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Sonic peripheries : middling with/in the event

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SONIC PERIPHERIES **MIDDLELING WITH/IN THE EVENT**

PETRA KLUSMEYER

Sonic Peripheries: Middling With/In the Event

Proefschrift

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Prolegomena to Sonic Peripheries

The Prolegomena to Sonic Peripheries presents a summary of the thesis punctuated by additional commentary (in sans serif font). It begins with a brief outline of the background, questions, and objectives of this research; followed by the locating of the research in the fields of theory and art practice, identifying a gap in knowledge, and discussing its outcomes, including the relevance of the findings for artistic research, also referred to as research-creation, and cognate fields, such as sound studies and philosophy (more specifically, process philosophy, philosophical aesthetics, speculative pragmatism, and new materialism).

In laying out the above before the reader, I seek to provide added information on the context of the thesis, such as methodological choices made to undertake a search based on questions, and also hunches and intuitions which have led to surprising 'encounters', unexpected 'road-forks', and more questions on the way. Thus, here, I want to retrace aspects of the research and offer comments on select issues to elucidate on states of affairs where necessary.

That being said, this preliminary note resumes 'after the fact', that is, after the work has taken place. The 'prolegomena' – literally, *to say beforehand* – aims to position the work ahead and to act as a guiding backdrop or 'trompe-l'oeil' of the present thesis – here, the term *trompe-l'oeil* is deployed to suggest 'attention-to-detail', rather than 'trick-the-eye'. My intention then lies on creating *added* detail to an unfolding scenery, the conceptual tableau of the thesis that deliberately starts in the middle because sound *is* the middle. Sound is always already a middling of experience, a middling event that cannot be grasped nor situated as such. As I return to *this* beginning to speak of the future that is of the past, the

aim is now, however, to set in place, to explicate what might otherwise escape the critical eye when reading the thesis.

The research explores *what* and *how* sound *does* in certain art practices; it lends an ear to so-called ‘material-discursive’ events that come into expression as in/determined sonic occurrences. The research done in and through the arts attunes to the vibrational immanence that underlies all experience (following Deleuze’s naturalist ontology that conceives nature as autopoietic positive power). This view considers the sonic as a vibrational force and an affective, affirmative, albeit paradoxical event: oscillating between matter and matter mattering, intuited as intensive force and apprehended as ‘aesthetic figure’ through sensation. (The ‘paradoxical’ refers to sound as middling between ‘sense’ and ‘non-sense’; never quite this nor that, sound evades framing and naming, yet exists always already in and of [pure] experience.) This ambiguity or sense of betweenness is felt throughout the thesis and lies at the heart of the inquiry.

The research traces this *sense* of the between through curated exhibition-events featuring three distinct sonic art practices and one additional offshoot case. The experimental-performative nature of the artistic events under discussion create experiences made up of matter and (material-discursive) meaning, giving rise to *sonic occurrences* that are specific to their taking-shape in a given circumstance. This taking-shape occurs in and through sonic practices qua human and nonhuman agency; hence, the research investigates notions of nature-culture and nonhuman-human relations through the affects/effects of sound’s happening.

The questions this research asks follow from the above. How does a sonic artwork-performance bring about sensations that leave experiential traces that we neither know nor recognize as we encounter anew the vibrational flux from which im/material expression arises? (The flux or flow is conceived as a field of energies – a ‘virtuality’ in the Deleuzian sense.) How do the material condition

of a sonic artwork-performance (the content) and the ensuing sensation (the form of expression) co-emerge; how are they produced in one another? What is the role of the curator and the artist? What is the part of the audience? While doing the research, other questions followed that address the specifics of each case study and framed the conditions and procedures for gathering empirical materials and harnessing conceptual matters. However, the basic concern that informs every part of the research process is *in wonder of* what happens when sound happens as an aesthetic force. The emphasis of each query lies on the active occasion, the radical empiricism, the moment of encounter, *how* the sonic event comes to pass as aesthetic force creating specific semblances, resonances, or types of 'spaciousness *in-act*.'

The thesis has three main objectives. Firstly, it describes sonic art practice as experimental research and makes a case for curating such practices as a form of research; it positions this type of research as a contribution to new forms of knowledge and provides a resource for future research-creations and (reform of) evaluation practices. Secondly, it brings together philosophy and art to elaborate a genuine manner of working with sonic matter (mattering); it conceptualizes and materializes novel ways of thinking, and creates a case for writing itself as practice and curating/producing art as theory; that is, it seeks to practice what it theorizes and vice versa. Thirdly, it advocates a certain transformation of self that lets us side-step ourselves, intervene and invent possible worlds or future fabulations as the offshoot case shows. Practicing a process-oriented exploration complexifies as it advances; it creates resonances between theory and practice, between audience and sound art, between the written thesis – inclusive of presented artifacts – and the reader. It wants *not* to reduce but foster awareness of the ongoing complexity of life.

The rundown above frames the primary aspects of the research, i.e., the ontological premise of sound in this context; what I was hoping to achieve in and through sonic practice (via curating and my own art practice – more on this

below); and what the written part of the thesis has to offer to the fields of research-creation and philosophy more generally (more on this, too, below). Before turning to the conceptual framework of the research, let me take a moment to shed light on what the written part of the thesis does *not* show but is present between the lines. My reason for digressing on what is allegedly absent is to address the peculiar problem of making choices.

The Introduction discusses the incentive behind the research, the 'why(s)' of what is to come. It also states the 'conundrum' of the sonic itself that has compelled the search towards questioning the very notion of sense (here, with a nod towards the 'gap in knowledge'). The many more 'whys' that developed from the research, the new questions, the 'road-forks' taken are not outright listed in the thesis but can be discovered in the research documentation. One significant 'choice' thus made, has been the pursuit of bringing the research on sonic practice and writing together **as not to make sense of one another but to create sense** (as in 'no-sense' and sensation, see the chapter titled 'Experiment 1'). This decision has essentially led to a careful selection of what 'data' to include in the 'write-up' (in contrast to all that was excluded from it). Suffice to say, there is a lot more to the research than what meets the eye of the reader. So, what lies between the thesis lines can be found **online** – here, in the form of the so-called 'Research Blog' (of which I talk in Part Two in the chapter 'SP Performative Encounter'). Also, make a note of the choice made to differentiate between the research blog and the addendum to the thesis (see the chapter 'Apropos Online Addendum'). The former tries to be both a research journal and the archive of the project, albeit non-public. The latter – as an integral part of the thesis – serves as a hub for materials from the case studies; there, I exhibit a selection of archived (sonic) artworks, photos, and other noteworthy documents to create reader experiences relevant in the situations under review.

Research Blog

<https://pklusmeyer.wordpress.com>

Username: cartomythographer

Password: sonicperipheries

Upcoming, the discussion turns to the archive to comment also on details concerning my artistic practice and the collaborative aspect in working

the cases; to point the reader to some facts on the conduct of research and ethics in this context; and to reflect on the 'whys' and the role of the participants (audience). But first things first.

The research employs a transdisciplinary methodology (understood to mean here to draw from across disciplines and resources – i.e., philosophical and artistic) to accommodate the above by creating research strategies that allow for the encounter with unknown unknowns (what we don't know we don't know); to develop new means for the unlocking of what possibly can be known from the unknown (make the *ambiguous*, the indecipherable in linguistic terms, 'palpable' through invention – invention meant on the part of the participant alongside the sonic artwork-performance). The work undertaken forges a research-practice that shows affinity with art research and speculative philosophy, thus positioning the thesis in both spectrums. It draws from various philosophical resources, chiefly Deleuze and Whitehead, and engages with wider debates on sonic materialism, speculative pragmatism, and nonrepresentational methodologies. It weaves together what derives from the research exploration: artifacts, sensations, meanings, and interpretations to engender the thesis' own *poetics* and native concepts.

What is meant here by 'poetics' is the rethinking of writing in its proximity to sonic practice to provoke affective assemblages – a 'po-ethics'; a writing that enacts what sonic practices do, i.e., creating sensations and 'intoning a tune' of sonic thought. **Po-ethics**, thus, is an ethics in the Spinozan sense charged with the poetics of a sonic practice to open an affirmative-productive space in the reader's encounter with the written text. As said above, the search for the unknown-unknowns, among other things, forges affinity with artistic research and speculative philosophy, sliding between one and the other. Hence, the research constructs a logic that enfolds, embraces, and lives the very notion of the between, i.e., oscillating between disciplines and the

writing's sliding with making. Given this, it seems only apt, and even necessitates that the written thesis deviates from the social sciences' and humanities' conventional (writing) models. (The kinship this research does have with the social sciences and humanities is outlined in the next summary part). However, to deviate does not mean to neglect. This is to say that the thesis draws links to several theorists/artists who contribute to the debates on 'sonic materialism', 'sonic thought', 'speculative realism/pragmatism', and 'Deleuzianism' in the broadest sense. It deploys a synthesis of resources (from practice and theory) that brings about a 'practical aesthetics' – the new, the unexpected originates in the combination of materials. It also identifies a **gap in knowledge** (cf. above, 'non-sense'), yet not spelled out, as in 'this is the gap ...'; here indeed lies the gap the reader should mind. Precisely because this thesis is a middling of practice and research, I hope that the reading of the thesis becomes a middling event, a po-ethics, in its own right.

There is a kinship between this research and the methodologies known to the humanities and social sciences, e.g., (post)phenomenological, ethnographic, hermeneutic, heuristic, and speculative approaches. I have worked with basically three methods: (a) methods informed by continental philosophy and/or speculative metaphysics; (b) methods from social sciences (questionnaires, interviews); and (c) methods from the arts and/or hard sciences (experimentation in/through the Performance Encounter activity).

The curator-led intervention called 'Performative Encounter' is a bespoke method that I developed in/through the research (in part as co-research with the featured artists, more on this soon). The question this tailored approach seeks to accommodate is how to create situations that provide the research participants (audience) with the 'appropriate' tools to probe into sonic events (and their effect/affects). The Performative Encounter (PE) activity was deployed in all three art exhibition-events titled *Sonic Peripheries* (SP).

Each PE activity frames specific aspects relevant to the SP case under study: The first case SP#5, featuring the sound/media artist David Strang, explores vibrational (sonic) ecology more generally. The second case SP#6, presenting the artist and composer Shawn Decker, is concerned with nature 'unforeheard', discerning 'soundspace' in the making. The third case SP#7 with the artist/musician Stephen Lacy investigates image to sound relations, auscultating (Lat. *auscultare*, 'listen to') the *between* of image to sound, listener to space, and sense to non-sense relations.

The PEs are comprised of a set of directives ('Encounters' and 'Prompts'), a map of the gallery and nearby vicinity, a questionnaire, and a consent form. (From the outset, I informed the public about the research, and it was made clear that their participation was voluntary; anybody could partake in the event's activity without taking part in the case study. More on this in the chapter 'SP Performative Encounter' where the reader can also find a link to review the questionnaires and consent forms.)

The PEs work in twofold ways: (a) they create an entry point for the listener/spectator to participate in research-creation, and (b) they serve as a device/'ploy' to apprehend sonic experience and translate the *traces* of this experience (i.e., effects/affects) into various forms of material expression: drawings/diagrams, words, narratives, audiovisual recordings, audio recordings, and other invented means. The PE outcomes (incl. questionnaire and interview responses) served me as a basis for follow up interviews and as a source for the uptake on future 'anarchiving' (more on the concept of the 'anarchive' and its significance to this research-creation in my next commentary).

The questionnaire presents an integral part of the PE activity – next to the Encounter (as the frame for the experimentation on site) and the Prompts (as a direction or 'nudge' towards specific kinds of action). Each questionnaire contains (a) an iterative set of semi-open questions (to inquire into time-/space-related experiences) and (b) a distinct set of semi-open questions (to inquire into

the coming of/to sonic experiences/occurrences specific to the particular case). (Here, 'semi-open' questions means to obtain both a specific answer – choose between 'yes', 'no', or 'not applicable' – and a text answer.)

Finally, the PE activity as artistic research device – including the follow-up interview – enacts a strategy that originates in and through my research. This plan/research strategy was diligently and rigorously put into practice. The reader should note that I have adhered to the ethical standards of the social sciences and humanities in the conduct of this research.

Following the case studies, my analysis of the written, verbal, diagrammatic, or other empirical materials uses a distinct approach that, too, emerged from the research practice. In the heuristic-based and interpretative-led reading of the data, I was looking/listening for patterns, rhythms, and resonances in and between the research findings to extract conceptual threads. That is, to 'create concepts' (after Deleuze) in the anticipation of constructing a sonic philosophy that not only wants to theorize/speculate about and through sonic experiences but also invoke sonic occurrences through the writing (more on the latter in the upcoming commentary).

Now to my role as researcher, artist, and curator in this 'adventure'. Indeed, I also refer to this research effort as **adventure** because in many respects it became an odyssey of 'events' – some wondrous, some productive, and some daring. And yes, in many respects **Sonic Peripheries** is my adventure – as discussed in the Introduction – but one to which I invited others to partake in (hoping to suspend the solipsistic tendency of [my own] artistic research). To call this research 'adventure' is not a stylistic quip but corresponds with Alfred North Whitehead's notion of (quest into) what philosophy and art might be capable of. He says that art derives from adventure (1933/1967, p. 293), and also states that philosophy begins in wonder and when all is said and done, the wonder remains (1938/1968, p. 168). Another point Whitehead makes (one

that I take to heart) is to be mindful of experience in the making: "Have a care, here is something that matters! Yes – that is the best phrase – the primary glimmering of consciousness reveals something that matters" (ibid., p. 116). His proposition (note the exclamation mark) – plus 'adventure', plus 'wonder' – is encapsulated in the present thesis, the ethico-aesthetic synthesis of sonic practices, curation, philosophy, and audience participation at play here. Those three aspects (and 'moral ingredients' of care and concernedness) are the guiding principles to this ad/venture that inform the roles I played and the position I take in how I played them out.

In this research, my part envelopes different roles fulfilling particular functions that inform one another, that is, operate in a kind of entanglement with one another and with other associated (human and nonhuman) actors. Here, I see myself foremost as the researcher and theorist, followed closely by (and inseparable from) the artist and curator. Depending on the stage in the research process, the weight of the roles, i.e., how they influenced/shaped the ongoing venture varied in degree. As the thesis shows, the curator, that is, I in **co-research** with the invited artists lay the groundwork for the case studies.

The reader might ask now, why curating and why co-research? This goes back to the above issue of choices: Firstly, as will be discussed in the Introduction, this research grows out of an artistic series on contemporary sounding art that I initiated some years ago. To then employ curating as means to investigate sound is to me, (a) a pragmatic choice to broaden my (sonic-philosophical) practice, and (b) the decision to further explore the material and conceptual 'peripheries' of sound in expanded art practices – as prefigured in the title of the series. Secondly, to call the work undertaken with the artist 'co-research' seems only just. (I might even go so far as to suggest that nearly any form of research is co-research. Here I think of what Karan Barad posits through her philosophy of agential realism, namely that "[p]ractices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated" [Barad 2007, p. 185].

As such, a researcher-researched relation is less clear-cut and separated as may be assumed in the first place.)

Co-research has taken place in the first phase of the casework – generally to establish the objectives for the particular case. The sonic artwork-performance that has developed from there is the outcome of the artist’s exploration – aside from the last case with Stephen Lacy; here, Lacy and I extended our collaborative effort to include my making art – then also exhibited as part of SP#7. (The latter development is what I mean by ‘offshoot’. Because of the previous art-collaborative project, I then forged another **offshoot case** – as mentioned right at the outset of this text – that operated under the aegis of this research but independent from the previous case studies. This case I discuss in part in the Introduction, in the chapter ‘SP Performative Encounter’, and at length in Part Four of this thesis.)

Research Ethics

The terms of the research conduct were disclosed right from the start of co-research. The rights and obligations of the parties involved were addressed in the research proposal which was reviewed and approved by the university ethics committee.

What the reader can probably tell by now is that my research has been an interwoven/complex venture in which my involvement as curator was of import but perhaps less interesting to me in the long run. That is to say, while researching, my role as researcher, facilitator, and ‘distant’ observer moved further towards the artist, explorer, and philosopher role – especially with regards to my part as/function of the carto-mytho-grapher in Part Four.

Again, some of the intricacies that went into the formation of this research are addressed in the thesis but do not take center stage. Taken that the thesis might be atypical (in the sense discussed above concerning the deviation from certain norms), it does present a methodology chapter and provides information on the artistic series and the Performative Encounter activity – both in Part Two. (I will give a brief overview of the distinct thesis structure shortly.)

A few words on the so-called **carto-mytho-grapher** before turning to the archive/anarchive connection. The carto-mytho-grapher is a form of fictioning (pace Simon O’Sullivan) or fabulation, thus the neologism. ‘I’ as researcher wanted to explore the notion of side-stepping my assumed role and take up a meta-perspective by inventing ‘the sojourner’ (after Henry David Thoreau) – this is how the Catskills come in, namely as a ‘quasi-Walden’. When applying to the Catwalk Art Residency (Hudson Valley, NY), I proposed I would investigate **sonic thinking** via a ‘perceptual mannerism’ (another neologism; more on the purpose of word inventions below) – i.e., to set out to cultivate contemplation, listening, and writing, and to engage in the sonic ecology of the grounds and the Catskill mountains. It was my playful attempt to encounter ‘nature’ (the very notion of the latter, what it means exactly, is not uncontested – this, I problematize in Part Four, but within limits). The link then to the previous research as ‘Sonic Peripheries’ lies in **aesthetics** – that is, in Whitehead’s philosophy of ‘pure feeling’ and his take on beauty (as a wider and more fundamental notion than truth (1933/1967, p. 265). So, beauty or the beautiful is something I wanted to (aesthetically) encounter (in a bucolic rather than urban environs). The encounter with beauty connects in my view to the **marking of temporality** (also a question of the ‘making of time’) and the instance of beauty – the **ah-aha!** – in and through experience. I wanted to discern the instant of the particular (sonic) occurrence – ‘capturing’ and transposing the **something** in and of experience using techniques like drawing, frottaging, field recording, etc. This exploration thus includes the visual, i.e., ocular alongside cochlear aspects in the taking-shape of experiential eventness. Finally, “[n]ature is that which we observe in perception through our senses” – this Whiteheadian key phrase from *The Concept of Nature* (1920, p. 3) leads the carto-myth-grapher’s lay of the land of sonic occurrences.

Briefly, neologisms such as the ‘carto-mytho-grapher’, ‘perceptual mannerism’, ‘factual-fictional’, ‘pragmatic-magics’, among others, have the function

to offer concepts (singularities) where, following Deleuze's style of thinking, "[s]ense is not what is manifestly said or denoted; it is what is opened through denotation" (Colebrook 2010c, p. 3). That is to say, in creating new terminology, I seek to resound what lies immanent to sound as event. For example, a word combination like 'factual-fictional energies' exists provisionally to create new connections, new ways of seeing, hearing, or here 'thinking-feeling' (Massumi's coinage) the lively in sonic events; the **factual-fictional** should point the reader to the potential inherent in the occasioning itself – as the life dynamic that it is, the potential of being 'the feeling of what happens', which Brian Massumi (2011) discusses with regard to the imperceptible, the virtuality or 'pure potentiality' underlying all experiences (see Part One, Chapter 'Thinking Sound').

I turn now to the archive of the project aka **Research Blog**, followed by my take on Manning et al.'s anarchive. The blog (see callout titled 'Research Blog' for name and password to the restricted site) contains the documentation of the research: photo, video, and audio materials plus various other (reproductions of) artifacts are archived online to assume the form of a 'research journal', including interview transcripts, quotations, freewriting, miscellaneous ideas or any other (seemingly) significant data gathered during the research for future reference. Of import to the reader in this context is the option to peruse the materials and trace some aspects of the thesis back to their source; here I think for instance of the many hours of **transcribed interviews** (some available in the original audio version). In the thesis itself, I speak of the research blog in Part Two (in one of the footnotes), but since the purpose of this prolegomena is to assist the reader in accessing content (and meaning) of the thesis more easily, my intention is to open this possibility right here in this add-on to the thesis (see callout titled 'Re: SP Interviews');

Re: SP Interviews

SP#5 <https://bit.ly/2DGFqiN>

SP#6 <https://bit.ly/2UVd4Hi>

SP#7 <https://bit.ly/2vxdCcs>

this also goes for the aforementioned addendum. The '**Online Addendum**', as previously pointed out, contains selected materials from the case studies. The selection connects directly to those parts in the thesis

Online Addendum

<http://sonicperipheries.petraklismeyer.com>

to illustrate situations or make emblematic where words might fail to convey the particular situatedness of the event/episode under discussion.

As said before, I was seeking patterns, rhythms, and resonances in and between the empirical materials to distill instances that point towards sonic occurrences or semblances of 'something' occasioning in and of experience (also referred to as 'more-than' or the 'otherwise', see Part Three). In the thesis, I present intermittently select questionnaire responses and interview excerpts as to call into play distinct voices that **intone**, as it were, **sonic thinking**; they bear witness to aesthetic encounters and describe or poeticize experiences emerging from these encounters. For example, at the start of the thesis – namely in 'A Roadmap Towards Sonic Occurrence' – I begin the chapter with three episodes that speak of individual experiences of *Sonic Peripheries* participants. Each lived experience originates in the entanglement with a sonic artwork-performance and marks the so-called **more-than of the event**. For instance, the third episode describes an unfolding scene to which I inject listener replies that demonstrate a specificity of the event, that is – as the following example will show – a poeticized equation of an incipient sound-space: "Amp sound plus guitar sound plus room sound plus listener position: That's the equation!" (Black 2013). The description of the first episode, on the other hand, refers to an interview (as follow-up to the questionnaire) which I conducted post art-event. Of particular interest here is the participant's imaginative response to the question in the context of 'thinking-feeling' sensations (cf. Massumi 2011). She offers: "I can feel a change. [Here, the insert of her scribbles/hand-drawn diagram, followed by:] I can sometimes feel a light tickle on my imaginary skull" (Radovic 2012). This 'image', or rather singularity of

thinking-sound, I then re-figured into the 'tickle-and-skull' trope of the thesis. I endeavor to claim that my appropriation does justice to the original statement; it seeks to encapsulate a recurrent theme in which experience is a change ap/prehended as the slide between perception and thought, the feedback and feed-forward between the limits, enfolding the not-yet-thought and unfolding future-thought. This is one of several propositions the thesis puts forth (and the research has explored throughout). Radovic's written, verbal, and diagrammatic account thus singularizes the "eventfulness in art" (Massumi 2011, p. 82) and also demonstrates the link between aesthetic encounters as the catalyst for thinking-sound and the pinning down of sonorous forces into occurrences where the more-than (as the ineffable) is felt.

The point I want to make here is twofold. Firstly, my use of empirical materials as described above should not be mistaken as a cursory flourish to spice up the thesis; instead, the incentive is to find 'traces' that are "carriers of potential" (Manning 2017, p. 12). The 'exemplars' are thus not only placeholders for something (which in turn speaks of something else). Rather, they also trigger a potential inherent to the taking account of an experiential event that might launch future events; in fact, they have triggered an **eventfulness in writing-art** – here I mean my writing through art derivatives as can be seen in Part Three. Secondly, the derivatives from the research turn operative in the sense advocated by Manning et al. in their call for "making practice a *process-making engine*" (ibid., p. 13; italics in original). The gist of the **anarchival approach** and the tie-in to my endeavor lies then also in the reconsidering of methods – indeed problematizing methods as "happy simplification" (Whitehead 1933/1967, p. 221) more generally (see Part Two, Chapter 'Research into Sonic Art Practices').

To the reader this might not be obvious at once, wondering why I find discussing methodology is *not* without complication. In the hope of clarifying this point and not undermining all that I said above on bespoke methods, I will

say that indeed the research is practice-led, yet at the same time presents a philosophical investigation into sonic occurrences with a twist. The idiosyncrasy lies in middling itself as a technique that wants to elude a methodological stronghold – that is, if the latter means framing the work according to academia’s conventional criteria concerning knowledge and its production. The knowledge crafted here (**as the middling of practice and research**) lies in producing an event of writing to invigorate the anarchival force of the sonic artworks and art events’ derivatives; namely then, when ‘anarchiving’ is understood as an attunement to what escapes the archive but nonetheless affects **the** (experiential) **event’s capacity to activate new sonic occurrences**.

With all this said, I want to turn now to the thesis’ structure before closing the Prolegomena with a round-up of the main research findings. A more detailed outline of the chapters can be found in the Introduction, Chapter ‘A Roadmap Towards Sonic Occurrence’.

The thesis is structured in four parts – with respective chapters that pertain to the specifics of that part – following a tripartite Introduction that lays out the incentive behind and objectives of the research. This Introduction provides the reader with ‘a roadmap towards sonic occurrences’, i.e., it gives an overview of each chapter and informs about the online addendum as part of the thesis. Part One considers the concept of middling in and with the event of sound’s occasioning, and explores the encounter with the sonic by drawing on case examples; its gist lies in the experience of ‘the between’, living the relation connecting one experience to the next, one occurrence to another. Part Two looks critically and ‘po-ethically’ at what research into sonic art practices might mean and what it can do. It describes the *Sonic Peripheries* (SP) artistic series – SP#5 (Strang), SP#6 (Decker), and SP#7 (Lacy) – and discusses the SP Performative Encounter activity in the chapter under the same name. Part Three enacts what the research does through theory-practice entanglements: it wants to push the

thesis to the *unlimit*, i.e., create fabulatory accounts that speak of middling with/in the event, and *reinvoke* the sense of betweenness that comes to matter; it ties a conceptual knot with Manning et al.'s 'anarchive'. Part Four presents the offshoot case, the philosophically inspired 'poesis'/discussion on 'kairos' and its (aesthetic) experiment: *How is Nature; An Event. Image. Writing. Works in progress (process)*. The chapter titled 'Refrain: Middling With/In the Event' (not a final part in a strict sense) recapitulates aspects of the research and 'cross-stitches' the conceptual threads, as to create a closing, albeit an open image of thought. The Postscript, a final note or fabulation, leaves us 'a grin without a carto-mytho-grapher' (meant as a nod towards *Alice in Wonderland* and towards 'haecceity', the *thisness* of the Event as relations of movement and rest, oscillation and speed, in short, a sonic occurrence).

In alignment with the research questions (as point of entry to the inquiry) and the objectives above, the research findings are as follows. The curated art events produce original sonic performances and artworks. Also, and essential to this type of research-creation, the one-off experimental feature of these events present the condition for the curator-led and audience-based exploration of experiences through aesthetic encounters. This approach allowed individuals to explore sound's ambiguity in a playful and heuristic manner – inviting new insights into sound's happening as a material, conceptual and '(al)luring' phenomenon. This research path incited new knowledge – embodied, non-conceptual knowings that in turn provoked materialized occurrences of so-called 'fugacious expression' of the sonic. The latter neologism is a placeholder for when matter comes to matter, when the 'more-than' of vibrational force – as a *specific thisness* of the event – translates into physical shape (i.e., when understood to mean that traces of the qualitatively thisness individuate/actualize into some form or another; e.g., see Fig. 1 of Part Three). The performative power of the

productive encounter with and disclosure of the unknown/‘unforeheard’ lures the thinking towards a critical perspective of what is and what might become.

This reflective yet unfinished thinking together with the research derivatives create a ripple effect for future thought in motion that surpasses the archive and moves towards sound’s anarchiving – deploying writing practice. The relevance of this outcome lies in the process of moving sonic thinking not to an endpoint but to keep the thinking sidling along a *feeling-understanding* continuum. Whitehead’s philosophy of ‘pure feeling’ informs the research just as the written part of this thesis informs the reader that pure feeling and understanding are not opposing ends, thus bringing into question an affect-reason dichotomy. This stance can also be felt throughout the offshoot case. The research thus wants to advocate a nuanced relationship to knowledge – in the arts and sciences more generally.

The sonic’s distinct being, or rather becoming as always already resounding the between, brings forth concepts which offer fresh perspectives for/on philosophical aesthetics and new materialism(s). The concepts (and provisional neologisms) that have developed from the research – ‘middling with/in the event’, ‘fugacious expression’, ‘perceptual mannerism’, among others – speak distinctively of the event’s more-than human soundings that render theory-practice entanglements meaningful. That is, they make discrete, felt, and understood what is otherwise in flux. This research thus invented methods to encounter the ineffable as much as it seeks to problematize methodologies that aim to objectify the ineffable (and its effects). That said, the thesis brings writing and sonic practice together such that writing itself becomes a practice; and sonic practice becomes a kind of writing when understood in the sense of leaving a trace, of inscribing/being inscribed as middling between the sensuous and sense (also via the enactment of a perceptual mannerism). The written parts of the thesis as scientific ‘(ad)venture’ presents an open-endedness that aspires to entice the critical reader into thinking/feeling the ambiguity of sound’s occurrence; it upholds an ethico-

aesthetics that is never applied without rigor. The thesis thus proposes a way: an alternative reasoning through which to consider what research-creation can mean and what it can mean to do, how theory informs practice and how practice speaks back to theory and vice versa.

The research deliberately *sounds across* art research, sound studies, and philosophy to trigger sympathetic resonances and amplify the ethos the written project engenders. *Sonic Peripheries: Middling With/in the Event* is offered as a contribution to the fields of knowledge across these disciplines.

In closing the Prolegomena, I want to remind of Whitehead's saying: "Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains" (1938/1968, p. 168). I hope that with the thesis (to come) I have done my best to incite a wonder towards sound events, sonic practices, and thinking-sound more broadly. I also hope that this preliminary note/commentary provides the reader with a helpful guide to this adventure, including its experimental (speculative) flights and the artistic (empirical) landings, to ensure – at best – to not lose sight of the wonder ahead.

Introduction

THE (AD)VENTURE

Art is an issue of Adventure.¹

Alfred North Whitehead

No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time.²

Lewis Carroll

Can you discern the impatient tone? The Gryphon demanding of Alice to give an account of her adventures – all of it! at once! – decidedly against the Mock Turtle's wish for explanations. Those who have read the tale *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll will understand that explanations and common sense don't necessarily coincide. What is to be expected when meeting a White Rabbit with pink eyes, splendidly dressed with a waistcoat, a pair of white gloves and holding a pocket watch to boot?

“‘Well, I never heard it before,’ said the Mock Turtle; ‘but it sounds uncommon nonsense’” (Carroll 1865/1993, p. 104).

Talking of this volume, what I hope for is to take you on an adventure into *Sonic Peripheries*, a Wonderland (excuse the pun) of *sound* and *art research*;

¹ Whitehead, A.N. 1933/1967. *Adventures of Ideas*. New York: The Free Press, p. 293.

² Carroll, L. 1865/1993. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, p. 103.

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and give some explanations in and over time. The impatience is partly mine: Where to begin? What to tell the reader in order to create *sense* – in both meanings of the term; in other words, how to create and recreate a sonic experience? Recount a research journey and problematize the findings? Give descriptions of research events, more precisely, curated art events that address questions about the sonic? Not quite – not yet, in any case. Let's use this space here, for the time being, to allow for a glimpse down the rabbit hole; that is to say, to describe the incentive behind this research done in and through art practice, and to speak of sound's nature as affective and paradoxical occurrence, which, all along, has been the driving force for this inquiry.

Onto the adventures.

My earliest *aesthetic encounter* with sound took place during a 1980s *Peel Session*. English radio presenter, journalist and disc jockey John Peel was known to present eclectic musics outside the mainstream. On a late afternoon, which day exactly I cannot recall, he featured the German industrial band *Einstürzende Neubauten*. Twiddling with the knobs for hope of better reception, I was sitting in my teenage bedroom and listened to the signals coming in through the ether.³ The band's name in English translation, 'collapsing new buildings', literally points to their 'trademark sound', the noise emitted by custom-built instruments – exactly what you would expect to hear on any construction site: banging on metal plates and chains. Aside from that fact, what's mainly memorable about this occasion was *the awareness of sound as such* that this cacophony inspired in me. The fidelity of the transmission was low, yet the atmosphere sizzled; hearing static *noihsshzs* ... the word "*SehhhhnsuchT*" ... *strikingly* sputtered by the lead

³ The term *ether* should be read as a poetic figure rather than a matter of fact since its existence is long disproved.

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vocalist, musician, writer Blixa Bargeld, followed by a distinct bass guitar pulse, guttural screeEEEEchh ... and the lyrics to 'Sehnsucht' (*Kollaps*, 1981):

Sehnsucht / Desire
kommt aus dem Chaos / comes out of chaos
Sehnsucht / desire
Sehnsucht / desire
ist die einzige Energie / is the only energy
meine Sehnsucht / my desire
meine Sucht / my addiction
Sehnsucht / desire
ist die einzige Energie / is the only energy.⁴

I want to believe that this experience struck a chord with me that still resounds. *Desire, chaos, energy*. Sound! Desire “comes out of chaos,” he spouts; it arises out of an infinite, a force-field from which it explicates. Whether tacit or roaring, this *wild* intensity churns in the form of an affirmative material flow, de-individualized as such. The lyrics fuse with the noisy backdrop of radio fuzz and percussive beats on steel. The words undulate between sense and nonsense; namely, escape meaning and turn into raw expression – a Joycean “chaos-cosmos” (Deleuze 1969/1990, p. xiii) from which *sounds* emerge. Thus sound aligns with desire when understood as affective intensity, since both originate from chaos as energetic fluxion, a creative progression from matter to mattering. *Alas*, signification?! There is no escaping from representation, is there? Let’s endeavor to suggest that sound occupies a space that sits *between* oppositions. *Neither this nor that* – a double negation that produces a condition for ‘paradoxical affirmation’: It is neither resolve nor escape from a *problematic locus* but

⁴ Bargeld, B. & Einstürzende Neubauten. 1997. *Headcleaner: Text für Einstürzende Neubauten* = *Text for Collapsing New Buildings*. Berlin: Die Gestalten Verlag, pp. 220–21.

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rather a productive encounter that affords novelty.⁵ (Indeed this claim will need further explanation in due time.)

Can we say anything about what the term 'sound' means? There are a number of artists, scientists, and philosophers who have explored various ways of thinking about sound. My concern in what follows lies especially in what was said over the past half-century. For example, Christoph Cox writes in *Audio Culture*, "The academy has witnessed an explosion of interest in auditory history and anthropology led by social scientists who have turned their attention to sound as a marker of temporal and cultural difference" (2004, p. xiii);⁶ and continues elsewhere, "'sound' has gradually displaced 'music' as an object of cultural fascination" (Cox 2006, p. 1).⁷ Clearly, across diverse disciplines and (artistic) practices, Cox, Douglas Kahn, Jonathan Sterne, among others, see an increase in the debate on the sonic – what it *represents, does, entails*.⁸ I will discuss some

⁵ When asking the question, What can we hear?, or What does it mean?, we are presented with centuries of 'cultural baggage' that comes with "the language that we use to describe sound and hearing" (Sterne 2003, p. 10). I aspire to think sound apart from human audition, even if a separation (emancipation) seems 'unthinkable' – as Jonathan Sterne points out in *The Audible Past* (2003, p. 11): "We treat sound as a natural phenomenon exterior to people, but its very definition is anthropocentric." See Sterne, J. 2003. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham: Duke University Press.

⁶ There are several publication that deal with various aspects of auditory culture. See for instance: Bull, M. & Back, L. eds. 2003. *The Auditory Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg Publishers; Cobussen, M. et al. eds. 2016. *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*. New York: Routledge; Erlmann, V. 2004. *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening and Modernity*. Oxford: Berg Publishers; Sterne, J. 2012. *The Sound Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

⁷ Take for instance the *Journal of Sonic Studies* (founding editors Marcel Cobussen and Vincent Meelberg) as exemplar for advocating multidisciplinary research by artists and theorists, which seeks to contribute to a rethinking of the relation between acoustics and society. See e.g. Cobussen, M. & Meelberg, V. 2011. Reflections on Sonic Environments. *Journal of Sonic Studies*, Vol. 1. [Online] Available at: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/166023/166040> [Accessed: 12 May 2019].

⁸ Not only did the above-mentioned theorists identify an increase in the debate, they themselves fuel the nascent field of sound studies with aspects ranging from philosophical speculations to socio-political concerns of the sonic. What follows are theorists and artists that informed this project but are in

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aspects of this discourse later on. However, at present we return to my initial concern and look to Kahn whose “*Noise, Water, Meat* (1999) was seminal in initiating the ‘sonic turn’” (Ikoniadou 2014, p. 4). His definition of sound goes as follows:

By *sound* I mean *sounds, voices, and aurality* – all that might fall within our touch on auditive phenomena, whether this involves actual sonic or auditive events or ideas about sound or listening; sounds actually heard or heard in myth, idea, or implication; sounds heard by everyone or imagined by one person alone; or sounds as they fuse with the sensorium as a whole. (Kahn 1999, p. 3; italics in original)

Although I am inclined to subscribe to Kahn's interpretation, something is amiss. That is to say, the focus is anthropocentric, a stance which regards the world in terms of human values and experiences. This, I would argue, places little import on considering sonic *alterity* ‘outside’ the human mind. Although Kahn allows thinking *about* sound (and listening) as conceptual figures. This, however, does not conjure sound as *something* that exceeds (human) consciousness. I want to advocate a *thinking sound* that allows for its existence to be independent of auditory perception in the human and nonhuman, which then positions the argument amid a speculative, ethico-aesthetic, and transdisciplinary framework, in short, a new materialist paradigm. It is a thinking that acknowledges sound as vibratory force, or in the words of Sterne, it is “a little piece of the vibrating

part not listed under References. This limited selection (in alphabetical order) is by no means comprehensive and should be taken as complementary to and in support of my general claim above: Jacques Attali, Steven Connor, Marcel Cobussen, David Dunn, Frances Dyson, Kodwo Eshun, Steven Feld, Paul Hegarty, Don Ihde, Allan Kaprow, Robert Morris, Max Neuhaus, Pauline Oliveros, Andrea Polli, Luigi Russolo, Pierre Schaeffer, Emily Thompson, Barry Truax, Salomé Voegelin, Allen Weiss, Hildegard Westerkamp.

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world” (2003, p. 11). Hence, to ask what sound defines is problematic insofar that such *occasioning* by nature, in my view, remains ambiguous and discursively indeterminable. Nonetheless, to inquire into the paradoxical complexion of sound in relation to artistic practices is the (ad)venture of the present thesis.⁹

To begin with an epistemological question, namely, What can we know about the sonic?, should presuppose another set of questions pertaining to (i) the ontological status of ‘this little piece of the vibrating world’, and (ii) what this particular world does; or put otherwise, “not *what* something is, but how it is – or more precisely, *how* it affects, and how it is affected by, other things” (Shaviro 2009, p. 56; italics in original). The latter concern brings us to mathematician-philosopher Alfred North Whitehead by way of Steven Shaviro’s book *Without Criteria* (2009). Shaviro presents a re-reading of Whitehead’s “theory of feelings” in conjunction with Immanuel Kant and Gilles Deleuze in the overall context of a radical experimental attempt to rethink postmodern aesthetic theory. According to him, Whitehead’s aesthetics are both the “immanent criterion for order” and the mark of “our *concern* for the world, and for entities in the world;” as such, placing aesthetics “at the center of philosophical inquiry.” However, this is not to

⁹ It is perhaps a sign of the times that by the end of writing this dissertation, theorists such as Bernd Herzogenrath in *Sonic Thinking* and Christoph Cox in *Realism Materialism Art*, for instance, advocate ideas similar to those presented here where sonic art practices enact what I call theory-practice entanglements: a reciprocal interfusion of philosophy and art research. See Herzogenrath, B. ed. 2017. *Sonic Thinking: A Media Philosophical Approach*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic; Cox, C. et al. eds. 2015. *Realism Materialism Art*. Berlin: Sternberg Press. Also of specific interest is the research of Marcel Cobussen, Professor of Auditory Culture and Music Philosophy at Leiden University (the Netherlands) and the Orpheus Institute in Ghent (Belgium). His work shows, among other things, the relevance of artistic research and the artists’ responsibility in “rais[ing] awareness, to become more conscious and to increase our knowledge of the sonic world that surrounds us” – with the incentive of “contribut[ing] to an improvement of those environments, of these in-between atmospheres [in the Gernot Böhman sense] (Cobussen 2016, pp. 8, 9). See Cobussen, M. 2016. Towards a ‘New’ Sonic Ecology. Inaugural lecture, Leiden University. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/44578> [Accessed: 21 May 2018]; also Cobussen, M. 2014. Towards an Ethical-Political Role for Artistic Research. In D. Crispin & B. Gilmore eds. *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp. 83–89.

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say that *Sonic Peripheries* develops an analysis of a 'critical aestheticism' (Shaviro's term) – rather aspires to explore both Whitehead and Deleuze's non-phenomenological affect theory in relation to sonic art encounters. To conclude this thought, I should like to add that my reason for turning to *Without Criteria* rests on the fact that Shaviro's exposition made Whitehead's philosophy accessible to me, whilst at the same time connecting the dots for me to the other two thinkers. In later chapters, I will have the occasion to turn the respective philosophers directly as well as introduce other theorists, such as Brian Massumi and Erin Manning, and Karen Barad, among others, with the intention of problematizing the above-mentioned onto-epistemological concerns. (The term *onto-epistemology* originates with Barad [2003, 2007], theoretical physicist and feminist scholar.) As a final note here, let me make plain that sound as a *term* does not *mean* much to me; in other words, as an artist-theorist with a concern for sound (and the sonic arts), I seek to conceptualize the occasioning of vibrational force, thereby endeavoring to promote a Deleuzian approach of a '*doing* philosophy' upon which I will elaborate shortly.

Listen!¹⁰

If you blot out sense and sound – what do you hear?¹¹

Let's assume nothing.¹²

¹⁰ Here also I refer to sound artist Max Neuhaus's seminal project '*LISTEN*' from 1976. See Neuhaus, M. n.d. Walks. *Max Neuhaus*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/vectors/walks/LISTEN/> [Accessed 21 May 2018].

¹¹ This is a Zen koan from the eleventh-century. See Berendt, J.-E. 1983/1991. *The World Is Sound: Nada Brahma: Music and the Landscape of Consciousness*. Rochester: Destiny Books, p. 20.

¹² I suggest to read this sentence in two ways: one, not to assume anything and two, to assume Nothing (or *nothingness*).

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Philosophy, to Whitehead, is both an “adventure of ideas” (1933/1967) and an “experimental adventure” (1929/1978). As such, Whitehead’s reading of philosophy proves particularly relevant to my purposes here since his metaphysics seek to discover “new facets of experience: to work out the notions and trace the relations that allow us to encounter aspects of the world, and things within the world, to which we have never paid attention before” (Shaviri 2009, p. 149). His philosophical speculation, akin to Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s aspiration, practices “the art of philosophical assemblage” (ibid., p. 148), that is, “the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 2). It is this *attitude* I want to adhere to in this thesis – and, in fact, have adhered to and put into practice in the practice-based research done prior to writing these lines. The artistic encounters, as part of the *Sonic Peripheries* artistic series and research events of which more will be said in subsequent chapters, present the heterogeneous materials, the building blocks for a yet unknown, *adventurous* configuration to emerge.

Let us backtrack for a moment, or rather, fast forward from the 1980s to the latter half of the 1990s. “Face it – the Digital Revolution is over,” proclaims Nicholas Negroponte in *Wired Magazine*.¹³ I had outgrown the odd fancy to turn into a punk goddess, and instead attuned my ears to glitch, electronica and sound art. Digit-land galore! No longer fidgeting with analog gear, I worked with the discrete chunks of sampled noise, creating intricate sonorous landscapes.¹⁴ My

¹³ Negroponte, N. 1998. Beyond Digital. *Nicholas Negroponte WIRED Columns*. [Online] Available at: <http://web.media.mit.edu/~nicholas/Wired/WIRED6-12.html> [Accessed: 21 May 2018].

¹⁴ The use or misuse of digital technology has had a great influence on the making of these compositions. My early sound works were largely made up of ‘debris’, a ‘landscape’ of sonic glitches and recognizable fragments (concrete sounds) reorganized into a form in which mistakes become aestheticized, no longer displaced pieces but fragments composed into an artifice – a detritus of culture, as it were. In later works, the glitch aesthetic gave way to field recording practice and writing. Generally, my praxis developed in the direction of so-called expanded art practices, inclusive of

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artistic practice, situated in the fine arts, undulated decidedly between sonic art and theory;¹⁵ or let me say, the praxis operated in the fault line following Blixa Bargeld's *screeEEEEchh* – sound as such.¹⁶ Here I refer to sonic matter or energy as *aesthetic force* that gave way to artistic experiments, which led to the construction of discreet sonic assemblages.¹⁷ Moreover, 'the lure of wisdom' paved the way to where my art practice took a turn toward Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy, a

performative aspects with fabulatory function: e.g., *Permanent Fragments*, 2008; *Mapping Out the Sonic Unconscious*, 2010; *How is Nature*, 2016.

¹⁵ Here I mean that my creative practice has its root in the visual arts – more specifically, graphic design and photography. During graduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), my focus shifted toward time-based media. The then Time Arts program is now part of the graduate Sound program led by Nicolas Collins, Shawn Decker and Lou Mallozzi. There, the study of sound in an art school sits amid the fields of sound art, experimental music, and sound studies.

¹⁶ A word on Sound and Music. This project assiduously avoids any categorization of what amounts to music and what might not. When asked whether some of my early sound works were music or not, I wouldn't know how to respond. It was like listening to someone speak in a language I did not comprehend nor cared to learn. Following Caleb Kelly's perceptive analysis of the music/sound discourse, or more specifically, 'sound art' versus 'music' debate, it is about time to let go of the (artificial) boundaries between disciplines that share a common ground, namely sound as their source for making work – be it be dubbed experimental music, glitch works, or sound art. In fact, "the term 'sound art' would be more useful if it had an 's' added at the end to form 'sound arts' [or 'sonic arts' as used in this volume], as for the most part those who use the term would rather a much wider usage than the visual arts and could then include music, literature, and performance under its coverage" (Kelly 2009, p. 16). I opted to describe the type of art presented here under the umbrella term 'sonic arts' and the art practices to be referred to as 'sonic art practices'. A definition of music or sound art is not part of this venture, therefore I treat the issue to a footnote. Perhaps I might give it more space in future projects. Suffice to say here that the artists whose works are under discussion, consider themselves sound/media artists and in two instances include the term musician to the description. See Kelly, C. 2009. *Cracked Media: The Sound of Malfunction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

¹⁷ To give the reader an idea of my work, see Frans de Waard's review in *Vital Weekly* (Number 208). There he writes, "[she] does stuff with skipping CD's, but in such a subtle and elegant way, that this is not a problem at all (reminded me of Nachtplank [sic] actually, but even more subdued). A very fine piece" (n.p.). De Waard is referring to a track titled *BwO*, published on Boxmedia, (Chicago Electronic Music Compilation) in 1999. De Waard, F. n.d. Chicago Electronic Compilation. *Vital Weekly* 208. [Online] Available at: <http://www.vitalweekly.net/208.html> [Accessed: 21 May 2018].

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sonic thinking par excellence. This encounter (and others that followed) proved a watershed moment in this still ongoing adventure: I had set foot on the path to *Sonic Peripheries* – the artistic series and research events – which explores the sonic from a manifold perspective: art practice, philosophy, curation, and writing. In Part Two, I will give a more thorough account of the artistic series (the source of the title of this volume). Suffice it to say here that the initial idea behind *Sonic Peripheries* was as simple as inviting friends and artists to present works to my graduate students and other sound enthusiasts. A simple idea grew into curated research events of contemporary sonic art practices and finally led to and blossomed into this thesis.¹⁸

We might consider the conceptual seed (which came into full bloom in the form of this research) prompting the inquiry into sound, art, and the incipience of sensation; here, the latter is read through a Massumi-Deleuzian lens, supposing a postphenomenological stance where experience is desubjectified and disembodied from affection and perception. The questions this research asks are then as follows. How does a sonic artwork-performance bring about sensations that leave experiential traces that we neither know nor recognize as we encounter the vibrational flux from which im/material expression arises? (The flux or flow is conceived as a field of energies – a ‘virtuality’ in the Deleuzian sense.) How do the material condition of a sonic artwork-performance (the content) and the ensuing sensation (the form of expression) co-emerge; how are they produced in one another? This then begs the question concerning the role exercised by the audience amid this artistic (vibrational) conflux. The listener/spectator/participant, I will suggest, equally partakes in constituting a relevant element in the sonorous becoming-world, becoming-cosmos. To explore the sonorous (plus the pictorial,

¹⁸ I would like to point the reader to the Prolegomena of the thesis where I give information on the so-called ‘Online Addendum’ (including the URL). This addendum to the thesis contains selected materials from the case studies, i.e. the *Sonic Peripheries* artistic series. See also the upcoming chapter ‘Apropos Online Addendum’ for the URL of the site and more detail on the use of the addendum within the thesis.

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sculptural, and situational) becomings that emerge from these artistic encounters/happenings – indeed, to do justice to all the above-mentioned – my choice was then to turn to *artistic research* as experimental configuration; here, I take on the part of the curator/artist and theorist (wanting to rehearse the invention of concepts, seeking to create a consistency from chaos – in reference to the Deleuzian position on what a philosophy can do). The research thus also queries the role of the curator and the invited artists.

While doing the research, other questions followed that address the specifics of each case study and framed the conditions and procedures for gathering empirical materials and harnessing conceptual matters. However, the basic concern that informs every part of the research process is *in wonder of* what happens when sound happens as an aesthetic force. In the upcoming paragraphs, I will address in more detail the matter of artistic research and, as promised at the outset, the incentive behind the research done in and through art practice.

It is beyond the scope of this venture to engage in the debate on artistic research as *such* – a debate that is concerned with the place art as research takes in academia, and the criteria that give grounds for speaking justifiably of artistic practice as research (Borgdorff 2012). That said, it is helpful to raise the issue due to the specific entanglement of artistic, curatorial, and participatory forces at play here – however, keeping in mind that the impetus for this thesis is different. In a later chapter, I will have the opportunity to discuss this particular entanglement as a ‘type of research’, hereby taking into consideration the notion of artistic encounter, or more precisely, ‘performative encounter’ in relation to the aforementioned onto-epistemological concerns.

So when I speak of the *incentive* behind this research done in and through art practice, I speak of all the preceding encounters with the sonic as described above. This includes occasions where sound is conceived (and perceived) both as audible and inaudible occurrence – as either vibration, music, fabulation,

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concept, or as 'something other' (for lack of a better term). Call it incentive or 'lure of the middle' – the problematic locus where the sonic is *neither this nor that* – that gives impetus to listening intently, yet assuming nothing. We will lend our attention to this all-embracing activity. It is the moment of awareness (back then in my teenage bedroom and later, as we shall find out, in the art gallery) that takes precedence over questions of signification in this *radical empirical* research. As such, *sound is a matter of experience*. Nothing more but also nothing less (hence the epithet radical).

Finally let me clarify my placing emphasis on the words 'in and through', that is, research *in and through* art practice. Here I resort to Henk Borgdorff who concludes in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (2012) that 'research in the arts' means that "artistic practice is not only the result of the research but also its methodological vehicle, when the research unfolds *in and through* the acts of creating and performing;" in short, "research takes place in and through the creation of art" (p. 147; italics in original). However, for my purposes here, it is of import to expand on Borgdorff's principle and proffer an aspect that finds particular resonance in this context, namely, the creation of concepts. As previously mentioned, Deleuze and Guattari practice "the art of philosophical assemblage;" in *What is Philosophy?* (1991/1994), they further elucidate this point: "philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts;" and continue, "But the concept is not given, it is created; it is to be created" (pp. 2, 11). The concept, for them, takes on a philosophical reality: "what is truly created, from the living being to the work of art, thereby enjoys [...] an autopoietic [*sic*] characteristic by which it is recognized;" "the concept has nothing whatever to do with a general or abstract" (pp. 11, 12). In other words, the creation of concepts 'posits itself in itself', meaning, it is as much experiment as it is experience itself. Hence, "philosophical theory is itself a practice just as much as its object. It is no more abstract than its object" (Deleuze 1985/1997, p. 280). It is a *doing philosophy* that 'recognizes' the concepts arising from other practices with which it interferes, in a sense similar

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to a resonance effect, detecting sympathetic vibrations in the flux to which it attends to, amplifies and then transmits. The point I endeavor to make is that research, how it is understood here, *not only* takes place in and through the creation of art but, just as importantly, brings forth a theorizing sound that is not 'about' sound. Here I make reference to Deleuze's statement in *Cinema 2*: "A theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices" (1985/1997, p. 280). That is to say (and more will be said in due course), the curating practice via *Sonic Peripheries* presented an adequate extension to my inquiry into sound. It situated the practice amid others and, as such, presented a condition for resonances to occur *between* the various agents – thus relaying the affective (and ephemeral) embodied in the processes, materials and enactments. Therefore, a thinking sound is not about sound (echoing Deleuze) but about the concepts that the sonic gives rise to, and to which the research attends, elaborates on and aims to give expression to in this thesis.

In conclusion, the reason for writing this type of introduction is a pragmatic one: To get the reader in tune with what's to come, it aims at conjuring a mood, an atmosphere engendered by the (ad)venture. This undertaking inaugurates a complexity, say, a 'new materialist aesthetic' that avers sonic experience as an 'event': an aesthetics of force, flux, and resonance, emerging beyond representation and humanist configurations of subjectivity (Cox 2011). The interest lies on the 'between', that is, before any distinctions between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, material and immaterial are drawn (indeed questioning whether such distinctions are tenable). New material aesthetics can thus be understood "as a kind of *empiricism* involving itself with *real conditions of emergence*" issued from *the between* as a melding of (sonic) materiality, force, and sensation as movement – bringing forth "a becoming of *the world* that is reciprocally a *becoming-world* of the subject and object" (Massumi 1997, pp.

