Celebrating the Crisis of Representation:

Foregrounding Conjunctive and Disjunctive Relations in

Painting and Sound Installation

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged. Ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Michael Graeve

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I have been inspired by the creativity and playfulness of my daughters Alina and Annika. Alina, you already know all about word counts and research, and if I'd only read as much as you have, I'd be into my second PhD now. And for two thirds of your life, Annika, your Papa has been studying. You've had deep reserves of patience, well beyond your years, as you have waited for rides in the bush, camping trips and the like. Get your bikes – let's go now!

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This thesis has been professionally edited by Dr Margaret Johnson of The Book Doctor in accordance with the IPED guidelines for editing research theses. Unless otherwise noted, photographs are by the author; thank you Dominique Petitgand and John Brash for permission to use your images.

Contents

Images

Audio Files

A DVD is located in a sleeve at the end of this printed document, where Audio files are sorted in folders titled with project number and project title. For the online repository of this exegesis, project numbers and basic descriptions have been incorporated into the file names themselves.

Project 1: *Spatial choreography* (2010)

- These following audio files are stereo mix-downs of the four-channel compositions diffused in the gallery space:

  Track 1 of 12: 2'13"
  Track 2 of 12: 2'48"
  Track 3 of 12: 1'32"
  Track 4 of 12: 0'31"
  Track 5 of 12: 0'58"
  Track 6 of 12: 1'41"
  Track 7 of 12: 1'34"
  Track 8 of 12: 4'24"
  Track 9 of 12: 0'54"
  Track 10 of 12: 0'24"
  Track 11 of 12: 3'02"

The following audio file is a composite track of these stereo files, stringing all compositions together with brief pauses, as they were played in the gallery:

  Track 12 of 12: 26'00"

Project 2: *Relations and un-relations* (2010)

- The following audio file is a stereo mix-down of the four-channel composition diffused in the gallery space:

  Track 1: 8'00"

Project 3: *Subsequent moments simultaneously* (2011–2012)

- The following audio file is a stereo mix-down of the four-channel composition diffused in the gallery space:

Track 1: 8'00"

Project 4: *Multiple monochromes* (2012–2013)

- The following audio file is a stereo mix-down of the four-channel composition diffused in the gallery space:

Track 1: 11'00"

Project 5: *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* (2013–2014)

- These following audio files contain the actual sound compositions diffused in the gallery space:

Track 1: 9'11"

Conjunctive relations, audible (001) (2013). 2-channel sound composition. Composed for Brown Innovations SoundBeam SB30, MiniAmp, CD player, CD.

Track 2: 12'02"

Part of: *Disjunctive relations (001)* (2013). Wall and floor installation, 2-channel sound composition. Composed for SolidDrive SD1-sm induction drivers, 2-channel DVD, DVD player, amplifier, synthetic polymer pain on primed structural beech plywood, screws.

Track 3: 14'33"

Conjunctive relations, audible (002) (2013). 1-channel sound composition. Composed for Panphonics SoundShower RS-232 with integrated amplifier, iPod, bracket.

- The following track is a composite composition, featuring a mix of original recordings presented, as well as room documentation of Place Gallery and SNO Art Projects (Sydney Nonobjective). This composition was presented as a stereo composition in a program entitled *Place* curated by Philip Samartzis, within the *Now hear this* section of group exhibition *Melbourne now* at the Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Australia. 22 November 2013–23 March, 2014.

Track 4: 9'00"

Conjunctive and disjunctive relations (composite),
(2013). 2-channel sound composition..

Abstract

Painting and multi-channel sound composition are combined in this practice-led PhD to generate installations that foreground an ongoing oscillation between conjunctive and disjunctive relations. While interactions between painting and sound practices have contributed to advances in their respective fields, the creation, analysis and curation of such work has often emphasised causal relationships. This study offers an expanded focus by bringing together painting and sound in ways that acknowledge equally the junctures and disjunctures between the mediums.

The practical and theoretical considerations of this study are framed by concepts drawn from the work of Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and William James. Initially this study is informed by the Jena Romantics' response to the crisis of representation brought about by Immanuel Kant. It uses Novalis' proposition – to study foreign systems to better understand one's own – to interpret conjunctive relations between painting and sound through the lens of transcription. Such conjunctive relationships are then rendered complex in installation, following Schlegel's questioning of the possibility of representation and proposing instead endless deferral of resolution, ongoing contradiction and free play. Finally, James' argument that experience consists of what he terms both conjunctive and disjunctive relations, brings to prominence a complex understanding of the conceptual and experienced in installations.

This exegesis provides an overview of five key projects through which this practice-led research has developed. The philosophical and conceptual frameworks are used to interrogate these projects to allow consideration of sound and painting installation within the context of specific art historical and philosophical sources dealing with representation and experience in installation, painting and sound art. In developing a complex interplay and understanding of spatio-temporal and audio-visual fragments, this study seeks to celebrate the free play of experiencing suggested by the crisis of representation.

Leading Fragments

Once one becomes infatuated with the absolute and simply can't escape it, then the only way out is to constantly contradict oneself and unite opposite extremes. The principle of contradiction is inevitably doomed, and one only has the choice of either suffering from it or else ennobling necessity by acknowledging its status as free action.

—Schlegel (in Seyhan 1992, 3)

One studies foreign systems to find one's own system.

—Novalis (in Seyhan 1992, 23)

Every examiner of the sensible life *in concreto* must see that relations of every sort, of time, space, difference, likeness, change, rate, cause, or what not, are just as integral members of the sensational flux as terms are, and that conjunctive relations are just as true members of the flux as disjunctive relations are.

—James 1909, 280

Introduction

How can processes of transcription and improvisation be made complex in order to reveal doubt about the possibility of causal translation between painting and sound practices, revealing a poietic[1] openness of relationships that develops when one medium studies, but cannot represent, another? In what ways can concepts derived from the celebration of the crisis of representation in Jena Romanticism, such as free action, contradiction and the fragment, be used to foreground a tensioned presence in painting and sound works in installation? How can considerations of sequence and simultaneity be applied to spatial and temporal aspects of installation composition to emphasise active experiencing at the intersection of time and duration? How might the concept of conjunctive and disjunctive relations be used to structure and better understand the complex oscillation of painting and sound interactions in installation?

These are some of the questions that have been considered through the development of five projects. These projects straddle the mediums of painting and sound,[2] and are manifested as installation environments. Relationships between painting and sound have contributed to a number of energetic historical and contemporary developments, including abstraction in painting and changed considerations of duration in musical composition. This study seeks to build on the rich potential of such interactions between the mediums and locate these in installation space; for, while there is no delineated genre of painting and sound installation,

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[1] I use the poietic to describe a productive form of the poetic – a poetry that generates more than itself. The poetic is already generative, being etymologically derived from the maker, but the word *poiesis* acknowledges its formative aspect.

[2] For consistency's sake the word *sound* is used in this study to stand for sound, sound art (coming from a lineage of both music and the arts), sound composition, musical composition and musical recordings – contemporary and historical. Its use as a denominator of artistic practice is relatively recent, coming into usage many years after a number of modernist contributions such as those of Edgar Varése's proposition to include in the definition of music all organised sound and, later, John Cage's pleas for non-musical sounds to be recognised, see for example Max Neuhaus, in Huberman, (2005, 55). Sound art, as a term, is doubly contested, questioned with care by many including Susan Hiller (2012, 57), and by Douglas Kahn who convincingly argues for "the more generic sound in the arts" (2006, n.p.).

the history of conjunctions that are legible in such work allows an exposure of aspects of painting and sound interaction that do not render each other unified, nor completely. Although considerations of painting and sound have often been considered through models of crossovers or illustrations, this exegesis seeks also to reveal the disjunctive elements that result from the complex interplay of sound and painting in installation space. This process of revealing the disjunctive functions to foreground the disruptive power of un-relations, making installations into ongoing and un-resolvable environments. This is achieved through exhibition experiments that engage practically with celebrations of the crisis of representation in Jena Romanticism, and with William James' proposition of conjunctive and disjunctive relations.

While this research is practice-led, in this exegesis I have brought together both practical and philosophical considerations. One of my aims in undertaking this research was to develop a useful language for sound and painting installations that can move beyond statements of causal relationships to in fact capture both the complexity and uncertainty of interactions, and delight in the proliferation of interpretations. I have sought to enact a dynamic relationship between practice and theory similar to that present between painting and sound in my works. I have not sought to flatten the possible distances and contradictions in considering the relationships I have set up, instead delighting in the possibilities presented by triangulating painting, sound and theory. While the literary, aesthetic and philosophical considerations hinge on Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and James, these are merely starting points to wider investigation and analysis of the practices and histories underlying this study, which puts into motion a dynamic set of interrelations between making, thinking and writing. Indeed, the pleasure of undertaking this study was in the proliferation of interaction between these three elements as they developed alongside each other. There is no desire for the artworks to simply mimic the theory, nor for the theory to stand in for the artwork: it is the

interaction that drives the project. If the crisis of representation seeks to encapsulate the impossibility of rendering some thing in another, or of rendering the subject in the object, as philosophy might phrase it, then the relationship between this exegesis, and the artworks that initiate its discussions, is similarly rendered problematic; but in the spirit I have deployed across these artworks, this complication is celebrated wholeheartedly.

This exegesis commences with a short chapter which explores a series of philosophical and aesthetic considerations. The first section introduces the concept of the crisis of representation, and how this crisis developed into an aesthetic concern for the Jena Romantics Schlegel and Novalis. The second section considers a fragment by Schlegel to initiate a consideration of possibilities for contradiction and endlessness in experience in artworks, as well as improvisation. A fragment by Novalis puts into motion a discussion of transcription, and the impossibility of rendering one medium with another. The final section focuses on the experiential, showing the opportunities that arise from using James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations to discuss sound and painting installation. While the philosophical lenses are themselves of contemporary concern, they are employed here to describe, interrogate and innovate the practice-led work, which is the primary focus and contribution of this research. This is not to detract from the focus I bring to developing a considered narrative of a celebration of a crisis of representation that might be leveraged to better understand interdisciplinary practice, but to delimit that this effort has been brought to bear on fine art studio practice, rather than on a contribution to philosophical discourse per se.

Through the colorations of these lenses, the projects are considered in detail in the following chapter, Projects. The projects tie back into the theoretical considerations and are informed by them, although they are not subsordinate. The considerations by which the projects are interrogated unfold under the following headings:

Project 1 *Spatial choreography*

- Tensioned presencing
- Improvisatory installation design and composition
- Constellations, dispersal of elements
- Choreographing experience through space and across time
- The sounds
- Compositional process and sound characters

Project 2 *Relations and un-relations*

- Opposite extremes, constant contradiction
- Free play of installation improvisation
- Free play of sound improvisation

Project 3 *Subsequent moments simultaneously*

- The impossibility of transcription

Project 4 *Multiple monochromes*

- Monochrome / flatness
- Space, duration and physicality of sound

Project 5 *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*

- From vignette to fragment
- Variously spatialised sound
- The moment and duration of painting
- Colour

Lens

Celebrating the crisis of representation

> The problem of representation is inherent to the never fully answered question of how philosophical or literary language can mediate and account for the world of experience and for concepts.
>
> —Seyhan 1992, 4

If this project seeks to celebrate the crisis of representation,[3] how do I define it in the context of this research? My initial model for such a crisis derives from the *reaction* to Immanul Kant's second Copernican revolution – both by Kant himself and by subsequent thinkers. Kant does not use the wording of a "crisis of representation", but performs it philosophically in his second Copernican revolution in the *Critique of pure reason* of 1781, where he establishes that the mandate for making meaning lies in the power of the subject, not in the object being contemplated. In other words – and this is why it is a Copernican revolution – Kant places the human mind at the centre of all operations of knowledge. With this argument begins a widespread series of philosophical re-negotiations of the role and autonomy of the subject in Western thought, where the making of meaning becomes considered in a way that makes it contingent and provisional. In Peter Rusterholz's terms,

> Kant's "Copernican turn" lies in his declaration that our cognition does not
> conform to the objects of reality, but that the reality of the objects conforms to our

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[3] The wording of a 'crisis of representation' appears in a variety of additional contexts, of which some are related, others outside the scope of this study. Related to the interests of this study, and researched in the early stages but not further developed here, is the notion of a crisis of representation that leads to the development of early modernist abstraction. See Lewis (2007) and Hughes (2004). A number of additional crises of representation that are not directly related to this study have been postulated in post-modernism, see Bertens (1995), and in anthropology, see Marcus and Fischer (1985, 15), and numerous other fields. There are also numerous crises 'in' (rather than 'of') representation, such as in semiotics, see Kim (1986, 86).

modes of cognition … Hence, as early as Kant, there is the theory that the activity

of thinking is not mimetic, but constructive. (2003, 53)

As such, Kant's second Copernican revolution both placed, and highlighted, the

concept of agency in the subject and, because it led to more questions than answers in its

wake, has been described in negative terms as a crisis of representation. While Michel

Foucault does not use the language of a crisis, he similarly places "the threshold of our

modernity" at the point of Kant's consideration of the "rightful limits" of representation

(1994, 242–243).[4] In regard to Kant's reconfiguring of representation, Daniel Hoolsema

points out in his review of Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's *The literary absolute*:

The challenge Kant bequeathed his successors is, of course, the presentation of the

ideas of pure reason: freedom, immortality, and God. In a word it is the

Darstellung [representation/presentation[5]] of the absolute. Kant explores this

problem in all three of his *Critiques,* and he arrives three times at the same

conclusion, namely, that the absolute always only receives a partial presentation;

therefore it can never undergo intellection. (2004, 849, fn6)

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[4] Michel Foucault speaks of the "questioning" of representation in *The order of things*: "Confronting Ideology, the Kantian critique … marks the threshold of our modernity; it questions representation … on the basis of its rightful limits. Thus it sanctions for the first time that event in European culture which coincides with the end of the eighteenth century: the withdrawal of knowledge and thought outside the space of representation. That space is brought into question in its foundation, its origin, and its limits: and by this very fact, the unlimited field of representation, which Classical thought had established, which Ideology had attempted to scan in accordance with a step-by-step, discursive, scientific method, now appears as a metaphysics. In this sense, Criticism brings out the metaphysical dimension that eighteenth-century philosophy had attempted to reduce solely by means of the analysis of representation. But it opens up at the same time the possibility of another metaphysics; one whose purpose will be to question, apart from representation, all that is the source and origin of representation; it makes possible those philosophies of Life, of the Will, and of the Word, that the nineteenth century is to deploy in the wake of criticism." (1994, 242–243).

[5] In the literature, the German "Darstellung" is variously translated by theorists either as presentation or representation. While Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy use "presentation" in *The literary absolute: The theory of literature in German Romanticism* (1988), Martha B Helfer speaks of representation in her *The Retreat of Representation: The Concept of Darstellung in German Critical Discourse* (1996). I have based my choice of representation on its use in Seyhan's *Representation and its discontents: The critical legacy of German Romanticism* (1992) which was an important early inspiration for this present project.

Martha B Helfer traces the changing concept of representation in Kant in ways that foregrounds its catalytic force: "where Kant had attacked linguistic ambiguity as the bane of philosophical discourse, his successors capitalize on its productive or *poietic* potential" (1996, 177). This challenge was notably embraced by the Jena Romantics, a short-lived movement best delineated by their publication of the *Athenaeum* journal of 1798–1800. Though the Jena Romantics wrote over 200 years ago, my research into their positive reading of the crisis of representation is principally informed by the 20th-century literary and philosophical criticism (including that of Azade Seyhan, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, and Martha B Helfer) that finds in the Jena Romantic material an unfinished project with relevance for contemporary criticism and philosophy. In particular, the application of these frameworks to interdisciplinary art and painting and sound installation practice has not been common – an opportunity deliberately realised here.

Of the Jena Romantics, I focus here on Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis [Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg], who feature most strongly in the writings on this topic, and whom Seyhan considers "its major theorists" (1992, 5).[6] For the purposes of this project I worked through two specific philosophical fragments, of their work, taking these writings as frameworks for the consideration of questions of cross-media. Given the literary and philosophical nature of the aesthetics being considered, there is an additional crisis of representation when the ideas are brought to practice, and deliberately so: the installation works do not seek to represent the fragments, but instead to reveal the poietic, the poetically productive and constructive nature, of what is here defined as the crisis of representation. They celebrate such a crisis' potential, both to generate novel audio-visual installations and to to provide a language to grasp aspects of the artworks created.

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[6] This energetic journal also published the work of August Wilhelm Schlegel, Caroline Schlegel, Dorothea Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling.

Schlegel fragment

> Once one becomes infatuated with the absolute and simply can't escape it, then
>
> the only way out is to constantly contradict oneself and unite opposite extremes.
>
> The principle of contradiction is inevitably doomed, and one only has the choice
>
> of either suffering from it or else ennobling necessity by acknowledging its status
>
> as free action.

—Schlegel (in Seyhan 1992, 3)

Schlegel's fragment bursts with unresolved and ongoing tensions that are either endured or accepted. Both the desire to create tensions, and their celebration, have been used in this research as frameworks for making, and in turn for giving, language to its experience in installation space and conceptually. Initially I will consider how these tensions relate to notions of openness and an emphasis on the experiencing subject, and openness in installation. Secondly, I will discuss the *absolute* in Jena Romanticism as a *negative absolute* which is probed through free play, rendered here also as improvisation.

The consideration of opposite extremes and constant contradiction are held here as indicative of the possibilities of an installation practice that does not resolve. Such a metaphor of non-resolution, and its possibilities for contradiction, are rendered in the projects through the interplay between sounding and painting events, and the sense of openness relies on one not being able to represent the other, but always acting through a dynamic interplay of parts which acts to foreground an ongoing experience[7] rather than a resolving understanding of the relation between parts. Such an opening-up of the experiential aspects of the art builds on developments over the last century as artists have done three things: challenged the autonomy of the art object, developed the context of installation practice, and foregrounded openness,

uncertainty and complexity.[8] This is well-documented from various perspectives in the

practice and writings of, for example, Rosalind Krauss,[9] Daniel Buren[10], John Cage[11] and

Roland Barthes.[12] Other pertinent examples of artists who utilise installation space to provide

complex embodying experiences are Bruce Nauman and Gaylen Gerber, who use deliberate

contradiction and deferral of resolution as strategies to enable complex spatial and temporal

experiences.Umberto Eco's *The open work* likewise engages with notions of openness and the

experience of uncertainty in artwork, and poetics:

> In its advocacy of artistic structures that demand a particular involvement on the
>
> part of the audience, contemporary poetics merely reflects our culture's attraction
>
> for the "indeterminate," for all those processes which, instead of relying on a
>
> univocal, necessary sequence of events, prefer to disclose a field of possibilities,
>
> to create "ambiguous" situations open to all sorts of operative choices and
>
> interpretations. (1989, 44)

Such discussions either relate explicitly to, or are applicable to, installation practice. In

developing this research project I was particularly interested in developing installations to

provide an experience of complexity by allowing the use of constant contradiction and the

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[7] Such an ongoing experience is well described but harshly criticised as theatrical by Michael Fried in *Art and objecthood* (1998) as well as in *Absorption and theatricality* (1988).

[8] Over-the-top complexity is, for example, used in John Cage and Lejaren Hiller's *HPSCHD* (1969). Branden W. Joseph performs a detailed analysis of complexity in Cage's practice in *Beyond the dream syndicate: Tony Conrad and the arts after Cage*: "Always attentive to contemporary scientific and technological developments ... Cage's notions of complexity and chaos ultimately, perhaps, have more resonances with cybernetics and chaos theory than with Eastern religion. For Cage, the idea of 'identifying with nature' was above all a reconfiguration of the avant-garde technique of estrangement, the most important aspect of which, arguably, was the disidentification with overly reductive (but not all) ideas of causality..." (2008, 78).

[9] The movement beyond sculpture to an expanded field of engagement is chronicled in Krauss (1985). Krauss also works through the influence of theatricality and performance and its influence on viewer experience (1977, 240).

[10] Daniel Buren states: "Each work, even the seemingly simplest one, is in truth the result of a significant number of interactions. Of interferences." (1996, 106; trans. Michael Graeve).

[11] See Branden W. Joseph (2008, 33). See also John Cage's engagement with indeterminacy (1968).

[12] Barthes' reconfiguration of the role of the author in texts such as *The pleasure of text* (1976) and *The death of the author* (1977) likewise cause a rethinking of the role of the experiencing subject/reader.

uniting of extremes. I brought painting and sound crossovers into installations that

foregrounded both conjunctive and disjunctive relations in a complex interplay of spatio-

visual sequences and audio-temporal simultaneity. In them Schlegel's contradiction and

tension between parts are rendered metaphorically as work that does not resolve – a desired

tuning that applies to all the projects in this study, but that is explored with particular

reference to Schlegel's opposite extremes and constant contradiction in Project 2, *Relations

and un-relations*.

A question of how to prolong experience is performed at multiple levels in the

experience of my installations, acting, among other functions, across the fields of linguistic

interpretation (we may seek words to describe the similarity or difference of image and

sound), across the senses and across media-specific histories (how the concrete might be

considered differently in painting and in sound histories). My search for languages of

contradiction, openness and ongoing uncertainty commenced with a desire to find words to

describe artworks that build possibilities, that discuss audio-visuality with more openness and

indeterminacy than the causal language of synaesthesia, and outside the didactic determinism

of a discourse of "this colour resulting in that sound".[13]

Schlegel's fragment commences with the notion of "the absolute" and closes with a

mention of "free action". Engagement with free action and free play occurs prolifically in

Schlegel's and Novalis' writings, developing from Kant's characterisation of free play as a

uniting of understanding and imagination in the apprehension of beauty. Schlegel's and

Novalis' considerations of free play also develop against the background of – and in reaction

to – Friedrich Schiller's and Johann Gottlieb Fichte's considerations of freedom.[14] Free play

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[13]Christoph Cox lays out the basis for just such a critique of the synaesthetic, in response to five influential
synaesthesia and visual music exhibitions held around 2005. See Cox (2005). When living in New York in
2005, I too saw and heard *What sound does this colour make* at Eyebeam (2005), and while the works
contained didn't necessarily fall into line with the causal title, the title nonetheless remains as a provocation.

[14] These topics are considered in detail in Dahlstrom (2011) and Vater (2010).

can be considered in relation to open-ness in art practice, by reflecting on the relationship

between free play and the absolute – both terms frequently appearing in tandem in Schlegel's

and Novalis' writings. While an infatuation with the absolute[15] (as identified in the fragment

framing this section) might signal a sense of closure, in Schlegel and Novalis the

philosophical construction of the absolute begins to take the form of a negative absolute and,

in Schlegel's case, of an ironic absolute, described by Ayon Kumar Roy:

> The anxieties latent in Schelling's aesthetics escalated into a full-blown crisis in
>
> the Romantic doctrines of Schlegel and Novalis, who located the power of art not
>
> in its capacity to achieve the Absolute but in its self-conscious acknowledgement
>
> of art's very failure to reach the Absolute. For Schlegel and Novalis, the
>
> governing principles of art were irony – understood as an abyssal form of
>
> sceptical negativity – and the "negative Absolute," which emerged from the very
>
> repudiation of the quest for metaphysical certainties. (2009, xv)

Novalis, echoing Schlegel's acknowledgement of the impossibility of representing the

absolute, in turn posits free activity as a direct result of the "renunciation of the absolute":

> Unending free activity arises in us through the free renunciation of the absolute –
>
> the only possible absolute that can be given us and that we only find through our
>
> inability to attain and know an absolute. (in Vater 2010, 288)

What emerges is a free play that occurs in the context of an acknowledgement of

complexity and endlessness, which I argue can give voice to an open-ness in artmaking that

questions causal and deterministic approaches to making and interpreting art. If Schlegel

considers free action as forming an endless contradiction, then the experience of art, of a

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[15] Another "absolute", that of "absolute music", fundamentally influenced the development of painting towards
abstraction. However, although a number of authors and works are closely related to this study, in particular
Vergo (2005) and Hay (2010), this connection is not a focus of this research.

work, may likewise be considered as endless. As Seyhan states, "The possibility of 'free action' implies freely motivated representation that is only possible in the realm of art and which a belief in the availability of truth or being would exclude" (1992, 3).

At this point I will bring one last concept into relation with free action and free play: the free play of improvisation. This is not to argue that improvisation is the same as free play, but that some aspects of free play (in Kant that of an interaction between understanding and imagination, in Seyhan's consideration of Schlegel that of a "freely motivated representation") – in light of there being no right answer – resemble the space of improvisation. In this way, Schlegel's and Novalis' engagement with concepts of free action and free play are used in this study to enable me to interrogate improvisation, either to engage openness in the practical works developed, or to signal readings of such openness. Improvisation is considered in the practical projects in a number of forms, initially through an improvisatory installation process (a process of arriving relatively empty-handed and creating the work on-site), which was applied to Projects 1, 3 and 4 and is discussed in detail in Project 1, *Spatial choreography*. The free play of installation improvisation and the free play of sound improvisation are discussed in relation to Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*, where there is consideration of an improvisational language in the visual arrangement of parts devised to signal openness and improvisatory play, and where improvisation in sound takes the form of both composing within the space, and, particularly in Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously,* emphasises gestural sounds.

Novalis fragment

One studies foreign systems to find one's own system.

—Novalis (in Seyhan 1992, 23)

For the purposes of my study, I have used Novalis' fragment to articulate possible considerations of the relationship between painting and sound mediums through the

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framework of transcription. The process of studying foreign systems lies at the basis of a number of energising historical crossovers and transcriptions between painting and sound practices, as well as of their critical interpretation.[16] Painting that looks to the foreign system of sound contributes significantly to the varied genealogies of abstract painting[17] in the works of, for example, William Turner,[18] Wassily Kandinsky,[19] Frantiŝek Kupka,[20] Piet Mondrian[21] and Paul Klee.[22] In turn, numerous innovations and developments in sound can be traced to studies of painting, an example being Morton Feldman's adaptation and transcription of painterly approaches to his composition process in works such as *For Franz Kline* (1962) and *de Kooning* (1963).[23] More recently, four artists who approach the transcriptions between painting and sound elements in different ways are John Aslanidis, Ruark Lewis, Steve Roden and Marco Fusinato, whose work will be discussed later. In the studio I have extended upon this history of painting derived from sound and sound derived from painting through processes of transcription, by concurrently developing bodies of work that each take the other as their subject. While this conceptual framework is relevant to all the projects, I have focused the discussion on transcription on Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously*.

