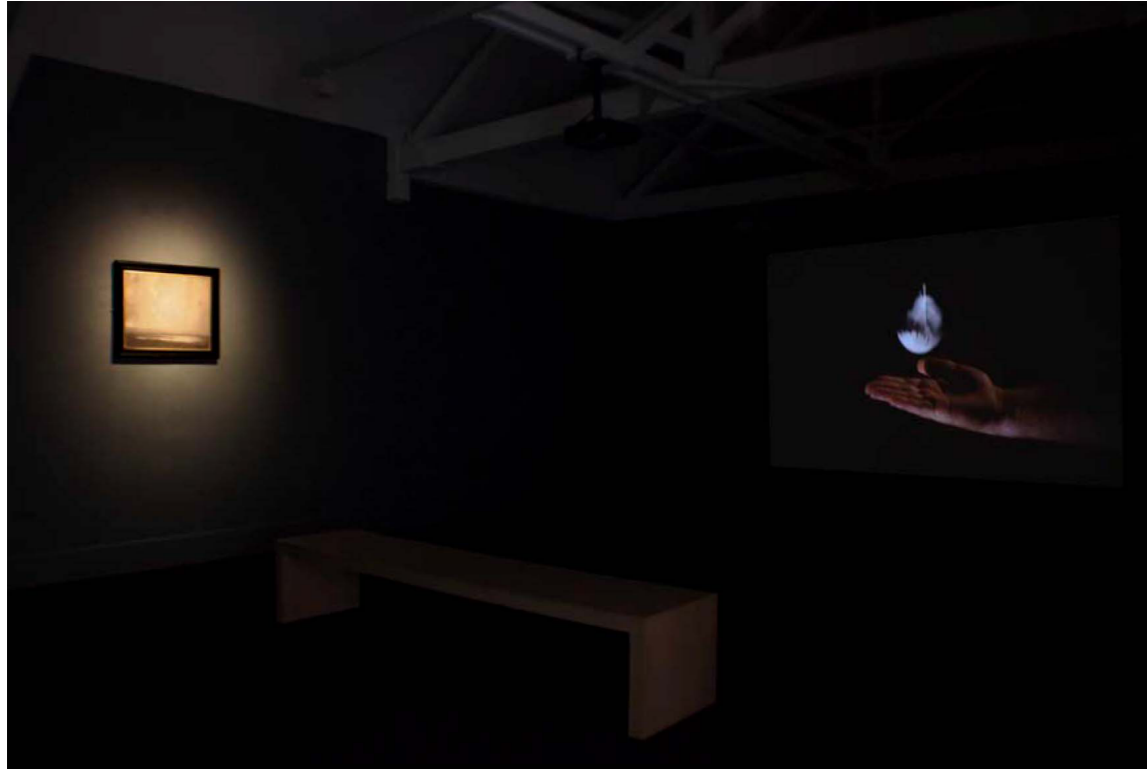


Figure 20: Paul Henry, Early Morning on Donegal Lough. 1917. Oil on canvas. Collection of The Model home of the Niland Collection.

Figure 22: Paul Henry, The Lake of the tears of the sorrowing women. 1916. Oil on canvas. Collection of The Model home of the Niland Collection.



Figure 21:
Mark Garry. Bridges Burned and Backs Turned. A winter light.
The Model home of the Niland Collection.2014.
<https://vimeo.com/378165469>

We as a nation were complicit in these atrocities by proactively engaged in silence as a mode where a kind of buried silence was enabled, where each governing aspect of society was complicit via their silence.

“Bridges Burned and backs Turned.” This was an installation that integrated a new film work that was presented with two paintings by Irish Paul Henry again from the Model’s Niland collection. These paintings are “Early Morning on Donegal Lough” circa 1917-1918 and “The lake of the Tears of Sorrowful Women” circa 1916-1917. These Paintings

are somewhat unusual for Henry in that they are quite subdued depictions of the Irish landscape, with muted colours and compositionally minimal. (Figure 20 and 22)

The paintings were presented in a room with a projected silent film. This film is a depiction of a hand repeatedly releasing a white feather, that slowly falls downwards and gets caught just before it hits the ground, this action repeats over three minutes until finally the feather is not caught and is blown away out of shot. This film was unusual for me in that it was silent, this was a means for me to reiterate the enabled buried silence I spoke about in the discussion of the last artwork. (Figure 22)

Henry’s painted depictions of the North West of Ireland. Portrayals of rural Ireland, paintings of people engaged in manual labour working on the land or at sea. Paintings of stacks of turf and small cottages in desolate landscapes. These images were instrumentalised by the Irish state in a number of ways, his images were used by the Irish tourist board to ‘sell Ireland abroad’ and in many ways became pictorial mechanisms for how Ireland would be viewed from abroad but also how Ireland as a nation would associatively define itself going forward as an independent nation. I viewed this instrumentalization as a deeply problematic romanticism of poverty and a semiotic washing of colonialism.

Bridges Burned and Backs Turned tried to engage carefulness as an entity and its

display with the paintings attempted to make this work act as a discourse in relation to nationhood. This collection of artworks acted as a poetic methodology to speak about the manner in which Ireland's citizens acted towards one another since our Independence where the personal and political intersect.

“History Windows” This room was made up of a series of works that related to individuals and topographic characteristics that had/s a symbolic or associative relationship with Sligo. These included works that related to the suffragette and revolutionary nationalist Constance Markievicz and the writer William Butler Yeats. These works acted as a means to speak about the role of women Ireland's revolutionary movements and the paradoxes inherent in the work and associations of W.B Yeats.

This collection of elements combined to implicate the exhibition as a space of social responsiveness. In this instance a number of inter-related social, historical and political are implicated both as research source, a characteristic of generative process and artistic response.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by describing two different types of practice as a means to position my own work within a broader discussion of inter-reliance as an art making mode where there is an interdiscursivity between site and context. This choice is reflective of current positions within context responsive practices where many contemporary artists, when engaged in practices that engage with the broader social world choose to do so in public sites outside of the traditional confines of art in physical and intellectual terms.¹¹⁵ These artists strive for a stronger and more direct political engagement with the world and everyday life and do so by positioning themselves outside of the conventions of the gallery.

This chapter also suggests that it is not necessary to negate gallery conventions to engage in social practice and that social practices can benefit from positioning themselves within an institution and in some cases instrumentalising the associations and agency of the conventions of the gallery or museum. Engaging forms of empathetic commentary on a social situation.

What was important in Revoir Un Printemps and A winter Light was the engagement with site and context. In these instances the installation or site-specific intervention implicates site as a source of meaning, where inter-reliance between site and context are enabled in an artwork. Where the locality acts as a kind of mould for the work,¹¹⁶ where

¹¹⁵ Kwon, Miwon. Chapter 2 One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity. (Space Site Intervention.) Situating Installation Art. University of Minnesota Press. Erica Suderberg. 2000. p 43

¹¹⁶ Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015. p 352

there is a reciprocal conditionality or dialect between an artwork and its surroundings.¹¹⁷

Anne Ring Peterson proposes that by its very nature as an activity installations are site specific:

[...] Installations create a spatial ambience. Thereby it not only creates a space for viewers to position themselves in a physical sense, but it also forms a site which has its own identity and meaning – the site of the work..... the installation arranges its own site in an existing location, it is also connected to the space and the meanings of the location itself. The connection to the site may be weak, as it often is with a reproducible installation, or it may be strong, as we see in site-specific installations where the inclusion of the location, and possibly even some of the contexts surrounding the artistic intervention provides the basis for the work itself.¹¹⁸

Miwon Kwon in her essay One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specific Art and Location Identity, tries to articulate what she perceives as the positioning of artists who are engaging in site-specificity at the turn of the century, she posits that the concerns can be broken into three distinct paradigms; the phenomenological and empirically based, the social and institutional, and the discursive paradigm.¹¹⁹ In the 1960's artists like Michael Asher, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Robert Smithson and Mierle Laderman Ukeles each viewed site not only as a physical spatial unit but as a culturally defined structure with links to more extensive economic, political and social structures.¹²⁰ These structures were inherently linked to the institution and these artists devised structures and devised systems to question and undermine the said institution.

Revoir Un Printemps, and A Winter Light fall into Kwons' third discursive paradigm, in that they are not so concerned with the critique of the cultural confinement of art and are concerned with an intense engagement with the outside world and everyday life, concerned with integrating art more directly into the realm of the social.¹²¹ The particular types of site-specific and context responsive installation spoken about in this chapter, also engage another element. Because of their specific engagement with the social, they implicate the associative. Anne Ring Peterson describes this as discursive, but whilst discursive describes their motivation, the actual experiencing of these installations is more complex. Whilst social practices are played out in many forms in contemporary art practices there is something specifically empathetic about ones engaging the social via the use of installation as a model, in that in the experiencing of an installation the art work is physically felt and heard in addition to being viewed. This felt experiencing heightens one's associative cognisance of

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015. 351

¹¹⁹ Ibid p 354

¹²⁰ Ibid p 357

¹²¹ Kwon, Miwon. Chapter 2 One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity. (Space Site Intervention.) Situating Installation Art. University of Minnesota Press. Erica Suderberg. 2000. p 43

other humans felt experiencing. This felt experiencing is contextually aligned with a concept or social subject. Installations enable a particular form of empathetic inter-reliance via this merging of felt experiencing and contextual awareness within a spatial situation.

This form of empathetic inter-reliance is enabled by a merging of four elements, form, time, context and positioning. Form or more precisely a space shaped by the artist, i.e. a three-dimensional environment or spatial entity that has physical as well as semiotic aspects.¹²² Time; where time is broken into two categories; firstly, an awareness of temporality and secondly, The time of Reception, what, Gottfried Boehm calls the production time I.e. the time that passes when decoding and understanding, which is a successive and time-consuming process.¹²³ Context, where context is made up of; Site; the artworks physical and architectural settings and the Societal; the social, the locality, the economic or historical fabric of a site. Positioning; where position encapsulates, the conceptual framework, artistic aspirations and response to the social situation.¹²⁴ Positioning also involves a merging of ethical values and responsiveness.

Mine and the other site-specific artworks discussed in this chapter, in addition to their enabling of a dialectic between an artwork and its context/surroundings also involve a specific situation where the visitors physical presence and movement in and around the work become a necessary precondition for the experience of the work.¹²⁵ Where the visitors eyes and acts of vision are just as closely associated with the body, its sensations and movements as the work is to its site.¹²⁶ Site-specific socially responsive practices create particular spaces of exchange that are dependent on the inter-reliance of the associative, perceptually felt, experiential and an awareness of the broader social world outside of the concerns of the art world and art history. They activate space through forms of empathetic exchange.

Each artwork does so in a manner that incorporates or merges a set of preconditions that are crucial in establishing a particular type of relationship between subject and experience. They enable staged spaces into which they must enter and in which the encounter with the work must unfold.¹²⁷ They merge two attitudinal places of convergence, the phenomenological and the contextual. The phenomenological focuses on the

122 Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015. p 49

123 Boehm, Gottfried. "Bild und Zeit" in Das Phanomen Zeit und Wissenschaft, ed, Hannelore Panfilk, Wein Heim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, Acta humaniora. 1987. p 3

124 Michel De Certeau suggests that the simultaneous enabling of the phenomenological and associative, creates a new space where:

[...] one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orientate it, situate it, temporalize it

De Certeau, Michel. The Practice of Everyday life. Berkeley: University of California press. 1984. p 117.

125 Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015. p 355

126 Ibid.

127 Ring Peterson, Anne. Installation Art. Between Image and Stage. Museum Tusculanum Press. 2015 p381

installation/engaged site as a spatial ambiance and analyses its situational and temporal dimensions and the audiences interaction with the work.¹²⁸ The Contextual focuses on the works connection with external circumstances, the historical, social, cultural and political circumstances that exist in the surrounding society.¹²⁹ These situations enable forms of associative intercorporeality where the transition from object to space and the merging of the phenomenological and contextual have as Anne Ring Peterson states:

[...] undermined the notion of the autonomous art work and have established a new standard which says that the contextual circumstances or parergon, should always be taken into consideration when viewing an art work.¹³⁰

The next chapter also engages forms of interdiscursivity. This involves an inter-reliant dialogue between a series of cinematic devices and the forms of embodied temporal cinematic experiencing they facilitate.

Chapter 3: Temporality in cinema (Slow film, the Poetic, Sublime and Transcendent)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will engage with the film aspect of my practice. In addition to highlighting the specific concerns of two of my films it will use Slow cinema as a means of locating my film works within a broader theoretical film framework. It will also questions the inherent value structures of temporality in film. This in turn acts as a strategy to implicate inter-reliance where it occurs in three forms in this chapter. It implicates the inter-reliance between cinematic time and attention, the inter-reliance between theory and practice and an inter-reliance between temporality and cinematic truth and the specific forms of encounter these enable.

This chapter will engage with the filmic elements of my art practice, integrating two of my moving image works, Landscapes from 2005 and North of the West from 2015. While the preceding chapters explored the use of time in art making, or more specifically temporality as a device in installation practices and musical performances, this chapter explores the use of duration in relation to moving image. This chapter implicates the

128 ibid.

129 ibid.

130 ibid

inter-reliance between specific cinematic devices and the enabling of expanded temporal experience of moving image works. Chapter one discussed the use of enabled temporality in the experiencing of an art work or artistic situation, this chapter re-iterates the facilitating of temporal cinematic experiencing. Locating a discussion of the specific motivations and aspirations of *Landscapes* and *North of the West* within a broader discussion of the facilitation of inter-reliance of time and cinematic experiencing in Slow Cinema. The discussion describes the devices, mechanisms and motivations of slow cinema and locates where and why these characteristics are apparent in *Landscapes* and *North of the West*.¹³¹

While each of the films have specific concerns and aspirations, there are persistent, reoccurring elements. Each implicate landscape and/or natural forms as symbolic, associative and/or pictorial devices and each use wind as a device or activator of action or meaning while none engage text based or spoke narrative. They, as with all forms of film, record time and impose duration, but each of my films use expanded temporality with specific aims and aspirations for this use of filmic time. They use slowness and devices such as long takes, as a means of enabling a temporal unfolding where conventional narrative is negated and a contemplative and ruminative mode of spectatorship is prioritised.¹³² The chapter attempts to critically locate each film in a discursive space specific to each individual film, and will involve a range of theoretical positionings. Each will prioritise to a greater or lesser degree, characteristics and ideas that relate to Slow Cinema within these discussions. Such as the long take, cinematic slowness, withholding as a device, panning shots, Deleuze's concept of the crystal image and Bazin's concept of enabled realism.

This chapter will begin with an introduction to the mechanics and aspirations of both films. This will be followed by an overview of Slow cinema, integrating both its contemporary definition and thematic lineage. A critical locating of each of the films will then take place, this locating will focus on a number of theoretical positions that relate to the aspirations of each specific film work. Prior to the conclusion there will be a discussion of the choices and use of music in the films.

3.2 Film Descriptions

Landscapes

Credits:

Landscapes (2005). 13 Minutes 34 Seconds.

Concept: Mark Garry.

Direction: Mark Garry.

Cinematography: Myles Claffey.

Sound: Karl Burke.

Additional composition: Karl Burke.

¹³¹ *North of the west* was made to have a specific contextual relationship to other art works in a multi room gallery setting. In my analysis I will note these contextual relationships but discuss the film as an individual entity.

¹³² Çağlayan, Orhan Emre. Screening Boredom. The History and Aesthetics of Slow Cinema. A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Film Studies University of Kent. February 2014 <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30704535.pdf> Accessed 12/2/202

Editing: Mark Garry.