The (Ad)venture

755–56; italics in original).¹⁹ As the title of this thesis seeks to suggest, *Sonic Peripheries: Middling With/In the Event* aims at sounding out the between, therefore exploring a sonic ecology that enfolds relational-qualitative goings-on between diverse bodies, powers, and intensities. Through artworks and artistic actions – including gallery visitor participation during the art events then and yourself, the reader, now – the happenings encourage unfinished reflection in the hope of provoking a thinking in motion.

Perhaps similar to what a *koan* (also known as a paradoxical anecdote in Zen Buddhism) can do? Let us reiterate: ‘If you blot out sense and sound – what do you hear?’ Even as a non-Buddhist, the riddle does its work on me. No doubt, it affords a ‘problem’; however, not in the negative connotation of the term but rather in the affirmative or constitutive sense given to the notion of *problem* or *problematic* by Deleuze, that is, as “something which forces thought and provokes responses or creative ‘solutions’” (Schrimshaw 2012, n.p.). The issue at hand is not to ‘crack the problem’ but preferably to be attentive to what happens when sound happens.²⁰ I propose that this enactment, or attunement produces

¹⁹ Massumi concludes this thought with the following phrase set in parentheses: “*devenir tout le monde*’, becoming ‘everything-and-everybody’” (1997, p. 756; italics in original). The reference stems from Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1998, p. 280) and pertains to the notion of “becoming-imperceptible” (ibid., pp. 279–282) as the foremost aspiration in the series of the *becomings*: “The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula.” See Massumi, B. 1997. Deleuze, Guattari, and the Philosophy of Expression. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 24(3), 745–782; Deleuze G. & Guattari F. 1980/1998. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

²⁰ For Joachim-Ernst Berendt koans are “formulas, questions, or problems that seem to be rational and yet have no rational solutions” (1983/1991, p. 20). In ‘Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy’, Shigenori Nagatomo offers the description: “A koan is formulated like a riddle or puzzle and is designed in such a way that intellectual reasoning alone cannot solve it without breaking through ego-consciousness by driving it to its limit” (2017, n.p.). The suggestion I want to provisionally make derives from Berendt’s account connecting koans and mantras to a ‘world of sound’. He equates *sound* to also mean “the prime substance of the world,” i.e., atoms, neutrons, and positrons, etc., “elementary particles of which the atomic nucleus consists and the universe consists and we consist” (1983/1991,

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what Whitehead calls 'affective tonality' or 'mood' – not the actual content of our experience but the virtual becoming of perception intrinsic to all experience (Massumi 2011). The same holds true, I propose, for artistic encounters in general and the encounters with vibrational force in particular; some sonic artwork-performances operate at the interface of what Deleuze calls the virtual-actual, conjuring new unprecedented experiences and expressions. In Deleuze, "the virtual and the actual are two mutually exclusive, yet jointly sufficient, characterisations of the real [...] Without being or resembling the actual, the virtual nonetheless has the capacity to bring about actualisation and yet the virtual never coincides or can be identified with its actualisation" (Boundas 2010, p. 300). Then, 'what's to come' problematizes these occurrences and takes its cue from Whitehead's aesthetic ontology, which privileges feeling over understanding. Surely, *sound is a matter of experience*. And the basis of experience – we shall learn from the philosopher of the middle – is emotional (ibid., p. 176).

"'What a curious feeling!' said Alice [...] And so it was indeed [...]" (Carroll 1865/1993, p. 22).

p. 19). The proposal is thus that the koan mentioned above takes the form of an 'ethico-aesthetic matter-of-fact'. Our attending to sound in general and more specifically, to sound as *aesthetic force* (through the sonic artworks) affords a situation for the possible transformation of self that lets us experience "a kind of *immanent beyond* to everyday experience" (O'Sullivan 2011a, p. 127; italics in original). See Nagatomo, S. 2017. Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Spring 2017 Edition. E.N. Zalta ed. [Online] Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/japanese-zen> [Accessed: 20 May 2018]; O'Sullivan, S. 2010a. From Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine: Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art Practice. In Zepke, S. and O'Sullivan, S. eds. *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 189-107.

A ROADMAP TOWARDS SONIC OCCURRENCE

The map is not the territory.¹

It begins with sensation and perhaps ends on sensation. “Art is the construction of a living world of sensation; a world that never stops becoming something else, never stops breaking and composing, never stops emerging as something new” (Zepke 2005, p. 219). Art is the *real* territory the reader needs to find a way into – keeping in mind that the map acts as a guide towards experience and towards *curious feelings*, as Alice might say. There are several tasks this thesis aims to tackle. One job is to explore Deleuze (Deleuze-Guattari) and Whitehead’s non-phenomenological affect theory in relation to sonic art encounters. Another job is to develop a pragmatics of inquiry that lets us think-feel sonic occurrences as they arise in and through aesthetic encounters (more on the neologisms along the way). The main job, however, is to take you along an adventure that starts with the part Introduction – made up of three chapters – and continues to the four key parts of the thesis (Part One, Two, Three and Four respectively).

Let us take a bird’s-eye view on the logic of the territory and its topology. The following roadmap will trace the lines of thought that underlie the conceptual landscape of the thesis.

¹ Doyle, C.C. et al. 2012. *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 163.

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To embark on the first track to the next and so forth, I will need to present the reader first with three episodes that mark the entry points towards sonic occurrence. The respective episodes speak of individual experiences by *Sonic Peripheries* participants. Each lived experience emerges from the entanglement with the sonic artwork-performance and index the *more-than* of the event. The maybe less common terms so far mentioned: 'more-than', 'thinking-feeling', 'lived experience', will be introduced in Part One. For now, suffice it to say that something happened, something of significance – a *glimmer of sensation*, as it were – which left a sensible yet ineffable feeling that occupies and stirs the participant/listener's space.

Before I proceed, let me explain why I do this here now and not in the chapters to come. It has in part to do with the logic of the territory, that is, the decisions I made in how to organize the contents of the thesis to give a perspective of a larger whole. Further below I will provide a synopsis of the respective parts and chapters. I will say here, though, that the examples I give to discuss certain concepts are always contextualized within the relevant sections. By examples I mean, for instance, interview excerpts, participant reports, and artifacts emerging from the events – more on this soon. Nevertheless, in hindsight, I want to shed more (and a different) light on the circumstances of the experiential event and its coming into expression.

The upcoming episodes are like sneak previews of some of the work ahead of us. They cannot tell the full story (can only hint at the scene at best) and should instead be seen as complementary to the chapters titled SP Artistic Series and SP Performative Encounter of Part Two. Those chapters work independently of the other parts of the thesis. The reader may decide ahead of reading Part One to first peruse the chapter on *Sonic Peripheries* – the artistic series and research event – satisfy one's curiosity, if you will, and then proceed to the section on the Performative Encounter activity to complete the picture. However, the reader may also decide to simply start from the beginning and go all the way to the end in a

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linear fashion. Although the project is no doubt Deleuze-Guattari-inspired, it doesn't entirely adhere to the notion advocated in *A Thousand Plateaus* which is to select any plateau (chapter) for starters and continue to wherever next. I prefer if the reader were to follow the linear structure as presented in the contents – aside, of course, from the exception I mentioned which is to fast forward to the more descriptive chapters of Part Two that deal with the where and what of the art research events.

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Episode 1. June 28, 2012. 8 p.m. – opening night of *Sonic Peripheries #6* with Shawn Decker. The exhibition/performance at the Gallery Künstlerstätte Stuhr-Heiligenrode is well attended even though at 8:45 p.m. – the start of the semifinal game Germany against Italy during the UEFA European Championship. The sonic artwork-performance is well underway. The village is near empty (with people watching the game supposedly), which makes for a quiet summer night. The serene atmosphere complements Decker's live sonic performance that fills the air of the gallery and nearby vicinity. Sounds drift through open doors and windows, caressing the natural soundscape of the place. Also enveloping the ears of the listeners who partake in the Performative Encounter activity that asks of them to explore the 'natural'/'artificial' sounds and rhythms by moving attentively through the indoor and outdoor spaces. The task is to perceive and listen, to reflect and make use of one's imaginative and intuitive powers – to discern the making of soundspace at the cusp of sonic occurrence.

It is Marijana Radovic, Vesela Bodurova, Wilke Thomssen, among others, whose experiential event the reader will encounter in Part One. They were attending to an unfolding sonic scape that is difficult to describe in words. Connecting the heard (the experience it triggers) to language is daring. Radovic's attempt was striking due to the image she fabulated of a 'tickle-and-skull.' Sensations are

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tickling the mind while it grasps the elusive feeling one might have of the un-rolling soundscape before one's 'inner ear'. The sonic artwork-performance was a combination of various field recordings, electromechanical clicks, and clusters of sine waves which created some kinds of semi-harmonics and slightly dissident sounds that seemed likewise organic in quality. The tension between the apparently real (concrete) and artificial sounds was cause for the invention of new worlds, or indeed, novel phraseologies where the focus is on the experience itself as the element of a thinking-feeling phenomenon. It doesn't lack a better description – it is what is precisely needed: “to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are utterly unavoidable. Not at all because it is a necessary step, or because one can only advance by approximations: anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is under way” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 20). This Deleuze-Guattarian maxim is the thread that binds the strangely vague to the rigorous yet anexact articulations in and through writing about these events or occasionings.

Episode 2 takes place on July 7, 2011. Similar circumstances, same location as above. The exhibition opening of David Strang's work was scheduled for 8 p.m. and drew quite a crowd. The warm and pleasant summer night ensured that the *Sonic Peripheries #5* participants engaged in a sonic excursion that took them outside and into the nearby historic mill building and surrounding park (further detail of the event's set-up I describe in the chapter SP Artistic Series). Before I turn to Hannah Klatt whose artifact sets the stage for Part Two of this thesis, I will quote from a participant report of the field exploration.² His description does

² I modified the text by Pedro Oliveira, Digital Media M.A. student, to improve general readability. However, the gist of the observation is his. For the Summer term 2011, I offered an advanced Sound Culture seminar with a focus on sonic ontology and materialism, including an artist-led workshop teaching students how to build electret microphones and hydrophones. The written report on the art event/sonic excursion was part of the course assignments.

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justice to some aspects of the unfolding of events (which leads to episode 2, i.e., Klatt's experience/experiment).

All attendees were encouraged to individually explore the sonic landscapes of the sites surrounding the gallery, either through electret microphones or hydrophones. Each type of device led to an entirely different experience: the electret mics provided for an augmented, almost flat perception of sound, very much like a sonic wall, while the hydrophones allowed the exploration of more subtle textures in underwater environments. The primarily sonic nature of the field exploration offered a completely different understanding of space. Although the usual visual stimuli were there, focusing on the sonic aspects of an environment with the aid of listening devices altered one's perception of sounds and opened onto new kinds of spaces, rhythmic patterns, and sensations. (Oliveira 2011)

A sonic wall? Flat perception of sound? Klatt walked the grounds exploring the sonic sites with an electret microphone. She took her time and sank into the depth of hidden worlds.

Klatt ventured into the mill, auscultating the surfaces of old beams, running machinery, and conveyor belts. Changing the volume on the device disclosed the unexpected within earshot: Gritty sounds came to the fore, tonal shifts and rhythms made her sway to the newly found groove.

When asked to draw an object (figurative or otherwise) in memory of her sonic experience, Klatt pondered the request and playfully crumpled up the sheet of paper (see Part Two: Research Into Sonic Art Practices, Fig. 1).

Episode 3 occurs on July 4, 2013. Gallery Artist in Residency Stuhr-Heiligenrode: 8 p.m. It was a pleasant summer night. First-time visitors, and some

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from the year before, came to see the opening performance by Stephen Lacy aka Academy Records for *Sonic Peripheries* #7 – the last of the three art research events.

Dave Dowhaniuk, Eike Buff, and others set out to complete the Performative Encounter activity. They each explored the sound-image dis-/conjunction presented in the gallery. They were also encouraged to enact several experiments that address questions of perception of sound and site, providing the individual with ways of doing that deal with both the materiality of the sonic and sound as conceptual practice.

A lot was going on that night. The visitors were presented with photographs, drawings and a kind of difficult-to-pin-down-low-rumbling soundscape in one of the two spaces. From the other room, the noise of two running film projectors infiltrates the gallery and hallway. The film loops on display are silent. (What the film loops show and what the work does will be discussed in other parts of the thesis.) As announced at the outset, Lacy would perform a 30-minute piece for electric guitar, two amps, and one echo pedal. The score for 'Stereo for Mill' is seen on display in the main gallery. Participants move around and take up different listening posts. "Amp sound plus guitar sound plus room sound plus listener position: That's the equation!" (Black 2013). "I describe my experience as wandering," says Paula Hurtado Otero (2013) and continues: "There is a repetition, which evokes the movement, a constant of time, but the small and constant changes – or better addition/subtraction of sounds – took my thoughts in along this feeling of being moved." During the time of the live performance, the film projectors were shut off. Once turned on again, the entire atmosphere shifted from one that was thick with "a sense of permanent presence" (Naumann 2013); "[s]imilar to a fog formation that moves around, enfolding me as if I were gliding through space, almost levitating" (Wolfram 2013) – to one of awakening to other senses and scenes where the drawings and film loops were re-encountered as if though seen, heard, and perceived more acutely.

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With this feeling, Dowhaniuk and Buff explored the notion of sound and non-sound. The Performative Encounter activity asked the participants to watch the films as long as they see fit and then to capture, with the aid of a recording device, an image that conveys no sense of sound. This 'way of doing' and its outcome leave us much to speculate as the reader will find out in the last two chapters of Part Three.

♦ ♦ ♦

Returning to a zoomed-out position, we look to parts one to four that mark the map, directing the reader like signposts towards sonic occurrence. It bears minding that we engage in a mapping of sonic occurrence in its entanglement with theory and practice, which is also to mean that we take heed of sound's unique coming into existence as ethico-aesthetic expression through artistic practices and participant involvement.

All the parts of the thesis are guided by Deleuze and Guattari's "logic of the AND" (1980/1998, p. 25). This motive enables "a pragmatics that is not a 'localisable relation going from one thing to the other and back again', but a 'transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle'" (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, p. 28 as quoted in Zepke & O'Sullivan 2010, p. 1; italics in original). I hold that sonic art and its derivatives are of the *between* that Deleuze-Guattari evoke in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The very nature of sound as vibrational force, an oscillatory event – "a stream" – will naturally negate definitions, "nullify endings and beginnings" (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 25). *Neither this nor that* – to recite the magic formula anew, the invocation of the problematic locus we crossed in the previous chapter. The case studies here, then, are "transversal experiments with the and between art, in its contemporary and

visual [AND sonic] form, and Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy” alongside other friends and intercessors (Zepke & O’Sullivan 2010, pp. 1–2; italics in original).

Part One or *Middling With/In the Event* considers the concept of middling in and with the event of sound’s occasioning. The reader is taken along a path of discoveries, rather than definitions. Being confronted with the question of what counts as thinking-sound, which leads to the subsequent query of how to practice a thinking-sound as pragmatics of inquiry into artworks, performances, and situations, we are asked to consider what art does instead of what it might mean. Part One consists of two chapters, the first of which is titled Thinking Sound and the second Aesthetic Encounter. Both draw on materials and experiences from the artistic research events to discuss and make prehensible and comprehensible what might otherwise be lost or hidden. The gist of Part One lies in the experience of the between – living the relation that connects one experience to the next, one occurrence to another. In the chapter Thinking Sound, we trace a line between Deleuzian aesthetics and Massumi’s Whitehead-inspired speculative pragmatism to account for the lived abstractions that in-form the creation of soundspace as the spectral occurrence of real existence. This notion might appear obscure until we consider that, for Deleuze, “nobody has lived anything else but the abstract” (1978, n.p.). For Deleuze, as for Whitehead, “the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*)” (Deleuze 1987/2007, p. vii; italics in original). Proceeding on this track, we come to Massumi’s take on *semblance* which he describes as “the experience of a virtual reality” (2011, p. 15).³ Not wanting to overcomplicate matters at this early stage, I shall leave some issues

³ ‘Virtual reality’, here, does not refer to digital simulation or some other computer-related context. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the concept of the virtual goes back to Deleuze’s naturalist ontology.

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pending; I will only say that to practice a thinking-sound presupposes what I refer to as *listening-in and -through* that lets us slip into the heart of the event where perception and thought congeal to thinking-feeling sonic occurrence taking-shape (how's that for simplifying?). In the chapter Aesthetic Encounter, we will further explore the encounter with the sonic by drawing on case examples. We learn about Cage's radical empiricism in the form of his purposeful-purposelessness credo. And there is, for instance, Decker's Wow!-moment that we take time to consider through the lens of Whitehead's theory of prehension. What I want us to pay attention to is the potential moreness to life that can be discerned through art – especially through sonic arts – which brings forth all kinds of knowings. What is at stake are the transformative powers that sonic artwork-performances afford and to give expression to the technique, the *manner* in which sonic matter comes into articulation.

Part Two with the add-on title *Sonic Peripheries* sets out to discuss what the heading anticipates. All is about Sonic Peripheries (henceforth abbreviated as 'SP' in this section). SP in the context of research into sonic art practices is the first of the three chapters of Part Two, followed by an overview of the SP artistic series in the second chapter and SP's unique so-called Performative Encounter activity, a mode of research-creation under review in the last chapter of Part Two. And as said earlier, the last two chapters of Part Two can be seen independently of the other parts of the thesis.⁴

Research Into Sonic Art Practices takes a look at methodology also because of the absence of one that is specific to this type of research. It was my role as artist-led curator and theorist to engender a methodology understood as the mapping of the experiment and its entanglement with theory. That is to say, the research brings together philosophy and art to elaborate a genuine manner of

⁴ Aside from Part Two, I want to also refer the reader to the Prolegomena of this thesis for further information on the methods employed and some commentary on my methodological approach here.

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working with sonic matter (mattering). This approach entails a transdisciplinary methodology drawing from various disciplines and resources, such as philosophy, practice-based research, and the arts. By employing such a versatile methodology, I am able to create strategies that make an encounter possible with unknown unknowns (what we don't know we don't know). In addition, it gives me the opportunity to unlock of what possibly can be experienced from the indecipherable, that is, to make unknowns 'palpable' through inventions by the participants of the sound art performances. The chapter starts first with Hannah Klatt's search into sonic alterity and her thinking-feeling sonic occurrence that led to a spin-off product (the artfully crumpled paper) and turns by way of Klatt towards a discussion on the onto-epistemological standpoint of this venture and its implications. Klatt's awareness of the vibrant conflux is not a matter of comprehension but prehension. It is primarily a sensuous, noncognitive experience that has the potential to transduce into a conceivable, albeit fleeting articulation. The Performative Encounter activity enabled the participants to create an expanded situation – one, by attending to the felt unknowns that spring from a sonic artwork-performance and, two, by inventing an action that transposes the experience into a 'material-discursive' expression where matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Klatt's experiment is of particular allure in this context because it embodies a thinking-in-doing that does not start in the mind but in nature and enacts an empirical style (a pluralism), which is emblematic for middling with/in the event. The chapter closes with the call for a comprehensive, yet unfinished view on methodology. The nature of the sonic requires methods or techniques that take into consideration that sound is a matter *of* experience *in* experience. Research into sonic art practices takes up the methodological challenge to enter the 'messy middling goings-on' in resonance with each other; to conjure up techniques that afford a middling with and in the event, which lets us assume a more nuanced relationship to knowledge about that which can be known – or rather be of knowing.

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The chapter SP Artistic Series provides the reader with information on the series of contemporary sonic art practices that serve as the basis for the art research cases under discussion in this thesis. It gives background on the series itself initiated by this author in 2008 and has since invited artists to work at the Artist in Residency Stuhr-Heiligenrode and present outcomes at the native gallery. The incentive behind the project plus information on the location and each of the three artists and their works is given. Also, the chapter takes a closer look at the three case set-ups and the research concerns that inform the respective style of research-creation which then led to the site-specific works open to the public in the form of an exhibition and sonic artwork-performance. I briefly outline the contents of each exhibition/art happening and provide some detail on what the gallery visitors/SP participants were invited to do.

SP Performative Encounter is the chapter that zooms in on the specifics of the curator-led intervention named Performative Encounter (in this section henceforth abbreviated as 'PE') activity. The PE activity is composed of a set of directives that opens onto a performative experiential milieu with the capacity to affect and be affected. Here the word 'performative' takes on the meaning of a temporal presence, an *intuit-immediacy* where something compels us to think-feel the more-than or, more specifically, the 'otherwise' (on the latter term, see the chapter titled One of Part Three). The gist of this type of intervention is to incite a thinking-sound and connect the participant to a vibrational ecology in the broadest sense. In particular, the directives that asked the participant to 'capture' the heard/perceived would call forth the unexpected and draw out the hidden – which we have come across in the episodes presented at the outset of this chapter (e.g., the crumpled piece of paper in Klatt's case). The chapter will inform on the conditions set out and bespoke methods employed to make participation engaging and foster attentiveness to the incipient *otherwise* in aesthetic encounters. The PEs then work in a twofold way: to create an opening for gallery visitors to participate in research-creation, and likewise to serve as a methodological device

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to abstract experiences into actualizations in the form of drawings, audiovisual recordings, or other types of empirical thinkings. This approach ensured the documentation of processes and collection of data for 'future fabulation'. More on the latter below in the outline of Part Three.

Finally, let me note that unlike the previous cases, Lacy and I together deployed the PE activity as a methodological vehicle to investigate the ap/prehension of liminality in soundspace. Thus my role as artist-led curator shifted to also include my artistic practice in the equation. This experience led to the making of what I call offshoot project, which, however, continued on the same track of *Sonic Peripheries* and in alliance with all that came before. The experiment I pursued under the aegis of the SP research venture and the issues focused on I shall introduce in the overview of Part Four below.

Part Three – *The Event/s: Sonic Occurrence* takes center stage, that is, this part 'enacts the middle' when understood to mean 'middling with/in the event' as introduced in this context.

Part Three consists of three chapters titled One and Two respectively – and with the last one named Experiment 1 or also *Experimenting: Sound/Non-Sound*. (Note that the thesis contains two so-called Experiment chapters, the first one we find in Part Three and the second one – Experiment 2 – in Part Four.) The present part compared to the others is brief or economical in style, focusing in on particulars relevant to the occurrence of the sonic. Here language seeks to assume the rhythm of the event: A becoming-rhythmic event, creative stammering in the Deleuzian sense that slows down, pauses ... and ... *and* picks up speed again to enfold what we have been after. What we pursue is the glimmer of sensation phosphorescing from within ourselves at ourselves precisely as the affect-emergence. Again, "to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are utterly unavoidable [...] anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is under way" (Deleuze & Guattari

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1980/1998, p. 20). In the 'passage underway' we find meaning beyond representation, in the interval between sense and non-sense (see esp. Experiment 1). Sonic occurrence is perpetual creation: the 'unforeheard' or the *otherwise* (of chapter One) moves, changes, impinges on itself and us.

Chapters One and Two of Part Three connect what Erin Manning and the SenseLab collaborative describe as the *anarchive* or anarchival approach to the 'products' that evidence sonic occurrence's mattering – in our case, for instance, the crumpled sheet of paper from episode 2 or the Dowhaniuk-Buff experience/experiment of episode 3 (see chapter Two). "The anarchive," writes Manning, "is a *repertory of traces* of events. The traces are not inert, but are carriers of potential. They are reactivatable, and their reactivation helps trigger a new event which continues the creative process from which they came, but in a new iteration" (2017, p. 12; italics in original). Similarly, this is what is implied by future fabulation above; the documentation of processes and the archive of 'fugacious expression' (see Part Two: Research Into Sonic Art Practices) engendered fabulatory actions which took the form, for example, of the Experiment 1 chapter.

The first two chapters of Part Three are Whiteheadian to the core with Deleuzian influences. Both philosophers' interest lies in the potential of becoming and the production of the new; namely that which speaks of the more-than inherent to sonic occurrence. Not wishing to pre-empt the sense and sensations that arise by reading the short chapters, it should suffice to say that Part Three wants to reactivate the traces that emerge in and through aesthetic encounters. Here the earlier episodes (as instances for 'the ineffable' to arise) allow us to anticipate the 'eventfulness in art' (and the 'artfulness in nature') (Massumi 2011). What matters – and comes to matter in any new iteration – subsists in the quality of worlding that is invented. "This is what the anarchive does," insist Manning et al.: "it inserts itself in the schism where the finite and the infinite come together and makes that schism tremble, *valuing it from the inside*. The ineffable is felt" (2017, p. 8; emphasis added). While chapter One's primary focus

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lies in delineating the politics of the anarchive and locating tie-ins to the PE activity, chapter Two emphasizes the speculative character of the event native to the PEs. There, the reader undergoes three accounts that begin each with the phrase: IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF WATCHING TWO FILM LOOPS (all caps intended). Following the short accounts, the reader takes a zigzaggy route towards Whitehead's notion of 'value' to finally arrive at the questions of how matter comes to matter and what might matter most.

A word on the Experiment chapters. Experiment 1 or also *Experimenting: Sound/Non-Sound* is a contribution to a series titled *Experiment! Experimental Practices*, edited by Sher Doruff and Manuela Rossini. Contributors were invited to be experimental in their approach, not only in content but also, should they feel this to be suitable, in form (layout, typography, image/text relations). In response to the call, I produced a one-off text-image constellation which I present in this thesis in its original version for publication. Thus, I decided to include crop marks to indicate the layout (and contents) as the facsimile. Experiment 1 is situated in Part Three since the one-off piece is concerned with, as aforementioned, the 'passage underway' placing sense in the sensation, sliding forward and back between thought and perception. Also, we might consider the text-image experiment a spin-off product from the enactment of the PEs between Lacy and myself. In contrast, Experiment 2, albeit a spin-off too of the SP art research events, is located elsewhere, namely in Part Four. The project in its entirety is an offshoot of much larger scale that needed to be dealt with separately. Finally, Experiment 2 or *How is Nature* presents the reader with a reproduction of fifty-one 4 x 2 1/4 inches cards (digital-analog graphite drawings on paper, including QR codes to link to field recordings). The discussion on the experiment and the theoretical implications I will introduce next.

Introduction

Part Four with the additional title *How Nature Does* takes a comprehensive look at the art project I embarked on during a month-long stint as artist in residence at Catwalk Institute, Catskills NY. The chapter A Lure for Feeling (the phrase I borrow from Whitehead) wants to practice what the SP venture preaches: to work through theory-practice entanglements. That is, *not* to illustrate practice by way of theory, *but* to explore ways in which theory and practice are mutually implicated. The idea for this offshoot grew out of the art research events more generally and more particularly from specific questions and nascent interests that ensued from them. The questions pertain to, one, Whitehead's stance on beauty and, two, the ma(r)king of temporalities via aesthetic experience of sonic artworks. The nascent interests have to do with exploring what I call a perceptual mannerism – a mode of invention that is an expression of thinking sonically qua writing and experimentation.

A Lure for Feeling takes us on a winding road that starts at Catwalk (a 'quasi Walden') and into the Catskill Mountains for artistic field research. We make an unexpected turn where the narration becomes one of a 'conceptual persona' – the carto-mytho-grapher – who journeys along a perceptual path of what she sees and hears when middling with and in the event.⁵ The chapter Experiment 2 shows the reproduction of the artwork, which under close inspection assumes the function of a map, providing the onlooker with access to nature's 'ragged edges' and 'chalky surface texture'. In both chapters of Part Four matter comes to matter, or also, theory and practice correspond to create (sonic thinking) assemblages for imagining and experiencing the real anew.

In the subsequent chapter of the thesis titled Refrain: Middling With/In the Event, the focus is on the *ritornello* – the return to conceptual threads that stand in resonance to one another – a continuous mapping of the concepts that have come alive in the process of the research-creation. We take a final look at

⁵ More on the function of the carto-mytho-grapher for this research-creation in the Prolegomena.

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three conjunctive pairs: first, 'thinking-sound' and 'middling with/in the event'; second, 'aesthetic encounter' and 'semblance'; and third, 'fugacious expression' and 'anarchival trace'. All concepts speak of the encounter with the sonic – with a particular focus on its relational dimension, the capacity to evoke strange temporalities in the making of soundspace, its affective power to incite the beautiful (in sonic semblance), and, finally, the reactivation of *untimely* thought.

The Postscript is in remembrance of Alice and an invocation for a 'carto-mytho-grapher to-come', a call for new possibilities of a life after the (ad)venture *and* for futures ahead.

♦ ♦ ♦

A final note about the use of contractions in written English. In the thesis, I make frequent use of contractions which is a way of working with Massumi and the way in which he theorizes. That said, I will close this chapter with the following quote from him and let it speak for itself. "If you don't enjoy concepts and writing and don't feel that when you write you are adding something to the world, if only the enjoyment itself, and that by adding that ounce of positive experience to the world you are affirming it, celebrating its potential, tending its growth, in however small a way, however really abstractly – well, just hang it up" (Massumi 2002, p. 13).

APROPOS ONLINE ADDENDUM

A discussion on sonic artwork-performances is no substitute for the experience of being there physically – attending the event live, so to speak. This being said, writing on art affords a different type of experiential event. It creates other assemblages, not so much a retelling of facts but rather a production of aesthetic encounters through writing, which can open up the art experience to further adventures (O’Sullivan 2001b). Documentation of the *Sonic Peripheries* artistic series and research events – in the form of audio recordings, videos, and photos, etc. – is available and will be made use of from time to time in the upcoming account: on the one hand, to make reference to some specifics and on the other hand, to play into the encounter between art and philosophy, thus to create thinking-feelings in resonance with the concepts discussed in the text.¹

¹ The reader should note that aside from this addendum a blog exists which contains the documentation of the research: photo, video, and audio materials plus various other (reproductions of) artifacts are archived online to assume the form of a ‘research journal’, including interview transcripts, quotations, freewriting, miscellaneous ideas or any other data gathered during the research for future reference. I discuss the difference between the so-called ‘Research Blog’ and the addendum in the Prolegomena. Further, I make mention of the blog in the chapter ‘SP Performative Encounter’ of Part Two. Note that the interview excerpts employed in the thesis can be found in the blog under the rubric ‘Case Studies’. If so wanted, the reader can thus trace some aspects of the thesis back to their source, for instance, the many hours of transcribed interviews.

Apropos Online Addendum

Some of the materials, especially those suitable for print, are present in this document. Other materials, like sound and video, are placed in the digital extension of this volume: The 'Online Addendum' serves as a platform for media that could otherwise not be experienced. This means of presenting additional materials from the case studies will provide a tactile/sensuous encounter with the documentation of the artworks and other outcomes of this art research venture. However, the digital addendum will not give detailed information on every aspect of the research – nor should it do that. Everything is in the thesis; though, the add-on materials may prove helpful in the overall experience.

Here some practical hints. This is the URL to the online addendum:

<http://sonicperipheries.petraklasmusmeyer.com>

There is a simple sign system set in place that suggests what to see and/or hear online and when. This is what it looks like:



In the upcoming chapters, these icons will indicate what to listen to, see, review or watch in the specified section. Left to right: the first symbol denotes audio, the second photo, the third miscellaneous documents, and the fourth and final symbol stands for film/video.

To give an example, I invite you to listen to an audio excerpt (in preparation for Part One). In the margin, you find the visual-numerical clue: the symbol for 'audio' and a digit. This combination tells the reader what to select for the respective section – here, the first example for the present chapter Apropos Online Addendum: the audio excerpt titled 'Shawn Decker, SP#6, Performative Installation'.



Part One

MIDDLELING WITH/IN THE EVENT

THINKING SOUND

I begin Part One with an aphorism, if you will, that marks the beginning of the concluding chapter of *What is Philosophy?*; there Deleuze and Guattari write: “We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness” (1991/1994, p. 201). This observation, I suggest, we can all relate to, that is, it is an experience that we all share and know to some or lesser extent. Indeed, it is distressing when either a nascent idea, or say, a ‘feeling of import’ slips away.

What remains is an impression, a faint residue, or glimmer of sensation that is not yet articulate thought; something that ‘tickles the imaginary skull’, as one *Sonic Peripheries*’ attendee put it in the interview following the event/sonic artwork-performance. “I could feel it ... not really feel it because it’s imaginary. But that’s how, I guess, I felt it. And really did” (Radovic 2012). She said it was difficult to find the words for what she had experienced. What came to mind was the description of the ‘tickle-and-skull’. What to make of the phraseology? The image she invokes is of a fleeting, somehow bizarre nature. Clearly, something happened; ever so lightly touching the body, ‘tickling’ the mind – or, as Deleuze might say, intersecting with the brain and stirring a nerve, so to speak. Her recollection of a ‘sonic happening’ reflects on an incipient occasioning that had emerged at the edge of chaos. And it is this kind of glimmer of sensation –

apprehended at the threshold of nonconscious-conscious perception that is of interest here and where we come back to below.

♦ ♦ ♦

In Deleuze and Guattari, *chaos* is equivalent to “a void that is not a nothingness but a *virtual*, containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms, which spring up only to disappear immediately, without consistency or reference, without consequence” (1991/1994, p. 118; italics in original). According to Alberto Toscano, “Chaos is thus defined not by its disorder but by its fugacity” (2010, p. 48). Disquieting? Common sense tells me to keep order in check. “This is why we want to hang on to fixed opinions so much [... they form a kind of] ‘umbrella,’ which protects us from chaos” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, pp. 201–202). Deleuze-Guattari believe that opinions about things and states of affairs help us to structure our thoughts and represent them to others, but they also insist that “such simplicity detracts from the variety and uniqueness evident in our experiences of the world” (Stagoll 2010b, p. 53). ‘Opinions’ (they refer to the Greek word *doxa*) are nothing but “extracted clichés from new perceptions and promised affections” (ibid., p. 150). Departing from this premise, what philosophy and artistic practice can do and should do is *undo* simplification: “make a slit in the umbrella [...] to let in a bit of free and windy chaos” (ibid., p. 203). Deleuze-Guattari (following Nietzsche) request that philosophy and art think and ‘do’ experimentally, that is, that they “no longer accept concepts as a gift [... but] *make and create* them” (ibid. p. 5; italics in original). What follows from this?

At the outset of this thesis, I talked about the impetus behind the (ad)venture. The intention has been to inquire into and get attuned to the complexity of the sonic in relation to artistic practices. To me, this suggests the question of what happens when a sonic artwork-performance happens; or slightly revised, with an emphasis on sensation, the question reads: What happens when sound happens

Part One – Middling With/In the Event

as an aesthetic force? ('Force' here means: "*any capacity to produce a change or 'becoming', whether this capacity and its products are physical, psychological, mystical, artistic, philosophical, conceptual, social, economic, legal or whatever*" [Stagoll 2010c, p. 112; italics in original]¹). This concern demands that we consider sound (and sonic arts) beyond our own presuppositions. How does one move beyond one's expectations and pre-conceived ideas that seek satisfaction? How to allow for, that is to say, *infuse* an openness to encounter sound in ways other than expected in a given circumstance? This task, I argue, is one for the artist-led curator/theorist to take up in close proximity to the artist and artworks. My incentive was, and still is, to facilitate situations that incite a 'thinking-in-motion' that invites us to discern and contemplate a sonic event – as it comes, as it goes – to inquire into the goings-on, the what-has-happened-in-and-between the rhythmic ebb and flow. Can we conceive, or rather 'prehend' (Whitehead's term) a relation or movement that is in excess of 'a' mind, that constitutes a qualitative difference present in the world which is 'felt' by organic and nonorganic

¹ Cliff Stagoll further explains, "For Deleuze, we can only truly *perceive* [cosmic/universal/earthly] forces by *intuiting* them; that is, by grasping them without reference to a conceptual understanding of existence" (2010c, p. 110; italics in original). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari write, "The most we can say is that when forces appear as forces of the earth or of chaos, they are not grasped directly as forces but as reflected in relations between matter and form. Thus it is more a question of thresholds of perception, or thresholds of discernibility belonging to given assemblages" (1980/1998, pp. 346–347). For them music (I propose: the sonic arts in general) does not reproduce the sonorous but renders forces sonorous, i.e., harnessing forces of the cosmos, the universe, and/or the earth. Though sound's nature as affective and paradoxical occurrence remains ambiguous: oscillating, as it were, between matter and form (or matter as it comes to matter), intuited as intensive force *and* apprehended as 'aesthetic figure' through sensation. As suggested in the introduction: *sound occupies a space that sits between oppositions*. Neither this nor that – *a double negation that produces a condition for 'paradoxical affirmation'*, which gives way to productive (aesthetic) encounters; hence our interest in sound's occasioning as aesthetic force or figure and the happenings that might bring to pass the unexpected. See Stagoll, C. 2010c. Force. In A. Parr ed. *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 110–112; Deleuze G. & Guattari F. 1980/1998. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Thinking Sound

life? This concern evokes the Deleuzian image of *?being* in the sense proffered by Claire Colebrook:

That is, being cannot be reduced to the world of present beings or things, or what we can say is, but this does not mean we should posit some negative beyond being or nonbeing. Rather, being (as *?being*) is life understood as the potential for creation, variation and production in excess of what we already know to have existence. (2010d, p. 192)

With this said, it is important to take note of the implied vitalism in Deleuze, since 'being (as *?being*)' implies a virtual force that enfolds as it unfolds "potentials through contingent and productive encounters" (Colebrook 2010c, p. 4). It can also be thought as chaos-like force-field or energetic flux, which is "something more than 'mere' matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable" (Coole & Frost 2010, p. 9). It is the virtual but real existence from which we come and from which we draw. The 'we' is meant to read as the entangled subject-object or the entwined encounterer-encountered, anyone-and-anything invested in the eventfulness, i.e., the chaos-cosmos from which sound as aesthetic figure eventuates. Also, and this is of import, at the peripheral line between the virtual and the actual, thought is born as emergent capacity through sensations (more on this below). I am interested in these emergent becomings and curious about thought that aligns to a *thinking sound* that captures the nature of the sonic as vibrational, thus, as a material force underlying all aesthetic experience. What does this mean in the context of this project?

The *Sonic Peripheries* cases that I have alluded to so far wish to foster a sonic thinking, a thinking-in-motion. It means that we need to establish conditions that impel us "[to] plunge into the chaos," as Deleuze-Guattari (1991/1994,

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p. 202) dramatically put it, or, alternatively, to free-fall into the 'not-yet-thought', in the hope of challenging the predictable, to create experiences in experiments: "variations that are still infinite" and "varieties that no longer constitute a reproduction of the sensory in the organ but set up a being of the sensory, a being of sensation," to quote from *What is Philosophy?* (1991/1994, pp. 202–203; italics in original). Looking ahead at some of the work of Part Two we might say that for *Sonic Peripheries*, the artistic series and research (or call it 'the adventure', since it is one in many ways), different practices and agents were purposefully 'thrown into' the same pond – causing the expected ripples and some unexpected diffractions; mapping in the process new patterns of thinking-sound, or tracing those that were set in motion by others, take Deleuze-Guattari, for instance (aren't they sonic thinkers par excellence?), and not to mention the invited artists whose work I owe much to in terms of making the events possible, after all. As remarked on by Deleuze: "It is at the level of interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all kinds of events" (1985/1997, p. 280). Theory (philosophy) and art practice – in their relatedness – create spaces for fabulation. In the making of research creations, interferences take place, cause new conceptual patterns, images, sounds – all types of (ad)ventures.

In light of this, what can we say about the role of the 'art recipient', or more precisely, the participants of a sonic artwork-performance within this ecology of practices? I propose that they equally partake in constituting a relevant element in the sonorous as well as pictorial, sculptural, and situational becomings that arise from the aesthetic encounters. However, I do not mean 'participatory' in the sense of relational art² – although there is a kinship to this type of socio-

² Relational art is a term coined by the French art critic Nicholas Bourriaud in the 1990s "to describe the tendency to make art based on, or inspired by, human relations and their social context" (Tate, n.p.) and artist's associated with relational aesthetics are Angela Bulloch, Liam Gillick, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jens Haaning, Philippe Parreno, Gillian Wearing and Andrea Zittel. Bourriaud in his book titled *Relational Aesthetics* (1998) defines the term as follows: "A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space" (p. 113). See Tate. 2018. Relational Aesthetics –

political art, but not a likeness. The kinship this research shares with relational or participatory art resonates with Claire Bishop's definition of it as an "artistic orientation towards the social" where "the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations [...] while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant*" (2012, p. 2; italics in original). However, this study neither seeks a discussion of 'active' versus 'passive' spectatorship nor of "'bad' singular authorship and 'good' collective authorship" (ibid., p. 8). What is at stake here is the transformative power that artworks, performances and situations (in sum: sonic artwork-performances) afford. This will be explored in this thesis alongside the question of how the forces at play give rise to a 'situatedness'³ wherein different 'agents' collide, coalesce and *inspire* aesthetic encounters, and give rise to 'the event/s' (see Part Three: The Event/s). Situatedness then speaks of a spatiotemporal 'eventness', i.e., the emergent becoming of a *now*

Art Term. *Tate*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/relational-aesthetics> [Accessed: 21 May 2018]. See also Bourriaud, N. 1998. *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Les presses du réel.

³ It should be noted that the term 'situatedness' links to Feminist theorist Donna Haraway who illustrates how we as human subjects are produced through and by the environments we inhabit, i.e., social, political, economic, technological, and cultural *situatedness*. Her work on situated knowledges "emphasizes the ways in which science is a rule-governed form of 'story-telling' that aims at getting at the truth, but the idea of truth she uses here is not that of reality *an sich* but a reality that is produced by human material practices" (Janack 2004, n.p.; italics in original). Also importantly to add, in Haraway's words: "Feminist accountability requires a knowledge tuned to resonance, not to dichotomy. [...] Feminist embodiment, then, is not about fixed location in a reified body, female or otherwise, but about nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning" (1988 p. 588). The latter is of interest since we will lend an ear to 'material-discursive' (material-semiotic) events actualizing as in/determined sonic occurrence through aesthetic practices. This also implies that the concepts and case studies under discussion here are produced through the 'entanglement' of matter and meaning whereby a distinct separation between one and the other is suspended or indiscernible. See Janack, M. 2004. Feminist Epistemology. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-epis/> [Accessed: 20 May 2018]; Haraway, D. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14, 575–599.

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– not just in the simplistic sense that something “‘happened’ at a particular moment in time, but in so far as it aspires to bring a variety of elements and forces into relation with one another” (Parr 2010, p. 31). So what happens when the participants take ‘the free fall into chaos’, thus facing the unknown, the not-yet-thought? What do they bring to the impending situatedness? And what do they possibly retrieve from this experiential event?

But before we can address this, we need to also ask, what counts as thinking sound? How can we practice a thinking-sound as a kind of pragmatics of inquiry?⁴ We will pursue these questions in a bit of a roundabout way: we begin by exploring Deleuzian aesthetics (or strictly speaking, a Deleuze-Guattarian aesthetic). We then move on to Whitehead’s theory of prehension, meet Massumi and Simon O’Sullivan along the way, among others, until we reach a juncture, namely the upcoming chapter of Part One: Aesthetic Encounter.

♦ ♦ ♦

Not what art is but how a work of art does. This Deleuzian-inspired credo will guide what is coming next.

How-an-artwork-does and affects matters to Deleuze. In his earlier work on aesthetics (esp. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*), Deleuze constructs a theory of perception where ‘sensation’ is thought as a pre-individual, asubjective plane of intensity. It “opens at the threshold of sense, at those moments prior to when a subject discovers the meaning of something or enters into a process of reasoned cognition” (Conley 2010, p. 247). Sensation is “what *vibrates* at the

⁴ Here I would like to adhere to Massumi’s sense of ‘pragmatics’. He explains, “Pragmatic doesn’t mean practical as opposed to speculative or theoretical. It is a synonym for composition: ‘how’ processual differentials eventually play out as co-composing formative forces. [...] The co-composing of formative forces constitutes in each exercise of experience a novel *power of existence*: a power to become” (2011, p. 12; italics in original). See Massumi, B. 2011. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

threshold of a given form,” explains Tom Conley (ibid., p. 248; emphasis added) and calls on Paul Cézanne’s still lifes and the ‘appleyness’ of the apples.⁵ The feeling or intensity arises from the taking-form of the apples as the painterly abstraction that they are. Sensation tickles the mind into intuiting the ‘aliveness’ of apple, i.e., its appleyness. For example, in the earlier statement by Marijana Radovic: something ‘tickles’; which is to mean, it vibrates exactly on the edge of sense and nonsense, that is, at the peripheral line between vibratory force and the sonic landscape in its taking-on-gestalt-like-formation: “I could feel it ... not really feel it because it’s imaginary. But that’s how, I guess, I felt it. And really did.” Or take Vesela Bodurova who was attending the same event as Radovic. She said of her experience: “I felt that I can see and smell the sea and feel the water running beneath me” (2012). Both ‘listened to’ a 90-minutes sound performance-cum-installation (more on aspects of participation and listening soon) that led to a place where intuition and imagination meet, or rather coalesce. “The place is a ‘multidimensional’ phenomenon. It exceeds space and time and is still the place that it is,” says Wilke Thomssen (2012) who was there, too, along with a small crowd of sonically interested students and locals. I choose to discuss the above observations because they describe the kinds of experiential events that ‘live on’ or carry on. As Thomssen points out: ‘it exceeds space and time’, *becomes* the place it occupies. It is not a ‘beyond’ but a virtual yet real existence. The experience carries on; it has its own life.

“Art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved,” write Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994, p. 163). This is key to their aesthetics, and this is of interest to us. The point I want to come to will take time to reach, but suffice it to say that in order to explore the conditions by which the sonic occurs as aesthetic figure we need to follow the Deleuze-Guattarian credo and look to the how-the-artwork-does and how it affects. Generally, ‘affect’ means here “the

⁵ In the words of D.H. Lawrence, “the appleyness of the apple” in Cézanne; as quoted in Deleuze, G. 1981/2003. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. London: Continuum, p. 35.

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transitional product of an encounter, specific in its ethical and lived dimensions and yet it is also as indefinite as the experience of a sunset, transformation, or ghost” (Colman 2010, p. 11). Affects are quick to strike and carry on; thus art *transforms* and *endures* by way of a *faint residue* that subsists always-already in the middle, never localizable, but occupies bodies, ‘spaces’ – physical, spiritual, intellectual, and cognitive. The ‘faint residue’ can also be read in the Deleuze-Guattarian sense as “*a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*” (1991/1994, p. 164; italics in original). We will continue to elaborate on this notion because it serves as our basis for understanding the processes involved that inform thinking-sound.

Let’s reiterate Bodurova’s account of a sonic occasioning: “I felt that I can see and smell the sea and feel the water running beneath me.” Her wording seems unusual, remarkable even. Remarkable insofar that she doesn’t say I *imagine* the sea, that is, conjure up an image of a seaside. What she describes is neither a memory of a day at the beach nor a generic notion of *any* sea. Rather, she *feels* the seaside: she smells the ocean and senses the swell of water. Bodurova retrieves blocs of sensations.

In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari consider blocs of sensations as a *being* of sensation that exists of percepts and affects rather than perceptions and affections. To them, percepts compare to “*nonhuman landscapes of nature*” and affects to “*nonhuman becomings of man*” (ibid., p. 169; italics in original). Here Roland Bogue provides a helpful gloss: “Percepts are like landscapes in which the human being as subject no longer exists and yet remains diffused throughout the landscape; affects are intensities that traverse individuals and go beyond ordinary emotions and sensations. Percepts and affects exceed lived experience and our recollections of that experience” (2010, p. 100).⁶ It is worth noting

⁶ Bogue provides an instructive reading of *sensation* in Deleuze’s (and Guattari’s) work. See Bogue, R. 2003. *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*. New York: Routledge, p. 164ff.

that for Deleuze and Guattari all art creation is about the extraction of blocs of sensations: “to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another” (1991/1994, p. 167). To harness the forces of the cosmos, “to make perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become” (ibid., p. 182), they consider the artist to be “a seer, a becomer” (ibid., p. 171). By the same token, this should include the ‘art recipient’, the participant of a sonic artwork-performance. Bodurova intuitively feels the seaside as she ‘listens-in’ (see also Part Three: Experiment 1). We might say that she *sees* – *foresees* (also *forehears*) – as she enters the field of audition. She enacts a spiritual insight specific to the relational whole opening up before her, therefore, *becomes* cosmic-ocean through sensation. She feels the water beneath her, above and surrounding her, fusing momentarily with the multidimensional phenomenon that exceeds spatiotemporal coordinates but is of the real. I suggest that she *think-feels* the sonorous (nonhuman) landscape, which seems to afford indefinite olfactory and vague ocular impressions. The concept of thinking-feeling belongs to Massumi (2011, 2002). There he allies intuition with imagination: “Imagination is the mode of thought most precisely suited to the differentiating vagueness of the virtual. [...] Imagination can also be called intuition: a thinking feeling. Not feeling something. Feeling thought – as such, in its movement, as process, on arrival, as yet unthought-out” (Massumi 2002, p. 134).⁷ Hence thinking-feeling

⁷ Dermot Moran (2000) points out how at the turn of the twentieth century the role of ‘intuition’ was emphasized by philosophers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Henri Bergson, and William James. Here Bergson’s account of intuition from *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1913, pp. 6–7): “By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within the object in order to coincide with that which is unique in it and consequently inexpressible” (as quoted in Moran 2000, p. 10). According to Moran, “the prevalence of notions of intuition as a kind of spiritual sympathy with the object of knowledge has often led to phenomenology being widely misunderstood as a form of irrational mysticism” (ibid.). In fact, it should be noted that our take on intuition supposes a post-phenomenological position where experience (sensation) is desubjectified and disembodied from affection and perception. This could be taken for some form of ‘mysticism’, however, should rather be read through the lens of Deleuze’s ‘incorporeal materialism’, which, perhaps, to an extent, favors a

the fragrance of the sea is a form of extracting percepts and affects from the sonic artwork-performance on site. Bodurova fabulates becoming-sea; this, we understand, is not a thing recollected but a process of transformation: a transduction. “Like electricity into sound waves. [...] Or vision into imagination. Or noise in the ear into music in the heart. *Or outside coming in*” (ibid., p. 135; italics in original). The artist composes from the outside, the ‘great outdoors’; deploying field recordings and electric pulses, creating rhythms and swooshes; sonic textures that infuse the place turning it into the kind of space Thomssen describes above: a multidimensional soundspace: spectral occurrence of real existence.

What follows is an excursus into the Deleuzian concept of becoming (an annotation to what’s been and will be said, if you like) because it ties directly to sensations and thus to thinking-feeling, moving us further along the path of thinking-sound towards where sonic occurrences enable a possible ‘transformation of the subject’ (cf. O’Sullivan 2001b, 2006). To start, it is worth quoting Cliff Stagoll (2010a, p. 26; italics in original) at length here:

Deleuze works at two levels to rectify such [i.e., difference-from-the-same] habitual thinking. Philosophically, he develops theories of difference, repetition and becoming. For the world of practice, he provides challenging writings designed to upset our thinking, together with a range of ‘tools’ for conceiving the world anew. At both levels, becoming is critical, for if the primacy of identity is what defines a world of re-presentation (presenting the same world once again), then becoming (by which Deleuze means ‘becoming different’) defines a world of presentation anew. Taking his lead from Friedrich Nietzsche’s early notes, Deleuze uses the

notion of ‘magic’. Moran, D., 2000. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. New York: Routledge; see more on *magic* in Massumi, B. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 257–258.

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term 'becoming' (*devenir*) to describe the continual production (or 'return') of difference immanent within the constitution of events, whether physical or otherwise. Becoming is the pure movement evident in changes *between* particular events.

Becomings can thus be thought as 'affect-emergence', a qualitative difference immanent within the world. *We become* would then mean that we transform through sensations: "Sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other [... ;] sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression" (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 177). It is a movement in-and-between the rhythmic ebb and flow of pure experience: a relation that constitutes nonconscious feelings ('prehension' in Whitehead) in the production of events. In soundspace, the thinking-feeling someone (or something) operates as sensory medium for the taking account of change: "I guess, I felt it. And I really did." This is Radovic's vague but rigorous description of the glimmer of sensation (the faint-residue that persists) phosphorescing from within herself at herself precisely as affect-emergence.

"Deleuze believes that each change or becoming has its own duration, a measure of the relative stability of the construct, and the relationship between forces at work in defining it" (Stagoll 2010a, p. 27). In this view, becoming creates its own temporalities, which forfeits the notion of a transcendental time, i.e., "the Kantian *a priori* form of time that depends upon attributes of a particular kind of consciousness" (ibid.; italics in original). Change occurs in the time of the 'return', the eternal production of difference immanent within the coming-to-be of events.