Novalis' fragment concerns the study of foreign systems, and is considered by Seyhan to be at the base of Jena Romantic hermeneutics because of its role in problematising representation:

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[16] Overviews of these interactions are the topic of von Maur (1999), Lockspeiser (1973) and Vergo (2010).

[17] See Moszynska (1990, 38–43).

[18] See Lockspeiser (1973, 49–66).

[19] See Kandinsky (2006, 33–35, 54–55). For a discussion of Kandinsky's works, including *Fugue (Controlled impression)* (1914) see von Maur (1999, 30–37).

[20] For mention of Kupka's *Amorpha, fugue in two colors* (1912), and subsequently a more in-depth analysis of the influence of Jazz on Kupka's works of the 1920's and 30's, see Fauchereau (1989, 17, 25–27),

[21] For a discussion of Mondrian's Fox-trot and Broadway boogie-woogie works of the 1940's, see von Maur (1999, 97–102) and Cooper (2002).

[22] See Düchting (1997) for an extended discussion of Klee's works and his consistent engagement with musical themes.

The challenge to understanding posed by the mystique of another system of thought heightens awareness of the problems inherent to representation. Representation goes from a concrete object of perception to its final verbal account via a system that combines memory, the desire to grasp the totality of experience, and exchange of the object for the linguistic sign. Each of these terms fails to maintain the mechanism of identity necessary to recuperate the object and points to the figural space of representation. This space is, in effect, the site of the unrepresentable. The critical imagination of Romanticism assigns this space to poetry. This assignment constitutes a revision, reconstruction, and reinvention of the concept of representation envisioned by Kant and Fichte. (1992, 23–24)

If, as in Seyhan's words, "The critical imagination of Romanticism assigns this space to poetry", then I am invested in opening this space to that of installation, and to opening installation to the spaces in-between the mediums of sound and painting. In practice, I have rendered the possibility of mediums studying one another to know themselves better through a consideration of transcription. I consider transcription as the activity of adapting material from one medium to another, and in specific I am interested in the revelatory potential of this process; for while transcription may initially appear to be a formulaic process, each algorithm must in fact be chosen; each table of correspondences needs to be constructed. Transcription can be unselfconscious, even unconscious, but it can never be indeterminate. Does a frequency of x hertz necessarily translate into a colour temperature of y kelvin? And if so, by what formula? This reveals much about the choices that the transcriber makes. And transcription is also relative to the question of translatability, and of representation, itself. This is central to my project, because in creating and analysing these works, and in seeking to render sound as painting and painting as sound, I have learnt that they are not translatable, or

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[23] See Bernard 2002; Beal 2002.

if they are translatable, then other important aspects are lost. Translatability therefore relates to the question of mimetics and likewise to the question of the crisis of representation, for if representation is problematised then so is translation, and we arrive at the crisis – or impossibility – of translation.

Thus transcription becomes a poietic force, with neither the possibility of, nor the responsibility to, representation. It becomes, as Seyhan suggests, "the site of the unrepresentable" (1992, 24). While I consider questions of transcription between painting and sound under the heading of Novalis' suggestion of systems studying another, such transcription is always rendered and acknowledged as a reaching for understanding, for relations, for proliferations, rather than as a rendering, representation, or illustration of the essences of such processes. The complication of transcription acknowledges both conjunctive and disjunctive forces at work in the interaction between the two mediums, and the complication of installation space doubly renders simplistic notions of causal relations both untenable and undesirable if an openly structured experience is sought. Indeed Gaston Bachelard claims that the poetic, in his case the "poetic image", renders itself in the "opposite of causality, that is, in reverberation" (1958, xvi).

Additionally, Novalis' notion of one system studying another has influenced the language of this study, informed in a more contemporary context by Daniel Albright's art historical writing which self-consciously utilises comparative arts methodology in order to echo the cross-disciplinary sources he is investigating, thereby finding compelling pathways through the crossovers between music, visual art, theatre, literature and dance within modernism.[24] A qualified, specific form of transcriptive tension, brought to language, has been one of the benefits of considering how mediums, or forms of knowledge, can render each other richly without emptying out meaning and possibility.

As the flow of ideas with William James in the coming section leads towards a desired interaction of both conjunctive and disjunctive relationships, transcription remains a valuable way to think, make, recover and speak of conjunctive relations to start with, but also acknowledge that transcription reveals the tension aimed for in the artworks produced: an openness without a complete falling apart, an oscillation between causal relation and open disjunction, a movement between meaning and free play.

James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations

> The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.
>
> —James 2008, 101

If endless contradiction is suggested as a possibility in Schlegel's disjunctive fragment, and if two mediums might look to each other to understand themselves better, as in Novalis' fragment, then how might I enact these in installation? How can the relations between parts be conceived in a way that celebrates an ongoing oscillation? I see such characteristics enacted in the flow of experience through conjunctive and disjunctive relations as described by James. In my search for a way to describe a system of endless contradiction (and to develop it as a positive characteristic) I considered dialectical terms, such as in Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*. But in moving beyond these early projects in this study, I sought a way of thinking through relations that remained tensioned as dynamic interplays, rather than as one form negating the other. Complexity and uncertainty suggested themselves as terms during the development of this study, and remain desired characteristics to describe the wish for open outcomes within the works comprising this study: in that sense, complexity

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[24] See Albright (2004), (1981) and (2000).

and openness are mutually supportive terms. Yet, if complexity describes the outcome, how ought the components relate in order to produce such complexity? James develops a philosophy of experience in such works as *A pluralistic universe* (1909) through a description of conjunctive and disjunctive relations relative to the flow of experience. In talking about the difference between sensation and our ability to conceive of this experience, James describes a flow of conjunctive and disjunctive relations:

> With this we have the outlines of a philosophy of pure experience before us …
> That one moment of it proliferates into the next by transitions which, whether
> conjunctive or disjunctive, continue the experiential tissue, can not, I contend, be
> denied. Life is in the transitions as much as in the terms connected; often, indeed,
> it seems to be there more emphatically, as if our spurts and sallies forward were
> the real firing-line of the battle, were like the thin line of flame advancing across
> the dry autumnal field which the farmer proceeds to burn. In this line we live
> prospectively as well as retrospectively. It is "of" the past, inasmuch as it comes
> expressly as the past's continuation; it is "of" the future in so far as the future,
> when it comes, will have continued it. (2008, 37)

Thus, in considering the narrative I have created through deliberation of my projects in this study (not of a literal lineage from Jena Romantic philosophy to that of James), we move from a celebration of the crisis of representation to the celebration of experience itself, with an emphasis in James' thinking on an ongoing flux of conjunctive and disjunctive relations. He avoids a stiffly binary tension, instead placing the word "relation," literally, into relation with both the conjunctive and the disjunctive, and in doing so names the process by which an oscillatory flow of experiences can be constructed and discussed. This play of conjunctive and disjunctive relations was implied across the five projects featured in this study, but featured most coherently in the development of Project 5, *Conjunctive and*

disjunctive relations which concludes the practical works. In this installation the relation between the fragmentary audible and visual parts seeks to form just such a series of relationships. In this manner, James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations have provided a language to capture my understanding of, and my pleasure of being within, painting and sound installations in which transcription is rendered complex and where the constant contradiction ensures a lack of resolution that in turn foregrounds the complexity and uncertainty of experience. The projects, and their language, have changed in emphasis from a celebration of the impossibility of representation to a celebration of experiencing itself.

Projects

This section analyses how the five practical projects that comprise this study interrogate the questions that necessitate this study. Taken as a whole the projects form a multilayered and multisequenced investigation. At times they advance the practical strategies iteratively to deepen a particular strategy from project to project and venue to venue; at other times they work through concerns that present themselves in a single project only. Each project commences with a physical description prior to working through the investigation that it is involved in. These topics, in turn, refer back to the the more philosophically oriented introductory lens, and the connections made to it.

As a way of considering how these projects practically probe such questions, I have shaped project notes, reflections, community of practice research and bibliographic research into a series of focused topics such as colour, improvisation, transcription, etc. While the majority of topics apply well to all the projects (think of colour and sound), I sort them selectively under the five project headings. Presented in this manner, each project is encountered through only a limited set of topic elaborations, but with a view to a progressively unfolding set of considerations that build a comprehensive – although never a complete – study. This subdivision of variously-scaled parts enacts a play similar to that governing the artworks themselves, where fragmentary part-experiences fall together and fall apart as a series of conjunctive and disjunctive relations. I have attempted to distribute evenly neither the word counts nor the emphases among the projects: instead, the earlier, and last projects receive the most consideration to aid the flow and comprehension of all, and to reveal the progress made. Three of the five projects comprise of multiple realisations across a total of ten exhibitions, and aspects of the work were re-installed and reworked in different locations, providing additional opportunities for analysis within the research.

The projects are documented in this exegesis in the following manner: the Projects chapter features limited overview images for each project; additional photographs are reproduced in the Appropriate Durable Record. Additionally I have supplied a DVD with files of audio material. The audio for the first four projects is represented as stereo mix-downs of the compositions performed in space. The last project is represented by three recordings, again in the state they were diffused in the gallery, but also one composition that intermixes the source sounds with documentation from two exhibition spaces where these works were presented.

Project 1: *Spatial choreography* (2010)

Image 1 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (2010). Installation view. e/static, Turin.

Realisation

Spatial choreography. Solo exhibition at blank at e/static, Turin, Italy, 3 June – 17 July 2010.

Works comprising *Spatial choreography*:

- *Squares squared* (2010), synthetic polymer paint on 4 plywood boards, overall dimensions 2400 x 2400mm.
- *Untitled* (2010), 4-channel sound composition, 11 tracks, duration 26'00", DVD, DVD player, active studio monitor loudspeakers, cables, synthetic polymer paint on plywood boards, synthetic polymer paint wall painting, dimensions variable.
- *Untitled* (2008), oil on linen, 1520 x 310mm.
- *Untitled* (2008), oil on linen, 1520 x 310mm.
- *High* (2010), synthetic polymer wall painting, dimensions variable.

Visible first are the two paintings *Untitled* (2008), the only visual works created before commencement of this study. They consist of five equal squares each, hard edged, flatly painted, without visible brushstrokes. These paintings were placed so that both are visible, one after the other: one canvas placed in the entrance area, the other coming into view upon approaching the doorway to the main gallery, addressing the audience in a direct manner. A sense of variation of colour within a similarity of format, of a rhythmic dah dah from close to distant. A sense of a beat both inside the paintings (of five measures) and a beat from painting to painting near to far (of two measures). Colour themes in the works are related, in that all the colours in each work have close relatives in the other painting, either in regard to hue or tone. Overall a high-key colour scale, resulting in an energetic opticality that belies the evenness of the compositions.

Audible and visible upon entering the gallery was the audio paraphernalia that forms part of *Untitled* (2010), a four-channel sound composition of eleven tracks. In visual terms, the equipment consists of a DVD, DVD player, four powered studio monitor loudspeakers

and long black cables. The loudspeakers and DVD player are placed on coloured boards: the four boards for the loudspeakers are painted with the same colour/paint and on the same surface as the panels, making up a large four-squared wall painting. The board under the DVD player is painted the colour of the thin-lined square wall painting; thus colour relationships and material relationships start relating to each other across the room. The sound work was composed on-site from a library of pre-recorded audio files of record player and loudspeaker recordings. Audible one after another are eleven individual tracks with short silences in between, resulting in a 26-minute composition. These sounds reveal and transcribe different aspects of both the visual and the sound composition in space, as well as aspects of experiencing the gallery space: successions, spatial complexity, sounds from here and there, immersion, slow fades, hard edges, slow and fast sections. The sounds were composed as differing characters or vignettes – each existing in space in different ways, each revealing something different about time and duration. Throughout this study, all sounds were initially sourced from record players and loudspeakers – performed without vinyl – created through rhythms of the needle on the platter, machinic sounds of the mechanism, and through feedback loops generated by placing the loudspeaker close to the needle. These source recordings were recorded over the previous decade and form an extensive archive from which I have re-composed, re-mixed and re-processed in ways that I describe in detail in the section "Compositional Process and Sound Characters".

Visible third, behind the audio equipment, is *Squares squared* (2010), a work created on-site. It consists of four plywood panels leaning against the wall in a manner that results in a four-square arrangement. Purchased and cut in Turin, the squares perform in relationship to the two canvas panels also featuring squares, although at a significantly increased scale, and lean against the wall in a nod towards provisionality.

Visible fourth is an element of *Untitled* (2010), a wall painting of a thin green line that describes the outline of a square: large, geometrical and precise. An electricity lead emerges from a power point within this wall square, connecting to the sound equipment.

Visible fifth and last is *High* (2010). Having traversed the gallery and turning towards the exit, audiences can see four cloud-like smudgy semi-painterly areas of pale pastel, painted above the fluorescent tubes. The colours are paler and gentler than the other colour groupings so far, alluding to the process of a gentle diffusion of coloured light reflected into the room from near the fluorescent tubes. This work is handmade and light compared with the geometric rigidity of the other painted works.

The installation was created in the critically-engaged and sound-focused gallery e/static in Turin. e/static commenced in 1999 as a curatorial project by Carlo Fossati, working with prominent international sound artists including Phill Niblock, Christina Kubisch, Steve Roden, Rolf Julius, Akio Suzuki and Hans Peter Kuhn.

Introduction to *Spatial choreography*

What form of experiencing presence do I seek in the projects comprising this study, and how can this be achieved? I work through a tensioned presence, exploring how I tested this in the forms of improvisatory exhibition design, and the compositional process. I discuss how constellations and dispersal of elements provide components that encourage a choreographic experience which reveals a set of complex interrelations that produce a tensioned presence.

Tensioned presencing

artists who deliberately seek divergence among the constituent arts sometimes discover that the impression of realness, thereness, is heightened, not diminished.

—Albright 2000, 7

I will commence the investigation of the projects comprising this research by questioning the concept of presence, and in particular of tensioned presence. Tensioned presence underlies all five projects, and the aim is to foreground it through an oscillation of conjunctive and disjunctive relations in the installation space. The development, exhibition and written consideration of this particular project, *Spatial choreography,* and all of the projects, has resulted in a better understanding of how I understand presence to be addressed in my work.

My early project notes indicate *Spatial choreography* to be driven by an intent to foreground an experiencing of being present. In the lead-up to the exhibition I wrote to the gallery director:

How to write now about an exhibition that will be made on site, in space, in time? … There is no doubt in my mind that my reluctance to speculate on the future is tied to a desire to express presence. More precisely: to be present. Not a projection into a future. And not a nostalgia about a past. But a presence of here and now. And in that sense I treat the gallery as a playground. Installation as a medium emphasises the provisional and the improvisational. (Graeve, pers. comm.)

While this correspondence in the lead-up to the exhibition speaks simply of presence, in considering the way in which I might work towards presence in the project, I here develop the idea of a tensioned presence. At a first level of analysis this project – and indeed this entire study of five projects – performs presence by executing installation towards a "phenomenological or experiential understanding" of engagement. I take this wording from Miwon Kwon's *One place after another* which commences its genealogy: "Emerging out of the lessons of minimalism, site-specific art was initially based in a phenomenological or experiential understanding of the site" (2002, 3). Yet while site influences the work, I do not place it at the core of the experience, but weave and narrate the artworks into site to their

advantage so that they may unfold in a manner supportive to an ongoing experience of presence and duration. The way in which wall-painting and sound-composition can nestle themselves into a space also contributes to a sense of there-ness and assertiveness about the presence of the work itself.

Developing from this notion of a phenomenological presence, the form of presence which I test in this study is what I call a *tensioned* presence. I conceive of this as a productively poietic form of presence. It builds upon the absorbed, immersive and meditative aspects of the phenomenological presence that characterises accounts of first wave site-specificity, and combines these with the uncertainty and ongoing contradiction engendered by the way painting and sound potentially read, interact, and contradict each other in this investigation. In this way I deliberately juxtapose and undermine moments of immersion or contemplation compositionally, spatially and conceptually. Such a tensioned presence may be understood in terms of the disruptive forces applied by Bruce Nauman to installation experience (spatially confounding in his corridor works, durationally confounding in works such as *Four corner piece* (1970)) or a poeticised form of Brechtian alienation (his *Verfremdung*) where, as Berthold Brecht states, "no 'hypnotic fields' arise" (Patterson 1981, 160).

As a result of this complication of the tensioned presence, the initially-stated intention of the exhibition – of a presence without past and future – in practice soon gave way to a presence that is multiple in form, and that takes into account both the flow of duration and the moment of time: "What do we experience when …?[25] How does each of those experiences frame not only our previous experience, but also our forthcoming one?" (Graeve, pers. comm.)

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[25] For the question of what is seen when, and what happens differently in the cases that my painting and sound are perceived first as complementary, or first as contradictory, I am indebted to a powerful cold reading of my

A useful starting point for this discussion of presence can be found in the notion of "presencing" in *Time and being* (Heidegger 1972). As Carol J White interprets it,

> Presencing is the fourth dimension of Time because it is a distinctive way the cultural past, present, and future are held together; the future and past make their "presence" known along with the present, and thus presencing provides a distinctive kind of historical continuity. (1996, 156)

In this way, presencing may be seen to act as a framework that actively holds the future and the past in a present: indeed, it is this multiple character of presence that I sought to enact by choreographing the installation experience, described later in this chapter; and the notion of the co-existence of time and duration explicitly make their mark on all the coming projects. This discussion of a presencing at this point also prefigures the development in this PhD study towards an emphasis on experiencing, initially considered through the drawn-out irresolution of the installations working with Schlegel's ideas of opposite extremes and constant contradiction, and later more directly addressing the flow of experience through a consideration of James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations.

Improvisatory installation design and composition

> So I have been asking how I can make the installations perform? How can the work be performative (even if it now sits still in an exhibition space, even if now the sound composition is fixed to a timeline). What gestures can be included in the work to allow the play to read as play, and not as a signal of control? In the end, the question of how to make the work appropriate to the process.
>
> —Graeve, pers. comm.

work by Gaylen Gerber at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. Echoes of his questioning ripple throughout this exegesis.

In this project my pre-planning took the form of leaving open significant parts of the installation to be conceived and completed on site in the seven days leading to the opening. Not everything was commenced on site, as I brought two previously-completed oil painting canvases and a hard drive with a library of source material sounds that would be re-composed in the gallery. Barring these, the exhibition engaged a method of working that actively embraced a performative and improvisatory approach to exhibition design, composition and installation. While it is easy to take "being in the space to make work" for granted when working locally, international assignments more often than not require extensive speculative pre-planning by working from photographs and floor plans towards pre-designed solutions. It is only through a declaration of trust that curators and gallery directors open opportunities for a site-specific and time-specific exhibition design, composition and construction that might explicitly take advantage of the presence of the artist in preparation in the gallery space itself. Daniel Buren pointedly describes the benefits to organisers of works completed in the artist's studio rather than on site. In his analysis, the studio is

> the place where … the exhibition organiser … can come to select quietly among
>
> the presented works … Hence the organiser runs the least of the risks: not only
>
> has he already selected the participating artist, he even selects the works he
>
> desires in the studio. (2004, 17)

While Buren describes an increased risk to the organiser when the studio is side-tracked, this increased risk is likewise the case for the artist, who has, as Miwon Kwon astutely observes, become "a cultural-artistic service provider rather than a producer of aesthetic objects." (2002, 4) As I am also engaged in an ongoing sound performance practice (outside the limitations of this study), I experience the improvisatory benefits of this change of emphasis as enabling, rather than as a limitation or as a being-owned by the institution, as is Kwon's criticism.

Thus a flight to Turin, most of the decision-making (photographing, pacing around the space, some mocking-up in Photoshop), all the shopping (boards, paints, rollers, masking tape), most of the making (painting, arranging, composing a sound work from a library of part-composed sounds, mixing and mastering and authoring to DVD) all happened during the seven-day set-up period. Two older easel paintings had been freighted from Australia. The remainder of the exhibition was conceived, painted and (re-)composed on-site at e/static. This evokes the notion of working improvisationally: not just site-specific art-making but also time-specific art-making. A working under pressure and with concentration and presence. My presence in the gallery space during the making became a generative force for the investigation, and the pacing, sitting and walking became a model for speculatively pre-performing – and thus structuring – the audience's future engagement, and a trigger for compositional relationships being developed alongside each other in painting and sound compositions.

The two brought-along paintings were moved around the gallery space, cardboard was placed near the lights, masking tape was used here and there. A limited number of Photoshop montages were crafted. As the visual aspects of the project developed, so did the sound elements, being composed in the gallery space. Should the work's overall feel become one kind of thing or instead many kinds of sensations? Which painting should become a source for what kind of new sound composition? In Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously*, I will describe in more detail some of the processes that led from painting to sound and from sound to painting.

The accounting here becomes complex. What exactly, of the artists' presence, what of presencing, becomes translated recoverably into the experience of the final exhibition? Does installation take me out of my comfort zones, or does it encourage the re-performance of known strategies, but now under duress? A full representation of the improvisatory is

impossible, given improvisation's emphasis on making explicit the modes of production, of requiring open-endedness, and of being seen to be characterised by a lack of pre-determination and pre-meditation. In this lies one of the crises of representation featured across this study. Cornelius Cardew echoes such sentiments in *Towards an ethic of improvisation* where he proposes "that improvisation cannot be rehearsed" (2006, 126). As such, improvisation requires the possibility of failure, at which point the improvisatory is linked to a sense of the performative.

However, the approach was to ensure readings of improvisation-making in aspects of the work: the leaning of the boards, the handheld painting above the fluorescent tubes. Thus what is performed as an improvised exhibition-making is incorporated into the readable fabric of the works – and so the look of improvisation becomes one of the signals in the work, and one of the strategies of developing the work – as I had hoped – "appropriate to the process" (Graeve, pers. comm.). This look of the improvised was deepened in Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*, while the process of working up a project on site became a model of activity for two other projects in this study, Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* and Project 4, *Multiple monochromes* – in each case presenting new challenges to my working methods and new opportunities to practise a tensioned presence.

Constellations, dispersal of elements

The tensioned present desired in *Spatial choreography* was built on creating an interplay of forces and experiences rather than a unified overall-ness. It sought to be neither an all-of-one-kind experience, nor to function as a completely incongruous accumulation of artworks. In order to engage multiple modes of experience in the installation space I staged the conception, creation and display of artworks in the form of individual visual and audible events across time and across the gallery space. I conceived of these events as simple units or scenes that appeared initially to be focused on one moment, one idea and one characteristic,

before their inter-relationships gave rise to open-ended encounters in the form of constellations, which occurred in pictorial and walked space and across composed and felt duration. As in all the projects, the relationship between visual and audible elements provided a good deal of the tensions.

The dispersion of parts that I performed and composed in e/static finds a model in Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard (A throw of the dice will never abolish chance)* of 1897 (Mallarmé 1994, 124–144), where a number of separate poem-like text narratives are interspersed with space and each other, forming multiple juxtapositions and conjunctions as the poem unfolds[26]. In Mallarmé's poem the multiple narratives activate the spaces in-between; *Spatial choreography* similarly charges the relationships between painting and sound, between space and time, and between moment and duration.

> I don't transgress against this order of things, I merely disperse its elements. The paper intervenes each time an image, of its own accord, ceases or withdraws, accepting the succession of others and, as it is not a question, as it usually is, of regular sound patterns or verses but rather of prismatic subdivisions of the Ideas, at the instant they appear and for the duration of their concurrence in some exact mental setting, the text imposes itself, variably, near or far from the latent guiding thread, for the sake of verisimilitude … Narrative is avoided. (Mallarmé 1994, 121)

Within the poem Mallarmé hints at the equally applicable concept of a constellation. The most foregrounded narrative concludes with the words: "NOTHING … WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE … BUT THE PLACE … EXCEPT … PERHAPS … A CONSTELLATION." (142–144). As a way of conceiving multiple individual parts and their

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[26] My understanding and enjoyment of Mallarmé was strongly influenced by wide-ranging curatorial discussions with Michael Graf in 1998.

interaction with each other, I have found that the notion of a constellation provides a useful language to describe the way in which the parts of my sound and painting installations come together and fall apart, align and misalign, open up and close down understandings and associations. In a similar manner, Mallarmé's poem has been used as a starting point to consider questions of openness, chance and the aleatory by many 20th-century artists and composers, with Marcel Broodthaers considering it to be, in Rancière's words, "a treatise on the art for our time" (2007, 41), and even John Cage's and Pierre Boulez's friendship and profound letter correspondence falters, in part, over their different realisation of Mallarmé's invitation to openness (Boulez and Cage 1993). Formally Boulez's *Third piano sonata* (1958– present) reconsiders Mallarme's constellations as a model to propose precisely-composed passages that require aleatory interpretation and decisions as to their order of performance. Boulez entitled the third formant of this composition *Constellation-miroir*, drawing attention to the agile and open character sought in this work, which echoes my intentions of how *Spatial choreography* might be experienced as an open work with multiple possible experiences and sequences within it. Boulez's desire for a continual aliveness is not only structured into the composition, but is also revealed in that the composition, like many others of his, remains in progress to this day, indicating his unease at that time with closure of the compositional process, of scores, and of re-performing works:

> Why compose works that have to be re-created every time they are performed?
> Because definitive, once-and-for-all developments seem no longer appropriate to
> musical thought as it is today … which is increasingly concerned with the
> investigation of a relative world, a permanent "discovering" rather like the state of
> "permanent revolution". (in Ruch, n.d.)

If I have posited *Un coup de dés*' constellation, dispersion, division and "prismatic subdivision" as a useful framework, how did I approach this framework physically in the

exhibition space? In practical terms, *Spatial choreography* unfolds through a series of juxtapositions and relationships. In the development of this project I came to understand that for this to occur it is preferable that there is difference between parts, and that not everything is audible, nor visible, at the same point in time or space.