The generative process for this film began with a period of research, motivated by a perceived demise of interest in the Irish landscape or more specifically a perceived demise in a particular kind of associative connection to the Irish Landscape. I was interested in Irish mythology and legacies of Ireland's Pre-Christian, pagan beliefs systems as they related to the formation of landscape. Examples included fairy forts or Rathes, which are the remnants of Iron age - Bronze age dwellings known as Lios or Hill forts/Ring forts, that had deeply imbedded relationship to mythological and supernatural beliefs. This perceived demise in interest coincided with a turn towards a greater engagement with television and contemporary digital technology by the generation of Irish people that followed mine. Rather than focus on a specific mythology or archaeological site, the work stemmed from an aspiration to view the Irish landscape more broadly as a place of possibility and wonder. The film engages a minimal, composition. Consisting of a series of scenes of three transparent plastic sheets that are slowly moved by the wind. Shot on digital video is real time (24 frames per second), using a static camera and a large aperture. Made up of long shots, medium shots and close ups. The pacing and pictorial logic of the film is subtly mirrored by the soundtrack. In its editing it uses predominantly straight cuts with two transitions. The film is made up of 8 scenes and was shot in a forest in Sligo called Union Woods, during the summer over three days, in what is recognised as the golden hour (shortly before sunset). The films colour was graded in post-production to have a neutral tone neither overtly warm or cold. (Figure 23) The soundtrack was made up of a merging of field recordings of the forest and additional site specific compositions by Karl Burke. Prior to our filming Burke had been commissioned by Sligo's Arts office to make a sonic response to this forest. For two months Burke had used the forest as a studio, composing, generating and recording music within the forest. He used guitars and various pedals and small amplifiers and a number of sonic apparatus that he had devised such as tensioning cello strings between trees which he would amplify and play with a bow. Creating a soundtrack about the forest within the forest Burke's work culminated in a performance within the forest. Burke took these new compositions and merged them with field recordings and digitally processed them to become the soundtrack for the film. Tonally and structurally this soundtrack is ambient in that it prioritises tone and atmosphere and lacks a defining time signature or structured melody. It moves slowly between, field recordings, tonally melancholic drones and textural layers and more complex discordance and occasional silence.

North of the West

North of the west (2015) 8 minutes 47seconds.

Concept: Mark Garry.

Direction: Mark Garry
Cinematography: Padraig Cunningham.
Sound: Mark Garry and Sean Carpio.
Editing: Mark Garry and Padraig Cunningham.

As noted in the introduction North of the West was part of an exhibition entitled An Afterwards that took place at the Luan Gallery in Athlone. This exhibition involved a multidimensional approach, integrating a diverse range of media and mechanisms, throughout a number of rooms. I grew up close to the location of the gallery and spend much time there as a child. As with all of the exhibitions An Afterwards both activated architectural space and reference a set of conceptual criteria, in this case the criteria references the social and cultural characteristics of my childhood.

I used this exhibition as an opportunity to retrospective examination of the social and cultural aspects of my childhood. As Rachael Gilbourne wrote in an accompanying publication the exhibition sought to look at what may lie at the core of our own conditioning, knowledge and social codes.¹³³ The exhibition integrated art works by my parents alongside mine and referenced various foundational characteristics of my childhood, such as my relationship to rural pictorial space, my cultural and social encounters with politics, film, music, literature and architecture. The exhibition acting as an opportunity for me to assess and reassess the elements that combined in defining my personality and politics as Gilbourne suggests;

In our lives we set to conquer and fail as we grow, often only to return to what once was, and will always be. How do we negotiate this continual process of back and forth, the contradiction of change and changelessness.¹³⁴

The film aspect of the exhibition, as with the other aspect of the exhibition An Afterwards engaged in a retrospective examination of the most dominant socio geographic elements characteristic of my childhood. These were the Catholic church and living on an island surrounded by the sea. This film acted as a means of structuring an allegorical parallel between the sea and my paradoxical childhood relationship with the Christian faith – both powerful, immense, beautiful and potentially terrifyingly omnipresent elements that surround the island of Ireland.

The visual subject of the film is made up of 6 scenes, made up of wide and close up shots of the Atlantic ocean filmed from the coast line. The film was shot at high speed over one day during a spring storm at Mullaghmore Peninsula in County Sligo. This film is edited using straight cuts. (Figure 24 and 25)

¹³³ Gilbourne, Rachael, An Afterwards, the Luan Gallery, Athlone. 2017, p 3

¹³⁴ Ibid



Figure 23: Mark Garry. Landscapes (2005). Film Stills
<https://vimeo.com/694364433>

Mullaghmore Peninsula is noted for the enormity of waves that break off its shore. Structurally the film is made up of six fixed camera scenes, the first four scenes are close-in shots of an aggressive, tumultuous sea, dark and complex in tone. The sixth shot is a wide shot of the open sea during the storm, with a much brighter tone.

The display mechanisms involved in the presentation of this film are somewhat unorthodox. The film is projected and the soundtrack is not directly connected to the film. The soundtrack is a separate entity and is available to play on a vinyl record that is located on a turntable adjacent to the seating in front of the projector. It is the choice of the audience to play or not play the soundtrack.

The Soundtrack itself was an existing sonic artwork by me and musician Sean Carpio. It is a recording that was related to the Drift performance, discussed earlier in this chapter. It is a related but independent piece, commissioned by Irelands Music Network. For this recording we created a situation that integrated certain conceptual and sonic elements from the Drift performance and then processed the material through more protracted methods. The recordings were made with two saxophonists, Robert Stillman and Robin Fincker (Robin Fincker also performed as part of the original Drift performance.) and an accordionist, Nigel Towse and three Aeolian harps recorded over three days in a small forest in Dublin's Phoenix Park. The music was improvised in short takes with minimal guidance and subsequently processed and edited by me and arranged by Carpio. The recording was released solely as a 10" vinyl record.

Tonally and structurally this soundtrack is, as with the Landscapes film ambient in that it prioritises tone and atmosphere, lacks a defining time signature or structured melody. It slowly builds in volume and complexity of layering. It moves slowly between melancholic drones and textural layers and more complex discordance and occasional silence.

3.3 Slow Cinema, ideas and definitions

The definition of slow cinema engages two inter-related elements. A: An aesthetic practice within filmmaking, a merging of stylistic techniques, whose function is to achieve a contemplative mode of spectatorship. B: A delineating of a lineage of historical critical positioning in relation to this idea.

The term Slow Cinema has come to denote a structural and stylistic tendency in both



Figure 24 and 25:
North of the west (2015) Film stills.
<https://vimeo.com/378151576>

mainstream and art-house cinema, traversing the boundaries of documentary, fiction and experimental film. The central characteristic of these diverse moving image works has to do with forms of enabled slowness or duration. In certain cases this has to do with the overall duration of the films, such as the work of Filipino film maker Lav Diaz for example, who's films are often over five hours long. Additionally more prevalent in these works is the use of specific structural devices such as long camera takes and delayed cuts, that combine to engage and/or enable temporality.

Emre Çağlayan elaborates upon the use of duration in his describing of slow cinema;

[...] as a discrete strand of contemporary art cinema, slow cinema's distinguishing characteristics pertain ultimately to its aesthetic design, which comprises techniques associated with cinematic minimalism and realism. These films retard narrative pace and elide causality, displacing conventional storytelling devices for the benefit of establishing and sustaining a mood and atmosphere, which are often stretched to their extreme in order to impel the viewers to confront cinematic temporality in all its undivided glory [...] The films' aesthetic trademarks include a mannered use of the long take and a resolute emphasis on dead time: devices that foster a mode of narration that initially appears baffling, cryptic and incomprehensible, but offers, above all, an extended experience of duration on screen.¹³⁵

Implicated in this strand of filmmaking are the works of: Chantal Akerman, Lisandro Alonso, Pedro Costa, Lav Diaz, Carl Theodor Dreyer, Tsai Ming-liang, Yasujiro Ozu, Jenni Olson, Carlos Reygadas, Ben Rivers, Béla Tarr and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Slow Cinema is an evolving idea and practice, not located in any specific genre or geographical location, it is an inter-cultural global practice. The term Slow Cinema is attributed to Jonathan Romney in 2010 in his review of a movement within art cinema that gained prominence during the 2000's. As Emre explains:

Romney's article was published as part of Sight & Sound's tribute to the first decade of twenty-first-century cinema that included a list of 30 films, numerous of which belonged to the slow cinema tradition. Romney described slow cinema in a much-cited passage as a "varied strain of austere minimalist cinema that has thrived internationally over the past ten years". Its primary mission, according to Romney, was "a certain rarefied intensity in the artistic gaze, [...] a cinema that downplays event in favour of mood, evocativeness and an intensified sense of temporality"¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Çağlayan, Emre Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. p 4

¹³⁶ Ibid

This position was expanded upon in an article entitled 'Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema' published in 2008 by Matthew Flanagan. Initially Flanagan is particularly definitive in his description, suggesting that in order to be described as slow film/cinema the film must have three constitutive elements. A: An undramatic narrative. B: A long take, i.e. an unbroken representation of an event or non-event. C: Stillness. (in terms of camera set-up).¹³⁷ He then expands upon this somewhat narrow definition, describing the common stylistic tropes of these films as "the employment of (often extremely) long takes, de-centred and understated modes of story-telling, and a pronounced emphasis on quietude and the everyday."¹³⁸ Flanagan wants us to consider this specific engagement of temporality as more than an aesthetic flourish.¹³⁹

In light of the current prevalence of these stylistic tropes, it is perhaps time to consider their reciprocal employment as pertaining not to an abstract notion of 'slowness' but a unique formal and structural design: an aesthetic of slow.¹⁴⁰

He recognises this movement as a shift away from industrially conditioned habits and, "compels us to retreat from a culture of speed, modify our expectations of filmic narration and physically attune to a more deliberate rhythm."¹⁴¹

Slow cinema is undeniably a part of a long lineage of contemporary art, avant-garde, art-house and experimental film that engages time in a specific manner and implicates the inter-reliance between cinematic time and attention. Two of the most prominent art examples being Andy Warhol's Empire from 1964 an eight hour and five minutes, single stationary view of the Empire State building and Michael Snow's La Région Centrale from 1972, a three hour seventeen shot contemplation of an uninhabited mountainous Canadian landscape. Many of the stylistic/structural tendencies of Slow Cinema were also apparent in a many mainstream films since the 1960's such as Michelangelo Antonioni's tetralogy L'Avventura, La Notte, L'Eclisse and Red Desert released between 1961 and 1964 and much earlier in Scandinavian films, such as Carl Theodore Dreyer's Day of Wrath from 1948 and The Phantom Carriage by Victor Sjöström from 1921.

The use of the term slow can also be observed in the describing of a number of other contemporary socio cultural movements such as Slow Food, Slow Criticism, Slow Media and Slow Science, all of which Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge suggest, aim

¹³⁷ Flanagan Matthew, "Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema," 16:9 6.29 (2008), http://www.16-9.dk/2008-11/side11_inenglish.htm. Accessed 10/1/2020

¹³⁸ De Luca, Tiago and Barradas Jorge, Slow Cinema. Edinburgh University Press. 2016. p 1

¹³⁹ Çağlayan Emre. Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. p 6

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Çağlayan Emre. Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. p 6

to rescue extended temporal structures from the accelerated tempo of late capitalism.¹⁴² This is not to suggest that each slow movement has a singular fundamental position that each are adhering to, but slow films would seem to share narrative and aesthetic features that lend themselves to a prevailing discourse of slowness which here finds its cinematic materialisation.¹⁴³

There are of course contradictory positions and alternative definitions of this particular cinematic style or tendency. Harry Tuttle coined the acronym CCC (Contemporary Contemplative Cinema) to describe this movement. Many of the stylistic elements that are now recognised as characteristics of slow film/cinema were partly captured by Paul Schrader in his coining of the phrase 'Transcendental Style' in his book *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer (1972)*, where he discusses what he perceives as a number of discernible stylistic and aspirational commonalities in the films of Yasujiro Ozu, Robert Bresson and Carl Dreyer. The connection between Schrader's Transcendental Style and what has become known as Slow Cinema has become more prevalent in Schrader's subsequent revisiting of his Transcendental Style in Film.

Schrader's specific engagement with the spiritual in film will be revisited in the discussion of the last film in this chapter and rather than focus on this element here, it might be more useful to highlight the stylistic and structural elements that Schrader initially used to characterise a transcendental style, many of which are recognised as contingent elements/aspirations of what is now recognised as slow cinema. These characteristics can be broken into two factors, firstly style and aspiration and secondly lineage.

Schrader suggests that the essence of motion pictures is action and empathy. The image or photograph in the case of film holds empathy. Images of objects or persons that we relate to and the photographs move, enabling empathy and action.¹⁴⁴ He posits that what differentiates between mainstream cinema and what he describes as Transcendental Style or contemplative cinema has to do with the use of action. Transcendental Style in the place of action offers delayed action or sometimes inaction characters walk slowly, speak slowly, there are pauses, lengthy tableaux where nothing seems to happen. There are obsessively long camera takes and delayed cuts.¹⁴⁵

He implicates the use of three specific devices that engage time, firstly withholding as a device, where film engages a withholding of desired and expected elements from the viewer. He suggests that forms of slow or contemplative cinema take a lean back

142 De Luca, Tiago and Barradas Jorge, *Slow Cinema*. Edinburgh University Press. 2016. p 3

143 Ibid

144 These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 4/7/2020

145 Ibid

approach,¹⁴⁶ Mainstream cinema grabs us by the lapels, they hold us tight, they shows us pictures of beautiful people and exciting action and all the while they play music so we know how to feel every single moment,¹⁴⁷ they lean into the viewer, desperate for the viewer's attention. Contemplative films on the other hand lean away and challenge the viewer to lean forward and become part of the films journey and become active rather than passive.¹⁴⁸ This use of time in enabling active participation on the part of the viewer, is a pivotal characteristic in the ability of these forms of cinema to enable an inter-reliance between cinematic time and attention.

Schrader also implicates withholding devices in the use of music. Underscoring is the location of music quietly under spoken dialogue, and he suggests that its use in mainstream cinema is the simplest, most effective way to dictate emotion, it tells you how to feel happy, scared, sad and so forth.¹⁴⁹ He suggests that in Transcendental Style there is often no musical underscoring, only sound effects, no musical guideposts, or music is used unexpectedly.¹⁵⁰

The second device he implicates is the single master shot, where there is a single (often) expansive wide shot that does not implicate edits or camera movement, a single uninterrupted shot. In this situation;

[...] the viewer is not being instructed by edits. You are not being told which character or line of dialogue is more important at a particular moment. The viewers eye must make its own choice as it pans across the screen to see which character it wants to concentrate on at that particular point.¹⁵¹

The third device is the delayed cut and its enabling of dead time, where rather than moving swiftly from shot to shot and cut to cut, certain cuts are paused or delayed and duration is enabled.

Schrader suggests that:

It was Robert Bresson who first realised that the unnecessary protraction of time, holding onto the image longer than the viewer expects had a Phenomenological effect where the viewer becomes aware of watching something over time. This is what Henri Bergson called la durée, duration of an experience, the duration changes the relationship between the seer

146 These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 4/7/2020

147 Ibid

148 Ibid

149 Ibid

150 Ibid

151 Ibid

and the seen [...] Bresson, Ozu, Rossellini use this type of duration to create meditative cinema, Mizoguchi and Antonioni use it to create contemplative cinema. This use of duration enable us to become active viewers, where we create a movie while watching a movie. You are leaning into the film and becoming part of the creative process of the film.¹⁵²

These three technical elements that Schrader describes are a rejection of montage, which was the predominant technical device in pre-second world war European filmmaking.

The forms of film discussed by Schrader attempts to engage realism via duration, they negate edits and montage in favour of the single master shot. In contemporary slow cinema the single master shot is often replaced by the use of long panning shots. The use of panning requires the cinematographer to use a wide angle lens, which enable the camera to capture subject and their environment in the same shot and negates the need for a cut between wide and close up shots, allowing the cinematographer to get a wide angle and a close up in a single shot. The removal of cuts assists the perception of realism in that the cut is an artificial construct, our eyes can't cut. When you jump forward or backwards in time via the use of cuts, you disturb the realist immersion in the world of the filmic story.