Becoming-soundspace might produce moments of temporal suspension: "The time disappeared similar as in the feeling of joy or boredom," says Markus Walthert (2012) of his experience when listening to the unrolling soundscape of *Sonic Peripheries* #6. His description reminds me of Whitehead's question con-

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cerning the sensation of anger: “How, he asks, does an angry person know he’s angry the next moment, even if it’s just a halfsecond later? He isn’t reflecting, he doesn’t conclude that he’s angry. He just is, still. He finds himself still *in* his anger” (1933/1967 as paraphrased in Massumi 2011, p. 64; italics in original). Joy and boredom (also coming from own experience) seem to produce a similar effect or feeling insofar that joy (or anger in Whitehead’s example) presents “the in-ness of that moment, as it was the in-ness of the preceding moment” (ibid.). The issue thus is not the content of joy or the reason for boredom, rather the affective temporality it brings to bear: Nothing changes but everything does in the meantime.

In Deleuze-Guattari, the meantime or ‘meanwhile’ (*entre-temps*) is allied to becoming. “The meanwhile,” they write, that is, “the event, is always a dead time; it is there where nothing takes place, an infinite awaiting that is already infinitely past, awaiting and reserve” (ibid., p. 158). Though I believe that the feeling of absence-of-time Walthert observes is neither ‘dead’ nor ‘empty’, rather, it is a ghostly fullness in the sense Karen Barad puts forth. Let me interject that by ‘dead’ Deleuze-Guattari are also likely to mean ‘unlivable’, i.e.: “The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure *reserve*” (ibid., p. 156; italics in original). Read as such, the ‘pure reserve’ aligns with the notion of *virtuality* as a field of energies or reservoir of potentialities – certainly ‘uninhabited’ by human subjects but a ‘place’ we are entangled in, no matter what. Not to diverge too far and risk overextending the excursus, I will keep the upcoming passage on Barad’s “ghostly non/existence” (2012, p. 12) short; it will serve to illustrate a point, or say, a way of being in becoming, that I endeavor to show.

Barad writes, “the void is a spectral realm with ghostly existence;” and claims (alongside Deleuze-Guattari) that this virtuality is exactly not a nothingness (ibid.). It is full with buzzing potentialities at the peripheral borderline of being and nonbeing. There is no absence (not even an absence-of-time), but rather, “the infinite plentitude of openness” (ibid., p. 16). This makes for a *lively*

tension, “a desiring orientation toward being/becoming” (ibid., p. 13). We can intuit-imagine the spectral realm if only we are careful enough; patiently attuning to the not-yet determined becomings – listening-in and -through – towards where time appears to vanish, slows down (or speeds up!) in ‘the in-ness of the moment’.

Becoming-different or becoming-other “*is its own time*, the real time in which changes occur, and in which all changes unfold” (Stagoll 2010a, p. 27; italics in original). Perhaps it would look like this (in lieu of words): “—.—.—.—.—.” (Sick 2011). The punctuation marks or, here, ‘diagram’ (a derivative from *Sonic Peripheries #5*) represent, that is, enact a time of production originated in difference and becoming; here real time becomes duration intermittently (and rhythmically) marked by temporary determinacies, the taking-form of this or that. “The actual is not what we are but, rather, what we become, what we are in the process of becoming – that is to say, the Other, our becoming-other” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 112).

We become ‘Other’ through blocs of sensations, again through the imperceptible forces that affect us; “the forces of gravity, heaviness, rotation, the vortex [... etc.,] and time (as music may be said to make the sonorous force of time audible);” they become expressive, transforming themselves, giving themselves a new quality (ibid., p. 182). “This is not a signifying relation, in which the material plane is understood as a chain of signifiers and the aesthetic plane is the field of the signified: rather, it is a relation of eruption” (Grosz 2008, pp. 74–75). There’s no avoiding it (why would we?); the sublime surge embraces us wholly, incites a loosing of oneself to then come out of the hold slightly other to one’s self. “Art here is no longer a reassuring mirror of our own subjectivity, but an experiment in exploring what lies *beyond* our subjectivity” (O’Sullivan 2001b, p. 118; italics in original). In our context, the art events or happenings – more precisely, the sonic artwork-performances in association with the ‘Performative Encounter activity’ (more on the curator-led intervention in Part Two) – set the condition to exper-

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iment and explore, to mindfully free-fall into *the between* – maybe as ‘foreseen’ in the diagram in the form of the *dash* before (or after) the period, like a pause that doesn’t stand still. Generally understood in a text as indication of a break in sense, the dash, here, indicates a threshold to an ‘infinite plentitude’. This is where becoming-other co-exists with time, creating its own temporality. And this is where sensations come in, quite literally entering the between: “Sensations are subjective objectivities or equally objective subjectivities, midway between subjects and objects, the point at which the one can convert into the other” (Grosz 2008, p. 76) – an openness for becoming – anew; a space of invention and fabulation; a time of contemplation. What art does is precisely for life to transform itself; a transition or evolution through which all becomings pass, from one state to another: “we become by contemplating it” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 169).

Contemplation is a curious doing. It presents us with a simple yet complex doing. It is a way of being in becoming which is active as it is passive; as such, it is not deliberately active but also not entirely passive. The doing – embedded in the lively tension of becomings – sits in-between. Keith Robinson (2010, pp. 124–125) describes Deleuze’s (Whitehead-inspired) notion of contemplation as “a passage or folding ‘between’ states, a movement of pure experience or perception that increases or decreases its potential through interaction and communication with those states.” In Whitehead, this is considered a “*taking account*” (1925/1967, p. 69; italics in original). For our purposes, we draw on the nonphenomenology of Deleuze and Whitehead’s aesthetic ontology as the basis for a pragmatic inquiry into artworks, performances and situations.⁸ The intention is

⁸ Daniel Smith and John Protevi in ‘Gilles Deleuze’ in the *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* comment on Deleuze’s relation to Whitehead as follows: “although the points of comparison are many, Deleuze himself rarely discusses Whitehead, save for several important pages in *The Fold*” (2018, n.p). Here I would like to add that Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* considers Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* to be “one of the greatest books of modern philosophy” (2001, pp. 284–85).

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to trace a 'new materialist' aesthetics premised on blocs of sensations that engender a situatedness from which the 'art recipient' might emerge slightly changed. Therefore, we continue to elaborate on the question of what could be considered a thinking-sound. For this, we outline the doings in contemplation (Deleuze) or prehension (Whitehead). This leads us next to what I provisionally call 'factual-fictional energies' and the experience of lived abstraction; as Deleuze points out: "The abstract is lived experience [...] you can live nothing but the abstract" (1978, n.p.).

The statement that follows presents experience as the occasioning of life; life is understood here as vital or energetic existence:

What matters is to understand the experience [of the sonic] not as an intellectual abstract but as a living; that is to say, immanent to the experience is something that conveys the real in the lived

Further – and this pertains to Whitehead's critique of pure of feeling, in other words, his theory of prehension – Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* relate Spinoza's notions of 'affectio' and 'affectus' to Whitehead's prehension, that is, "each thing [is] a prehension of other things and the passage from one prehension to another a positive or negative 'feeling'. Interaction becomes *communication*. The ('public') matter of fact was the mixture of data actualized by the world in its previous state, while bodies are new actualizations whose 'private' states restore matters of fact for new bodies. Even when they are nonliving, or rather inorganic, things have a lived experience because they are perceptions and affections" (1991/1994, p. 154). In the concluding chapter of *What is Philosophy?*, they return to Whitehead with respect to the latter's notion of 'superject'; they elaborate, "The brain is *mind* itself. At the same time that the brain becomes subject rather 'superject', [...] the concept becomes object as created, as event or creation itself [...] And this *I* is not only the 'I conceive' of the brain as philosophy, it is also the 'I feel' of the brain as art" (ibid., p. 211; italics in original). See Smith, D. & Protevi, J. 2018. Gilles Deleuze. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2018 Edition. E.N. Zalta ed. [Online] Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/> [Accessed: 20 May 2018]; Deleuze, G. 1988/1993. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Athlone; Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1991/1994. *What Is Philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University Press.

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experience. The lively [*das Lebendige*] in the experience gives the experience its actual life.⁹ (Thomssen 2012)

‘The lively’ is prior to ‘an intellectual abstract’; it precedes cognition. It constitutes a form of knowing that follows from the encounter with art. Experience is something that *happens* – unfolds, never at standstill. It *becomes* in process. In the Event the sonic is called into being as aesthetic expression conjointly with the ‘art recipient’ as *participant*.¹⁰ “Sound is a process that sweeps you along and which enfolds you in its process of change, wanting to take you elsewhere,” Thomssen said later in an interview with the author.¹¹ In conver-

⁹ Translated from German by the author. Here in the original: “Das Entscheidende ist, die Erfahrung nicht als eine intellektuelle abstrakte, sondern als eine lebendige zu verstehen; d.h. in der Erfahrung ist etwas enthalten, was dieser Erfahrung erst das eigentliche Leben vermittelt. Das Lebendige an der Erfahrung gibt der Erfahrung ihr wirkliches Leben.”

¹⁰ See Deleuze 1988/1993, pp. 76–82.

¹¹ Wilke Thomssen, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, attended all three case studies. This interview followed *Sonic Peripheries #6* in July 2012. It should be noted that Thomssen was a doctoral student of Theodor W. Adorno at the Frankfurt School. In the interview, he made reference to Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory* (1970/2002), calling attention to the latter’s use of ‘lived experience’ (*lebendige Erfahrung*). Thomssen claims that for Adorno to use the notion of lived or living experience is noteworthy since it refers to something that indeed, according to Thomssen, precedes language/cognition and, as such, eludes theory/critique. Adorno further writes, “That the experience of artworks is adequate only as living experience is more than a statement about the relation of the observer to the observed, more than a statement about psychological cathexis as a condition of aesthetic perception. Aesthetic experience becomes living experience only by way of its object, in that instant in which artworks themselves become animate under its gaze. This is George’s symbolist teaching in the poem ‘The Tapestry’, an *art poétique* that furnishes the title of a volume. Through contemplative immersion the immanent processual quality of the work is set free. By speaking, it becomes something that moves in itself. Whatever in the artifact may be called the unity of its meaning is not static but processual, the enactment of antagonisms that each work necessarily has in itself” (1970/2002, pp. 175–176; italics in original). Following this passage Adorno endows the artwork with a monadological character, which he finds “as true as it is problematic” (*ibid.*, p. 180). This brief discussion in *Aesthetic Theory* resonates, in my view, with Deleuze’s chapter ‘What is an Event’ in *The Fold* (1988/1993)

sation, he emphasizes the processual aspect in aesthetic experience, temporal progression and finally *change* taking place.¹² Would we not consider change to be the most obvious and inevitable factor in life? And as such, in art? Common sense provides us with the assumption that, for instance, time is linear and appears to move forward. Everyday occurrences (based on the laws of classical physics, e.g., the apple falls to the ground) evidently give us impressions of mutability; however, it is a type of mutability that still remains, at least to some degree, predictable. Even though Thomssen speaks of a temporal progression, implying perhaps a telos in the experience, I read his account as an attempt to articulate the *not-yet-thought* as it “wells up from below the threshold of human awareness” (Massumi 2011, p. 165). The experiential event ‘in the act’ creates its own rhythm, a trajectory that proceeds *achronologically* designating – a time and a space and a thought – once the experience has come into perceptual focus. This rhythmicity also means that the threshold of awareness within the body is of particular concern.

Let me quickly add here that Thomssen cautions against “the instrumental use of an abstract concept of thinking” in favor of a unity of thinking and feeling: “Only when thinking is joined again with feeling in the process of thinking does the human body react with sensations; only then,” he carefully suggests, “can we

where he talks about Whitehead’s concept of prehension, which is of import here. Suffice it to say at this point that Adorno’s aesthetic theory plays only a partial role in the present discourse. See Adorno, T.W. 1970/2002. *Aesthetic Theory*. New York Continuum.

¹² The ‘elsewhere’ Thomssen alludes to in his account of aesthetic experience is not a transcendent space but instead speaks of the potential immanent to art, which lies beyond signification. The power of art, or here, the power of the experience of the sonic artwork-performance as *living* “names art’s specificity as art [...] that is] not just ‘meaningful’, or not only an object of knowledge (although it is that too)” (O’Sullivan 2010a, pp. 190–191; italics in original). See O’Sullivan, S. 2010a. From Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine: Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art Practice. In S. Zepke & S. O’Sullivan eds. *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 189–107.

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be sure that anything happens in thought that has relevance to a person.”¹³ What is of relevance then inheres in the reciprocal relation between feeling, or rather pure perception, and thought.

Massumi writes in *Parables of the Virtual* (2002, p. 91): “Perception and thought are two poles of the same process. They lie along a continuum. [...] The poles of perception and thought are at the limits of the same continuum.” We might say that experience is change felt as ‘the slide’ – from one end to the other, the feedback and forward between the limits – enfolding the not-yet-thought and unfolding future-thought. A corollary to this is that thinking is born under the constraint of the slide and the material force integral to the process. “Sensation is an extremity of perception,” contends Massumi: “It is the immanent limit at which perception is eclipsed by a sheerness of experience, as yet unextended into analytically ordered, predictably reproducible, possible action” (ibid., p. 97). Which also means that sensation is of the between, “*between* the perceiver and the perceived” (ibid, p. 90; italics in original). Always in motion, sensation is in excess over consciousness, yet despite it (or precisely because of it) inaugurates a qualitative difference that is *presencing* in the world.

On this view, sonic artworks are more than ‘material facts’ played back to an audience. Here, I refer to recorded sounds (field recordings) or vibrations that somehow modulate a work or result from a process. (The spectrum of sonic art is wide. My description is in no way representative of a still burgeoning field. It is limited to the artistic practices and works presented at *Sonic Peripheries* only.) We might say that sonic artworks are creations of factual-fictional intensities or energies extracted from the natural world. We thus turn to sonic art practices and performances that operate at the interface of the virtual and actual, generating

¹³ Translated from German by the author. Here in the original: “Erst indem das Denken sich wieder vermählt mit dem Fühlen – wo in einem Denkprozess der menschliche Körper mit seinen Empfindungen reagiert, um das mal vorsichtig auszudrücken – ja, erst dann kann man überhaupt sicher sein, dass in dem Denken irgendetwas geschieht, was für den Menschen wichtig ist.”

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'moods' or 'affective tonalities' (Whitehead's terms), provoking new experiences and expressions that link to the qualitative difference ('the lively') that live on. In closing this thought, we might also say that Thomssen's prehension of the sonic artwork-performance is exactly 'what it is' *because* it is informed by the moods, the lived abstraction felt as 'the in-ness' of one moment to the next.

"In fact, [the body] is just as much part of nature as anything else there – a river, or a mountain, or a cloud. Also, if we are fussily exact, we cannot define where a body begins and where external nature ends" (Whitehead 1968, p. 21).

In what follows, we embark on a minor detour that is major in terms of its experimental and experiential merit. The aim is to connect theory and practice by way of listening, then empirically map the occurrences that are both fact and fiction in order to further demonstrate how thinking-sound in relation to thinking feeling *does* (informs one another). For this, we rehearse a text score by the sound and media artist Achim Wollscheid:

Please listen carefully to the different sounds of your environment
Adopt one of the sounds
Try to imagine this single sound expanded over one minute
Do not change it, just maintain it
Try not to hum it, just think it
Then quit ¹⁴

♦ ♦ ♦

Wollscheid's text score along with other signs was mounted in Hampstead Heath, London as part of the project *Piece for a Listener* (LaBelle 2000 in Ehrlich et al.

¹⁴ Text score as quoted in Ehrlich, K. et al. eds. 2003. *Surface Tension: Problematics of Site*. Los Angeles: Errant Bodies Press, p. 222.

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2003, p. 221). It asks the random passer-by to shift the attention and “consider sound as an affective and influential physical phenomena in the world [...] And more so, as an ecological layer in which we are implicated” (ibid., p. 222). (If you haven’t already tried, I encourage you to take a moment to engage in the practice. In my view, it can be carried out at any time and anywhere.) As soon as we partake in the experiment, we notice the complexity of the task or activity. Among other things, it shows that “[t]he physicality of sound, as a movement of air pressure, of vibration, of interpenetrating exchanges from all around, forms an enveloping and effective influence” (LaBelle 2010, p. 133). Doing research in and through sonic art practices corroborates these ideas; further, I hold that our attentiveness opens up to the world of vibrational forces: a strange but nevertheless familiar reality.¹⁵ This is not the place to dive into a full discussion of modes of listening, though; suffice it to say that alone “the advent of recording and broadcasting forever altered the experience of listening and drew attention to the act of listening itself” (Cox & Warner 2004, p. 66). Indeed, the possibility of re-listening to *recorded* sounds poses yet another set of problems that artists, scientists, and theorists have been attending to and addressed through their respective practices. Seminal figures since WWII such as Pierre Schaeffer and R. Murray Schafer must be mentioned here. The former coined the term ‘*musique concrète*’ (concrete music) and dedicated his artistic-theoretical career to developing a typology of sounds,¹⁶ while the latter initiated the so-called Acoustic

¹⁵ I engage my students in listening exercises on a regular basis. Depending on the course, I will devise a series of prompts that start simple and increase in difficulty during the term. The difficulty lies in the ability of discerning how sound effectuates: what it does, how it does, and lastly, what it is, what it means to a person; in other words, the complexity that comes along with listening ‘as such’. Here is one such prompt followed by a question. The query is as simple as it is demanding: “Take 10 minutes to listen to your surroundings. What did you notice? Please describe.”

¹⁶ On Schaeffer’s sonic research see Chion, M. 1983/2009. *Guide to Sound Objects: Pierre Schaeffer and Musical Research*. Trans. J. Dack & C. North. *EARS*. [Online PDF] Available at: <http://ears.pierrecouprie.fr/spip.php?article3597> [Accessed: 21 May 2018].

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Ecology movement along with like-minded musicians, artists, and thinkers.¹⁷ (More on this topic in Part Four.) However, for the time being, let us refocus on listening and adopt one, two or three sounds as samples for probing factual-fictional energies.

Say you spent some time 'just' listening to the surroundings – what did you notice? To me, Wollscheid's text score poses a challenge. It requires of us to zero in on a particular occurrence that once in perceptual focus vanishes within split seconds. We might go so far as to say that the score invites failure. Or, put differently and giving my remark a positive spin, it confronts us with a phenomenological and epistemological complication, or rather, *complicatedness* (as in 'elaborately intra-/interconnected'). Our enactment of the text score reveals "the interconnectedness of things, their interplay across the senses, and the implicatedness of the individual within a broader field of concern" (Ehrlich et al. 2003, p. 222).

As I type these lines, I sit in front of my laptop, indoors, and try to listen intently at the same time. The window is closed. The door of my study is closed, too. It seems quiet apart from the expected sounds of keyboard strokes, a few cars passing in the distance, and the soft fizz of sparkling water in a glass next to me; the water emitting tiny popping sounds – irregular and somewhat edgy – is creating a curious percussive noise. And, finally, there is muted birdsong. I decide to adopt the sound, or strictly speaking, the sounds of the fizzy drink. I stick with

¹⁷ Acoustic ecology, also known as soundscape studies, started in the early 1970s with R. Murray Schafer and other scholars from the Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, Canada) as part of the World Soundscape Project, later to be re-inaugurated as the World Forum of Acoustic Ecology. Still active today, the international community of ecologists, scientists, musicians, and listeners are interested in outlining "a sociology of sound," so Ken Ehrlich et al.: "for what becomes apparent in soundscape studies is the overall structure of social institutions, their manifestation in governmental policies related to noise, and the ways in which a more general attitude towards sound as reflected in listening consciousness is manifest in social relations" (2003, p. 222). More on Acoustic Ecology see Schafer, R. M. 1977/1994. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester: Destiny Books.

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them for some time. While the pops get softer and less and less prominent, I take up Wollscheid's cue and *imagine* the sonic event. A shift from the factual to the fictional? Not quite; this inference would be too short-sighted. Thinking *about* sound is not what I mean by thinking-sound.

Let us try again.

Here we are imagining-intuiting the sound of sparkling water. Glittering flashes of tiny pops, small sonorous explosions, which, as the effervescence subsides, will eventually fade away from earshot. We know or *attune to* the intricacies of an eventfulness in its acquiring gestalt in the form of frequencies, intensities and duration. We think-feel the expressive taking-form of the sonic. Wollscheid's prompt incites a reading and invites the listener to explore sounds as conceptual constructs. But more so, the activity lets us slip into the artfulness of the everyday. As Massumi advocates in *Semblance and Event*: "There is an artfulness in every experience. Art and everyday perception are in continuity with one another" (2011, p. 45). As said before, the point I want to make is not easily made, since the thinking-feeling of what happens that Massumi means pertains to what he refers to as "the messy middling goings-on of pure experience in all its potential and complexity" (ibid., p. 11). (Massumi draws from neuroscientist Antonio Damasio who employs the phrase 'the feeling of what happens' as a description for "that background feeling of what it's 'like' to be alive, here and now" [ibid.]). Messy and maybe difficult to come by, but still, *something that's doing*; or put this way and bring it to a point: "Something's happening. [...] There's happening doing. This is where philosophical thinking must begin: immediately in the middle" (ibid., p. 1). Thus we look to Massumi's activist philosophy in order to come by, which is to say, to problematize *middling with/in the event* in relation to sonic art and associated practices.

What art can do is to reveal a world, a nature to which we are no strangers, Rick Dolphijn (2014) reminds us, but "have been blind or deaf to [...] a

wholly other nature that we have just never ‘been in’ before” (p. 190; emphasis added). Nature ‘unforeheard’ offers an alterity that “reveals pure elements and dissolves objects, bodies and the earth” (Deleuze 1969/1990, p. 317). In Deleuze, the concept of ‘wholly other’ is linked to Michel Tournier (*Friday, or, The Other Island* [1967]),¹⁸ though it can also be identified within other creative fields aside from literature. The notion cuts across all the arts where the distinction between content and form is suspended. Dolphijn in ‘The Revelation of a World that was Always Already There’ demonstrates this via Samuel Beckett who comments on Joyce’s literary work: “Here form *is* content, content *is* form. His writing is not *about* something; *it is something itself*” (as quoted in 2014, p. 189; italics in original). It is an occasioning of wholly otherness, a breaking open the present, a revealing of nature ‘unforeheard’. Dolphijn concludes that “this otherness is never ‘outside’ of something” and insists that “[t]he revelation of a world is in no way imaginary or idealist. The world given rise to is revealed as both a new material assemblage and as the idea that belongs to it” (ibid., pp. 189, 190). Here, too, “we become with the world” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 169). Becoming-world as sensory becoming is “otherness caught in a matter of expression” (ibid., p. 177); a kind of contraction of material and immaterial (spiritual) forces into affect-emergences – as we have already seen in our earlier case.

Thinking-sound inaugurates the factual-fictional energies of ‘the lively’ occurrence where ‘form is content, content is form’ – to borrow the Beckettian phrase. (Note that the hyphen connecting the terms factual and fictional denotes their coming together, co-occurring along the same creative flow. Keith Robinson informs us that for both Deleuze and Whitehead, “being, thinking, and creativity are one” [2010, p. 122]. Every activity, event or *sonic occurrence* is thus creation or ‘creativity’.) The attending to ‘the messy middling goings-on’ allows us to respond and resonate with the materiality surrounding us; we *slip in*. In other words, we practice a listening that “produces an opening for, an experience of the

¹⁸ See Deleuze, G. 1969/1990. *The Logic of Sense*. London: The Athlone Press, p. 312ff.

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event, precisely, as the affect” (O’Sullivan 2001a, p. 128); connecting us directly to the natural world, ‘intra-acting’ within the dynamism of its forces (Barad 2007, p. 141). This we can intuit through the tiny pops, the evanescent sonic explosions (or, indeed, through whichever sounds you have chosen during the detour, our sonic excursion, that is). Another example for middling-with/in is Radovic’s somewhat bizarre ‘tickle-and-skull’ analogy for the affective quality specific to a sonic event of *Sonic Peripheries #6*. Bizarre, uncanny or beautiful – whatever we call it, the occasioning of experience is not a ‘signifying relation’; rather, the beautiful, bizarre, ugly or just unprecedented occurrence is the registering of the experience’s taking effect. This is not altogether a conscious act on behalf of the listener, that is to say, ‘the subject who intends’, as the phenomenologists might say. No will of the Self to listen ‘artfully’ is required, quite the contrary. To think-sound involves a kind of listening with emphasis on awareness that enables us to “sidestep ourselves,” as O’Sullivan (2001a, p. 128) puts it.

The pragmatic act required to ‘sidestep our self’ is neither prescribed nor follows a specific procedure. Though the attitude enacted may be close to what Henri Bergson terms ‘sympathy’, an aspect of his philosophical method known as *intuition*; the issue at stake in Bergson’s approach is to “enter into an experience *directly*, so as to ‘coincide’ and ‘sympathise’ with it” (Stagoll 2010d, p. 136; italics in original). The question (or ploy?) is how the human observer can exceed habitual thinking and its all too anthropocentric leanings. Here Stagoll’s commentary is quite instructive: “The manner in which one achieves this [i.e., to coincide and to sympathize], though, is notoriously difficult to describe, with as many characterisations as scholarly commentaries. Sometimes Bergson aligns intuition with artistic sensibility and awareness, or a detachment from reality. At other times he associates it with pure instinct” (ibid.). The latter point is of interest to us: “Instinct, Bergson says, is not cognitive. It is sympathetic;” and as such, it is a mode of thinking that is one with doing (Massumi 2014, p. 32).

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We 'do' as we slip in the event's unfolding in the blink of an ear, as it were – middling with/in the event. This is not a listening to, but rather a listening-*in* and a listening-*through* the physicality of sound: "Pure energy forms, directly perceptually-felt as rhythm in an amodal in-between of hearing and proprioception on a boarder zone with thought" (Massumi 2011, p. 145). Hearing (or perception of vibrations more generally) and thinking are two poles of the same process. Echoed in my own words, experience is change ap/prehended as the slide between perception and thought, the feedback and feedforward between the limits, enfolding the not-yet-thought and unfolding future-thought. We think-feel in sensation and we become (wholly other) through sensation. We are sympathetically attending-to the something's-happening that transports us "into the heart of a unique event that is just beginning, with which our life will now coincide, but whose outcome is as yet unknowable, and consequently inexpressible" (Massumi 2014, p. 32). Whatever wells up from below the threshold of our awareness brings to bear a (naturing) nature unforeheard.

Sonic art practices in particular induce an affirmative ambivalence (or 'paradoxical affirmation', see in the Introduction). The ambivalence lies in the nature of the sonic's occasioning as an energetic, physical phenomenon that has the power to affect and yield effects. It is integrally ecological in the sense that its occurring implicates environments (both human and nonhuman). This is not to say sound is naturally 'natural' as opposed to 'cultural' – rather it oscillates along a 'nature-culture continuum' (Massumi's term, see 2011, p. 165); *alas*, my choice of linking the words: factual-fictional. Perhaps the neologism leaves much to be desired? Nonetheless, it should point to *the potential inherent in the occasioning itself* – as the life dynamic that it is, the potential of being 'the feeling of what happens', the 'vitality affect', which Massumi discusses with regard to the imperceptible, the virtual or 'pure potentiality' underlying all experiences (Deleuze

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1988/1933; Whitehead 1929/1978).¹⁹ “Art brings that vitality affect to the fore [...; and art] brings back out the fact that all form is a full-spectrum *dynamic form* of life. There is really no such thing as fixed form” (Massumi 2011, p. 45; italics in original).

In anticipation of what comes next, it might be worth emphasizing that Massumi's activist nonobject philosophy is invested in the occasion of experience and its makeup as singular event in an ongoing activity synonymous with life. Whitehead, Deleuze, and Massumi – each one is interested in mapping the conditions of a novel experience-in-the-making. This thinking presupposes that creativity and novelty lie at the gist of all matter and more so: *pure potentiality lies at the gist of all matter to come as it comes to matter*. Of interest is that art and everyday perception relay each other. Of concern is to practice a thinking-sound as artistic and philosophical pragmatic that shows us ‘the techniques of existences, unforeheard’ (cf. Dolphijn 2013). Hence, we slip in the midst of ‘what's-known’ and ‘what's-not-known’ to encounter a wholly other nature that forces us to think anew. What's next follows in the lines of thought established so far and seeks to explore *the happenings, the encounters* that make us think. To do this we look into what Massumi calls ‘semblance’ (and ‘techniques of existence’) in relation to Whitehead's aesthetic ontology to further elaborate on the question of what happens when *sound happens as aesthetic force* – keeping in mind that *Sonic Peripheries*' concerns lie in finding out how the form of content, that is, the material condition of a sonic artwork-performance, and the form of expression (as sensation) are co-emerging, or being produced in one another. Finally, let me close this section by remarking that sound's occasioning

¹⁹ The term ‘vitality affect’ originates with American psychiatrist and psychoanalytic theorist Daniel Stern. See Stern, D. 1985. *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 53–61; Stern, D. 2010. *Forms of Vitality: Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, Arts, Psychotherapy, and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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comes in many guises, as the case studies to be discussed below have demonstrated experimentally-experientially (see esp. Part Three: Experiment 1 and Part Four: Experiment 2). My task, then, is to engage in a kind of mapping of sonic occurrence that does justice to sound's unique coming into existence as aesthetic figures through artistic practices, participant involvement and other fictive or real intercessors.²⁰

²⁰ "There is no work, Deleuze writes, without intercessors. 'Fictive or real, animate or inanimate, our intercessors must be created. They come in series'" (Deleuze 1995, p. 125 as quoted in Manning & Massumi 2014, p. 64). See Manning, E. & Massumi, B. 2014. *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Deleuze, G. 1990/1995. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

AESTHETIC ENCOUNTER

‘It happens that ...’¹

Jean-François Lyotard

It happens that *there is* ... it happens that there is *something* in the encounter with the sonic (vibrational force, audible or not) that impinges on the environs of which we as listeners (or ‘participants’) partake in – however, not exclusively so. The encounter with vibrational force is active and all-pervasive, “a becoming-temporal of spatial movements and spatial processes, the promise of a future modeled in some ways on the rhythm and regularity of the present” (Grosz 2008, p. 55). A material event occurs, happens – *happenstance* – between one thing and another: “Physically, vibrations occur as oscillations due to frictions or the pressure waves of a sound, resulting in a resonating energy field. [...] Sounds are generated by vibrating objects and materials, and they in turn generate, through a sort of reciprocal exchange, further vibrations as they come to touch material surfaces” (LaBelle 2010, p. 134). Take a drumhead, for instance. Tap a drum and its membrane begins to vibrate, waves of energy drifting outwards – similar to a

¹ Lyotard 1988, p. 18 as quoted in O’Sullivan 2001a, p. 128. See also Lyotard, J.-F. 1988. *Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 16–27. See O’Sullivan, S. 2001a. The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art beyond Representation. *Angelaki*, 6(3), 125–135.

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pebble striking the surface of water, generating movement away from the point of contact. A sound takes place: *splash!*, then propagates in vibrant silence; or, a percussive *thump!*, resonating through the drum, a noise occupying spaces, lives.

For Jean-François Lyotard, “to encounter an event is like bordering on nothingness” (1988, p. 18). When he speaks of an event (his idea of ‘eventness’ as described in *Peregrinations*), Lyotard does not imply sound per se. Indeed, he doesn’t specify ‘what’ exactly ‘there is’ that is encountered (in the everyday in general, or in art in particular) other than that “‘there is’ something here and now, regardless of what it is” (1988, p. 19). This “uncanny ‘fact’” is to be endured as “‘directly’ as possible without the mediation or protection of a ‘pre-text’” (ibid., pp. 19, 18) – hence Lyotard’s definition of an event as “the face to face with nothingness” (ibid., p. 17). O’Sullivan adopts the latter’s call for ‘a practice of patience’, which he further conceptualizes in his own writings on art and aesthetics, affect and the production of subjectivity (O’Sullivan 2001a, 2001b, 2006). The appeal for a *practice of patience* lies in the pragmatics of the act: a kind of listening within and ‘beyond’ as experiential non-intentional doing that opens onto “a void that is not a nothingness but a *virtual*, containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms” (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 118; italics in original). To face nothingness, then, does not confront us with an absence, a lack of some kind – on the contrary, this attunement allows for something to happen that lets us access “a kind of *immanent beyond* to everyday experience” (O’Sullivan 2011a, p. 127; italics in original). Indeed, “[n]othingness is not absence, but the infinite plentitude of openness,” we are reminded by theoretical physicist Karen Barad. In *What Is the Measure of Nothingness?* (2012, p. 16), she explains: “Infinities are not mere mathematical idealizations, but incarnate marks of in/determinacy. Infinities are a constitutive part of all material ‘finites’, or perhaps more aptly, ‘af/finites’ (*affinities*, from the Latin, ‘related to or bordering on; connection, relationship’).” The it-happens-that perhaps compares to an im/material touch, a fleeting gestalt in movement, in the

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sense of “a oneness-in-manyness of a moving on” arising on the edge of the in/finite (Massumi 2011, p. 35). “[I]f we listen carefully,” advises Barad, “we can hear the whispered murmurings of infinity immanent in even the smallest details” (2012, p. 16). To listen-in is a kind of attentiveness based on the ethos of patience or equanimity (*Gelassenheit*), a ‘letting-be’ of things and situations in their unfolding; “impoverish your mind,” says Lyotard, “so that you make it incapable of anticipating the meaning, the ‘What’ of the ‘It happens ...’” (1988, p. 18). This sympathetic-attending-to the it-happens-that of *the smallest details*, may lead to discerning nature's unforeheard clamor in the depth of pure sonic energy forms (see Part Three: Experiment 1 and Part Four). Finally, and not surprisingly, John Cage comes to mind. The artist, composer, writer, mycologist, and practitioner of Zen follows an aesthetics similar to Lyotard's “ascetic attitude” (ibid., p. 20), premised on the principle of “let[ting] sounds be themselves” (Cage 1961, p. 10).

The upcoming anecdote of Cage's visit to the anechoic chamber (a room with an exceptionally low degree of reverberation) is well known in the field of sound studies, and it has been retold many times.² Needless to say: it is worth

² See, for instance, Augoyard, J.F. et al. 2006. *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP; Kahn, D. 1997. John Cage: Silence and Silencing. *The Musical Quarterly*, 81(4), 556–598; Kim-Cohen, S. 2009. *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*. New York: Continuum; Nudds, M. & O'Callaghan, C. eds. 2010. *Sounds and Perception: New Philosophical Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Toop, D. 2010. *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of The Listener*. New York: Continuum. Also view the excerpt of Nam June Paik's 1973 video work 'Global Groove' where John Cage describes his visit to the anechoic chamber: “It was after I got to Boston that I went into the anechoic chamber at Harvard University. Anybody who knows me, knows this story. I am constantly telling it. Anyway, in that silent room I heard two sounds: one high and one low. Afterwards I asked the engineer in charge: ‘Why, if the room was so silent, I had heard two sounds?’ He said: ‘Describe them.’ I did. He said: ‘The high one was your nervous system in operation, the low one was your blood in circulation’.” Transcribed by the author from Paik, N. J. & Cage, J. 1973. John Cage, a visit to the anechoic chamber. *Global Groove* (excerpt). [Youtube] Available at: <https://youtu.be/jS9ZOIFB-kI> [Accessed: 21 May 2018].

repeating, though this time I seek to emphasize the interconnectedness – strictly speaking, the intra-activity – of energies taking effect (i.e., material finites in the taking-form as part of an entangled state).³ Here, I want to suggest that Cage's experience gives way to a radical-empirical account of patiently ap/prehending a situatedness, which eventually, yet decisively, turns away from predetermined 'nature'/'culture' distinctions. He (or something?) lets-be and listens, enabling what I call a genuine aesthetic encounter. What follows is Cage's description of the event of 1951:

[... I] heard two sounds, one high and one low. [... The engineer] informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation. Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music. But this fearlessness only follows if, at the parting of the ways, where it is realized that sounds occur whether intended or not, one turns in the direction of those [one] does not intend. [...] This psychological turning leads to the world of nature, where, gradually or suddenly, one sees that humanity and nature, not separate, are in this world together. (ibid., p. 8)

³ Here I refer to Karan Barad's notion of *onto-epistemology* or, more precisely, what she terms 'ethico-onto-epistem-ology' which, in her words, "point[s] at the inseparability of ethics, ontology and epistemology when engaging in (scientific) knowledge production, with scientific practices, and with the world itself and its inhabitants – human and non-human beings that intra-actively co-constitute the world" (2007, p. 90 as quoted in Geerts 2016, n.p.). See Geerts, E. 2016. Ethico-onto-epistem-ology. *New Materialism*. [Online] Available at: <http://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/e/ethico-onto-epistem-ology> [Accessed: 25 May 2018]; Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

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Two remarks should be made regarding this. Not even silence can be free of sounds.⁴ Cage's sudden '(spiritual) insight' engendered a radical shift in the artist's conception of sound and silence (which is never 'silent'), heralding in its wake unprecedented sonic art practices. Listening for Cage, then and later, means listening to all noise, whether sound, silence or music. And he offers a simple formula: "All I am doing is directing attention to the sounds of the environment" (1995, p. 98). In the film documentary *Listening* (1992), Cage briefly speaks about sound in relation to listener expectations: "When I talk about music, it finally comes to people's mind that I am talking about sound that doesn't mean anything. It is not inner, but is just outer. [... Those] who understood this finally said, 'You mean it's just sounds?'" In that sense, he promotes a practice that *redirects* attention to the ongoing vibration that is sound. Thus, meaning can be found in sound itself resonating in and as part of an environment. Cage objects to anthropomorphizing the sonic and prefers, again, "to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments" (1961, p. 10). Surely, sound occurs 'out there'; however, in my view, it is neither 'inner' nor 'outer' but *immanently there*. This expanded reading denotes a vibrant ecology where sound is understood as oscillatory material force.

Critical in Cage's perception of his *aesthetic encounter* is the realization that sounds just happen, indeed keep on happening, regardless of one's intentions. The listening-in on the it-happens-that opens up to "the world of nature, where, gradually or suddenly, one sees that humanity and nature, *not* separate, are in this world together" (ibid., p. 8; emphasis added). For Cage, this understanding presupposes a 'cognitive turn', that is to say, a surrender of purposiveness that lets us sail the ocean of sound. Nothing is lost. "In fact, everything is gained. In musical terms, any sounds may occur in any combination and in any

⁴ Or put this way: Not even silence can be free of *vibrational force*. Cf. Barad, K. 2012. What is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, Justice. *DOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notes 100 Thoughts*, No. 99. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, p. 12.

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continuity” (ibid.). In ‘Experimental Music’ (1961), Cage brings up the question of why to compose music. I shall quote his musings in their entirety in order to then conclude with some thoughts on the nature-culture entanglement introduced here.

And what is the purpose of writing music? One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but dealing with sounds. Or the answer must take the form of paradox: *a purposeful purposelessness or a purposeless play*. This play, however, is an affirmation of life – not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s mind and one’s desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord. (ibid., p. 12; emphasis added)

The question we pursue is less the question of why write music; rather, we seek to pursue the Cageian paradox as formulated above. First, however, let me reflect once more on Cage’s experience in the anechoic chamber – more precisely, his phenomenological account of embodied experience. Clearly Cage anticipated ‘pure’ silence but encounters his own corporeal being instead – the background noise of life: breath, metabolism, circulating blood. This basic albeit profound realization that all noise is silence (or silence is noise) led to his reevaluation of sound, silence, and music. To turn towards *any* sounds without preconception requires in his words a “psychological turning” that calls for “a giving up of everything that belongs to humanity – for a musician, the giving up of music;” he concludes that “humanity and nature” are allied in this world (ibid., p. 8). There is an *affinity* (to say it with Barad), a connection with what we take to be our humanity (or culture) and nature. This is similar to what Massumi will argue in *Parables for the Virtual*, namely that nature and culture are not disentangled

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from one another but belong to the same continuum. For the latter, “the ‘natural’ and the ‘cultural’ feedforward and back into each other. They relay each other to such an extent that the distinction cannot be maintained in any strict sense” (Massumi 2002, p. 11).⁵

My aim at this juncture is to present an extension to Cage’s proposition. I argue that the encounter with the sonic necessitates more than a cognitive turn. It requires foremost an *aesthetic operation* that rests on the entangled state of nature in culture (or, if you prefer, cultured nature) and the processes involved in aesthetic experience. Here Whitehead’s aesthetic ontology is of significance and to that, we will now turn.

Whitehead’s ontology is aesthetic due to his account of prehension, which, simply put, privileges feeling over understanding. In this sense, the term, the concept of aesthetics does not primarily imply a theory of the beautiful, that is, a theory of art more generally. Rather, in its root meaning, aesthetics implicates the senses and sensibility. Whitehead’s philosophical thought on par with William James’s radical empiricism (more on this below) advocates *experience* as the basis for all ‘our’ knowing. Nothing lies outside experience and experience, hence, includes everything. Therefore not only humans ‘feel’, but so do nonhuman, organic and nonorganic entities; as such, an electron has feelings, desire and creative impetus. Whitehead says, “The basis of experience is emotional” (1933/1967, p. 176). His cosmos is filled with “throbs of feeling” or also “pulses of experience” where actual occasions as basic elements of his process philosophy engage in mutual relations of provocation.⁶ This ‘doing’ he calls prehension. Whitehead

⁵ Thus the need, according to Massumi, “to theorize a *nature-culture continuum*” (2002, p. 11; italics in original). See also Massumi, B. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 38–39; 258n10.

⁶ See Whitehead, A.N. 1933/1967. *Adventures of Ideas*. New York: The Free Press, p. 177; Lachmann, R. 1997. Susanne K. Langer’s Notes on Whitehead’s Course on Philosophy of Nature. *Process Studies*,

employs the term *prehension* rather than perception in order to avoid anthropomorphic, that is, cognitive and rationalistic connotations. On this view, rocks, electrons, trees, jellyfish, microbes, and ourselves are equally filled with pulses or throbs of experience. As we are aware of touching, tasting, hearing with our body, so does a plant nonconsciously feel and nonsensuously think itself in the act of growing towards the direction of light (see Marder 2013; Massumi 2011).

It is the creative dynamic, the rhythms of lived experience shared by nonorganic and organic life that is of concern here. To inquire into the sonic's *creativity* also means to ascertain the *dynamic details* of a process. "These details are played out at the level of the emergent occasion, in the constellation of the event. They are [...] its technicities, its overarticulations, its preaccelerations. They are the event's *more-than*," writes Erin Manning (2014, p. 323; emphasis added). We take up Manning's cue and consider the 'more-than' in our context to mean the 'uncanny' ap/prehension of a qualitative dimension that often goes unnoticed in everyday perception. This brings us to Massumi's project and what he refers to as "an artfulness in every experience" (2011, p. 45). He (with Manning) holds that it is precisely in art through which we ap/prehend life dynamics, that is, the lively details of a process: "Art brings that vitality affect to the fore" (ibid.). We perceive –prehend, if you will – relationally and through processes. That is also to say, there is always more than meets the eye (and ear). There is a potential moreness that wells up from an overfull nothingness. The trick here will be how to account for the more-than. Hence, we follow Massumi's lead (which he in turn took from James) that says, "take everything as it comes" (ibid., p. 86) – which lands us back onto Cageian aesthetics.

Knowingly or not, Cage enacted a radical empiricism that is invested in a 'purposeless play' and the credo of 'a purposeful purposelessness'. This seeming

26(1/2), p. 150. Goodman, S. 2010. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, pp. 95–98.

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paradox welcomes the complexity of the world, this life, a life. It is his commitment to say 'yes, and' – accept purposefully and carry on purposelessly – in the creation of art (note that my reading should be taken with the caveat that Cage, his life and artistic practice certainly show further breadth and are not limited to the above). My point here is that Cage not only 'deals with' sounds, he also deals with all phenomena (which classical empiricism excludes). Whitehead's ontology includes and describes them as 'eternal objects' that are "relations, contrasts and patterns [... that are] real, because they are themselves 'experienced relations', or primordial elements of experience" (Shaviro 2009, pp. 40–41). We might say that the artist sidesteps his subjectivity in 'the dealings' with the world: listening-in and letting be; attuning to a world of relations. Cage's practice here takes the form of a non-intentional pragmatics where (sound) art "is the technique for making that necessary but normally unperceived fact perceptible, in a qualitative perception that is as much about life itself as it is about the things we live by" (Massumi 2011, p. 45). This is not a throwback into romanticism – if anything, it is a realism with the odd touch of mystic happenstance.

Deleuze and Guattari, Whitehead, Massumi and Manning, now Cage – what links them? And how does this relate to our venture? First of all, the common thread lies with creativity or what Deleuze calls "the formation of a New" (1988/1993, p. 77). This brings with it the underlying questions of what an event is and what the conditions are that make an event possible. Furthermore, I suggest that their practices – philosophical, artistic, or both – entail an empiricism that is always already middling in the eventness: It is a thinking-in-motion that does not start in the mind but in nature. "For Whitehead, nature thinks;" this might raise eyebrows but was once explained by Manning as follows: "When Whitehead says that nature 'is impenetrable by thought', what he means is that thought does not enter into nature from the outside to orchestrate it from without. Nature is not a passive element to be mediated. Nor is thought a mediating activity" (Whitehead 1929, p. 13 as quoted in 2013, p. 214). This said,

thinking presents a rhythmic to and fro *from within* – enfolding the not-yet-thought and unfolding future-thought: “Nature *creates* thought” (ibid.; italics in original).

“I guess, I felt it. And I really did” (Radovic 2012). Something’s happened! “There’s happening doing,” to echo Massumi and recall for a moment Radovic’s expression from the previous section: the tickle-and-skull; the glimmer of sensation that affects the body, mind, and spirit – the latter, however, precludes any notion of transcendence.⁷ In *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead makes use of the word *concern*, which, appropriated from the Quakers (Religious Society of Friends, a Christian movement), is a term suitable to express what the tickle itself marks – namely, “the rise of an affective tone originating from things whose relevance is given;” it is “divested of any knowledge” conveying the “fundamental structure” of experience (Whitehead 1933/1967, p. 176). “Aesthetics is the mark of what Whitehead calls our concern for the world, and for entities in the world” (Shaviro 2009, p. 46; italics in original). It is a philosophy that inquires into *how* the something’s-happening *is* doing that shows a genuine concern for the *affective tone*, the qualitative-relational dimension of something’s-happening doing – in short, the event’s more-than – especially relevant in the context of sonic artwork-performances. This speculative philosophical attitude wants to exceed epistemology and circumvent hermeneutics; it engages in the concern for the relations that connect experiences, which are exactly these in/determinate and hard to grasp atmospheres or ‘moods’ that enliven the encounter with the sonic – that is to say, those situatednesses which this adventure explores. In

⁷ ‘Spirit’ here can be read both as *natura naturans* as well as a *natura naturata*. “The first term may be literally translated as ‘nature naturing’, that is, as producing itself, while the second may be translated as ‘nature natured’, that is, created forms. The former is thus a verb, intrinsically and internally dynamic; the second, a noun, suggesting greater inertia and heteronomy” (Coole 2010, p. 97). In that sense spirit – as nature’s force – *creates* thought giving impetus to a thinking that starts from within. Coole, D. 2010. The Inertia of Matter. In D. Coole & S. Frost eds. *New Materialism: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 50–115.

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Essays in Radical Empiricism, James writes: “*the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as ‘real’ as anything else in the system*” (1912, p. 42; italics in original). Here, indeed, through the sonic artworks and performances, we participate *in the concern for any kind of relation* that we prehend as intensities of varying degrees, tendencies, which are felt in their movement-moving on. Not imagined but stirring the imagination, no less.

♦ ♦ ♦



Figure 1

Shawn Decker (foreground), *Sonic Peripheries #6*, 'Non/Natura Naturans; Discerned Presence' (2012). Art Gallery Künstlerstätte Stuhr-Heiligenrode, June 28, 2012. Photo by Annika Meyer.

It is the event. Vibrations of sound disperse, periodic movements go through space with their harmonics or submultiples. The sounds have inner qualities of height, intensity, and timbre. The sources of the sounds [e.g., analog, electromechanical or synthesized oscillations] are not content only to send the sounds out: each one perceives its own, and perceives the others while perceiving its own. These are active perceptions that are expressed among each other, or else prehensions that are prehending one another. (Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 80)

2. 

Wow! A performative-installation is featured tonight.⁸

Shawn Decker – US American artist, musician, composer – suggested the term ‘performative-installation’ for the sonic artwork-performance presented at *Sonic Peripheries #6* (see Figs. 1 and 2). The set-up for both performance and installation consisted of 36 two-inch speakers, three pairs of Genelec speakers and three additional studio speakers (used as mono output), all of which were distributed throughout the entire first floor of the gallery (including the kitchen, bathroom, and hallway). The small speakers, situated along the walls of the large exhibition space, functioned as kinetic electromechanical device emitting *clicking* sounds. The other loudspeakers diffused Decker’s field recordings from various parts of the world (ranging from atmospheric sounds of places to more concrete sonic *gestalten* – e.g. a seagull’s scream or the bullfrogs’ booming croaks). In addition, a microphone positioned above the gallery entrance piped in noise from the local outdoors, which were intermittently fed into the live mix, the

⁸ In reference to Deleuze’s phrase in the chapter ‘What is an Event?’ of *The Fold* where he begins with the statement: “A concert is being performed tonight” (1988/1993, p. 80). As an aside, Deleuze considers the latter sentence to be his favorite of *The Fold*; see Deleuze, G. 1990/1995. *Negotiations, 1972–1990*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 160. Deleuze, G. 1988/1993. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Athlone.

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performance indoors. What was heard, or rather experienced, throughout the performative-installation were many events producing a rich soundscape of on-site sounds combined with field recordings in juxtaposition with synth-based sounds, clicks and swoosh-like motions simulating the rhythms and patterns found within any ecosystem: A sonic multiplicity or composite mediated through technology, that is, hard- and software like laptop, synthesizer module, micro-controllers, mixer, etc. programmed and performed live by the artist.



Figure 2

Two-inch speakers mounted along the gallery walls (here, below the windows), emitting clicking sounds.

Aesthetic Encounter

One of Decker's intentions was to tap into what he calls the 'inherent rhythms' of field recordings. Deploying bricolage and other bespoke techniques, Decker created an abstraction from sonic matter that doesn't represent 'a' place, but rather, I will say, enacts lived abstraction: semblance of rhythms and patterns immanent within resonance of spaciousness in the making.

I invited Decker to participate in this case study, particularly since his art practice is positioned at the intersection of music composition, the plastic arts and performance, using physical and electronic media to investigate, simulate, and praise the natural (and 'non-natural') worlds.

Massumi uses "the word *relation* to refer to the full spectrum of vitality that the dynamic form really includes, potentially, abstractly self-expressed in its semblance" (Massumi 2011, p. 46; italics in original). Semblance does not refer to a specious appearance of a 'thing' – it's not an illusion. Rather, semblances eventuate in the encounter with art as *aesthetic effects*. Similar to Manning's more-than, Massumi says that semblance is "a placeholder in present perception of a potential 'more' to life" (ibid., p. 49). Through semblances we can intuit-
imagine "the experiential reality of the virtual" (ibid., pp. 15–16) – the virtual to mean "the abstract event potential in lived experience" (ibid., p. 49). Here, Deleuze explains: "once you have reached lived experience, you reach the most fully living core of the abstract. In other words, lived experience represents nothing. And you can live nothing but the abstract." (1978, n.p.). Massumi (pace Susanne Langer) illustrates this nearly counter-intuitive notion through an example from the decorative arts: vegetal motifs. We don't actually see "spirals, we see spiraling. We see a *movement* that flows *through* the design" (2011, p. 41; italics in original). Nothing is moving, yet it is. It is an abstract but *real* movement. "Semblance is the manner in which the virtual *actually appears*. It is the being of the virtual as lived abstraction" (ibid., pp. 15–16; italics in original). Wow! The artwork's affect is felt as the aesthetic effect within an instant.

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Also, we might know this effect as the feeling we have – quite literally – when the tiny hairs rooted in the dermis of one's skin rise in response to something unfamiliar in the familiar: a 'goose bumps' (or hair-rising) moment. Agreeable, disagreeable or otherwise, the judgment of the affect and its effect *felt* (as goose bumps, for instance) is another matter altogether. (Consider the mind's maneuver to comprehend and categorize what follows from the encounter to be an after-effect.)

In conversation with this author, Decker himself speaks of *Wow!* as the feeling of the THAT – *that* which marks the moment of change and also *genuine* surprise. Here is an excerpt from the interview:

There were several moments, where I was just like 'Wow!', you know. I mean, several things happened in the space where two or three random events that coincided with something that I had programmed on the synth, you know – which coincided with something that was bleeding in from the other room. So it was like a really complex set of things going on there and interacting. And suddenly there was this giant transformation where the whole soundscape sort of changed from one sound to another and this was an amazing kind of moment of transition where everything changed at once. (Decker 2012a)

Not only is the artist struck by this *giant transformation* – this all-embracing activity – but so are the listeners (participants); bricks and mortar, floor boards, air molecules, the fly seeking escape from a closed window. In fact, any entities inside and outside the gallery were complicit in the coming-together of

forces that created semblances.⁹ The affective quality of life's more-than *unfore-heard* is an immanent intensity that becomes apparent (*erscheint*).¹⁰ In the case of a sonic event, the occurrence 'strikes' differently than, say, photography or other visual or plastic arts would. The difference, I suggest, lies in the semblance itself. Sonic occurrence is neither static nor possibly mnemonic, as a photograph might be; rather, the point I want to make now is quite another, namely that sonic matter is perpetual creation: it moves, changes, impinges. It transcends borders, permeates bodies and *creates spaces* (or spaciousnesses). It articulates shapes and produces surfaces. Sound woos without promise, and its lure goes beyond language. 'Wow!' is thus another way of giving utterance to the intensive prehension of the aesthetic encounter with the sonic – hence the added punctuation (!) to indicate the genuine exclamation.