To create a difference between parts I developed a variety of formal approaches while on site. Thus, the slow sense of a controlled gesture involved in creating hard-edged canvas paintings stands in contrast to the casually-leaning plywood board painting where the monochrome panels are rendered in simple-to-apply synthetic polymer house paint. The hard edges of the green wall painting and the boards, in turn, stands in contrast to the brushy cloud-like forms painted near the ceiling lights; likewise for the variety of energetic and calm eye-movements that are created through different colour-relations. The spatial experience, the unfolding of these visual occurrences, and the percussive rhythm of eyes darting across the room, is then in turn revealed, mimicked and contrasted by the eleven different sound compositions. Likewise for the surface quality of paint and sound, the physical depth, weight and character of pigment on a stretched canvas or painted wooden stands in contrast to the lightness and diffusion of a colour composition that is projected metaphorically and physically into space from nearby lighting, in a manner related to the sound of the quiet hiss emerging from the loudspeakers. Durations are revealed in a series of variations, where the duration of seeing stands in a tensioned relation to that articulated by the duration of a sound composition. Seeing an optically energised edge between two brightly contrasting colours might be mimicked by the interference patterns of two closely-pitched feedback frequencies, but the experience of optical and audible beatings are fundamentally different. A similar event occurs for colour echoes: the large plywood painting and the boards supporting the loudspeakers and DVD player were painted the same colour.

In this first project I considered these variations and different parts in terms of constellations or vignettes, and the nature of the tension between these parts became a central concern of this study. The following three projects were less rich in the formal variety present within each project, but as the study unfolded and notions of conjunctive and disjunctive relations, and of the fragment, became heightened, the final project then acts to reappraises this first project with more clarity and direction by reconfiguring what I here call constellations of parts into fragments. Considering all these confluences and influences and mimickings and relations and differences and disjunctions and spaces-in-between these parts, what in the end does each of the relations consist of? This question deals with considerations of transcription – what is possible to transcribe, what happens through the process of transcription – and I will revisit this question in Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously*.

Choreographing experience through space and across time

> Space can never be that completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established, and in which everywhere is already linked with everywhere else. A space, then, which is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be open, too.
>
> —Massey 2005, 11–12

To discuss the creation of a tensioned arrangement between these parts, I considered the usefulness of the associations I have with choreography as a metaphor for the design of an installation experience: "And hence, the questions of how we do experience a work in a given space. What is the narrative, in both vision and sound, from one element to the other? …What is the dance, the choreography, that eventuates?" (Graeve, pers. comm.)

Choreography here is used metaphorically, and in a double sense. Firstly, installation provides a certain set of opportunities, open but not limitless, and as such acts as a score. Secondly, there is a dance of experiencing that occurs in the space, both as an embodied walking-through and around, and then as a conceptual dance between installation and audience, between the artist's and the experiencer's conceptualisations. The sense of a dance also brings time and space into a charged play, a play that I have come to consider analogous to installation. Referring to Mallarmé, Alain Badiou observes,

> If it is true that dance plays time within space, that it supposes the space of imminence, then there is for dance an *obligation* of space. Mallarmé indicates this as follows: "Dance alone seems to me to need a real space." Dance alone, mind you. Dance is the only one among the arts that is constrained to space … Dance instead integrates space into its essence. It is the only figure of thought to do this, so that we could argue that dance symbolizes the very spacing of thought.
>
> ...
>
> Yes, in dance, we would find the metaphor for the unfixed. (2005, 63; 61)

I want to extend Badiou's statement and argue that the choreography that unfolds in installation is likewise a "metaphor for the unfixed", and it is for this reason that the relation between parts, and their choreography, are used in installation throughout this study. A choreography that unfolds over time is heightened by a deferred and varied experience. In this project I take music's deferral as a model also for that of a visual unfolding. If "[d]eferral is an essential quality of music, part of its means for producing time" (Impett 2010, 85), then a suspenseful arrangement of visual and audible events within installation space likewise relies on new impressions, new conjunctions, and new juxtapositions occurring in a deferred manner, rather than all at once. In the process of creating work on site, I took into account such different views, various sightlines, the confluences between audible and visual elements,

and the many possible unfoldings of non-linear narratives and juxtapositions, all as ways to foreground both constellations and the unfolding choreographies between them.

As has been previously described, aspects of the exhibition were set up to be experienced in an approximate initial order. Of course, following that initial movement through the space, any sequence of these elements could be re-experienced as a series of juxtaposed parts of experience driven by the movement of the audience. The role of the experiencing subject as an agent within installation is here foregrounded, rendered through an open-ended listening, walking, pacing and viewing. The artist Gaylen Gerber conceives such openness in regard to his own work:

> I take viewer involvement as the subject in my work. I'm not interested in the iconographic but I am interested in the picturesque because it brings up the relationship of the pictorial to activity. You may be able to get a more comprehensive view of the exhibition from a number of positions by standing back from it but to really understand it you have to approach it, walk through it. This creates a situation in which we see ourselves as the organizing force behind our experience. (Gerber and Bitterli 1998, 6)

My approach to using constellations in *Spatial choreography* can be better understood through an analysis of both Gerber's recent exhibitions and his statement above. He uses a series of pictorial successions to frame each other, for example, in his self-titled 2010 exhibition at Green Gallery, Milwaukee[27], where the self-contained parts of variously coloured lights and painted walls provides a series of distinct encounters in which both optical exhaustion and visual re-framing narrate a series of successive installation impressions that give rise to installation memories, each of which re-frames the next. Similar processions of part-experiences also drove two projects that impressed themselves on my development as a

young artist: *General review of gain and loss* by Leslie Eastman, Daniel von Sturmer and Andy Thomson (1996)[28], and *Deferred - differed presence* by Andy Thomson and David Thomas (1998).[29] Both projects featured ambitious wall constructions, or huge canvases placed, as a series of frames through which the experience of the work became a succession of impressions so that each had the effect of reconfiguring previous experience. As David Thomas described *Deferred - differed presence*:

> This work uses a set of structures which will, through their relationship and positioning in the site - and therefore in time as well - prevent an immediate viewing of the work as a whole. This only becomes recoverable over time. The viewer has to defer immediate readings, this permits new responses to occur over the time of experiencing and of reading the piece. Memory has a role in constructing the experience." (Thomson, Thomas and Hill 1998, n.p.)

Such framings are central to the unfolding of installation experience, and it is in the ensuing choreography that *Spatial choreography* sought to revel – and to do so over time and space, and through sound and image.

The sounds

In this section I will discuss how I have composed the sound works. I will commence with an overview of the sounds and compositional processes utilised in this study as a whole, before describing how Project 1, *Spatial choreography,* in particular used an in-situ in-gallery compositional process to engage the privileged spatial and temporal aspects of inhabiting the gallery space during composition.

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[27] Gerber 2010.

[28] Eastman, von Sturmer, and Thomson 1997.

[29] Thomson and Thomas 1998. The original publication was entitled *Defered – Differed Presence*. I have corrected *Defered* to *Deferred* in the body of this text on request of the author.

The sounds utilised throughout this study were initially sourced from an archive of studio and live recordings of record players and loudspeakers. This instrumentation has been collected over the last 22 years, commencing in 1993, and I have now accumulated three sets of such orchestras in Melbourne, Munich and Chicago. Each features a dozen or more domestic stereo systems, each system containing record player, amplifier and loudspeakers. These are performed without records – using the needles on or beside the platters as contact microphones that amplify the surfaces of the record players themselves. As such the needles are used in a way that foregrounds a tactile character of sound construction.

The initial processes are simple, with direct links between action and outcome. When the needle rests on the still platter it picks up the low hum of the record player idling. When I turn the volume up, I cause a feedback sound, so from what we might call a hum we arrive at a tone. I am able to modify this feedback sound through loudspeaker placement, and bass, treble and balance controls, resulting in low- to high-pitch sine waves. While the still platter causes hums and feedbacks, when it moves the cartridge pickup finds sounds of low frequency grains and slow rhythms at 16 or 33 rpm, with increasingly faster rhythms, higher pitches and more hiss occurring at 45 and 78 rpm. These basic machinic system sounds are independent of my interaction other than starting a process. In handling the machines I cause an additional gestural element – my placement of needles, my movement of the tone arm, my stacking and shifting of loudspeakers: all of these result in sound signatures related to human intervention, with my performative presence starting, ending or modifying sounds along the way. These have been used in aspects of the performed work as a relationship to the gestural aspects of paint such as brush marks, rough edges and the handheld placement of panels – often to signal the beginning or end of a compositional passage.

The modular starting points when documenting a single record player range from a low hum and slow machinic rhythms to fast rhythms, hisses and varying tones of feedback. In

some cases I have worked with this in the context of live performance, where I might perform on up to 12 stereo systems with 24 loudspeakers (as I have done outside the scope of this study); at this level the sonic possibilities become increasingly complex, with multirhythmic proliferations of patterns and increasing spatial envelopment. Multiple low-pitched rhythms in fact become low-pitched noise textures, while multiple high-pitched fast turntable sounds become high-pitched noise clouds, and finally multiple linear feedbacks become articulated in space as waxing and waning interference patterns, where the loudspeaker placement around the room causes sounds to be localised close by and distantly.

My recordings of such sounds have provided an archive of source recordings, from the simple close-miked recording to complex documents of multi-channel performances. At a secondary level I have re-composed some of these using simple technical processes such as cut and paste, equalisation or multi-layering with occasional pitch-shifting and time compression. These digital processing techniques have generally resulted in simplified sound characters which mask the gestural aspects of some of the source recordings and instead emphasise so-called abstract sound qualities: tones, hisses, hums and noise diffusions.

The sound worlds and performance practices that lead to the raw recordings which are re-composed in the projects before us build on a history of what has come to be termed turntablism, although in the anti-DJ sense and outside a techno scene they might more appropriately be called recordplayerism. While many of the artists working in this genre commonly bring records into their game – think of John Cage's *Imaginary landscapes* (1939), Otomo Yoshihide, Janek Schaeffer, Marina Rosenfeld, Pierre Bastien and Martin Tetreaux – my processes are a more concrete approach to gaining sound from the record player as an instrument picking itself up. In this it is more aligned to the turntable as instrument that we find in Institut für Feinmotorik's work *Penetrans* (2002), or Michel Gendreaux's starkly intimate turntable sounds in the CD *55 pas de la ligne au no3.* (2002). Conversely, while the

chosen equipment is laden with metaphorical and nostalgic possibility, the opportunities for them to engage in medium archaeologies similar to those of Christian Marclay's turntablism are reduced by their absence in the gallery. The turntable is not listed nor explicitly evoked in picture, title or image, as I seek to downplay the nostalgic and metaphorical aspects of the source sounds while foregrounding the more abstract, concrete, and basic palette of hisses, hums, noises, rhythms and tones to be used for the much more complex interplays between these elements to provide compositional tension, as well as spatial and temporal complexity. As will be stated later in regard to colour, none of the sounds are 'interesting'; it is in their juxtaposition against each other, and ultimately against their audio-visual context, that they reveal their potential.

Compositional process and sound characters

This source material archive of individually-recorded players, of groups of players, and of manipulations and layers of these, was used for the on-site in-gallery compositional process in Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* and Project 4, *Multiple monochromes*. The same archives were used in Project 2, *Relations and un-relations* and Project 5, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*, but for those two projects the sound was composed in my home studio.

Of all the projects, Project 1, *Spatial choreography* was the most encyclopaedically varied in presenting the sound worlds I experimented with in this study. Through a detailed description at this point of selected tracks, I seek to portray not only the compositional experiments and considerations undertaken in this particular project, but to describe its sound world more comprehensively, in a way that may ameliorate their absence in future pdf documents that will circulate of this study. Without doubt the photographic images will be carried into the future in a more integrated way, whereas the sounds that are the stuff of half of this research may remain unheard, both as actual compositions rendered as stereo in the

documentation, as well as in the way they were diffused into installation space in their varied forms.

Track 1: 2'13"

Commencing in a reverberant space, with traffic sounds distantly apparent, now appear the sounds of a long series of clicks of record players being turned on. Then these switch to reveal a white-noise kind of hiss. This hiss fills the space evenly like fog, resulting in a sense of filling up every molecule of the space, an even diffusion – the way light might diffuse from fluorescent tubes. This is one of the benefits of a wide spectrum of noise frequencies, where the inherent directionality of the powered studio monitor loudspeaker's treble is counteracted firstly by four loudspeakers pointing in different directions, then by the subsequent secondary and tertiary reflections off walls and floors interfering with the initially generated sounds. The noise in this section is created through the layering of hundreds and hundreds off-set record player noises, rumbles of the platter turning, and the needle picking up the rubber mat's textures. Lots and lots of rhythms end up cancelling each other out, providing what seems a fog of sound. To complete the piece, we hear the sounds of equipment being turned off. This composition bookends the gesture-less and diffuse nature of layered wide-ranging frequency noise with the handheld turning on and turning off gestures characteristic of my machinic instrument. In later projects, this juncture between hands-off and hands-on gestures echoes the play between areas of paint and their edges. While in the original recording a sense of the initial reverberant space and traffic is strongly audible, within the gallery space this sound is largely masked, foregrounding the diffused noise instead. For this exhibition I am presenting the original 4-channel recordings, but mixed-down to stereo channels. This is one of many instances where the recording we hear now does not adequately represent the appearance of sounds in the space they were composed in: you

are listening to the documentation on a different form of equipment in a different space in a different context; and this is not to mention that four channels have been rendered in two,.

Track 3: 1'32"

A low soft bang-type sound, irregularly placed across the four loudspeakers, creating an echoing percussive rhythmic character that ricochets throughout the room. While emphasising a movement around the room, the composition also seeks to portray a sense of speed, of movement around the space, and of echoes and resonances. The gallery space was incredibly resonant (particularly so for one specialising often in the worlds of sounds), and both the darting around of reverberations and the darting around of sight gave rise to the experiences that are alluded to in this composition. Technically it is constructed as a simple layering, about a dozen times, of a snippet of low-frequency feedback of a needle on the platter with a loudspeaker placed on top. The stereo recording presented here is the clean signal played into the room, and does not capture the four channels of action that were diffused outwards into the different parts of the room.

Track 4: 0'31"

Multiple feedback drones fading in and out in layers. Multiple monochromes placed on top of each other, with a density filling the space as an enveloping physicality.

Track 5: 0'58"

A flat slab of relatively highly pitched white noise, again filling the space diffusely across all areas. No directionality or sense of a particular location. Sound as ground, not figure. No gestures or gestural starting or end points. Again, created through around ten or so recordings of needles on turning platters which were then layered, duplicated, offset, layered, duplicated, offset, layered, duplicated, offset etc.

Track 6: 1'41"

Machinic noise, rhythmic. A very close-in viewpoint and listening location near the centre of the machinery. At the conclusion of the composition we hear a change in stylus placement that hints at the gestures that cause the sound to change from rhythm to feedback tone.

Track 8: 4'24"

An expressive collagic mix of abstract and machinic sounds. A slow rhythm getting faster and faster. A clear sense of the hand that is involved, a sense of the gesture that gives rise to the action. Juxtaposition in the composition now to a layered feedback drone monochrome which has the potential to be ongoing. The hand-heldness of the earlier sections was designed as an extrapolation of the wall-painting near the ceiling lights which was gestural, playful and hand-held, although the reflection of coloured light from it, into the room, was a flatly-diffused colour-drone, unchanging and evenly diffused, subtly modulating what was already in the space.

Track 9: 0'54"

A high hiss filling the room with the sense of its diffusion, not unlike light reflecting off surfaces, with a slow, repetitive clacking in the background.

Track 11: 3'02"

Very low-pitched feedback, and also comparatively quiet – nearly out of range. Moves up in pitch about halfway through as a result of moving a loudspeaker off the platter, which in turn changes the resonance of the platter, which in turn changes the feedback sound. Despite the low volume, the sound presented itself feasibly dense in the e/static gallery space. The end of the sound composition is marked by the record player needle being picked up from the turntable platter, at which point the feedback subsides.

Conclusion to *Spatial choreography*

While the above descriptions pertain to the first project, the description of initial and individual sounds from which I am composing are in broad keeping with the sound worlds of the following projects. Shared starting points with this project were elaborated in subsequent projects in a variety of ways as the spatialisation, the placement, the pacing and the proliferation or reduction of audible components was tuned to each new proposition and environment. In writing about the way sounds were composed, I have, for example, described notions of "translating", "alluding to", "creating ways of sound moving in ways similar to paintings or visual aspects of the exhibition"; and in Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously*, I will discuss these relationships in more detail through a consideration of notions of transcription. This is not to say that the paintings always led and the sound compositions followed. Far from it: in most cases both were developed alongside each other in the gallery space.

As the projects unfold I will note other major changes and elaborations upon these early experiments, where Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*, emphasised the gestural aspects of this sound world, Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously*, provided a much more angular set of short flat compositions based on the compositional framework of two paintings, Project 4, *Multiple monochromes*, emphasised silences and durational sounds, and finally Project 5, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*, cumulated in an elaborately diverse set of loudspeaker technologies where elements of all of the above compositional processes were utilised but to much more effective spatial outcomes.

Project 2: *Relations and un-relations* (2010)
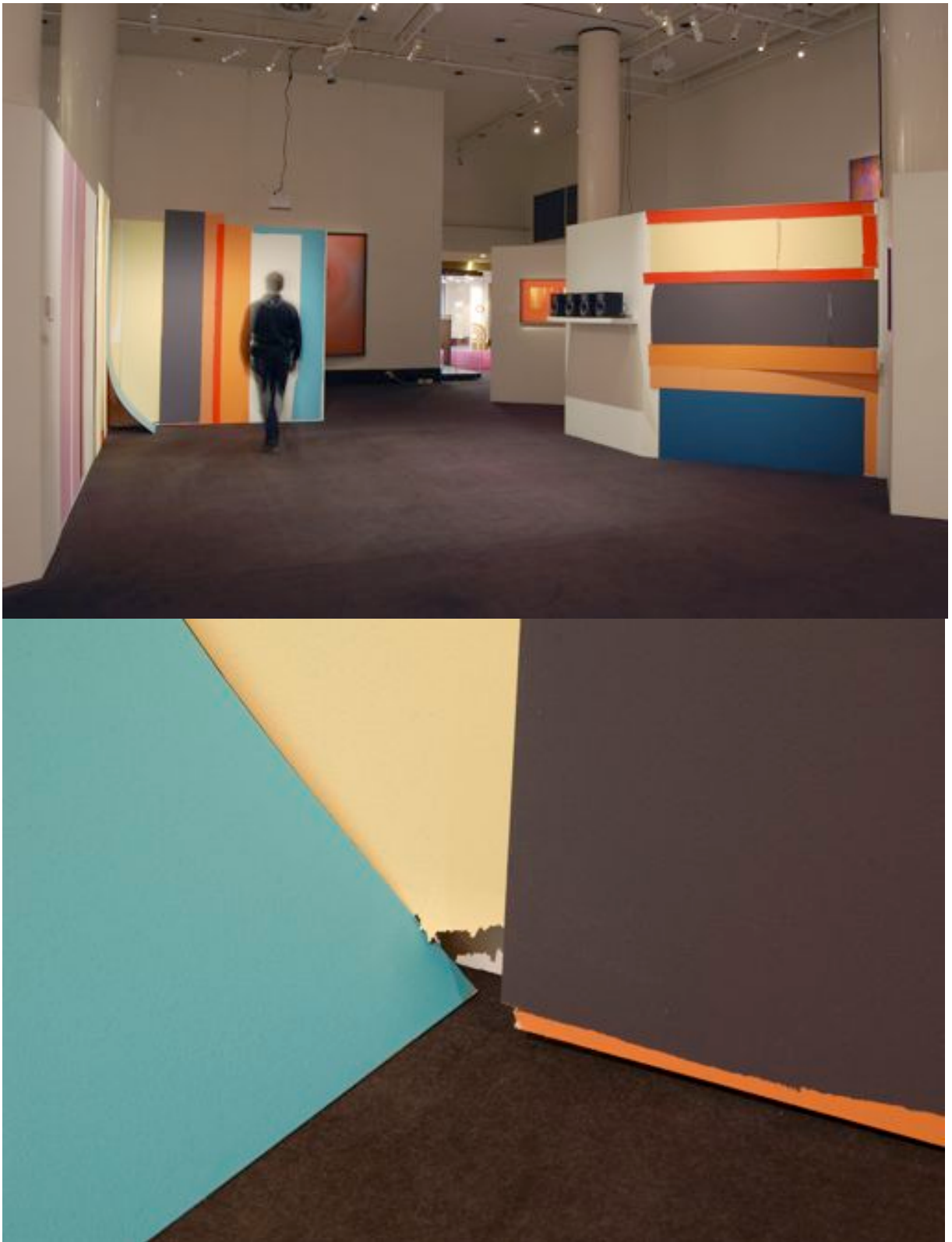
Image 2 P**roject 2 Michael Graeve,** *Relations and un-relations* **(2010). Installation view, the Arts Centre.**

Realisation

Sight & sound – Music and abstraction in australian art. Group exhibition, curated by Steven Tonkin at The Arts Centre, Melbourne, Australia, 12 June – 19 September 2010.

Additional artists exhibited: John Aslanidis, Yvonne Audette, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, Roger Kemp, Donald Laycock, Roy de Maistre and Robert Owen.

Publication: Tonkin (2010)

Materials: Painting and sound-installation; comprising synthetic polymer painted walls and boards (chipboard, MDF, particleboard, plywood), 4-channel sound composition (duration 8'00," active studio monitor loudspeakers). Installation dimensions variable.

Sight & Sound is an exhibition that explores the intersections between music and abstract art in Australia from the early 20th century to contemporary practice. The painters represented are John Aslanidis, Yvonne Audette, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, Roger Kemp, Donald Laycock, Roy de Maistre and Robert Owen, while contemporary sound artist Michael Graeve has created a new site-specific installation for the exhibition. (exhibition pamphlet, Tonkin 2010)

An integrated sound and painting installation, the work was walk-through in the form of one L-shaped and one Z-shaped wall facing each other, with my installation forming the centre of the overall exhibition space. An eight-minute composition featured record player and loudspeaker sounds, both recorded straight and processed. The composition placed an emphasis on gestural movements, with turntables turned on and off, moved, stopped and started. Other parts of the sound composition featured flat ongoing sections of feedback tones and noise bands, juxtaposed and moved around the different loudspeakers, which sat in a row on a shelf. My compositional decisions here were about simplifying the components and the compositional approach in a way that echoed the matter-of-fact placement and movement of panels through the room.

The placement of the four loudspeakers was an important element of this, as the distribution and re-distribution of sounds was compressed within a narrow horizontal area, different to the fanning-out from the middle that I had designed for the first project. The long large-scale painting was created on wall dividers and a series of fibre boards, particle boards and plywoods. Sections were painted in one spot and then moved to other areas, creating histories of movement and stencilled edges left behind. Compared to the vignetted nature of Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, this project sought a less fragmented approach, and as such both the painting and the sound works were more unified in their design.

Introduction to *Relations and un-relations*

The exhibition *Sight and Sound* provided a ready-made literature review of significant Australian artists working with abstract painting whose work was informed by sound. It commenced with Roy de Maistre's iconic Australian modernist painting *Arrested phrase from Haydn trio in orange-red minor* (1919–1935), one of the first productive encounters between abstract painting and sound in Australian modernist art. Major works representing the other artists in the exhibition (including the Bauhaus émigré Ludwick Hirschfeld Mack, Roger Kemp, Yvonne Audette, Donald Laycock, Robert Owen and John Aslanidis) all engaged in processes of transformation, inspiration and references to musical composition, and in different ways revealed music to be a rich source for pictorialisation. In negotiations with the curator Stephen Tonkin, one of the distinct characteristics of my commission was that mine would be the only combination of the two mediums in an integrated installation space. The other painters would exhibit their paintings while playing the sound works that they were inspired by, or in some cases the sound compositions that were commissioned as responses to the paintings. Only one other painter, Donald Laycock, composed sound works to accompany his painting *Gloria* (1982), but in the exhibition catalogue they were framed as "an 'artist's statement', not in words, but in music" (2010, 10), and like all the other musical works in the exhibition were diffused, placed and considered an accompaniment to rather than a component of the painted works. This underlines the uniqueness of my commissioned contribution to this historical survey.

In describing an artist's work, Germans speak of it as having "eine Position" – holding a position. Against this exhibition's backdrop of relations, inspirations, studies, transformations, transcriptions, illustrations, visual re-scorings and soundtracks to paintings, I sought to articulate my conflicted relationship to rendering sound in painting and painting in sound. This was based on two reservations, both of which underlie this PhD study. The first

reservation is that in my experience painting and sound cannot adequately represent each other, nor perfectly map onto each other. The second is the intention that their interaction be complicated. However, my drive to investigate a problematised, complex perspective on painting and sound relationships is based not on undermining the relationships that are possible between the two nor on doubting that there are worthwhile relationships, but is designed to prolong their interaction by enacting an endlessness and openness in the relationship between them. I signalled this intention in the project title, "*Relations and un-relations*". In an exhibition curated around artists' abstract paintings that had been influenced by sound, the notion of un-relations between painting and sound might well have been seen as a provocation.

As, in my experience, abstract paintings can't entirely represent musical compositions, and as, in my experience, sound compositions cannot adequately and fully represent paintings, I chose to consider this productive in-between through the metaphor of the crisis of representation – and indeed as a celebration of such a crisis. My readings of Jena Romantic material, and in particular Azade Seyhan's study *Representation and its discontents* (Seyhan 1992) informed what I intuited to be a positive and productive reading of the impossibility of representation and of the gap between subject and object. Having first read Seyhan in 1999, a more targeted reading of the work took place during the development of this project and fuelled the unfolding research, quickly becoming a cornerstone of this study. A number of conceptual frameworks were drawn from the Jena Romantic materials, including the two leading fragments upon which this study are hinged (refer to page two of this document) and through which the projects undertaken are considered. To draw out the relationship between Schlegel's fragment and the practical research undertaken, let me repeat it:

> Once one becomes infatuated with the absolute and simply can't escape it, then
>
> the only way out is to constantly contradict oneself and unite opposite extremes.