The panning shot has become a constitutive characteristic of Slow cinema. But is not exclusive to this movement, this technique is used in contemporary mainstream cinema, the most obvious example would be Russian Arc by Alexander Sokurov from 2002, this film was shot in one single take, this take was shot on handheld steadicam and is 96 minutes long. More commonly the very long take has been applied only once or twice in a film to establish a particular character, set of characters or dynamic between a character/s and a situation. Such as in Robert Altman's *The Player*, Brian De Palma's *Snake Eyes* and *The Weekend* by Jean Luc Godard. This shot was also a stylistic staple in the works of Michelangelo Antonioni and Andrei Tarkovsky occurring frequently in their films. More recently the long take and panning shot, have become more frequently applied in mainstream filmmaking, most noticeably in the work of Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki, in his collaboration with directors such as Alfonso Cuarón, (*Gravity*, *Children of Men*, *Y tu mamá también*) Alejandro González Iñárritu, (*Birdman*, *The Revenant*) and Terrence Malick (*The Tree of Life*, *To the Wonder*).

3.4 Lineage

¹⁵² These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 4/7/2020

This section will focus on the mutually informing theoretical and stylistic lineage of this cinematic movement. This points to the inter-reliance between theory and practice and the evolution of the specific forms of encounter this merging enabled.

Schrader recognises the lineage of the movement we are now calling slow cinema as a merging of theory and practice. He recognises a particular shifting of focus from movement to time in filmmaking beginning in the late 1940's in Italian Neo-realist films, where films begun to slow down and linger over images or scenes. He uses Vittorio De Sica's film *Umberto D* as a prime example. Schrader then suggests that two fundamental elements occurred simultaneously, firstly the publication of Gilles Deleuze's book *Cinema 2, The Time Image* (1985) and the film works of Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky. Schrader suggests that:

[...] While Deleuze was formulating his theory of time image Andrei Tarkovsky was putting it into practice. Influenced by Bresson, Tarkovsky brought withholding devices to the large canvas, encompassing science fiction, dreams, history, metaphysics and poetic realism. Ozu's theme was the family, Bresson's was the individual, Tarkovsky's was time itself.¹⁵³

Some clarification of Deleuze's concept of Time-Image might be useful at this stage. *Cinema 2, The Time Image* is the second part in a two volume complementary and interdependent study of cinema by Deleuze, combining cinema as played out in the world as film style and various philosophical positionings. In his first book *Cinema 1: the Movement Image* Deleuze discusses the uses and functions of the central compositional characteristics of cinema: the frame, the shot, and montage within a framing of Bergson's philosophy of movement and time. Implicating Montage and types of Bergsonian Movement-Image. He suggests Montage can be recognised in four distinct schools: the organic montage of the American school, the dialectic montage of the Soviet school, the quantitative montage of the pre-war French school and the intensive montage of the German expressionist school.¹⁵⁴ The types of Movement- Image can also be recognised in four forms; perception-images (that focus on what is seen), affection-images (that focus on expressions of feeling) action-images (that focus on behaviours and changing the world) mental-images (that focus upon the multiplicities of habitual memory).

In *Cinema 2, The Time Image* Deleuze shifts the focus from a cinema that is defined primarily via motion to one that is concerned with time. He persists in his implication of Henri Bergson's ideas, with a specific focus on Bergson's views on memory and he uses

¹⁵³ These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 4/7/2020

¹⁵⁴ Deleuze, Gilles, *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*. University of Minnesota Press, 1983. p 30

these ideas to construct one of the central concepts of this book: Crystal image (or time-image). The first book (movement-image) focused on matter the second's (time-image) focus is on memory. Filmmakers by negating the pace of montage and pausing on longer shots (The Long take) often enabling time-image, which involves a kind of freeing of the perceptual senses which has a 'direct relation to time and thought'.¹⁵⁵ Deleuze does not present us with a singular definition of time-image, it is made up of a series of partial insights and illustrative metaphors. One can surmise that the crystal- image that forms the foundation of Deleuze's time-image, is a shot that simultaneously contains a past and a present, the pastness of the recorded event with the present-ness of its viewing¹⁵⁶ Donato Totaro suggests that for Deleuze:

[...] The crystal-image is the indivisible unity of the virtual image and the actual image. The virtual image is subjective, in the past, and recollected. The virtual image as "pure recollection" exists outside of consciousness, in time. It is always somewhere in the temporal past, but still alive and ready to be "recalled" by an actual image. The actual image is objective, in the present, and perceived. The crystal-image always lives at the limit of an indiscernible actual and virtual image.

The crystal-image, for Deleuze ascribes a usage of temporality that recognises the simultaneous present and pastness of the image in film. The crystal-image shapes time as a constant two-way mirror that splits the present into two heterogeneous directions,¹⁵⁷ "one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time consists of this split, and it is ... time, that we see in the crystal"¹⁵⁸

Schrader suggests that Tarkovsky's films mark a dividing point in the history of durational film.

Before Tarkovsky the use of withholding and distancing devices, what Deleuze called time-image took place in the context of commercial theatrical cinema, after Tarkovsky these devices became increasingly exaugurated and these films fell into the domain of film festivals and Art museums. Bresson's three minute shot of a door became a ten minute static shot of traffic. Transcendental Style morphed into the hydra headed monster we call slow cinema.¹⁵⁹

This specific theoretical and practice based lineage that Schrader notes, has become the

¹⁵⁵ Deleuze, Gilles, Cinema 1: the Movement-Image. University of Minnesota Press, 1983. p 17

¹⁵⁶ Totaro, Donato. Part 2: Cinema 2: The Time-Image <http://reflexionesmarginales.com/3.0/4-part-2-cinema-2-the-time-image/>

¹⁵⁷ These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 4/7/2020

¹⁵⁸ Deleuze, Gilles, Cinema 2: The time-Image. University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p 81

¹⁵⁹ These extracts are taken from a lecture by Paul Schrader that occurred in conjunction with a screening of Schrader's film "First Reformed". Hosted by Fuller Studio the lecture revisits his book "Transcendental Style in Film" and the intersections of spirituality, cinema and time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> Accessed 7-1-2020

recognised trajectory of slow cinema i.e. beginning with Henry Bergson's theory of time and consciousness, duration, the implication of European modernist cinema and Deleuze's 'time image'. Reiterated here by Matthew Flanagan.

Contemporary Slow Cinema is an eventual descendant of the international modern cinema that emerged in the late 1940's, One that attempted to restore belief in 'the tatters of the world' by creating a regime that reflected the post-war struggle to (re) connect with a new reality (Deleuze 2005: 166). This impulse began with post-war Italian realism and continued most forcefully in European Modernist films of the 1950's and 1960's, and the high modernist structural and materialist cinema of the 1960's and 1970's . The notion of slowness, in this context, comprises one of the most potent signifiers of the modern post-war cinema, and the forms it has assumed have been diverse and changeable.¹⁶⁰

There is one other character/publication that also played a crucial role in the discussion of this movement. This is French film critic Andre Bazin and his book What is Cinema first published in 1967. Specifically Bazin's premise that film has an ontological relation with reality owing to its photographic basis, where for Bazin film has an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time.¹⁶¹ Bazin celebrated the fact that cinema allowed for the first time the image of things [to be] likewise the image of their duration, change mummified.¹⁶² Bazin's location within discussions of slow cinema is premised on two interrelated elements, enabled duration and realism. He also suggested that these tendencies began in Modernist European cinema in the 1940's. He suggests that these forms of cinema forego montage, (where an aesthetic was enabled via a fragmentation of images) which was the dominant mode prior to this time, in favour of the long-take style or tendency and the use of depth of field which he called a 'sequence shot'. The second inter-related element was his recognition of reality being enabled via directors use of non-professional actors and choosing to shoot on location as opposed to shooting on constructed sets within studios.

The forms of enabled realism that Bazin eludes to, have a distinct relationship to the claim of cinematic truth that occurred with the emergence of observational cinema, enabling film works that had a related but distinct set of considerations played out using realism i.e. where what you saw was what you heard and vice versa, again using long takes in favour of montage. The negating of the edit enables a kind of truth of reality within the cinematic. This concept of cinematic truth can be located using a number of terms that are linked to particular forms of historical documentary film making. These forms of historical documentary film making by their rejection of montage enabled an

¹⁶⁰ Flanagan, Matthew. De Luca, Tiago and Barradas Jorge, Slow Cinema. Edinburgh University Press. 2016. p 29

¹⁶¹ Bazin, Andre. What is Cinema. Volume 1. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California. 1967. p 21

¹⁶² De Luca, Tiago and Barradas Jorge, Slow Cinema. Edinburgh University Press. 2016. p 7

inter-reliance between temporality and forms of cinematic truth.

The terms Direct Cinema or Observational Cinema encapsulates a set of stylistic tendencies that have become very familiar to us via news journalism and reality television. This style had a specific relationship with technological developments in the 1960's where lightweight hand-held cameras and live, synchronous sound were available to filmmakers for the first time. This meant that you could have much more flexibility as a film maker and did not need a studio or set or additional lighting or sound to make a film. With Direct Cinema, cinematic truth is sought via the use of a hand held camera that follows and observes a subject in reality as an observer would, this style is now more commonly referred to as fly on the wall, where the audience and subject become unaware of the camera's presence, paradoxically simultaneously inferring the reality of the camera and via this familiarity, extracting attention away from the presence of the camera.

Direct Cinema borrows from an earlier cinematic style employed by Jean Rouch known as 'Cinema Verite' or "truthful cinema". Rouch began making films in the late 1940's the majority of which were made in Africa where he spent the majority of his life. Rouch's documentary format is an homage to earlier filmic concept of Kino Pravda "Film Truth" promoted by Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov in the 1920's. Cinema Verite differs from Direct cinema in that rather than show us the truth it provokes its own kind of truth. Rouch's films suggest that the truth within cinema was not contingent on the reality enabled via one's becoming unaware of the cameras presence. In Rouch's films the characters are very much aware of the camera, and if they change how they are/act because of the camera's presence this is just another layer of the persons reality being exposed.

Tiago De Luca and Jorge Barradas suggest that Bazin's:

[...] championing of these elements of cinematic modernity is predicated on ambiguous images whose indeterminate narrative import and/or temporal flow open up a space for reflection and intervention on the part of the spectator.¹⁶³

This opening up of a space for reflection and intervention on the part of the spectator that De Luca and Barradas note, where space is enabled in the film are crucial motivational characteristics of the films of mine which will be critically located in the next section, and a number of the characteristics ascribed in the discussion of slow cinema can and will be applied to these two films. The next section of this chapter will outline the aspirations and make up of each of my films and attempt to position each of my films within discourses, many of which relate to slow cinema.

3.5 Landscapes

163 De Luca, Tiago and Barradas Jorge, Slow Cinema. Edinburgh University Press. 2016, p 8

Landscapes enables a number of the constitutive characteristics of slow cinema—the long take, ordinariness, extended duration, the enabling of contemplative space, the use of boredom as a device and the implication of repetition and realism. The implication of realism as applied in a discussion of Landscapes has to do with the implication of the long take as a device. The film uses repeating relatively long takes as a means to avoid the pacing applied in mainstream editing techniques, which essentially divide diegetic space into consecutive shots that appear logically or psychologically connected to narrative motivation¹⁶⁴. Where conventional montage editing techniques focus the attention of the spectator on psychologically justifiable details within a scene, the long take renders the spatial and temporal aspects of the scene continuous and palpable, thus creating a sensation that is closer to reality.¹⁶⁵

Emre Çağlayan reiterates this position via the implication of Bazin, suggesting that;

Bazin argues that the long take attains a special function for its ability to preserve reality's sense of temporal continuity and spatial unity. As a result, Bazin writes: "it is no longer the editing that selects what we see, thus giving it an a priori significance, it is the mind of the spectator that is forced to discern, as in a sort of parallelepiped of reality with the screen as its cross-section, the dramatic spectrum proper to the scene".¹⁶⁶

Landscapes is narrated via the interplay between objects and the environment. Recurring images of plastic sheets that are suspended between trees, these plastic sheets become characters that are animated by the wind, choreographed by air moving through the atmosphere, causing the sheets to move both independently and in unison. They are blown both very gently and violently. Unspectacular objects in an unspectacular landscape. A slowly unfolding series of nuanced events. Using temporality to ask us to think about both a landscape and ourselves. Thus enabling a kind of poetics of the everyday. Its aspiration is to use the landscape as a mechanism to speak about itself, and uses cinematic duration as a means to enable a sense of wonder. Slowness in film becomes as Lutz Koepnick suggests, a position where:

Unlike the violent forces of shock and trauma, wonder has the more moderate ability to make us thoughtful. It captures our attention to make us see the world without possible obstructions, and in so doing, it permits us to learn how to sense our own seeing.¹⁶⁷

This film slowly reiterates its characteristics, it foregoes the spectacular or sensational

164 Çağlayan Emre. Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2018. p 49

165 Ibid

166 Çağlayan Emre. Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan. 2018. p 49

167 Koepnick, Lutz. The Long Take. Art cinema and the wondrous. University of Minnesota press. 2017. p 16

in favour of an aspiration for wonder via a contemplative and ruminative mode of spectatorship.¹⁶⁸ It enables a sense of filmic wonder that is constructed using duration where the long take serves as a stage and condition for wonder's possibility.¹⁶⁹

There is a temporal unfolding of elements that slowly become familiar, elements that are purposefully associatively neutral suspended transparent plastic sheets that have two simple potentials, to be activated by the air and to reflect light. Over the duration of the film these two characteristics are presented and on occasion highlighted, but nothing else will be learned from this scenario. Whilst there is dialectical exchange and an arc of sorts in that the film begins with a mid-range shot and moves to a close-up and ends on a wide angle shot, there is no narrative, enabling de-dramatization¹⁷⁰ and dead time. It uses boredom as a device to encourage introspection from a viewer. Boredom has become an increasingly prevalent element in the discussion of slow cinema, both positively and negatively as a mechanism to describe characteristic features of this movement.

Emre Çağlayan delineates boredom as an aesthetic virtue, in the sense that it gives rise to a type of aesthetic or intellectual elation that in certain contexts functions as a springboard for our mind to exercise artistic inspiration, creative insight and contemplation.¹⁷¹ He suggests that:

[...] We can feel this sense of simple boredom in the cinema when we are faced with monotony—yet, we need not take this experience as equivalent to anti-immersion, as perhaps the most conventional and undesirable consequence of boredom.

Rather than view boredom negatively as wasted time (dead time), there are alternative potentials in the experiencing of boredom, where a temporally extended mode of consciousness can yield acts of subjective introspection and enhance individual creativity.¹⁷² Cinematic boredom can be generative, and can enable a kind of internal productivity. It can open ways up for a new configuration of things, and therefore also for a new meaning, Emre Çağlayan suggests that by virtue of the fact that it has already deprived things of meaning, it can lead to a calm state of receptiveness.¹⁷³

This calm state of receptiveness that Çağlayan notes, was crucial in the artwork's ultimate aspiration. The use of repetition and the long take enables a space where conventional narrative is negated and disengagement enables a contemplative space. This

168 Çağlayan, Orhan Emre. Screening Boredom. The History and Aesthetics of Slow Cinema, A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Film Studies University of Kent. February 2014 <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30704535.pdf> Accessed 12/2/2020

169 Koepnick, Lutz. The Long Take. Art cinema and the wondrous. University of Minnesota press. 2017. p 9

170 Çağlayan Emre. Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom. Palgrave Macmillan, p 192

171 Ibid

172 Ibid

173 ibid

enables a situation where a participant with the film can engage with this landscape as a place of possibility and wonder, not only because of what they see or hear but because of a combination of stylistic and structural features their engagement with the film is partly of their own making. As Lutz Koepnick suggests:

[...]The Long Take is about visual strategies that reckon with viewers who approach screens not as self-effacing windows onto and representations of other worlds but as dynamic architectural elements of their own world.¹⁷⁴

This film uses constitutive elements of slow cinema, such as the long take and constructed boredom to enable a perceptual and associative cinematic space to offer and encourage an assessment or re-assessments of the Irish landscape both as social construction and visual/sonic filmic experience.