In the chapter 'What is an Event?' of *The Fold*, Deleuze traces the lively dynamics of nature's occasionings with the aid of Whitehead's theory of prehension. Neither an idealism nor a materialism, according to Adam Robbert, "but an organic realism evolutionary in character" (2012, p. 3), Whitehead's speculations are premised on the fact that the fundamental reality of nature is one of passage and differentiation: "sense terminates, not in things, but in something going on" (Bigger 2005, p. 608). As a consequence of this, Whitehead advocates *against* what he refers to as 'the bifurcation of nature', that is, "the strange and fully modernist divide between primary and secondary qualities" (Latour 2011, p. xii).

⁹ In developing the notion of semblance, Massumi also draws on Walter Benjamin, cultural critic and essayist, who employs the German *Schein* which translates to appearance, speciousness, sheen, glint, among other possible meanings in English. See Benjamin, W. 1919–20/1996. On Semblance. In M. P. Bullock & M. W. Jennings eds. *Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 223–225; Benjamin, W. 1920–21/1996. Beauty and Semblance. In M. P. Bullock & M. W. Jennings eds. *Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 283.

¹⁰ Cf. "Every artistic thing that is beautiful has semblance [*Schein*] because it is alive in one sense or another" (Benjamin 1920–21/1996, p. 283).

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Bruno Latour in his foreword to Isabelle Stengers's *Thinking with Whitehead* helpfully elucidates:

Bifurcation is what happens whenever we think the world is divided into two sets of things: one which is composed of the fundamental constituents of the universe – invisible to the eyes, known to science [...] – and the other which is constituted of what the mind has to add to the basic building blocks of the world in order to make sense of them. (ibid., p. xii)

Again – for Whitehead (1920) – nature is observed in perception through the senses. The mind is relegated to a mere supportive role. Stengers says to this, drawing on Whitehead's *Concept of Nature*: “If the ‘mind’ is to be responsible for something it is in terms of selection and simplification, not of addition [...] and if ‘what we know instinctively’ is to be confirmed, selectiOn and simplification – in short, abstraction – must not define ‘knowledge’, but always such-and-such a way of knowing” (1920 as quoted in 2011, p. 48).

What I want us to pay attention to is the potential moreness to life that can be discerned through art – especially through sonic arts – which brings forth all kinds of knowings. When Deleuze asks, ‘What is an event?’, he turns to sound. Deleuze begins his account as follows: “A concert is being performed tonight;” and continues: “It is the event” (*The Fold*, p. 80). In an earlier block quotation (p. 77), Deleuze discusses the connection between vibration and prehension. There he writes, “Vibrations of sound disperse, periodic movements go through space [...] each one perceives its own, and perceives the others while perceiving its own” (1988/1993, p. 80). This activity is full of *self-enjoyment* and intensity: “The origins of the sounds are [...] prehensions that are filled with *joy in themselves*, with an intense satisfaction, as they fill up with their perceptions and move from one perception to another” (ibid.; emphasis added). The vibrations at

play in sonic artwork-performances are proliferating. Moving back and forth, sonic waves add up and intensify, creating resonances – sonic effects – creating *self-enjoyment*. “Self-enjoyment is not a moral category. It is not about the enjoyment *of* this or that. Not the enjoyment of the subject for life, but the enjoyment of life in the event of life-living [...] as the continuous outdoing of any notion of life in-itself or nature in-itself” (Manning 2014, p. 322; italics in original). Resonance is then *an event of life-living* – a relational field where prehensions as reservoirs of self-enjoyment inhere the power to create anew, that is, ‘a New’ from a vastness of oscillating, sonorous molecules that forever retain a certain more-than.

Decker participates in the *becoming* of resonant spaciousness. He is confronted with and part of a transformation, a coming-together – that is, a prehension of partial events that make up a situation of the it-happens-that. This happening – the *Wow!* – expresses the excess of the inexpressible: *Something’s pushed the limits of what’s known and to be known*. On par with sensation, this eventness provokes, stirs – vibrates. The sheer *wowness* of the change marks the affect-emergence registering as the certain more-than within an activity and incipient expression – a novel soundspace in the making.

Before I narrow my focus in future chapters to aspects of sonic occurrence and the ensuing expression of various aesthetic figures, let me make some closing remarks on semblance in the context of aesthetic encounters.

♦ ♦ ♦

This is not Utö island. (Ceci n’est pas l’île de Utö.)

Or, when Thomas Edison was heard saying: “I was never so taken aback in my life.”¹¹

¹¹ See Taussig, M. 1992. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge, pp. 211, 278n13.

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Those familiar with the essay 'Profound Listening and Environmental Sound Matter' by Francisco López, published in *Audio Culture* (2004), might recall the section framed by the epigraph, 'This is not a pipe', or, in the original French, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'. This iconic phrase by the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte marks the incongruity of what something represents and still is not what it appears to be.¹² It is worth noting Robert Hughes's remark on 'the catchphrase of modern art' which the art critic considers to be "a condensed manifesto about language and the way meaning is conveyed, or blocked, by symbols;" he writes, "No painter had ever made the point that 'A painting is not what it represents' with such epigrammatic clarity before" (1980/1995, p. 244).

López takes up Magritte's provocation and transposes it to the sonic arts. The experimental musician argues in his essay that what we hear in his piece *La Selva* is not the rainforest La Selva (in Costa Rica). If it is *not* a representation of the site, well then, what is it? His response: "the musical piece is rooted not in a documentary approach but in a notion of 'sound matter'" – the focus lies on, López says, "the inner world of sounds" (2004, p. 85). The latter's proposition resonates much with Decker's concern for the 'inherent rhythms' of field recordings, since they also do not represent a place but construct experiential facts from a virtual reality or a material immanence (or field of energies).¹³

¹² The painting by René Magritte discussed here is titled *The Treachery of Images* also known as *This Is Not a Pipe* and *The Wind and the Song*, 1929. The work is part of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) Collections. See online <https://collections.lacma.org/node/239578> [Accessed 25 May, 2018].

¹³ It probably does not need mentioning this far into the thesis that *virtual reality* here doesn't refer to digital simulation or some other computer-related context. As already made clear, the term 'virtual' goes back to Deleuze's naturalist ontology. Constantin V. Boundas describes the concept as follows: "the virtual and the actual are two mutually exclusive, yet jointly sufficient, characterisations of the real. [...] Without being or resembling the actual, the virtual nonetheless has the capacity to bring about actualisation and yet the virtual never coincides or can be identified with its actualisation" (2010, p. 300). Boundas, C.V. 2010. Virtual/Virtuality. In A. Parr ed. *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 300–302.

In what follows, we seek to further pursue the manner in which the virtual comes into actualization: the how and what of the it-happens-that. Then let us take the above phrase, 'This is not Utö island' – or *Ceci n'est pas l'île de Utö* in allusion to Magritte – for a teaser for more on how sonic matter comes to matter. The issue is too comprehensive to develop near the end of this chapter. Suffice it to say that field recording (sound recording more generally) presents us with an ontological ambivalence – a challenge – that we shall revisit later.

It comes as no surprise that the US American inventor of the phonograph was feeling *aghast* when he first heard himself recite the rhyme 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' from playback. He was reported saying: "I was never taken so aback" (as quoted in Taussig 1992, p. 211). This was in 1877 – Thomas Edison encountered the alienness of his own voice listened to from a distance. In the twenty-first century, sound recording still affects greatly – through the memories it stirs or the moods it gives rise to. Here, for Edison, there is also a complexity at play whereby the material and the discursive interlock: the spoken words (in their hapticality) and the meaning of the words spoken (how something's been said). According to the anthropologist Michael Taussig, "'Taken aback' is a significant choice of words for this historic moment, a spontaneously fitting way of expressing [...] the 'shudder of mimesis' being taken back to childhood, back to primitivism" (ibid.). The uncanniness in the aesthetic encounter – earlier referred to as the unfamiliar in the familiar – might be in part due to *mimesis*. But rather than *mimesis* (here to mean the imitative representation of a 'thing' through audio), I want to advocate instead the notion of *sonic semblance* where recording, and in this instance field recording presents us with a kind of objectivity that we can experience as *likeness* of a 'thing' and/or 'atmosphere' embedded in the materiality. In other words, in Decker's recording of Utö island, for example, we believe to hear a seagull's scream (across the stereo field) and feel the *spaciousness* of the site recorded as the "uncanny excess of actual objectivity"

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(Massumi 2011, p. 56). On the whole, we think-feel sonic matter (artifacts) as it comes to matter.

As mentioned before, sound art is ontologically ambivalent, or even onto-epistemologically *tricky*. ('Tricky' in the sense that it requires care and concern to do justice to the ecology of practices involved.) It should be noted that Massumi has raised the subject of semblance in music. However, there is plenty to discover in contemporary sonic art practices that I shall continue to problematize here. What's at stake is to give expression to the technique, the manner in which sonic matter comes into articulation.

Part Two

SONIC PERIPHERIES



Figure 1

'Folding and unfolding' (*Falten und entfalten*). In response to Performative Encounter 4, crumpled paper and drawing by Hannah Klatt. As part of *Sonic Peripheries* #5 (2011).

RESEARCH INTO SONIC ART PRACTICES

“I don’t believe in things,” affirms Deleuze in *Negotiations* (1990/1995, p. 160); which is another way of saying that any notion of being as unchanging entity is untenable, not relevant. Things are always-already in the making: “becoming is not the becoming of some being. There *is* becoming, from which we perceive relatively stable points of being. [... Corollary:] there is not some world or being that then becomes, but [...] a life of complex change” (Colebrook 2002a, p. 52; italics in original). The world is not made up of things (and words) but of *events*; creative acts – here, be it research into sonic art practices, writing and drawing; indeed, the act of crumpling up a sheet of paper enfolds the dynamics of a life-living. These acts as events traverse a plane of changes. Hence producing percepts and affects, affording trajectories of sensations that fold-in perceptions. “Perception,” according to Manning (with Massumi), “infolds thoughts in the making. It does not reflect the world, it ingathers its relational fact into a feeling for its future infolding” (Manning 2009, p. 81). Folds; creases; pleats of matter (Deleuze 1988/1993). Consider for a moment the image at the beginning of this chapter (Fig. 1). What do you see?

Or oughtn’t I to ask, do you think-feel the foldings of a past’s presence, its relational fact? Let me address the former question and leave the latter pending. What *I* recognize is an image, strictly speaking, a scanned in version of an A4-sized paper that shows signs of folds and creases.

Remember the sound of a piece of paper crumpled up into a ball? It happens that ...; I look at the surface of unforeheard depth. The style of folding – rather brutish, not refined – yields crumbled paper, not origami. Folds and lines inscribed onto its hidden plane.

Like the moon in one's hand; resonant stuff across past-present-futures. Creases striate the smoothed-out paper, marks of far-off resoundings. Resonance, it bears reminding, is a relational field. Looking anew at Figure 1, the drawn elements come into focus. The perspective is one from above, gazing down on a sea of folds; ridges, “waters, papers, fabrics, living tissues;” imaging “expressive matter, with different scales, speeds, and different vectors” (ibid., p. 34). Tracing the eventness of movement moving-on.

“What are these lines?”¹ Emergent evolutions, microperceptions, hallucinatory tendencies (Whitehead 1929/1978; Deleuze 1988/1993; Manning 2009). *Folding and unfolding. Resonant immediations.*

♦ ♦ ♦

“Was sind das für Linien,” queries Hannah Klatt in interview with this author (which translates as ‘what are these lines?’). Klatt was one of the *Sonic Peripheries #5* attendees (or participants) invited to partake in what I here call Performative Encounter activities – a mode of research creation of which more will be said below. Her experiment is of particular allure in this context because it embodies a thinking in doing that does not start in the mind but in nature *and* enacts an empirical manner, which is emblematic for middling with/in the event. Deleuze, we have learned, ‘does not believe in things’; instead, he says, he “spent a lot of time writing about [the] notion of the event” (*Negotiations*, p. 160). Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy is “interested in the circumstances in which things happen” and inquires into where and when a particular situation occurs and how it

¹ Hannah Klatt in an interview with the author, following *Sonic Peripheries #5*.

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happens (ibid., p. 25). Research into sonic art practices – the way it's done here – seeks to attune to this philosophical attitude compelled by a radical empiricism, in other words, a philosophy of *doing*. We are looking to Klatt's exploration since it expresses a particular situation, an eventness of resonant spaciousness *infolded* – which is to suggest that she has experimentally/experientially probed into the nature of sonorous realities. This is how it's happened.

The situation was such (although we won't go into detail of the exhibition/sonic artwork-performance) that the audience was confronted with a kind of art *happening* – an overlap of multiple 'scenes' or 'sonorous sites' situated and taking place inside and outside the gallery of the Künstlerstätte Stuhr-Heiligenrode, inclusive of the nearby historic building, a mill with water wheel and machines in operation, and its natural surroundings (gardens, river and waterfall, etc.). (More on the artistic series and research events in the upcoming chapter.) The UK artist David Strang was commissioned to work on site. He created an intricate relay of relations where the natural and sociohistorical ecology of the locale played into the whole of the exhibit and sonic artwork-performance. This site-specific artwork (in the most literal sense of the terms) was "a performance of site," according to Strang (2011b). The artist employed field recordings and installed contact microphones to select parts of various machines inside the mill building to capture discreet sonic vibrations. Further, he arranged light meters in different areas of the mill to measure the variations in brightness – light-shadow motions caused by the rotation of wheels, for example. The data was then streamed to a computer with a bespoke MaxMSP software patch located in the main gallery space. The audience/participants encountered a live feed of sounds, vibrations and rhythms resembling machine noise, yet aestheticized and estranged from that reality. The live aspect of the performance-centered event derived from the direct entanglement of audience and computer with the mill, its machinery and resultant sonic cacophony, producing a contrasting, though complimentary sonic environment in relation to the adjacent grounds: river and water wheel, park and

gardens, the bridge occasionally crossed by cars, bird song and people's laughter (from the ice cream parlor nearby). However, there was more to it.

There were scenes or, as it were, sonorous sites that added to the overall experience. And here is where Klatt's experiment comes in – how it demonstrates (not illustrates!) aspects of research done in and through sonic art practices. It should be borne in mind that this project wants to neither generalize nor speak to the conditions of possibility for all art research. In line with Deleuze and Guattari, this research into sonic art is “interested in modes of individuation beyond those of things, persons, or subjects: the individuation, say, of a time of day, of a region, a climate, a river or a wind, of an event” (*Negotiations*, p. 26). We are interested in concepts that explicate from research-creation. “A concept, as we see it, should express an event rather than an essence” (*ibid*, p. 25). Art and philosophy conjoin; “between a philosophical concept, a painted line and a musical sonorous bloc, resonances emerge,” describes Deleuze (1983, n.p.) in one of his lectures; “very, very strange correspondences that one shouldn't even theorize” – and which he prefers to call “affective [...] these are privileged moments.”² This type of research, namely the ‘act of looking, inquiring again and again’ (etymologically speaking) into sonic artworks seeks out the moments of the emergence of affect. The rather elusive and difficult to name *thinking-feeling* presents the trigger for Klatt's ‘forceful’ search. Therefore, let us return to the matter of how it happens and look to the privileged moment, the it-happens-that in the smallest details in-between as well as *in- and outside the folds*.

We learned that Strang's sonic artwork-performance explores sonic sites and territories by gathering field recordings and environmental data with the aim of folding site information back onto itself, that is, allowing site-specific materials

² Translation from French by Bernd Herzogenrath; see Herzogenrath, B. ed. 2009. *Deleuze|Guattari & Ecology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 227. For the lecture transcription, see Deleuze G. 1983. Cours Vincennes, 02/11/1983. *Webdeleuze*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/69> [Accessed: 25 May 2018].

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to deterritorialize site. Visitors of *Sonic Peripheries #5* were then invited to participate in a so-called listening excursion for the purpose of surveying the soundscapes – either with the aid of an electronic device and headphones or *without* a technical extension – and prompted simply to be attentive to the moment. They were free to engage in the Performative Encounter activity (a curator-led intervention driven by the question of how to facilitate situations that incite contemplation of a sonic event; for further details, see SP Performative Encounter of Part Two) introduced here to act as a guide to help discern in which way vibrational force affects ‘our’ awareness of reality.

Klatt chose to walk the grounds with a listening device also known as electret or ambient microphone (Figs. 2 and 3). As part of Strang’s practice, the artist designs and constructs electronics that assist in exploring the environment (Umwelt) and “amplify certain aspects to heighten our perception of space and place” (Strang 2011a). For this art exhibition-event, he built various devices that would allow the participants to ap/prehend the soundscape through a different lens, or rather, an acoustic-to-electric transducer. In the case of Klatt, she auscultated the environs using an electret microphone; a world in stereo – though not heard in hi-fi nor truly binaural-quality sound.

The somewhat cheap materials used for the gadget impinge on both the transduction of air pressure and the reception of the signal, namely as “cheap-quality sound that can become sculptural as well” (Strang 2011b). This is to say that the device (indeed, any technological prosthesis) will have an influence on how the world is perceived. Strang’s suggestion concerning to the correlation between the cheapness of materials and the experience of sound as sculptural object is of particular interest. It seems to imply that a poor-quality rendering of a reality ‘out there’ gives the experience a visceral, even *haptic* objectlike dimension – it gives rise to sonic objecthood. Take a moment to consider this prospect before we proceed to Klatt’s privileged blink of an ear.



Figures 2, 3

Sonic Peripheries #5 participant with listening device (top image). Turning the volume knob on electret (also, ambient microphone) to adjust amplitude level of incoming signals. Photos by Claudia Madeiros.

Part Two – Sonic Peripheries

♦ ♦ ♦

Put research into practice:

Crumple up a sheet of paper;

then unfold.

Repeat, start with a clean sheet –

listening-in and -through.

♦ ♦ ♦

She walks and listens. Listens and walks – rehearses. In thinking-feeling, both in-acts make two sides of the same coin.

She walks and listens, *feeling* the rhythmic pulse from within and without her entire body. “This fascinates me,” Klatt might think. Then, she turns the volume knob on the gadget and enters into a strange realm – a zone of indetermina-tion, of indiscernibility. As if ‘I’ were no longer at a distance, but merged with something near and far – binding all sounds, all entities (human and non) onto a flat plane – a surface strewn with variations and kinks; *clacks and clinks. Snap, snick, chink and pops.*³

This affective soundscape lures, indeed *fascinates* in the sense of be-witches, enchants, to bring under the spell by some more subtle and mysterious power. The mill in particular with its rich cacophony of machines and belts in motion provides an infinite source of sonic iterations, drawing in the curious,

³ Klatt in interview with the author, following the *Sonic Peripheries #5* event. The statement, or rather observation is paraphrased, that is, poetically translated from Klatt’s original description. However, she said that the experience of listening via the device *fascinated* her, also because it enabled her to control the amplitude of her surroundings. This would allow her to focus on sounds in the distance, for example, that came to the foreground – a perspectival shift that she had not experienced before, opening onto a world of rhythms and strange sounds – *clacks and clinks*, as it were.

opening up to *felt unknowns* – *spellbound*, as it were, by vibratory forces. Even when taking off the headphones, Klatt's senses the tingly throbs in her body as though connected to the old wood beams stretched across the floor. Each piece of timber is filled with the commotion of resonant particles, *tingling-tickling* along its surface and throughout. Fibrous material comes alive: utterances of a pastness present, anticipating a future in the “something *doing*” (James 1912, p. 161; italics in original). “Everything real must be experienceable somewhere,” asserts James in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, “and every kind of thing experienced must somewhere be real” (ibid, p. 160). And it is worth repeating, “*the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as ‘real’ as anything else in the system*” (ibid, p. 42; italics in original).

That which lurks in the folds of experience is ‘as *real* as anything else’ and takes precedence over questions of signification in this radically empirical research. Klatt lends her attention to this all-embracing activity, which stirs and steers her worlding: “It takes over life, fills the world, for an immeasurable instant of shock” – without a tinge of drama (Massumi 2015a, p. 108). This kind of rupture or provocation hits us, moves us; we sympathize, as Bergson might say, with the something's happening-doing.

Klatt rejigs in the blink of an ear. She slips in and through the middle – middling with/in the event. The rejigging happens as a way of rearranging what is taken as the givens. “When all is said and done, it always isn't. Something's still doing. With each new circumstance [and happenstance], the process integrally rejigs” and starts going on and on again (Massumi 2015c, p. 164).

As mentioned above, the Performative Encounter activity served as guide for the listening (sonic) excursion. Each member of the audience was given a handout that consisted of directives, so-called Encounters, with a questionnaire, including a map of the area and a blank piece of paper. The final Encounter reads

3. 

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as follows: *Create a drawing (schematic, figurative, etc.) of a specific sound object.* With paper and pen ready at hand, Klatt attends-to the moment – ever so resonant with the situatedness from where she commingles.

“Participation is the yield in what Raymond Ruyer calls ‘aesthetic yield’. It is the yield both in the sense that it gives a sense of direction to a process already underway and that it opens that process to more-than of its form or content” (Manning 2015a, p. 63).⁴ This (ad)venture is invested in the *more-than*; it asks how the material condition of a sonic artwork-performance (the form of content) and the form of expression (as bloc of sensations) are being produced in one another. Which then invites the question concerning the role exercised by the listener-cum-participant amid this vibratory conflux.

In Part One it was implied that the participant of a sound exhibition and performance might act as a coefficient of these *strange* realms or zones of indetermination infused by an affective quality or *affective tone*, which Klatt encounters above. In aesthetic experience, “the basic fact is the rise of an affective tone originating from things whose relevance is given,” says Whitehead (1933/1967, p. 176). No prehension “can be divested of its affective tone, that is to say, of its character of a ‘concern’ in the Quaker sense. Concernedness is of the essence of perception” (ibid., p. 180). Concernedness is of relevance to *this type of research* because it is set against any suggestion of knowledge, that is, of Reason in the

⁴ “Creative life of instinct: vital art. Ruyer remarks that it is of the nature of instinctive activity to produce an ‘aesthetic yield’. After all, what is a force of mutual linkage if not a force of composition? Deleuze and Guattari ask, ‘Can this becoming, this emergence’, this composition animating the genesis of new forms with a life of their own and producing an aesthetic yield, be called ‘Art’? [...] For if we can call this Art, it is because the human has the same self-animating tendency to supernormality. Only when we experience it in our own desiring lives we arrogantly tend to call it culture as opposed to nature, as if the animal body of human beings was somehow exempt from instinctive activity. As any biologist will tell you, the human body is on the animal continuum” (Massumi 2015d, pp. 9–10). See Massumi, B. 2015d. *The Supernormal Animal*. In R. A. Grusin ed. *The Nonhuman Turn*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kantian sense understood as “the godlike faculty which surveys, judges and understands” (Whitehead 1929/1978, p. 6). Here, research into sonic art practices is interested in different forms and modes of knowing and looks to Whitehead’s stance on reason as “the force of thought that is immanent to the event. [...] It is the reason *of* nature, in nature, a concern with the very edges of the thinkable in its nonalignment to consciousness” (Manning 2014, p. 322; italics in original). Whitehead insists we should never ask, “what is in the mind and what is in nature” (1920, p. 30 as quoted in *ibid.*). The question should rather be how nature creates thought, or more to the point, how research into sonic art practices invents (cf. van der Tuin 2014).⁵ These are matters led by the concern for the world and for an ‘ecology of practices’ (Stengers’s term akin to Deleuze’s notion of ‘thinking par le milieu’).⁶

⁵ The notion that ‘nature creates thought’, I draw from Manning (pace Whitehead). Also Vicky Kirby (as quoted in Barad 2003) makes a notable point regarding the humanist understanding of ‘we’ and its implications with respect to ‘thinking’; she writes: “I’m trying to complicate the locatability of human identity as a here and now, an enclosed and finished product, a causal force upon Nature. Or even ... as something within Nature. I don’t want the human to be in Nature, as if Nature is a container. Identity is inherently unstable, differentiated, dispersed, and yet strangely coherent. If I say ‘this is Nature itself,’ an expression that usually denotes a prescriptive essentialism and that’s why we avoid it, I’ve actually animated this ‘itself’ and even suggested that ‘thinking’ isn’t the other of nature. Nature performs itself differently” (pp. 228–29). Barad, K. 2003. Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), 801–831.

⁶ On ‘ecology of practices’, see Stengers, I. 2005. Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices. *Cultural Studies Review*, 11(1), 183–196. There Isabelle Stengers describes the notion as follows: “What I call an ecology of practice is a tool for thinking through what is happening, and a tool is never neutral. A tool can be passed from hand to hand, but each time the gesture of taking it in hand will be a particular one – the tool is not a general means, defined as adequate for a set of particular aims, potentially including the one of the person who is taking it, and it does not entail a judgment on the situation as justifying its use. Borrowing Alfred North Whitehead’s word, I would speak of a decision, more precisely a decision without a decision-maker which is making the maker. Here the gesture of taking in hand is not justified by, but both producing and produced by, the relationship of relevance between the situation and the tool” (p. 185).

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Again, to Manning, participation “is the yield both in the sense that it gives a sense of direction to a process already underway and that it opens that process to more-than of its form or content” (2015a, p. 63). In ‘Artfulness’, she speaks of the problematic of participation itself based on examples from her own artistic practice that is concerned with “the art of the event or event-time,” the exploration of “choreography as mobile architecture” by means of “crafting an ease of entry into a complex environment itself under modulation” (ibid., p. 52). There are aspects in this discussion that overlap with our venture, albeit that the context and the artwork under discussion differs greatly to this research. Nonetheless, the question Manning asks is of import, namely, “how to create generative lures toward a participatory process” (ibid.). It is of import because, in a nutshell, its emphasis lies on *attentiveness* to a situation; in our case: the concept of awareness. Awareness is not outside the sonic but within. To be aware means to take account of “a genetic process from the dark depths of the world” (Robinson 2010, p. 125). Klatt’s awareness of the vibrant conflux is not a matter of comprehension but *prehension*. It is primarily a sensuous, noncognitive experience that impels the complex dynamic (prehensive) unit toward a conceivable, albeit fleeting articulation. Meaning, firstly, the event of prehension presents “an ‘intermediary’, a purely immanent potential power, a relation of difference with itself, or pure ‘affection’ before any division into form and matter” (ibid., p. 124). And secondly, it gives way to what I provisionally term ‘fugacious expression’ – by which I endeavor to propose that the more-than individuates, comes into actualization; take this for an ad hoc formula: Incorporeal MATTER COMES TO MATTER that COMES TO MATTER. In other words: incorporeal events (as more-than) inhere in matter that comes to matter in achronological succession or manner. A rhythmic ‘frolicking’, a to-and-fro on the surface of sense and non-sense (see esp. Part Three: Experiment 1).

Let us again turn to Klatt and her forceful response to the directive – the Encounter introduced above – in the attempt of tracing this ‘fugitive’ concept.

As part of the art happening and research event, Klatt and other participants of *Sonic Peripheries #5* were asked to create a drawing of a specific sound object that could assume a figurative, diagrammatic or entirely different form. Klatt went for the latter. In conversation, she later disclosed that she wouldn’t actually know how to draw a sound. Who could blame her? After all, it begs the question of what is meant by a ‘sound object’ in the first place; and on second thought, why represent a sonic event that naturally evades reification? Below, I shall clarify that this task is not about representation. This Encounter is what it is: an aesthetic experience – in this instance, an invitation to explore the sonic as “non-cochlear” (Kim-Cohen 2009) or conceptual construct to inspire a thinking sound anew.

Klatt listens-in and -through, attends-to the moment whilst sound waves traverse the wooden beams and continue to float in the space, her ears, head, throat, and teeth – the rhythmic pulse occupies Klatt’s whole being. She then picks up the sheet of paper and mindfully crushes it between her hands as a way of pleating and folding the vibrational continuum. Inscribing a genuine topology of sound onto paper – a performative gesture that implicates (*falten*) as much as it explicates (*entfalten*) the vibratory conflux. Charting twists and turns, creating new patterns or resonances. What are these lines? This is a concern that – perhaps similar to Klatt’s – has kept me occupied for some time inasmuch as I waver between reading the image and thinking-feeling the wholly otherness of a pastness-presencing in the folds (see again Fig. 1). Put another way, the ink-drawn lines conjure an anarchitecture of bifurcating branches that bear resemblance to a city’s detritus (oddly, the city of Detroit comes to mind and how nature has a way of reclaiming urban sites). Meanwhile, I am drawn into the jittery tracings, which seem to mimic the precursory act of crumpling up the

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paper – as such, revealing a world immanent *to* that gesture and *of* the paper-material.

Maybe Klatt tried to tend to “the disorganized perceptions of the life that pulses through our bodies” – the minute feelings, “the ‘microperceptions’ that make up who we are – not just the perceptions of the eye that sees and judges” (Colebrook 2002b, p. 40). In hindsight, she never explained; she simply stated a problem. Klatt thought aloud *in actu* of something she was taken with, namely the phenomenological and epistemological complicatedness of the event’s coming into being (and ?being). Going over the folds’ traces with ink was her way of inquiring into the nature of the (sonorous) event. Just this one problem-proposition set off an enduring trajectory of free-and-wild creations of concepts.⁷

Consider fugacious expression to be one of many guises of sound’s occasioning. Here, it takes the shape of an artifact of material-discursive nature. It relates to what Manning refers to as *aesthetic yield*; that which “expands beyond any object occasioned by the process to include the vista of expression generated by art as event” (Manning 2015a, p. 63). *Participation, in our case, produces a spectacle of materialized expression that opens onto the mysteries of felt unknowns*. Meaning that the participant of the Performative Encounter activity creates an *expanded situation* – one, by attending to the felt unknowns that spring from a sonic artwork-performance and, two, by inventing an action that transposes the experience into a material-discursive expression or ‘object’. Klatt heeds a situatedness that unravels before her ears as she is also encouraged to act, to reconfigure, to intra-act with art as event. Herself, sonorous molecules, the listening device, paper, the Encounter – all these elements are entangled in the production of a fugacious expression which articulates as in/determined sonic occurrence through aesthetic practices.

⁷ Cf. Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1991/1994. *What Is Philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 105.

It should be noted here that the neologisms 'material-discursive' and 'intra-activity' go back to Barad's agential realism (2003; 2007; 2010; 2012; see also Donna Haraway [1988] for 'material-semiotic'). Her theory challenges ideas of individualist (atomist) metaphysics, and instead advocates an entangled ontology from which material-discursive phenomena arise, hence opposing the idea that subjects and objects are separate and pre-existent entities that make up this world.⁸ "Indeed, there is a host of material-discursive forces – including ones that get labeled 'social', 'cultural', 'psychic', 'economic', 'natural', 'physical', 'biological', 'geopolitical', and 'geological' – that may be important to particular (entangled) processes of materialization" (Barad 2003, p. 810). 'We' as part of the world co-compose the world's worlding through the agency of diverse practices and ongoing intra-activity. In this context, the forces and processes involved (or

⁸ Barad argues in 'Post humanist Performativity' (2003) that "[t]he relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other" (p. 822). Which is also to mean that practices are constituted by both meanings and materialities. There is a *material-discursive* performativity at play; or yet in other words: "On an agential realist account, discursive practices are not human-based activities but rather specific material (re)configurings of the world through which local determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted" (ibid., p. 802). According to Barad, this requires a rethinking of materiality as "not a thing but a doing" (2007, p. 151) as well as a reconsideration of "notions discursive practices and material phenomena and the relationship between them" (2003, p. 802). In terms of 'intra-action' (also 'intra-activity') Barad writes in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*: "The notion of intra-action is a key element of my agential realist framework. The neologism 'intra-action' *signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies*. That is, in contrast to the usual 'interaction', which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. It is important to note that the 'distinct' agencies are only distinct in a relational, not an absolute, sense, that is, *agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements*" (2007, p. 33; italics in original). Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

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entangled) provide the condition of possibility for this type of research on the sensory watch for entwined matter-meanings.

For Klatt, the experiment was pragmatic in its approach. She set out to investigate the sound of paper; this she did, and this, we know, led to surprising spin-offs and questions like the one about the lines. As proposed above, her concern lay in the microperceptions in-between the folds which she has thought-felt in the in-act of the something's happening. I will argue, though, that Klatt's experiential event is not only pragmatic if that is understood to mean "practical *as opposed to* speculative or theoretical" (Massumi 2011, p. 12; italics in original). Rather, it is speculative *and* pragmatic in character. "[S]peculative in the sense that a process remains open to its potential, and pragmatic in the sense that it is rooted in the in-acts of its 'something doing'" (Manning 2015b, p. 56). In the words of Massumi (2011, p. 12): "The speculative aspect relates to the character of potential native to the world's activity, as expressed eventfully in the taking place of change. The pragmatic aspect has to do with how, in the taking-definite-shape of potential in a singular becoming, the relational and qualitative poles co-compose as formative forces." *She puts research into practice: Crumples up a sheet of paper; then unfolds.*

Klatt as well as others who participated in the Performative Encounter activity enacted a speculative pragmatism advocated by Whitehead, Massumi and Manning. The latter two explored how creative research and philosophy come together: "putting art and philosophy, or theory and practice, on the same creative plane, in the same ripple pool" (Massumi 2011, p. 83). Each drop in the pool matters, calling forth a diffractive pattern that speaks of the possibility of emergence of unforeheard happenings: MATTER COMES TO MATTER COMES TO MATTER; short, how matter 'does' comes to matter.⁹ Promoting what has

⁹ At this point, it is worth quoting at length from the philosopher Christoph Cox who, as the proponent of sonic materialism, gives an excellent account of the conceptual challenges encountered when discussing sonic ontology and sonic materiality. He clarifies how sounds – albeit thought of as intangible, invisible, and ephemeral entities – are material phenomena, namely "ontological particu-

been put into practice and to the test means to engage in the concern for the relations that connect experiences, which are precisely those in/determinate and hard to grasp affective tones or atmospheres that enliven the encounter with the sonic and arising situatedness.

Klatt speculatively-pragmatically configures; *repeats, starts with a clean sheet – listening-in and -through.*

♦ ♦ ♦

Research into sonic art practices gives rise to onto-epistemological considerations. The term 'onto-epistemology' – coined by Barad (in connection with the neologisms discussed above) – brings ontology and epistemology into focus as co-dependent factors in the production of 'situated knowledges' (Haraway's

lars and individuals" (Cox 2015, p. 126). Here is an excerpt from 'Sonic Thought' of *Realism Materialism Art*: "[S]ound present[s] us with an *ontology* that unsettles our ordinary conception of things. In philosophy, ontology is the subdiscipline that investigates being, determining what there is or what sorts of things exist. We ordinarily operate with an ontology that begins and ends with what J. L. Austin wryly called 'moderate-sized specimens of dry goods', the objects of our everyday experience: apples, chairs, trees, cars, and so forth. This ordinary ontology extends to include larger objects such as mountains or stars, and can accept scientific objects such as subatomic particles, provided that they are taken to be tiny versions of ordinary things – stable, solid, and durable, though very small. Indeed, when we speak of 'matter', we tend to think solely of *solid* matter. Few would take liquids, gases, or plasmas – water, air, or fire, for example – as paradigms of matter. This ordinary ontology privileges the senses of sight and touch; or rather, the senses of sight and touch determine this everyday ontology. The invisible, intangible, and ephemeral objects (so to speak) of smell, taste, and hearing seem to have only a shadowy existence relative to the standard of the ordinary solid object, whose presence is guaranteed by eyes and fingers, and enshrined in 'common sense', which names an entrenched hierarchy of the senses rather than some common agreement among them. But surely sounds, odors, and tastes exist, and surely they are as material as sticks and stones. Sounds, to take the example that concerns me here, set eardrums aquiver, rattle walls, and shatter wine glasses" (ibid., p. 124). Cox, C., 2015. Sonic Thought. In C. Cox et al. eds. *Realism Materialism Art*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 123–130.

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term¹⁰). The former concerns theories of beings, the latter theories of knowing; both -ologies are entwined and mutually implicated insofar as “all explicit epistemological reflection has ontological presuppositions as well as ontologizing effects [– and the other way around:] all reflections on ontology have epistemological presuppositions as well as epistemologizing effects” (van der Tuin 2014, p. 257). Barad considers *onto-epistem-ology* “the study of practices of knowing in being” (2003, p. 829). To engage in research, that is to say, to look carefully into situations that (come to) matter, means here (as well as in other scientific contexts) to acknowledge that “practices of knowing cannot be fully claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practices but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part” (Barad 2003, p. 829; cf. ‘prehension’ in Whitehead 1925/1967, pp. 69–73). The acceptance of this basic truth (or perception that is accepted as true) goes against our anthropocentric leaning inclined to uphold that it is we who call the shots that really matter.

Matter as it comes to matter enfolds both human and nonhuman aspects of life. Knowing (prehension, if I may) is a reciprocal action between various agents, elements or things – including sounds, paper, pen, and rhythmic vibrations through and through. What comes to matter is *how* an event comes to matter – followed by the concern of what matters to whom. “‘Humans’ are [a] part of the world-body space in its dynamic structuration” (Barad 2003, p. 829). What is at stake in a posthumanist account of performativity (to mean in Bara-

¹⁰ Marianne Janack (2004) writes, “Donna Haraway’s (1988) work on situated knowledges emphasizes the ways in which science is a rule-governed form of ‘story-telling’ that aims at getting at the truth, but the idea of truth she uses here is not that of reality *an sich* but a reality that is produced by human material practices. Thus, she argues ‘facts’ are in fact ‘artifacts’ of scientific inquiry. This does not make them false, but it does render them bound up with processes of human production and human needs. Nonetheless, they maintain an ontological independence to a certain extent; this is the central insight of the analogy to other kinds of artifacts” (n.p.; italics in original). More on ‘Feminist science studies’ see Janack, M. 2004. Feminist Epistemology. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-epis/> [Accessed: 25 May 2018].

dian terms: “All bodies, not merely ‘human’ bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity – its performativity” [ibid., p. 823]) – is how the in-acts of experience play out in the emergent occasioning of a sonic event. How then does the entanglement of artistic, curatorial, and other participatory forces intra-act in the course of this experimental-experiential formation (i.e., artistic research), taking into consideration how discursive practices and material phenomena come into articulation in art as event?

Klatt’s undertaking is one of several instances that playfully demonstrate how human and nonhuman (material) bodies are able to co-compose material-discursive artifacts. But – and this is a pleading ‘but’ – we need to bear in mind that in this overall constellation, the human aspect assumes a *particular* position, albeit not a privileged one. To say otherwise would be ill-advised, even if it were to evoke anthropocentric values.¹¹ Therefore, we need to mind or factor in what practices can do. By practices, I not just mean artistic, philosophical, scientific, or the world’s microprocessual practices, but also socio-cultural and political workings, such as institutions, conventions and methods, among other things, that inform research. ‘To mind’ is in a sense an appeal to carefully look at (listen to) the ambient backdrop behind knowledge production. What may we hope for (to hear), then?

“Barad wants us to study *practices*,” writes Iris van der Tuin in ‘On the Mode of Invention of Creative Research’ and elucidates:

Such practices happen *in being* and they are *of knowing*. ‘In being’ points to appreciation for refraining from ontological assumptions, such as the assumption of entities being clearly delineated or of

¹¹ This ‘appeal’, if you like, is written in reference to Massumi’s *Semblance and Event* and Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter*, which I will further address at the end of the chapter SP Performative Encounter of Part Two. See Massumi, B. 2011. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, p. 165; Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 119–120.

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entities being mute in the hands of signifying academics. Here, being is allowed the possibility to be messy and above assumptions tend to produce reductive accounts. 'Of knowing' indicates appreciation for refraining from epistemological assumptions, such as the assumption of knowledge claims ruling over objects of knowledge or existing in a web of words that refer to each other instead of to objects, of instruments being mentioned mediators and of environments being fully neutral. (2014, p. 259; italics in original)

'Of knowing' is the assumed onto-epistemological standpoint in this venture. Abstractions – from nature, from culture, from experience, etc. – never fully define 'knowledge', but rather this-or-that way of knowing (Stengers 2011). Indeed, the world's worlding is messy. The attempt by research and its methodologies "to convert this mess into something smooth, coherent and precise both miss out on particular textures of life [...] and tends to make a mess of what it does seek to understand, because it fails to account for complexity" (Coleman & Ringrose 2013, p. 5). I cautiously hold my research done in and through sonic art practices doesn't fail to account for complexity, though surely it derails notions of rational understanding or "exact knowledge" (Stengers 2011, p. 52) – diligently and purposefully (read the latter with a wink in my eye).

To discuss methodology in our case is not without complication, or rather *complicatedness*. On a side note, the terms 'methodology' and 'methods' are often used interchangeably in the discourse on artistic research (Borgdorff 2012, p. 49). In scientific research parlance, however, methodology is generally understood to stand for "a method or body of methods used in a particular field of study or activity" (*OED*) – or as Paul Kiff et al. put it plainly: "'methodology' refers to the different way in which researchers 'find things out'. The particular methods that researchers will employ will always reflect their ontological and epistemological

beliefs" (2009, p. 46). This project subscribes to an onto-epistemological framework, which, alongside Deleuze and Whitehead, advocates an empiricism that is likewise a pluralism – which welcomes 'complicatedness', if you like. Meaning, "the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*)" (Deleuze 1987/2007, p. vii; italics in original). In *Negotiations* (1990/1995), Deleuze further explicates: "there's nothing transcendent, no Unity, subject (or object), Reason; there are only processes, sometimes unifying, subjectifying, rationalising, but just processes all the same" (p. 145). This line of thought, akin to Barad's, underlines the complicatedness or entanglement between various agents in which the Deleuzian notion of multiplicity takes on special significance.

Understood as complex structure, multiplicities endure temporally as so-called assemblage or grouping of relations that "ideally create new ways of functioning" (Livesey 2010, p. 18). Deleuze thinks of multiplicities as "becomings without history, of individuation without subject (the way in which a river, a climate, an event, a day, an hour of the day, is individualized)" (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. viii). What counts lies in *the between*: "a set of relations which are not separable from each other" (ibid.). This type of empiricism concerns itself with real conditions of emergence issued from the between as a melding of (sonorous) materiality, force and sensation as movement; its emphasis lies on 'the set of relations' which can be experienced – albeit not known as such. "What defines [the multiplicity] is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND – stammering" (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. 34). The techniques set in motion – rather than methods 'put in place', which alludes to producing certain kind of knowledges – emphasize the AND, and create openings to novel experience that extend from the middle of a field, that is, in the mess of relations not yet organized into terms or elements. "Against [the] rationalistic tendency to treat experience as chopped up into dis-

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continuous static objects, radical empiricism protests,” writes James (1912, p. 237). He insists that conjunctions like ‘and’, ‘with’, ‘near’, ‘towards’ need to be taken “at their ‘face-value’, just as they come. [...] While we live in such conjunctions our state is one of *transition* in the most literal sense” (1912, p. 237; italics in original). Hence living life-in; experiencing the something’s doing in its processual unfolding: AND, AND, NEAR ... *noihs* ... *noihsshzs*; as noise (vibrational force) comes into perceptual focus, it is always already on the cusp of a new – *buzzing* – *thrumming* – *whirring* – and AND so on. We shall intermit this clamorous contemplation with the Deleuzian dictum: “Thinking *with* AND instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking *for* IS: empiricism never had another secret. Try it, it is a quite extraordinary thought, and yet it is life” (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. 57; italics in original). Do try.

If we want to speak at all of methodology, it is essential to consider the methods used as some kind of vehicle to access the middle, the between. Also of import is to keep in mind that this research (this thesis) wants to come to terms with occurrences that come about during the sonic artwork-performances. Even though of equal importance, yet not at the focus of this inquiry, are the respective artistic practices that make *Sonic Peripheries* possible. That is to say, the artists’ making (*poiesis*) and doing (*praxis*) provide the necessary foundation for this venture; or to put it this way: their works present the ‘resin’, the means and material to uphold the structure; they are *of* the in-between. Less figuratively speaking, the strategies and methods used by the artists are part of the overall entanglement and affect the process. However, this discussion will not say much about the artists’ respective context and manner of working – unless it informs the ‘*howing*’ of the event; as in the case of Strang whose listening devices, for instance, facilitate situations to encounter the sonic as transcendental occurrence

that provides the possibility for material-discursive articulations to arise.¹² Thus we turn to sonic artwork-performances that operate at the interface of the virtual and actual, conjuring new unprecedented experiences and expressions, producing *moods* or *affective tonalities* that point to the qualitative difference conjured above (e.g., Klatt's speculative pragmatic intervention and invention). In the upcoming chapter on *Sonic Peripheries* – the series and the related research – more will be said about the conception of the research event and the choice of commissioned artists. It should provide a general overview of the three art exhibition-events and the participants involved in order to help locate an otherwise *seemingly* abstract discussion on art and philosophy. (I emphasize 'seemingly' since this text wants to be anything but abstract; in fact, the coming-together of the written text seeks to parallel the art event – it *is* practice itself. In short, it aims at expanding but also delineating the limits of the sonic arts through the intervention of concepts via writing – at best producing *concrete* thinking-feeling sensations.)

♦ ♦ ♦

As pointed out in the part Introduction, it is beyond the scope of this venture to engage in the debate on artistic research as such – a debate that, simply put, is concerned with the place artistic poesis and praxis can occupy as a research method in academia (Borgdorff 2012). This project neither argues for nor against artistic research *as a type of research* endorsed by academia (to mean the fields

¹² Here I would like to reference Cox again who in 'Sound Art and the Sonic Unconscious' (2009) argues for a genuine sonic metaphysics wherein sound is conceived as "continuous, anonymous flux to which human expressions contribute but which precedes and exceeds these expressions" (p. 19). He claims that sonic art, at its best, "calls attention to an auditory unconscious, a *transcendental* or *virtual* domain of sound that has steadily come to prominence over the course of the twentieth century" (ibid.; italics in original). Cox, C. 2009. Sound Art and the Sonic Unconscious. *Organised Sound*, 14(01), 19-26.

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of science in the widest sense). It is relevant though to raise the issue due to the specific entanglement of artistic, curatorial, and participatory forces at play, bearing in mind that the impetus, here, is to call attention to the sensory knowings that we can hope for – to feel, to hear, to apprehend; in other words, knowings that emerge from the-dark-depths-of-the-world, as it were. To study the practices that partake in this artistic research – which envelop sound as their medium, concept and fabulation, that is, take the sonic as their subject and object for aesthetic exploration – presupposes a desire to ‘find things out’, as Kiff et al. put it, albeit narrowly. Their statement presents a definite view on *who* is the knower and *what* is the known. For example: ‘We’ find something out about the sonic environment of a bridge’s fencing by placing a so-called contact mic onto its surface and feel-hear the vibrations emanating from the object; or, Klatt solely discovers the buzzing amid the trembling depth of this little-piece-of-vibrating-world through attentive listening. The (human) Subject apprehends the (non-human) Object – period. This adventure begs to differ and takes its cue from Whitehead’s aesthetic philosophy and James’s radical empiricism. In ‘Against Method’ (2015b), Manning eloquently articulates the efficacy of the latter:

it gives us a technique to work with the in-act at the heart of experience, providing subtle ways of composing with the shifting relations between the knower and the known, keeping in mind, of course, that the knower is not the human subject, but the way relations open themselves towards systems of subjectification. Similar to Whitehead’s (1978) notion of the ‘superject’– which emphasizes that the occasion of experience is itself what proposes its own knower-known relations, resulting in a subject that is *the subject of the experience* rather than a subject *external* to the experience – radical empiricism refutes the notion that experience is constituted before all else of *human* relations. To understand

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experience this way places us, as humans, in a more nuanced relationship to knowledge. (p. 55; italics in original)

Polemics aside – the suggestion I want to make is that research into sonic art practices needs to establish a comprehensive (as well as unfinished) view on methodology. The nature of the sonic requires a pluralism of methods and techniques which takes into consideration that sound is a matter *of* experience *in* experience – and, as said from the start, is neither-this-nor-that. There is no sound in itself, no primordial ‘ursound’ that precedes the sound we come to apprehend. Instead, there is a virtual domain (also “chaosmos” [Deleuze 1969/1990]; “transcendental” [Cox 2009]) from which vibrations come into articulation as material-discursive phenomenon. Originating from chaos as energetic flux, progressing through matter-meanings, the sonic partakes in an experiential eventness, indeed, imparts on the “vector of prehension [that] moves from the world to the subject, from the prehended datum to the prehending one (a ‘superject’)” (Deleuze 1988/1993, p. 78). The methodological challenge is thus to enter the messy middling goings-on in resonance with each other, to conjure up techniques that afford a middling with and in the event that lets us assume ‘a more nuanced relationship to knowledge’ in relation to that which can be known, or rather be of knowing. However, this is also where the crux lies of researching the sonic and associated practices; to “[proceed] from the middle, through the middle [...] establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 25). The overall task will be then to embrace the crux and follow the relations: “Take everything as it comes” (Massumi 2011, p. 85). To Massumi (after James), “take everything as it comes, means you have to take continuity and discontinuity as *they come*” (ibid., p. 86; italics in original). This philosophical empiricism, calling for a kind of non-action echoes Cage’s promulgation ‘to let sounds be themselves’. The imperative is to invent methods that coincide with the so-called techniques

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of existence/relation which both Massumi and Manning consider a vital element in the arts; something that art can show us – lets us experience – not externally to the experience, but immanently to its occasioning.

Let me elaborate by referring back to the ‘Wow!’ example of which we talked in Aesthetic Encounter of Part One. In the context of Decker’s sonic performance/installation, the sheer wowness experienced by the artist – and by participants of the art events – exemplifies this type of artfulness that can occasion in art, however, is not limited to it. Massumi stresses that there is “an artfulness in every experience” (2011, p. 45). His point (my point being as regards the sonic arts) is that art has the potential to bring to the fore the relational-qualitative dimension that is registered as uncanny, strange, beautiful, or perhaps ugly; something that is present in the everyday, but remains hidden and might never see the light of day, or say, of apperception. The *Wow!* is expression of a thinking-feeling experience of a *something*, name it ‘atmosphere’ or ‘pure animateness’. A *vitality affect* that can be experienced as dynamic flow; such as, “spinning” or “jiggling hum,” terms used by *Sonic Peripheries* attendees to describe the sonic-derived atmospheres. They are not ‘figures’ in the sense of musical themes, variations, modulations, etc., but are “tessellations of sounds” generated by the live performance. What Decker describes as the *giant transformation* in the sonic artwork-performance is the moment of the THAT in the AND: air molecules pushing, surging forward, conjoining and conjuring up acoustic qualities. Heavy steps across squeaky floors; random changes in loudness initiated by an algorithm; sounds bleeding in from the outside; all the above creating a moment of joyful tessellation, non-stop moments full of self-enjoyment in no need of further explanation other than stammering “Wow!”

Technique of existence (also: technique of relation) is Massumi’s turn of phrase “for a way of doing something that, ‘eventfully effects a fusional mutual inclusion of heterogeneity of factors in a signature species of semblance’. In other

words, [it] refers to the manner in which [..., e.g.,] listening habits, assembling schemes, compositional gambits, etcetera, give rise to a form of abstraction through which one lives" (Massumi 2011, p. 143 as quoted in Priest 2013, p. 60). It affords the expression of a certain form of relationality. In fact, "anything that exists possesses a technique of existence insofar as the latter is a necessary condition for the former" (ibid.). Sonic artwork-performances bear techniques of existence specific to their manner of operation that bring about lived abstraction, i.e., semblances.

Recall that Massumi regards 'semblance' as "a placeholder in a present perception of a potential 'more' to life. [...] Semblance is the manner in which the virtual *actually appears*. It is the being of the virtual as lived abstraction" (2011, pp. 49, 15–16; italics in original). In 'The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens', the philosopher resumes that "art practice is a technique of composing potentials of existence, inventing experiential styles [... .] Art is inventive, literally creative of vitality affect" (ibid., pp. 73–74). Vitality affect and technique of existence, both to him, come down to the same thing, and here Massumi does mean 'technique' in its operative sense: "To achieve any affective-effective composition requires [...] minute attention to detail, and obsessive experimentation in how the situation is set up or framed" (ibid., p. 74). There lies the key, how a situation is set up: dynamic operative speculative pragmatically put into practice.

As previously mentioned, we need to remember that *Sonic Peripheries* is interested in aesthetic encounters that produce semblances of a kind unique to sonic art practices. In our constellation, the focus lies on the 'event-time' itself, that is to say, the taking place of a sonic artwork-performance in which the audience turns complicit ('runs interference') in the poetics of the experiential eventness in the making. We pay particular attention to the time and space during which the exhibition/performance-event takes place – a two-hour window. When everything happened; keeps on happening, generating reverberance

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unlimited. We prick up our ears to vitality affects in audition. We listen in and through – practicing a thinking-sound. Nevertheless, the question remains: how to facilitate situations that incite this sort of thinking which invites contemplation of a sonic event (coming and going) and thus lets us look into the goings-on (what's-happened-between the ebb and flow of coming-and-going)? In the last chapter of Part Two titled SP Performative Encounter, we will turn to the methods (and techniques of relation) this research has invented to enable conditions that make the not-yet-thought viscerally thinkable. This links to the concern this artistic research shares with speculative pragmatism, namely how to fashion generative lures for participatory processes (Manning 2015a; Manning & Massumi 2014). This and more will be discussed below.