The principle of contradiction is inevitably doomed, and one only has the choice

of either suffering from it or else ennobling necessity by acknowledging its status

as free action. (in Seyhan 1992, 3)

In this project I have re-considered this fragment in practical terms, first by taking the

notion of constant contradiction and the uniting of opposite extremes as a framework to

structure the play between painting and sound in installation space, rendered here initially as

relations and un-relations, and second by relating free action to the notion of improvisation. I

do not seek to use this fragment to illustrate the work, nor use the work to illustrate the

fragment, but for each to be a lens through which the other may be rendered more fully in its

poietic, and productive, potential. Opposite extremes and constant contradiction are

considered here through a process of investigating relations and un-relations – the desire to

find and name relationships between the mediums of painting and sound, and the frustration

of the impossibility of that desire. Where in the Lens chapter I described Schlegel's concept

of free action as a way to frame notions of openness, here I take this one stage further, and

relate free action to improvisation. While I have applied improvisatory strategies to varying

degrees in all of the projects (I have already described the exhibition design of Project 1

Spatial choreography as improvised), those processes in *Spatial choreography* were less

recoverable in the final result, and, as such, stronger in reading in this present project.

Opposite extremes, constant contradiction

I enjoy no space more than the one in-between. Of course I diligently make sense

of the world by seeking the direct route, the causal correlation, the full disclosure,

the pattern-forming repetition and the sensible understanding. Yet I deeply desire

that experience of unsettled presence that arises from the awkward un-relation,

from the juxtaposition of the un-synaesthetic and from the framing of one

understanding relative to another.

In considering opposite extremes and constant contradiction, as alluded to in Schlegel's fragment, I have chosen to think and work through these in the form of an interplay between relations and their lack, their opposite, their other. The subtle openings and closings in negotiating a cross-medium and multimodal installation experience featuring sound and painting was sufficient for me to work through these propositions – there was no need to engage surrealist absurdisms or radical incongruences, as opposite extremes and constant contradiction might imply in a literal reading. It quickly became apparent that relations are simpler to describe than un-relations, although dialectically each relies on the other to be read, and their active interaction is the subject of this study. The notion of relations relies on what I experience as a propensity to link, to make meaning, to put two and two together. And here in turn I experience 'Eureka moments' as forms of closure of possibilities. This is not to say that being able to put my finger on one relation excludes the possibility of others, but that, at the very least, when I make such a connection I am put at ease. For me, such moments of cognitive rest encourage an immersed disposition that closely relates to the phenomenological aspect of presence I previously described, rather than to the tensioned presence I consider a fundamental aim of these works.

To start with, an example of a specific relation in this project is the immersive nature of diffused sound in general, echoed here in specific as a surround-painting of coloured panels arranged panoramically, then rendered in turn as a composed panorama of moving parts across the four loudspeakers on the shelf, moving thus from a general characteristic of sound to a specific design of installation space, which in turn is transcribed into the spatial considerations of the sound composition. Thus I may use similar descriptors to capture the compositional structure of a sound composition, or of a painting composition, or of an installation. These steps were iteratively performed in the development of this work, with

sound and painting developing alongside one another, not one after another. I can consider the question of edges in a similar way, when with the work unfolding in sound and painting, rough edits and rough edges are applied to both. The rhythms of patterns across time in sound and across space in painting function in related ways. I worked through additional relations in the collagic approach that characterised both the painting and sound compositions, where blocks of colour and sound activity pushed up against each other in a tactile and overlapping manner, so that the figure-ground relationships in both the sound composition and the painting installation composition were rendered complex and interwoven, with a dynamic optical interplay between advancing and receding colours and boards, enacted similarly in sound by a dropping-in and -out of sounds that shifted the plane of audition across loudspeakers and in and out of space. Jonathan Marshall described this layering and sequencing as revealing a strong materiality that linked across the mediums of sound and painting:

> it forces – or encourages – one to look at the materiality of the practice. There's something about that sound of hiss, clunk and assorted cheap amplification and recording devices that seem to suggest a very tangible sense of presence in what is, after all, a highly intangible art (sound). It's also unapologetic (and quite directive) in its minimalism. So the sound [functions] fairly directly in parallel to the visual panels, the idea of mute blocks and sustained color tones which nevertheless have a slightly grimy or base ambience to them – in that they are clearly sheets stuck to the wall. (pers. comm.)

Yet, how to counter all the alliterative, compounding and framing potentialities of each of these relationships, their potential to approach causality, didacticism, determinism or illustration? Where discussion of relations might fall into a conveniently generalised

journalese? How to prevent the over-simplifying conflation of adjectives, verbs and possibilities? Barthes plays out the dilemma in *The grain of the voice*:

> If one looks at the normal practice of music criticism … it can readily be seen that a work (or its performance) is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective. Music, by natural bent, is that which at once receives an adjective. The adjective is inevitable: this music is *this*, this execution is *that*." (1977, 179)

If Barthes considers such issues in linguistic terms (and the bind certainly applies in writing this study), then my consideration of this concern is likewise applied within the artwork itself, and to the relationships between parts. I experience this as a sense of loss that results from a meaning emptied out through the process of naming, of translating, of transcribing, and of placing the epithet in a way that drains the possible, as Barthes further considers. When

> we turn an art into a subject … there is nothing left but to give it predicates; in the case of music, however, such predication unfailingly takes the most facile and trivial form, that of the epithet. Naturally, this epithet … has an economic function: the predicate is always the bulwark with which the subject's imaginary protects itself from the loss which threatens it." (Barthes 1977, 179)

In order to interrupt such losses which I experience as deriving from causal and didactic translations of description, while not entirely preventable they are certainly designed to be questioned within the artworks. It was in this form of an interruption to causal engenderings that in this project I initially used notion of un-relations to perform the roles of Schlegel's "opposite extremes" and "constant contradiction". Opposite extremes are therefore here considered in the sense of relations and un-relations, in the sense of the extremes of "getting" a relationship between the sound and painting parts, or of "not getting" an aspect of

the interaction; and in considering the getting or not getting, again neither of these can "be it", but they need to work in oscillation against each other.

Un-relations were rendered here in the gaps and incongruities between what occurs in painting and in sound, or indeed what is legibly recoverable as such relationships. This project seeks to acknowledge that whatever relations I may have characterised or thought of can never have been encyclopaedic or complete. This tension is performed in part through the juxtaposition of painted and diffused elements in the installation space, and the manner in which the experiencing of that space creates both an agency for the experiencer and an indeterminacy as to what is experienced, in what relationship, and at what time. Thus the un-relations reside in the moment of hesitation, or doubt, about possible connections, and in the aspects of pacing, or of placing, or of dozens of other possible aspects of painting and sound confluences that have not been transcribed or transposed. Un-relation is located in that continuous movement of uncertainty, those experiences of incongruity, those aspects of the work that don't match up. In this the emphasis on interruption is placed differently to the audio-visual spectacle of, for example, Ryoji Ikeda's *The transfinite* (2011)[30], where the data input and the audio-visual outputs are exposed in a manner that foregrounds their algorithmic translation rather than the choices made in such translation. This is not to say that Ikeda's work does not in the end produce a powerfully poetic effect, but that in my reading of *The transfinite*, an air of translatability is foregrounded, rather than one of emphasising translation's impossibility or potential arbitrariness.

In the handheld awkwardness of my un-relations I seek to act out a crisis of translation's representational possibility; and in being self-declared disruptors of closure these works revel in that endless role as being one of celebration. But despite all their disruptive powers, un-relations are fragile and fugitive. I sense that already as a result of their naming

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they have become relative, relational and contextualised – indeed, subsumed into the fabric of the work. In the final analysis, any notion of an un-relation is an ambit claim. Real un-relation might exist either as entirely indeterminate composition or as a surreal absurdism. Neither of these positions were desired or realised in the context of these projects. As a consequence, as this PhD study unfolded, James' notion of conjunctive and disjunctive relations came to replace what here was tested as relations and un-relations.

Free play of installation improvisation

It is not by accident that improvisation is more commonly used to describe musical performance and movements than to designate painting or installation practices. If I could not perform in the space for the duration of the exhibition, then one of the challenges I embraced was to open up a language of free play within installation, rather than only in the sound works themselves. In contrast to the tendency for improvisation to be considered more apparent in sound performances, in this project (and indeed throughout this study), improvisation was somewhat more apparent in the installation and paintings.

How, then, could I work against the final state of installations/paintings – concluded, closed and finished as they are – and create them and cause their reading to enact free play and improvisation? It required addressing both the making as well as the experience of the work in a way that communicated an improvisatory openness. The free play of painting installation was here achieved through an explicitly performative language of gestures and movements. I enacted the improvisatory notions of potential and provisional through a number of strategies, including an interrelated painting manner where boards are used as stencil edges for each other, through the revealing of leftovers from previous actions, and through the act of leaning. A series of dividing walls and various ply and MDF panels were painted in a range of different synthetic polymer (house) paints, of varying reflective values

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[30] May 20–June 11, 2011, at Park Avenue Armory, New York.

(matte, satin, gloss, high gloss). The paint was applied with rollers over an entire surface, or after screwing boards on top of each other; thus some boards' arrangement and layering acted as a stencils in the painting process, and the resultant edges varied from the sharp to the fuzzy, depending on the thickness of the boards and the nap of the roller.

These boards were then relocated, broken into narrower stripes after being scored with a blade, and switched around the three main dividing walls comprising the work – moving this way and that across approximately ten linear metres. Stripes painted in the same colour were pulled apart into different sections of the installation, leaving their previous positions behind as the traces of stencil edges. The stencilling here acted as a way to access absence and presence, as a way of holding the trace of a movement, of a spatial reshuffle, of a real-time composition having occurred in that space. In experiencing the work the option became available to attempt recovery of the traces of movement around the wall-spaces: where did this board previously sit? While the process of making in my work is explicit, the layering and relocation of panels contributes to their actively confounding movement, acting similarly to what has been characterised in Katharina Grosse's spray-painted installations in which she foregrounds "the complexity of the improvisational, in that the decisions and actions within a given space both cover their tracks and accrue sensations and associations that move beyond the methods that brought them into being" (Ryan 2012, 9).

In particular regard to my painting acting in performative manners, I build on the work of Blinky Palermo. Brooks Adams reflects on the performative aspects of Palermo's works when considering the 2003 retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery:[31] "Everywhere we were made aware of Palermo's enthusiasm for mounting, framing and ruling devices that create firm edges over and against which paint can slip and slide." (2005, 134)

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[31] "Blinky Palermo," curated by Gloria Moure, Serpentine Gallery, London, March 26–May 18, 2003.

Such interplay of control and openness assists in the experience of a playful possibility in Palermo's work, and it is not surprising that one of this study's protagonists, Novalis, is one of the only direct references mentioned by Palermo during his brief career, in his titling of *Hymn to the night (for Novalis)* (1966) and featuring Novalis in catalogue prefaces. In a manner related to that of Palermo, the mixture of real painted edges and edges created through the layering of boards sought to create a spatially unresolved and complex relationship between the visual elements of *Relations and un-relations*. The spatial positioning of parts is likewise complex, and what appears to be in front of the other, behind the other, or in fact on a similar plane, is ambiguous, and depends on colour warmth, colour hue, tone, spatial layering and shadows. Warm colours that should advance are often held behind cooler colours, confusing the desired effects expected by the eye. Where the hard edge paintings used in Project 1, *Spatial choreography,* downplay the edge to foreground the colour relations, the complex edges that I tested in this project contribute to heightening an instability that occurs between the colour fields. Jonathan Marshall describes the effect of the work as follows:

> Several times I lost track of what was actually painted onto the strips, and what was a three dimensional seam or shadow produced by the laying of two panels beside each other. This ... seems a startling, meditative effect, in which the harsh minimalism enables a transformation to Shakespeare's famous line of a "sea change into something rich and strange. (pers. comm.)

This active articulation of different forms of edging, and the flipping between figure and ground – a dynamism between colour and surface – was designed to support a reading of a playfully improvisatory work, and this way of engaging a heightened energy of edges was subsequently extended in various forms across all the following projects.

A further feature indicating the free play of improvisation and experiencing was in the way the materiality of moving and fixing were handled. This consisted of an explicitly-performed relocation of painted panels, and in an open-ended character of the installation as characterised through both leaning and awkwardly-affixed panels. The sensibility of improvisatory processes was emphasised through the explicit exposure of screws, holes and ripped boards as a result of the removal, moving-around and re-fixing of painted panels. The leaning was a gesture used to read as both playful and provisional. This lackadaisical placement finds its precedent, amongst others, in Blinky Palermo's close colleague Imi Knoebel, whose works such as *Ghent room* (1980), reinstalled –I should say laid out – in manifold forms across different venues, is analysed in regard to just such notions of the potential by Rudolf Bumiller (1992). Taking into consideration the subtle readings of aspects of display and building, an additional element that supports the notion of the work being performed (rather than installed, self-sufficient, complete, sealed and delivered) is the explicit use of builder's woodscrews in the work, and the process of keeping the screw-holes exposed so they might expose a history of placements, a reading of where a board might once have been attached but is no more.

All the gestures of drilling, ripping, tensioning, layering, revealing, concealing, moving and stencilling thus hold their own signification in regard to a reading as improvisational free play, framed here by Schlegel's fragment, and working with a similarly-minded openness and endlessness of re-arrangement that seeks to enact a constant contradiction and movement that does not resolve. Such a sense of an installation improvisation was most recoverable in this project.

Free play of sound improvisation

How can a sense of the improvisatory be retained in a sound composition and recording? Given that I sought to create a sense of a sense of an ongoing and forever-moving

installation, the question quickly became one of how to create a sense of the improvised and the provisional within the sound composition, despite its fixed and closed nature as a recording.

In sound performance, improvisation is linked to a real openness of the moment, given that there is a chance for change and for failure. Preparing an installation environment in the lead-up to an exhibition brings new challenges. The compositional process in the home studio is similar to the free play of improvisation, but also fundamentally different: the composition undergoes a process of improvisatory play with sections being moved around, and with placement processes similar to the re-arrangement of painted panels around the installation, where sounds move from loudspeaker to loudspeaker. Slabs of tones and noises are placed, listened to, removed, made more prominent or less audible, diffused by layering, foregrounded by silencing other channels, clarified through equalisation, placed in front of and behind other sounds that might or might not be audible until other changes occur in the composition to provide space for a clearer audibility. But, of course, the performance becomes fixed for diffusion in the gallery space, and whereas improvisation requires the possibility of failure and is explicitly linked to a sense of the performative, with fixed mediums these possibilities are diminished. This goes some way to explaining the ambivalence of many improvising performers and indeterminate composers towards recordings: is the power of energy dissipated, and is the danger taken out of the work, in its moment of documentation or publication? David Grubbs thoughtfully considers these issues in *Records ruin the landscape* by analysing the troubled concerns of John Cage and Derek Bailey, amongst others:

> To the extent that one can generalize about multiple practices that are often
> grouped together with the terms "experimental" and "avant-garde," this is work
> intended to be encountered in the time and space of its production, created by

individuals whose relationship towards sound recording has ranged from merely uninterested to positively disdainful. (2014, 2)

Grubbs' treatment of this topic adds significantly to the scholarship that traces the difficulties attendant on recording. The question of live activity versus the representation of sound, both in the score and in the recording, are aspects that strongly contribute to our reading of audible situations and improvisatory openness. Add to this that an improvised sound language is indelibly linked to the specific sounds of the genres of jazz, free jazz, free improv and free noise – none of which my sound characters, in their angular editing, are reminiscent of – and quickly there is a reading of a closed work. Bruce Russell argues a similar concern in *Free noise manifesto*: "Free music last came into the light through jazz, hence the widespread illusion that the two are somehow necessarily related" (Russell 1994).

Given all the cards stacked against an improvisatory reading, I made extensive use of the gestural aspects of my recorded archive, now using sounds such as the handheld movements of record player needles being pushed around, evidencing the movement of loudspeakers by the changing characters of feedback as they move around, emphasising the beginnings and ends of sounds. Only limited sections of flat, ongoing sounds were used to set up a relationship to the visual panels moving around. As such, this composition was the most hand-held of the five projects. Even despite such attempts, the handheld did not read as strongly as hoped, suffering in the end under the strong impressions that a fixed-length sound composition provides, those of a fixed placement of materials. In considering this current project and study, the pre-recorded character of the sound compositions pushes against the provisional readings I sought to reveal in this project, undoing much of the moving-around-the-space energy created by the installation itself. It wasn't until Project 5, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations,* that I was able to go some way to addressing questions of openness, free

play and, by that stage, free interplay between compositions, by varying multiple tracks' durations in installation space.

Conclusion to *Relations and un-relations*

In the context of an exhibition focused on the ways in which sound had inspired abstract painting in Australia over the last 100 years, with an emphasis on relationships and inspirations between the two media, I sought to test and problematise relationships between painting and sound works, as part of a desire not to undermine but to prolong the possibilities of relationships between the two. Using Schlegel's fragment I created frameworks to engage opposing extremes and ongoing contradiction, as well as the free play of improvisation. This project extends the consideration of what might engender sound and painting relations, bringing to the foreground the possibility of an ongoing, rather than a causally deterministic, relationship. Questioning the possibility of sound being able to be seamlessly represented through painting, the work takes on a dynamically performative installation language that remains open and ongoing, engaging gestures of movement and relocation that propose that while painting and sound can relate on many levels, their position relative to each other can remain unresolvable.

Taking the potential of an improvisatory process and its visual and audible languages, this project succeeds in foregrounding a visual free play through the gestures used in the painted elements, whereas the fixed-length of the compositions, and the sound worlds of the audio composition themselves work against the open possibilities in the installation.

Project 3: *Subsequent moments simultaneously* (2011–2012)

Image 3 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* (2011). Installation view. Factory 49, Marrickville.

Realisation

Subsequent moments simultaneously (2011–2012)

Materials: six paintings (oil on linen, 607 x 607mm, wall painting and shelves for active studio monitor loudspeakers and DVD player, 4-channel sound composition (8'00"). Installation dimensions variable.

Three realisations

- *Subsequent moments simultaneously*. Solo exhibition at Factory 49, Marrickville, NSW, Australia. 7 – 16 April, 2011.
- *V.A.* Group exhibition, curated by Dylan Martorell at Utopian Slumps, Melbourne Australia. 17 September – 8 October, 2011.
  Additional artists in exhibition: Marco Fusinato, Tarquin Manek, Dylan Martorell, Victor Meertens, John Nixon and Mat Valdman.
- *Fourtrack*. Group exhibition, curated by Andrew Tetzlaff at RMIT Project Space, Melbourne Australia. 11 April – 3 May, 2012.
  Additional artists in exhibition: Greg Fullerton, Drew Pettifer and Kit Webster.

A series of six easel paintings, two painted on the front surface, and four canvases which had been used as stencil-surfaces so that they were painted on the edges. A wall painting and integrated shelf-painting created on-site. A sound composition composed on-site at Factory 49, more angular and less gestural than previous compositions in this study. This composition and the six easel paintings remained the same, while the wall- and shelf-painting were reconfigured for each new realisation of this work. This work was developed across three iterations, first at Factory 49 which specialises in non-objective art, then in two sound art group exhibitions at RMIT Project Space and Utopian Slumps.

Introduction to *Subsequent moments simultaneously*

One studies foreign systems to find one's own system

—Novalis (in Seyhan 1992, 23)

This project uses the concept of transcription to further interrogate possible ways of understanding and using sound and painting interrelations. Building on the discussion of the Novalis fragment in the Lens chapter, and considerations of how the two disciplines of painting and sound have looked to each other to allow innovations to occur, this project considers the poietic possibilities of transcription. To reiterate, Seyhan's conception of one system looking at another considers that the interplay between systems considered in this way reveal an impossibility of representation; in Schlegel's and Novalis' work this "space" of the "unrepresentable" is assigned "to poetry". I consider that, as I have noted earlier, the "real measure of the being of a poetic image" "is in the opposite of causality" (Bachelard 1958, xvi), so that the tension between the possibilities of one medium studying another in order to better understand itself, and one medium causally illustrating another, well describes the kind of productive tension I am seeking to explore.

In this context Novalis' proposition provides a framework to consider in more detail the possibilities of confluences, influences, allusions, metaphors and illustrations possible between the mediums of sound and painting in these projects. The refrain of a tensioned set of relations and un-relations, or of constant contradiction, or of the free play between painting and sound (which I will discuss in the context of installation in Project 5, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*), has been discussed; but the process used to describe it has thus far been implied rather than named. I will describe it here via the process of transcription as a way to better understand the interrelation and flow of material ideas between the two mediums.

In regard to a language of transcription, the explicitly conjunctive aspects of James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations provide an eminently applicable language that might be used for transcription. Here is just one of James' potentially useful listings of relational words that open up consideration of how transcriptions might unfold: "With, near, next, like, from,

towards, against, because, for, through, my – these words designate types of conjunctive relation arranged in a roughly ascending order of intimacy and inclusiveness." (1976, 24)

A series of additional transcriptive words open up ways to name possible relationships between paintings as source and sound compositions as outcomes, including related to, similar to, derived from, translated to, taken from, referring to, alluding to, similarly – the list could go on. Yet, in the framing of transcription as site of impossibility, transcription itself performs a celebration of the crisis of representation. In this it joins the chorus of the previously-discussed opposite extremes, ongoing contradiction and free play. Transcription is here made complicated, made awkward, and it openly acknowledges both the struggle of not being able to represent the other medium, or the disappearance of poetry, if indeed the two mediums were to perfectly match each other – either as causality, as illustration, or as a synaesthetically-prescribed this-means-that.

The impossibility of transcription

Make a painting of *frequency*

—Duchamp 1973, 25 (initially from *The 1914 Box*)

The initial starting point for this project was the development of six easel paintings in the studio prior to travelling to set up the exhibition. These six paintings were made up as follows: two where the painting activity takes place on the face of the canvas, and four where the activity takes place at the sides of the canvas. Each square to be painted on a face side required two other canvases to be laid upside down upon it to act as stencil edges: thus, one painting's frontal action gave rise to two paintings' side action.

These paintings were designed to rework the notion and process of stencilled edges which became apparent in Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*, where stencilled edges had been used in part to provide a realisation of an improvisatory language more commonly found in sound. While in Project 2 I worked towards a disorienting set of relationships between the

parts, giving a sense of physical movement around the space, this project sought to bring this more recoverably into the relationship between painted parts. As the title of *Subsequent moments simultaneously* developed alongside the initial paintings, the notion became important that the works should be able to be experienced both as a sequence and also as a momentary totality. I had developed the title in order to reflect on the way in which the moment and the duration intersect in both painting and sound languages. Paintings are there-all-at-once but also reveal themselves over time. Sound compositions are also fully present at any one moment, while inevitably remaining alive (even if not always active) across time. This relationship between the durational and the momentary guided the compositional process of the paintings as much as the sound work in this project, and was then extended in the paintings created for Project 5, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*, while the flatness developed in the visual and sound works was further tested through the monochrome in Project 4, *Multiple monochromes*.

Echoing the improvisatory installation process discussed in Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, I arrived at Factory 49 with these six paintings and a big pile of wooden board leftovers from Project 2, *Relations and un-relations*, which were packed back into the car after being shuffled around the room for two days while I developed the language that this exhibition would speak: this was but one of numerous examples of the iterative process of an improvisatory installation development. Here again, the language for an exhibition was formed in the setup period, during which the most pertinent questions and the thrust of the inquiry were both actively developed and passively found through a process of play and reconfiguration. This narrative of development of works was likewise informed by the philosophical considerations of the Jena Romantics and James, and were being actively developed during the research process. Through this process the four-squared arrangements of the frontal paintings were elevated (from multiple other possibilities) to be the most pertinent

hook for the exhibition, and as their clarity did not benefit from a juxtaposition with masses of bent broken boards, these boards were removed from the exhibition. The two frontal canvases became the prime subject of transcription into sound, and were then echoed in the wall-painting.

Similar to Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, and Project 4, *Multiple monochromes*, no sound composition was prepared until on-site, and I set up a composing and diffusion position in the gallery space. Here the first decision was where to place the four loudspeakers I had brought, to the venue, and in what arrangement. For this I decided to work from the paintings. The painting's four far corners became – and this is one of many words that stand in for 'transcribed' – the markers of where to place the loudspeaker cones in relation to one another. Thus the centre of each woofer was placed as if at the corner of an imagined painting of the same size as the adjacent canvases. I lowered the loudspeakers so the top woofer was at the centre height of the paintings, hung at 1550 mm. In this way the implied four-squared format became a visible as well as a sounding proposition.

This form of transcription may well be considered structural, given the ability for the transcription of painting size and height to be measured and calculated into the location of loudspeaker placement. A compelling example of such transcription is the collaborative project by Marco Fusinato and Thurston Moore, *TM/MF* (2000), where Thurston Moore "is recorded performing 10 guitar improvisations. In response, a painting is made using various implements found in the studio and completed within the time limit of each recording" (Fusinato 2001, 47). Fusinato's projects around this period worked across monochrome painting and free noise composition, always revelling in an apparent matter-of-factness in both presentation and statement. As Fusinato describes another project at the time, *Painting 10/1* (1998–ongoing): "The work is positioned and presented as realism … There is no creative wizardry toward the invention of something new" (42).

While the structural transcription of duration in Fusinato's work, or of painting sizes in *Subsequent moments simultaneously* is simple and matter-of-fact enough, there is more at stake. While it may not be wizardry, revealing transformations do occur, and those transformations are based on transcriptive choices made by Fusinato. Based on the guitar improvisations of Thurston Moore, Fusinato's ten new paintings, and the videos of their making, differ markedly from their so-called source, despite the fact that the durations of the sound works determined the durations it would take to make the paintings. Presenting Moore's guitar performance video alongside Fusinato's painting performance video, and then alongside the paintings themselves, both the obvious relations of duration, as well as the final incommensurability of all the parts, is revealed: the paintings appear unable to reveal the sound in full, revealing in their grasping approach that sound is impossible to represent as a whole, and certainly not without major transformation, through painterly language. By no means is this a problem, for this incommensurability may be experienced as the subject of the work: and again there is a crisis of representation at work. In concept and in experience, the layers of activity from guitar through to painting, from documentation through to actual paintings, came to act as a composite of possibilities.