3.6 North of the West

North of the West also attempts to engage a sense of wonder but a more complex associative and socially constructed sense of wonder. This critical locating merges three inter-related discursive elements. Site and context specificity, the transcendental in film making, the sublime and the Paintings of Caspar David Friedrich. These three elements combine as a means of approaching the films subjects. i.e. religion or more specifically Ireland's complex relationship with religion, and our associative and topographical relationship with the sea. In this film I am proposing that there is a recognition of an analogous relationship with both the sea and religion.

A: Site and Context Specificity

The film was shot at Mullaghmore Peninsula, County Sligo. By locating the film here acts as a means to exploit a number of associative connections that relate to religion, politics and cultural association. This particular geographic site has become synonymous with a specific historical event. On the 27th of August 1979 Louis Mountbatten and one of his grandsons, Nicholas and a local boy Paul Maxwell died when a remotely detonated bomb exploded on their leisure boat off the coast of Mullaghmore. Another passenger, Doreen Knatchbull Brabourne died from her injuries the day after the bombing. The bomb was planted as part of an armed paramilitary campaign undertaken by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) that took place between 1969 and 1997. This campaign was aimed at ending British rule in Northern Ireland, in order to create a united Ireland. This bombing was particularly noteworthy in that Mountbatten was a remarkably high profile victim. He was the second cousin of Queen Elizabeth the second and has served as Supreme Allied Commander during the latter part of the Second World War, the last

174 Koepnick, Lutz. The Long Take. Art cinema and the wondrous. University of Minnesota press. 2017. p 12

Viceroy of India and was the Chief of the British Defence Staff the head of the British Armed Forces. In addition to the social status of its victims, and the overt relationship between religion and politics the other interesting characteristic of the location of this atrocity was the associative relationship with this specific topographical location. The North West of Ireland is tied up with particularly romanticised connotations and associations of the Irish psyche. This bombing took place not in the streets of Derry or Belfast but in the sea between Donegal and Sligo, this coastline was the setting for many of Paul Henry's paintings, (whose instrumentalization by the state has been noted earlier in this text.) This bombing also took place a couple of miles from to the birthplace of the famous politician, revolutionary, socialist and suffragist Constance Markiewicz née Gore-Booth and this place is also closely aligned with the life and work of one of Ireland's greatest poets and Nobel Laureate W.B Yeats. The bombing taking place in this particular location with these particular set of cultural associations made it particularly resonant within the history of the conflict from a Southern Irish perspective and in a way one could suggest that the bombing symbolically fractured Ireland's idealised senses of itself. This division in the conflict were constructed in religious terms, as a Catholic from the South of Ireland you were by proxy aligned with the ideas and actions of Irish Republican Nationalists. There was an inherent sense of responsibility and guilt, that was tied up in shame by association. This sense of shame was magnified by the subsequent emergence of the Catholic church as space of misplaced moral priority in terms of its abuse of its power and treatment of the poor and vulnerable in Ireland.

B: The Transcendental in film making

As already highlighted the film implicates an aspiration to speak about religion, where site-specificity acts as means of enabling a conversation about the associative and social repercussions of religion. The film has also had aspirations to enable a broader discourse that engages the psychological and spiritual aspects of religion or faith. One of the characteristics I was interested in expressing in the film was faith's promise of transcendence where transcendence is viewed, both as aspects of a deity's power and character that is independent of the material world. This also related to the idea that transcendence is a psycho/spiritual aspirational concept that can be attained via prayer or meditation. The application of terminology in this section is going to implicate Christian definitions in discussing the term transcendence.

Paul Schrader applies the term transcendental style to filmic mechanisms that reject psychological realism using film to address the transcendent. As he states:

[...] a style which has been used by various artists in diverse cultures to express the Holy. Just as anthropologists at the turn of the century discovered that artisans in unrelated cultures

had found similar ways to express similar spiritual emotions, so, in cinema, unrelated film-makers have created a consensus of transcendental style. The style is not intrinsically transcendental or religious, but it represents a way (a tao, in the broadest sense of the term) to approach the Transcendent. The matter being transcended is different in each case, but the goal and the method are, at their purest the same.¹⁷⁵

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Paul Schrader in his book *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer* (1972), attempted to locate where certain filmmakers have used specific techniques and stylistic tendencies to express the holy or transcendent in film. The stylistic tendencies and theoretical lineage outlined in the book have become ascribed in the description of Slow cinema as a movement. In the original book and Schrader's retrospective examination of the book he does not view these discursive spaces the transcendent and slow as mutually exclusive, and this section will also simultaneously implicate characteristics of slow cinema and Schrader's 'transcendental' style as a means to implicate the religious in the discussion of North of the West.

Schrader defines the Transcendent as something that is beyond normal sense experience, and that which it transcends is, by definition immanent.¹⁷⁶ From Schrader's perspective these film makers were using film or more specifically devices within filmmaking to engage the spiritual.

[...] although transcendental style, like any form of transcendental art, strives toward the ineffable and invisible, it is neither ineffable nor invisible itself. Transcendental style uses precise temporal means – camera angles, dialogue, for predetermined transcendental ends.¹⁷⁷

For Schrader a film that engages transcendental style aspires to transcend culture and personality in the same manner as many religious ideologies. He suggests by objectively setting pictures side by side a spiritual truth can be achieved, a truth that cannot be obtained through a subjective personal or cultural approach to those objects.¹⁷⁸

Schrader's book delves into the formal, structural and subject minutia of each director's work, engaging with the use of aesthetic, symbol and cultural specificity as a means to articulate a perceived commonality in aspiration i.e. to enable particular forms of perceptual/experiential space. The films that Schrader implicates in his defining of transcendent or spiritual film are structurally very different to mine. The works by Yasujiro Ozu, Robert Bresson and Carl Theodor Dreyer are complex and varied feature length narrative based films, where my piece is relatively short and does not have a conventional

¹⁷⁵ Schrader Paul. *Transcendental Style in Film. Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1972. p 2

¹⁷⁶ Schrader Paul. *Transcendental Style in Film. Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1972. p 8

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p 2-3

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p 9

narrative. They were designed to be encountered in cinemas, where mine was designed for a gallery setting. Their similarities to my film, lie in the implication of specific techniques and aspiration.

There are contradictory characteristics at play here, in that the aspiration to engage transcendence is played out via depictions of worldly things, in this case the sea filmed during a storm. This is what Christianity would refer to as immanence where the divine is manifested in the material world.

North of the West implicates a number of the technical/stylistic elements that Schrader outlines as being crucial elements of transcendental style. The use of a single (often) expansive wide shot that does not implicate edits or camera movement.. The use of the delayed cut and its enabling of dead time, where rather than moving swiftly from shot to shot and cut to cut, certain cuts are paused or delayed and duration is enabled.¹⁷⁹ These two strategies, as withholding devices, enable a type of meditative film making and/or meditative experience with film that engages religion or spirituality via film as a medium:

Transcendental style can take a viewer through the trials of experience to the expression of the Transcendent; it can return him to experience from a calm region untouched by the vagaries of emotion or personality. Transcendental style can bring us nearer to that silence, that invisible image, in which the parallel lines of religion and art meet and interpenetrate.¹⁸⁰

Schrader suggests, that in addition to the implication of specific devices that enable particular forms of perceptual/experiential space, he posits the idea that it is perhaps possible to somewhat measure a film's spiritual quality via a sparsity, abundance paradigm. He suggests that if we want to determine a film's "spiritual quality" we have is to examine the manner in which it disposes of its inherent abundant means and substitutes sparse means.¹⁸¹ Where transcendental style is not a fixed relationship between abundant and sparse means like sculpture, [but because it operates in time, it involves a] fluid interaction creating a temporal as well as spatial rhythm. It gradually can use less abundant and more sparse means, drawing the viewer from the familiar world to the other world.¹⁸²

In transcendental style sparse means are, to a large degree, simply a refusal to use the available abundant means. There is no great need to invent new abstract forms; sparseness can be achieved by gradually robbing the abundant means of their potential. Where these

179 Paul Schrader revisits his landmark book "Transcendental Style in Film" and lectures on the intersections of spirituality, cinema, and time as part of a conference hosted by Fuller Studio. 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0CCMz7nJdo> assessed 20-1-2020

180 Schrader Paul. Transcendental Style in Film. Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1972. p 169

181 Ibid p 159

182 ibid

forms of film must use the given abundant means to sustain audience interest, and it must simultaneously reject the empathetic rationale for that interest in order to set up a new priority¹⁸³

This balancing of abundant and sparse means was a crucial factor in many of the structural choices in relation to North of the West and where Schrader's framings are most useful. In this film the pictorial subject, a storm being played out on the coast of an ocean is inherently abundant, tumultuous, brimming with pictorial vibrancy. This film used specific devices to manage the amount of abundant and sparse means at play in the film.

The film is made up of only six fixed shots scenes, where the camera moves closer into the sea as the film progresses, dark in tone, the footage becomes increasingly aggressive in the action it depicts, beginning with large waves entering and breaking in the center of the screen. It then moves to footage of the movement of foam and soapy water caused by the water hitting off rocks. Then moving to a close up of the water churning within the rocks close to the cliffs. The film then opens up to a still stormy wide shot of the sea, but this shot is flooded with light, almost cliched articulation of magnificence and grandeur.

What is crucial here is the merging of the footage and edits in the management of the abundant and sparse. The film flows inwards, becoming increasingly dark in tone over six and a half minutes using only five shots each over a minute long and opens to a wide bright shot that is two minutes fourteen seconds long. While the subject is pictorially abundant, this abundance is negated by the length of the shots, the footage is also filmed in slow motion, further elongating the temporal engagement, where duration enables a familiarity that goes beyond the informative enabling another form of encounter. Where cinematic techniques, styles and subjects enable a specific form of meditative encounter what Schrader recognizes as cinema's unique ability to reproduce the immanent also lies its unique ability to evoke the Transcendent.¹⁸⁴ North of the West implicates abundant and sparse as a means of implicating the spiritual.¹⁸⁵ Whilst the film is concerned with a merging of the immense and danger, these elements acted as a means of implicating the sublime as a concept, which will be discussed in the next section.

C: The Sublime and Casper David Freidrich

The overarching concerns of the film i.e. the cinematic articulation of the simultaneous omnipresence of religion and the sea and my feelings, is possibly best understood in a sublime sense, as a paradox of terror and delight. This third discursive space will implicate two elements. Firstly, the structures and characteristics of the sublime and

183 Schrader Paul. Transcendental Style in Film. Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1972 p 159

184 Ibid p166

185 Ibid

where the sublime is implicated in an examination of North of the West and secondly it will implicate the work and its devices within the work of the German Romantic Painter Casper David Friedrich.

The Sublime¹⁸⁶

The implication of the sublime in a discussion of North of the West is two-fold. This has firstly to do with subject matter, it is a depiction of nature (the sea) and phenomena (a storm), both of which are frequently applied as examples within discussions of the sublime. Secondly the films implication of forms of immersion, where immersion in the sublime bears comparison to the psycho perceptual characteristics of Christian faith. Schopenhauer suggests, the experience of the sublime involves struggle and is both humiliating and uplifting.¹⁸⁷

The associative paradox that I noted at the beginning of this section, as being the motivation for North of the West.(This film acted as a means of structuring an allegorical parallel between the sea and my paradoxical childhood relationship with the Christian faith – both powerful, immense, beautiful and potentially terrifyingly omnipresent elements that

¹⁸⁶ Whilst the term 'sublime' has classical roots, the implication of the term in this section begins with the writings of Edmund Burke. For Burke the sublime had to do with the particularities of one's experiencing of an artwork, object, space or environment, where distinctions are established via a discussion of the disparity between what can be recognized as beautiful or sublime. For Burke each element is viewed as being mutually exclusive. For Burke this distinction had much to do with the scale and passivity, the experiencing of small unthreatening thing like a flower was recognized as experiencing beauty and where the experiencing of something grand and potentially dangerous like an enormous waterfall or a storm could elicit a sublime experience. Beautiful things or experiences give us pleasurable feelings, sublime things overwhelm or terrify us. There is proposition that our experiencing the subline involves an inherent paradox in that, when experiencing a vast of terrifying thing in our terror we also find delight. Burke ascribed the sensations associated with the sublime as a negative pain which he called delight. As Burke states:

[...] Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling [...] When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and [yet] with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as every day experience.

In his *Analytic of the Sublime* published in 1790, Immanuel Kant expanded upon and modified Burke's reasoning of the sublime. among the many other modifications of this concept, Kant create two specific categories within the discussions of the sublime in relation to natural phenomena. He referred to these the two distinctions as the mathematical and the dynamical sublime. For Kant

The mathematical variety involves objects of great size, such as deep ravines and vast deserts, which push our senses and imagination to the very limits of their powers, whereas the dynamical sublime relates to powerful natural phenomena, such as devastating hurricanes, violent volcanoes, and lofty waterfalls.

These ideas were further expanded upon by Arthur Schopenhauer. The sublime is just one section of an aesthetic theory that is part of Schopenhauer's broader organic philosophical system. In isolating the sublime Schopenhauer suggests that aesthetic pleasure can be sought and attained by human engagement with elements that are paradoxical in their character, in that, they are simultaneously appealing and overwhelming, but also phenomenological in that it is not the object of a reflecting judgment but a distinct kind of aesthetic experience, necessarily fused with sensory elements. Much of his thinking is located in the sublime in relation to nature. The feeling of the sublime manifests, first and foremost, in our physical and metaphysical insignificance in comparison to the mighty powers of nature.

¹⁸⁷ Vandenabeele, Bart, *The Sublime in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. p 6

surround the island of Ireland) is perhaps accurately observed in Schopenhauer's ideas of the sublime. Where the the sublime draws us out of ourselves and enables an aesthetic appraisal of wild nature and our complex existential relation to it.¹⁸⁸ This particular duality of religion and the sea, being both powerful, immense, beautiful and terrifyingly omnipresent is perhaps best encapsulated in this particular articulation of the sublime in nature by Schopenhauer, where he suggests;

[...] it humbles and exalts, it is disturbing and serene, distressing and joyful. As in the beautiful, I feel elevated above my individuality, and that offers me considerable peace, but (unlike an experience of the beautiful) I also experience the insignificance and fragility of my empirical, embodied self.¹⁸⁹

The film uses scale as a device to implicate the sublime, three quarters of the film is made up of shots that locate the camera facing into the sea, a stormy tumultuous sea, locating the viewer in a situation that if encountered in reality would be terrifying and dangerous.

[...] mountainous waves rise and fall, are dashed violently against steep cliffs, and shoot their spray high into the air. The storm howls, the sea roars, the lightning flashes from black clouds, and thunder-claps drown the noise of storm and sea. Then in the unmoved beholder of this scene the twofold nature of his consciousness reaches the highest distinctness. Simultaneously, he feels himself as individual, as the feeble phenomenon of will, which the slightest touch of these forces can annihilate, helpless against powerful nature, dependent, abandoned to chance, a vanishing nothing in face of stupendous forces; and he also feels himself as the eternal, serene subject of knowing, who as the condition of every object is the supporter of this whole world ... This is the full impression of the sublime.¹⁹⁰

Bart Vandenabeele posits that a Schopenhauerian sublime affords a unique aesthetic way to confront suffering and, instead of suppressing it, to transform it into something with which one can live.¹⁹¹ Crucially this film enables a situation where the immersion in this scene is glorious, it also implicates a perceivable immanence of the sublime, where we can understand this interaction with nature as a manifestation of the divine. Where our physical and metaphysical insignificance in comparison to enormous powers of nature are similar to our physical and metaphysical insignificance in relation to the omnipotence of nature (the sea) and God.