Suffice it to say in conclusion of this section that research into sonic art practices here means to create a milieu for interference to take place for both the unforeseeable and unforehearable between the various agents of the *Sonic Peripheries'* events. As artist-led curator-theorist, I set forth the process by positing a research *lure*, rather than a research *question* (Doruff 2010) for the respective artists whom I invited to 'co-research' the proposition. Each case acted on different lures and hunches. There was not any pre-existing methodology to follow; rather, it was ours to engender, which is then a methodology understood as the mapping of the experiment and its entanglements with theory. For this, I looked to the broad field of social sciences and humanities to borrow methods relevant to the purpose of research creation. I tailored a methodological approach that includes aspects of a constructivist and hermeneutic perspective. The former holds that "objects and events actually become constituted in and through artworks and artistic actions;" the latter assumes that "artistic practices and artworks disclose the world to us" (Borgdorff 2012, p. 172). While this research seeks elements inherent to these perspectives, it also wants to exceed epistemology and circumvent hermeneutics. It wants to challenge the anthropocentrism implied in

these logics. Let me quote a passage from *The Conflict of the Faculties* (2012, pp. 172–173) relevant to our concern. There Borgdorff writes:

Only in and through art do we see what landscape, soundworlds, histories, emotions, relations, interests, or movements really are or could be. Here lies the performative and critical power of art. It does not represent things; it presents them, thereby making the world into what it is or could be. [...] The world-revealing power of art lies in its ability to offer us those new vistas, experiences, and insights that affect our relationship with the world and with ourselves. Artistic research addresses this world-constituting and world-revealing power of art – the ways in which we constitute and understand the world in and through art.

For all the reasons discussed so far, this statement is as partial as it is partially true; partial to the hubris of a human-centered art theory-criticism that knows and explains, and partially true because it implicates the human as constituting force in the aesthetic experiences – though not understood to mean that he or she is *the* constituent who drives ‘the performative and critical power of art’, but seen as one constituent, among others, who is a part of this world’s worlding in the Baradian sense. Despite Borgdorff’s implied Kantianism when saying, “A distinctive characteristic of artistic research is that it articulates both our familiarity with the world and our distance from it” – I do agree with him on the point that “artistic research is the realization that we do not yet know what we don’t know” (ibid., pp. 171, 173). Thus research into sonic art practices is concerned with the not-yet-knowing and remains curious about what Sher Doruff (2010) refers to as “the surprise encounter with *unknown unknowns* (what we don’t know we don’t know)” (p. 7; italics in original). Although at risk of cutting the argument short, I want to leave a discussion on ‘unknown unknowns’ and

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'method assemblage' (Law 2004) specific to this research for later. In the chapter following the brief overview of *Sonic Peripheries* (artistic series and research events), we will turn to the methods and techniques employed in the case studies. So more on the style of research creation and the methods invented for inspiring participatory processes until then.

SP ARTISTIC SERIES

Sonic Peripheries (in this chapter henceforth abbreviated as 'SP') started out as a curated series of exhibition-events featuring contemporary sonic art practices that developed into the research venture presented here under the same name. The cooperation between the Artist in Residence Stuhr-Heiligenrode and myself (as art researcher of Sound Studies at the University of the Arts Bremen) began in 2008 and has since commissioned artists to present work to the borough of Stuhr and beyond. Invited artists for the series include Mark and Laura Cetilia aka Mem1 (SP#1 2008), Lou Mallozzi (SP#2 2009), Howard Sandroff (SP#3 2009), Helen Pritchard (SP#4 2010), David Strang (SP#5 2011), Shawn Decker (SP#6 2012), and Stephen Lacy aka Academy Records (SP#7 2013). The artistic series, as figured in the title, maps the conceptual peripheries of expanded art practices with a genuine concern for the sonic. The historic and pastoral setting of Heiligenrode, located in Lower Saxony in the northwest of Germany next to the city-state of Bremen, affords yet another sense of 'peripheries', namely in terms of its geographic and aesthetico-political location: outside the city, outside mainstream exhibition sites. This constellation provides a favorable frame for a critical and inquiring approach to sound in the arts wherein received notions regarding form, content and context are creatively and imaginatively questioned and readdressed. As part of the series, the three case studies undertaken under the aegis of this research and discussed in this thesis, each introduce a specific take on the inquiry

of which more will be said shortly (and will further be explored in Part Three). Suffice it to say that the artists invited to conduct co-research were selected due to their idiosyncratic positions on sound as material and conceptual conduit. Take for instance David Strang whose work we encountered some pages earlier. He refers to himself as a digital media as well as a sound artist with a primary focus on acoustic matter and interactive elements. In his practice, Strang examines the natural surroundings we inhabit and amplifies singular aspects to heighten our perception of space (and place). For this, he deploys artistic strategies that involve sound recording, hacking gadgets and the usage of sensors, among other things. Strang is experienced in orchestrating experimental workshops within a collaborative framework where participants explore and probe into vibrational force more generally. With this in mind, I asked the artist to pursue with me the subject of sound in relation the Deleuzian concept of the virtual. SP#5 with the additional title 'Sound in the Virtual' was the first of three cases realized at the artist-in-residency in Stuhr-Heiligenrode between 2011 and 2013.

We learned from previous discussion that this venture is interested in how sonic art practices enable processes and experiences that create an aesthetic yield of the more-than. We might also note again – and pre-empt some discussion to come – that this research is interested in the onto-epistemology of sonic occurrence. This brings on the question of the role of curation, that is, how curatorial practice might facilitate as much as challenge these processes. For this reason, the (ad)venture explores curator-led intervention in tandem to the artist's work to unlatch 'generative lures' (Manning's term) for participatory enactments. Here curating takes on a "zoomed-out" position, revealing "the larger scenography of its relations inclusive of an immediate and expansive meshwork of actants that it affects and is affected by" (Doruff 2010, p. 6). In this sense, curator-led practice undertakes "researching through the notion of framing" (ibid.). Indeed, the framing of a particular content, condition or sensation implicates this act of

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research as “dynamic de-framing and re-framing method” (ibid, p. 9), which can engender novel perspectives and forms of expression in artistic production and its reception.

Below I discuss the objectives and strategies that apply to each case. One objective that applies to all cases, however, was to engage in what I consider to be co-research over a span of time, ranging from one and a half years to less than two months. The main co-research phase took place in the form of an ‘art laboratory’ during the artist’s stay at the residency. In *Rethinking Curating* (2010), Graham and Cook explain that the term *laboratory* resonates with science models with an emphasis on process: “experimental activities occur, things and ideas are tested, and sometimes they fail” (p. 237). Similarly, yet differently, the art world’s use of the word indicates “an alternative approach that can deal with process rather than object, with participant rather than audience, or with production rather than exhibition. Even in high modernist times, Alfred Barr was describing MoMA as a laboratory” (ibid., p. 235).¹ Which also goes back to Borgdorff’s idea that research in and through art is “about broadening and shifting our perspectives, our horizons. It is about constituting and accessing uncharted territories” (2009, p. 21). Staying in this groove, I would say that this venture makes use of this speculative and pragmatic attitude by creating space and time for processual thinking and doing that challenges and perhaps disables established concepts about the role of the artist and curator, or the researcher and researched. Co-research, then, becomes a collaborative intra-active endeavor that seeks to extend beyond a researcher-researched dichotomy, yet upholds the integrity of the respective practice which in turn yields an artist-led performance event on the one hand, and a curator-led intervention on the other. This strategy

¹ Alfred Hamilton Barr, Jr. (1902–1981) was an art historian and the first director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Stark, T. 2015. Barr, Alfred Hamilton, Jr. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/libraries-and-research-centers/leonard-lauder-research-center/programs-and-resources/index-of-cubist-art-collectors/barr> [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

allowed for various ideas, sentiments, and approaches to undulate between the researcher and the researched until discrete trajectories crystallized. Each trajectory gave articulation to an activity that was autonomous, but intertwined in a common goal; it was agreed that each case would culminate in a one-off sonic performance and exhibition. The performative aspect was imperative to the project because it provided the necessary condition for others to engage in the curator-led Performative Encounter activity.

In the following, I introduce the artists and briefly outline each art event, without going into a full description and analysis of the artworks and situations presented. All SPs took place during the summer. The exhibition-events, always scheduled for Thursday nights, lasted two to three hours with gallery attendance ranging from 40 to 50 participants. The exhibitions (without the live performance element) were open to the public for several days only. Apart from the SP art events, select public events prior to the opening were held at the University of the Arts Bremen, such as artist talks and artist-led workshops. At the night of the opening, The SP exhibition-events included a free bus transfer from Bremen to Stuhr-Heiligenrode and back. Those taking the ride considered it a field trip *extraordinaire* – transporting the person from a place they knew to some kind of Alice's Wonderland.

I have already introduced aspects of David Strang's practice, but, let me now complement this information with further detail. In addition to working and exhibiting in a collaborative framework with artists and scientists alike, Strang's oeuvre includes site-specific installations, field recordings, performances, re-appropriated media objects and networks. Aside from this project, he presented solo works in the UK, Europe, Iceland, Russia, and the USA. In co-research and as leitmotif for the two-week art laboratory, the artist explored sonic sites in regard to questions of the virtual. Sonic territory was carefully surveyed, that is, field recordings made and environmental data gathered in order for site-specific

materials to fold back onto itself. That is, the specificity of the environs influenced the artwork in progress. Let me elaborate on this by briefly describing the general set-up.

The gallery of the artist residency is situated today in a landmarked building that was the house of a miller in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the main exhibition space, the larger one of two rooms, gallery visitors were presented with an analogue tape installation and a kind of workshop set-up for the DIY (do-it-yourself) construction of cassette-loops. In the smaller room, an audiovisual piece was installed and displayed on a continuous loop. SP#5 attendees were invited to participate in a 'sonic excursion' (as part of the curator-led intervention), thus, explore the various acoustic artifacts and take into consideration the question of how sound and the virtual (also in the sense of haptic vibrations) relate and affect our perception and understanding of reality. The exploration could be pursued in the gallery and in nearby mill buildings as well as outside along the bridge and paths of the park (the site of a former Benedictine monastery).² In order to carry out the field excursion, the artist built listening devices, such as electrets, hydrophones, and contact microphones.

In preparation for the sonic artwork-performance, Strang attached several piezos (i.e., contact mics) to parts of various grain-processing machines inside the mill to capture discreet sonic vibrations. With the gears and belts running, the

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² For a detailed account on the historic site of Heiligenrode and the monastery mill, I direct the reader to the website of the *Klostermühle Heiligenrode*, set up and maintained by the Fellowship of the Watermill Heiligenrode: <http://www.muehle-heiligenrode.de/b-index>. Especially the entries on the various mill machines, inclusive of an animation of the grain processing steps, are quite instructive. Special thanks are due to Rudolf Franke, member of the Fellowship of the Watermill, former teacher and mill enthusiast who volunteered to show us around and provide valuable information. He gave Strang and myself access to the mill building over the duration of the project and offered to operate the mill machinery for the purpose of the live sonic performance on the opening night. Franke, R. n.d. The historical Watermill Heiligenrode near Bremen in Germany. *Klostermühle Heiligenrode*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.muehle-heiligenrode.de/b-index> [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

machines caused a ruckus – some of which was discerned as audible noise or as vibrations that the piezos would pick up and transduce. In addition to this arrangement, the artist fastened a number of light meters in different parts of the mill to measure the variations in brightness, i.e., the light/shadow movements created by the rotation of wheels, for example. The data was gathered (via microcontroller and laptop) and streamed to the miller's house. The live aspect of the sonic artwork-performance derived from the entanglement of the machines and their Umwelt. In the gallery, the SP#5 audience could then listen to a real-time transmission of the mill's sounds and vibrations resembling mechanical noise, yet aestheticized and estranged from that reality – creating a contrasting, but nonetheless complementary sonorous environment in juxtaposition to the mill building itself and the park surrounding it. This changing soundscape (plus tape-loop installation, plus people talking, etc.) engendered a situatedness that invited further exploration of sonic territory in pursuit of a vibrational-evanescent map from which an acoustic trace temporarily emerged in the main exhibition space.

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7. 

In terms of SP#6 with Shawn Decker, I would like to refer the reader to Part One where we have in part discussed this SP with the Whitehead-inspired subtitle 'Non/Natura Naturans; Discerned Presence'. I shall refrain from providing a reading of the add-on title, but instead leave this to your collective imaginations. However, it is relevant to keep in mind the aspect of awareness that is implied in the title. In what follows, I will add some information about the art event that was omitted earlier.

We invited the SP#6 audience to take part in an acoustic exploration to investigate the notion of nature. What indeed is nature or 'nonnature' (as Decker will have it)? How can we define nature? Something Whitehead would ask and then answer as follows: It is "what we are aware of in perception" (1920, p. 28). This type of attentiveness was, and still is, of concern here. By means of the SP#6

Performative Encounter activity (to which we return in the next chapter), the participants were asked to pursue the issue of how nature and acoustic artifacts (e.g., 'natural' versus 'constructed mathematical' rhythms) are encountered, will affect our perception (in prehension) and provoke possible worlds (or sound-spaces). While listening to the sonic artwork-performance (or 'performative-installation' as coined by Decker), the audience, or rather, the participants would move through the exhibition space of the miller's house – including the hallway, kitchen, the garden as well as adjacent mill buildings – discerning various sonic environments and rhythms over a period of time. By way of motion and rest – walking and staying put – new diffractive patterns and rhythmic events gave way to a choreography of forces.

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Let me add in passing that the gist of this event/project was to create a situation for a practice of thinking-sound as discussed in Part One. From what I learned through the interviews with the participants and my own observation and experience of being there that a sense of intense focus, even calm, ensued over time. There was no chatter, no hubbub – as Decker also noted in hindsight – rather a way of letting be and 'to let sounds be themselves'. It is simply a way of discerning how sonic sites unravel whereby "[t]he space gets bigger, wider without barriers"³ (Lehnert 2012) and "[s]pace and place have dissolved"⁴ (Dogbey 2012). "The space becomes sound, it loses its structuring austerity"⁵ (Thomssen 2012). Generally, sonic artwork-performance are a challenge to document and record – which made this an especially daring one to describe (hence my decision to add some participant responses above). Decker later remarked that a live event of this kind cannot be captured. For the artist, however, this is not a sign of a problem but rather a sign of success; in his words: "if you could

³ Translated from German by the author. In the original: "Raum und Ort haben sich aufgelöst."

⁴ Translated from German by the author. In the original: "Raum wird größer, weiter ohne Hindernisse."

⁵ Translated from German by the author. In the original: "Der Raum wird zu Sound, er verliert seine strukturierende Strenge."

capture the essence of that performance, of that installation with a single audio recording, then, in my mind, it wouldn't have been a very interesting installation" (2012b). (The reader is invited to follow the audio symbol and to listen to an excerpt of the sonic performance. The audio recorder was positioned in the main gallery space. More on what the participants did during the art event to foster a thinking-sound, see upcoming chapter, pp. 135–137.)



Now we turn to the last of the three case set-ups, namely SP#7 with the US artist and musician Stephen Lacy who works under the moniker Academy Records. His works have been performed and exhibited at numerous venues – including Hyde Park Art Center, Linda Warren Gallery, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. I asked Lacy to join in co-research also because his artistic position, in my view, is emblematic of the expanded art practices of sound in the arts. Each Academy Records project is concept-led, site- and time-specific and generally of a DIY nature to encompass in a collaborative-performative act the actants and networks available through smaller economies. For this SP case with the subtitle 'Sound/Image: Fielding Abstractions', the conception of sonic occurrence lay at the heart of the investigation. Lacy and I sought to explore the constellation of lived abstraction and the effectuation of experiential events in conjunction with the notion of vanishing points in sound and image (in the context of site-specificity and space in general).

Unlike the previous cases, Lacy and I together deployed the Performative Encounter activity as a methodological vehicle to enquire into the materiality of site (with a focus on the art residency in the last phase of co-research) through field recording, photography, and drawing (more on SP#7's artistic collaboration in the next chapter). Over the course of the exhibition-event, the audience was again invited to participate in an exploration or the contemplation of the nature of the sonic in relation to visual-perspective spatial topologies. They encountered a series of works – in part the result of the Performative Encounters enacted

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between Lacy and myself – and, importantly, experienced a live act or sonic performance by Academy Records, which informed the overall ‘mood’ and the coming into expression of so-called soundspace.

In the next few paragraphs, I will briefly outline the contents of the exhibition. In the main gallery space, Lacy installed photographs and drawings in contiguity with recorded sounds played back into space. Here the idea of image-landscape in relation to sound or soundscape was explored. A low tactile rumble suffused the room, creating a distinct presence, indeed making the listener aware of the gap between what was heard on the one hand and seen on the other. Even though we could discern frequencies that give rise to sonic objecthood (or semblance of ‘some-thing’), the soundscape was never descriptive, did not narrate, but would invoke a quality belonging to an undefined environment and situation.

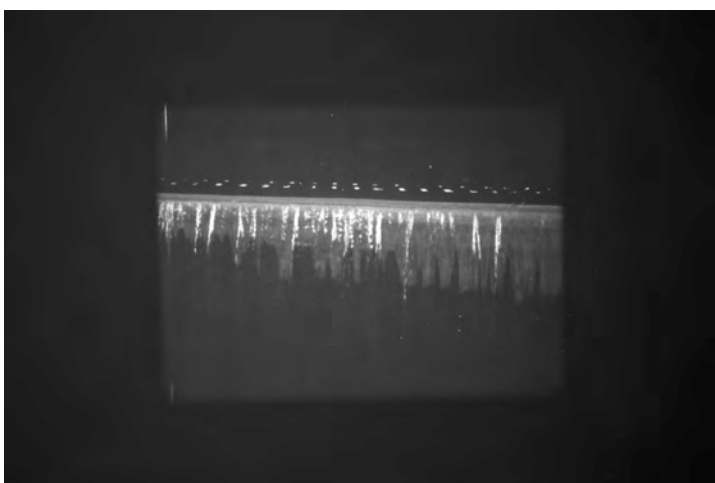
In the other gallery space, an additional set of drawings we installed as well as two film projectors displaying each a distinct film loop onto opposite walls (Figs. 1, 2). The room was filled with the noise of the running projectors, though the film loops themselves were silent, displaying scenes that reflect on the notion of both sound and non-sound. These works resulted from the artistic collaboration where Figure 1 shows Lacy’s closing thought on our experimental series (and Fig. 2 shows mine, albeit not a closing thought as such since I continued to work on this problem through the conjunction of writing and image-graphics in *Experimenting: Sound/Non-Sound*).

The drawings in general (and the score in particular) were Lacy’s explorations of sound and image relation that reference and frame the specificity of the artist in residency and its vicinity. In his own words, the artist states: “I am gathering field recordings to inform the generation of sight-responsive drawings that survey the individual’s sonic relationship to the landscape through line and

10. 



11. 



12. 

Figures 1 (top), 2

Still images of ca. 20-seconds 16 mm film loops by Lacy (top) and Klusmeyer – results of SP#7 Performative Encounters 5 & 6. Photos by Lucas Odahara.

Lacy's film (Fig. 1) shows a handheld medium shot that imparts a partial view of a bench surrounded by lush greenery. Figure 2 shows a stationary mid to close-up shot of a body of water moving toward an edge from where it flows rapidly down.

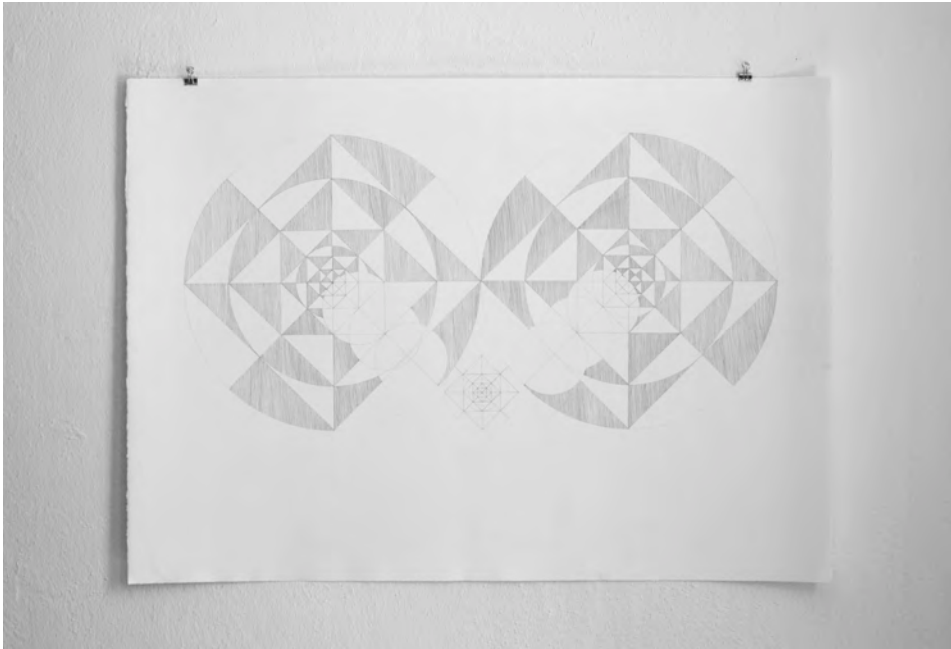


Figure 3

Diagrammatic score by Academy Records. Photo by Lucas Odahara.

pattern. In using landscape as a mode of research – through films, drawings, and sounds – I can relate pattern studies to temporal spatiality.”⁶ The diagrammatic score commissioned for SP#7 (as seen in Fig. 3) presents a singular abstraction of space. In performing the drawing/score, Lacy reenacted (not reproduced) the ‘temporal spatiality’, or rather, the felt particularities of the given location. Participants were encouraged to move around the gallery, especially throughout Lacy’s 30-minute sonic performance – a piece that consists of one electric guitar, one stereo echo pedal and two guitar amplifiers. The melodic pattern, or what he calls ‘rhythmic figure’, was played through the pedal that split the signal to each amplifier situated in separate rooms, thus fracturing the pattern through physical

13. 

14. 

⁶ Lacy S. 2016. Artist Statement. Email correspondence with the author, 7 December.

space. Due to the hard left and right pan of the stereo pedal, the ensuing patterns would only create a partial image of the actual played rhythm, generating sonic expression-events specific to the listener's relative position in space at a given time.

SP PERFORMATIVE ENCOUNTER

Performative Encounter (in this chapter henceforth abbreviated as 'PE') emerged from the first case study. While I would refrain from calling SP#5 a pilot study, I will say that the first case was the most indeterminate of all three. This bears risks but also opportunities; in fact, uncertainty turned into an opportunity in the form of a curator-led intervention, namely the PE activity, driven by the question of how to facilitate situations that incite vital contemplation of a sonic event (its coming and going) and let us look into the goings-on (the what's-happened-between the coming-and-going).

Since our interest lies with the occasioning of sonic occurrences, the challenge was to conjure a method that accounts for the ineffable, the hard-to-grasp affective tones that 'seep up' from the unknown to become known. Something that we recognize, but speaks to us without clear content; "an incipient activity that summons intensities towards a coming-to-expression, a thinking directly imbued with rhythm, with feeling" (Manning 2015b, p. 61). By way of the PEs, we sought to tap into the summoned intensities, the throbs of feeling, or blocs of sensation that provide the condition for *erkennen*. The German verb 'erkennen' connotes a process where the prefix 'er-' suggests a revealing or unlocking that leads from recognition to knowing – *erkennen* to *kennen*. Manning in 'Against Method' (ibid.; see also Nietzsche 2003, p. 14) tells us that "there is often a sense of recognition despite a lack of knowing in the strong sense.

Knowing is incipient to the experience at hand, sometimes known as such, sometimes actively felt but indecipherable in linguistic terms.” But, and this is an important ‘but’, the unlocking of knowables in the indecipherable can be made palpable through invention. Here I mean invention on the part of the participant alongside the sonic artwork-performance.

How, then, to engage the gallery visitor in an activity that would foster *erkennen* – akin to “felt experience of knowing” (Doruff 2010, p. 7) – that comes alive at the moment of creativeness? This begs the question of how to set up or frame a situation so that it invites experimentation that will yield new modes of knowledge (outside predetermined schemas of knowledge). The felt experiences of knowing, I propose, occur by way of thinking in motion when engaging in experiments of a speculative pragmatic nature; that is to say, when experimentation and play provide us with the means “to engage speculatively in a pragmatic process” (Manning 2015b, p. 60). The PE activity, composed of a set of directives in the form of so-called Encounters and Prompts, opens onto a performative experiential milieu with the capacity to affect and be affected.¹ Here the term ‘performative’ takes on the meaning of a temporal presence, an *intuit-immediacy* where something compels us to think-feel the ‘otherwise’ (see Part Three: One).²

¹ “The [Spinozan] formula ‘to affect and be affected’ is also proto-political in the sense that it includes relation in the definition. To affect and to be affected is to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity. This openness is also taken as primary. It is the cutting edge of change. It is through it that things-in-the-making cut their transformational teeth. One always affects and is affected in encounters; which is to say, through events. To begin affectively in change is to begin in relation, and to begin in relation is to begin in the event” (Massumi 2015b, p. ix). See Massumi, B. 2015b. *The Politics of Affect*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

² Here I use the term ‘performative’ in the sense given to it by Peter Jaeger (2013) after Mieke Bal in *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities* (2002). For both the performative “lives by the present and knows no anteriority” (Bal 2002, p. 17). Jaeger in *John Cage and Buddhist Ecopoetics* writes that he focuses “specifically on Bal’s definition of the performative due to its immediacy, its temporal presence and its claim for non-dualistic awareness – categories of experience which can also be found represented in the literature of Zen” (2013, p. 3). See Bal, M. 2002. *Travelling Concepts in the*

Part Two – Sonic Peripheries

“This something is an object not of recognition but a fundamental encounter that can be ‘grasped in a range of affective tones’” (Deleuze 1994, p. 139 as quoted in Semetsky 2010, pp. 91–92). Middling with/in the world (and the event) “– *this* time, on *this* occasion, under *these* circumstances – is never settled in advance, but must be worked out, per-formed, as it were” (McCormack 2015, p. 89; italics in original). The act of ‘encounter’ is key to initiate the process – a ritual as a way of doing, if you like – for a thinking-sound ‘par le milieu’, to echo Deleuze. The first PE activity employed what I consider to be basic techniques. The PEs that followed grew in complexity – especially with regard to SP#7.

The reader might have noticed that I use ‘method’ and ‘technique’ interchangeably. Both terms refer to a set of practices that attend to the ineffable, the *atmospheric*, that provide the means and manner by which we intervene and invent anew from a field of relations arising from our intra-acting – ‘per-forming’ – with the artfulness of the givens in *that* occasioning, under *those* circumstances. Let us recall, though, that sonic artwork-performances bear *techniques of existence* specific to their manner of operation that bring about “signature species of semblance” (Massumi 2011, p. 143). Technique of existence (or relation) is immanent within experiential eventness in its coming-to-be. It gives rise to a form of abstraction through which we live – and, here, through which we participate – that can produce material expressions opening onto the mysteries of felt unknowns. Thus, it bears minding that techniques, or set of methods, work *initially* from without and techniques of relation from within. Each Performative Encounter activity provides directives (read, if you will: set of methods) that supply the participant with the tools to probe and auscultate sonic semblances. The intention was “to draw out something of the world that remains vague but still matters;” as such, the directives (initially from without) induce a matter mattering that, in turn, create fugacious expression – an artifact of material-

Humanities: A Rough Guide. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; Jaeger, P. 2013. *John Cage and Buddhist Ecopoetics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

discursive nature – with its own aesthetic yield or semblance (from within the process) (McCormack 2015, p. 93). Here think back on Klatt's experiment or proceed to Part Three for other 'derivatives' that speak of the eventness.

Before turning to discuss particulars of the PE activity through examples, it will be helpful to recall once more the incentive behind this artistic research. Generally, the idea is to get attuned to the complexion of the sonic in relation to expanded art practices. From this, the question arises of how to create or infuse an openness to encounter sound in ways other than expected in a given circumstance; that is, how not to expect and repeat, but inspire an attentiveness to the *otherwise* incipient in an aesthetic encounter. For that reason, this project assumes aspects of what is known as 'method assemblage'. The neologism, coined by the sociologist John Law, advocates that the Deleuze-inspired concept of assemblage denoting "processes of arranging, organising, and fitting together," when thought in correlation with 'methods', will produce an alliance that accounts for the hard-to-grasp, the generative flux of which realities are made (Livesey 2010, p. 18). According to Law, "The task is to imagine methods when they no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable" (2004, p. 6). As such, he considers method in an extended manner, namely as *method assemblage* bound to make numerous, often surprising, connections. In this sense, the PEs are (along Deleuzian lines) a methodological abstract machine put into practice. I might add that this approach ensured the collection of empirical materials creating space for fabulation. Furthermore, borrowing from conventional (or say, established) models in social sciences and the humanities, I employed bespoke qualitative approaches, such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, audiovisual recordings, and research journaling (more on the Research Blog see footnote 5) for the purpose of documenting processes and gathering data for future reference. In sum, the PEs work in a twofold way: they create an opening ('generative lures' in the Manning-Massumian sense) for the gallery visitor to participate in research creation on the one hand and on the

Part Two – Sonic Peripheries

other serve as methodological and onto-epistemological devices to abstract experiences into actualizations in the form of writings, drawings, audiovisual recordings, or all other types of empirical thinkings that come to expression.

What follows from this in practical terms? One, the Research Kit; two, listening-in and -through; three, intervene and invent; four, the interviews. (Five, harnessing concepts.)



Figure 1

SP#6 PE activity; Research Kit in use. Photo by Annika Meyer.



15.

Figure 2

SP#6 Research Kits collection after the event. Photo by Annika Meyer.

We begin with a description of the so-called Research Kit, which was a constituent part of each case/art event but unique with regard to its components. In the following, we look to SP#6 as example. Figures 1, 2 show the kit: a tote bag containing a clipboard, pen, papers, an audiovisual gadget, and, importantly, the PE directives plus questionnaire. The bag with the items was handed out to each gallery visitor at the outset of the opening night.

16.

As mentioned above, the PEs are comprised of a set of directives in the form of Encounters and Prompts, plus a basic map of the gallery space (and immediate vicinity), a questionnaire and consent form. Following the introduction of the artist and works, the public was invited to participate in this project and carefully peruse the attached information. With this said and done, the event-exhibition was opened; the directives set the conditions for the course of action. Here, I offer Encounters 1 and 2 (from a total of four):

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Please familiarize yourself with the map. Begin your listening journey in Gallery A. Enter the gallery space, seek out a place to sit or stand, and listen for some duration. You decide for how long.

Create a route that takes you through different spaces inside the gallery as well as outside the building. Draw the route on the map and indicate with a cross the locations where you spent some time for close listening. Please follow the respective prompts. Repeat the same route at least twice.

Encounters (or also 'performance scores') provide the frame for experiment-experience on site. Prompts differ from Encounters insofar that they are directed towards specific kinds of action. For example, one prompted the participant to 'feel' the heard (as opposed to thinking *about* the heard) – sauntering through the indoor and outdoor spaces – pausing here and there, with eyes closed. The next Prompt read: "Write down a word that comes to mind." We might say that the directives, on the whole, work on the level of the atmospheric. The PE activity endeavored to inspire a thinking-sound and connect the participant to a sonic, or rather vibrational ecology in the widest sense in order to draw out the hidden as well as tacit knowings. Especially those Encounters that would ask the participant to 'capture' the heard (through the use of audiovisual technology or other means of mnemonic recording, e.g., drawing, exploratory writing, etc.) incited the unexpected. Actual-corporeal participation (in lieu of or in addition to theoretical doing) not only gave rise but also form to the Real by invoking the potentiality of the Present into taking-shape. It provoked a "sense of permanent presence," as one participant put it.³ And we might also say it

³ For questionnaire responses and interview transcripts visit the Research Blog online. More on the Research Blog and its function in addition to the Online Addendum, see p. 139 and/or proceed to footnote 5 of this chapter.

SP Performative Encounter

provoked a provisional presencing of matter that comes to matter – for real (see Part Three).

Each PE activity inclusive of the questionnaire was designed in relation to the specifics of each case and the research proposition that informed the respective co-research process. The questionnaire consisted of an iterative set of semi-open questions and a distinct set of semi-open questions. The former pertained to the experience of time and space, the latter were questions that sought to elicit responses relevant to the coming-to of sonic occurrence (or select experiences thereof). The responses were returned to me at the end of the art happening. Interviews with those who gave consent for a follow-up conversation were scheduled in close proximity of time to the art event.

In closing this chapter, I will shortly address the artistic collaboration between Academy Records and myself. We together deployed the Performative Encounter activity as a methodological vehicle to enquire into the materiality of site, and, as said above, this was an approach quite unlike the previous co-researches. The process started out with a set of directives I devised for Lacy to work with. Once I received his response – in the form of photographs or field recordings – I would propose the next set until we reached Encounter 5: “Taking research into practice.” Here we decided (after a discussion on site-specificity in image-sound correlations) that Lacy called the Prompt which I would then enact. I also suggested that we integrate analogue film into the process. (This seemed only apt with respect to Academy Records’ practice and the problem that we were co-researching at the time.) His instruction read: “Using the Bolex consider the frame as demarcation of space. Using the viewfinder: frame up an image that conveys no sense of sound; also inverse, frame up an image that conveys a distinct (known or universal) sound.” The next and last Encounter (of a total of six), I again devised for Lacy to then put into practice. It said: “Reenact the semblance of an event;” followed by the Prompt: “Repeat Prompt 5 with the

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addition to reenact the scenes of PE 5: 1. waterfall, 2. stone; 3. bench; 4. water surface; 5. wall. For direction see photo/film documentation.” In other words, repeat the previous task (i.e., ‘Using the Bolex ... frame up an image’, etc.) and take the lead from the documentation of the location scouting for film loop one (see Fig. 2) to create a contrasting film loop two (Fig. 1).⁴

This is not the place to discuss the intricacies of our collaborative effort; suffice it to say, however, that we took the PEs to the limit (as far as we could) by integrating the method as exploratory means for the discovery of what arises from the interstice between sensation and cognizance. “The emphasis here is on the experience of making as *encounter*,” writes Doruff in ‘Artistic Res/Arch: The Propositional Experience of Mattering’ (2010, p. 8; italics in original). In Doruff’s account on artistic research, the style of research-creation takes on significance, meaning – it is how we enter a ‘thing’ in and through artistic poiesis that comes to matter mattering (the Germanic root *thing* assumes the meaning of the Latin ‘res’ in the sense of matters-of-concern as *ethico-aesthetic* matters-of-fact). The back and forth in the making of a thing, in this case, the film loops, is given primacy. Similar to the practice of the ‘exquisite corpse’ – based on the Surrealists’ method involving a sheet of paper “folded horizontally concertina-fashion onto which, in turn, each member of a group draws a part of a body, without being able to see what others have drawn on the paper” (Manchester 2002, n.p.) – the PE activity allows for an opening or *archway* (to use Doruff’s image) towards what we might anticipate but do not know ‘as such’. Although the PEs depart from the surrealist technique, the dual nature of our collaboration, the sharing and fostering *the difference in the one* – the exploring of sound in non-sound and vice versa – was, and is, of interest and a matter-of-concern for two et al.

One final thought, and pre-empting an underlying aspect of Part Four, I want to link this collaborative experience to my decision to create an offshoot

⁴ I want to thank Ali Eichelbach for his help in the realization of Encounter 5.

project as part of *Sonic Peripheries*. I write this not to excuse my choice for diverging from curation for the pursuit of my own art practice, but rather to convey the importance of artistic work and the experiences it affords when navigating one's way through the labyrinthine passage of producing artworks, inclusive of writing and other kinds of creative endeavors. There is a sense of *joy* in the making that lets us access what I refer elsewhere to as the otherwise. Here I mean 'joy' in the Spinozan sense – not a feel-good-type as Massumi shows in *Politics of Affect* (although that, too, for me at times) – but “Joy in the Spinozan sense refer[ring] to the intensity of the affective encounter. The intensity of the encounter in turn refers to an augmentation in powers of existence – capacities to feel, act and perceive – that occurs through the encounter” (Massumi 2015b, p. 208). This ingredient to research in general and research-creation in particular I wanted to continue to trace *intensively* (in proximity to and in alliance with all that came previously) when exploring the Whiteheadian 'lure for feeling' through the experiment/project titled 'How is Nature'. For more on this, see Part Four: A Lure for Feeling and Experiment 2.

♦ ♦ ♦

As way of concluding Part Two (though, somewhat lengthy in what follows), I would like to add two things here that pertain to the issue of sound art and performance-related documentation in general and audience participation in particular – something that has been, and continues to be, at stake for this kind of venture.

Let me take this as a cue to introduce the reader to my Research Blog.⁵ I do this at this juncture since it relates to the subject of information, materials and

⁵ I decided to discuss the Research Blog here rather than in the chapter *Apropos Online Addendum* since I didn't want it to take up too much space right at the beginning. As said earlier, everything is in the thesis – supported by select audio, visual, audiovisual, diagrammatic, and textual examples online. The Research Blog is a different animal altogether, but it may just so give the reader an idea

Part Two – Sonic Peripheries

nascent ideas of which to produce archives on the one hand, and enable creative flows on the other, which, in my view, need safeguarding against the perils of losing one's thought-connection (see Part One, p. 38). To find out more, I invite you to proceed to the footnote 5 of this chapter. You may follow up on this now or later; for what is to come next, it is not critical to review the online site. What it

of the extent of this venture (and why it took the time it did). As Rick Dolphijn said: "it's what anthropologists do," namely to open up their research journals to the initiated. And this is what I am doing here right now without claiming that this should portrait the entire story – it doesn't. It's another rhizomatic thread amid the ones that you find in the thesis (and others that may never see the light of day or made public, that is). Now let me add a few words concerning the layout and respective content of the blog. The menu shows the following rubrics: Case Studies, Theory-Practice, and Quasi Writing. Under the first rubric you find archived data from the *Sonic Peripheries* (SP) art research events: in part the process that led to the events as well as images, sounds, miscellaneous data from the performances/exhibitions – and, importantly, the interview transcripts. Altogether information I thought significant then and felt the need to organize by way of cataloging the bits and pieces. Note that I distinguished between what I call SP Annotated Archive and the pages under the same rubric that show a selection of responses/findings from the respective research events. Next, the rubric titled Theory-Practice. It shows how I (tirelessly) continued to seek new ways of organizing data with the intention of extracting conceptual lines; see Diagrams, for instance. (I must have been desperate, but then again the annotated mind maps reflect to some extent what later can be found in writing, albeit not directly.) The last rubric (there were others I deleted along the way) presents an offshoot idea; something in the way of art practice. A nascent idea that I didn't further flush out but will leave for you to ponder; it's slightly embarrassing to me now, or, say, I feel self-conscious about the experiment titled Quasi Writing. But if art research or art making were all too slick and neutral, then, perhaps, something was amiss. Well? ... Both tags and categories became somewhat diluted over time: too many tags, too many ideas; so the archive might have turned into a 'mad scientist's bin' ... at any rate, a useful one to me. The rest is self-explanatory or if not understood to be ignored. Enjoy rummaging (no negative connotation intended). You might find the occasional gem as I have over the course of the endeavor and while writing this thesis. The website with the title Research Blog (Excerpt) is a slimmed down copy of the original ongoing research blog/journal. I didn't go back and reread everything; there was simply no time nor desire to do so. I hope though that I didn't leave you with too self-indulging entries; there might still be some that are overly sulky or plain silly. I am afraid that's just part of *the adventure* – such as this one – no doubt.

<https://pklusmeyer.wordpress.com>

Username: cartomythographer

Password: sonicperipheries

does, however, is to provide additional insight into the overall process. I thus consider it an add-on to the official Online Addendum.

Now back to where we left off. It is worth reminding ourselves that a discussion on sonic artwork-performances is no substitute for the experience of being there physically, attending the live event in person. That said, writing on art affords a different type of experiential event. It creates other assemblages, not so much a retelling of facts but rather a production of aesthetic encounters through 'perceptual' writing that opens up the art experience to further adventures (cf. O'Sullivan 2001b). It is a kind of interference of which Manning and Massumi write in *Thought in the Act* (2014, p. vii):

Philosophy does not yet know how to speak. Its thinking is active, uneasy because always in the encounter. Giving words to the encounter is what we have attempted to do here. Not to solve the riddle of how art and philosophy [...] move together, but to ask ourselves what writing can do to make thought-felt what art can do, with philosophy.

This venture aspires to "[run] writing interference" (ibid., p. viii). For example, the retelling of Decker's experience (see Part One: Aesthetic Encounter) "has more fundamentally to do with speculation than designation, or any form of one-to-one correspondence between words and things" (Massumi 2011, p. 119). It thus implies a freedom involved – not only to run interference, but to run wild – to let the eventness re-enter the scene. Documentation of the *Sonic Peripheries* cases in the form of audio recordings, photos, and the like, is available and has been and will be made use of from time to time: on the one hand, to make reference to some specifics (see e.g., Figs. 1–3 on pp. 127–128); on the other hand, to play into the encounter between art and philosophy, hence to create thought-

Part Two – Sonic Peripheries

feelings in resonance with the concepts discussed in the text (see also Part Three: Experiment 1). Suffice it to say here (and to say it with Bishop who notes):

To grasp participatory art from images alone is almost impossible: casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening or seminar tell us very little, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project. They rarely provide more than fragmentary evidence, and convey nothing of the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and people to participate in them. (Bishop 2012, p. 5)

I shall leave this uncommented (letting it speak for itself) and move on to the next thing, the position of the participant.

As said earlier in this thesis, the audience is not merely a recipient but equally a participant and co-producer of situations. The *Sonic Peripheries* cases operated on the basis of inviting the audience to partake in the sonic artwork-performance – i.e., the art research events. Depending on the conceptual framework of the respective case, the part of the audience (or gallery visitors) varied between ‘active’ and ‘reflective’ participation, or a combination of both – of which some details were addressed earlier. Of import, here, is to stress the relevance, or rather irrelevance of a human-centered perspective in this context. Why both? Because it is never just one, that is, one perspective, one thing or element, one intercessor, etc. This (ad)venture explores what art can do by means of research creation and writing, which involves (and creates) various modes of thinking within an ecology of practices. In other words, there is never a neat divide between art, research and *those* participating in research creation (‘those’ meaning: human and nonhuman elements). However, for Massumi, the gallery visitor assumes a privileged link in the coming-together of elements: “The experiential effect occurs to the visitor, as it occurs to itself as its own event, through the

conduit of the visitor” (Massumi 2011, p. 165). In that sense, the audience (or also ‘art recipients’) of a sonic artwork-performance acts as catalyst or transducer, bringing energies afloat into perceptual focus. What comes to pass as the experiential event (or ‘the excess of the inexpressible’) is the effect setting in as it wells up from below the threshold of human awareness. “This makes the experience integrally ecological,” asserts Massumi (ibid.). Still, this doesn’t imply that the event is ‘natural’ as opposed to ‘cultural’. On the contrary. To the activist philosopher the event is ecological *because* “[i]t takes in elements classifiable as natural (the physiology of the human body, the physics of [sound] and materials) in a way that effectively fuses them with cultural elements. The coming-together draws on a nature-culture continuum” (ibid.). And lastly, in closing this line of thought: privileging the human in the encounter with the nonhuman may (or may not) underpin anthropomorphism (the attribution of human characteristics and intentions to nonhuman entities). “A touch of anthropomorphism,” writes Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter*, “can catalyze a sensibility that finds a world filled not with ontologically distinct categories of beings (subjects and objects) but with variously composed materialities that form confederations” (2010, p. 99 as quoted in Manning 2014, p. 327). To invite the audience to participate in a sonic artwork-performance welcomes the opportunity (and the risk) to veer off the beaten path. *Sonic Peripheries* attendees were free to engage in experimentation that possibly enabled situations that could just be the right ‘antidote’ against anthropomorphizing. Being drawn to a specific sonic event and the experience it brings forth requires of us, in Bennett’s words, “to relax into resemblances discerned across ontological divides” (2010, pp. 119–120). *I take the chirps of crickets for the sound and feel of rain – virtually – falling upon me*;⁶ “a chord is

⁶ Dave Dowhaniuk in interview with the author, following the *Sonic Peripheries #6* event. He participated in the Performative Encounter activity, as part of the case study. The italicized statement is paraphrased, or rather poetically translated from Dowhaniuk’s original response, which goes as follows: “The sonic textures were comforting from the rain, which felt as though I was covered and

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struck between person and thing, and I am no longer above or outside a non-human 'environment'" (ibid.). This awareness, precisely this listening-in and -through the materiality of sound, presents a concern for the world's worlding: "how the world composes itself in a mode of perception that does not privilege the human in any of its precomposed guises, or any other general categories" (Manning 2014, p. 327). We tune in; we become attuned to the messy middling goings-on, resonating with the things surrounding us, intra-acting with the world of forces – as a matter of fact – based on the principles of passage and in/determinacy.

relaxed, and to the chirps of the crickets and birds, the warm hum which emanated through the space that had a meditative feeling."

Part Three

THE EVENT/S: SONIC OCCURRENCE

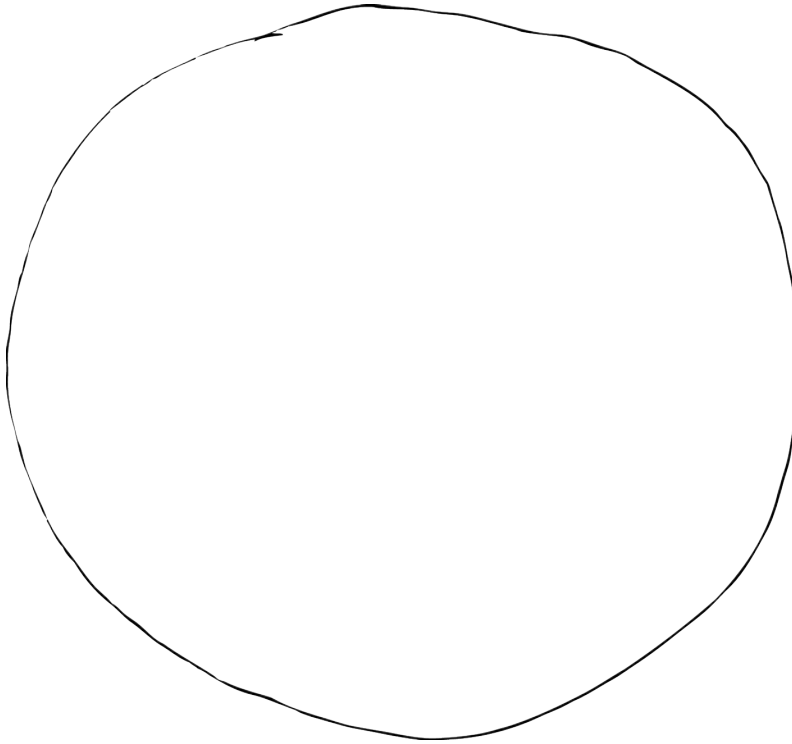


Figure 1

As part of *Sonic Peripheries #5* (2011). In response to Performative Encounter 4, drawing and following description by Anke Königshulte:

Especially the contact microphone or hydrophone reveals sounds that would be inaudible or quite inaudible otherwise. I refer to the subtle underwater noise or the rhythmic, mechanical hammering when pressing the piezo on surfaces of the machines and mill structure, thereby constituting an intimate relationship to the space being listened to. Furthermore, the lack of visual support provides more freedom for imagining sounds and encourages me to listen even more carefully to the details. In terms of the drawing, I envisaged 'something round turning' – one might say that my drawing is an abstract rendition of the mill. I cannot say that the place gets extended in any way, or that it feels more vibrant, or simply enlarged; it rather seems that the sonic dimension opens 'a door to another world'.

ONE

All arts are occurrent arts because any and every perception, artificial or 'natural', is just that, an experiential event. It's an event both in the sense that it is a happening, and in the sense that when it happens something new transpires. There is eventfulness in art, just as there is artfulness in nature. (Massumi 2011, p. 82)

"And there is creativity across the board," adds Massumi (ibid.). Creativity and novelty lies at the gist of all matter – more so: pure potentiality lies at the gist of all matter to come as it comes to matter. This venture cares to encounter a wholly other nature: the 'eventfulness in art' and the 'artfulness in nature', which forces us to think anew, that is, the New. We thus follow the traces (of the adventure), the lines of flight that made – still do – make us think-feel; and we continue to explore the happenings, the occasions of experience at the heart of the event (or read: 'event/s', i.e., the native variant which wants to stress, with the force of a forward slash, the 'oneness-in-manness-nature' of the occurrence on one side and the notion of art as event-performance on the other). Being attentive to the experiential event lies at the core of all matter-mattering. Attentiveness, also awareness, calls for an ecology of practices, inclusive of the doings of the in/organic (nonhuman) lives equally partaking in the vibratory fullness of potential that Whitehead calls *reality*. "The world of activity [viz. reality] is the one which

tunes toward the form the actual occasion takes," writes Manning in 'What Things Do When They Share Each Other' (2017, p. 7). And this not a world of 'pure' form. "There is no such a thing. Form is simply what happens when activity moves toward a limit;" as Manning et al. emphasize, "this limit always includes what exceeds it, its more-than" (ibid. p. 8). "It is the Creative World. It creates the Present by transforming the Past, and by anticipating the Future" (Whitehead 1947, p. 79). Why is this important? Because Invention (the New) lies in the encounter between forces, when lines of forces coalesce, come into form – that is, for the philosopher of the middle, "each taking-form involves 'the swing over from reenaction to anticipation' [... which] introduces novelty into the world. A taking-form 'arises as an effect facing its past', no sooner to turn away from its past to become 'a cause facing its future': a future cause" (Whitehead 1933/1967 as quoted in Massumi et al. 2009, p. 41).

To pre-empt some of the work of Part Four and slightly what follows, we might note, once again, the significance of the passage *of* nature and in/determinacy *in* nature. Reality comes in cuts *and* flows. Whitehead's process philosophy on par with a quantum ontology (that "deconstructs the classical one" [Barad 2012, p. 6]) teaches us to see beyond dyads or dualisms and, importantly, affords us "the tools to understand how all experience is made of cracks and captures, archival and anarchival at once" (Manning 2017, p. 2). Things happen in quantum leaps. And art happens in this time that is the untimely, the *kairotic instant* which sends the magic flying (see also pp. 208, 210). This (ad)venture relies on the fabled paradox: "Nothing happens, and yet everything changes" (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 158). It turns to what I call 'pragmatic-magics' (see Part Four: A Lure for Feeling), the 'doing' of the 'something' that ensues from the flow to cut flow to cut and so forth (both in a continuity of becoming and becoming of continuity [see also p. 180; esp. on the difference between Deleuze and Whitehead, see Shaviri 2009, p. 19n2]). The point I want to come to pertains to the experiential event/s of the *Sonic Peripheries* cases/art happenings and the

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question of how to account for the pragmatic-magics. The ‘taking account’ was in part established through the Performative Encounter activity, or more precisely, the instructions or performance scores. The accounting of the process, the things or ‘products’ that evidence the (sonic) occurrence’s mattering is allied to the archive, or rather the *anarchive* as I learned from Manning (2017). I should like to add here a few general remarks before turning to (my timely brush with) ‘the anarchive’.¹

As announced at the outset of this thesis, *Sonic Peripheries* aims at sounding out the *between*, thus exploring sonic ecologies that enfold relational qualitative goings-on between diverse bodies, powers and intensities. This means that we problematize the occurrences that arise from middlings with and in the events issued forth from sonic artwork-performances and associated practices. This also means then that not only the question of method comes into play but likewise the question of how to actually pin down a feeling/force concreting (taking-form) from a sonorous perplexion which is experienced as agreeable, disagreeable or otherwise. This ‘otherwise’ is of interest in this chapter. (In terms of the style of research creation and the methods invented for the purpose of inviting participatory processes, return to SP Performative Encounters of Part Three.) The ‘fuzzy’ otherwise transfigures into diagrams and narratives (Fig. 1), among other *crystalline* derivatives that speak of the event (play off the artfulness in nature and eventfulness in art, if you like) (see e.g. Figs. on pp. 146, 156). So what to do with the artifacts and memories? Create the anarchive in the archive!

“Artists everywhere are taught to document document document, the product emphasized, always, over the force of form,” writes Manning and aptly points out: “Increasingly, to make art is to know how to frame it.” (2017, p. 6).

¹ By ‘timely brush’, I mean the happy circumstance that I was invited to read Erin Manning’s manuscript on the concept of the anarchive. I want to thank Sher Doruff, a long-time SenseLab collaborator, for her excellent – and timely – advice to read the text. More on the research group: <http://senselab.ca>. See also Murphie, A. ed. 2016. *The Go-To How-To Book of Anarchiving: SenseLab and the Distributing the Insensible Event*. Montréal: The SenseLab.