Focusing on a different aspect of transcription is Sydney artist Ruark Lewis. He has worked with transcriptions from sound (and many other source materials) since the 1980's, and describes the majority of his works as *Transcription drawings* – transcriptions from one form of making into another. He created a number of drawings of domestic soundscapes which he rendered in thick black bars, hinting at the way sound spreads out in its environment. (Lewis 1990, 28-29) These works foreground Lewis' interest in rendering sound in pictorial ways by considering it as a compositional impetus.

If Lewis' abstract *Transcription drawings* can be traced to their sources in generally comprehensible ways, Steve Roden works in the opposite manner. In translating sound works

into abstract paintings and sculptures he introduces multiple sequences of convoluted, chance-manipulated and tenuous translation processes that often leave one wondering exactly how the work might have been arrived at. His *Feldman drawings* (2004), for example are based on listening to Morton Feldman's music, in bed, going to sleep, while drawing in the dark (with additional subtle modulations of these conditions). Roden states:

> The systems I use to generate the work are all related to translation ... but if one seeks a kind of literal logic in the work, it falls apart because it can't be translated back - they aren't codes, so logic isn't necessary to navigate them. (Roden and Fox 2010, 14)

Returning to the possibilities of my own paintings being transcribed to sound, once the loudspeakers were located on the wall I placed my composing workstation with Pro Tools audio editing software and laptop in front of the loudspeaker arrangement, in order to monitor and listen to the work composed in the actively developing installation space. The loudspeakers' placement suggested a frontal spatial experience so that potential placements of sound could undergo small-scale movements of compositional fragments around the loudspeakers. These could be metaphorically and physically placed as a sound-painting of sorts, dealing with directionality in explicit but spatially limited ways. In this, the audience was permitted a position where they might pause in front of a painting for the movement of compositional parts between loudspeakers to be audible; but even at the ideally spatialised point about two metres out, the work never took on a complexly spatialised nor virtuosic movement of sounds around the audioscape, eschewing gradual pans for wholesale on/off here/there placements. At a distance the sound was perceived as an overall diffusion in the warehouse space, retaining its general compositional shape but not the spatial details.

Thinking further through the opportunities for transcription of the paintings by creating an inventory of pertinent characteristics, I chose flatness and the painterly stencilled

transitions as two of the motifs offering themselves for transcription. The sound work developed towards the idea of placing multiple sound monochromes both above each other in duration, and alongside each other over time. In part this followed a consideration of likely eye movements across the painted works as a model for how the sound could move across the composed space. That decided, I commenced by devising a duration that might allow both durational flatness and the changes of parts to be discerned. I divided the sound composition into four one-minute sections, with one-minute breaks of silence placed between. One minute sound, one minute silence. This was finally burnt to DVD, which then played continuously as an eight-minute loop.

As with previous works, the sound components I worked from consisted of a mixture of feedback sounds, noise bands, and a small amount of gestural record player and loudspeaker sounds. While using similar source recordings and sounds, the sound work for *Subsequent moments simultaneously* was the most angular, flat and decisive of the sound compositions produced during this study, relating to the pared-back sound worlds of, for example, Taku Sugimoto's *Doremilogy* (2007), the reductive, slightly demonstrational compositional structures of Pietro Grossi's *Battimenti* (2003), and the restrained but physically complex *-Artefact-* (2002) by Philip Samartzis and Sachiko M.

Sound parts

Part 1. The first of the four one-minute compositions was strongly structured around the first and second halves of thirty seconds each, as if to enact the left- and right -hand sides of the paintings. The composition started on the right -hand speakers, and at thirty seconds moved to the left; the alternate speakers fell silent. The sounds featured were mainly feedback sounds, diffusing flatly into the room as tones.

Part 2. Contrasting with this first composition, the second composition featured a more horizontal arrangement, with certain sounds featured across the whole minute while

others moved in and out of the different loudspeakers at 15-second intervals, thus taking the quarters of the painting surfaces as divisional markers but now to quarter the duration of this section. The feedback sounds featured in this composition were closer in pitch to each other, causing interference patterns as they were experienced in the space, and in this emulating the visual aspects of optical activity and interference that occur between two colours that vibrate when placed adjacent to each other.

Part 3. The third one-minute composition featured high-pitched noise bands (made up of hundreds of layers of record player sounds) moving across the four loudspeakers in 15-second increments. In the room these diffused evenly away from the loudspeakers, as if a fog were moving into the room.

Part 4. The fourth composition derived another approach from the four-panelled paintings, this time with neither a purely horizontal nor vertical pattern to the sounds' movement through the speaker arrangement, but instead a variety of placements. Channel 1 on the lower left featured a low ongoing feedback tone throughout the minute. The top left channel 2 featured a high noise band for half the minute before embracing silence. The third channel, top right, was constant throughout the one minute, but worked as a supplementary perspective of the first channel, providing an exposure of the machinic origins of the sounds, and thus a different sound world altogether.

These arrangements, positionings and movings of sound events across the vertical or horizontal space of the four loudspeakers sought to echo the way the four-panelled paintings could be read visually, either horizontally with movements of the eye from the left two panels to the right two colours, or vertically from either the top or bottom two panels to the other. There was opportunity to work around the painting visually, echoed in movements of sound around the four loudspeaker's locales. Additionally there was the opportunity to move from opposing ends of the paintings through the middle to the opposite side, echoed also in this

arrangement in the way certain sound events were placed sonically. Lastly, there was the possibility of focusing on one colour only, allowing the other three to fade into the background, a compositional simile for which was the placement of quiet noise bands behind louder sections, which became apparent when a louder sound completed, thus indicating that while all parts were present, not all were apparent nor concentrated on until the arrangement changed.

Seen through the point of view of a series of possibilities, or the possibilities of a series, Sol Le Witt's works such as *Variations of incomplete open cubes* (1974) come to mind, where all permutations of a system are performed; this offers itself as an opportunity for future compositions. Indeed, questions of a geometrical nature, and the opportunities for image and sound to work through geometrical concepts, was on my mind during this time also for a project, outside the scope of this PhD study, for which I curated international artists working with geometrical arrangements in visual and/or audible form. *Geometric form seen in recent sound* included Nicolas Collins, Christoph Dahlhausen, Robin Fox, Michael Graeve, Joyce Hinterding, Rolf Julius, Bruce Mowson and Toshiya Tsunoda, and was presented in 2011 at two galleries specialising in non-objective art, gkg Gesellschaft für Kunst und Gestaltung in Bonn, Germany, and K09 Kunstruimte 09 in Groningen, Netherlands.

In keeping with the self-generating, self-referential and transcriptive process of this exhibition, I kept the sound composition and the easel paintings the same for the subsequent iterations at RMIT Project Space and Utopian Slumps, but re-generated and re-developed the wall paintings. In the case of Project Space I chose more subdued colours in order to better reflect the calm decisive manner of the sound composition. At Utopian Slumps, on the other hand, the colours were keyed-up to be more vivid, as the paintings on the speaker shelves and behind the loudspeakers sought not to reflect the sound composition but the vibrancy of the four-squared easel paintings.

What each of these re-configurations indicated was that while each may have been a different interpretation, none could claim to be the correct, the full, the right transcription. Instead, each was an interpretation – and in being so, one among many possible others. This reinforced questions about the process along the way: at times I would ask, why choose one aspect to translate and not another? How can a colour be translated into a sound without making somewhat arbitrary choices from among many options? Better to celebrate the impossibility of representation, and to consider the benefits of painting studying sound to know itself better, and for sound to study painting to know itself better, but not to claim that they might be collapsible.

Conclusion to *Subsequent moments simultaneously*

This third project tested a more consistent approach to transcription, and my analysis considers the productive, the problematic and the conflicted nature of transcription. When commencing this study I was expecting transcription to perform the role of a steady-state series of relationships, whereas the installation process would act out the aspect of complication and proliferation of meanings. It turned out not to be as simple as that. While the process of transcription ties in with notions of one artistic practice studying another, it also relates to a history of painting and sound crossovers that have proven energising for the development of abstraction. In considering the multivalent nature of transcription in this project, I aim to reveal both its possibility and its limitations, its simplicities and its complications. Transcription is thereby complicated, enacting its impossibility.

Project 4: *Multiple monochromes* (2012–2013)

Image 4 Project 4 Michael Graeve, *Multiple monochromes* (2013). Installation view, Wellington City Gallery.

Realisation

Project 4: *Multiple monochromes* (2012–2013)

Sound full: Sound in contemporary Australian and New Zealand art

Curated by Caleb Kelly and Aaron Kreisler.

Two realisations:

- Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin New Zealand. 7 July – 11 November, 2012.
- City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand. 19 October 2013 – 9 February 2014.
  Additional artists in exhibition: Kusum Normoyle, David Haines and Joyce Hinterding, Eugene Hansen and Jenny Gillam and Dr Kron, Michael Morley, Vicky Browne, Torben Tilly and Robin Watkins,

Brent Grayburn, Robin Fox, Philip Dadson, Thembi Soddell and Marco Fusinato.

Publication: *Sound full/among the machines,* Kelly, Kreisler and Ballard 2013.

Review: McIntyre, Sally Ann. "The Sound Already Present: Sound Full, Dunedin Public Art Gallery." *Realtime* online e-edition Sept 5, 110 (2012). http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue111/10786.

Materials: 4-channel sound composition, duration 11'00". Wall and panel-painting (synthetic polymer on gallery wall and plywood). Installation dimensions variable.

An installation devised, painted and composed in-situ for its first iteration at Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Panels were mounted to the wall with screws, over-painted onto the wall, and some panels then removed and the screws re-installed into the boards, before placing them on the floor, suspended around 35 mm above-ground. The Wellington City Gallery iteration was a re-installation with limited changes: same sound composition, same panels, but painted in new colours. My analysis is based on a deepening of understandings across both venues.

Introduction to *Multiple monochromes*

Picking up from Project 3, *Subsequent moments simultaneously,* I sought to build on the way in which flatness reveals itself in sound and in painting, and how it can be used to reveal the complication of time. Why did I investigate flatness as a primary mode of transcription in this work? The notion of flatness in sound suggests possibilities related to those of flatness in paint. While the monochrome has at times been a point zero in painting (de Duve 1999; Rose et al. 2006), sound history has used explicit flatness and endless duration as representative of a potential endlessness in relation to time, an outside-of timeness as an ever-present moment, and as a spatialising materialisation of sound.

Multiple monochromes builds on the previous projects in a number of ways. The process of creating the majority of the work in the gallery space continued, augmented by the

use of pre-existing materials as a shaping factor in the development of the work. With ten days to set up the work I was able to take the opportunity to consider the development of the work in situ, first working through the larger structural decisions in the space, then painting, then composing the sound works. Ahead of the exhibition at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery I asked to be able to use pre-existing paint and existing wooden panels. A large number of standard-size wooden panels, pre-drilled at six points, had been previously used at the gallery for a previous exhibition, and these were available for my use. Seeking to build on both the opportunities for an improvisatory shuffling of artworks around the room as well as the notion of tracing and stencilling, a work developed where panels were screwed to the wall, over-painted on the wall, and then some of the panels unscrewed and dropped to the floor. At that stage, screws were re-drilled into the boards, allowing them to float above the ground.

Monochrome / flatness

A strong theme in the history of music consists of the discovery that counterpoints could be so precisely synchronized and adjusted that the ear could choose to constitute them either horizontally, as independent lines, or vertically, as a succession of chords.

—Albright 2000, 5

Given that one of the implications of the monochrome is of either endlessness or boundlessness, and that neither colour nor sound can be boundless, the question quickly becomes one of where the edge is, and how it is rendered. If the sense of scale might be implied to actually move beyond the edges of the canvas, then how might that occur? Robert Irwin asked the same thing: "How do I paint a painting that doesn't begin and end at the edge?" (Weschler 2009, 101). Ultimately he moved off the canvas support in 1967, painting *Discs* (1966–69) which were mounted on the wall and lit with four spot lights. The boundaries of these works were difficult to determine. My movement beyond the confines of

the support is instead a physical, and a literal, one, painting as I am over the edges of the support then peeling off that support to reveal it first as physically suspended as a presence just above the ground, and then second as an absence on the wall.

Building particularly on Project 1, *Spatial choreography,* where a changing narrative benefited an unfurling of the experience of the constellations in installation space, in this work too I sought to find a way to create such an experience of timing. Initially it appeared that the architectural layout of the gallery space I was working with would not be able to frame such a time-based unfolding of the work – there were no hidden parts to the space, and all was visually revealed at once. Additionally countering the ability to provide multiple narrations within the space was the fact that audiences were able to enter the gallery from three points. I worked against this all-at-onceness by developing the placement of boards on the ground, effectively choreographing a path through the installation space that resulted in the eyes being hit by different aspects of the work as the feet moved through the implied pathways. Thus, while the overall effect of the arrangement was relatively even and even-handed, the placement of boards on the floor, not unlike Adrian Schiess' floor-bound paintings, provided a dynamic narrative of sights as audiences navigated the spaces. At the same time, addressing the floor allowed a heightened immersion in the experiencing of the space, and in engaging the movement of the body, as much as the eye, installation engages its potential to address the experiencing audience.

Rosenthal describes this:

The viewer is in the present, experiencing temporal flow and spatial awareness. The time and space of the viewer coincide with the art, with no separation or dichotomy between the perceiver and the object. In other words, life pervades this form of art. (2003, 27)

Interestingly, Rosenthal describes a viewer, rather than an experiencing subject or an audience member, which quietly indicates how installation is often perceived in the terms of visual art without acknowledging a multi-sensory possibility. Working to counter the description of installation without explicit reference to the audible, the sound works in this exhibition revealed themselves not only across a timeline but also across the audible spectrum of space, with re-locations of sound from one part of the room to another echoing the movement possible for an audience, in ways described in the following section.

In the visual aspects, counteracting the potential dramatism of the scale of the painted works was the deadpan roller application, matter-of-factly applied onto the boards and over the edges before their removal. Likewise, the colour choice in this project was less dynamic than in previous works, and this in part was the result of the use of pre-existing colours that had, in the case of the Dunedin showing, been chosen for their application as architectural gallery colours. While there is a small aspect of indeterminacy in this process, I don't want to overstate it here; in the end the colour choices were not unlike a palette I might normally use. In the second iteration of this exhibition, at Wellington City Gallery, the colours in the technician's basement were sufficiently dull to send me to the paint store to supplement them with colours that would provide sufficient visual activity to relate appropriately, conjunctively, with the sound composition that had been created and tuned to the colours in the first showing.

An association never far from the experience of this project was a sense of both framing and traces. I have previously discussed the notion of traces as a way to foreground movement and potential in artworks. The measured all-over approach of this installation, and the somewhat mannered and controlled paint application (even when loosely referring to freely-played painting) downplayed motion and openness in the space. Instead, the removal and relocation of painted panels from the wall resulted in large empty spaces left behind. If in

earlier projects there was explored an idea of sound and painting transcriptions creating a tensioned zone between understanding and incongruity, then in *Multiple monochromes* the relationship between sound and painting was conceived to be not of one studying another, but of one framing another.

Space, duration and physicality of sound

> I'm attempting to think time. I'm well aware that time has no unity, no moment, no instant, no beginning, no end, and that I have no knowledge of its eternal completeness. For all the times that I've been able to tell, all of them were untimes. I am now attempting to rethink time as a pure multiplicity.
>
> —Serres 1997, 6

The consideration of relations between time and space in sound, and time and space in painting, has given rise to some charged art historical battles across the painting and sound divide, in part divining the spaces and times that might open up between painting and sound. Lessing's proto-formalist *Laocoön* of 1766 (1962) acts as a revealing flashpoint, and in its devotees it initiates the history of a formalist modernism of an apart-ness of media. This develops in symbiotic contrast with movements towards intersection and juxtaposition: in Baudelairean correspondence, in the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and later still in the multiplicities in installation practice; and I will refer to Daniel Albright's illuminating study *Untwisting the serpent* to guide me through this discussion. Lessing's 1766 consideration of an antique Laocoön sculpture brings Lessing to state that

> this essential difference between [poetry and the visual arts] is found in that the former is a visible progressive act, the various parts of which take place little by little [nach und nach] in the sequence of time; whereas the latter is a visible static act, the various parts of which develop next to one another [neben einander] in space. But if painting, by virtue of its signs or its means of imitation, which it can

combine in space alone, must completely renounce time, then progressive acts,

because progressive, do not belong among its subjects - painting must content

itself with acts next to one another, or with mere bodies. (in Albright 2000, 9).

Albright comments:

This is the source of Lessing's famous distinction between the spatially

juxtapositive arts of *nebeneinander*, such as painting, sculpture, and architecture,

and the temporally progressive arts of *nacheinander*, such as poetry and music.

For Lessing, time and space are planes of existence that scarcely seem to meet;

each defines a domain of art with distinct protocols. (9)

The wording frames the possibilities of working against such distinctions by upsetting

simplistic notions of the flow of duration in sound through repetition and flatness. Albright

hears the breaking up of sound as a signifier of ongoing time in the developing stasis of Erik

Satie's work, and such a non-teleological stance towards sound ties in with notions of

openness explored in this research:

What has struck many listeners about Satie's music is the "anti-teleological"

quality (in Leonard Meyer's phrase): it takes up time without seeming to move

forward in time. Even when the chords are not strange, even when the chord

progressions are not strange, Satie's music is conspicuously lacking in the

outward thrust typical of Western tonal music. (190-191)

Initially developed as an outcome of the transcriptive process of deriving sound

characteristics from paintings, in *Subsequent moments simultaneously* the use of flatness

developed a more enveloping sound volume to make the sound composition more palpably

physical. While the Dunedin installation ended up with more moderate volumes, due to

neighbouring artworks, the Wellington showing of this project featured strongly present

volumes of sound diffusion, making the sound physical and emphasising its at times static

qualities. Again, this built on the presaging of a physicalised notion of what sound might become, revealed vividly by Albright through the work of Satie:

> Satie was the first great materialist of music. After a century in which music was conceived according to models derived from psychology and idealist philosophy, Satie conceived music according to models derived from physics. What is the chief property of music? – to Satie, the answer was inertia. (192)

In Satie inertia is often achieved through prolific repetition or through aimlessness in the compositional tone progression itself; but this is still a long way from the inertia of sound that Lamonte Young revealed in a number of his compositions. Yet, once an audience is engaged in experiencing Young's work, these unchanging compositions, and in particular his and Marian Zazeela's *Dream house* (1991 – present), the flatness is revealed and experienced as a rich and changing spatial experience. In *Dream house* sound frequencies are unchanging sine waves pushed into the room, but their interaction in space, and their perception, create a strongly dynamic work. While the sound's compositional flatness seeks to stand outside time, it allows a foregrounding of the physical changes our perceptions undergo in space, which also reveal time. Tony Conrad, having performed with Lamonte Young in the Theatre of eternal music, states the potential of a physicalised potential of sound when it embraces the relationship between the moment and the space:

> the music he played with Young, John Cale, and Marian Zazeela in the '60s "was an effort to freeze the sound in action, to listen around inside the innermost architecture of the sound itself," which suggests that the group functioned as a sort of real-time performance sound installation, with the performers also functioning as audients. (Conrad, in Licht 2007, 292, n37)

Lessing's prohibition now appears quaint, as time and space have revealed themselves not to be entirely irreconcilable forces. As such, I concur with Albright's position:

I suspect that, in its original form, the Laocoön problem no longer troubles anyone. We have learned to tolerate or love all sorts of transvestism between time and space, from pictures that literally move, in the cinema, to straightforward recasting of musical surface according to models derived from the visual arts. (2000, 32)

Indeed, my investigation gains much energy from this "transvestism between time and space," but my projects desire neither to annihilate nor conflate their differences, instead seeking to reveal the productive resistances to their seamless integration. These resistances are based in a tension between their (let's call them) energetic states, which are indeed contrasted by the way the act of experience changes their relationship and being within time and space. Thus, while sound is in one sense an art of the *Nacheinander*, and painting is in some sense an art of the *Nebeneinander*, our experience of them reveals them to be both the former and the latter. A history of sound that pushes against being bound to duration, and a history of painting that pushes against being bound to stillness, specifically inform this study.

Project 5: *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* (2013–2014)

Realisation

Conjunctive and disjunctive relations (2013–2014)

Three distinct realisations, and also presented for PhD examination:

- *Disjunctive Relations: Painting, Sound and Space.* Solo exhibition at Place Gallery, Richmond, VIC, Australia. 3 − 27 July, 2013.
  Materials:
  Conjunctive Relations (001), 2013
    Oil on linen
    310 x 410mm
  Conjunctive Relations, Audible (001), 2013
    2-channel sound composition 9'11" duration
    Brown Innovations SoundBeam SB30, MiniAmp, CD player, CD.
    Edition of 3.
  Disjunctive Relations (001), 2013
    Wall and floor installation
    2-channel sound composition, 12'02" duration
    SolidDrive SD1-sm induction drivers, 2-channel DVD, DVD player,
    amplifier, synthetic polymer pain on primed structural beech plywood,
    screws.
    Dimensions: Wall: 1980 x 2000mm. Floor: 2 panels of 1980 x 400mm.
    Unique work.
  Conjunctive Relations, Audible (002), 2013
    1-channel sound composition 14'33" duration
    Panphonics SoundShower RS-232 with integrated amplifier, iPod,
    bracket.
    Edition of 3.
  Conjunctive Relations (002-011), 2013
    Oil on linen
    1980 x 410mm
- *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*

Solo exhibition at SNO Art Projects (Sydney Nonobjective*)*, Marrickville, NSW, Australia. 31 August – 29 September, 2013. Materials as stated above, with one newly developed work: First, Second and Third Reflection, 2013
Synthetic polymer wall painting
Dimensions variable

- *Melbourne Now*. *Place,* program curated by Philip Samartzis, within the *Now Hear This* section of group exhibition *Melbourne Now* at Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia. 22 November 2013 – 23 March 2014.
  Materials:
  Conjunctive and disjunctive relations (Composite), 2013
  2-channel sound composition, duration 9'00"
- 2014, RMIT Gallery, PhD examination exhibition
  Details of works as for the first iteration.

This final project was realised in three iterations across commercial, artist-run and institutional galleries, and is also the project presented for the PhD examination. The work was initially developed for exhibition at Place Gallery where the title was *Disjunctive relations: Painting, sound and space.* By the following month, for the realisation at SNO Art Projects*,* I consolidated the title to *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*, explicitly referencing James' concepts which were becoming increasingly central to my understanding of the study. For the headphone presentation at *Melbourne now* at The Ian Potter Centre, I combined the originally-presented sound compositions with documentation of the Place Gallery and SNO presentations into a new composition. Following is a brief description of the works included in the project.

Conjunctive relations (001), 2013, Oil on linen, 310 x 410mm.

- One small easel painting made up of five stripes. Featuring a cool yellow, a warm yellow, a yellow-green, a pale yellow and a pale green-turquoise.

Conjunctive relations, audible (001), 2013, 2-channel sound composition 9'11"
duration, Brown Innovations SoundBeam SB30, MiniAmp, CD player, CD.

- One long narrow black loudspeaker, using array technology featuring 16 small
  loudspeakers, diffusing a stereo sound composition in a manner that makes the
  sound appear clearly located in the plane of its making. The sound composition
  here is made up of parts that are placed across the stereo sound field so that in
  many parts of the composition they reveal to the viewer the sweet spot where
  the stereo field comes into play.

Disjunctive relations (001), 2013, Wall and floor installation, 2-channel sound
composition, 12'02" duration, SolidDrive SD1-sm induction drivers, 2-channel DVD, DVD
player, amplifier, synthetic polymer pain on primed structural beech plywood, screws.
Dimensions: Wall: 1980 x 2000mm. Floor: 2 panels of 1980 x 400mm.

- A physical combination of sound and painting. The wooden boards were
  painted in a manner that would reveal underpainting when the two boards were
  lowered to the ground, retaining five coloured stripes but providing a colour
  rhythm across the vertical and down to the horizontal panels. The floor-
  mounted panels were used as resonating bodies for the induction drivers,
  which vibrated the boards so they became loudspeakers with a stereo
  composition – one panel per channel. The sound composition was made up
  largely of sounds that were less directional in nature, diffusing into space that
  was somewhat dislocated from its object.

Conjunctive relations, audible (002), 2013, 1-channel sound composition 14'33"
duration, Panphonics SoundShower RS-232 with integrated amplifier, iPod, bracket.

- A one-channel sound composition was created for this highly directional
  loudspeaker which worked to produce a sound beam through carrier-wave

technology. A series of sounds were composed into this format, some of which worked to underline the directional characteristics of the loudspeaker, others to undermine them.

Conjunctive relations (002-011), 2013, Oil on linen, 1980 x 410mm.

- A series of ten tall paintings, each featuring five stripes. Each stripe was painted using one or two other canvases placed upon it as stencil edges. As this process unfolded wet paintings were placed onto wet paintings, and interrelationships of colours appeared in each.

First, second and third reflection, 2013, Synthetic polymer wall painting, Dimensions variable.

- This work was developed at the second iteration of this project, at SNO Art Projects, Marrickville. Working from the work *Conjunctive relations, audible (002)*, which used the highly directional Panphonics SoundShower loudspeaker, this work featured three roughly-painted circular shapes at the locations, and at the scale, where the sound from the loudspeaker reflected off the wall. Starting with a small and strongly-hued painting where the soundwave first hit, the second reflection was both more diffuse and weaker in colour strength; the third reflection was larger again, and weaker in tone.

Conjunctive and disjunctive relations (composite), 2013, 2-channel sound composition, duration 9'00".

- This sound composition was a combination and re-composition of the actual sound works played in the gallery spaces at Place Gallery and SNO, combined with documentary recordings of the sound environment of those exhibitions. Place Gallery was documented in a relatively objective manner (in terms of representing the sound environment of the gallery space through microphones),

while the SNO exhibition was documented as explicit walk-throughs, featuring my footsteps, movements and spatial orientation in space.