Casper David Friedrich

This section will conclude with a discussion of the work of the German painter Casper

¹⁸⁸ Vandenabeele, Bart, *The Sublime in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. p 6

¹⁸⁹ Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*. Dover Publications, Inc. New York. 1958. P 102

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p 204-205

¹⁹¹ Vandenabeele, Bart, *The Sublime in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2015.p 6

David Friedrich.¹⁹² Friedrich's work acts as a pictorial encapsulation of many of the ideas of the sublime as articulated by Burke, Kant and Schopenhauer but also has relevance in a discussion of North of the West. This section will focus on a particular compositional device employed by Friedrich. There are specific commonalities between North of the West and the paintings of Friedrich. Whilst he often used landscape as a means to express religious themes this film focuses on the compositional and aspirational commonalities of North of the West and where Friedrich implicates the sublime in nature. Friedrich's paintings bear formal similarities to North of the West in that he often painted grand, epic landscapes, depictions of forests, mountains and in particular the sea. Whilst he painted the sea devoid of human life in works such as Greifswald in Moonlight (1817), Reefs by the Seashore (1824), After the Storm (1817), and Northern Sea in the Moonlight (1823–1824) he also made paintings of the sea in which he located humans, such as Moonrise over the Sea, (c.1821), and most famously The Monk by the Sea (1808–1810). (Figure 26.) In these last two paintings Friedrich used a specific technique to locate the human figures in the paintings. This technique is called the Rückenfigur (or figure seen from behind). When implicating human figures in a painting Friedrich almost exclusively used this technique. Using the Rückenfigur Friedrich is encouraging the viewer to place themselves in the position of the figure in the painting, to as it were, perceptually enter the painting. In The Monk by the Sea, the figure of the monk is tiny in comparison to the enormous tumultuous sea that he looks out upon and is completely immersed in the landscape and we, via use of the Rückenfigur also become immersed in this landscape. Immersed is a sublime sense where we experience the sublime potential of nature.

North of the West bears a number of compositional similarities to The Monk by the Sea, in its use of nature or more specifically the sea as a device, its implication of immersion as device, functions in a similar manner to The Monk by the Sea where, as Paulo Pinto suggests "The contrast of the abyssal infinite with the monk's tiny figure is presented with

192 Casper David Friedrich was part of intellectual movement in German-speaking countries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries known as German Romanticism. Thematically this movement is somewhat formed by a rejection of the values of reason and rationalisation held by the neoclassicals who preceded it, in favour of sentimentalism and the emotive. This set of social attitudes also had a connection with the sublime as a concept. Writers, musicians and artist within this movement often implicated the sublime as a motivating characteristic, frequently implicating depictions of landscape as a mechanism to implicate the sublime. Whilst there were a number of painters from this time that used landscape as a device to implicate the sublime, including German artists Ludwig Richter, Carl Spitzweg, Carl Julius von Leybold and the Norwegian painter Johan Christian Dahl, this section will solely focus specifically on the work of Friedrich.

His work was Immersed pictorially and ideologically in nature or more specifically landscape, and articulates an immense confidence in the correspondence between the mind and nature. His work was also deeply imbedded in religious thinking and imbued with melancholy. Friedrich grew up in the Lutheran faith and also lost his mother and three of his siblings before he was thirteen. He portrayed the landscape in a way that moved beyond the classical conceptions of beauty, and to pictorially explore landscapes possibility as a space of sublimity what Timothy Mitchell suggests as;

[...] a reunion with the spiritual self through the contemplation of nature. Friedrich was instrumental in transforming landscape in art from a backdrop subordinated to human drama to a self-contained emotive subject.

Figure 26:
Casper David Friedrich.
The Monk by the Sea
(1808–1810)



a tremendous depth arising from the boundless expanse of sky and sea."¹⁹³ In the first two thirds of the North of the West one is almost engulfed by the sea, we are made aware of its enormity and like the monk, cognizant of our vulnerability in relation to the sea's engulfing deluge. In the final third the film switches to a wide shot of the sea, which still stormy and violent in bathed in a beautiful blue light. This use of light suggests the scared or heavenly but in a more obvious or clichéd manner, not unlike the atmosphere evoked in many painted depictions of the ascension of Jesus, by Garofalo, Dosso Dossi and Rembrandt. This referencing of Friedrich's paintings in this film has two purposes, the first has to do with the implication of the sublime as a means of implicating nature in the locating of religion and the filmic use of the Rückenfigur as an immersive device. An additional immersive device used in both Landscapes and North of the West is the use of sound and the next section will delve into this characteristic of the films.

3.7 Music

Before this chapter concludes I want to note the use of music in the films. The choice of musical style and the implication of sound in the films bear a number of resemblances to not just the use of sound in Slow Cinema but the broader stylistic tendencies and aspirations of Slow Cinema, which will become apparent as the section unfolds.

From a sonic perspective none of the films engage conventional script or language and as such any sonic narration occurs via sound or music. Landscapes and North of the West use non-diegetic sound. Sound in a film can be categorised into diegetic and non-diegetic sound. Diegetic sound has a source on-screen, recorded at the time of the shoot, such as dialogue or human or mechanical action, such as a ball being kicked or a train passing by, where the sound presented as originated from source within the film's world. Non-diegetic sound is the sound that is added in during the editing process with no on-screen source, such as voiceover narration or a soundtrack.

The musical choices for my films were predominantly influenced by the three types of music I was listening to around 2000. Firstly experimental or post-rock instrumental

193 Vandenabeele, Bart, The Sublime in Schopenhauer's Philosophy Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. p 6

music by Scottish band Mogwai and a range of bands from Canada and the USA such as Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra, Set Fire to Flames, Explosions in the Sky and in particular a band called God Speed you Black Emperor. These bands made music which used much of the conventional instrumentation of a rock band, guitar, bass, keyboards/piano, delay and loop pedals and drums but often added strings and using two drummers and drum kits. But rather than adhering the traditional verse, chorus convention, their pieces built slowly in complexity, volume and pacing, often using extended melodic transformation, repetition and complex layering of sound types and time signatures and slow harmonic changes. Their works were often quite long, (up to twenty minutes long). Tonally dark and melancholic, the pieces often built to dark foreboding orchestral crescendos and then decrescendo.

The second form of music was electronic music or more specifically ambient/abstract electronic music. Mainly English acts such as Aphex twin, Boards of Canada, Plaid, the Black Dog, Michael Paradinas (μ -Ziq), Luke Vibert, Bibio and in particular Authechre. These acts were as with the first bands discussed using synthesizers, sampling technology and computer software to make extended electronic Instrumental music, that differed to conventional dance music in that it lacked a persistent beat, used purposefully abstract time signatures, or no bass or drum beats at all, who's focus was using repetitive patterns to create mood or atmosphere as opposed to narrative and listening as opposed to dancing. Around this time I also began listening to Japanese electronica musician Susumu Yokota who opened me up to a whole series of early Japanese electronic musicians and minimalist composers from the 1980's, Such as Haruomi Hosono, Hiroshi Yoshimura, Takashi Kokubo Satoshi Ashikawa, Inoyama Land and in particular the composer and percussionist Midori Takada's. This music also had commonalities with the other two forms in that it was long in duration, ambient and used expanded melodic transformation. It used slow harmonic changes, reiteration of *musical* phrases, a complex contrapuntal texture and broken chords. It differed in that much of it implicated field recordings and was made up of a merging of synthesizers and conventional instrumentation. Each of these musical forms have been become prevalent as non-diegetic sounds in both film and TV. This connection is most apparent in Godspeed you black Emperor who commission Canadian filmmakers Philippe Leonard and Karl Lemieux to make moving image works to accompany the bands live performances. My consideration of these forms of music happened experientially. I realised that unlike lyric based songs, when listening to each of these forms of music I could oftentimes engage in other forms of work or study. Whilst they are compelling, engaging and often emotional, crucially they leave psychological space, space that can be filled in other ways, with other thoughts. The sound and music that are used in my films are merging of these three forms of music. Music where it occurs in my two films, as in much of slow cinema is meant to situate or locate as opposed to dictate or lead. The music attempts to be associatively neutral, it does not use conventional song structures,

or language or voice, which are the most readily exploitable associative sonic tools. They also negate cultural specificity in that the music does not reference existing historical forms such as traditional Irish music or choral music. The music also avoids associatively emotive instrumentation such as strings and piano, so often used to elicit an emotional response in the viewer.

As stated earlier the sonic elements that are used in my films are merging of the three musical forms noted above. Where ambience is used to locate but not lead, to create mood or atmosphere as opposed to narrative. Sound from the actual site of filming is often implicated in the soundtrack of the films as a means of sculpting the presence of a site by producing an embodied experience of the site.¹⁹⁴ It is a merging of field recording, conventional instrumentation and digital manipulation and processing. Rather than be passive background music it is music that has a nuanced progression, implicating expanded melodic transformation. It used slow harmonic changes, integrates silence and reiteration of *musical* phrases, complex contrapuntal textures and broken chords. Whilst it somewhat references classical traditions it complicates or abstracts this form. When it integrates crescendos and decrescendos it does so by using complex layering's of sound types and time signatures enabled by digital processing. The music strikes a delicate balance between compelling and occasionally evocative and visceral but also enabling imaginative or perceptual space for the viewer/listener.

This enabling of perceptual space occurs via the negating or disruption of musical expectancy. Musical expectancy is constructed melodic organisation enabled by specific arrangements of pitch, timing and instrumental choice, music is made up of a composer's choreographing of expectation.¹⁹⁵ A simple example of this choreographing of expectation, would be the use of verse and chorus, where one leads the other follows and repeats over the duration of a piece of music, or the use of increasing beat structures to lead one towards a chorus or crescendo. Another example would be the induction of emotion in music, where sequences of short durations and ascending pitch contours attempt to reflect happiness and expanded durations of descending pitch communicate sadness.

The music used in my films engage arousal but avoid or disrupt valence as a means to avoid emotionally leading the viewer listener. This avoidance of sonic leading, mirrors the visual concerns of mine and many other films recognised as part of the slow cinema movement where by avoiding montage in favour of the long take and other devices creates a situation that whilst evocative they enable perceptual space. In my films there

194 Chattopadhyay ,Budhaditya .Reconstructing atmospheres: Ambient sound in film and media production Volume: 2 issue: 4, page(s): 352-364 Article first published online: November 13, 2017; Issue published: December 1, 2017 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2057047317742171> Accessed 16-2-2020

195 Hubon, David. Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation. MIT Press LTD, Bradford Books, 2008, p 2

is also a non-linear relationship between the activities of the music or sound and the visual imagery. Sound occurs both diegetic and non – diegetic. Very rarely is there a direct correlation between the visual and sonic in the films i.e. the locating of the most dramatic sound with the most dramatic imagery. Each of the films use sounds to engage site (forest, island and sea) and uses sonic strategies dualistically using ambient sound to both locate the audience in this site and organised sounds that intend to create a convincing universe through the mediation process,¹⁹⁶ but does so in a nuanced way that is both compelling and spatially and associatively open.

Landscapes implicates diegetic sounds, i.e. sounds that were recorded at the location of the film. Implicating the environmental sound and compositional responses recorded in the actual forest landscape. Enabling a kind of constructed symbiotic relationship between the sonic and visual.¹⁹⁷

3.8 Conclusion

While the research subjects differ with each film there are persistent commonalities. In each there is a specific inter-reliance between concept and context. Each use landscape as subject, context and device, each use the wind as activator of action. Both of the films try to engage cinematic truth, by negating montage and presenting an abundance of reality. The most prominent similarity in the films is the use of slowness as a means of enabling particular types of contemplative engagement with film. Each engage contingent elements of slow cinema where specific stylistic tropes are engaged to enable a temporal unfolding to occur in the cinematic encounter with the films enabling an inter-reliance between time and perception.

Mine and the other films discussed in this chapter use slowness as a mechanism to encourage active participation, where in these films like in the installation's discussed in the proceeding chapters the viewer become an active rather than passive participant in the work. Slowness is used to enable the audience member and film to become inter-reliant, where the audience member becomes a participant as Schrader suggests they become 'part of the films journey', a crucial characteristic in the completion of the work.

¹⁹⁶ Hubon, David. *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*. MIT Press LTD, Bradford Books, 2008, p 2

¹⁹⁷ One of the more interesting examples of the implication non-diegetic sound in slow cinema is in implication of sound in the generative process of the films of Hungarian film maker Béla Tarr. Tarr has collaborated with the composer Mihály Víg on most of his films. Víg also starred as an actor in Tarr's film *Sátántangó / Satan's Tango* from 1994. Beginning with the film *Kárhozat / Damnation* in 1988, the composer and filmmaker engaged in a very interesting method of generating and implicating sound in the film making process. Prior to filming Tarr would give Víg a script and film treatment, Víg after reading the treatment and script would compose pieces of music, much more than was actually needed. Tarr would then choose pieces of music for the film and have Víg record them with musicians in a studio, each piece's length would correspond to the suggested length of a scene. The cinematographer would then be given the musical compositions to become familiar with them prior to shooting. The musical recordings would be broadcast outdoors as the scene was being played out and filmed. The music dictating the length and pacing of each shot and in a way directing the actors, in that the actors were directed to allow the music to effect/dictate the tone and emotions of their performance.

The practice foregrounds the poetic over the didactic, it enables encounters that allow space, where the audience for the work become a constitutive element. These films and the characteristics that make them, as with the artworks discussed in the earlier chapters have a broad conceptual underpinning, where the art work/s act as forms of subtle commentaries on social phenomena. In this chapter this has to do with enabled slowness perceived through a cinematic lens. As forms of Slow cinema, my films subtly challenge the ever-increasing pace of contemporary life. As Emre Çağlayan suggests images in Slow cinema are:

[...] pausing not in any naïve effort to 'go back,' [...] but to slowdown [...] For it is in slowness and the capacity to parse one's own present that one gains ground on what's coming up next, perhaps restores to the everyday some degree of agency, perhaps some degree of resistance.¹⁹⁸

Slow cinema enables particular forms of time and consideration, which in enabling of particular perceptual experience are notable when related to the current shifting from a material-based economy to an attention based economy, an "attention economy". In contemporary society attention has become a commodity. Attention is understood as a state in which cognitive resources are focused on certain aspects of the environment rather than on others.¹⁹⁹ The term "attention economy" was coined by psychologist, economist Herbert A. Simon; who suggested:

[...] that attention was the "bottleneck of human thought" that limits both what we can perceive in stimulating environments and what we can do. He also noted that "a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention."²⁰⁰

From a cultural perspective, attention has been commodified in its most popular and widespread cultural forms, cinema and TV. Cinema and TV are broadly reflective of its time and predominantly reflect the pace of contemporary society. Most popular film is fast, loud and spectacular and over-stimulating. In contemporary life our attention is also being pursued in ways, many of which have to do with technological advancements which have enabled a limitless amount of information strategically focused on capturing our attention. Personalised levels of attention via means like social media and focused web-based advertising, where value is ascribed by how much attention we give to a certain thing.

Perhaps slow cinema offers not just a commentary on this socioeconomic reality but

¹⁹⁸ Çağlayan Emre. *Poetics of Slow Cinema. Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.p 199

¹⁹⁹ Mintzer, Ally. *Paying Attention: The Attention Economy*. March 31st, 2020. <https://econreview.berkeley.edu/paying-attention-the-attention-economy/> Accessed 12-5-2020

²⁰⁰ Ibid

an alternative to it. As Lutz Koepnick suggests this form of cinema:

[...] at once probes and recalibrates what it means to be attentive today. It deflates the disruptive haste of contemporary screen life to play out the promise of the wondrous against a culture of vigilant connectivity and mostly reactive self-maintenance. It slows down processes of perception— not for the sake of slowness it-self, but to rebuild what it might mean to recognize and attend to the new as new, as a wondrous event in time.²⁰¹

This wealth of information enables a scarcity of attention, our engagement with digital media is having a profound effect on cinema, our concentration levels are getting shorter and our engagement with moving image is getting smaller, shifting from the big screen, something that was greater than us to something that we are greater than, to the computer screen and even the telephone screen. Perhaps as Koepnick, Lutz. Suggests slow cinema as a form offers the possibility of reconstructing spaces for wondrous looking in the face of its ever- increasing disappearance.²⁰²

Slow cinema simultaneously enables particular types of inter-reliance, between temporality and cinematic truth, between theory and practice and between time and attention. Where most contemporary cinema fills each second with action sound and sensation, Slow cinema uses sparsity to enable perceptual space where one can become an active participant in the film. Where the perceiver of the film becomes an inter-reliant collaborator in the work, slow cinema enables the space for a viewer to become an active participant in film works completion.