(‘*Document* or perish’ ... the new catchphrase in artistic research?) Even though Manning with Massumi and the SenseLab collaboratively pursue a research trajectory different than mine, I wish to highlight the shared concern for what they term “the eventing” at the cusp of experience: “its passage from force to form” and “its passage from form to force” and what exceeds actualization but is no less key to the liveliness of the event (ibid., p. 2; on the lively [*das Lebendige*], see pp. 52–57). I shall limit a discussion on the concept of the anarchive and focus only on aspects relevant to our purposes here. One aspect relates to the more-than of the eventing (what I consider ‘the lively’ in experience) and the questions to whether it were possible to find ways “to feed forward the more-than of the event’s taking form,” followed by: “how would this more-than kindle new work, new techniques, new processes in ways that coincided in some sense with what took place before?” (ibid, p. 7). It is especially the latter which parallels what I tried to set in motion by way of the Performative Encounter activity. One other aspect relates to the derivatives found in the archive (i.e., the documentation of the artistic series and research events; see also p. 139n5). I above deployed the adjective ‘crystalline’ as a feature of the product – or also termed ‘fugacious expression’, a neologism coined with regard to the Hannah Klatt case discussed earlier – to allude to a sense of “unspecified or fabulous (precious) material” (*OED*) on the one hand and the more or less gradual solidification (taking-form) involved in the growth of a crystal on the other. Perhaps a mythical gem?

To Manning, “The anarchive needs documentation – the archive – from which to depart and through which to pass. It is an excess energy of the archive: a kind of *supplement* or surplus-value of the archive” (ibid., p. 13; italics in original). Here, too, documentation needed doing, but the focus lies somewhere else. What this thesis wants to do (mainly in this and the upcoming chapters) is dig deep into the treasure chest (of the research process) and extract the gems. “The anarchive is a *repertory of traces* of events,” writes Manning (ibid., p. 12; italics in original). Then true to her concept, our gems of which we speak are

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carriers of potential for emergent fabulation: “They are reactivatable, and their reactivation helps trigger a new event which continues the creative process from which they came, but in a new iteration” (ibid.). As said elsewhere, sonic occasionings come in many guises, which the case studies have experimentally-experimentally demonstrated. The task is now to follow the traces of sonic occurrence and its genesis into novel forms of expression. For this, we turn to Figure 1 and the description that follows by Anke Königshulte, attendee/participant of *Sonic Peripheries* #5.

Königshulte ends her account on the note: “the sonic dimension opens ‘a door to another world’” – a phrase that leaves much to speculate. About the hand-drawn circle, we might say that it presents us with the portal to an unheard (of) world (a gateway to another dimension), but this seems all too simple (as in obvious or cute even). Rather, we think-feel her rendering as the more-than underway when listening to the site (of the mill, machines, etc.). In some sense like the Klatt case, Königshulte’s drawing shows an attempt to either *encircle* or capture the something’s-doing. Albeit that ‘capture’ is not quite the happy term since it would seem to counteract the in-act operative in the (diagrammatic) semblance. There is an animateness that subsists as (or persists in) the hand-drawn characteristic of the drawing; indeed, ‘creaturely’ comes to mind concerning the affective conception of the diagram in its experimental and processual capacity. In passing, it is worthwhile to mention O’Sullivan’s (2016) take on the practice of diagrammatics in the context of artistic practice in general. One, he says, “we might simply claim that the diagram can short-circuit the discursive (and, as such, demand ever more interpretations) whilst also calling for other forms of interaction to be enacted” (pp. 15–16); two, continues:

The diagram here is a strategy of experimentation that scrambles narrative, figuration – the givens – and allows something else, at last, to step forward. This is the production of the unknown from

within the known, the unseen from within the seen. The diagram, we might say, is a strategy for sidestepping intention from within intention; it involves the production of something that then 'speaks back' to its progenitor. (p. 17)

The 'otherwise' felt by Königschulte transduced into form that speaks not only back to her but, too, to us, which reactivates and triggers the lived abstraction into action again. Indeed, the anarchive (in the archive) contains more crystals ready to glisten, however, we choose this one for its 'complexion' in the simplification – the abstraction that it is. See the curved line: starting at the top, goes round in one swift move – anticlockwise – to terminate near the point where it began. We might say, it acts counter its time, thus speaks of another time; the time of the event as the passage of nature. The simplification lies in the substraction from the flurry of potential. Or as Deleuze and Guattari frame it: "The most we can say is that when forces appear as forces of the earth or of chaos, they are not grasped directly as forces but as reflected in relations between matter and form" (1980/1998, pp. 346–347). And famously, Whitehead states: "nature as perceived always has ragged edges" (1920, p. 50). The circle – 'the round' (*le rond*) in Deleuze (1978) – enacts a ragged edge of worlding that is never sharp. There is an anexactness to this diagram, namely its *roundness* that reflects what exists alongside its periphery – its circumference. Whereas the circle is defined by a midpoint, the round is defined by the activity of the line itself. According to Deleuze, 'le rond' "must obviously be lived dynamically, as a dynamic process [...; it] implies an operation by which something in experience is rounded" (ibid., n.p.).²

² Deleuze finds something akin in Edmund Husserl when he speaks of the 'anexact'. "For Husserl, between a specific instance of a circle and the general idea of a circle, there is something like 'cirleness', or 'roundness', capable of precise characterisation, but only in terms that are 'anexact', that is, inherently outside the sphere of things to which the notion of exactitude applies" (Bogue

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Let us intermit here.

As Manning foretells: “What reemerges can never be decided in advance for its coming-to-be will be ecological at its core, influenced by all the ways in which *these* singular forces compose with *this* singular ‘taking’. Change always happens, no matter what” (2017, pp. 5–6; italics in original).

2010a, p. 27). See Bogue, R. 2010a. *The Concept of Fabulation*. In *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 14–48.

TWO

This is the politics of the anarchive, that it move the adventure of the event toward its future potential. The politics of the anarchive are always politics of care for the event. (Manning 2017, p. 16)

Care or concern is always a factor in the genesis of events, even aside from the issue of human perception – even in material events in the absence of a human perceiver. An atom ‘prehends’ the subatomic particles composing it. Its unitary form is the form of expression of their eventfully concerning each other. Whitehead goes so far as to say that concern is an ‘ultimate factor’ of the world. It is not a content of human subjectivity. (Massumi 2015b, pp. 197–198)

It begins something like this: GO TO THE HEART OF THE CONUNDRUM. Step 1. Watch the film loops as long as you see fit. Step 2. Capture an image that conveys no sense of sound. Step 3. Conjure an image that conveys a universally specific sound.¹

¹ The text is slightly altered from the original SP#7 Performative Encounter activity.



One, two, three, four, five still images (see Fig. 1); each distinct from the other, but also tied to one another – excerpts from a short video clip, quasi-reified slithers of time and space. They tacitly agreed to be led by the riddle. In play, taking up the task – “proceeding from the middle, through the middle” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 25) – not lead, *be lured* to the heart of matter’s mat-tering: Push the record button and capture a sense of no-sense. The foresight of seeing in something seen we cannot see?

“The seeing happens almost by accident, spiriting across tremulous color lines – traces – that are less visual than vibrational: lines fielded,” write Manning and Massumi on the painterly work of Bracha L. Ettinger in ‘No Title Yet’ (2014, p. 65).²

“Vibrations are *of* time more than in time: they make time as they take it, moving the image toward what cannot quite be seen in the seeing. The interces-sor, the friend, activates these vibratory tendencies, creating an intensive passage between past and future outsides, the canvas [in Ettinger’s case] a complex po-lyphony” (ibid.). The images of white blob-shaped light – in our case – a complex pandemonium: Implosion, explosion – the cinematic flicker. He said either inten-sity (the sudden collapse or outburst of energies) came closest to the Idea of no-sound, at the same time, reminding us (alongside of Cage) that the sonic inheres in so-called Silence. And who is to say no-sense-of-sound *is* silent, thus implying an absence or a lack of some kind – a primordial stillness? Granted: the prompt to capture an image that conveys no sense of sound is – slippery.

² See artworks by Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger visit WikiArt n.d. Bracha L. Ettinger. *WikiArt.org*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/bracha-l-ettinger> [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

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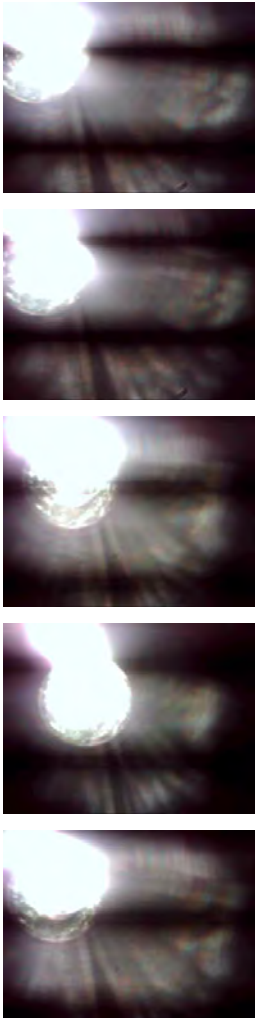


Figure 1

Series of still images (from 10-sec. video). In response to Performative Encounter 3 by Eike Buff. As part of *Sonic Peripheries #7* (2013).

IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF WATCHING TWO FILM LOOPS, I. One, a handheld medium shot that imparts a partial view of a bench surrounded by lush greenery; two, a stationary mid to close-up shot of a body of water moving toward an edge whence it flows rapidly down (see SP Artistic Series, Figs. 1, 2). Both films are marked by strong horizontal lines across the visual field; both

exceed the original scene, the time and place of their making; they don't fit but are befitting the atmosphere, the estranged temporality and out of placeness they generate upon encounter. The distinct horizontals keep the eye locked onto the projection surface – steady against which all else shifts, the sway of the *greening* in counterpoint to the gesture of the handheld camera in one film. The other film, at first, appears static-like with no discernible stirring of the camera; however, the gaze holds on to a sliding motion, strictly speaking, the smooth descend of a single leaf along the water's surface towards the below, outside the frame. As the film loops, the leaf returns; gliding effortlessly 'now-here' to 'no-where' ad infinitum (see also next chapter: Experiment 1).

Sense in nonsense? "The outside does not exist as such," say Manning and Massumi in reference to Ettinger's practice (ibid.). "It participates, it activates. It is always and only relational. Intensive interval contributive to an event in-forming, the outside captivates a process" (ibid.). The process addressed by the philosophers belongs to painting. The process we address pertains to the proposition above: Go to the heart of the conundrum. Whether in Ettinger or in the performative practice discussed here, the outside lies anterior to the doing; it participates – "a germ of unease, a friendly if troubling interloper that co-inhabits all tendings toward form, an essentially 'unformed element of forces'" (Deleuze 1988, p. 43 as quote in ibid.).

IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF WATCHING TWO FILM LOOPS, II. An inkling of sorts infects (infects him and others, we will see shortly). The term 'infection' is used here in its etymological sense: *in-facere*, to make within, do, perform, "and more generally, to impregnate, or be impregnated" – in a purely speculative sense – as opposed to the term's commonly negative or pathological connotation (Debaise 2017, p. 75). Speculative, because what makes within, what transpires in the form of thought-action, remains open and disinterested until a

limit or threshold is reached (and, thus, a 'decision'³ made). "'Infection' is [also] the term Whitehead chooses to designate, in a generic way, what the poet celebrates as 'presence'. Celebration refers to the fact that it is a poet's experience that is infected by the mountain, gloomy and ancient" (Stengers 2011, pp. 157–158). Presence denotes the feeling of someone or thing 'present', meaning, albeit not in a definable way, that this feeling constitutes through the passage of events that modifies and modulates a given situation towards this or that (shape of experience); in short, it is "what we are aware of in perception" (ibid., p. 91). For one poet or person, this might be the "brooding, ancient presence" of a mountain, while for another it might be the "incessant shimmering, an elusive rustling" of nature understood as ever so changing (ibid., p. 153). Both experiences testify to a presencing (or also worlding, a 'world of activity') that imposes itself – infects – in such a way that we belong to it a lot more than it belongs to us; consequently, it impregnates the givens with a sense of import, that is, 'value'. Then, "[t]o speak of the shape of experience is to find a way to touch the middling of events forming, to be interested not only in the form they will inevitably take, but in the *valuing*

³ On the meaning of 'decision' in Whitehead's cosmology, Shaviri writes in *Without Criteria*: "For Whitehead, the final cause is the 'decision' (1929/1978, 43) by means of which an actual entity becomes what it is. 'However far the sphere of efficient causation be pushed in the determination of components of a concrescence ... beyond the determination of these components there always remains the final reaction of the self-creative unity of the universe' (47). This 'final reaction' is the way that 'the many become one, and are increased by one' (21) in every new existence. The point is that 'decided' conditions are never such as to banish freedom. They only qualify it. There is always a contingency left open for immediate decision' (284). This contingency, this opening, is the point of every entity's self-determining activity: its creative self-actualization or 'self-production' (224). And this is how novelty enters the universe. The decision is always a singular one, unique to the entity whose 'subjective aim' it is. It cannot be categorized or classified: for that would mean returning the decision to the already decided, to the efficient causes at the point of whose conjunction it arose" (2009, p. 89). Shaviri continues: "Following Whitehead, we should say that it is the very act of *decision* (conceptual prehension, valuation in accordance with subjective aim, selection) that makes cognition possible – rather than cognition providing the grounds for decision" (ibid., p. 94; italics in original). See also Shaviri, S. 2009. *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, p. 89n11.

of *how* force and form conjugate in this singular instance of an event's coming to be" (Manning 2017, p. 9; emphasis added). To Whitehead, *value* is not a moral indicator.⁴ "Value is an element which permeates through and through the poetic [as well as autopoietic] view of nature" (Whitehead 1925/1967, p. 93).

IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF WATCHING TWO FILM LOOPS, III. "Everything happens between the light and the white" (Deleuze 1983/2003, p. 93). "Everything happens in encounters" (Debaise 2017, p. 75). That said, we turn our attention to the series of still images (Fig. 1); initially we look *at* and then *between* the-light-and-the-white.

In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze considers "light's adventure with white" an anti-expressionism which he terms "lyrical abstraction" (1983/2003, pp. 93, 94). Without venturing into a discussion on Deleuze's theory of film semiotics, which is too far-reaching to address here, what strikes as pertinent for our purposes is his Goethean-led conception of light that "no longer has to do with darkness, but with the transparent, the translucent or the white" (ibid.). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe speaks of various degrees of cloudiness, an emergent thickening of transparency that finds its extreme in White: "the fortuitously opaque flash of pure transparency" (as quoted in ibid.).⁵ Here the quality of light in the image, which perplexes in itself the luminous potential of infinite gradations of cloudedness, is affective rather than representation-laden. What weprehend is the powers of affect through the tracings of light as potential of "*the outside* which exists as un-

⁴ Isabelle Stengers in *Thinking with Whitehead* (2011, p. 157) explains: "With typical British humor, Whitehead limits himself to giving a generic definition. If we, as humans, can claim to be different, it is not because we nourish values. Value belongs to the order of nature: it is what is realized by all that exists, in the sense that what exists succeeds in enduring, succeeds in maintaining its individual way of gathering together, that is, of making things hold together in a determinate way. Value indicates a success in and for itself." Stengers, I. 2011. *Thinking with Whitehead: A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵ Deleuze modified the translation from Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, §495. Cf. Goethe, J.W. von n.d. Goethe's Theory of Colours. J. Murray, 1840. *Archive.org*. [Online] Available at: <http://archive.org/details/goethetheoryco01goetgoog> [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

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formed elements of forces” (Deleuze 1988, p. 43; italics in original). What we look at is lyrical abstraction at work: a diagrammatics of life, of resonant radiance, of *white noise*. In Figure 1, everything happens in-between the variations of the white of which we think-feel the traces of perplicated (folded, entangled) lines of vibrations. Each frame in the series is a kind of afterimage, a static state of transformation in a given dynamics. The order of such frames, as seen here, disrupts the idea of chrono-homogeneity; not a succession of 24 frames per second, but a sequence (a time) ‘out of joint’, a presencing of the Untimely yielding the color white as ‘pure affect’ from a virtual flow of light. Translucid mattering. This is the fortuitous becoming of pure transparency, a becoming-opaque of light; and the fluctuating flashes, a becoming-flicker of cloudedness freeze-framed in the there and then.

♦ ♦ ♦

“If the anarchivive was about harnessing process, how would we do that without muting the very force we were after,” asks Manning in ‘What Things Do When They Share Each Other: The Way of the Anarchivive’ (2017, p. 2).

The way or practice we choose, and here, I suggest, Eike Buff (Fig. 1) and Dave Dowhaniuk (Fig. 2) have chosen, is one of experimentation. At its core is a pragmatics and ethico-aesthetics that espouses asubjective impersonal modes of existence: becoming-artistic, becoming-cinematic, becoming-opaque of light. Dowhaniuk as the Deleuzian ‘seer’ who sees and enables us to see the luminescent and affective quality between the-light-and-the-white, a derivative of the encounter with the film loops. He responds to the infectious lure of the prompt: to capture an image of no sense of sound, the abstract but real space of sound non-sound; *l’entre-deux* or sonic occurrence itself.



Figure 2

Still images (cinematic flicker). In response to *Performative Encounter 3* by Dave Dowhaniuk. As part of *Sonic Peripheries #7* (2013).

Note that both Dowhaniuk and Buff turned their back away from the projections towards the film projector's emanating light; or perhaps not too surprising, since Deleuze conceives of the Idea of color as white light, "which perplicates in itself the genetic elements and relations of all the colours, but is actualised in the diverse colours with their respective spaces; or the Idea of sound, which is also like white noise" (Deleuze 1968/1994, p. 206). This brief reference to 'Ideas' may appear obscure until we consider that, for Deleuze, "Ideas are precisely the ultimate elements of nature" (ibid., p. 165), therefore locating noise within nature and, importantly, identifying the site of 'sound/non-sound' constitutive of Dowhaniuk and Buff's cinematic-aesthetic expression (see also *Experimenting: Sound/Non-Sound*). Now, with this in mind, I endeavor to draw a connection to Whitehead's notion of value and, necessarily, the politics of care inherent to the anarchic.

"'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event," writes Whitehead (1925/1967, p. 93) and considers the event to be the outcome of fact and value (Halewood 2010). Hence opposing the fact-value distinction, a mainly neo-Kantian position where "facticity falls under the purview of science and, consequently, value becomes limited to, at best, being an epi-phenomenal realm fabricated by and for humans or, at worst, a subjective creation of individual humans which merely expresses unfounded sentiment and holds back

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science” (ibid., p. 232; q.v. ‘bifurcation of nature’, pp. 81–82). I shall not provide a comprehensive delineation of value within Whitehead’s cosmology. Instead, the focus is on value and valuation as integral feature of the ethico-aesthetics at play here, namely, where “art can function as a useful ‘entrance’ to investigating aesthetics of existence in their ethico-aesthetic impact on how the ‘real’ is constituted” (Brunner et al. 2012, p. 43). Here ethics and value in the Whiteheadian sense are mutually inclusive and “inextricably linked with the notion of becoming,” with the former being an ethics of “affirmation” and “evaluation” (Marks 2010, p. 88). “Such an ethics applies the acceptance that the world is, as Deleuze puts it, neither true nor real, but ‘living’” (ibid.). And with the latter, value, being an essential aspect of all existence, of all that ‘lives’, animate or non. “To attempt to separate fact from value is to rip reality apart” (Halewood 2010, p. 234).

In the context of art, then, to affirm means to evaluate in aesthetic expression its experimentation in life and possibilities for novelty. This is not a moral procedure, but an investigation of modes of existence in their ‘ethico-aesthetic impact’ on how “force and form conjugate in this singular instance of an event’s coming to be” (Manning 2017, p. 9). What is at stake in the prehension of eventfulness (in art and nature) is the “infectious holding-together” of force and form “upon which the success of endurance depends” (Stengers 2011, p. 158). We take this to imply, not entirely without humor, that all that is, or rather *becomes*, depends on success stories. So, Dowhaniuk’s as well as Buff’s ‘success’ relies, first, on the ethical choice in the Spinoza-Deleuzian sense to believe in the world and its powers of creative transformation and, second, on the ‘dynamics of infection’ that impinge on them in the encounter with ‘the outside’, the friends, the intercessors: The noise of the running projectors (sound), the film loops and hubbub of the flicker (sight), the recording gadgets (touch) – the incipient experience of import rising (valuation) – intuit-imagined between action and reaction.

Returning to the initial question of how to go about harnessing process without diminishing the forces we hope to find in order to foster encounters that

are productive, that is to say – joyful – to invoke Deleuze’s Spinozism. “Involving the coming together of two ‘bodies’ that essentially agree with one another, such encounters have the concomitant result of increasing our capacity to act in the world” (O’Sullivan 2010b, p. 277). Similarly, for Manning, “[t]he anarchic is a technique for making practice a *process-making engine*. Many products are produced, but they are not *the product*” (2017, p. 13; italics in original). What counts comes ‘alive’ through affect-emergence and moments of ‘sense in non-sense’, which impregnates the participants with a presencing that exceeds Self but does lie within oneself. Driven by the propositional lure to go to the heart of the conundrum, Dowhaniuk and Buff interact (intra-act) with the art practice, importantly, with the Performative Encounter activity which gives access to the virtual or *void*, which Barad calls “a spectral realm with ghostly existence” (2012, p. 12; see also Part One). The derivatives (not products in the consumerist sense) ensue from this spectral (or rather *spectrum*) encounter and in turn fuel the ‘process-making engine’. Clearly, the series of still images increased the capacity to think through – in practice – the notion of sonic occurrence in its virtual/actual taking-shape.

According to Whitehead, “Our enjoyment of actuality is a realization of worth, good or bad. It is a value experience. Its basic expression is – Have a care, here is something that matters!” (1938/1968, p. 116). Care and concern are sides of the same coin. When Whiteheads speaks of concern, he refers to the subject-object relation intrinsic to the structure of experience. “The occasion as subject has a ‘concern’ for the object. And the ‘concern’ at once places the object as a component in the experience of the subject” (1933/1967, p. 176). (He is cautious to note that subject-object does not immediately infer knower-known relations [for more on this see Part Four]).

“Yes – that is the best phrase – the primary glimmering of consciousness reveals, something that matters,” concludes Whitehead in reference to value-experiences (above) (ibid.). That is: ‘Have a care’ – brings it to a point – namely,

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be mindful of matter that comes to matter. Or as put by Manning with a different slant, “The anarchive is a manner of becoming that matters” (2017, p. 12). How the anarchive operates is what matters the most: “a *feed-forward mechanism* for lines of creative process, under continuous variation” (ibid.; italics in original). It exceeds documentation, though, as “*cross-platform phenomenon*,” the anarchive is activated in the relays: “between media, between verbal and material expressions, between digital and offline archivings, and most of all between all of the various archival forms it may take and the live, collaborative interactions that reactivate the anarchival traces, and in turn create new ones” (ibid., p. 13; italics in original). Again, what matters – and comes to matter in any new iteration – subsists in the quality of worlding that is invented. “This is what the anarchive does: it inserts itself in the schism where the finite [actual] and the infinite [virtual] come together and makes that schism tremble, *valuing it from the inside*. The ineffable is felt” (Manning 2017, p. 8; emphasis added).

We might regard the works presented here in a similar light of the anarchive, namely as ‘surplus-value’ of the *eventing* at the cusp of experience – tremulous ripples – that are less acoustic than empirico-ideal: sonic erewhons? It is beyond the scope here to further explore the latter question. Suffice it to say that Deleuze assigns the term ‘erewhon’ (Samuel Butler’s coinage) to describe Whitehead’s radically different ‘categories’, i.e., his ‘empirico-ideal notions’ in opposition to Kant. Which, for Deleuze, “are really open and which betray an empirical and pluralist sense of Ideas” (1968/1994, p. 284). “They are ‘generic notions inevitably presupposed in our reflective experience’, but they do not *represent* that experience, nor explain how it is possible for us to *know* things in experience. They cannot be *applied* to experience, because they are already located *within* experience itself” (Whitehead 1929/1978, p. 18 as quoted in Shaviro 2011, p. 82; italics in original). Thus, bringing us full circle to the Idea of sound; or rather, Dowhaniuk and Buff’s “visible indexing” of anarchival traces (Manning 2017, p. 13) – not a resemblance/representation of no-sound, but an identification of

Two

something that matters – concomitant to the thinking-feeling of the propositional lure that set the pragmatic-magics into flight.

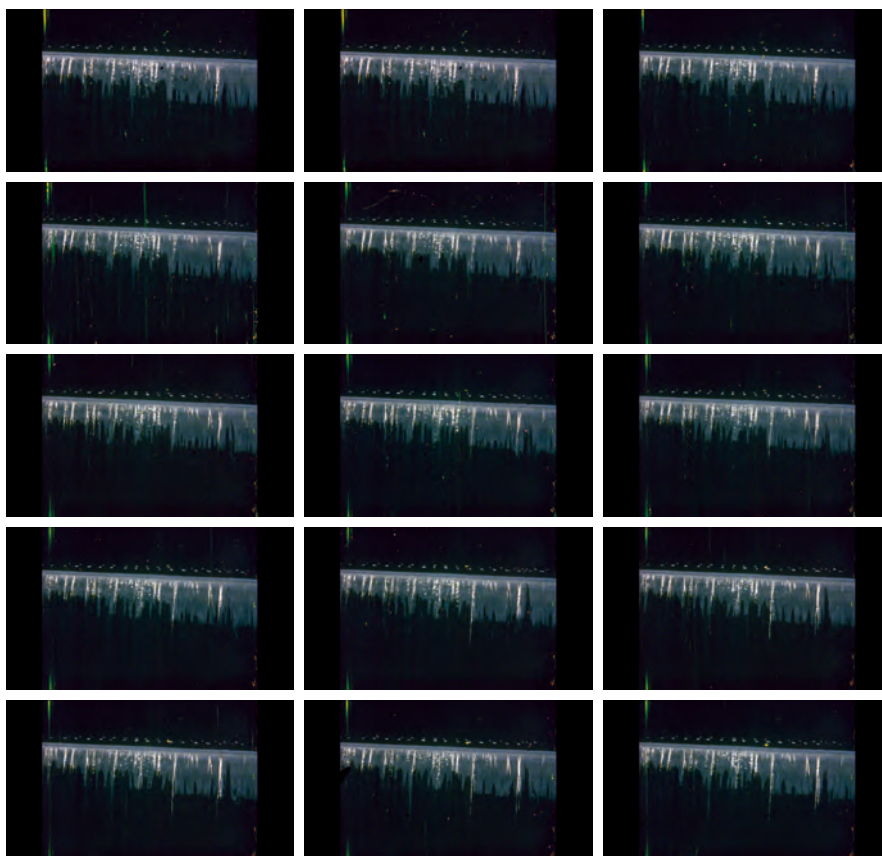
The anarchive provides an ethico-aesthetic programme that constitutes a certain politics of care that “surpasses the individual to connect to whatever is impersonal at its heart” (Manning 2017, p. 17). It is here that it tends to the more-than that lies at the core of life – a Life – in the Deleuzian sense. This is not to say that the individual has no bearing; that Dowhaniuk’s or Buff’s experience/experiment is of no consequence; quite the contrary: “The anarchive is not something ‘we’ do. It is something that catches experience in the making. It is something that catches us in our own becoming” (ibid., p. 7). Parallel to participatory practices, it hones in on the problematics of the Event/s and places emphasis on becomings that cannot be named but are integral to our own existence. This is why it matters so much.

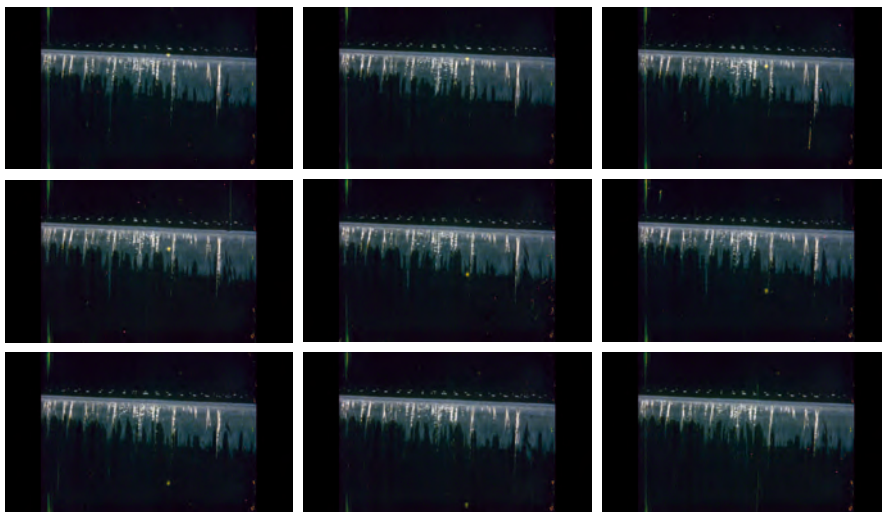
EXPERIMENT 1

*EXPERIMENTING:
SOUND/NON-SOUND*

Petra Klusmeyer

FIGURE 1: FRAMES 1-24





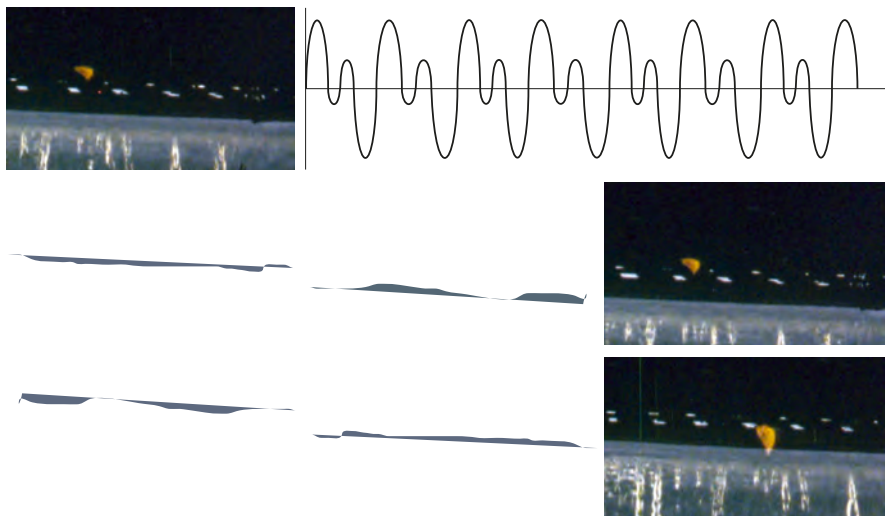
In the brief text that follows, I invite you to think about the notion of sound and non-sound. Consider this to be an experiment or provocation—either term applies. This is an attempt to explore what happens when nothing does; or in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “Nothing happens, and yet everything changes” (1991/1994, p. 158). To proceed, let’s summon up the image of a darkened gallery space in which we come upon a 16 mm film projection that shows a single 14-second take in continuous repetition (see Fig. 5). The film loop is silent, however, the projector emits a whirl of sounds caused by the engine’s fan and film-carrying mechanism—mainly, celluloid fluttering along the spools. I want us to pay attention to the *in-between*, the gap, the grid, the threshold from one fraction of a second to another; one single frame to another (see Fig. 1); sound to non-sound. Take this as an exercise, a meditation to conjure the between of the in-between, what I call ‘middling with/in the event’.

For this we look to Figure 1: *Frames 1-24*. Here we see a series of twenty-four images, a digital transfer from the first second of the film loop, that is, the first 24 single frames from a total of 366 frames. The layout allows us to *read* the images from left to right, top to bottom; or, let the eyes *scan* across the page, thus sensing the surface, not merely cognizing it. We feel the horizontal tilt across the plane. We grasp a body of water that emerges from a (visual) plateau, to then drop downwards. We intuit the frozen dynamism of a cascade, albeit captured at a point

in time, it continues to vibrate the binary complex of 0's and 1's. Also discern the flow of thresholds; the rhythm composed of frame 1-gap-2-gap-3-gap-etc. The apparent continuity made of cuts and bits; abstracting the sounding (throbbing) second into a flow of discontinuities. This presents a semblance of a sonic event; it *is* and yet *isn't*—at least not in the sense of being perceived or heard by an ear (human or non). Though the throb or pulse is felt—*only just so*, nonconsciously tingling the body and mind: “Vibrations do not disappear, but dissipate, echoing all the while, for energy is conserved. Sounds spread out, they become less and less contracted, they fuse, but they still remain” (Evens 2005, p. 14); indeed, their energy of vibration causing a quiver in each droplet of water (any medium as a matter of fact) seemingly forever. A quiver, a ripple immanent to the rhythm-surface, twenty-four frames per second, inclusive of the gaps between—sound *and* non-sound?

Semblance is not an (auditory) illusion; nor is it phantasmagoric—some kind of apparition that belongs to the imagination alone. Brian Massumi (2011) suggests that a semblance makes the virtual appear; put this way, “When a semblance is “seen,” it is virtually seen” (Ibid., p. 18). Here, when a semblance is ‘heard’, it is virtually heard. It is a *listening-through* to the incorporeal dimension of the sonic, the energetic broadband of the flux from which a sounding event actualizes, say,

FIGURE 2: FRAMES 104 AND 109 AND 111 AND ...





as the clamorous roar of a waterfall or the quiet whisper of a leaf's descent onto its surface. Let's follow the trajectory of the amber-colored leaf as seen in Figures 2 and 3. Before noticing the leaf itself, we take in a series of images, again of select film frames as well as lines and shapes; nearly hieroglyphic, we may attempt to decipher a meaning—given that 'meaning' is inscribed in the sign (still image, graph, shape, color, etc.) as energy is transcribed into matter (and vice versa). In other words, meaning equals energy, as energy equals matter—as the latter two are known to be interchangeable modes of the same reality. To decipher or to read is then not an act on the side of the subject but rather a conglomeration of forces from which the interpreter emerges. Consider this experiment as exemplar: think *of* the notion of sound/non-sound. To do so, that is, to engage in contemplation of the paradox, I endeavor to suggest that we first confront it halfway; not a thinking-of but a thinking-in: we look to the forward slash (marking a difference and a sameness of the terms), thus the middling instant, the *between*. 'Thinking', following Deleuze, "is not a natural exercise but always a second power of thought, born under the constraint of experience as a material power, a force" (Semetsky 2010, p. 92). Listen-through to the leaf's passage from the top of the image down, down it falls. Encounter the leaf's flight along the arrow's path. What do you hear now?

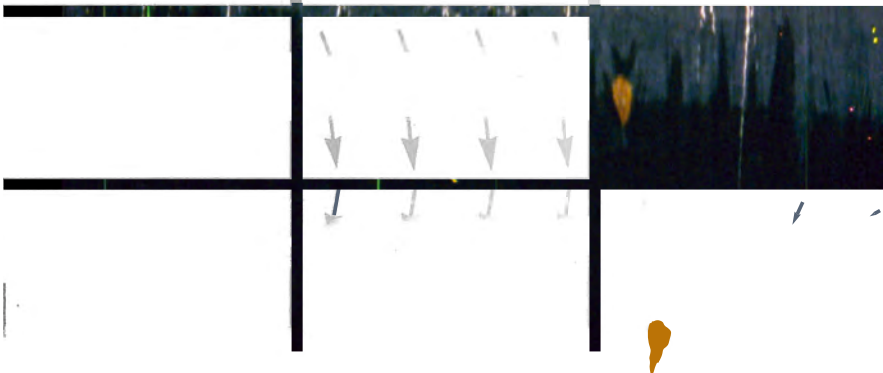


FIGURE 3: LEAF DESCENDING (FRAMES 112 AND 117)

'I hear neither stream nor leaf; I feel the downward pull as the leaf's earthbound fall. I tried; do not try, don't think but 'be-ware' and listen-through and -inwards, eventually (middling with/in the event). What do you hear now?

"The event is coextensive with becoming, and becoming is itself coextensive with language" (Deleuze 1969/1990, p. 8). In Deleuze, "paradox appears as a dismissal of depth, a display of events at the surface, and a deployment of language along this limit" (Ibid, p. 9). Sound *forward slash* non-sound designates a sliding back and forth along the limit of comprehension, or rather, 'prehension' (a term coined by Alfred North Whitehead to denote a noncognitive 'feeling', "a purely immanent potential power, [...] or pure 'affection' before any division into form and matter" [Robinson 2010, p. 124]). It is through experience (the eye 'seeing-feeling', the ear 'hearing-feeling'—inhale-gap-exhale-gap-inhale-gap-etc.) the rhythmic skid on-the-grid and off-the-grid. We *submerge* in-side-out, outside-in and above, below the 'material-discursive' force-field (cf. Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012; Barad 2003);

Figure 4 resembles all there can become and still

is not: the event "eternally that which just

happened and which will happen,

never that which is happening"

(Deleuze 1969/1990, p. 8).

We behold the remnants of a graph, depicting

air pressure over time: the *unsound* sound (wave);

signs undone and restated, constructing the complexity of

the very darkest plane. This perplexion of the between affords an experiential

event that escapes common ground and gives way to unheard-of frequencies. Here

we are, everything happens on the edge between matter and matter as it comes

to matter; "between things and propositions" (Ibid.). Here we are again—loop,

return, and zigzag—*Frames 1-24* where, "Nothing happens, and yet everything

changes" (Deleuze 1991/1994, p. 158). The event of sound/non-sound lives in the

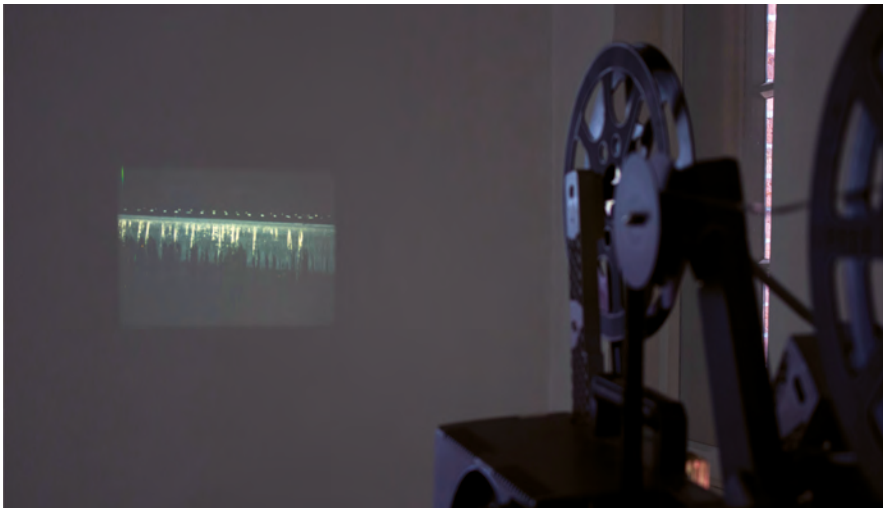
paradox of being and non-being.

FIGURE 4: FORCE-FIELD

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FIGURE 5: SOUND/NON-SOUND (2013)



Presented at *Sonic Peripheries #7: Fielding Abstractions* with Academy Records.

Part Four

HOW NATURE DOES

A LURE FOR FEELING

Beauty is therefore an *event*, a process, rather than a condition or a state. The flower is not beautiful in itself; rather, beauty *happens* when I *encounter* the flower. Beauty is fleeting, and it is always imbued with otherness. For although the feeling of beauty is “subjective,” I cannot experience it at will. I can only find beauty when the object solicits me, or arouses my sense of beauty, in a certain way. Also, beauty does not survive the moment of the encounter in which it is created. It cannot be recovered once it is gone. It can only be born afresh in another event, another encounter. (Shaviro 2009, pp. 4–5; italics in original)

When I laid down the last card, I can now safely say that I was *struck* by something. “Wow! Beautiful!”¹ – one description in response to *How is Nature*; not an expression I used but heard others say as they encountered the work for the first time (see Fig. 5 and Experiment 2). To use the word ‘strike’ to give account of the experience is deliberate though, and its meaning twofold. First – and here lies the primary significance – it alludes to a ‘forcible contact’ that exceeds my intention, likes or dislikes. It is a feeling or pulse of emotion which

17. 

¹ Doruff, S. 2016. Email correspondence with the author, 8 September.

underlies all sense and sensibility, and is forceful in such a manner that it “changes whatever it encounters” (Shaviro 2009, p. 63). The encounter opens to an outside, a contingent event that inheres in the limits of apperception. The effect it inspires is not an inevitable consequence of the happenings; it’s not something I already know, nor seek to discover. It simply *is* – *ising* at the horizon of tacit knowing. Thus struck again, taken with the formal aspect of the audio-visual piece – an artwork of fifty-one 4 x 2 1/4 inches cards and fourteen field recordings – possibly enchanting the ear and eye with the topographies of ragged edges and chalky surface texture it assumes.

18. 

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Let us backtrack for a moment and consider the three *W*’s of *How is Nature* – why, what, where. To discuss the purpose of the artistic project in the context of this research is a simple matter. Indeed, rather than examine the purpose of its making, I should like to refer to John Cage (1961) who once inquired into the purpose of writing music. Of course, his reply took the form of a paradox:

a purposeful purposelessness or a purposeless play. This play, however, is an affirmation of life – not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s mind and one’s desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord. (ibid. p. 12)²

² I use the same quote in Part One since I find it crucial and, indeed, helpful in claiming that Cage enacted a radical empiricism (akin to Whitehead’s process philosophy). More on this in the chapter Aesthetic Encounter of Part Two.

Part Four – How Nature Does

Cage's philosophical impulse was to leave out one's volition and let life run its course (in the creation of art). A 'purposeful purposelessness' is posited on the idea that Life – here *Nature* in the broadest sense – is constituted by an anonymous flux of matter and energy from which novelty and *creativity* arises. This stance reflects an onto-epistemological belief not bound to hermeneutical modes of interpretation. Consider it a materialist view wedded to Whitehead's organic realism that seeks to bypass the position wherein nature is bifurcated, "namely into the nature apprehended in awareness and the nature which is the cause of awareness" (Whitehead 1920, p. 31).

The antirealism inherent in the well established assumption that mind and matter are distinct substances – that is, that nature is divided in two systems of reality: one that is real or 'objectifiable' to the sciences, and one that is real to us, the human subject who perceives and 'dreams' – is erroneous to Whitehead (ibid., p. 30). Or as he puts it: "'We may not pick and choose' [...]; we must develop an account of the world in which 'the red glow of the sunset' and 'the molecules and electric waves' of sunlight refracting into the earth's atmosphere have the same ontological status" (ibid., p. 29 as quoted in Shaviro 2014, p. 2). Which is also to say that Cage's notion of artistic creation is premised on the conviction that he is *partaking in a whole* – "humanity and nature, not separate, are in this world together" (Cage 1961, p. 8). The reason of writing music, then, lies in matter, in nature itself to which he belongs. "Not an attempt to understand something that is being said [...]. Just an attention to the activity of sounds;" he lets sounds be themselves "rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments" (ibid., p. 10).

Whitehead opposes the antirealist presupposition that "perception is only the representation of an object, or in general terms, of an external world" and "replaces it with the notion that perception is part of the object or of the world. He names this reformulated notion *prehension*" (Sjöstedt-H 2016, n.p.; italics in original). Here subject and object are no longer conceived in epistemological

terms, “with the subject the knower and the object the known thing/world. Rather, the ‘occasion as subject has a ‘concern’ for the object. And the ‘concern’ at once places the object as a component in the experience of the subject” (Whitehead 1933/1967, p. 176 as quoted in Goodman 2010, p. 92).³ Whitehead takes up *concern* from the Quaker’s use of the word, namely as “divested of any suggestion of knowledge,” which makes it apt to express the fundamental structure of experience (Whitehead 1933/1967, p. 176). Concernedness denotes the “affective tone” that is intrinsic to the “subject-object relation” (ibid. pp. 175, 176). “No prehension, even of bare *sensa*, can be divested of its affective tone, that is to say, of its character as a ‘concern’ [...] Concernedness is of the essence of perception” (ibid., p. 180). Finally, the activity of prehension is filled with *feelings*, meaning any “occasion of experience,” also referred to as “actual entity” or “actual occasion,” involves what Whitehead calls “subjective form” (ibid., pp. 176, 177, 192). “The subjective form of an experience is the dynamic form of how the potentials for change initially found in the bare-active midst come to play out in its occasion” (Massumi 2011, p. 15). In other words, “this is *how, the manner in which*,” events in nature-matter come to pass; “[a]nd this manner makes all the difference” (Shaviro 2014, p. 38; italics in original).⁴

To clarify this point we consider a sonic example: tap a drum, its membrane begins to vibrate, sound waves propagate change the ear hearing it, the ossicles of the middle ear, the cochlear of the inner ear to the brain; and so part of

³ Whitehead further explains: “Thus subject and object are relative terms. An occasion is a subject in respect to its special activity concerning an object; and anything is an object in respect to its provocation of some special activity within a subject. Such a mode of activity is termed a ‘prehension’” (1933/1967, p. 176). Whitehead, A.N. 1933/1967. *Adventures of Ideas*. New York: The Free Press.

⁴ “[A] prehension involves three factors. There is the occasion of experience within which the prehension is a detail of activity; there is the datum whose relevance provokes the origination of this prehension; this datum is the prehended object; *there is the subjective form, which is the affective tone determining the effectiveness of that prehension* in that occasion of experience. How the experience constitutes itself depends on its complex of subjective forms” (Whitehead 1933/1967, pp. 176-177; emphasis added).

Part Four – How Nature Does

the drum – its potential/material constitution – *becomes part of us* (say, any entity, human or not, can be affected by the encounter). Although that the causal chain seems clear – i.e., drum, vibration, ear/organ transduces signal to brain, etc. – it remains open how something comes to matter. “An occasion may be *caused* by what precedes it, but, as Stengers puts it [in reference to Whitehead’s ‘causal efficacy’], ‘no cause, even God as a cause, has the power to define *how* it will cause. Nothing has the power to determine how it will matter for others” (2009, p. 40 as quoted in Shaviro 2014, p. 38). Let me quickly add that our example appears to privilege the human listener as recipient of the something’s-happening. So it does, but the listener is neither the passive receiver nor the constituent force in the occasions of experience. Rather, the issue at stake is the question of how nature does, and how *we* – not *apart* but *a part* of nature – carefully move in the midst, “in the mess of relations not yet organized in terms such as ‘subject’ and ‘object’” (Manning 2015b, p. 55). To say it another way, and eventually return to the ‘why’ of this project: to think/view the sonic through a Whitehead-Jamesian lens, we need to “perceive reality as it really is” (Sjöstedt-H 2016, n.p.); that is to say, “take everything as it comes. You cannot pick and choose according to a priori principles or pre-given evaluative criteria” (Massumi 2011, p. 85). It places you and me “in a more nuanced relationship to knowledge,” as Manning affirms; “[a]n occasion of experience [...] produces the means by which it will eventually define itself as this or that” (Manning 2015b, pp. 55–56). In the case of the drum, the sounds drifting outwards may be soft or loud – depending on the condition/situation wherein the action takes place, the vibrations might be reflected by walls, surfaces, or dampened by bodies, objects – then, anything and -body becomes (is, *ising*) part of a worlding. What it means (the ‘*this*’ or ‘*that*’) is less the issue, but what it does – *how* it does is at issue here.

Aside from this basic example, my interest in the making/proposition of *How is Nature* lies precisely in the complexities that arise in the encounter with vibrational force, that is to say, in prehension. Namely, *in the performative*

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encounter with vibrant ecology occurs what Cage – after Zen Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki – refers to as “unimpededness and interpenetration;” he describes his understanding of these concepts as such:

this unimpededness is seeing that in all of space each thing and each human being is at the center and furthermore that each one being at the center is the most honored one of all. Interpenetration means that each of these most honored ones of all is moving out in all directions penetrating and being penetrated by every other one and no matter what the time or what the space. [... I]n fact each and every thing in all of the time and space is related to each and every other thing in all of time and space. (Cage 1961, pp. 46–47)

This view depicts a distinct balance between the singularity of things and happenings (their unimpededness) on the one hand and their simultaneous inter-/intra-activity (their interpenetration) on the other. For Cage, this conception of reality is entirely non-dualistic, “since the complete interrelation of all things cannot allow for any divisions or distinctions” (Pritchett 1993, p. 75). Similar holds true for the dual-aspect ontology of Whitehead who insists that actual entities (things) and actual occasions (happenings) constitute the universe. “These two modes of being are different, yet they can be identified with one another, in much the same way that ‘matter has been identified with energy’ in modern physics” (Whitehead 1938/1968, p. 137 as quoted in Shaviro 2014, p. 35).

Although Whitehead’s atomism differs in nuance to Deleuze’s notion of process and becoming, both philosophers insist on relations as underlying cosmic factuality. Deleuze sees no actual thing, say, “an actual entity volcano, a real force to be reckoned with”⁵ – instead, he has eyes only for “its violent, upsurging

⁵ This phrase stems from Graham Harman’s *Guerilla Metaphysics*, which Shaviro draws on to elaborate on the distinct differences between Whitehead’s (atomist-based) process ontology and Harman’s

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action,” that is to say, “*its force to be reckoned with*” (ibid., pp. 33, 34; emphasis added). According to Shaviri (drawing on Robinson [2007]), the differences between Deleuze and Whitehead “are matters of ‘balance’ or emphasis, rather than fundamental incompatibilities” (2009, p. 18).⁶ The former believes in a ‘continuity of becoming’, whereas the latter subscribes to a ‘becoming of continuity’; what the two positions share is, in effect, the philosophers’ common quest in “how to resolve the conflicting claims of unity and multiplicity, or how to achieve what Deleuze-Guattari call ‘the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM’” (1980/1998, p. 20 as quoted in ibid.). My adventure is another, but it clearly links to their concern of *becoming*, *change* and ultimately *invention*. *How is Nature* deals with the problem of translation and *mannerism* in the context of artistic making (*poiesis*) and doing (*praxis*). The project follows the transversal movement of *Sonic Peripheries* based on the incentive presented at the outset of this venture. To reiterate: the motive and curiosity that drives this research done in and through art practice turns to occasions where sound is prehended (and conceived) both as audible and inaudible occurrence – as either vibration, music, fabulation, concept, or as ‘wholly other’. Call it incentive or *lure of the middle* – the problematic locus where the sonic is *neither this nor that* – that gives impetus to listen intently, yet to assume nothing. This research is committed to attending to the ever all-embracing activity, it is committed to the moment of awareness that takes precedence over questions of signification; as such, it is convinced that sound is always-already a matter of experience. Here we arrive at the ‘what’ of this art research offshoot; though let me first conclude the why section with some observations that are relevant in the overall discussion.

object-oriented ontology. See Harman, G., 2005. *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*. Chicago: Open Court, p. 82.

⁶ Steven Shaviri elaborates on this point in *Without Criteria*, p. 19n2. See Shaviri, S. 2009. *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.



Figure 1

Terra incognita: vegetatio, 'the power of growth' (or untamed cultured nature). Photo taken on the grounds of Catwalk Institute, Catskill NY.

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Take a moment to look at Figure 1. What do you see? Captured aliveness? Or rather a kind of stilled energy that quivers *still* – yet *not* still, not quiet. What do you hear? A buzzing of sorts? A rustling in the thickets of vegetation seen ahead, imagined below and somewhere above one's point of view? A kind of noise we might expect to hear when we see the display of shrubs, trees, sticks and stones, foliage, and dirt. *Nature* ... a wildness?, or one's dream thereof; Henry David Thoreau conjures 'wildness' in the writings he does on, or rather through nature (not *about* nature). Jane Bennett in Thoreau's *Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild* (2002) explains that in her study on the naturalist, artist-poet, and philos-

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opher, she “capitalize[s] Nature when it refers to the magical reality of Thoreau’s making, to the outdoor life he inflects as Nature” (p. xxxii). It is in this sense that Nature with a capital N will be considered here. As part of an idea that starts with what is known as American Transcendentalism, a philosophico-literary movement of the early to mid-nineteenth century, but diverges from it – namely, I endeavor to suggest, in the direction of a materialist meaning of worlding as opposed to an anthropocentric reading of the world.⁷

The notion of ‘materialist meaning’ I draw from Massumi who in *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* describes meaning as a “network of enveloped material processes” (1992, p. 10). He considers meaning as process; “an encounter between forces, or lines of force (which themselves are complexes of other lines), an event, dynamic rather than static and in a constant process of becoming [...] *the expression of one force on another*” (O’Sullivan 2006, p. 21; emphasis added). For Bennett, “Thoreau is a sculptor: his materials are flesh, bones, twigs, rocks, feathers, memories, and dreams; his tools – themselves finely wrought – are words, sentences, acute observations, imagination, hiking shoes, and canoes; his product is Nature and the sojourning individual” (2002, p. xxx).⁸ Her point being that it is “sometimes difficult – amid the dust and discarded or partially formed chunks – to figure out just what it is that is being made in

⁷ I wish to note here that I neither consider myself an expert on Henry David Thoreau nor on American Transcendentalism. My main sources with regard to the former goes back to Bennett’s studies on the philosopher as well as several texts by Thoreau himself. My interest in Thoreau comes, on the one hand, from Cage and his conceptual involvement with him and, on the other hand, my art-philosophical interest in the type of thinking that Thoreau projects, also, or especially concerning sound and sonic observations he expresses in his writings, e.g., in *Walden*.