Introduction to *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*

Every examiner of the sensible life in concreto must see that relations of every sort, of time, space, difference, likeness, change, rate, cause, or what not, are just as integral members of the flux as disjunctive relations are.

—James 1909, 280

Woven throughout the project descriptions so far is a motion of things coming together and falling apart in an ongoing oscillation that foregrounds experiencing and presence. In considering this final project of the PhD study I will consider the evocative possibilities offered by James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations, from which the title of this project was chosen. While I waited until the last project to write about James' concepts in direct relation to the artworks produced, readings of his work commenced around one third of the way into the program, and over the remaining time developed in importance to become a third cornerstone of this study, alongside Novalis' and Schlegel's fragments.

I have thus far elaborated a consideration of free plays of improvisation, and of opposite extremes and constant contradiction from Schlegel, and considerations of transcription from Novalis. A question latent throughout the study has been how to designate the parts that act towards the notions of constant contradiction and opposite extremes, and how to understand how to make, create, paint, compose and finally name the relationships between aspects of installations. How, if I speak about contradictory relationships, can the *other* of relationship be invoked? The tensioned presence between sound and painting were tested early in the consideration of relations and un-relations, but the language never entirely held as its dialectical was constantly undermined by the ways in which art, installation, galleries, and lastly this study, sought to re-engage the apart parts. Un-relation was rendered

then as an aim without possibility, always re-integrated into the installation environment and concept through the facts of it's being an installation, of a gallery being a space that makes sense. Parts were always already in relation to each other, and as such un-relations were re-absorbed immediately, just as transgression might exhaust itself in its brief movements outside meaning.

How, then, to find a language where things are always already in relation, yet not always logically, sensibly, representationally, causally, deterministically, illustratively so? James uses a language that allows concepts to be brought together without having to hold them in one place and forever. He speaks a language of the contextual, and of the oscillatory:

> Prepositions, copulas, and conjunctions, "is," "isnt," "then," "before," "in," "on," "beside," "between," "next," "like," "unlike," "as," "but," flower out of the stream of pure experience, the stream of concretes or the sensational stream, as naturally as nouns and adjectives do, and they melt into it again as fluidly when we apply them to a new portion of the stream. (in Sandoz 2000, 175)

Each of these words would fit neatly into the discussion on transcription undertaken earlier, where the emphasis was on the conjunctive couplers but where the impossibility and unlikeness of aspects of transcription were acknowledged, and which in James' terms now become disjunctive relations: they remain relations, but provide a disjunctive openness within the framework of relations.

This project completes a cycle of enquiry starting with Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, which is its closest match, but upon which it builds through the understanding and development of the middle three projects. In moving through the projects, the notion of the fragment replaces that of the constellation or vignette, and the interrelation between painted and sounded parts is more comprehensively varied. A major development undertaken within this project was the use of less common and greatly varied loudspeaker technologies,

for which I composed, causing a complexity in audible experiences in the space that rivalled the differently prepared and painted surfaces.

This project will be host to a discussion on how I have used colour, as well as the moments and durations of painting.

From vignette to fragment

A fragment is not simply an anecdote, epigram, or aphorism – each of which might be understood as complete in itself in splendid isolation. Despite similarities with these forms of writing, fragments are self-conscious indications of incompleteness, gestures to a whole that can only be fathomed, if at all, by an endless, precarious approximation.

—Dahlstrom 2011, 122–123

The innovation of the fragment (not quite invented by the Jena Romantics, but certainly tightly integrated with their project), lies in its ability to signal not necessarily an incompletion itself but an incompletion of the whole, an impossibility of (so to say) "the project". Such is indicated by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy in their study of Jena Romanticism:

But fragment 206 must be read in its entirety: "A fragment, like a small work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a hedgehog." Thus, the detachment or isolation of fragmentation is understood to correspond exactly to completion and totality. To borrow a term from a later tradition not unrelated to romanticism, that of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, one is tempted to say that the essence of the fragment is individuation. As an indicator of a process rather than a fixed state, this term is in agreement with the important Athenaeum fragment 116, where the "particular essence" of romantic poetry is "that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected."

And in a certain manner, fragment 116 defines the totality of "romantic poetry,"

that is, the totality of poetry, as fragment. (1988, 43)

In considering the aim of producing an installation experience that might emulate the possibilities of a waxing and waning set of conjunctive and disjunctive relations between painting and sound parts, I reconsidered the notions of constellations and parts to be rendered now as fragments. The notion of the fragment was never far from the thinking of this study, but not until I was able to describe the differences of the first, third and fifth projects from the second and fourth. The unevenly numbered projects feature a jumpy and prismatic set of objects and sound and painting parts, whereas the evenly numbered projects foregrounded one form of painting and one form of sound composition. In reflecting on the differences between the two, I came to understand that the differences between parts, not just between painting and sound, but also between different sounds, and between different painting elements, all contributed to a stronger experience of the opening up of possibility, and of the increasingly complex possibilities of interplay between conjunctive and disjunctive relations. This also signalled a downscaling of improvisatory and "free play" aspects in the making and appearance of the works, instead focusing on the free play of associations and conjunctive and disjunctive relations found in the tensioned *between* of the fragments.

Variously spatialised sound

This project responded to the limitations of the previous sound compositions by complicating the spatial aspects of sound diffusion and multiplying the timelines across which the compositions were realised.

A number of new sound experiences were sought in this experiment, a response to limitations in the sound work previously composed and diffused. This sought to circumvent two aspects of works that previously worked against the complex experiencing of sound in the space. The first was the way in which sound emanated evenly into the room, and filled it,

from common loudspeakers. The sense of a choreographed experience that the visual works sought to enact in a number of the projects, and which supported an open experiencing of the artwork that foregrounded the interplay between the conjunctive and disjunctive relations of experience, was inevitably flattened out. While very close positioning in front of the loudspeakers yielded some sense of spatialisation, this effect was in turn undermined by the visual and acoustic uniformity of the four loudspeakers used across four of the five earlier projects. The second was the way in which fixed-length compositions placed the aural works into a pre-determined loop that structured the exhibition experience, providing both beginning and end points. This not only anchored particular durations in the installation – in the way a soundtrack might – but also reduced the opportunity for internal dynamism of the sound compositions, as the tracks remain in fixed relation to each other.

These concerns were addressed in this project through research into and the purchase of three relatively unorthodox loudspeaker technologies and by composing works of different durations for each of these presentation platforms, thereby creating indeterminate relationships between the three compositions of 9'11", 12'02" and 14'33" duration.

The plane wave loudspeaker utilises a plane wave technology to provide a very directional sound experience. A microwave frequency (well above 50,000 Hz) acts as an extremely directional plane/carrier wave, into which the composition is transposed. Rather than the sound diffusing from a loudspeaker cone, the plane wave carries the sound information, in effect silently and as a beam, until it reaches an object; at this point it becomes audible. Upon coming into contact with an object, the plane wave reflects (as a billiard ball or a laser hitting a mirror would), as well as slightly diffuses, subject to the surface texture of the material it contacts (this change from a tight to a diffuse sound, from a tight plane wave to a broader one, is what the wall painting of yellow circular forms, *First, second and third reflection,* at SNO sought to enact). There are only a handful of manufacturers of these

loudspeakers; I purchased the Panphonic SoundShower. The listening experience is highly unusual, placing the sound signal deep into the ear. It is experienced as a highly directional signal, and the source of the sound is clearly discernible. When the loudspeaker is pointed directly at the ear this makes sense; but the first or second or even third reflection of this sound is heard in the gallery space, coming from somewhere where no loudspeaker is found, the sense of spatial dislocation and confusion becomes marked. After the first reflection the sound is quickly decoupled from its source, emphasising the way that sound moves through space. I used this not so much to create an absurdity of audible space as to create a strong sense of the directional movement of sounds that would reward audiences' movement through the installation, experiencing the beams of sound in a form similar to lines of sight, although in this case the lines were sound.

I had previously experienced Torben Tilly and Robin Watkins using the Panphonic Audio Spotlight to great effect at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, and there is much potential for artistic uses of this technology, which is more commonly applied in commercial environments. A particularly unusual aspect is its monophonic nature. This is not to say that it cannot be used en masse in gallery spaces, but given the nature of the beam it is not suitable for stereophonic imaging, which is one of the technological conventions used to spatialise, and locate and place, sound events. As such I composed a monophonic work for this loudspeaker which was made up of a series of "blocks" of individual sounds, sourced as with previous works from recordings and re-compositions of record player and loudspeaker hums, feedbacks, complex rhythms and diffused noise.

The array loudspeaker, the second of the three new loudspeaker technologies, uses an array of small loudspeaker tweeters placed in a semi-curve, creating a strong sense of the location of the sound. They fire in a delayed sequence, providing a strongly defined sound image that emerges not from a point source (as single-cone-based loudspeakers do) but from a

delineated surface, metaphorically not unlike that of a picture plane. Given that the stereo sound image cohered at a particular distance from the array, in this case around 1.3 metres, this loudspeaker addressed an audience in a way that a small easel painting might. To engage this opportunity to work with a horizontal arrangement of parts I composed in a manner where a series of sections of sounds, including feedback and noise banks, were juxtaposed at different locations in the stereo field. In the first iteration of this work at Place Gallery this loudspeaker was placed perpendicular to the small easel painting so that the sound field emerging from it acted as a corridor of sound across the viewing position for the painting, framing the visual experience.

The induction driver is the third unconventional loudspeaker type I experimented with. It consists of an induction driver technology, and was used for its non-directional characteristics. Induction drivers do not themselves make a sound, but produce small vibrations which act to make surfaces become resonating bodies. The SolidDrive induction drivers sourced for this project were designed to be screwed to wooden panels, and in this they provided an exciting opportunity to extend the concept of the floor panels used in Project 4, *Multiple monochromes*, where the panels were sitting silently on the ground. As the two drivers were screwed to large wooden panels the sound diffusion occurred across a similarly large expanse, making it a relatively non-directional experience instead suffusing the general area with what might be described as a fog of sound. While the boards acted as sounding surfaces they were also painted surfaces, and in this way the mediums of sound and painting were merged as an object. This is a possibility that I had resisted in my practice for two decades, as I considered a conflation between image and sound as sound sculpture lost the opportunities that an open space, a choreographic experience of installation space, a disjunctive relation between timelines of seeing and hearing, bring with them. That it felt possible to engage in this bringing together of image and sound as object was made possible

because of the complexity and uncertainty of the overall installation: as discussed previously, the fragment in itself may be complete, but in its relation to the set of possibilities relative to other aspects of the installation it will enact a role that encourages openness between parts.

This project exploited the contrast between the directionality of the Panphonic SoundShower, the located character of the Brown Innovations SoundBeam, and the non-directional qualities of the SolidDrive induction drivers to reveal a set of proliferating articulations of the complexity of aural space in a way that previous projects had pointed towards but did not achieve. Within the installation the three distinctly articulated sound experiences of beams, of corridors, and of diffused areas of sound provided a set of experiential possibilities that achieved similar complexity to the different presentation methods realised in the paintings (individual small easel painting, series of large canvases, wall–floor board painting). The overall result was one of increased complexity, both in terms of the durations of the sound works creating continuously new juxtapositions of sound, and through the varied sound qualities and experiences. The experiential is thereby foregrounded, as described by Clare Bishop in her consideration of Bruce Nauman's *Corridor* works where the physicality of sound and surface is rendered to reveal the phenomenological: "one becomes aware of the fact that we perceive space with our ears as much as with our eyes: as one move past the wall, auditory pressure increases and subtly affects one's balance" (2005, 68).

As in previous projects, the spatialisation and gestural handling of sound material was simple and deadpan, exploiting the possibility for juxtaposition, rather than working towards a believable moving of sound in a trompe l'oeil-like spatialisation, as is realised through the elaborate panning and processing found in the works of Hans Peter Kuhn, whose sounds move through the room in a virtuosic and seemingly disembodied manner; of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller; and of Bernhard Leitner. The handheld and provisional are again

foregrounded, in a language enacting the complexity of space rather than representing it, in order to provide for an openness of experience.

The second aspect of complexity brought to this project was to break the singular timeline of sound compositions previously used. The earlier four projects featuring sound suffered under the various effects of a simple timeline. At one level the defined length of the sound pieces added a specific duration to the installation, marked by the repetition of the composition at even intervals of 26'00", 8'00", 8'00" and 11'00". At another level the linear composition of time had a tendency to making the sound works into soundtracks for the exhibition – thereby diminishing the strength of potential in their reading relative to the visual elements featured in the gallery space: for when the sound becomes subsumed by the painting/installation elements it reads more directly as a transcription/translation. The implementation here of compositions of different durations created an endlessly new set of interactions between the three compositions.

In creating a more complex diffusion of sounds, and by creating a more indeterminate timeline, this project sought to foreground the way in which sound compositions could relate in both conjunctive and disjunctive ways to reveal a complex experience in installations space.

The moment and duration of painting

The disintegration of the unified pictorial space, the fragmentation of the object, the autocratic employment of liberated motif elements, the autonomy of color, form, and line, and the increasing dynamism of all three – these developments, which took place between 1908 and 1914 in the guise of Cubism, Futurism, Orphism, Vorticism or Synchronism – were basically directed towards opening visual art to the dimension of time. Never before in the numerous programs and manifestos of the avant-garde did there appear so many temporal concepts, such

as rhythm, dynamics, speed, and simultaneity, or musical terms such as cadence, dissonance, polyphony, etc., proving the existence of a close link between the temporalization tendencies in art and the reception of musical phenomena.

—von Maur 1999, 44

In considering the possibility of the fragment as something complete in itself, I developed a series of ten large and one smaller easel paintings that might read as temporalised and reveal an activated tension between the momentary of time and the flow of duration. The incommensurability of holding both moment and duration at one time was used here as one possibility of enacting the notion of a constant contradiction suggested in Schlegel's fragment. Considerations of conjunctive and disjunctive colour relationships contributed to the vibrancy of these works. The painting process contributed to a provisional and gestural surface treatment that made readable the processes of its making – holding alive a history of the work and providing a degree of implied provisionality and openness to future activity. These painted works do not attempt to transcribe specific sound elements, but instead focus on the generalised principle of the interaction between moment and duration as it might be described in sound composition.

In practice these works were created in a group, using each other as stencilled edges. I placed a canvas on the table. I then took two other canvases, placing them upside down on this bottom work to reveal one stripe, which I then "filled in" as an area with a stiff but finely-haired synthetic brush. As other stripes were sometimes still wet, having been painted on that day, the surfaces started interfering with each other. The sides of the paintings also become very active, as they had been used as stencils and were therefore overpainted in multiple layers. Such echoes of other works within a painting – its traces of a presence –refer to notions of memory and absence. Exhibited individually, these absences and presences are implied; exhibited as groups, the relationship between parts can be traced through the room,

as they had been in previous projects on a larger scale with boards and panels being moved around, leaving their traces behind.

The formal arrangement of parts in these works' structure played on the perceptual limitations I have observed in my own viewing of painting, where the concentration is invariably unable to hold more than one of a set of opposing attitudes when words are put upon them: the overall or the detail, the relation between two adjacent or two stripes placed apart, the colours themselves or the edges. It is like the rabbit–duck illusion, which in this case becomes enacted as a duration–moment, or sequence–simultaneity, tension. The stripe is placed to structure this double role, especially in a horizontal arrangement, as it encourages a skipping-across as well as an experience of patterning (but in my experience never both at once). In this way the project plays out the unending set of tensioned experiences that could be considered in relation both to Schlegel's allusion to constant contradiction and to James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations. I have previously worked through the consideration of free action in relation to improvisation, but in this case it could reveal an aspect of the work that might be regarded as both playful and enacting the duration/moment incommensurability. To do this, this project returned to the use of a striped painting format as a way to more explicitly reveal sequence. This stands in contrast to the four-squared arrangement of the previous paintings, which engaged with an aspect of simultaneity more than with that of subsequence (as it was described there), or more than with sequence (as it became titled here).

The question of how to represent in painting the flow of time, or the momentary nowness that is enacted in sound, has been an ongoing concern for painters, especially since the beginning of twentieth century modernism:

> Thus music, which lends shape to time, develops through time, and diminishes
> with the temporal flux, was "looked upon with envy" by visual artists who felt
> increasingly constricted by the spatial character of art and yearned to find some

way to integrate the missing dimension into their medium. In music, a space-time continuum already existed, since it engendered a continually changing "tone-space". (von Maur 1999, 43)

Such temporalisation of painting remains a contemporary concern, and is a strong element in, for example, Melbourne artist John Aslanidis' work. Since 1995 Aslanidis has developed a visual language to transcribe the aural effects he experiences in listening to techno music. Complex geometric patterns of overlaid circles, rendered with oil on canvas in a restless colour scheme, result in paintings that are experienced variously as a field of restless simultaneous activity and as a series of abstract motifs existing one after another. In works such as *Sonic network no. 2* (2005–2006), we experience references to both momentary and flowing aspects of time. In the series of paintings created for this installation I sought to realise this temporalisation by activating the relationship between colours in a dynamic oscillation, and by choosing a format that allowed both linear and simultaneous readings to occur.

Colour

> 1912 – the windows ... are a completely new technique. The contrasts of simultaneous colors are the relationships of colors in motion. This means that color has taken over the function of form, and form is not descriptive, it carries its own laws within itself ... No copy of nature ... but rather the first abstract painting in color. Color, the colors with their laws, their contrasts, their slow, fast, and very fast vibrations in relation to each other, their intervals – all these relationships form the basis of an art which is no longer imitative but creative, thanks to this special technique.
>
> —Robert Delaunay to André Lhote (in Vriesen and Imdahl 1967, 46)

Colour featured prominently in this project, combining both easel and large-scale paintings. The series of ten tall paintings was useful to make the specific use of colour explicit, allowing a consideration of the contribution of the optical activity of colour relationships as performing similarly oscillatory and energised roles as the beating of tones in the room might – an enacted physicality and activity even when the components are still. Given the fixed system of using five stripes in each painting featured here, the responsibility for developing movement and activity in the paintings relied strongly on the use of colour relationships, and I will describe the interrelations here. While the colour relationships differ between the oil paintings (which are possible to use at a higher intensity of pigmentation than possible in polymer synthetic domestic wall paint) and the wall paintings, how I considered colour relationships to function can be applied to both.

Describing individual colours is difficult enough, let alone combinations, given the number of possible colours (although in oil painting these are rather more limited before they turn to mud), but also the effect that opacity, width of stripe and relative location to other colours has. Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Remarks on colour* come to mind: "For here (when I consider colours, for example) there is merely an inability to bring the concepts into some kind of order. We stand there like the ox in front of the newly-painted stall door" (2007, 16e).

I concur that there are few fixed addresses for precisely determining, speaking and defining colour relationships. This may be perfect for a study that seeks a way out of determinate readings of colour and sound relations, propelling itself as much towards an open work as possible, but in this context such tight-lipped indeterminacy is not helpful. This dilemma has given rise to generations of colour theorists, chemists, artists and philosophers seeking to form languages that might capture colour itself, or the complexity of colour relationships. Over my twenty-five year obsession with colour I have formed my own handles

to grip this elusive matter. How to interpret the complex relations between multiple colours, even if I have created a simple enough formal structure to tempt myself to do so?

Following is a wording of considerations of colour relationships. These are strongly linked to Michel Eugène Chevreul's notions of simultaneous contrasts but I have considered it through my reading of – and about – Robert Delaunay's practice. The simultaneity in the title of this PhD project points at a long-term engagement, starting with one of my first series of oil paintings as a sixteen-year old high school student in 1988 – copies I made of Delaunay's *Windows* series of 1912–1913. But my re-reading for this PhD of Vriesen and Amdahl's 1967 study of Delaunay's work, which I had pored over in 1990, provided no less recognition of the usefulness to me of Delaunay's and Chevreul's wordings. My subsequent readings of Johannes Itten's *The art of color* (1961) and *The elements of color* (1970), and Josef Albers's *Interaction of color* (1963) also informed my language of thinking, seeing, mixing and placing colours, through pigment-based material models of colour.

Given the way the colours influence each other, depending on size, placement, opacity and so on, how do I develop the paintings? The first one or two colours are simple to choose, and often derivatives of colours that I have mixed specifically to finish another work. The third colour starts to give the painting character. The fourth colour takes time to choose, because the painting's character is becoming strongly formed; the last colour is a feat of courage and determination, because it can't be taken back and it invariably takes the painting either towards the energised active state I have sought to describe, or forms it into a flatly uneventful work. In part I can predict the outcome by holding the palette knife at some distance between eyes and the stripe, but the final look on the canvas always differs, depending on the transparency or opacity of the paint itself, but also on the unpredictable ways the previously-painted surfaces of the painting may have imprinted into each other. It

requires both a playful process of testing colours next to each other and a detailed thinking-through, a language, of colour relationships and rhythms.

Using Chevreul's language I could describe harmonious relationships –based on both contrast and similarity. A simultaneous contrast is the relationship between complementary opposite colours such as red and green, blue and orange, yellow and purple, which can function even when the colour has been tonally changed from its full strength. These are contrasts of high energy, providing a strong visual and optical pulsing and stimulation. Another harmony is that of the similarity of closely-related hues, although in this case the dynamism between the two tends to be minimal.

Warm and cool aspects of colours are useful markers of their individual likelihood of (all things being equal) appearing to moving towards us (warm colours) or away from us (cool colours). Both warmth and coolness, and tonal contrasts, can have a marked effect on figure–ground relationships, and these are often designed to flip, depending on what precedes and follows the sequence of viewing within the work.

Tonality contrast can have an effect on the reading of colours, causing neighbouring colours to be either heightened or reduced in intensity. Tonal similarity, on the other hand, tends to reduce the optical activity between quite different colours yet amplifies an optical activity where two colours are closely related, such as a warm and cool yellow placed next to one another.

Strong colour or tonal contrasts can cause a sense of a rhythm within a work that contributes to a time-based reading that unfolds. These contrasts tend to be doubly noticeable when they do not apply to the whole of a painting, applying to one part but not another.

There are two additional relationships that I perceive between colours: disharmonies and ambivalences. Disharmonies are clashes of colours, often between two high-key hues.

Ambivalences, on the other hand, occur where it is hard to pinpoint any particular interaction – these colours just sit next to one another without any apparent activity or influence.

In the final analysis, none of these relationships are stable in paintings carrying the complexity of five stripes; the activity occurs at the level of a number of colours interacting, and in the activity through which various elements are viewed. Because of this I often use a reversal of figure–ground and warm–cool effects as a way to create a dynamism in the work. I can place a warm and a cool colour next to one another which, in terms of shape or other colours used in the painting, might be seen to work in a manner opposite to what it would if placed simply next to one other colour. A movement therefore occurs across stripes, where a colour may appear foregrounded when the sight is set at the border to one of its neighbours; but this, the spatial relationship of foreground and background, or figure and ground, is reversed when concentrating on another relation. This happens, for example, when an orange stripe appears to advance next to a green one (according to a model of warm and cool colours), whereas the same orange stripe may appear to recede next to a darker blue. In this way relationships, and confusions, and optical pulsations, can proliferate across the canvas to benefit the unfolding of an ongoing set of colour narratives that reform across time. In these flip-flops is the dynamism required for a work to function well, to have an internal energy that "reads". At most times there is a requirement that not only one but a number of such dynamisms keep pushing the eye around the work. This occurs in a similar manner to Vriesen's consideration of Delaunay's *Window* pictures of 1912, where

> The relationships of these colors to each other objectivate their spatial
>
> relationships. Each single color zone is immediately pinned down or reversed in
>
> space, pushed forward or back by its neighbor. The spatial effect thus suggested is
>
> a function of the color relationships." (Vriesen and Imdahl 42)

It is also part of a work to possess an overall sensibility – what happens at one time and at one moment? Here the overall use of colours has an impact, and the question of how many contrasts and how many distinctions are within a work provide a momentary reading.

I choose colours in this way, and thinking of these criteria, at two levels: what colours are directly next to each other, and then how they react towards each other, across the whole painting. The relationship of colours next to each other is what in this series I have thought of as successive (and therefore related to duration), and the overall effect of the stripes relative to each other is what I think of as simultaneity (and therefore related to the moment). Clearly intuition is part of the process, but in order for the works to be successful, I experience that in each of the paintings there is a backwards and forwards play between relationships and un-relationships, between active and passive energies, between the energetic and the calm, and importantly between the relationships I can name and ones I can't. Thus the duration-moment, or sequence-simultaneity, problem becomes one of conjunctive and disjunctive relations, in much the same way that the larger consideration of this study seeks to provide a series of both conjunctive and disjunctive relationships – in these works, rendered within the easel paintings themselves. In this way the metaphors derived from James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations have provided me with a new framework to describe the various interactions of colours that is supportive of the greater tensions I seek to create in the works.

Conclusion to *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations*

In considering James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations as a framework to describe the ebb and flow of conjunctive and disjunctive relations, this final project foregrounds the interplay between elements in a manner that opens up opportunities for multiple intersections of readings. A more complex and ever-shifting sound environment, using novel loudspeaker technologies and moving away from the singular track to multiples, contributed significantly to a more complex experience in space and across time. This project also provided

opportunities to examine the momentary and durational aspects of painting, as well as the use of colour in the projects. Lastly, moving from the somewhat literary concerns of the Jena Romantics to James' conjunctive and disjunctive relations draws attention again to the experiencing of the work, tying in with the notion of presencing discussed in Project 1, *Spatial choreography*, while the "tensioned" part of presenting remains in the work as moments of disjuncture, open-ness and aloofness between the fragmentary parts.

If in the first project a discussion of presencing in Heidegger brought to the fore a presence of past, present and future, then with James we have the bookend to this experience, with a language particularly suitable for sound and painting works presented in installation that provide the opportunity for ongoing and open experiencing. At the same time, in moving forward in this narrative from the considerations of endless contradiction and opposite extremes in the Jena Romantics to the free flow of experiencing in James, I sense a fundamental shift from a – yes, what we might stereotypically call a tortured romanticism – to a deep pleasure of the now and the flow of events in James. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy signal this in regard to the ultimate desires of the Jena Romantics: while in that brief moment of *The Athenaeum* they revel in the crisis of representation, they also seek to resolve it.