Chapter 4: Songs and the Soil

4.1 Persistence of inter-reliance, Songs and the Soil

This chapter will engage the forms of inter-reliance that persist in the practice and will reiterate the ways in which characteristics discussed in the earlier chapters remain relevant. This chapter differs from the preceding ones in that they employed a reflective approach to prior practice but this chapter enables a situation where theory becomes form, where the research, questions and concerns of the thesis are mobilised in the making of new art works. This will occur by engaging with a recent body of research that was realized as an exhibition entitled Songs and the Soil that took place at the MAC (Metropolitan Arts center), Belfast in January 2020. This exhibition directly addresses the implication

of multiple forms of inter-reliance enabled in the practice. This exhibition functioned as a public iteration of inter-reliance as a structural methodology. This was made manifest in the conceptual framing, material choices and the forms of associative and participatory dynamics enabled in the installations. Songs and the Soil reiterates the use of sound, music and performativity within the practice. It enables forms of site and context responsiveness, and enabled temporality both within installation settings and the filmic elements of the practice. This exhibition physically manifests the theoretical positionings of the preceding chapters as artistic research.

Songs and the Soil engaged with the inter-reliance as a broad framework and in individual art works and groupings of art work. This exhibition and publication engaged the inter-reliant subjects of landscape and music/sound—exploring each element from historical, social and culturally associative perspectives; where landscape is recognised as a fluid term articulating physical space, idealised space and social space. That reflects a convergence of physical processes and cultural meaning, and where song acts as a response to, or archive, of personal, historical or socio-political instances. Several works engage with the cultural and ideological space where landscape and music/sound intersect. The exhibition integrates a broad range of media, positions and responses to these research subjects; including two film works, a six-hour soundtrack for a room, two sonic sculptures, a series of sculptural interventions, paintings, analogue photography, screen prints, ceramics and flowers. In most instances, a number of these elements combine to form installations.

There was a publication realized to coincide with this exhibition. The texts that feature in this publication do not relate to the artworks that made up Songs and the Soil directly, but either explicitly or obliquely engage with the broader research subject of landscape and music/sound. This publication enabled inter-reliant interdiscursivity between research and practice. This collaborative project integrates one existing text and six commissioned texts by myself, John Graham, Joanne Laws, Sharon Phelan and Suzanne Walsh. The publication also includes a transcription of a radio interview from 1974 with Charles Amirkhonian and the musician Robbie Basho. This interview discusses the broad scope of Basho's music and the remarkable generosity and fluidity of music as a cultural form. In particular, the dialogue explores music's openness and potential to continuously evolve and incorporate diverse influences, styles and forms.

In addition to engaging landscape and song Songs and the Soil as an exhibition also implicates each of the inter-reliant characteristics discussed in the preceding chapters. As

201 Koepnick, Lutz. The Long Take, Art cinema and the Wondrous. University of Minnesota press. 2017. p 9

202 Ibid

intimated above, this conclusion will reiterate the ways in which characteristics discussed in each chapter remain relevant in the practice. This will occur via a discussion of material characteristics and conceptual motivation of a number of the Art works that made up this exhibition, noting where there is a correlation between these artworks and the characteristics of the practice noted in the preceding chapters. Ultimately highlighting how these diverse elements combined to articulate the persistence of inter-reliance as a mode within the practice.

In terms of structuring this chapter, other than in one film the works were not individually titled in the exhibition, the structure of the discussion will involve moving through each installation in each floor of the gallery, noting the elements that were present in each room with correlating reference images.

4.2 The Upper Gallery

The Upper Gallery contained an immersive installation, made up of five inter-reliant elements that engage sound, landscape and time. (Figure 27 and 28)

1: On the floor of this gallery there were four hundred and twenty pieces of white, hollow cast porcelain ceramic vessels. (Figure 29) These cast porcelain ceramics were a mixture of natural elements, sea shells of various sizes and forms, deer antlers, pebbles and stones. Approximately two thirds of the ceramics had holes in them to enable them to become containers for dried Gypsophila flowers creating a kind of indoor meadow. I chose this flower because Gypsophila is commonly known as Baby's Breath and I wanted to implicate this botanical nomenclature as means to metaphorically implicate the human activity of breathing and by proxy the human voice.

The process of casting creates a shell of an object. These series of ceramic shells were a means to reference the earths acting as a resonant vehicle, where the sonic and social actions of humans reverberate of this natural shell in cultural form. This idea of the earth acting as a resonant vehicle was also a means of framing the broader concerns of the exhibition.

2: The space had a five-hour soundtrack that is played on four speakers that were attached to the wall, the duration of the work corresponds with the opening times of the gallery from 12pm -5pm. This soundtrack was made up of field recordings of birds within natural environments recorded in two forests in the North West of Ireland and a series of twenty-five additional musical compositions, that combined with the field recordings at various times over the five hours. The additional compositions are of various lengths, from two minutes to thirty minutes long. The compositions were pieces written and recorded by myself, made up of guitar, bass, piano, singing bowls and voice and electronically manipulated pieces. I made recordings of other musicians in places of worship such

as Churches, Synagogues and Buddhist temples in Ireland and various parts of Europe over the past five years, I then selected sections of these recordings and electronically manipulated them to become new sonic works. In a number of work rhythm structures and drums are implicated.

This work acted as a mechanism to realize an inter-reliance between sound and space. It used field recordings of rural natural environments as a means to articulate the relevance of the sonic properties of an environment when thinking or describing physical space. In the late 1960s R.M. Schafer at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver proposed specific forms of aural attentiveness to the environment. Prior to this, thinking about and describing physical space was primarily focused on an environment's physical characteristics, Schafer posited that perhaps rather than using the term landscape, the term soundscape might be a more relevant means of encapsulating the full range of an environment's characteristics and the manner in which human presence shapes a space or environment. For Schafer;

[...] the term soundscape indicates how the environment is understood by those living within it. Indeed, the individual listener within a soundscape is part of a dynamic system of information exchange. Soundscape ideology recognises that when humans enter an environment, they have an immediate effect on the sounds; the soundscape is human-made and in that sense, composed. A soundscape is the acoustic manifestation of place, in the sense that the sounds give the inhabitants a sense of place and the place's acoustic quality is shaped by the inhabitants' activities and behavior [...] that listening and sound-making stand in a delicate relationship to each other.²⁰³

This work also acted as a means to speak about the inter-reliance of song and human ritual. With a subtle but specific focus on the use of sound within religious celebrations and spiritual ritual. This exhibition took place in Northern Ireland and the use of music and in particular the drum was a means to reference the use of this instrument by Orange Order Protestant marching bands in Northern Ireland where music is part of a broader social mechanism that simultaneously confirms common bonds and maintains division. This aspect of the exhibition re-iterating the use of site specificity and social responsiveness as discussed in chapter two.

3: This exhibition also reiterates the implication of landscape as a conceptual mechanism in the practice. Landscape was implicated in the Drift performance discussed in chapter one and the film works Landscapes and North of the West discussed in chapter

203 Hildergard, Westercamp, P. Woog, Adam. Helmut Kallamann. World Soundscape Project. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/world-soundscape-project>. Accessed 17/8/2019



Figure 27:
Mark Garry. Songs and
the Soil. Installation view.
The Upper Gallery. The
MAC. 2020.



Figure 28:
Mark Garry. Songs and
the Soil. Installation view.
The Upper Gallery. The
MAC. 2020.



Figure 29:
Mark Garry. Songs and the
Soil The Upper Gallery.
The MAC. (detail) The
MAC. 2020.

three. This room also integrated three depictions of landscape. One of which involved two photographic works which I am describing as Motion-grams or archived time, that uses the generative techniques and conventions of analogue photographic process but slightly subverts them. When one is making a traditional photogram or photograph, one has a fixed image source. In the case of a photogram this source is a two, or three-dimensional, object and in the case of a photograph this source is a transparent film negative. Conventionally light is then projected through these sources onto photographic paper, which causes exposure which is the fixed, washed and dried to become a photograph. (Figure 30)

In the case of these Motion-grams, rather than project light through a fixed image source (an object or a transparent film negative.) these works are created in a photographic dark room by using a video projector to project moving image footage that had been inverted to its negative directly onto photographic paper. By using this process and plastic light controlling color filters attached to the lens of the video projector this process enabled me to make images that were an amalgamation of up to three minutes of moving image that became exposed onto the photographic paper as a single image. In these two works the moving image was a panning shot of a rural landscape and fixed camera footage of a sea.

This work stemmed from an aspiration to use photographic process as a means to speak about analogue process and an inter-reliance between archived time and music. I wanted to use an analogue generative process that used time to create images that mimicked how a vinyl record sonically archives time. Enabling a situation where time was archived as a single image.

4: The fourth work is a large image of The Rocky Mountains range (Figure 31) that was screen printed onto a piece of cotton. This work subtly references two characteristics of music culture. The Rocky Mountains stretch some 3,000 miles from British Columbia and Alberta in Canada through Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and down to New Mexico in the U.S. The choice to use this image stemmed partly as an acknowledgment of the remarkable frequency in which the name of this piece of mountain range occurs in songs, both in the USA and beyond and partly from an associative perspective what this says about idealised visions of landscape manifested in song. The choice to use screen print was a means to refer to various DIY musical cultures that have evolved within music and musical subcultures.

5: The Largest wall work (Figure 32) is a sculptural work made up of two large wooden frames and a large piece of cotton canvas. In this work the canvas is stretched around the frames on the left and right hand sides of the work and the canvas is not fixed at the centre and is allowed to drape as a curtain would. This sculptural work simultaneously reference

the vernacular and conventions of a landscape painting and implicated a drape or curtain as a means to associatively reference the stage and by proxy performativity. This work merging both landscape and song as a performative act.

4.3 The Tall Gallery (Three exhibition spaces)

Room 1

The first room in this series of galleries contained four inter-related elements.

A: The first piece in this room enabled a mutually informing inter-reliance between music and painting practices. This first work was made up of eight oil and acrylic paintings on canvas that were made using a painting technique called 'soak stain' invented by the American artist Helen Frankenthaler in the 1950's.²⁰⁴ This work merged landscape and Song in two ways. The way in which the paint was applied in each painting makes them appear like topographic landscapes, and the colour of each painting corresponded to musical notes from a piano composition of mine entitled Her from 2014. Using a system of colour scales that recognizes a one-to-one correlation between hue and pitch²⁰⁵ in colour and music. A system of allocating corresponding colours to the western twelve-note chromatic notation system began with Isaac Newton in 1704²⁰⁶ and has persisted and evolved ever since. The particular manifestation of colour scales employed for these painting was a palette designed by Theodor Seemann in 1881. The scale and amount of paint in each work corresponded to the frequency that each note occurred in the piece of



Figure 30:
Mark Garry. Songs and
the Soil. The Upper
Gallery. The MAC.
(single element) The
MAC. 2020 .



Figure 31:
Mark Garry. Songs and
the Soil. The Upper
Gallery. The MAC.
(single element) The
MAC. 2020.



Figure 32:
Mark Garry. Songs and
the Soil. The Upper
Gallery. The MAC.
(single element) The
MAC. 2020.

music. This work enabling a visual articulation of a song. (Figure 33 and 34)

B: The second work in this room similarly implicates landscape but also implicates craft, which is also discussed in chapter one. This work was made up of a wooden frame that has lengths of threaded coloured beads suspended within it. The frame mimics the configuration of a landscape painting and the lengths of beads correspond with the compositional conventions of 19th century Western landscape painting traditions. Implicating a foreground, middleground and background and a intersecting lines to lead the eye of the viewer. This work merges craft ideologies and classical tropes, implicating beads as material conventionally associated with the decorative arts and references the conventions of landscape painting, a coming together of low and high arts, acting as a commentary on historical artistic hierarchies. (Figure 35)

C: The third work also implicates craft and subtly references music. This work is made up of four freestanding wooden bases, each holding a woven satin sculpture. (Figure 36) Whilst these sculptures are purposefully ambiguous in terms of a specific association, referencing both a rural vernacular, having the appearance of a saddle or piece of saddlery and a Victorian women's or child's bonnet. In each of the sculptures the satin is woven around bent vinyl records each of which contain spoken work that has a relationship with landscape.

D: The fourth work contains many of the material characteristics and display mechanisms of a painting, but in an incomplete form. (Figure 37) The work is made up of a canvas background, a glass fronted frame and powder pigment. The pigment that is mixed with other materials to form paint is in this case presented loose in powder form. Rather than depicting a painted landscape in a conventional sense it presents an ever-shifting cross section of a geological landscape.

Room 2

The second room had a series of elements that implicate an inter-reliance between landscape, sound and time. This room had a double screen film work, two wooden wind harps and two household electric fans. (Figure 38) The two film works are made up of a series of motion panning shots of the same location shot in slow motion. The films loop continuously. The location is an island known as Church Island on Lough Owel on the

outskirts of Mullingar Co Westmeath. It is called church Island because in is the location of a medieval church traditionally called St Loman's Oratory. This location is outside of the town I grew up in and is a location where I spent much of my childhood and adolescence. I pass this location on my daily commute and the films were shot from a moving train on my way to and way from work each morning and evening. In the film on the left the camera pans from left to right and the film on the right the camera moves from right to left. Each section within the films depicts the island during each season, transitioning from spring through summer to autumn and winter over a five year period. These works acted as a filmic mechanism to speak about time, with transitioning time articulated in the subject matter and these films reiterate the devices and motivations that are contingent elements of Slow Cinema as discussed in chapter three.

The sonic presence in this room was enabled by locating two wooden wind harps and two electric household fans within the room. The electric fans were connected to a programmable timer which randomly turned the fans on and off which activated and deactivated the sounds emanating from the wind harps. This constructed sonic environment mimicked the environmentally activated contextual sound works discussed in chapter one, in this instance they acted as a means to reference the relationship between sound and landscape.

Room 3

The third room contains a thread spectrum²⁰⁷ (Figure 39 and 40) which is a recurring element of my practice which is discussed in detail in chapter one of this thesis. This particular thread spectrum was an intervention within architectural space located at three points within a treble height space. This work was made up of three hundred and ten lines of threads that mimicked the colour range in the paintings that corresponded with the song Her as discussed earlier in section A of room one of The Tall Gallery.

4.4 The Sunken Gallery (A single exhibition space)

The Sunken Gallery contained a second film work entitled An Lucht Siúil (The walking people), this work was a poetic response to social situation. That explored the relationship between Irish travellers and Modernism in Ireland, specifically the relationship between Irish Travellers and the Irish state as it is played out between the traveller and settled communities in the middle part of the last century. (Figure 41 and 42)

The film's narration in five sections adopts the theatrical structure of a Greek Tragedy performed partly in English and partly in Shelta (de Gamon /Cant), the language of the

207 The MAC also contains a permanent thread spectrum work entitled The Permanent Present commissioned by The Thomas Devlin fund.



Figure 33:
Mark Garry. Songs and the Soil. (single element)
The Tall Gallery. The MAC. 2020.



Figure 34:
Mark Garry. Songs and the Soil. (single element)
The Tall Gallery. The MAC. 2020.