⁸ Jane Bennett describes Thoreau as a *sojourner* and explains: “Sojourners are in search of a home but also value the sense of estrangement that propels them. Sojourning is not as purposive as journeying but not as aimless as sauntering. Although the self Thoreau seeks to fashion also engages in the last two, it is the first that best names the fragile balance between comfort and estrangement, between the universe and the Wild, that marks Thoreau’s ideal” (2002, p. xxvii). See Bennett, J. 2002. *Thoreau’s Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

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Thoreau's texts. Because sculptor and sculpture often coincide, it is hard to distinguish between raw material and emerging work of art;" and mine being, drawing on Bennett's analogy that the artist 'enacts' and transforms the lines of forces into what I termed elsewhere 'fugacious expression' – which is something of a matter-meaning that comes into articulation as artifact/thing of material-discursive complexion (ibid.). Meaning, as such, steps aside from the logic of logocentricism and assumes the wisdom of the Event inherent in naturing nature (Lat. *natura naturans*). Matter in its broadest sense (solid, liquid, gaseous, and intangible, that is, incorporeal) comes to matter as mattering event. Here 'meaning' can be understood as a 'cut' or 'point of suspension' — to name "the 'pinning down' of a dynamic process, a kind of map, or diagram, of a procedure" (O'Sullivan 2006, pp. 21–22). This proposition will be further explored in the context of the ideation and making of *How is Nature*. However, firstly let us continue our perceptual reading of Figure 1.

It seems nearly quotidian — the photograph, that is. But I think it really is not, especially on second sight. Not to say that it shows signs of any particular artistic merit; *nah*, it's a snapshot of a temporary mise-en-scène that unfolded in front of me the day I scouted – or should I say, 'sojourned' – the area. *Snap!* Maybe I was fidgety when pressing the camera button, alas, causing the image to appear out of focus in parts. Then again, I wonder – some elements in the image are entirely in focus, nearly jutting out from the picture plane to meet the eye halfway. There is a sense of dynamism that subsists in the tonal values, eventually concentering into shapes; see the lopsided trunk of a fallen tree near the center of the image: Dark, stark black-rhizomatic-lines amid moving grass and skittish light-bright leaves. The longer I look the less I conceive of an image that depicts a definite landscape – that is, the wooded environs nearby my cabin. I sense untamed cultured nature, perceive the power of growth *and* decay; 'I' lose myself – "surrendering of one's self to that which lies beyond oneself" (O'Sullivan 2001, p. 118). The image opens to a facsimile of terra incognita, bound to earth but not

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limited to sameness.⁹ The work in process began here. (And you may ask yourself, what does this have to do with sound? Just wait.)

The 'why' of *How is Nature* connects to the 'where', and we will come to the 'what' of the project shortly.

The where provides a straightforward response; but perhaps not quite so unambiguous when considering what Whitehead calls "the fallacy of simple location" (1929/1978, p. 137). The fallacy lies in the belief that 'discrete matter' is locatable – namely, "in a definite finite region of space, and throughout a definite finite duration of time" (Whitehead 1925/1967, p. 58). For the philosopher of process, this is a misconstrue of reality that entirely "ignores the way that feeling is relational and always in transition" (Shaviro 2009, p. 60). Well, pardon the odd aside – not too odd we shall see – we turn to the less unusual.

The where and when comes to this: In the summer 2016, I spent four weeks at Catwalk Artist Residency, Catskill, NY. Located in the Hudson Valley, near Catskill Mountains, the residency is flanked by the river Hudson and overlooks the sublime landscape so often depicted by the Hudson River School of painting – in fact, to one side of the Catwalk grounds, the view opens to *Olana*, the former estate of the painter Frederick Edwin Church (1829–1900). It comes as no surprise that resident artists are invited to work on projects focused on aspects of landscape.¹⁰

⁹ To quote Brent Adkins (2015) concerning the problem of the *new* and Deleuze and Guattari's postulated monism of univocity (as discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, namely in the first plateau on the rhizome): "The monism arrived at here, though, is not an Eleatic stasis in which movement is an illusion. It is the monism of the continuity thesis, the monism of univocity. *The claim is not that ontology is a monotonous sameness, but that everything exists in the exactly the same way.* There is no dualism of form and content that must then be related by analogy. There is no transcendence, only immanence. All the assemblages are arrayed on the same plane. The formula (pluralism = monism) is magic precisely because it allows for the creation of the new" (n.p.; emphasis added). See Adkins, B. 2015. *Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus: A Critical Introduction and Guide*. [eBook] Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

¹⁰ And to me, it comes as no surprise that I shall at once think of Thoreau in the context of New England. Though, strictly speaking, New Englanders moved into Upstate New York after having settled first in

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My proposal for the art residency outlined the motive for experimentation on site – taking into consideration, that is to say, expanding on the research proposition of *Sonic Peripheries*, which advocates a thinking-sound that, akin to Cage and other art-philosophers, seeks to explore ‘theory-practice entanglements’ – in other words, to conjoin philosophy and art practice in order to elaborate a genuine manner of working with sonic matter. “This kind of mannerism,” I explained – the listening-in and -through sonic materiality, “is premised on questions this research pursues;” put here in very basic terms: it wants to find out “what happens when sound happens as an aesthetic force” in a sonic artwork context. Basic, albeit not simple. In the chapters preceding this one, facets of the earlier case studies and the research at large were discussed. Suffice to say now that the findings from the cases, the continuous evolve- and involvement with this (ad)venture led to what I refer to at present as ‘perceptual mannerism’ – namely, a mode of invention that is an expression of thinking sonically qua writing and experimentation. Experimentation in the sense that I intent to push the limits of what sound can do – or put this way, how it comes into articulation through other media, other than itself (see esp. Part Three: Experiment 1).

This brings me to the what of *How is Nature*. The plan was, and still is to date, to work on a piece that combines writing with visual, i.e., diagrammatic approaches in correlation with field recording practice by which to problematize the notion of Nature. The term nature, especially with a capital N, holds all sorts of romantic ideas and lures – here I think of Thoreau and his musings:

Nature makes no noise. The howling storm, the rustling leaf, the pattering rain are no disturbances, there is an essential and unexplored harmony in them. [... N]ow I see the beauty and full

the six states of the northeastern United States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Thoreau’s seminal book *Walden* was inspired by his experience of living for some years amid woodland near Walden pond, an area located close to Concord, Massachusetts.

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meaning of that word 'sound'. Nature always possesses a certain sonorousness, as in the hum of insects, the booming of ice [...] which indicates her sound state. (*Journal 1*, pp. 12, 226–227)¹¹

That said though: this project subscribes to a realism, say, a new materialism, which deviates from any form of romanticism (e.g., Emerson's American Transcendentalism).¹² And precisely because of the pursuit of the *real* – not the ideal – it seems only apt to be embedded in an environment, such as the Catskills (to me, then, a quasi *Walden*) to cultivate contemplation, listening, making; to engage in the sonic ecology of the grounds. Also, in short, to encounter 'nature' in a bucolic rather than urban environs. I was interested in the site-specificity and the soundscape inscribed in this particular setting and envisaged to set out on numerous tasks/experiments that investigate the way sonic matter comes into expression, hence experience. What I hoped for was to encounter the 'great outdoors'; to explore an outside, something external to us that exceeds immediate apprehension – however, which can be intuited/imagined, sensuously/non-sensuously thought-felt by way of artistic-speculative manners of translation and transformation.

¹¹ Bernd Herzogenrath in 'The "Weather of Music"' (2009, pp. 217–218; italics in original) suggests that "Thoreau is exploring the audible world like a sound-archaeologist, carefully distinguishing 'sound' from 'music' [...]. What Thoreau is pointing at is the fact that nature *itself* produces what one might call 'ambient sounds';" and continues that Thoreau's sensitivity for environmental sounds "heralds an avant-garde aesthetics in music," wielding influence on composers such as Charles Ives, Cage and John Luther Adams, among others. See Herzogenrath, B., 2009. The 'Weather of Music': Sounding Nature in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries. In B. Herzogenrath ed. *Deleuze|Guattari & Ecology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 216–232.

¹² "American Transcendentalism is inextricably intertwined with the names Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thoreau. While Emerson's metaphysical and idealistic (in the sense of a Hegelian Idealism) brand of Transcendentalism made him the philosophical spokesman of the movement, his disciple Thoreau followed a much more materialist and 'physical' philosophy, without, however, completely casting off the Emersonian Metaphysics" (Herzogenrath 2009, p. 218).

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Indeed, what I did encounter was a plethora of impressions; factual and imagined (on 'factual-fictional energies', see pp. 53–64), naturally present and others produced as artifice of nature in Nature.

Contrary to the saying, what you see is what you get, I propose, what you see is *not* what you get. More to the point: What you believe you see is an approximation of what you think-feel as you get to see *and* hear it (see Fig. 2). Consider this; and take a look (again) at Figure 1 followed by Figures 3, 4 (you may also follow the audio icon on p. 197 and listen) – then proceed from here.

The process started on a hunch; it's always a hunch. Though I did know that I wanted to work with visuals and field recording. I also knew that I wanted to further explore the relation of site to sound in connection with notions of surface-depth, concrete-abstract, sense-nonsense – something that was brought about in the collaborative effort with Academy Records, which I then continued to develop in the work on the chapter Experimenting: Sound/Non-Sound. And not to forget, another thing I knew: there was still a conceptual itch that needed scratching. (Does one ever forget an itch?; more on it below). In hindsight, the joy of this creative research lay in letting myself run wild – speculative-pragmatically, playful-ferverently go beside one's self to anticipate that which lies beyond oneself. A purposeful purposelessness reenacted.

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Figure 2

Looking at, out or about the window? (Cf. Kim-Cohen 2009, p. xvii). View out the studio skylight watching and listening to the rain.

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♦ ♦ ♦

Invention lies in the encounter between forces, when lines of forces coalesce (Massumi 1992, 2002; Deleuze 1969/1990; Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998), or put this way, when sets of potentials synergetically click together (Simondon 2009; Whitehead 1933/1967); that is,

For Whitehead, each taking-form involves 'the swing over from reenaction to anticipation' due to an 'intervening touch of mentality'. He speaks of the reenaction in terms very similar [to Gilbert] Simondon, as an 'energizing' of a given set of conditions inherited from the past. The swing-over to anticipation introduces novelty into the world. A taking-form 'arises as an effect facing its past', no sooner to turn away from its past to become 'a cause facing its future': a future cause. The snapping-to exemplified in the taking-effect of the operational solidarity (the 'subjective form' in Whitehead's vocabulary) of this new existence *is* the 'touch of mentality'. Whitehead also talks about this in terms of the passing of a quantum threshold consisting in the becoming of a qualitatively new existence. (*Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 192–194 as quoted in Massumi et al. 2009, pp. 41–42)

In the anticipation of a futurity subsists the moment of invention; the doing, 'the decision' – the cut-off point – where the occasioning goes either this or that way. It does *click*; *bang!*, energetically leaps from now to now and here to here-now. The quantum thing follows its own reason. There is no trajectory to speak of, no change, yet everything changes; *puff*. WOW. Surprise!, a pragmatic magics taking effect, the quantum threshold's been passed. Barad (2007) discusses quantum leaps as follows:

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Quantum leaps aren't jumps (large or small) through space and time. An electron that 'leaps' from one orbital to another does not travel along some continuous trajectory from here-now to there-then. [...] What makes a quantum leap unlike any other is that there is no determinate answer to the question of where and when they happen. The point is that it is the intra-play of continuity and discontinuity, determinacy and indeterminacy, possibility and impossibility that constitutes the differential spacetime-matterings of the world. (p. 182)

How does this fall into the creation of *How is Nature?* I will try to clarify this point, although the feeling of change, the pragmatic-magics that happen in artistic practice, is nearly impossible to relate. It is a matter of *feeling*, of first-hand experience; however, that which gets produced, namely the artwork itself bears the trace of this magical touch ... in fact, it will yield its own. "Art is simple *but* complex in this sense. [...]t works on itself ... follows lines of enquiry, repeats certain moments, accelerates some motifs ... slows others down ... In so doing, art itself constitutes a world – its own world" – and so creates the conditions by which it may be 'read' and 'understood' (O'Sullivan 2014, n.p.; italics in original). Art's power lies in the differential spacetime-matterings it constitutes; the alinear spatiotemporal formations that gestate in miraculous no-time – in this case, the types of soundspace that might leap into (and out) of existence; a worlding of its own. While on the subject, for Simondon, the philosopher of techno-aesthetics, "all transition, all change, all becoming, is quantum" (Massumi et al. 2009, p. 41). The quantum trick, say, is an invocation of something unforeheard and seen; and, until here-now, of occurrences unknown.¹³

¹³ Let me briefly muse on Whitehead's take on the occasioning of taking-form, which, introduced above by Massumi, says, I repeat, "A taking-form 'arises as an effect facing its past', no sooner to turn away from its past to become 'a cause facing its future': a future cause" (Whitehead 1933/1967, p. 194 as quoted in Massumi et al. 2009, p. 41). This notion reminds me of Pauline Oliveros's site-specific

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Bennett's Thoreau is a sculptor. I wonder if she'd agree on my being a 'carto-mytho-grapher'; a *Pynchonesque* character, if you like – an *idiosyncrasy* assumed for this offshoot case; producing maps, projecting lines of flight by which to trace unknown knowns, truly seeking for unknown unknowns. The carto-mytho-grapher's materials are leaves, flowers, graphite, paper, feathers, atmosphere, and sounds; her tools: field recorder, camera, *intuition*, *imagination*, hiking boots, and bug spray; her product – *How is Nature* – takes the form of an audiovisual assemblage, a kind of map, or diagram of points of suspension, "the 'pinning down' of a dynamic process" (O'Sullivan 2006, pp. 21–22). Sher Doruff in 'Artistic Res/Arch: The Propositional Experience of Mattering' writes, "it is the surprise encounter with *unknown unknowns* (what we don't know we don't know) that is the hinge of the *potentiality*, of the indeterminate contingencies of artistic research practice" (2010, p. 7; italics in original). The inventive search for the unexpected depends on the carto-mytho-grapher's intuit grip for the *not yet* – namely for "a lure for feeling' that seduces an entity into its process of becoming, or that draws it into difference" (Whitehead 1929/1978 as quoted in

improvisational explorations of extreme acoustic spaces. *Deep Listening* (1988) was one such release by the composer/ musician – and other performers – recorded at the Fort Worden Cistern in Port Townsend, WA, on which she comments with regard to the forty-five second reverberation: "The sound is so well mirrored, so to speak, that it's hard to tell direct sound from the reflective sound. It puts you in the deep listening space. You're hearing the past, of the sound you made; you're continuing it, possibly, so you're right in the present, and *you're anticipating the future, which is coming at you from the past*. [...] *So it puts you into the simultaneity of time*, which is quite wonderful, but it's challenging to maintain it and stay concentrated. [...] The space itself becomes a very active partner in the creation" (as quoted in *Ocean of Sound*, pp. 248–249; emphasis added). In my view, Oliveros's account beautifully describes a taking-form of soundspace that comes into gestalt as sonic reflection of dis/similar temporalities – mirroring flows of presents, pasts, and futures' past. Soundspace, here, performs intricately folded, ever-specious present; and in reverberation, the processual situatedness energizes the in/determinate futurity's passage. This so-called propagation effect lets us discern the build-up of energy, a vibratory force that increases and endures, invigorating (causing) a mesh of enveloped material processes to resonate in quasi-unison. On Oliveros's practice of 'deep listening', see Toop, D. 1995. *Ocean of Sound: Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds*. London: Serpent's Tail, pp. 242–250.

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Shaviro 2009, p. 135). Which means, going back to the opening quote in this chapter, that, for example, the beauty of a flower presents a lure; it allures, or in Whiteheadian parlance, it presents a “proposition” which reveals a potentiality (1929/1978, pp. 186, 196–197).

That is to say, propositions are neither actual nor fictive; they are ‘the tales that might be told about particular actualities’, from a given perspective that enter into the construction [...] of that very perspective. As such, propositions are possible routes of actualization, vectors of nondeterministic change. [...] ‘A proposition is an element in the objective lure *proposed for feeling*, and when admitted into feeling it constitutes *what is felt*’ (ibid., pp. 256, 187 as quoted in Shaviro 2009, p. 3; italics in original).

Paraphrasing Shaviro (ibid.): the flower, stick and stone, foliage, or sound is not beautiful in itself; though, importantly, *something happens to us when encountering the flower*, stick and stone, foliage, or sound and we think-feel it to be beautiful. In aesthetic judgment, the carto-mytho-grapher tends to the lay of the land, surveying Nature – the harmonies (and disharmonies), rhythms, pulses, and affective tonalities inherent in its resonant spacetime-mattering. The attitude taken on is not one of an adjudicator nor legislator; the carto-mytho-grapher, instead, becomes aesthetic contemplator, tunes into disinterested reverie, thus taking account of the semblance of rhythms and patterns immanent to a resonance of spaciousness ‘in the act’; especially directing one’s ear at the semblances specific to the experience of sonic artifacts is of interest – along with the manner in which sonic matter comes into expression.

Why the concern for beauty? Because beauty functions as a *proposition* and operates as a *lure for feeling*. It speaks of affect and singularity. It is an aesthetic experience where the surprise encounter effectuates the manner in which

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novelty arises “from an act of positive decision” (Shaviro 2014, p. 39); ‘surprise’, however, here understood to designate an asubjective sensation contrary to an emotive attunement. Beauty to Whitehead is “a matter of differences that are conciliated, adapted to one another, and ‘interwoven in patterned contrasts’ in order to make for ‘intense experience’” (1933/1967, pp. 252, 263 as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 42). And beauty to the carto-mytho-grapher submits no definition; without question, she is taken by the sprawl of nature’s doing – in the sense of being led by intuition to discover an unruliness that underlies the joy she felt when watching the poplar’s sway and listening to the magicicadas’ frenzy.¹⁴ She recalls that after heavy rains the pensive force of beauty started to emerge; the repulsive smells, signs of rot and decay filled the air; and insects ... biting little beasts so unpleasant to the senses. Still – an experience of a life – beautiful on its own terms. As Thoreau said above, “the rustling leaf, the pattering rain are no disturbances, there is an essential and unexplored harmony in them” (*Journal 1*, p. 12); his notion of *Nature* “speaks to the idea that there always remains a surplus that escapes our categories and organizational practices, even as it is generated by them” (Bennett 2002, p. xxvii). For the carto-mytho-grapher, the wildness of Nature naturing is that which disturbs, confounds, and *inspires* the perceptual mannerism put to practice in the mapping and fabulation of *How is Nature*.¹⁵ Lastly, Shaviro in *The Universe of Things* advocates that “beauty is

¹⁴ For the curious, see Coin, G. 2016. Billions of 17-year cicadas to emerge in Eastern US, but in only one spot in NY. *Syracuse.com*. [Online] Available at: http://www.syracuse.com/weather/index.ssf/2016/04/billions_of_cicadas_to_emerge_in_northeast_but_only_in_one_spot_in_ny.html [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

¹⁵ Ronald Bogue’s gloss on Deleuzian fabulation is quite instructive and helpful in placing what I mean by fabulation when employing the term. He writes: “In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari reiterate the notion that ‘all fabulation is the fabrication of giants’ (D & G 1994: 171), but they also extend the concept of fabulation by tying it to the fundamental aim of the arts – that of capturing the affects and percepts of sensation. Percepts are like landscapes in which the human being as subject no longer exists and yet remains diffused throughout the landscape; affects are intensities that traverse individuals and go beyond ordinary emotions and sensations. Percepts and affects exceed lived experience and our recollections of that experience. Thus, art’s domain is ‘not memory but

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appropriate to a world of relations, in which entities continually affect and touch and interpenetrate one another;” and concludes his aesthetic considerations by posing questions relevant to this research:

I wonder, however, whether today, in the twenty-first century, we might be at the beginning of a major aesthetic revaluation. [...] Our predominant aesthetic procedures involve sampling, synthesizing, remixing, and cutting and pasting. In such a world, the aesthetic problem we face is Whitehead's [...] it is a question of beauty and patterned contrasts [...] How can recycling issue into creativity and familiarity be transformed into novelty? Through what process of selection and decision is it possible to make something new out of the massive accumulation of already-existing materials? (2014, pp. 42, 43–44)

I am not here to answer his questions, I am here to chart possible vectors of indeterminate transformation, in/along which the carto-mytho-grapher is one 'conceptual persona' – a sojourner (*Verweilende*) and go-between, among others: “Fictive or real, animate or inanimate, our intercessors must be created. They come in series” (Deleuze 1995, p. 125 as quoted in Manning & Massumi 2014, p. 64); at Catwalk, this includes the ubiquitous hum of ACs, the intermittent train and whistle sounds ever so materializing out of nowhere; the chipmunks' curious staccato; the sonorous touch of humid air, wind, and raindrops

fabulation' (D & G 1994: 168). 'Creative fabulation has nothing to do with memory [...] In fact, the artist, including the novelist, goes beyond the perceptual states and the affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer' (D & G 1994: 171). Fabulation, then, is one with the general artistic project of capturing percepts and affects via a general 'becoming' (Bogue, p. 100). See Bogue, R. 2010. Fabulation. In A. Parr ed. *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 99-100.

on the canopy.¹⁶ What to do in the encounter with a strange place that captivates, stirs and concerns you? You go explore. Which brings us now to the prefigured conceptual itch (yes, not forgotten).

Conceptual itch?! The neologism doesn't mean much other than to imply that something is persistent enough to cause attention, even annoy at times. It demands attentiveness. Here it comes in the form of a *problem* in the Deleuzian sense, that is, as "something which forces thought and provokes responses or creative 'solutions'" (Schrimshaw 2012, n.p.). You might also read it as a query concerning the ontological status of sound to image (what you hear in relation to what you see) – if indeed, 'ontological' and 'status' are the words to be used here?; bearing in mind that ontology is the study of *being*. At this stage of our journey (the thesis) it should be evident that the sonic is neither-this-nor-that; not a thing as in tree, camera, hiking boots, or ... biting little beasts. And yet still sound *is* material which entails objective potential. That is to say, its ontogenetic force sets drums into vibration and brings walls tumbling down. Perhaps though there is an ontic difference to be considered in the sound-image constellation – alone the notion of *image* deserves further thought – but surely, the issue would go beyond the scope of this chapter. Rather, let us zoom in on an image, namely the *pictur- esque* landscape, the site-specifics of the environs present at Catwalk/Catskill Mountains. I will go into the details of the problem (conceptual itch) as it presented itself to me shortly.

As suggested in the part Introduction, the sonic occupies a space that sits between oppositions. Neither this nor that – a double negation that produces a

¹⁶ "The difference between conceptual personae and aesthetic figures consists first of all in this: the former are the powers of concepts, and the latter are the powers of affects and percepts. The former take effect on a plane of immanence that is an image of Thought-Being (noumenon), and the latter take effect on a plane of composition as image of a Universe (phenomenon). The great aesthetic figures of thought and the novel but also of painting, sculpture, and music produce affects that surpass ordinary affections and perceptions, just as concepts go beyond everyday opinions" (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994, p. 65). See Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1991/1994. *What Is Philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University.

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condition for paradoxical affirmation, which gives way to productive, aesthetic encounters; hence our interest in sound's occasioning as aesthetic force that brings to pass the unexpected. "The most we can say is that when forces appear as forces of the earth or of chaos, they are not grasped directly as forces but as *reflected in relations* between matter and form," say Deleuze and Guattari; and surmise that "it is more a question of thresholds of perception, or thresholds of discernibility belonging to given assemblages" (1980/1998, pp. 346–347; emphasis added). Forces can only truly be perceived by *intuiting* them; "that is, by grasping them without reference to a conceptual understanding of existence" (Stagoll 2010, p. 112). For them, music – for me, sonic art in general – does not reproduce the sonorous but renders forces sonorous, in other words, harnessing forces of the cosmos, universe, earth's *Nature*. Oscillating between matter and form (matter as it comes to matter); intuited/imagined as intensive force and sensuously/non-sensuously thought-felt as aesthetic figure through blocs of sensation. The images for us to consider next are Figures 3, 4 and audio example 20 as instances of the 'problem' – tingling conceptually and, to some degree, objectively – provoking the senses, exciting protean lines of thought.

As previously mentioned, I sought to explore the site-specific attributes of Catwalk grounds. Part of the investigation meant to do field recordings on site over the course of days in order to capture various acoustic atmospheres of the environs. This included an excursion to Catskill Mountains, hiking the Escarpment Trail via Mary's Glen, North Point, Sunset and Artist's Rock.¹⁷ (Fig. 4 shows audio equipment set in front of the waterfall at Mary's Glen.) Aside from sound

19. 

¹⁷ This hiking trail is favored by the painters of the Hudson River School. Especially the outlook south along the eastern Catskill escarpment from the platform known as Sunset Rock gave inspiration to painters such as Thomas Cole (founder of the School) and his work titled *Catskill Mountain House: Four Elements*. Oil on canvas, 1843–44. See HRSAT: Sunset Rock n.d. *Hudson River School, Art Trail*. [Online] <http://www.hudsonriverschool.org/trails/1/sites/7> [Accessed: 26 May 2018].

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20. |||||

Figures 3 (top), 4

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recordings, I took photographs of the landscape/s, especially close-ups of plant life and other natural occurrences, e.g., bodies of water – cascades and rain. Furthermore, I experimented with the so-called frottage technique (this drawing method was developed by the Surrealist artist Max Ernst who placed a sheet of paper on a surface to then rub over it with a soft pencil to capture its texture). I gathered materials – such as leaves, feathers, rocks, etc. – to trace the surface condition of the respective objects. What was I looking for? Or rather, what did I listen *in* and *through*? I was neither looking for nor listening to anything specific other than wanting to let intuition guide the way toward that which lies between matter and form. To think-feel my way along the perceptual path of what is seen and heard when middling with/in the event. I took delight in the allure of the acoustic and visual scenery on site – absolutely contrary to what I had expected. Though if asked what it was I did exactly anticipate, I should draw a blank; perhaps the notion of a virgin land and/or romantic ideas of a wilderness infused my thinking? – certainly, none of which was true. But no less, what I discovered were sites of in-betweenness as *lures of patterned contrast intra-/intertwined with what's seen and heard* conjured up by means of artistic practice and production.

On this view, I might argue that the itch has been scratched or the puzzle pieces have been put in place. Indeed the problematic I puzzled over, namely how to deal with/comprehend/judge the modal difference of experiences of what I see and I hear at a given moment was beside the point. That is to say, through the making of *How is Nature*, I grasped once more that artistic work does not afford a solution to a number of questions. Rather, art affords propositions as amalgamation of potentialities and actualities that gives way to “aesthetic delight” (Whitehead 1929/1978, p. 185). Here I follow Doruff’s (2010) definition on artistic research. She writes that “framing is art’s method of establishing a territory, of demarcating a fragment of chaos as sensation,” putting forth that “[t]he emphasis here is on the experience of making as *encounter*. This is a kind of radical empiricism extolled by William James [... and Massumi’s speculative

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pragmatism, which] tends towards the experience of relational processes, every bit as real as its products;” and continues that creative research practice also always involves a *deframing* activity in order to “resonate with its milieu, its Umwelt, its ethico-aesthetic political situatedness, its participatory audience, to insure that its framed territory is a ‘space contained or bounded but nonetheless always open to the chaos from which it draws its force’” (Grosz 2008, p. 20 as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 8; italics in original). In conclusion, Doruff sums up her perceptive exposition on art as research with the statement:

Artistic research practice proposes to frame what is given in experience as a port of entry. It fields an opening as a creative affordance, composing a fragment of chaos to a scratch-like stuttering rhythm that in turn overflows its boundaries as a mattering, as a matter of concern. (2010, p. 11)

In this case, the emphasis lies on the space *between*, the experience of real-yet-abstract relations expressed as a result of ‘scratch-like stutterings’, the patterned contrasts intra-/intertwined with the affective tones and rhythms established by a plethora of impressions ... hear, see, taste, touch, smell ... think ... to and fro ... AND AND so forth ... frame one moment, deframe another. What remains and is given expression to is the middling between one ‘thing’ (e.g., feeling, thought, texture, sonorous quality) and some other. The incongruences that enliven our newly lived experiences through art (and artistic re/search) are matters of concern *and* facts. Massumi brings this to a point: “Art is about constructing artifacts – *crafted facts of experience*. The fact of the matter is that experiential potentials are brought to evolutionary expression” (2011, p. 57; italics in original). He then asks, “How can a framed picture presenting a fragment of a scene hold a wholeness of potential in it?;” and submits, “[b]y including what doesn’t actually appear, but that is necessarily involved in the thinking-feeling of what does. A semblance is a form of inclusion of what exceeds the artifact’s

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actuality” (ibid., p. 58; see e.g. Fig. 3). The term semblance, as it is used here, refers to the rhythms and patterns immanent to a resonance of spaciousness in-act. In short, the residual thinking-feeling of sonic matter as it comes to matter. Semblances, thus, not only refer to instances specific to visual art or ocular phenomena but to sonic occasionings as well. It is worth quoting Massumi at length here to further elucidate this abstract force of life-*likeness* with an account of what Roland Barthes (1980/1981) terms ‘punctum’:

The punctum for Barthes is an affective force that makes the photo breathe with a feeling of life, a life, in all the singularity of its having had no choice but to follow the generic life path toward death in its own unique and unreproducible way. It’s not about the content of the life per se or about psychological associations that a memento of it might arouse in the observer, it’s not really even about grief. It’s about the affective commotion of a direct, immediate, uncanny thinking-feeling of the dynamic quality of a life no more. (Massumi 2011, p. 57)

As an aside, Massumi in the above refers to *Camera Lucida*, Barthes study on photography. There Barthes describes the case of Lewis Powell who in 1865 was condemned to death for trying to assassinate the US Secretary of State W.H. Seward. Relevant to our purposes, I recommend that you take a look at Alexander Gardner’s portrait of the conspirator.¹⁸ The uncanniness issuing forth from the photograph escapes any words, which – basically – encapsulates the affect-event of punctum – and sonic semblance at stake here.

¹⁸ See Rancière, J. 2011. *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso, pp. 112-114. To view the photograph of Lewis Payne (aka Powell) visit Lewis Powell (conspirator). 2018. Wikipedia. [Online] Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lewis_Powell_\(conspirator\)&oldid=842812983](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lewis_Powell_(conspirator)&oldid=842812983) [Accessed: 26 May 2018].



Echoing the above, I want to ask now: How can a field recording presenting a sequence of a sounding scene transmit a wholeness of potential in it? In a similar vein to Massumi, I propose that the affective quality of a recording we apprehend as unfamiliar in the familiar is precisely that which draws us into the singularity of that scene. This in my view has little to do with the idea of documentary – as it was understood by the pioneers of the Acoustic Ecology movement.¹⁹ As I have argued elsewhere, field recording is *site-nonspecific*;²⁰ meaning, there is a nominal relation to place – a vibrational trace displaced and articulated apart from its place of origin – even then when the listener desires to envisage a mimetic real of site. Consider here audio example 18 on p. 175. I suggest that you concentrate on the first three tracks of the playlist (alternatively you could scan the respective QR codes as seen on pp. 215–228 and listen to the recordings via mobile device, as in phone or tablet PC).²¹ I refrain from ‘reading’ the field recordings; instead, I encourage to “a finding oneself in the unknown, an immersion in its specificity, a negotiation with its newness;” other than triggering the intellect which “render[s] the unknown known or knowable,” intuition takes us into the heart of a unique event, enabling “the generation of a new series of impulses which may help modify our relations to the world” (Grosz 2004, p. 240). What we find is the affective clamor of Nature turn sonorous, a resonant spaciousness that is present in duration, a felt presence that enacts time. Not a time but temporalities in the making.

¹⁹ ‘Documentary’ here to mean the practice of location recording and environmental advocacy, endorsed by R. Murray Schafer and the *World Soundscape Project* – today known as the *World Forum for Acoustic Ecology*.

²⁰ Klusmeyer, P. 2011. *Sonic Objecthood, Vibrational Force*. Unpublished essay.

²¹ The so-called Quick Response code or QR code is a type of matrix barcode that is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached; here it leads to an online audio archive.

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Especially when listening to the third track, it seems as if we encountered an enclosed, yet distant space; large, undefined and somewhat emptied but none the less brimming with energy (take an empty bottle and blow across the top – notice the resonance). We prehend a fluid, drone-like quality, a sonorous ambience caused by an uncongealed fusion of myriads of entwined frequencies that marks the start of the soundscape, i.e., track titled *Untitled 3*. It gives way to a vastness that is not necessarily recognizable as something we might know. However, the exercise is not to rehearse who-knows-*what* (though notice how prompt identification of what is being heard sets in) – rather, I want us to pay attention to how time ‘feels’, or more to the point, how temporalities come in and out of earshot; one temporality in the making overlapping another, as it were. Chronological time – parceled out into discrete intervals such as seconds, minutes, hours that can be quantified and measured – is thus suspended. We become attuned to flows, perhaps akin to a heterogeneous, qualitative, dis/continuous and to some degree interpenetrating movement of times: Temporal fabrics never inert but shifting heavy with mass like a wet ball of wool or light as the strand of silk floating across space. What we hear are sounds unknown yet known. Known unknowns arise from a scene that is enframed qua slice of time: beginning at zero moving onward to forty-seven seconds of recorded material. Even though the time frame is set, the temporalities disclosed in the field recording enact processually.

Special note should be made that R. Murray Schafer – composer, theorist, environmentalist – coined the term ‘soundscape’ as part of his advocacy for the study of acoustic environments in the 1970s onwards, inclusive of a prescription for a new kind of listening. Suffice it to say in regard to his programme that Schafer calls attention to the features of the soundscape, which he identified as “keynote sounds,” “signals,” and “soundmarks” (Schafer 1977/1994). Still relevant, the categories can be helpful in the general analysis of location recordings as they provide a vocabulary for the description of sonic events. For example, in

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Untitled 3, we perceive an ambience, that is to say, we tune into the *keynote sound*, representing the ‘acoustic backdrop’ of the locale, “created by its geography and climate: water, wind, forests, plains, birds, insects and animals” (ibid., pp. 9–10). The ‘*dronesque* ambience’ of the soundscape sets the mood; presenting a slow-moving, luscious cluster of tones – microtones, overtones, combination tones – the result of the general environs and atmospheric pressure waves. By around twelve seconds into the recording – enticed by the flow, we indulge in its enigmatic undercurrent. What follows then is not a sudden interruption of that flow, but it appears that tonal figures ‘lift off’ and turn into *signals* and *soundmarks* – to use Schafer’s terms. For instance, I discern the noise of far-off, rhythmic traffic and the cicadas’ ocean-like swell. “Signals are foreground sounds and they are listened to consciously,” writes Schafer in *The Tuning of the World* (1977/1994, p. 10). Similar to the notion of *landmark*, he considers soundmarks to be an essential part of a community’s acoustic life (which deserves protection, according to Schafer and the Acoustic Ecology’s socio-political agenda). With regard to Catwalk, I should think that the approaching and receding train and whistle sounds – mainly heard but rarely seen since the train tracks are mostly hidden from view – qualify as the regional soundmark.

Although of merit, a sonic typology is not of concern to this art project. This endeavor aspires to resonate with the Umwelt as it relates to the senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch and what ising between (not ‘is beyond’). The adventure lies with thinking-feeling sound as an aesthetic experience; to expand the limits of the sonic arts through the intervention and entanglement of other materials, other media, other concepts. The central theme of *How is Nature* pertains to the sites of in-betweenness and cares for the ‘pinning down’ of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “fuzzy aggregates” that are constituted by “*vague and material* essences” (1980/1998, p. 407; italics in original). This means we attend to the matter-movement, “the flow of matter in continuous variation, conveying singularities and traits of expression” (ibid., p. 406). Like the artisan in

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A Thousand Plateaus “who is determined in such a way as to follow a flow of matter, a *machinic phylum*” – we, you/me now the carto-mytho-grapher determinedly follow a sonic phylum that fleetingly articulates into various intensities and affects: “[an] operative and expressive flow [which] is as much artificial as natural: it is like the unity of human beings and Nature” (ibid., pp. 409, 406; italics in original).²² Of interest to this project is to connect this fuzziness with ‘resonant immediations’ (see Fig. 1, pp. 88, 89ff) which occasion in aesthetic encounters: one, in the manner of art experimentation that produces artifacts and, two, in the encounter with those artifacts (artwork) that provoke untimely/unthought experiences.²³ In what follows, we turn to the latter: meet the vagabond abstractions head-on in order to negotiate the *how* events come into matter-meaning. Here the question of time (*kairos*) takes primacy.

I have difficulty to think time, but I certainly can experience some sense of passage when listening to sounds. Sound happens in ‘duration’, or rather lifts off that ‘groundless ground of being’. The term *duration* is Henri Bergson’s and is used by both Whitehead and Deleuze. It stands for “the lived movement of temporality [...], the creative dynamism and indivisible movement of ‘the time of life’” (Robinson 2009, p. 224).²⁴ Therefore, duration is the underlying means for

²² “We will call an *assemblage* every constellation of singularities and traits deduced from the flow [here, the sonic phylum] – selected, organized, stratified – in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage in that sense, is a veritable invention” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 406; italics in original). Deleuze G. & Guattari F. 1980/1998. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

²³ “To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate, to ambulate. *It is intuition in action*” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, p. 409; emphasis added). The fifty-one cards (works on paper) might assume the function of a map, enabling ‘intuition in action’ along the lines of flight, thus following the clairaudient/voyant directives (‘the topographies of ragged edges and chalky surface texture’) to access what I call elsewhere ‘intuit-immediacy’ – the quasi-presence of a sonorous event in its be/coming-into fugacious expression.

²⁴ Elizabeth Grosz (2005, p. 4) similar to Keith Robinson’s gloss describes the Bergsonian ‘duration’ as follows: “Duration is the ‘field’ in which difference lives and plays itself out. Duration is that which

sounds to actualize in the form of soundspace; or to put it another way, through sonic individuation temporalities provisionally take shape. I further suggest that the process works reciprocally where the type of soundspace defines how temporalities unfold. As aforementioned, quantum leaps take precedence in microscopic processes and constitute the differential spacetime-matterings. The 'quantum trick' – as it were – is an invocation of something unforeheard and seen and hitherto of occurrences unknown. Hence, the cunning next act will be to articulate the inarticulable as well as to summon images for the imageless. (And why not let art work its magic? Trace the spectral occurrences! Probe into the sounds, the cards, the lines, the maps – the diagrammatics of *How is Nature*.)

Considering audio examples 18 (note: entire playlist) – the field recordings introduced earlier – I seek to describe *sui generis* temporal formations that yield *soundspace* and a perch for sonic objecthood. Here, I want to contemplate the relation of the singularity of a recorded scene-site-situation and conclude this chapter on the *marking* of temporalities in the ap/prehension of soundspace (or soundscape) in the making.

To proceed from here, I shall call on the term *kairos* and undertake a short excursus into its meaning.²⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines

undoes as well as what makes: to the extent that duration entails an open future, it involves the fracturing and opening up of the past and the present to what is virtual in them, to what in them differs from the actual, to what in them can bring forth the new." See Grosz, E. 2005. Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming. *Parallax*, 11(2), 4–13.

²⁵ What follows in this excursus is my attempt to delineate a partial view of the meaning of *kairos* in order to then conceptualize a kairotic instant in relation to aesthetic encounters and the singularity of the 'more-than'. As Thomas Rickert notes: "the meaning of the Greek word *kairos* is itself murky because of its many and varied usages (Rickert 2013, p. 75). He further mentions Eric C. White (author of *Kaironomia*) who considers *kairos* to "[stand] for precisely the irrational novelty of the moment that escapes formalization" (White 1987, p. 20); and quotes William H. Race (Classics scholar) who considers the term "elusive" (as quoted in Rickert 2013, p. 75). In my search for the meaning of the term, I have come across several publications, which have helped in developing my understanding of its historical and contemporary sense – that is, mainly in the context of English rhetoric but also, and importantly, artistic practices. Here are my main sources in random order:

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the word as “the propitious moment for the performance of an action or the coming into being of a new state” and also “fullness of time” – etymologically speaking, and as the *OED* has it, the Ancient Greek *καῖρός* (*kairos*) alludes to the “right or proper time.”²⁶ Besides affording temporal connotations, the term suggests a movement or *marks a force* as Deborah Hawhee puts forward in ‘Kairotic Encounters’ (2002). She draws on the mythical figure Kairos in order to

Cassin, B. et al. eds. 2014. *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. [eBook] Princeton: Princeton University Press. (See especially entries on Moment/Momentum/Instant and, in contrast, *Aiôn*); Rickert, T. 2013. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press; White, E.C. 1987. *Kaironomia: On the Will-to-Invent*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Hawhee, D. 2002. Kairotic Encounters. In J. Atwill & J.M. Lauer eds. *Perspectives on Rhetorical Intention*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, pp. 16–35; Muckelbauer, J. 2009. *The Future of Invention: Rhetoric, Postmodernism, and the Problem of Change*. Albany: SUNY Press; Cocker, E. 2015. Kairos Time: The Performativity of Timing and Timeliness ... or; Between Biding One’s Time and Knowing When to Act. In 1st PARSE Biennial Research Conference on TIME, Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. *NTU IRep*. [Online] Available at: <http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/27462/> [Accessed: 27 May 2018]. O’Sullivan, S. 2006. *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*. New York: Palgrave; O’Sullivan, S. 2012. *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*. New York: Palgrave. Negri, A. 2003. *Time for Revolution*. New York: Continuum. The following references relate to the viable/possible similarities between *kairos* and ‘the Untimely’ (and *Aion*): Deleuze, G. 1969/1990. *The Logic of Sense*. London: The Athlone Press; Deleuze G. & Guattari F. 1980/1998. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Grosz, E. 2004. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham: Duke University Press; Nietzsche, F. 2007. On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life. In D. Breazeale ed. *Nietzsche: Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 57–123; Leston, R. 2013. Unhinged: Kairos and the Invention of the Untimely. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 21(1), 29–50; Bogue, R. 2010. The Concept of Fabulation. In *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 14–48; Deleuze, G. 1968/1994 *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press. In the latter Deleuze writes: “[...] we must condense all the singularities, precipitate all the circumstances, points of fusion, congelation or condensation in a sublime occasion, *Kairos*, which makes the solution explode like something abrupt, brutal and revolutionary” (Deleuze 1968/1994, p. 190).

²⁶ Deborah Hahwee remarks that “*kairos* does not have a direct English equivalent. Most frequently translated as ‘exact or critical time, season, opportunity’, *kairos* marks the quality of time rather than time’s quantity” (2002, p. 18).

conceptualize what she calls “invention-in-the-middle,” a rhetorical stance, which is a “kairotic movement” understood as “simultaneous extending outward and folding back,” occurring in the realm of the middle from where a provisional subject and object emerges (Hawhee 2002, p. 19). Briefly, in terms of the myth-figure: the god Kairos “epitomizes decision- and incision-making in that he is usually depicted bearing scales and razor blades, tools for measuring and cutting as well as for being measured and cut” (ibid., p. 25). Central to this image is the (rhetoric) performance of steady- and readiness: “Kairos must remain in the middle, ever ready for a moment of intervention,” therefore prepared to *intervene* (mark) ‘in the nick of time’ and *invent* (make) ‘at the spur of the moment’ (ibid.). In that sense, *kairos* “mediates – or goes ‘between’ – the outside of the self, i.e., the nodes where ‘self’ encounters the world, and the discourse or the ‘other’ that the self encounters” (ibid.). Hawhee’s notion of invention-in-the middle invokes the Deleuzian ‘*au milieu*’ (in the middle): “*Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but [...] a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, [...] a stream without beginning or end that [...] picks up speed in the middle” (*A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 25; italics in original). Kairos, a rhizomatic movement? Her linking *kairos* to a material force – a matter-movement speeding up or slowing down, always-already in-between – produces an emergent becoming that lies beyond the control of self, and advocates a kairotic encounter that exceeds the ordinary spatio-temporal usage of the term. (Hence the myth-god of Opportunity turns action-figure of The Wild – in no time.)

The issue here is that I seek to give articulation to the temporal point at the edge of the in/finite (see Part One: Aesthetic Encounter, pp. 66–68). The difficulty, however, is, and has been throughout, that an ‘elusive *momentum*’ appears hard to catch and evades quick – or any – formalization. In the chapter Research Into Sonic Art Practices of Part Two, the focus lay on Hannah Klatt’s query of following the lines – ‘What are these lines?’ – which in return bore so-

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called fugacious expression. Now we are led by another quest, namely by the quixotic task of *pinning down* the quantum leaps of invention. And this is why we look to the kairotic instant as that which “does not name a time as such, but rather an orientation and attitude, perhaps best characterized as a certain restlessness and opening out to the ‘to-come’” (O’Sullivan 2012, p. 119).²⁷ Here following Simon O’Sullivan’s lead (pace Antonio Negri), I too wonder whether *kairos* is “a passage into the virtual” (ibid., p. 120). Because it is at the time or rather locus of incipience – what Massumi calls the ‘seeping edge’ – when “that which is immanent to experience (affect) becomes conceptualised within experience (specifically with language)” (O’Sullivan 2006, p. 191; see Massumi 2002, pp. 23–45). This then brings me back to the above concern: to explore the connection between the singularity of a recorded scene (field recording) and the making and the *marking* of temporalities.

It is of import at this point to recall that my interest links to Massumi’s concept of semblance, i.e., his discussion of art’s means to construct artifacts – “*crafted facts of experience*” (Massumi 2011, p. 57; italics in original). Earlier in this chapter, we briefly looked to Massumi’s example of a framed picture which holds a wholeness of potential in it by involving an affective quality necessary for the ‘arcane’ experience (or *punctum*) to seep up. It is again the more-than to which we come; that is to say, to relate the notion of kairotic instant to the singularity of the more-than in aesthetic encounters. *How is Nature* operates precisely “at that ‘seeping edge’ between the existing states of affairs and a world ‘yet-to-come’. [... T]his is not to position art as transcendent, for as we have seen the ontological coordinates of the actual and the virtual operate ‘within’ immanence (within this world)” (O’Sullivan 2006, p. 105) What arises (actualizes) from the infinite (virtual) affords a sense of significance, i.e., a qualitative difference that is hard to pin down but is nevertheless felt as affirmative attunement in

²⁷ This will be of interest to us shortly, namely that O’Sullivan (2012) suggests that “this time – of the event – is not dissimilar to Deleuze’s own ideas of the ‘untimely’” (p. 199). See also footnote 31.

the occasioning of a situatedness. Which is then to say that the sonorous-vibrant quality of a recording, namely that which we intuit as the unfamiliar in the familiar, is that which draws us into the singularity of a sonic occurrence as it concurrently extends outward and folds back in the blink of an eye/ear. It lies, paradoxically, with/in the blink of an eye *and* ear – *in the 'quantum interstice' of what's seen and heard, in the 'no-where' and 'now-here' of vision and audition* – that we can anticipate the event's more-than to emerge in thought-micro-perceptions, resonant at the fringes of cognition.²⁸ *How is Nature* presents us with a case to study those vaporlike occurrences that impinge on the body, jutting out from the works on paper like an *affect-projectile* that “rises from a scene, shoots out of it” – “pricks” and “bruises” the beholder of the cards in conjunction with the soundscapes: image *and* sound (not one *or* the other) as crafted facts of experience. (Note that the just mentioned quotations stem from Barthes [1980/1981, pp. 26, 27] who comments on the nature of punctum concerning photographic images. Regardless, his observations are relevant to our case since the force discussed subsists in the qualitative dimension perceived as strangely – painfully or sublimely – anew, though, coming from what is always-already there. Call it rejig at first sight; or punctum; or semblance [Langer 1953; Massumi 2011] and beauty [Shaviri 2009] – what these concepts have in common is the impact that is thought felt in aesthetic encounters.) Next, to conclude this discussion on

²⁸ The next passage from Deleuze (1968/2001) elucidates the notion of the 'no-where' and 'now-here': “Following Nietzsche we discover, as more profound than time and eternity, the untimely: philosophy is neither a philosophy of history, nor a philosophy of the eternal, but untimely, always and only untimely – that is to say, 'acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'. Following Samuel Butler, we discover *Erewhon*, signifying at once the originary 'nowhere' and the displaced, disguised, modified and always re-created 'here-and-now'. Neither empirical particularities nor abstract universals: a Cogito for a dissolved self. We believe in a world in which individuations are impersonal, and singularities are pre-individual: the splendour of the pronoun 'one' – whence the science-fiction aspect, which necessarily derives from this *Erewhon*” (p. xxi). See Deleuze, G. 1968/2001. *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Continuum.

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the nascent concept of kairotic instant as critical orientation facing the ‘to-come’, we will turn to Thoreau one more time.

♦ ♦ ♦

Feb. 2. [1841] Tuesday. It is easy to repeat, but hard to originate. Nature is readily made to repeat herself in a thousand forms, and in the daguerreotype her own light is amanuensis, and the picture too has more than a surface significance, – a depth equal to the prospect, – so that the microscope may be applied to the one as the spy-glass to the other. Thus we may easily multiply the forms of the outward; but to give the within outwardness, that is not easy.

That an impression may be taken, perfect stillness, though but for an instant, is necessary. There is something analogous in the birth of all rhymes.

Our sympathy is a gift whose value we can never know, nor when we impart it. The instant of communion is when, for the least point of time, we cease to oscillate, and coincide in rest by as fine a point as a star pierces the firmament. (Thoreau 1906, p. 189; italics in original)

Not a daguerreotype but an audiovisual piece of fifty-one 4 x 2 1/4 inches cards and fourteen field recordings that reflects Nature as nature diffracts itself onto the paper-graphite-material and into the encoded audio signals (see Postscript chapter on daguerreotypes and future fabulation). As we scrutinize each card and listen – both at once – we look at and hear towards Nature’s fictioning: “Nature writes,” Barad infers; it “scribbles, experiments, calculates, thinks, breathes and laughs” (2010, p. 268n11). And it inscribes its meaning as mattering: “a process of coming-to-meaning across the human/nonhuman, organic/inorganic divide”

(Sheldon 2016, n.p.). The carto-mytho-grapher picks up the spy-glass – just in time – to listen, see, and ruminate *kairos* ... “*becoming everybody/everything* [...] eliminate everything that exceeds the moment, but put in everything that it includes – and the moment is not the instantaneous, it is the haecceity [‘thisness’] into which one slips” (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1998, pp. 279–280; italics in original). MATTER COMES TO MATTER COMES TO MATTER: “[B]ecomings cut across distinctions between the mental and the material, the human and the nonhuman, culture and nature. Indeed, becomings are evident throughout nature” (Bogue 2010, p. 21). Incorporeals are produced by the material inter/intra-action of bodies or entities. They are the sonic and ocular effects that ‘rise from a scene’ – ‘prick’ and entrain the listener-beholder-sojourner in the instant of *kairos* (‘for the least point of time, we cease to oscillate, and coincide in rest by as fine a point as a star pierces the firmament’).²⁹ (See also Part Three: Experiment 1.)

²⁹ “Deleuze claims that while states of affairs have the temporality of the living present, the incorporeal events of sense are infinitives (to shine, to be the sun) that constitute pure becomings with the temporality of *aion* – a form of time independent of matter that always eludes the present” (Lorraine 2010, p. 130). The concept of *kairos* and the kairotic instant as it is developed here displays certain affinities to the Deleuzian *aion* while differing in nuance, namely that *kairos* does not name a time as such, but rather an orientation ‘to-and-fro’, a *kairotic movement dependent on iterative re/configurations of matter* as generative production of new paradigms of subjectivity: “subjectivity is not something that subsists: it is – on the contrary – produced by *kairos* [...] Subjectivity is not before but after *kairos*” (Negri as quoted in O’Sullivan 2012, p. 121). Mind that ‘dependent’ on matter should not read as if *kairos* were congruent with ‘chronos’, where “the present is in some manner corporeal” (*Logic of Sense*, p. 162). Indeed, as O’Sullivan (2012) suggests: *kairos* could be conceived as a passage into the virtual, which, to me, aligns with the idea of quantum leaps. The kairotic instant – not only understood as ‘the propitious moment for the performance of an action or the coming into being of a new state’ but as a creative leap that ‘passes’ in the nonmathematizable instant. An action perhaps just as “queer” as Barad (2007), Barad et al. (2012) consider the occasioning of quantum leaps; ‘the moment is not the instantaneous, it is the haecceity’ – an individuation takes place via thisness. And here/there the kairotic *momentum* ‘steps in’ (the action-figure Kairos) opening out the ‘to-come’, affording innovation qua intervention. See Lorraine, T. 2010. Incorporeal. In A. Parr ed. *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 130–131; O’Sullivan, S. 2012. *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*. New York:

Part Four – How Nature Does

Similar to a daguerreotype, the assemblage of cards and sounds invoke a spectral quality, “sucking away the time frame” (Palmer 2016).³⁰ Perhaps no longer a temporality but a kind of a atmosphere that beguiles and affects, and which undoes any notion of a here-now to there-then. *Time’s sucked away* – hence negated when understood to mean that past, present, and future are of the same temporality wherein the present originates time (De Beistegui 2012, p. 70). On this view, time is the Untimely, “neither temporal nor eternal,” that is to say, “acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come” (Deleuze 1968/2001, p. xxi).³¹ I suggest that *the benefit of a time to-come* inheres in *kairos* as the atmosphered (*attitudinal*) creative leap that comes from nowhere and goes nowhere. For example, when listening to tracks eight through eleven (i.e., Untitled 8–11) we are lured by a multiverse of sounds coupled with the impressions (on our retina) of graphite-tracings-and-dust covering the plane of cards: ScreeEEEEchh KaBOOM! In aesthetic experience, we inevitably take quantum leaps. (We come face to face with

Palgrave Macmillan; Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press; Barad, K. et al. 2012. Intra-active entanglements – An interview with Karen Barad. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, NR. 1-2, 10–23.