In the early projects undertaken in this research which I have considered through the lens of ideas extrapolated from Schlegel and Novalis, my focus was on the aspects of "supplementary complexity, hesitation, hovering" – all the talk of things not resolving, remaining open, staying in constant contradiction. These appeared, and indeed were, useful languages to describe the lack of completion, and the deferred resolution that I value in installation practice. Yet in comparing these languages, to that of James, an entirely different sense of the possibility for celebrating the present becomes possible, where the vertiginous gives way to the immersed. Thus, while the Jena Romantics take on the challenges of the

crisis of representation with gusto, they do not gain escape velocity: Novalis dies young, and Schlegel's concern change as he converts to Catholicism.

> From the outset, we have attempted to point out not the place, but the play of a difference [*écart*] that separates romanticism from idealism (from the metaphysics that perfects itself therein). This difference appears in a supplementary complexity, hesitation, hovering – or *Schweben,* to use a word that these texts are immoderately fond of, a word that may correspond to romanticism's infamous "vagueness," but that at times may also mean that romanticism constitutively involves a certain impossibility of exactly *accommodating* the vision of the Idea. Such an accommodation undoubtedly remains its goal, however, and the difference separating romanticism from idealism is minute. (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988, 122)

In the final analysis James' conception comes back to one of this study's lenses: his mention of the "inadequacy of our conceptions to match" experience might well be termed his crisis of representation:

> Radical empiricism insists that conjunctions between them are just as immediately given as disjunctions are, and that relations, whether disjunctive or conjunctive, are in their original sensible givenness just as fleeting and momentary … and just as "particular," as terms are. Later, both terms and relations get universalized by being conceptualized and named. But all the thickness, concreteness, and individuality of experience exists in the immediate and relatively unnamed stages of it, to the richness of which, and to the standing inadequacy of our conceptions to match it, Professor Bergson so emphatically calls our attention. (1909, 280)

Yet rather than, as with the Jena Romantics, it is "a supplementary complexity", the complexity that James (and Henri Bergson, as indicated in this quotation) recognise and "the

richness of which" is embraced. It is just such a positive celebration of the crisis of

representation that this research project seeks to engender in the outcomes of this final

project.

Conclusion

This research developed over four years, five projects, ten exhibitions, five cities and three countries. The artworks featured have been created both in the studio and on site in exhibition spaces. They have been presented to tightly-focused communities of practitioners and to broad audiences across artist-run spaces, commercial galleries and institutional galleries. These practical developments have in turn been informed by, influenced, considered and critiqued through the iterative process of writing this exegesis.

Through this process I have developed an expanded language of practice – in the studio, in the gallery and in my conceptual understanding. This study started with tentative considerations of how to enact, and how to name, aspects of installation that might sit beyond the causal, and did so through relations and un-relations. These binaries have now been reconfigured into a more complex and subtle interplay of both conjunctive and disjunctive relations that do not resolve but remain tensioned against each other in a free play of interaction. Improvisatory techniques have been applied to both exhibition installation, painting processes and the sounds themselves as a way to indicate an aliveness in the work. These experiences of complexity and uncertainty have been aided by the development of a varied language of sound composition and diffusion, and the juxtaposition of novel loudspeaker and diffusion technologies. The languages have become an expanded vocabulary and have renewed strategies to address sound and painting installation and its attendant opportunities.

This expanded vocabulary, informed by the reflections prompted in composing this exegesis, provides numerous opportunities for immediate and sustained attention. I have only touched the surface of how to compose for the new and varied loudspeaker technologies that I brought to the last project, as each engages space in complex and mutually different manners. The interface with architecture is heightened with these, and in general the politeness of

sound volumes and the spatially indistinct openness of exhibition spaces has often worked to undermine the potentially stark spatial effects and the embodied experience of audiences. As such, the use of a more concrete, palpable and physical approach to sound offers itself with increasing urgency. There is also opportunity to reconsider my sound instrumentation, as the presence of the machinic characters of the record players, and of the gestures used to play them, work towards a figurative and representational association. It is only in retrospect that I have understood that this has been one of the reasons that this study's planned engagement with questions of non-objective or concrete abstraction remained latent rather than driving. Questions concerning the tension between the momentary and the durational were also explicitly discussed, and again I see the need to radically stretch, and compress, aspects of duration in the sound works. Conversely, aspects of scale, gesture and surface in the painted elements are all ripe for new practical experimentation. I will begin to realise these possibilities over the coming months, so that by the time the PhD examination is complete new sound and painting installations and sound performances will have been presented in group shows in Hong Kong and Ahlen, Germany, and in a solo show in Wellington, New Zealand, taking the development of this work forward in a targeted manner.

At the same time, considerations of the crisis of representation have reached across theory and practice, in their engagement with questions of what forms of representation are possible, desirable, or, indeed (and preferably) impossible – between subject and object, between mediums, between experience and language. While for the purposes of this exegesis I have labelled the brief aesthetic and philosophical discourse as a lens through which I have framed the creative studio practice, in turn the studio practice has been a lens through which I have considered the complex relationships between discourse and practice. It is one thing to describe conjunctive and disjunctive relations; another to apply such language to art, revealing both possibilities and limitations in the crossing of such disciplines. Thus the

narrative through-lines have gone from the details of the philosophy of Schlegel, Novalis, and James, through to the contemporary philosophers who so richly reconfigure this material into the present (such as Seyhan and Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, on whose work much of my interpretation has relied), in considering how these concepts intersect with practice and in doing so are revealed in different lights. I have sought to handle this interplay with sensitivity but also playfully, seeking serendipitous tensions between the conceptual and the practical, between the metaphysical and the felt, between the moment and the duration, between the improvised and the composed, between the temporal and the spatial, between the painterly and the sounderly – all as an ongoing oscillation of conjunctive and disjunctive relations that celebrate the crisis of representation as a way to foreground the experiential.

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Appropriate Durable Record

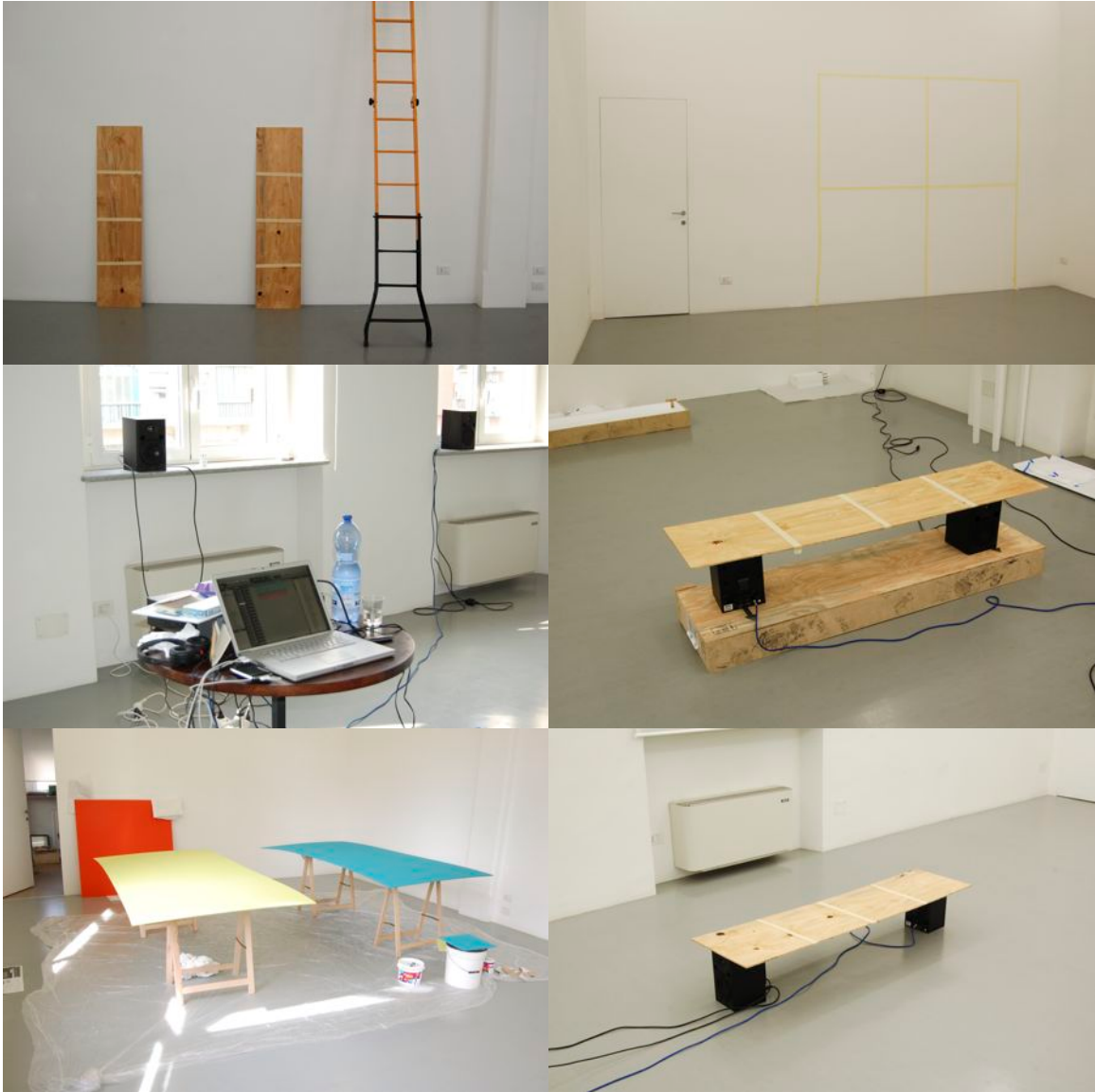## Project 1: *Spatial choreography* (2010)

Image 6 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (2010). Setting up. e/static, Turin.

Image 7 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (2010). Setting up. e/static, Turin.

Image 8 **Project 1 Michael Graeve,** *Spatial choreography* **(2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin. Lower two photographs courtesy of Dominique Petitgand.**
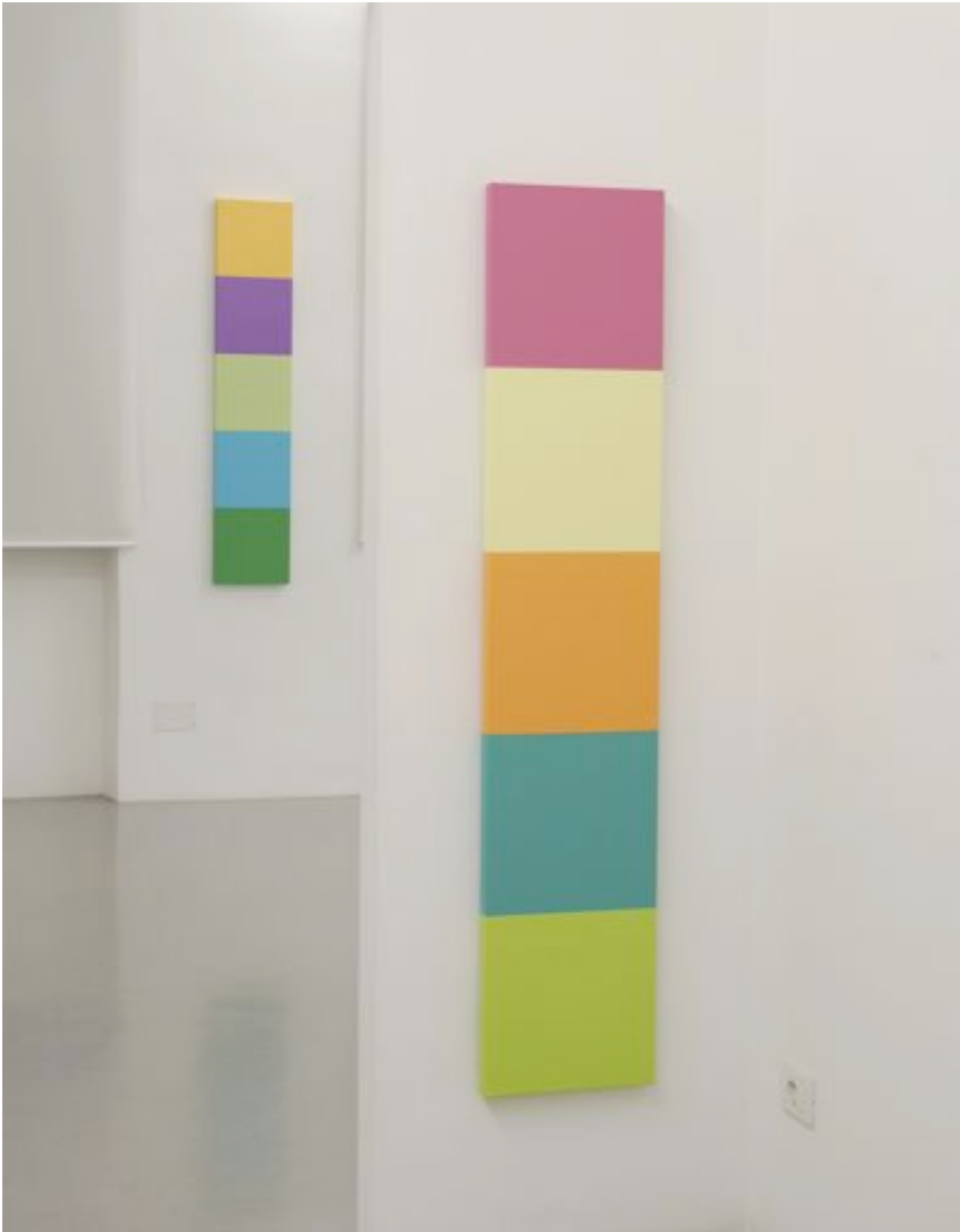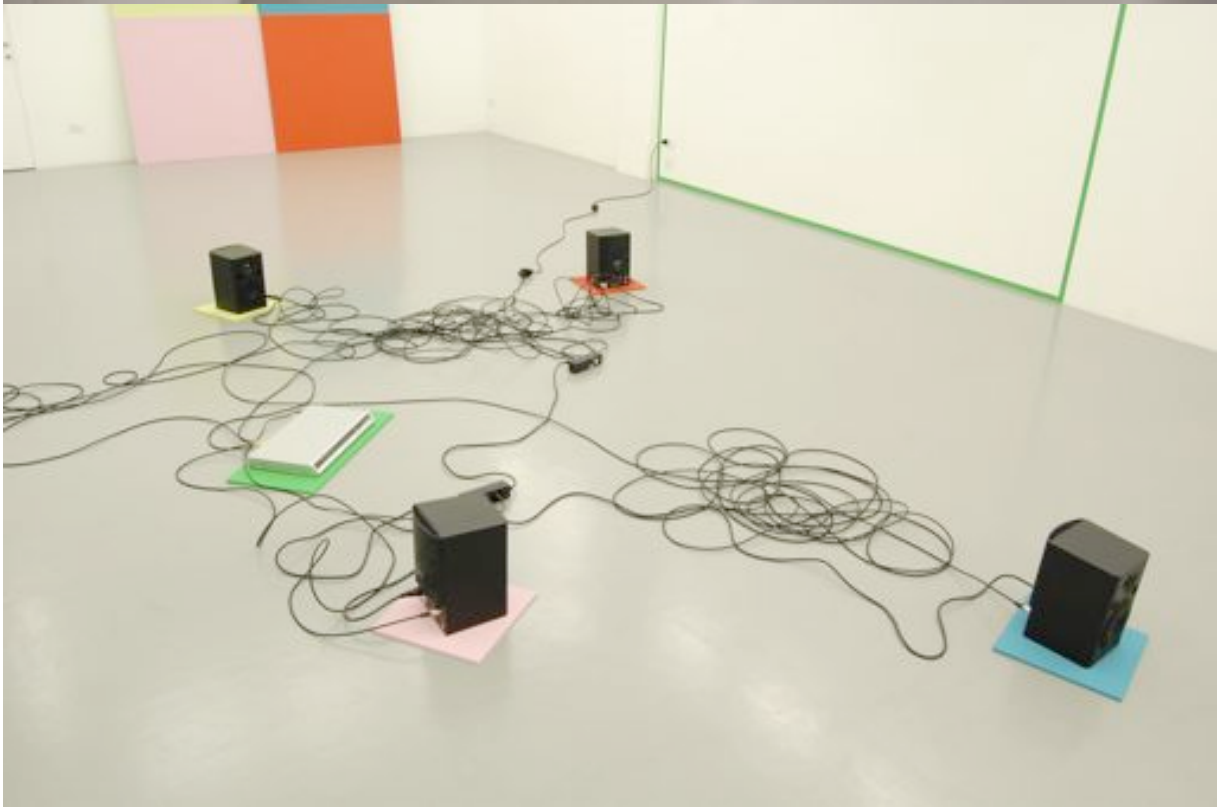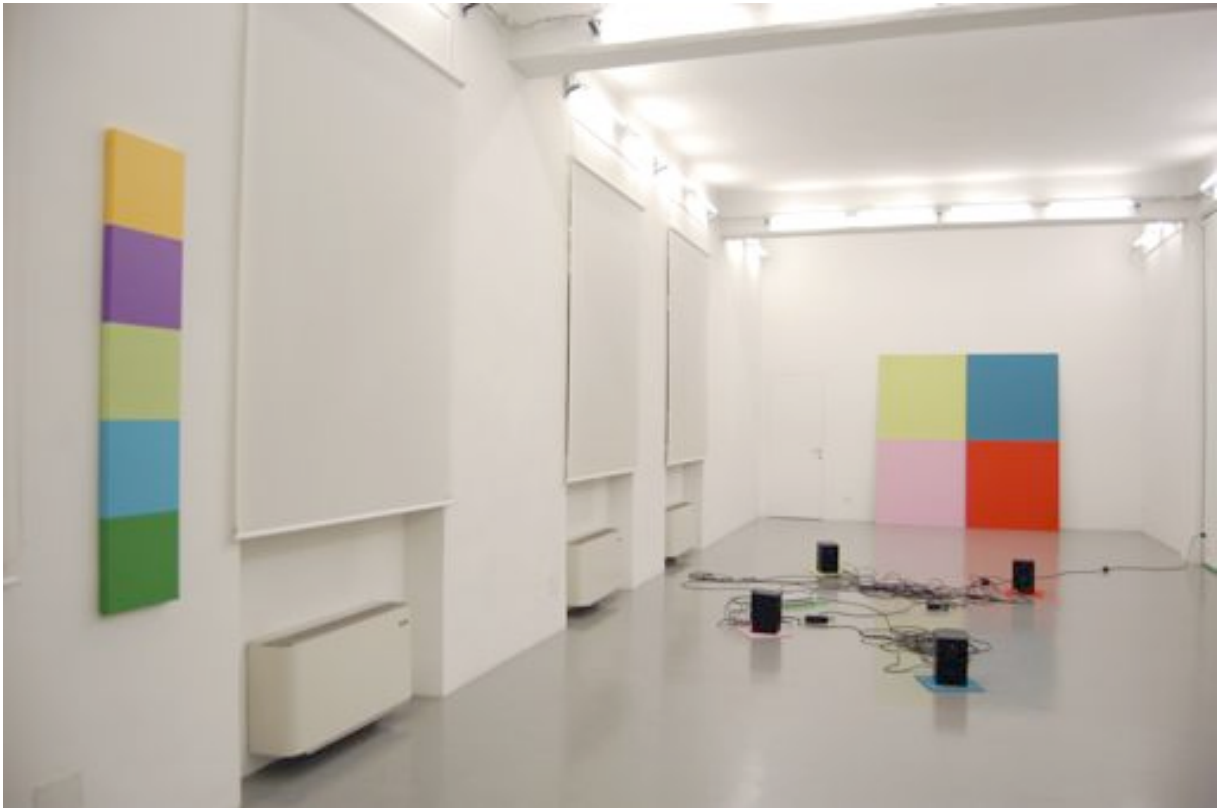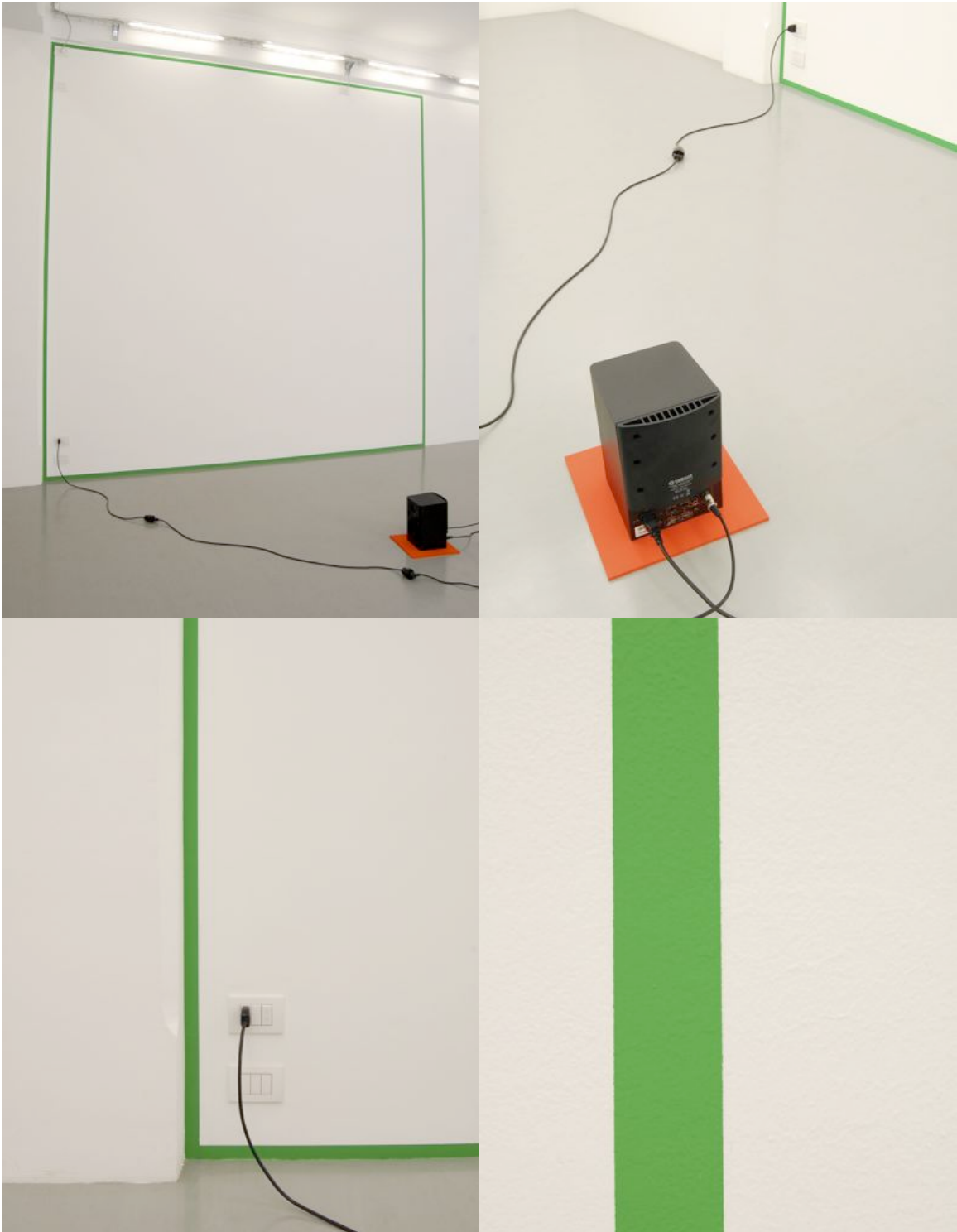
Image 9 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (**2010). Installation view. e/static Turin.**

Paintings: Untitled**, 2008. Oil on linen. 1520 x 310 mm.**

Image 10 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin.
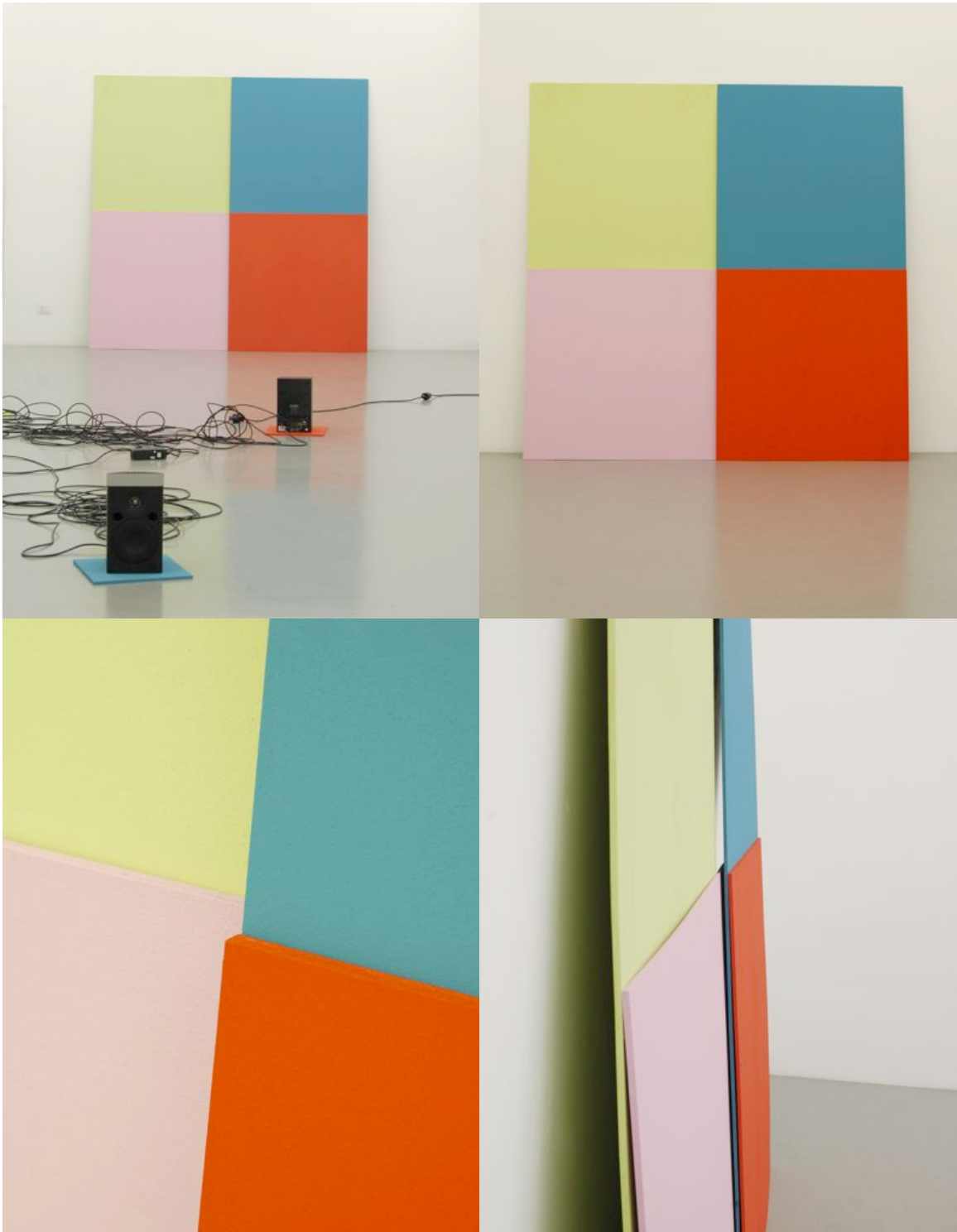
Image 11 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* **(2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin.**

Plywood, synthetic polymer paint. 2400 x 2400mm.