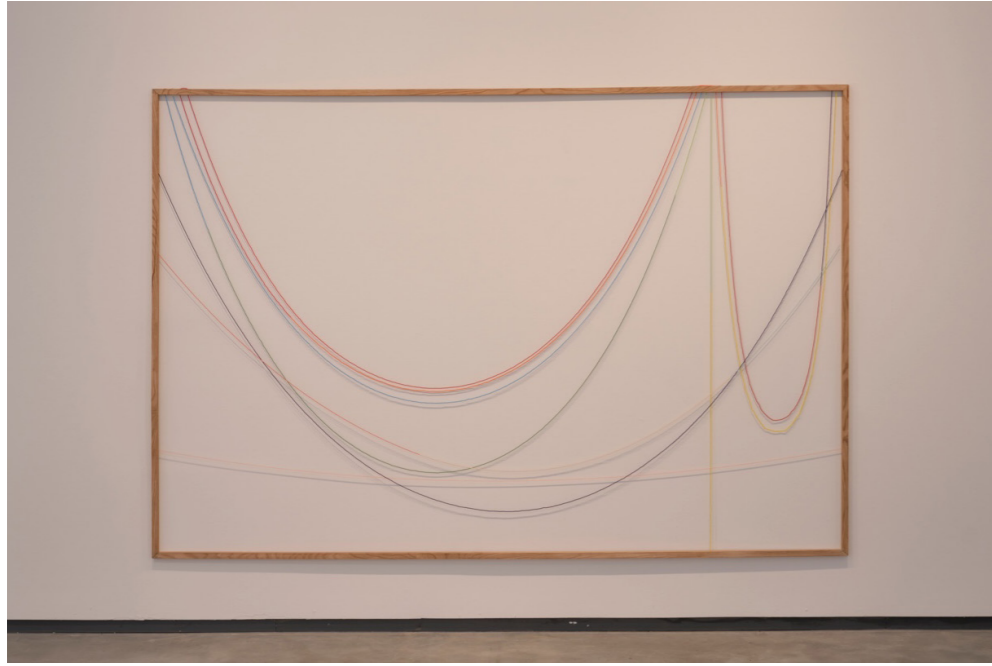


Figure 35: Mark Garry.
Songs and the Soil. (single
element) The Tall Gallery.
The MAC. 2020.



Figure 36: Mark Garry.
Songs and the Soil. (single
element) The Tall Gallery.
The MAC. 2020.

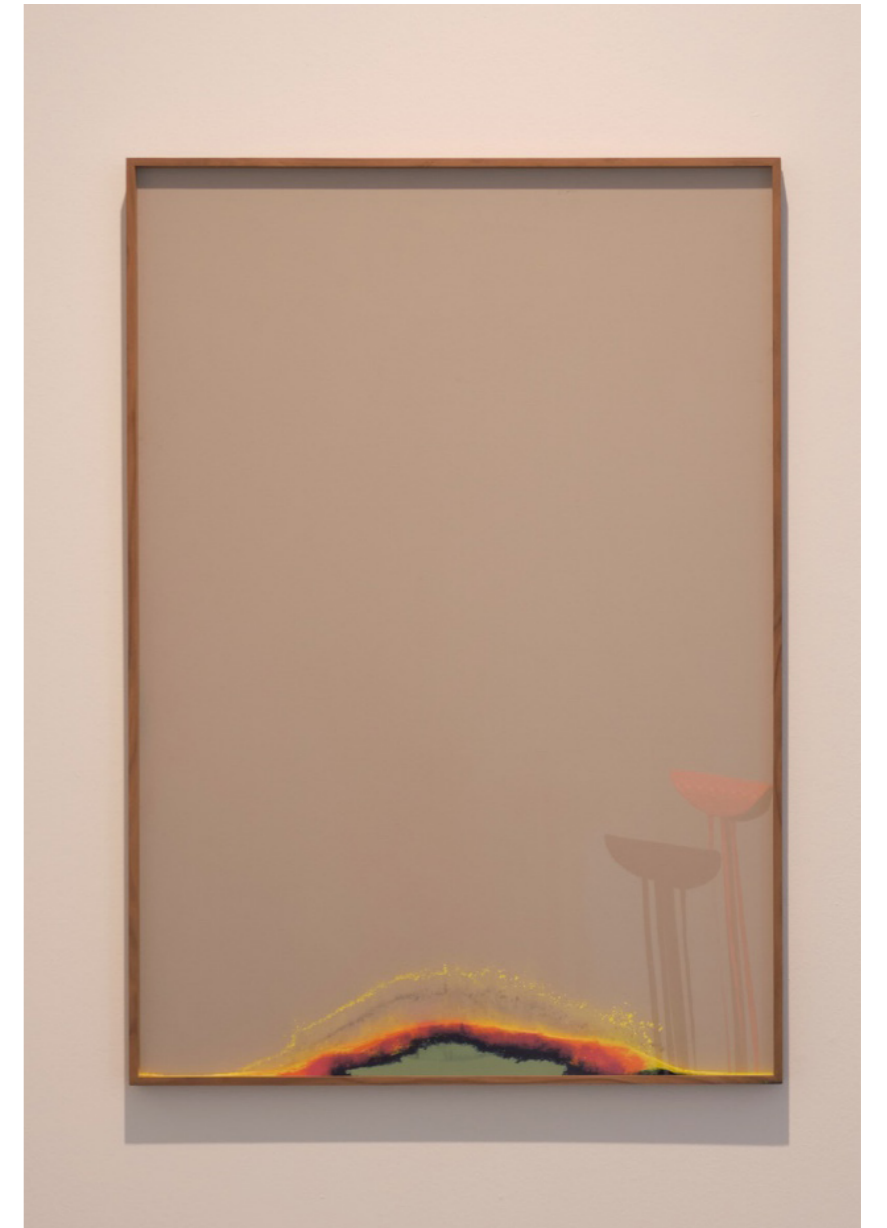


Figure 37: Mark Garry.
Songs and the Soil. (single
element) The Tall Gallery.
The MAC. 2020.

Irish traveller. These texts/songs, written by myself, act as a poetic response to Ireland's complex relationship to land and land ownership, and the relationship between the peoples who share this land. These texts are spoken or sang and are accompanied by music.

This work also engaged with the inter-reliance of landscape and song from a social perspective. Implicating the Irish traveller community as a means to speak about how the enforced marginalisation of this community enabled a situation where these peoples became protectors and preservers of crucial aspects of Ireland's cultural history.

Irish Travellers are a distinct ethnic group of nomadic people.²⁰⁸ Their historical origins remain unclear. Some historians argue that Irish Travellers are descended from the native Irish population, dispossessed as a result of social and political upheavals such as Oliver Cromwell's military campaign in Ireland (1649–53) or the Great Famine in Ireland (1840s). Other analysts propose much earlier origins, claiming there is evidence indicating the existence of nomadic groups in Ireland as early as the 5th Century AD. They retain a distinctive way of life, value system and set of traditions. Their language is known as Shelta, of which there are two dialects, Gamin and Cant.²⁰⁹

Traditionally as a nomadic group travellers have occupied common land. They lived in tents and horse-drawn carriages in large family units. Up until the middle of the 20th century Irish Travellers had a crucial role in the rural economy providing craft skills, seasonal labour and trading horses;

[...] filling important niches in the economy by bartering, selling and recycling scarce commodities. Since the 1960s, however, urbanisation, mass production of cheap disposable



Figure 38.
Mark Garry. Songs and the Soil. (single element) The Tall Gallery. The MAC. 2020.

plastics and other domestic items, and the mechanisation of agriculture changed the lives of Irish Travellers profoundly and undermined the basis of their rural economy in Britain and Ireland.²¹⁰

As a result of these socio-economic elements and a series of state legislations and media misrepresentations Travellers became marginalised economically and have over time become increasingly marginalised socially. In addition to their roles as migrant workers and craftspeople, Irish Travellers have a very long tradition of singing and playing music. Performing as a family unit many travellers made their living as musical entertainers, busking at fairs, marts and playing in bars. As Ireland developed as an independent state and embraced modernity and it attempted to construct a new outward looking national identity. Much of the earlier impetus around the preserving of Irish language and traditions that had begun with the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893

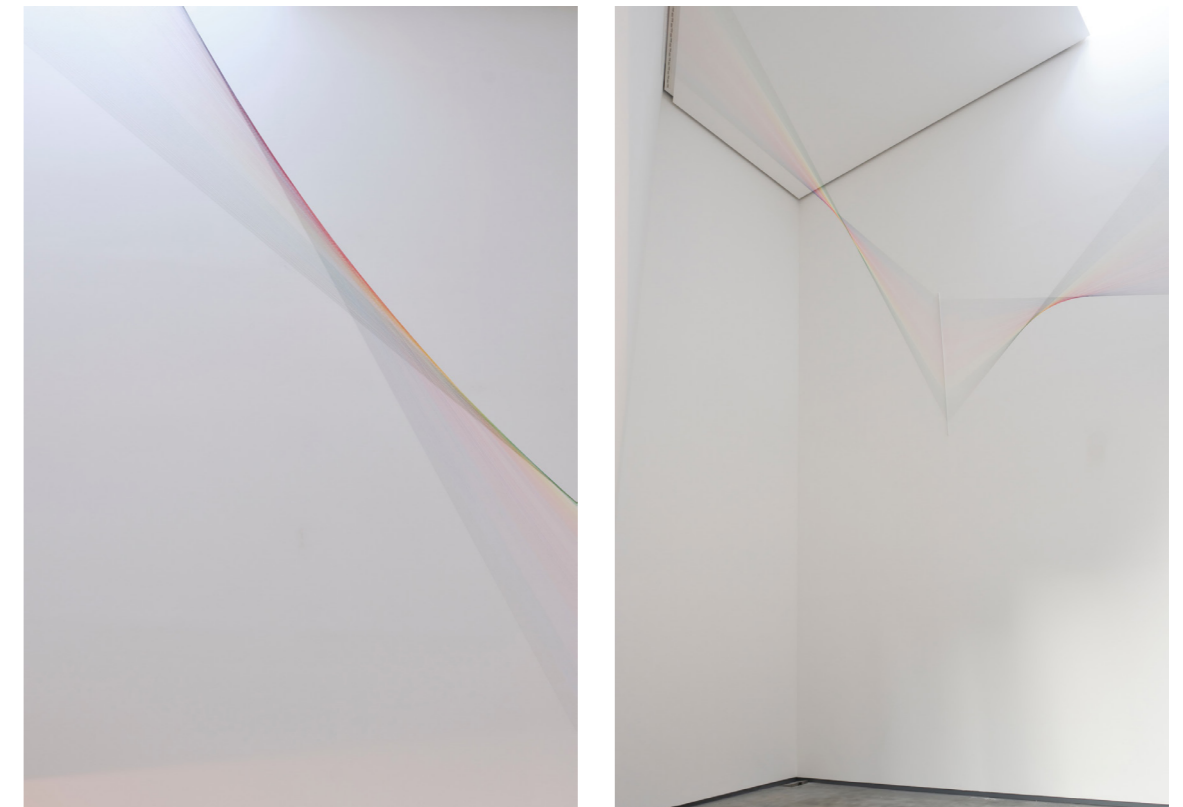


Figure 39 and 40:
Mark Garry. Songs and the Soil. (single element) The Tall Gallery. The MAC. 2020.

had dissipated. The enforced isolation of the Irish Travellers created a situation where they became the preservers of instrumental styles (in particular the fiddle and pipes) and thousands of songs that did not exist in written form.

The film is made up of five scenes of Irish rural landscapes and skies and two almost identical black horses, filmed over a summer in 2019. The film is shot in slow motion and has an oblique visual narrative structure with reoccurring elements. The choice of the two

²¹⁰ Ibid. p 9

²⁰⁸ Irish Travelers were established as a legally recognized ethnic group in 2000.

²⁰⁹ Mac Gabhann, Conn. Voices Unheard. A study of Irish Travellers in Prison. The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain. 2011. p 8

almost identical horses, stemmed from an aspiration to implicate the subtle othering that occurred between the settled and traveler communities over that last hundred years. Most of the scene differentiation and narrative flow occurs via sonic means.

The choice to narrate this film via song stemmed from an aspiration to recognise the role Irish travellers played in the preservation of Irish songs and instrumental styles. The choice to use the Greek Tragedy as a form was a means to articulate the persistent marginalisation of Irish travellers. The film uses two languages Shelta and English and as such is confusing and indiscernible to anyone who cannot speak both languages, this device was employed to reference the state and media supported purposeful confusion in relation to the Irish Traveller peoples.

This is an transcription of the narrative text for this film in English.

Prologue:

An ancient people formed of land.
Skilled with horse and skilled of hand
A wind of progress blew down our roads,
Values not the ways of those,
A shifting of the country side
Wagons they would no longer ride
There values that were different than
The values of the country man.
For two peoples living hand in hand
No space was left upon this Land
Guardians of our culture old,
A modern system would be sold

Parode (Entrance Ode):

For people of the horse and nail
A modern system it would fail
Bards and poets of Honeysuckle
Stained of name and stained of knuckle

Episode:

The girth and traces the grass and the rush.



Figure 41 and 42:
Mark Garry. Film Still. An Lucht Siúil (The walking people). Songs and the Soil.
The Sunken Gallery. The MAC. 2020.
<https://vimeo.com/405780400>

The hawthorn the brambles, the wren and thrush.
The withers the flank the muzzle and hoof.
The hammer and anvil the spokes and the roof

The willow and ash the robin the crow.
The Iron and stays the sun and the snow
The Forearm and fetlocks the gutter and vent.
The jig and the snips and the blanket and tent

The Mollicroft, gutter the brasses and reins
The dove the blackbird the sweat and the veins
The Blackthorne and holly the sticks and the smoke.
The fore head the flank the willow and oak

The Collar and crupper the spring and the clamp
The goldfinch the plover the fire and Lamp
The hoof and the shoe the spruce and the larch
The pine and the chestnut September and March

The jack the shackles the elm and the yew
The sparrow and magpie the stove and the flue
The bits and the bridles the footboard and spreader
The mane and the muzzle, the rope and the tether

The kestrel the moorhen the bay and the grey
The punch and the iron the grain and the hay
The loin and the barrel the labor and shoulder
The tarmac and gravel the foxglove and clover.

The pheasant and fox the cloth and the table
The chestnut the Dun, the fragile and stable
The plough and the scythe, the leaf and the green
The snowdrop and daisy the subtle and lean.

The Barrel and cannon the shafts and the perch
The cuckoo and curlew , the beach and the birch
The hogweed and hazel the carriage and bellows
The martingale, blinkers the shadows and echoes

The rook and the skylark , the tin and the pipe.
The wren and the jackdaw the young and the ripe.

The wood and the bark the wind and the cloud.
The butterfly the moth the proud and the bowed.

Stasimon

The race for progress was happening so fast we didn't notice a profound narrowing of customs and values. We engaged in a paradox of moral priority. Each Sunday we sang the psalms, but were silent to the imprisonment of the poor. We were silent to a loss of innocence, silent to the theft of the children of the nomads by the people of cloth. Suspicion was encouraged and the narrative of the laborer, the horse dealer, the tinsmith, the fiddler and the bard, was replaced with the fighter the beggar, the gaudy, the knacker, the tramps of the road. Languages were lost or hidden from sight and traditions were diluted or erased. Our forced assimilation and absorption failed, it compelled these people to close in on themselves to the security and strength of a family unit, Who we are comfortable to engage with, only through the distance of a camera lens. It forced an existence on the margins and for many an imprisonment of reliance.

Exode (Exit Ode):

For people of the horse and nail
A modern system it would fail
Bards and poets of Honeysuckle
Stained of name and stained of knuckle

4.5 Conclusion

This exhibition implicated inter-reliance as a central structural characteristic, engaging and responding to the inter-related and inter-reliant research elements of Landscape and Sound/Song. Where the earth is understood as a resonant vehicle, engaging materials and process manifest in cultural forms, noting where the sonic and social actions of humans reverberate off the earth.

Songs and the Soil engaged the installation as an artistic form, where inter-reliance is implicated as apparatus in the enabling of a number of forms of participatory dynamics, as noted in chapter one. These forms of participatory dynamics were facilitated by a series of mutually informing relations, an inter-reliance between research and form, between making and thinking, architecture and artistic intervention, between (enabled) temporality and experience, between materiality and association and between sound and social context.

The exhibition engages inter-reliance in forms of site, context and social responsiveness as discussed in chapter two. This is apparent in the broad research position where landscape

and sound/song are employed as a mechanism to engage this cultural situation and engage wider societal elements. This was apparent in each of the spaces but perhaps was most obviously played out in the film work “An Lucht Siúil (The walking people)” This work simultaneously enables an empathetic commentary on a social situation whilst engaging forms of interdiscursivity between art and society. Enabling the Art gallery to function as a socially responsive receptacle.

This exhibition also implicated much of the discussion that related to landscape in chapter three, where landscape is articulated as both research subject and social signifier. Where enabled temporality is played out as an inter-reliance between time and attention in cinema.

The body of research that became *Songs and the Soil* was in part motivated by a piece of writing from a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle called *The Terror of Blue John Gap*, one of the characters upon realising that the limestone hills in the story are hollow exclaims ‘Strike it with some gigantic hammer and it would boom like a drum.’ This proposition, the landscape acting as a resonant vehicle, this causation became a guiding principle in the approach to this exhibition and is also reflective of the set of principles and methods of framing articulated throughout the broader practice.

Chapter 5: In conclusion

This PHD by prior practice engaged in a retrospective critical examination of particular aspects of my practice as an artist from 2005 - 2020. In addition to articulating the specific forms and motivations of individual art works and cultural mechanism there is a persistent locating of where forms of inter-reliance are manifest in four aspects of the practice.

The research question of this thesis addressed the implication of multiple forms of inter-reliance enabled in the practice by opening a discursive space that integrated and critically examined the role and function of inter-reliance as a structural methodology and how this is implicated in specific aspects of the practice over this ten-year period. The thesis discussed the implication of inter-reliance as a mechanism in the integration of research within the practice and as a characteristic of a generative process. This is manifest in the critical examination of the material choices and the forms of associative and participatory dynamics enabled in the installations. In the use of sound, music and performativity within the practice. In forms of site and context responsiveness, and enabled temporality both within installation settings and the filmic elements of the practice.

As noted in the introduction the methodological approach is consistent in each of

the first three chapters. This involved a merging of mutually informing practice based and theoretical contributions. In the first three chapters this involved a discussion of the elements of my practice, the practices of other artists and cultural generators and a range of relevant theoretical positions. Each of these elements were specific to the subject of each chapter. Chapter four differed in its methodology in that it implicated the concerns of the thesis in practice as a form of artistic research that was manifested as an exhibition and related publication. These characteristics combine in each chapter to position inter-reliance as a structural methodology, isolating where and how inter-reliance occurs in the motivations and manifestations of the practice. These elements will be elaborated upon in detail in the proceeding section.

Chapter one locates where inter-reliance is observable in a specific device implicated in my installations and the aeroacoustic sonic elements of the practice. With these two art works inter-reliance is manifested as a series of enabled material associations and perceptual mechanisms. Each element acts as part of a mutually informing set of components that are reliant on one another. These elements involve participatory dynamics that are observable in the installations as a set of relations between enabled temporality, material signifiers, perceptual mechanisms and experiencer. In the musical elements participatory dynamics are enabled between aeroacoustic devices, environment, musical performer and improvisation as a practice.

From a practice based perspective, this occurs in the first chapter by engaging with the thread works which are a characteristic of the installation element of the practice and the use of aeroacoustic devices within a musical performance entitled *Drift*. The discussion of each element implicates practices by other artists that relate to each element. From an installation perspective this chapter engages with the work and concerns of artist who implicate similar material and ideological concerns, historical figures such as Naum Gabo, Richard Lippold and Fred Sandback and from a contemporary perspective Mary Temple and two artists that specifically engage craft within their practices Susan Collins and Yoshiro Suda. In terms of the musical performance elements of the practice the discussion implicates sonic artworks by Max Neuhaus, Pauline Oliveros and Avdio Hostem and environmentally activated sonic works by the Architect Nikola Basic and the landscape interventions of Alan Lamb.

From a methodological perspective this occurs by discussing each installation and musical element independently and then locating the parallels between these two elements of the practice. This occurs by recognising how the use of visual and sonic harmonics

enable forms of participatory dynamics, that facilitate a mutually informing set of inter-reliant components, enabling specific forms of temporal unfolding to occur.

The theoretical contributions involve the implication of a diverse but relevant set of thinkers. The chapter begins with an introduction to installation as an art making mode, implicating Claire Bishop and Anne Ring Peterson, Bishop's engagement with installation from an art historical perspective and Ring Peterson's contemporary perspective. The chapter then implicates Umberto Eco's concept of the Open Work and his perspective on the use of specific artistic devices in the activation of spatial relations. The chapter then introduces Arden Reid's conception of Slow art and the reciprocal nature of slow art and John Seigfreid's work on the nature of colour perception and colour as an emergent property of vision. The chapter then involves a specific section on time and craft and its implication within contemporary art practices, this includes thinking about crafts use in the formation of particular artistic experiencing. Richard Sennett's ideas of co-operation as a learned skill are then introduced as a means to elaborate upon the inter-reliant relational, cooperative characteristics of musical performance. R. Murray Schafer's World Soundscape Project is implicated as a means of articulating a shift in environmentally based sonic awareness, which leads to a discussion of focused forms of listening in the writings of Pauline Oliveros and her concept of deep listening. The chapter then implicates the historical, cultural implication of the Aeolian Harp. The chapter then implicates Christopher Small's use of the term Musicking as a term to encapsulate the inter-reliance between performer environment and audience. The work of George E Lewis and Gary Peters is then used as a means to justify the choice of instrumentation in the Drift performance and as a means to integrate African American ideas and culture making in the project and the role of inter-reliance in musical improvisation. The conclusion of the chapter uses Jacques Rancière's concept of 'the distribution of the sensible' as a means of extrapolating the role of mutually necessitating parts in the art works. It implicates the political by implicating inter-reliance as a method of engaging an ethics of empathic inter-subjectivity in the two elements of the practice discussed in this chapter. The conclusion then suggests that elements of the practice work in opposition to what Guy Debord recognises as the Triumph of Spectacle by employing perception or rather forms of co-perception as empathetic analogy. There is then a return to Eco's concept of the open work as a means to highlight the foregrounding of the poetic over the didactic in the practice and the chapter finishes by reiterating the role of improvisation and temporality in the two aspects of the practice discussed in the chapter and how these elements engage extended structures of temporality.

Chapter two engages where inter-reliance is perceptible in two site-specific, context responsive gallery located installations of mine. This chapter implicates my installations within a broader discussion of site-specificity and context-responsiveness and how these

practices enable a reciprocal inter-reliance between site and artistic response and site and contextual response. Implicating two forms of social practice that engage this means of enabling an art work. The first noting where these characteristics are implicated in dialogical socially engaged practices occurring outside of conventional gallery contexts and the second noting where these characteristics occur within a gallery context. This chapter concludes by highlighting the specific set of conditions that are particular to the installation as a form, in establishing a particular type of relationship between concept, subject and experience. Enabling situations that are simultaneously phenomenological and the contextual.

From a practice based perspective chapter two engages with artistic situations where forms of inter-reliance are enabled in relation to site specific and context responsive artworks as forms of social practice. This chapter engages with two artworks of mine, *Revoir Un Printemps*, that took place at Galerie du 5e in Marseille, and *A Winter Light* that took place at The Model, home of The Niland Collection in Sligo and a series of works by other artists that integrate site specificity and engage context as forms of social responsiveness. The works discussed begin with an explanation of residency and exhibition of mine at The Mattress Factory Art Museum in Pittsburgh entitled *Inner and Outer Space*. This project is used as a means to position the lineage of this characteristic of the practice. Historical examples of site specific installations by Daniel Buren and Michael Asher are then noted. The work of Stephen Willats is implicated as a means of introducing forms of Dialogical Practice. The work of Kurt Schwitters and Jannis Kounellis are implicated as part of an introduction to institutional site-specificity. The work of Ai Weiwei and Doris Salcedo become part of a discussion of the gallery as a socially responsive space.

From a methodological perspective this chapter introduces the formation of site responsiveness as a methodology in my practice. It then implicates the historical lineage of installation and forms of site specific and site responsive installation practices. The chapter then engages with the motivation and manifestations of *Revoir Un Printemps* and *A Winter Light* as a means to position these works as socially responsive gallery based practices that enable an inter-reliant fluid interplay between context and artistic response.

The theoretical contributions form an introduction to the inter-reliant reciprocal nature of site-specific practices. The term 'dialogical art' is then introduced as a method of engaging with art practices that act as forms of performative interaction between artist and society. This is followed by a discussion of the gallery where the gallery acts as a socially responsive space. In the discussion of my site-responsive installations Jeff Chang and Lisa Rosenthal are implicated in the justification of the use of Hip Hop as a cultural mechanism and to respond to polyculturalism as an entity. The conclusion of the chapter involves a return to the writings of Anne Ring Peterson and Miwon Kwon in the locating of site-

responsive installation practices as an inter-reliant merging of the phenomenological, the social and institutional, and the discursive paradigm.

Chapter three addresses the filmic elements of the practice enabling a discursive situating and critical locating of two of my films, *Landscapes* and *North of the West*. Engaging where temporality enables forms of inter-reliance between cinematic time and attention. In this chapter the form and conceptual motivations of each film are discussed both specifically and within a broader discussion of Slow Cinema. Implicating the concerns of my films with the wider value structures of Slow Cinema. This in turn acts as a means to question the inherent value structures of enabled temporality in film, and both the embodied and cognitive potentials of slowness in enabling forms of open contemplative cinematic encounters.

From a practice based perspective chapter there is a noting of film works that occurred in both gallery settings, art house and mainstream cinema. It notes filmmakers such as Chantal Akerman, Lisandro Alonso, Pedro Costa, Lav Diaz, Carl Theodor Dreyer, Tsai Ming-liang, Yasujiro Ozu, Jenni Olson Carlos Reygadas, Ben Rivers, Béla Tarr and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Andy Warhol and Michael Snow. Historical mainstream film makers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Carl Theodore Dreyer's and Victor Sjöström and contemporary mainstream films by Alexander Sokurov, Robert Altman, Brian De Palma, Jean Luc Goddard, Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro González Iñárritu and Terrence Malick.

From a methodological perspective chapter three begins with a brief introduction to the motivations of the two films of mine. There is then an introduction to the ideas and definitions of slow cinema. This is then followed by a locating of the historical evolution of this cinematic form and its theoretical foundations. There then follows a discussion of each of my films and a critical locating of each film and the implication of theory and practices of slow cinema within my works. This is followed by a discussion of the use and functions of music within my films. The chapter concludes by highlighting the inter-reliance between enabled temporality and cinematic experiencing as it is played out in my two films.

The theoretical contributions in the chapter begins with a number of related but distinct descriptions of Slow Cinema. As the discussion evolves it shifts and prioritises Paul Schrader's description of Transcendental Style in Cinema and this is used as a device to delve specifically into the motivations, aspirations and specific technical devices of temporality in film making. The discussion evolves to include a theoretical lineage of Slow cinema, using Gilles Deleuze's book's *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* with a specific focus on concepts by Henri Bergson that inform Deleuze's concept of the crystal-image. André Bazin's concept in relation to cinematic truth and films ontological relation with reality is

then discussed. This leads to Direct Cinema, the cinematic style known as 'Cinema Verite' and Dziga Vertov's *Kino Pravda*. The discussion then uses Bazan and Lutz Koepnick as a means of positioning the function of realism and the long take in my film *Landscapes*. Whilst writing about the second film *North of the West* the discussion becomes a little more complex in the sense that it involves site and context responsiveness in addition to film theory. This theory involves a revisiting of Schrader's Transcendental Style in Film. The analysis also integrates a discussion of the film's relationship to the sublime as a concept with a specific focus on the uses of landscape as both subject and device. Additionally this section of the chapter engages with the films stylistic relationship with the paintings of Casper David Friedrich. Prior to the conclusion there is a discussion of the use of sound within both films with a specific focus on the use of non-digetic sound. The conclusion of the chapter involves a return to a number of the characteristics of slow cinema and its use it extrapolating the aspirations of the two films of mine discussed in the chapter. This involves the restatement of the inter-reliance between enabled temporality and cinematic experiencing and the specific use of slow film as a means of counteracting the ever-increasing pace of contemporary life and the commodification of attention.

Chapter four acts a means of re-iterating the persistence of forms of inter-reliance within the current concerns of the practice. These concerns were manifested as a major new exhibition entitled *Songs and the Soil* that took place at the MAC in Belfast in January of 2020 and a publication also entitled *Songs and the Soil*. In addition to reiterating the concerns of the previous chapters, this chapter implicates inter-reliance as a fundamental principle in the research concerns and generative process of *Songs and the Soil* in that it engages with the space where landscape and song are viewed as mutually informing, reciprocally necessitating socio cultural entities. This chapter differs from the preceding ones in that they employed a reflective approach to prior practice but this chapter enables a situation where theory becomes form, where the research, questions and concerns of the thesis are mobilised in the making of new art works. This exhibition physically manifests the theoretical positionings of the preceding chapters as artistic research.

This chapter posits the reiteration of persistent inter-reliant characteristics in the current manifestation of my practice. Methodologically this is played out as a description of the material characteristics and motivations of each element of the exhibition and the specific persistence of inter-reliance as a fundamental characteristic of the practice.

Each chapter engages a diverse range of critical positions that are specific to each medium or cultural mechanism. The persistent commonality in each of the art works is their enabling of inter-reliance as a mutually informing dialectical interplay between art and society. Richard Sennett has written a number of books that engage in a historically based, identification of problematic characteristics of urban living and labour, looking at both the root and possible

solutions to these perceived problems. The last two of these were *The Craftsman* (2008) and *Together, the Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (2012). In both these inter-related books Sennett focuses on skill as a mechanism. In *The Craftsman* Sennett isolates the necessary human compulsion to do a job well for its own sake, he suggests that good craftsmanship involves developing skills and focusing on the work rather than ourselves. In *Together, the Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, he suggests that cooperation is not so much a matter of a certain moral attitude towards others and of shared ideals as it is a matter of skill. Cooperation Sennett argues is a learned skill an embodied craft which is conveyed by social rituals.²¹¹ My practice recognises the making and reception of art as social rituals, that whilst specific, engage with and recognise broader society. Throughout *Together* Sennett reiterates the importance of dialogue (rather than debate), mutuality (rather than unity).²¹² The motivations of my practice share commonalities with the aspirations of Sennett's two most recent books, but the objectives of the last book are perhaps most pertinent here, in that my practice uses inter-reliance, in the multiple forms it takes place within the work, as a means to enable dialogue and cooperation to occur. The practice uses inter-reliance as a mechanism to enable interdiscursive collective relationships between art and society, where the artist acts as a responsive social participant. The practice reflects and responds to society's actions, where the experiential, perceptual and associative combine and enable social relations that subtly foreground collective thinking within increasingly individualistic, polarized societies.

The practice facilitates modesty and complexity via a set of embodied, empathetic relationships, that rather than dictate they enable forms of dialogue to occur. The works that make up the practice embrace modesty, in the sense that they prioritise subtle restraint over sensation, openness over the directive, enabling dialogic conversations over dialectic arguments.²¹³ Complexity occurs in the practice via and enabling of a merging of associative and perceptual characteristics, which encourage open readings that function in opposition to the over simplification of contemporary political and economic observation, what Jacob Burckhardt calls 'the age of brutal simplifiers'.

The contribution to new knowledge in this thesis is articulated in the practices contribution to contemporary art as a field of knowledge. Where these responsive bodies of research and practice were publicly manifested in a range of national and international settings over a fifteen year period. This retrospective examination foregrounds the role of inter-reliance as methodology and ideology within the practice and the broader cultural world. Whilst undertaking the thesis I had the opportunity to make an exhibition and related publication. I used this opportunity to engage the framework of the thesis as a specific methodology in my approach to the exhibition and publication. The exhibition engaged the inter-reliance between landscape and music/song. This enabled a situation

211 Christian Maravelias, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-management-2012-3-page-344.htm>. Accessed 7/3/2021

212 *ibid*

213 Sennett, Richard. *Together, the Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012. p 13

where theory became form and the concerns of the thesis were articulated in the Art world. Where inter-reliance is manifest as a set of devices that are implicated within and comment upon contemporary art practices. Its persistent aspirations are to use the practice as a means to enable inter-reliance between signifiers and signified, artist and broader society, the self and others.

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