Image 12 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* **(2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin.**

Image 13 **Project 1 Michael Graeve,** *Spatial choreography* **(2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin.**

Image 14 Project 1 Michael Graeve, *Spatial choreography* (2010). Installation views. e/static, Turin.

Project 2: *Relations and un-relations* (2010)

Image 15 Project 2 Michael Graeve, *Relations and un-relations* (2010). Installation views. the Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Image 16 **Project 2 Michael Graeve,** *Relations and un-relations* **(2010). Installation views. the Arts Centre, Melbourne.**

Image 17 Project 2 Michael Graeve, Relations and un-relations (2010). Installation view. the Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Image 18 Project 2 Michael Graeve, *Relations and un-relations* **(2010). Installation view. the Arts Centre,**

Melbourne.

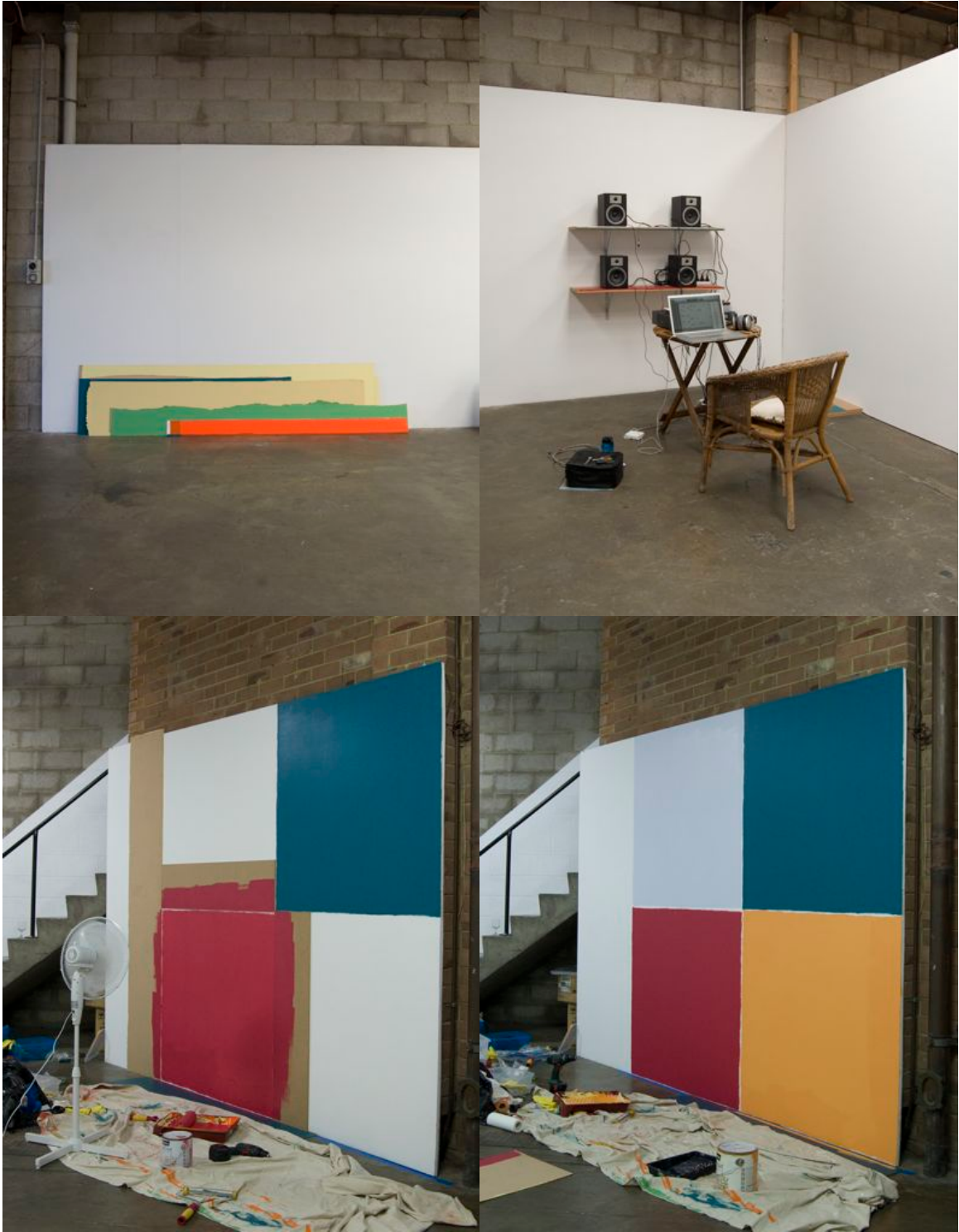**Project 3:** *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011–2012)**
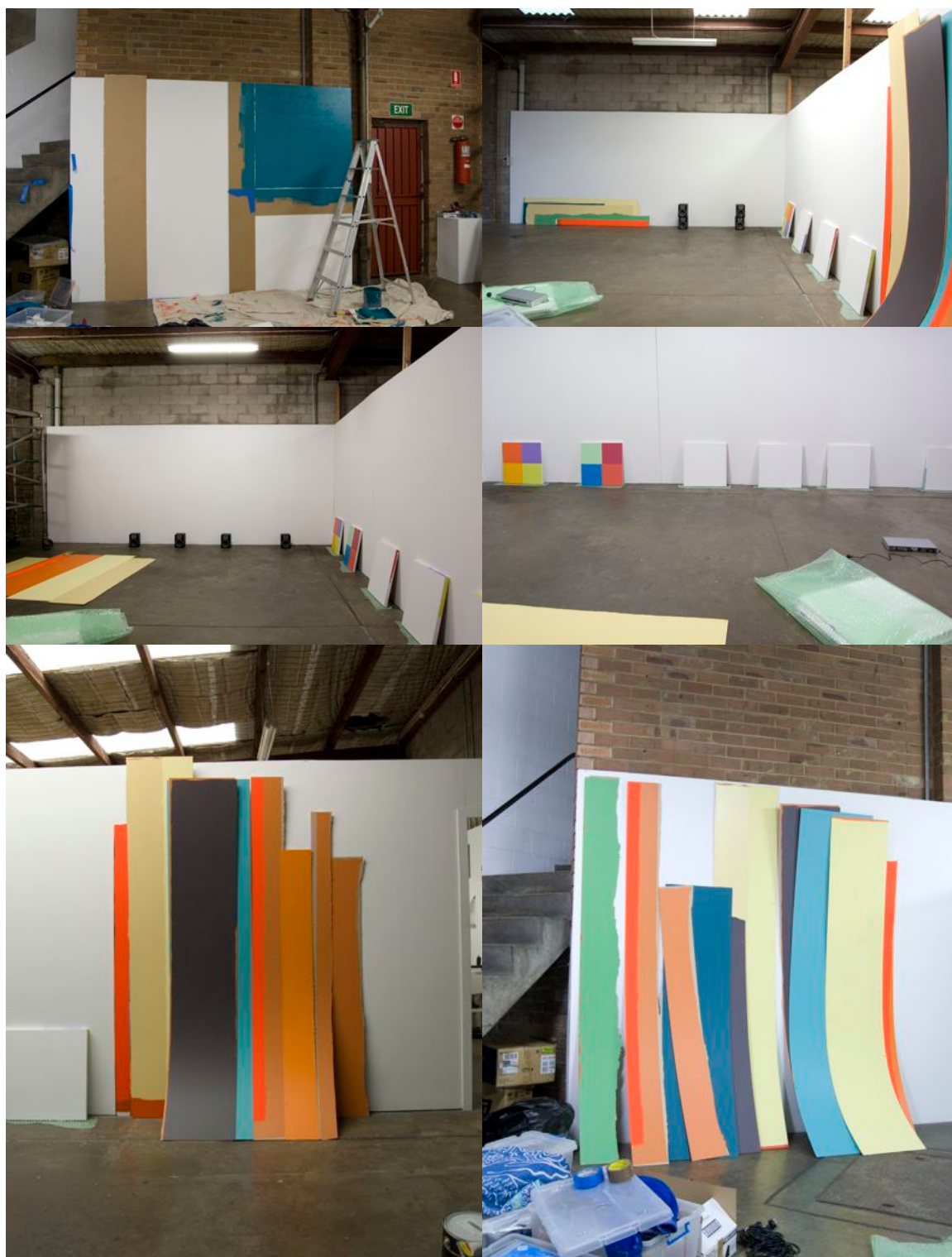
Image 19 **Project 3 Michael Graeve,** *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Setting up. Factory 49, Marrickville.**

Image 20 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* (2011). Setting up. Factory 49, Marrickville.
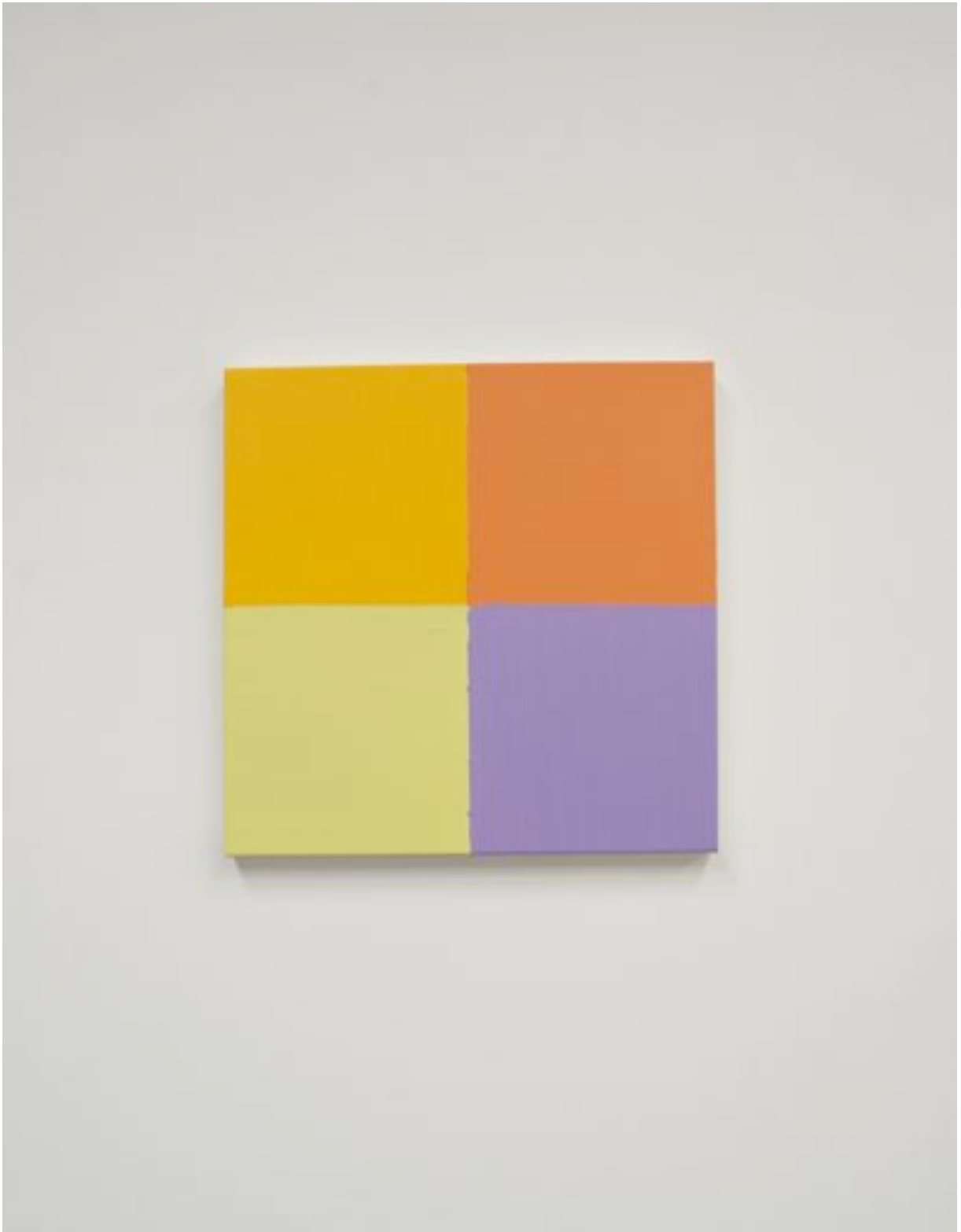
Image 21 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Installation views.**

Factory 49, Marrickville.

Image 22 **Project 3 Michael Graeve,** *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Installation view. Factory 49, Marrickville.**

Image 23 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Oil on linen, 510 x 510mm.**

Image 24 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Installation view. Factory 49, Marrickville.**
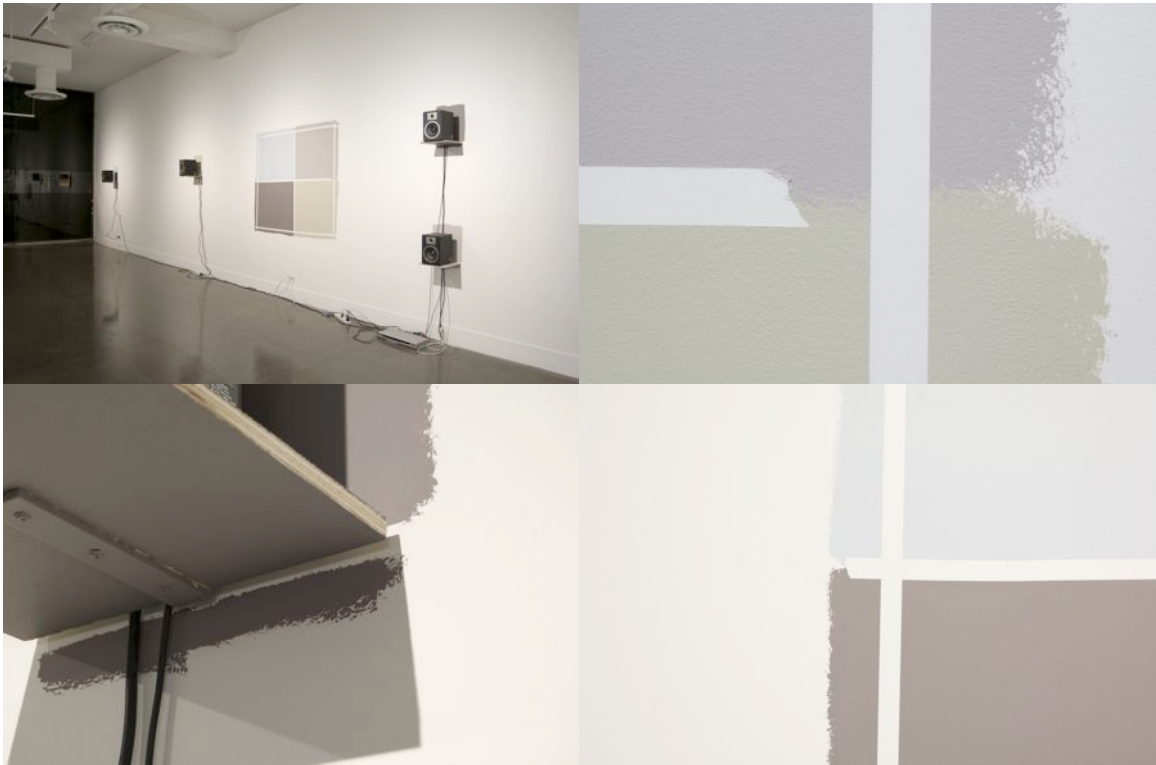
Image 25 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* (2012). Installation view. RMIT Project Space, Melbourne.

Image 26 Project 3 Michael Graeve, *Subsequent moments simultaneously* **(2011). Installation view. Utopian Slumps, Melbourne.**

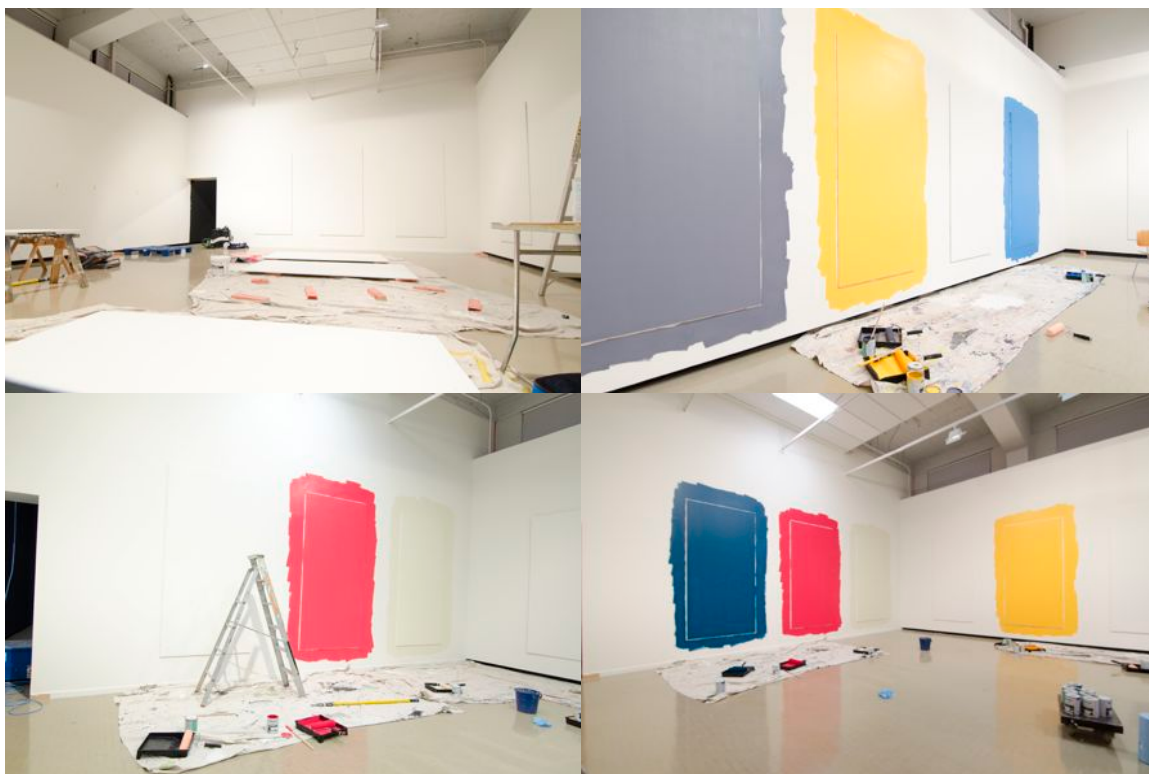# Project 4: *Multiple monochromes* (2012–2013)

Image 27 Project 4 Michael Graeve, *Multiple monochromes* **(2013). Setting up. Wellington City Gallery,**

Wellington.

Image 28 Project 4 Michael Graeve, *Multiple monochromes* (2012). Installation views. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin.

Image 29 Project 4 Michael Graeve, *Multiple monochromes* (2013). Installation views. Wellington City Gallery, Wellington.

Image 30 **Project 4 Michael Graeve,** *Multiple monochromes* **(2013). Installation view. Wellington City Gallery, Wellington.**

Image 31 Project 4 Michael Graeve, *Multiple monochromes* (2013). Installation views. Wellington City Gallery, Wellington.

Project 5: *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013–2014)**

Image 32 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013). Installation view. Place Gallery, Richmond. Photo: John Brash.**

Image 33 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013).**

Upper: Detail of work. Part of: *Disjunctive relations* **(001) (2013). Wall and floor installation, 2-channel**

sound composition. Composed for SolidDrive SD1-sm induction drivers, 2-channel DVD, DVD player,

amplifier, synthetic polymer pain on primed structural beech plywood, screws. Photo: John Brash.

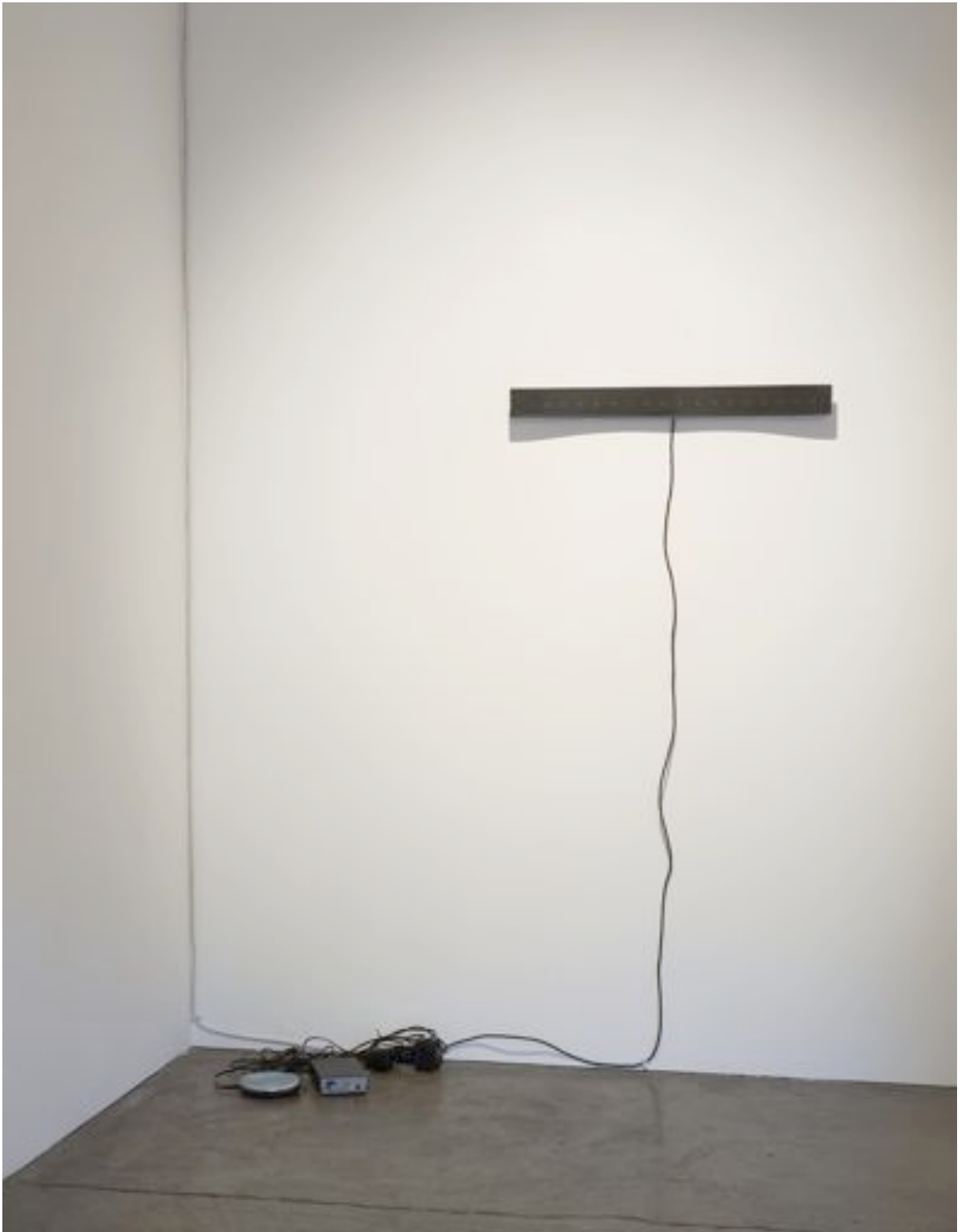**Lower: Installation view. Place Gallery, Richmond. Photo: John Brash.**

Image 34 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013). Detail:** *Conjunctive relations, audible (001)* **(2013). 2-channel sound composition. Composed for Brown Innovations SoundBeam SB30, MiniAmp, CD player, CD. Place Gallery, Richmond. Photo: John Brash.**

Image 35 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013). Detail:** *Conjunctive relations, audible (002)* **(2013). 1-channel sound composition. Composed for Panphonics SoundShower RS-232 with integrated amplifier, iPod, bracket. Place Gallery, Richmond. Photo: John Brash.**

Image 36 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* (2013). **Detail: *Conjunctive relations.*** Oil on linen. 1980 x 3190mm. Photo: John Brash.

Image 37 Project 5 Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013). Installation views. SNO Art Projects, Marrickville.**

Image 38 Project 5: Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* **(2013). Installation view. SNO Art Projects, Marrickville.**

Image 39 Project 5: Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* (2013). Installation view. SNO Art Projects, Marrickville.

Image 40 Project 5: Michael Graeve, *Conjunctive and disjunctive relations* (2013). Installation views. SNO Art Projects, Marrickville.