³⁰ During a studio visit, Purcell Palmer proprietor of Catwalk grounds and director of Catwalk Institute, commented on the work, comparing the effect it has to that of a daguerreotype, saying: “the time frame gets sucked away.” This remark might be owed in part to the chalky (spectral) surface texture of the works on paper, but then her spontaneous response came about as she listened to the field recordings *as she viewed* the set of cards (as seen in Fig. 5) – therefore stands in relation to the soundscapes.

³¹ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze discusses Nietzsche’s conception of ‘the Untimely’, which is of interest to us: “the Untimely, which is another name for haecceity, becoming, the innocence of becoming (in other words, forgetting as opposed to memory, geography as opposed to history, the map as opposed to the tracing, the rhizome as opposed to arborescence). ‘The unhistorical is like an atmosphere within which alone life can germinate and with the destruction of which it must vanish. [...]’ Creations are like mutant abstract lines that have detached themselves from the task of representing a world, precisely because they assemble a new type of reality that history can only recontain or relocate in punctual systems” (Nietzsche as quoted in 1980/1998, p. 296).

A Lure for Feeling

Kairos, now god of The Wild, *whoOSH* points to the field of an in/determinate future and past.) *A pragmatic magics' taken effect! Just-now!*; we encountered the vagabond abstractions, the incorporeal effects, say, “sound effects” in the event's own worlding (*Logic of Sense*, pp. 7, 70). The allure lies within the quantum interstice – the *resonant immediations* – since it emphasizes “the non-linearity of the time of the event [...] time's affective force, in the event. This affective force is laden with both pastness and futurity, but in a way that is singularly active in the now of experience” (Brunner 2013, p. 136).

Time is a matter of an inexhaustible dynamism of the folding and unfolding (enfolding) of mattering (Barad 2007). Neither a past nor a future, “but ‘past’ and ‘future’ are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity. There is no inherently determinate relationship between past, present, and future” (Barad as quoted in Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012, p. 66). There lies art's power: in the affective nowness (the singularity); in the differential spacetime-matterings it constitutes, that is, the alinear spatiotemporal formations that gestate in miraculous ‘no-time’ – in our case, the types of sound-space that quiver at the edge of experience. In the anticipation of a futurity to re/configure subsists the moment of invention; the doing, the cut-off point – the ma(r)king of temporalities (and spatialities). What we will find is the affective clamor of Nature turn sonorous, a resonant spaciousness felt in its presencing, enacting time. Thus not a time ‘as such’ but temporalities in the making, *marking sonic occurrence* from the flux of haecceities: a gush of wind, the rushing water; “perfect stillness, though but for an instant, is necessary. There is something analogous in the birth of all rhymes” (Thoreau 1906, p. 189).

Part Four – How Nature Does



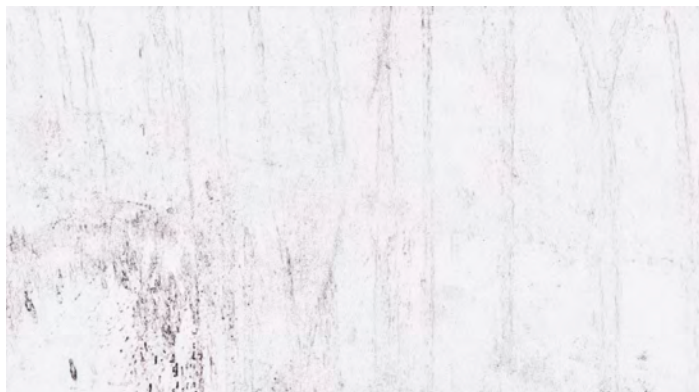
Figure 5

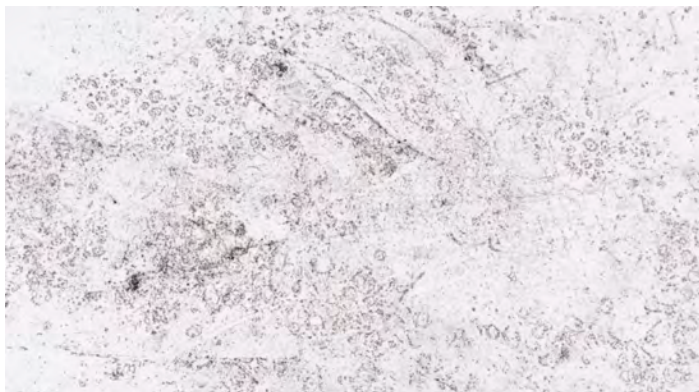
Snapshot of *How is Nature* – work in progress; cards laid out on the grand piano in the Catwalk studio.

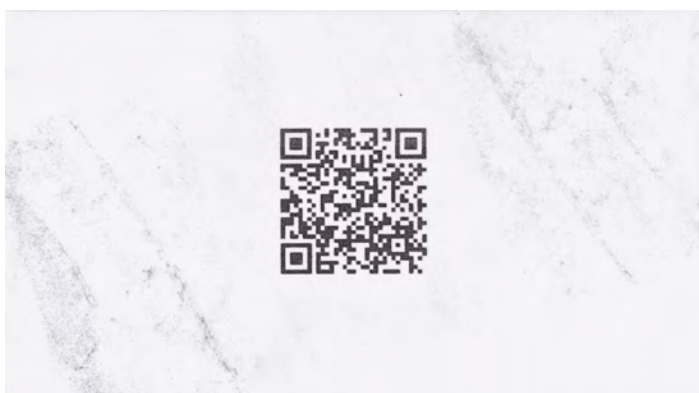
EXPERIMENT 2

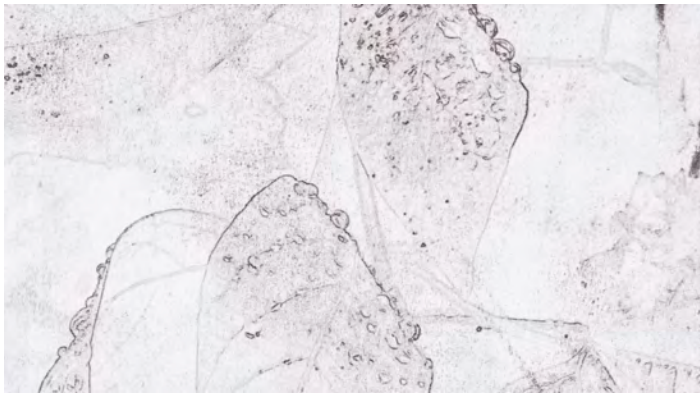
How is Nature

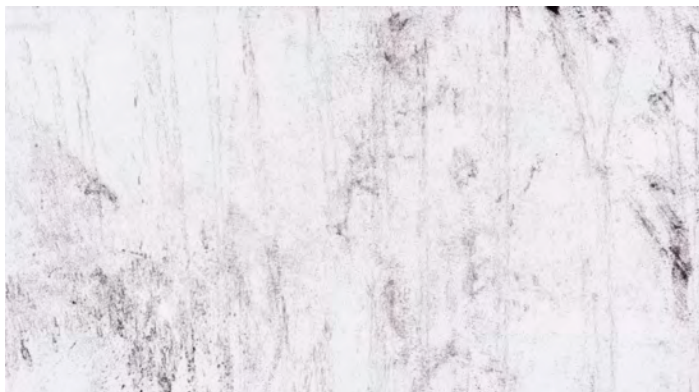
An Event.
Image, Sound, Writing.
Works in progress (process).

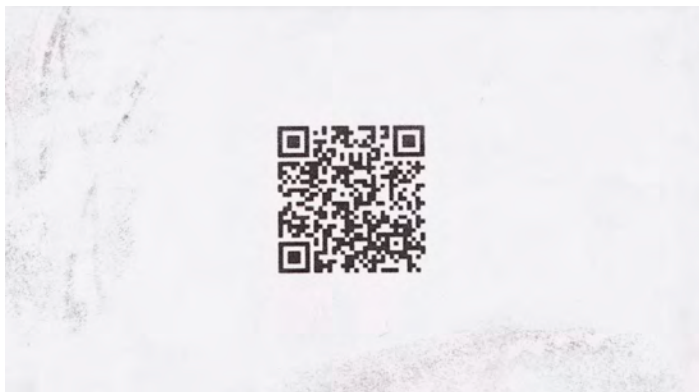


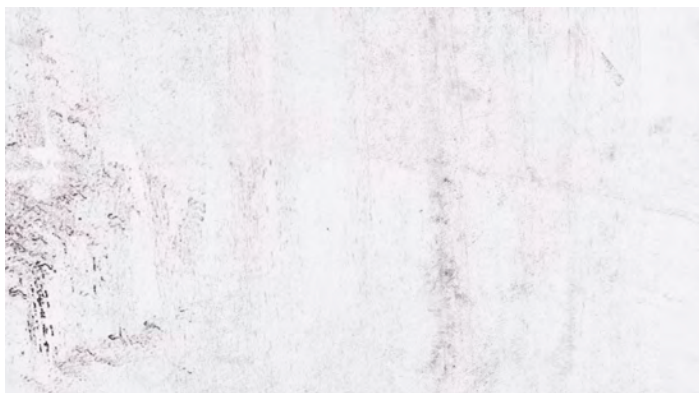


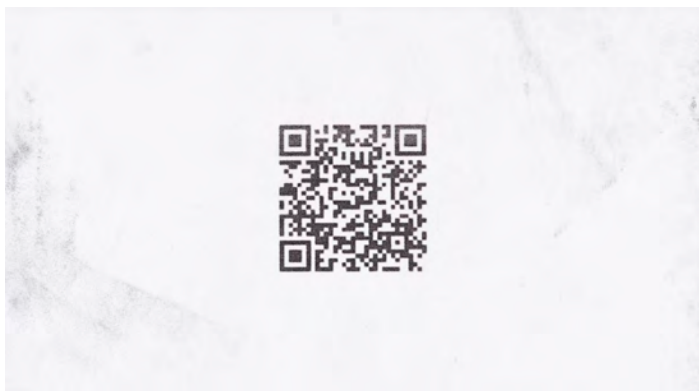
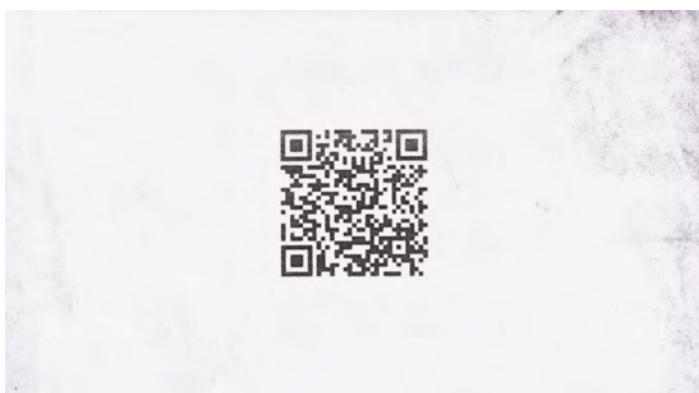








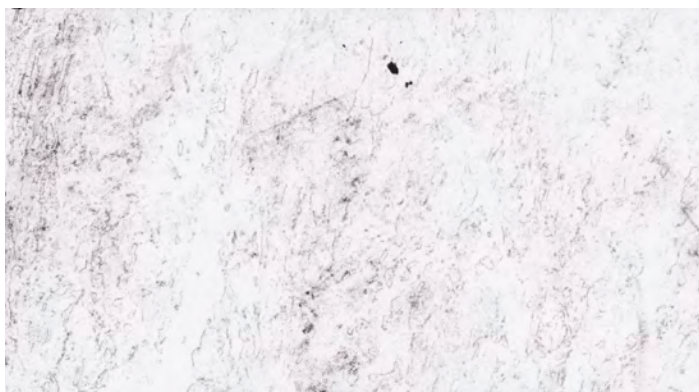












Refrain

MIDDLELING WITH/IN THE EVENT

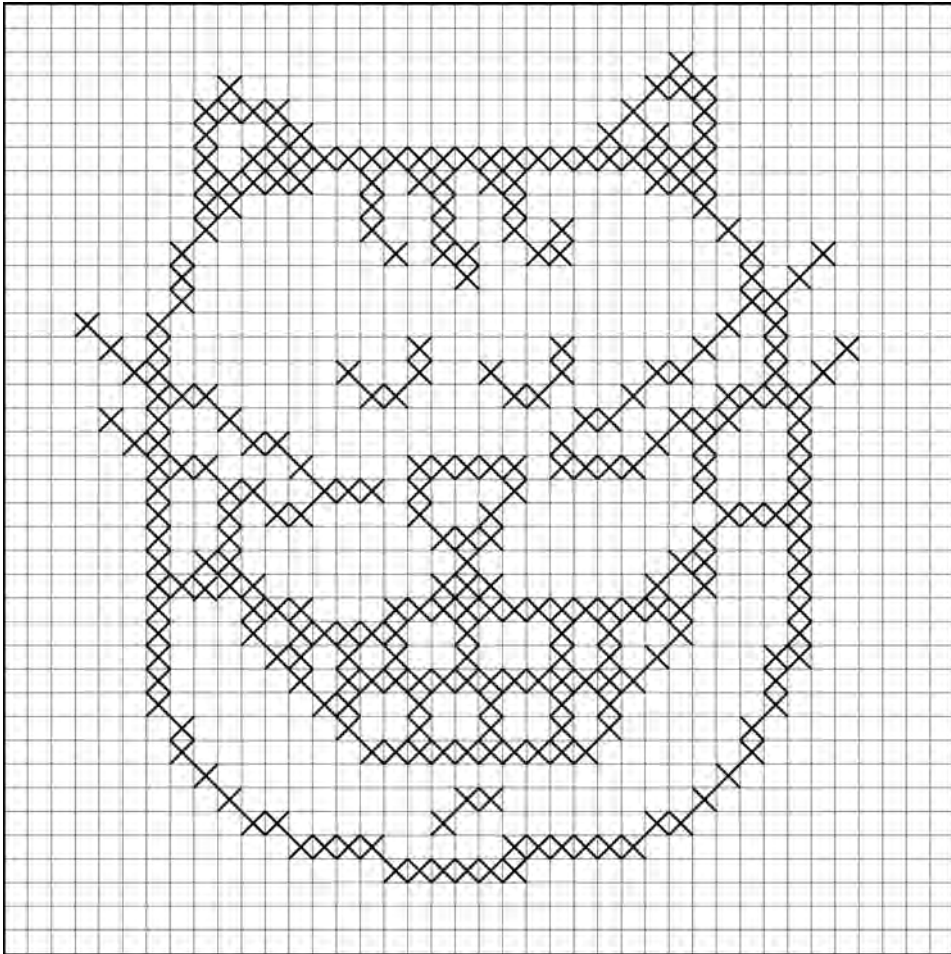


Figure 1

Cheshire Cat Cross-Stitch Pattern. Inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*¹ and *A Thousand Plateaus* (cf. Fig. Computer Einstein)²

¹ Carroll, L. 1865/1993. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions. The ever-grinning Cheshire cat poses philosophical questions and engages Alice in amusing but likewise perplexing conversations.

² See 'Computer Einstein' in Deleuze G. & Guattari F. 1980/1998. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 501.

Refrain – Middling With/In the Event

The smile spreads over the face, as the face fits itself onto the smile.³

Alfred North Whitehead

‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’

‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat.

‘I don’t much care where –’ said Alice.

‘Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’ said the Cat.

‘– so long as I get somewhere,’ Alice added as an explanation.

‘Oh, you’re sure to do that,’ said the Cat, ‘if you only walk long enough.’⁴

Lewis Carroll

We came a long way, considering that this project took a course over several years. It needed time to develop an account that would do justice to the complexity of the venture. When I say complexity, I refer to the work done here that attempts to chart a way of thinking of sound in art via a Deleuze-Guattarian and Whiteheadian framework. We might say, the exploration started with the basic query of what happens when sound happens as aesthetic force. This interest envelops the Spinozan claim that ‘we don’t know what a body can do’ until we begin to experiment, that is, here specifically, practice a perceptual mannerism that advocates a thinking-sound whereby emphasis is placed on awareness. In *Research Into Sonic Art Practices*, I have proposed that awareness is not outside the sonic but within. Also, meaning that what Whitehead terms ‘taking account’ takes places in the encounter with the sonic in immediate reciprocity to what lies without. “Every site is a prehensive interlocking of reciprocal modes in bare

³ Whitehead (1925/1967, p. 71) as paraphrased in Manning, E. & Massumi, B. 2014. *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 24.

⁴ Carroll, L. 1865/1993. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, p. 67.

activity [of coming experience]. [...] In the underlying activity of every perception, there is one two-way movement of reciprocal interfusion already incipiently, actively taking account" (Manning & Massumi 2014, p. 24; see also Whitehead 1925/1967, pp. 67–74).⁵ (This said, it should be more useful to consider a 'pre-hensive interlocking' or a "complex of prehensive unification" to occur along a continuum of varying intensive states between bodies/entities rather than juxtaposing 'inside' and 'outside' ontologies [Whitehead 1925/1967, p. 72].)

In the encounter with a sonic artwork-performance, we find the site and locus for an affirmative ambivalence – a productive, albeit paradoxical condition for the creation of experience that carries with it the potential for dreams and 'new earths' (cf. *What is Philosophy?*). It is there where we might discover what a body can become in the O'Sullivanian sense (pace Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot). In other words, we engage in an aesthetic operation in the participation with sonic artworks that allows for sidestepping what we think we know to access vistas that are nameless and novel. One of the things this project might have shown is that sound or sonic artworks more generally provide us with "a sense of recognition despite a lack of knowing in the strong sense. Knowing is incipient to

⁵ Alongside the Deleuze-Guattarian trajectory, I have been attempting to think with Massumi (and Manning and Shaviro, among others) to develop an understanding of Whitehead's aesthetic ontology and his idiosyncratic take on phenomenology. In *Semblance and Event*, Massumi lays out his Whitehead-Jamesian inspired narrative of a radical empiricism, or strictly speaking, a speculative pragmatism that focuses on the so-called 'bare activity', which he describes as follows: "the experience's just-beginning-to-stir in a more-than-of its own coming activity – is the *relational* dimension of the event's occurring. It is the event under the aspect of its immediate participation in a world of activity larger than its own. This bare activity of coming experience finding itself in the midst must, in some sense of the word, be perceived. Otherwise it would effectively come to nothing. To be a something-doing effectively is to be felt: to register (if only in *effect*). In what way bare activity is effective and felt, even though it lies at the very threshold of experience just coming into itself, is a major question which runs throughout this book" (2011, p. 3; italics in original). Taking Massumi's incentive, I also worried about the question of the something's-doing and tried to outline in this volume the experiential eventness of sonic occurrence within the context of artistic research and creation.

the experience at hand, sometimes known as such, sometimes actively felt but indecipherable in linguistic terms” (Manning 2015b, p. 61). However, this does not mean that of which we cannot speak must pass over in silence.⁶ Experiences at the threshold of sense and nonsense turned out to be modestly clamorous. Here I refer to the sonic art practices that work with vibrations as their medium and to the situatednesses set in motion that incite through the art recipient’s participating resonances in a double sense: to resonate with the work and to create a unique sustain of the experience in the creation of fugacious expressions (e.g., Klatt’s and Königschulte’s ‘derivatives’). The Performative Encounter activity acted as a springboard for middling between the sensible and intelligible, between matter and meaning.

Here also lies the link between Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism and Whitehead’s aesthetics which advocate sensation (affect or depersonalized feeling) over cognition in order to circumvent the bifurcation of nature and promote the notion of *becoming* and *process* as the fundamental fact of reality from which existence arises. At stake for a ‘critical aestheticism’ is to think about “how novelty can emerge from selective repetition, how all the entities of the world are deeply interrelated and mutually dependent even in their separation from one another, and how nonhuman agents, no less than human ones, perform actions and express needs and values” (Shaviro 2014, p. 5). How the latter concern is connected to ours in the context of sound in art is something this work has tried to negotiate.

We sure got somewhere. It lies in the nature of this research that the path we took was not pre-inscribed or prescribed; there was no map or navigation system to announce the best route available to – *there*. I do not suggest that

⁶ “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence” (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Proposition 7). See Biletzki, A. & Matar, A. 2016. Ludwig Wittgenstein. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Fall 2016 Edition. Zalta, E.N. ed. [Online] Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/wittgenstein> [Accessed: 27 May 2018].

the 'there' designates an endpoint. Rather, think it a *ritornello*, a refrain in the Deleuzian sense: "A ritornello? All music, all writing takes that course" (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. 54). Deleuze in his writings (with Guattari) deploys examples like, for instance: "WASP and ORCHID, or HORSE and STIRRUP" (ibid.; all caps in original) to conceptualize the Event and to speak of figurations that hint at *events of becoming* – "the wasp and the orchid; the woman and the turning of the waves; the sound and the fury [...] the process of becoming is not about signification, but about actualising new modes of affective interaction" (Braidotti 2010, p. 307). Then to write, that is, to write philosophically (speculatively) on artistic events is to *retrieve* or create *anew* blocs of sensation that intone a tune – a line of sonic thought – from the encounter with vibrational force. In *Dialogues II*, Deleuze says: "returning to the same example should lead to acceleration, even at the risk of wearying the reader" (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. 54). Taking the risk, I will go back to the same ditty, or instances, of thinking-sound (to the point where speedy returns might be spiraling into the infinite, leaving us "a grin without a cat" [Carroll 1865/1993, p. 69]).⁷ What follows are resonate threads that are cross-stitched to combine to and evoke a temporary image (of thought) (e.g., Fig. 1) understood to reflect on select occurrences and concepts specific to the experimental-experiential milieu of *Sonic Peripheries*. Here is a rundown of propositions that encapsulate the diffractions of the research done in and through sonic art practices and theory.

Thinking-Sound, Middling with/in the Event

Whitehead, Deleuze, Massumi and Manning – we might say they are joint in the rigorous assertion: all is Event! In a lecture on Whitehead (*L'évènement*, *White-*

⁷ "As Lewis Carroll says, it is when the smile is without a cat that man can effectively become cat as soon as he smiles" (Deleuze & Parnet 1987/2007, p. 74). Deleuze, G. & Parnet, C. 1987/2007. *Dialogues II*. New York: Columbia University Press.

head, 1987), Deleuze explains, “There are no things, there are only events, *all is event*. [...] Ultimately, underlying the event, there are vibrations. [...] It must be supposed that each vibration has submultiples, has harmonics ad infinitum, in the pure cosmos” (transcript in Faber 2011, pp. 11–12; emphasis added). In the chapter Aesthetic Encounter, we learned that Deleuze turns to ‘sound’ to elaborate on the genetic power intrinsic to vibrational force (“[t]he cosmos is the many” [Deleuze 1987]). At the heart of the (sonic) event’s occurring lies a *relational* dimension where “the experience’s just-beginning-to-stir in a more-than of its own coming activity” (Massumi 2011, p. 3). This thinking posits creativity and novelty as the gist of all matter, and more so: *pure potentiality to be at the gist of all matter to come as it comes to matter*. This proposition runs throughout this project.

Another vital and related theme is the notion of ‘thinking-sound’ or sonic thinking or also sonic thought. It appears to be the zeitgeist of the latter years to open up “the predominant discourses in sound studies to a philosophy that is process-orientated: an ontology of becoming, not of being, which recognizes entities as events and contingent actualizations of virtual potentiality, as a flow consisting of ‘variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds ... phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or ... of acceleration and rupture’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1988, pp. 3–4 as quoted in Herzogenrath 2017, p. 4). Bernd Herzogenrath in *Sonic Thinking* and Christoph Cox in *Realism Materialism Art*, among other contemporary theorists of sound, both advocate ideas similar to those presented here where sonic art practices enact what I refer to as theory-practice entanglements: a reciprocal connectivity of philosophy and art research. The practice of sonic thinking, as undertaken by this (ad)venture, embraces an artistic and philosophical pragmatism that shows us so-called techniques of existence specific to sonic artworks and situations. Techniques of existence or relation (Massumi and Manning’s term) are intrinsic to an experiential eventness in its coming-to-be and give rise to a form of abstraction

Refrain – Middling With/In the Event

through which we live (more below under 'Semblance'). What sonic art does so well is occupy a middle, that is, summon kinds of mysteries of felt unknowns – *ah!* THAT – at the threshold of sense and making sense. Sonic thought wants to tap into this reservoir of the ineffable and the beautiful (see esp. Part One and Part Two: Research Into Sonic Art Practices).

Thinking-sound is not about sound (echoing Deleuze) but about the concepts the sonic gives rise to, to which the research has attended, elaborated on and sought to give expression to in this thesis. Suffice it to say though, to engage in sonic thought is to patiently attune to the not-yet determined becomings, to intuit-imagine the goings-on of the something's doing: we 'slip in' the eventfulness in art that opens out in the blink of an ear ('kairotic instant') – middling with and in the event. This is not a listening to, but rather a listening-in and -through pure energy forms to where hearing (pure feeling/sensation) and thinking congeal to an experience of the event that breaks open the present and reveals to us a nature unforeheard. We might say, then, that we are always-already middling with/in the event in the thinking-feeling of sonic occurrence. One emblematic example to name here is Radovic's registering of a distinct experience's taking-effect – translated earlier into the analogy of a tickle-and-skull, i.e., sensation that 'tickles the imaginary skull'. Other examples for middling with and in the event were presented along the way (esp. in Aesthetic Encounter of Part One and Parts Three and Four), which show the inextricable link between the aesthetic encounter as the catalyst for a thinking-sound '*par le milieu*' and the eventual pinning down of forces, concreting from a sonorous perplexion into occurrences where the ineffable is felt. This brings us now to the next pair of resonate threads.

Aesthetic Encounter, Semblance

It is difficult to disentangle middling with/in the event from aesthetic encounter; one notion presupposes the other. We might say that in aesthetic encounter, the

art recipient-cum-participant finds the necessary condition for *real* experiences that spring from sonic artwork-performances. It is in the encounter with a vibrational ecology in the broadest sense that sonic occurrence as aesthetic figure takes place. This occasioning comes in many guises and as the cases have demonstrated continued to incite spin-offs; indeed, the Performative Encounter activity welcomed the production of artifacts – that is, invited the participants to give expression to the more-than incipient in aesthetic encounters (e.g., Klatt's paper experiment). Before turning to 'fugacious expression' (more on it below), let me first attend to aesthetic experience *as such*, or say, the moment where the 'Wow!' or the 'ah! THAT' comes to pass in the midst of becoming-soundspace, also in order to consider the notion of semblance once more.

Bear in mind that aesthetic contemplation is not meant to read as the subject's self-enjoyment in the experience of art (though let's just say that 'enjoyment' as in 'play' isn't ruled out – why should it?); rather, there is *in* contemplation a sliding scale of experience that moves between two poles: At one end is the sensuous, nonconscious experience of a 'complex prehensive unification'. At the other end is the content-formation, that is, the apprehended experience complicit with interpretation (and 'entertainment'). Somewhere between lies the experience of *semblance* and beauty. Here semblance has been described time and again as "the manner in which the virtual [i.e., pure potentiality] *actually appears*" or "the uncanny excess of actual objectivity" (2011, pp. 15–16, 65; italics in original) – or, in my extrapolation of Massumi's aesthetics: *the residual thinking-feeling sonic matter as it comes to matter*. To further illustrate the point, we turn to field recording; what we hope to hear is the unfolding of sonic semblance that speaks of the "artfulness in nature" and the "eventfulness in art" – to reiterate the latter (Massumi 2011, p. 82). This is not about identifying sounds, but rather an attending to sonic matter and *the* THAT which exceeds it; a kind of *overflow* of the inexpressible: vibrations, throbs, atmospheres – affective tonalities likely to send shivers down the spine. Decker said he sought out the *inherent*

rhythms in order to compose and improvise live with resonant materiality; ‘paint’ a sonic landscape and ‘sculpt’ an evanescent gestalt that folds-in time and unfolds over time; soundspace in the making. Cross-stitched (made and marked) across its spaciousness, we might touch on temporal strands thick as fog and light as airborne leaves; temporalities in the ma(r)king.

To inquire into the technique of relation of a sonic art practice means to ascertain what it does, what affects it might produce. In this particular case, Decker’s artistic concern lies with the artful fusion of recorded and synthesized sounds with on-site materials live-fed into the mix. This might overturn any idea of true site (as in ‘transporting’ Utö island into the gallery; this is no ‘anthropology of sound’ [Feld 2015]), however, at the same time stays true to site in the sense of composing with the materials off- and on-site. What makes this type of sonic performance intriguing is also its power to undo spatiotemporal certainties: diverse sonic qualities (from ‘mere’ vibrations to concrete sounds of ‘a’ place or thing) intermeshed with the givens, i.e., architecture, weather, mood, etc. – including the participant’s moving about – leads to experiences of unusual expansion or contraction of time and space. Thus, novelty originates in experiential facts that ensue from a vibrant immanence and its inherent poetics, which allows for *a kind of beauty to shine through in the semblance of resonant spaciousness in-act*.

This brings to mind an observation by Steve Goodman (pace Whitehead) which echoes a point Deleuze makes on “the eventfulness of *everything* as being the expression of Becoming” (Faber 2011, p. 11; italics in original) in his lecture on Whitehead. Goodman writes: “From vibes to vibrations, this is a definition that traverses mind and body, subject and object, the living and the nonliving. It is vibration, after all, that connects every separate entity in the cosmos, organic or nonorganic” (Goodman 2010, p. xiv). Deleuze says:

All is vibration. Why is vibration already at the beginning of order?
... So, there is one vibration which itself forms from the 'many',
and in this moment the disjunctive diversity begins to organize
itself in infinite series without limit. [...] The cosmos is the many,
that is to say, chaos. It is the chaos of the cosmos ... The second
stage of the genesis: the series of intrinsic and extrinsic qualities
converge toward the limits. This time there is an idea of conver-
gent series ... it is beautiful. It is a very great beauty. (Deleuze 1987
transcript in Faber 2011, p. 12)

It is fair to suggest that both theorists revere Whitehead's cosmology. The final aspect I want to arrive at relates to the just-said insofar that I seek to pinpoint a provisional manifestation of a *resonant beauty* that occasions in aesthetic encounter, happens in the eventfulness of sonic art more generally. Suffice it to say that I will not open the discussion to a reading of Beauty per se. Rather, the endeavor has been to articulate specifics of a (sonic) affect-emergence that gives way to 'intense experience' in the Whiteheadian sense. It is the process philosopher who defines beauty as "a matter of differences that are conciliated, adapted to one another, and 'interwoven in patterned contrasts' in order to make for 'intense experience'" (*Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 252, 263 as quoted in Shaviro 2014, p. 42); and it is his definition we take to in order to account for an aesthetics that is not of the sublime but the beautiful (esp. in *A Lure for Feeling*). Because it is not, for instance, "*the-truth truths*" ("the universal truth of 'man'"), to quote Massumi (2011, pp. 175, 138; italics in original) that we are after, instead we listen-in and -through the vibrations of vibrations in hope of encountering in sonic artwork-performances the lively amplitude of soundspace: the spectral occurrence of real existence.

Decker, Strang, and Lacy created types of soundspace that quiver at the edge of experience; their art practices present techniques of relation dedicated to

sonic alterity; wrest from the vibrations pulses, frequencies, rhythms and patterns; create ambulatory acoustic spaces in a given architecture or locale. Theirs is the production of a resonant reality that is animate with a “‘life quivering’ in the event of the semblance” (Massumi 2011, p. 178). “‘In an artifact of beautiful semblance, the semblance is all the greater the more alive it seems’. Semblance and aliveness are indissociable” (Benjamin 1919–21/1996, p. 224 as quoted in *ibid.*). Artifice produced in sonic artworks is as much semblance as it is *real*. “Artifice is fully a part of Nature,” says Deleuze, “since each thing, on the immanent plane of Nature, is defined by the arrangements of motions and affects into which it enters, whether these arrangements are artificial or natural” (1988, p. 124). Then somewhere *between* vibration and representation, or matter and meaning, we have a tête-à-tête with beauty when understood to mean “the incipient perception of the vitality of matter [...]. On this view, beauty is ontogenetic force at its newest and most directly knowable in a worlding integrally experienced in the suddenness of a leap into being, contracted into an in-between of qualitative transformation (Massumi 1997, p. 757). Artifice within sonic artwork-performance is never lost; indeed it produces the intensive leverage of the qualitative transformation we apprehend as *aliveness* in sonic semblance – the intensity of a lived moment in art – that which ‘shines’ and might sustain as ‘anarchival trace’ to which we come next.

Fugacious Expression, Anarchival Trace

The term ‘anarchive’ originates with Manning, Massumi, and the research done by the SenseLab collaborative. I cannot claim the concept as the product of this research-creation; the appropriation, however, serves the purpose of amplifying the notion of ‘fugacious expression’ native to *Sonic Peripheries*. In cross-stitching both concepts, I hope to incite a kind of conjunctive resonance (a doubling of creative powers if you like) across all that was said and perhaps will be said or

done in unforeseeable future; to resonate and reason with trajectories yet-to-come that speak of the eventness of sonic occurrence. What Manning proposes is that the anarchivists' "work is not to document but to germinate seeds for new processes" (2017, p. 14). We might say that *fugacious expression* – a neologism to describe the shape-taking from force to form – stands for, one, a *sui generis* token of a process (captured) and, two, a placeholder for "kindl[ing] new work, new techniques, new processes in ways that coincided in some sense with what took place before" (ibid., p. 7). There are resonances across-the-board that might find their source with the basic research question or *lure* at the outset of this project, which proliferates through collaborative effort and art production, diffracts at points of the Performative Encounter activity to resume its force, for instance in Part Three: The Event/s and the offshoot known as *How is Nature*.

In this thesis, I described how participation yields a spectacle of materialized expression that opens onto the mysteries of felt unknowns. The concern has been with how to account for experiences that are the product of sonic artwork-performances; how to create an opening for gallery visitors to probe and auscultate sonic semblance. Here, the Performative Encounter activity acted as a technique for abstracting experiences into actualizations in the form of writings, drawings, audiovisual recordings, or other types of empirical thinkings that come to expression. The concern *still is* with the *mysteries underway* and how they continue to 'infect' and 'permeate' the givens with a sense of import or *value* in the Whiteheadian sense. Value is intrinsic to existence. "Everything has some value for itself, for others, and for the whole," writes Whitehead (1938/1968, p. 111). Therefore, we might say fugacious expression encapsulates a kind 'surplus-value' which inheres in the artifact, but just as much exceeds it. It is the excess energy of middling with and in the event of art (see esp. Königshulte's drawing on p. 146).

Manning defines the anarchivists as both a "manner of becoming that matters" and a "*repertory of traces of events*" (2017, p. 12; italics in original). This

Refrain – Middling With/In the Event

doesn't make the archive (and documentation as such) obsolete, but takes it as a hub through which to pass (on the Research Blog and documentation, see p. 139n5). We might say, we crossed the archival arch to uptake *an*archival traces that lay dormant, ready to boom – traversing Experiments 1 and 2 of Part Three and Four respectively – diffracting unlimited. “This is the politics of the anarchive, that it move the adventure of the event toward its future potential. The politics of the anarchive are always politics of care for the event” (ibid., p. 16). With this in view, we continue to practice a perceptual mannerism that works through future theory-practice entanglements in art and philosophy, and the sonic arts more specifically (see Postscript). Always in sight (and earshot) of the event and with care for the event at the heart of sonic occurrence.

I shall close, then, with the cry ‘All is Event!’ in memory of Whitehead and Deleuze and anyone and anything else who and whatever keeps up the wonder.

Postscript

Postscript

'What a curious feeling!' repeats the carto-mytho-grapher (after Alice). And so it is to be continued: she takes a leap down the crater-crevice and grins like a Cheshire cat.



Cinders at Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho ¹

NOTES (A FABULATION)

¹ Binh Dahn, *North Crater Flow Trail at Craters of the Moon (#1)*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.* Daguerreotype framed 10 3/4 x 12 1/2 inches (plate 6.5 x 8.5 inches). I noticed Dahn's work when I did some research on daguerreotypes. This nascent interest of mine arose from the stay at Catwalk Artist Residency during which I explored the notion of nature (or nature-mattering) by means of a 'perceptual mannerism' (pp. 185-187), which led to the work in progress *How is Nature* (see pp. 215-228) and subsequently to the theoretical/rhizomatic extension known here as Part 4 – How Nature Does. Why

the fascination with daguerreotypes in general and Danh's landscapes in particular (see <https://n.pr/2seH0Ti> [accessed: 27 May 2018]; <https://bit.ly/2q0ZiIN> [accessed: 27 May 2018])? Without going into a full-fledged discussion, I will say this much: I feel drawn to, or rather *get drawn into* a seemingly timeless sublime. This is elsewhere in the thesis referred to as semblance, punctum or *beauty*. Maybe one could even speak of a kind of 'beatitude of the image', that is, the shimmering manifestation of an appearance by way of metallic elements and chemical processes: an alchemical resonance, as it were. Not just a depiction of the land (above, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve in Idaho, <http://bit.ly/2blQcyP> [accessed: 27 May 2018]) – but a merging with the land; a becoming-cinder, a becoming-earth, a becoming-mythical-animal (e.g., the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* or the carto-mytho-grapher who grins as she leaps into the unknown, hoping for the next adventure to unfold). My interest in early photography was triggered by way of commentary on my audiovisual piece *How is Nature* – i.e., the composite of fifty-one 4 x 2 1/4 inches cards (graphite analog-digital drawings on paper, see Experiment 2) – namely, that the cards, both, seen as a whole or individually, hold a spectral quality similar to that of a daguerreotype. "Art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved," write Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*.[†] What survives vibrates at the edge of the infinite informing that which turns finite. 'It happens that ...' (see p. 66) – and it happens ... undulates between a time of *aion* and a time of *kairos* (the opportune moment when the it-happens-that comes to pass). The point I want to make near the end of this (ad)venture is that I seem to have come full circle – back to 'a' beginning, but! always *au milieu* (to say it with Deleuze-Guattari). I want to pick up where I left off; turning my attention anew to the question of Nature's clamor and whispers – wondering about Thoreau's Wild, the American picturesque,[‡] sound-in and out-of-itself,[§] art research and writing-fabulation, *Immanence: A Life*^{**} and more. Binh Danh's beautiful daguerreotype acts as a reminder, my magic token: within it lies the crater-crevice; the journey continues from 'erewhon'^{††} ...

* Visit <http://binhdanh.com>

[†] Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1991/1994. *What Is Philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University, p. 163.

[‡] See also Conron, J. 2010. *American Picturesque*. University Park: Penn State Press.

[§] Cf. Kim-Cohen, S. 2009. *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*. New York: Continuum.

^{**} Deleuze, G. 2001. *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*. New York: Urzone Books, pp. 25–33.

^{††} "A no-place and a no-time. An 'erewhon' when and where other things become possible" (O'Sullivan, n.p.). See O'Sullivan, S. 2014. Art Practice as Fictioning (or, myth-science). *diakron*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.diakron.dk/issues/effects/art-practice-as-fictioning-or-myth-science> [Accessed: 27 May 2018].

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Summary

The research explores *what* and *how* sound *does* in certain art practices; it lends an ear to so-called ‘material-discursive’ events that come into expression as in/determined sonic occurrences through aesthetic practices. Likewise, the research done in and through the arts attunes to the vibrational immanence that underlies all experience. This view considers the sonic as a vibrational force and an affective, affirmative, albeit paradoxical event: oscillating between matter and matter mattering, intuited as intensive force and apprehended as ‘aesthetic figure’ through sensation. This ambiguity or sense of betweenness is felt throughout the thesis and lies at the heart of the inquiry.

The research traces this *sense* of the between through curated exhibition-events featuring three distinct sonic art practices and one additional offshoot case. The experimental-performative nature of the artistic events under discussion create experiences that are made up of matter and (material-discursive) meaning that give rise to *sonic occurrences* that are specific to their taking-shape in a given circumstance. This taking-shape occurs in and through sonic practices qua human and nonhuman agency; hence, the research investigates notions of nature-culture and nonhuman-human relations through the affects/effects of sound’s happening.

The questions this research asks follow from the above. How does a sonic artwork-performance bring about sensations that leave experiential traces that we neither know nor recognize as we encounter the vibrational flux – the virtual or *void* – from which im/material expression arises? How do the material condition of a sonic artwork-performance (the content) and the ensuing sensation (the form of expression) co-emerge, are produced, in one another? What is the

role of the curator and the artist? What is the part of the audience? While doing the research, other questions followed that address the specifics of each case study and framed the conditions and procedures for gathering empirical and conceptual materials. However, the basic concern that informs every part of the research process is *in wonder of* what happens when sound happens as an aesthetic force. The emphasis of each query lies on the active occasion, the radical empiricism, the moment of encounter, *how* the sonic event comes to pass as aesthetic force creating specific semblances, resonances, or types of 'spaciousness *in-act*.'

The thesis has three main objectives. Firstly, it describes sonic art practice as experimental research and makes a case for curating such practices as a form of research; it positions this type of research as a contribution to new forms of knowledge and provides a resource for future research-creations and (reform of) evaluation practices. Secondly, it brings together philosophy and art practice to elaborate a genuine manner of working with sonic matter (mattering); it conceptualizes and materializes novel ways of thinking, and creates a case for writing itself as practice; that is, it seeks to practice what it theorizes. Thirdly, it advocates a certain transformation of self that lets us side-step ourselves, intervene and invent possible worlds or future fabulations as the offshoot case has shown through the guise of the 'carto-mytho-grapher'. Practicing a process-oriented exploration complexifies as it advances; it creates resonances between theory and practice, between the audience and sonic artworks, between the written thesis – inclusive of presented artifacts – and the reader. It thus wants *not* to reduce but foster awareness of the ongoing complexity of life.

The research employs a transdisciplinary methodology to accommodate the above with the aim of creating research strategies that allow for the encounter with unknown unknowns (what we don't know we don't know) and new means for the unlocking of what possibly can be known from the indecipherable (make unknowns 'palpable' through invention – invention meant on the part of the

participant alongside the sonic artwork-performance). It forges a research practice that shows affinity with artistic research and speculative philosophy, thus positioning the thesis in both spectrums. It draws from various philosophical resources, chiefly Deleuze and Whitehead, and engages with wider debates on sonic materialism, speculative pragmatism, and non-representational methodologies. It weaves together what derives from the research exploration: artifacts, strange sensations, diverse meanings, and interpretations to engender the thesis' own *poetics* and native concepts.

There is a kinship between this type of research and the methodologies known to the humanities and social sciences, i.e., (post)phenomenological, ethnographic, hermeneutic, and heuristic approaches. This artistic-cum-qualitative research develops bespoke methods adequate to the research aims above-introduced, such as the 'Performative Encounter activity' that tends to the *atmospheric* – i.e., the hard-to-grasp affective tones or 'moods' produced by sonic acts – and provide the research participants (audience) with the tools to probe and auscultate the sonic; it makes use of questionnaires and participant interviews. The research documentation includes photo, video, and audio materials, and various other (reproductions of) artifacts archived online, i.e., in the form of a research journal that also contains quotations, freewriting, correspondences, articulations of ideas, etc. gathered during the research for reference and uptake of future *anarchiving*. 'Anarchiving' is understood here as an attunement to what escapes the archive but nonetheless affects the event's capacity to activate potentials of variant (sonic) occurrences yet to come. The 'anarchive' is a concept coined by Erin Manning and the SenseLab collective, a so-called 'laboratory for thought in motion' which explores the active passage between research and creation.

The thesis is structured in four parts – with respective chapters that pertain to the specifics of that part – following a tripartite Introduction that lays out the incentive behind and objectives of the research. This Introduction

provides the reader with 'a roadmap towards sonic occurrence', i.e., it gives an overview of each chapter and informs about the online addendum as part of the thesis. Part One considers the concept of middling in and with the event of sound's occasioning, and explores the encounter with the sonic by drawing on case examples; its gist lies in the experience of 'the between', living the relation connecting one experience to the next, one occurrence to another. Part Two looks critically and 'po-ethically' at what research into sonic art practices might mean and what it can do. It describes the *Sonic Peripheries* (SP) artistic series – SP#5 (David Strang), SP#6 (Shawn Decker), and SP#7 (Stephen Lacy) – and discusses the SP Performative Encounter activity in the chapter under the same name. Part Three enacts what the research does through theory-practice entanglements: it wants to push the thesis to the *unlimit*, i.e., create fabulatory accounts that speak of middling with/in the event, and *reinvoke* the sense of betweenness that comes to matter; it ties a conceptual knot with Manning et al.'s 'anarchive'. Part Four presents the offshoot case, the philosophically inspired 'poesis'/discussion on 'kairos' and its (aesthetic) experiment: *How is Nature; An Event. Image. Writing. Works in progress (process)*. The chapter titled 'Refrain: Middling With/In the Event' (not a final part in a strict sense) recapitulates aspects of the research and 'cross-stitches' the conceptual threads, as to create a closing, albeit an open image of thought. The Postscript, a final note or fabulation, leaves us 'a grin without a carto-mytho-grapher' (meant as a nod towards *Alice in Wonderland* and towards 'haecceity', the *thisness* of the Event as relations of movement and rest, oscillation and speed, in short, sonic occurrence).

In alignment with the research questions (as point of entry to the inquiry) and the objectives above, the research findings are as follows. The curated art events produce original sonic performances and artworks; also, and essential to this type of research-creation, the one-off experimental feature of these events present the condition for the curator-led and audience-based exploration of experiences through aesthetic encounters. This approach allowed individuals to

explore sound's ambiguity in a playful and heuristic manner – inviting new insights into sound's happening as a material, conceptual and '(al)luring' phenomenon. This research path incited new knowledge – embodied, non-conceptual knowings that in turn provoked materialized occurrences of so-called 'fugacious expression' of the sonic. The latter neologism is a placeholder for when matter comes to matter, when the 'more-than' of vibrational force – as a *specific* thisness of the event – translates into physical shape (as individuation or actualization of the more-than). The performative power of the productive encounter with and disclosure of the unknown/'unforeheard' lures the thinking towards a critical perspective of what is and what might become.

This reflective yet unfinished thinking together with the research derivatives create a ripple effect for future thought in motion that surpasses the research archive and moves towards sound's anarchiving – deploying writing practice. The relevance of this outcome lies in the process of moving sonic thinking not to an endpoint but to keep the thinking sidling along a *feeling-understanding* continuum. Whitehead's philosophy of 'pure feeling' informs the research just as the written part of this thesis informs the reader that pure feeling and understanding are not opposing ends, thus bringing into question an affect-reason dichotomy. This stance can also be felt throughout the offshoot case. The research thus wants to advocate a nuanced relationship to knowledge – in the arts and sciences more generally.

The sonic's distinct being, or rather *becoming* as always already resounding the between, brings forth concepts which offer fresh perspectives for/on philosophical aesthetics and new materialism(s). The concepts (and provisional neologisms) that have developed from the research – 'middling with/in the event', 'fugacious expression', 'perceptual mannerism', among others – speak distinctively of the event's more-than human soundings that render theory-practice entanglements meaningful. That is, they make discrete, felt, and understood what is otherwise in flux. This research thus invented methods to encounter

the ineffable as much as it seeks to problematize methodologies that aim to objectify the ineffable (and its effects). That said, the thesis brings writing and sonic practice together such that writing itself becomes a practice (i.e., enacts a 'perceptual mannerism'). The written parts of the thesis as scientific '(ad)venture' presents an open-endedness that aspires to entice the critical reader into thinking/feeling the ambiguity of sound's occurrence; it upholds an ethico-aesthetics that is never applied without rigor. The thesis thus proposes a way: an alternative reasoning through which to consider what research-creation can mean and what it can mean to do, how theory informs practice and how practice speaks back to theory and vice versa.

The research deliberately *sounds across* art research, sound studies, and philosophy to trigger sympathetic resonances and amplify the ethos the written project engenders. *Sonic Peripheries: Middling With/in the Event* is offered as a contribution to the fields of knowledge across these disciplines.

Samenvatting

In dit proefschrift wordt onderzocht *wat* en *hoe* geluid *werkt* in bepaalde kunstpraktijken; het richt zich op zogenaamde “materieel-discursieve” en (on)bepaalde auditieve gebeurtenissen in esthetische praktijken. Tegelijkertijd weerklinkt in dit onderzoek in en door de kunst de immanente vibratie die ten grondslag ligt aan elke ervaring. Dit houdt in dat het auditieve als vibratie en als een affectief, affirmatief maar tevens paradoxaal gebeuren moet worden beschouwd, zich bewegend tussen materie en betekenis, een intensieve kracht die zintuiglijk begrepen kan worden als een esthetisch figuur. Deze ambiguïteit, of het idee van “een tussenin”, doortrekt het hele proefschrift en vormt het hart van dit onderzoek.

Het proefschrift herkent dit idee van “een tussenin” in de curatie van drie afzonderlijke geluidskunsttentoonstellingen en nog een extra *case study*. De experimenteel-performatieve aard van deze artistieke manifestaties leidt tot ervaringen die concreet (materieel) zijn en betekenis genereren, daarmee unieke en singuliere auditieve gebeurtenissen teweegbrengend; dit gebeurt in en door auditieve praktijken waarin menselijke en niet-menselijke actoren een rol spelen. Daarmee is dit proefschrift, steunend op de affecten en effecten van geluid, tevens een onderzoek naar de relaties tussen natuur en cultuur en tussen mens en niet-mens.

Uit het bovenstaande kunnen de volgende concrete onderzoeksvragen worden gedestilleerd: hoe leiden de constant in beweging zijnde vibraties van een geluidskunstwerk of uitvoering tot ervaringen die we (nog) niet kennen of herkennen – het virtuele of een *leegte* – van waaruit een (im)materiele expressie kan ontstaan? Hoe vallen de vorm van de inhoud (de materiele voorwaarde van

een geluidskunstwerk of uitvoering) en de vorm van expressie (het optreden van een gevoel) samen of hoe is de een in de ander werkzaam? Wat is hierbij de rol van de curator of de kunstenaar? En wat is het aandeel van het publiek? Gedurende het onderzoek kwamen andere vragen op die meer betrekking hadden op elke *case study* afzonderlijk en ingingen op de voorwaarden en procedures aangaande het verzamelen van empirisch en conceptueel materiaal. Maar het belangrijkste dat het hele onderzoeksproject doortrekt is een zekere *verbazing* over wat er plaatsvindt als geluid als esthetische kracht wordt ingezet. In elke vraag ligt de nadruk op het actieve, het radicaal empirische, de ontmoeting, op *hoe* een auditief gebeuren zich als esthetische kracht kan manifesteren en daarmee specifieke vormen, resonanties, en een “actieve ruimtelijkheid” kan creëren.

Het proefschrift heeft drie hoofddoelen. Ten eerste beschrijft het geluidskunst, en het beheren en organiseren daarvan, als een experimentele vorm van onderzoek in zichzelf; het presenteert dit type onderzoek als een bijdrage tot nieuwe kennisvormen en vormt een aanzet tot de ontwikkeling van onderzoek-creatie en (een herziening van) het evalueren daarvan. Ten tweede verbindt dit onderzoek filosofie en kunst om met auditief (betekenisvol) materiaal om te gaan; het conceptualiseert en materialiseert nieuwe denkbewegingen en presenteert het schrijven zelf als een praktijk. Met andere woorden, het doet een poging te praktiseren wat het theoretisch verwoordt. Ten derde bepleit deze dissertatie een zekere transformatie van “het zelf” door het op een zijspoor te plaatsen om daardoor nieuwe werelden of verhalen te ontdekken (zie hiervoor ook de extra case study met betrekking tot de “carto-mytho-graaf”). Kortom, het praktiseren van een procesmatige exploratie wordt complexer naarmate men verder gaat; het creëert resonanties tussen theorie en praktijk, tussen geluidskunst en publiek, tussen het geschreven werk (inclusief de artefacten) en de lezer. En het is niet de bedoeling deze complexiteit te reduceren, maar juist om er meer bewust van te worden.

Het onderzoek kent een transdisciplinaire methodiek om het bovenstaande mogelijk te maken; deze methodiek heeft als doel onderzoeksstrategieën te ontwerpen die een ontmoeting mogelijk maken met “unknown unknowns” (dat waarvan we niet weten dat we het niet weten) en nieuwe wegen te ontsluiten voor wat mogelijkwerwijs geleerd kan worden van het onontcijferbare (het door middel van inventies tastbaar maken van “unknowns” – inventies van het publiek en van geluidskunst zelf). De dissertatie heeft affiniteit met artistiek onderzoek en speculatieve filosofie, en positioneert zich in beide velden. Het steunt op verscheidene filosofische bronnen (voornamelijk Deleuze en Whitehead) en engageert zich met grotere debatten aangaande “sonic materialism”, speculatief pragmatisme, en niet-representeerbare methodologie. Wat voorkomt uit deze exploratie – artefacten, vreemde gevoelens, een verscheidenheid aan betekenissen en interpretaties – wordt met elkaar in verband gebracht om zodoende een eigen poëtica en een reeks nieuwe concepten naar voren te brengen.

Er is een verwantschap tussen dit type onderzoek en de methodieken die men hanteert in de geestes- en sociale wetenschappen (bijvoorbeeld (post-)fenomenologie, etnografie, hermeneutiek en heuristiek). Dit artistiek-kwalitatief onderzoek (her)ontwikkelt deze methodes zodanig dat ze de bovengenoemde doelstellingen dienen: zie bijvoorbeeld de “Performative Encounter activity” die tendeert naar het atmosferische, d.w.z. de moeilijk te vatten affectieve tonaliteit of stemming eigen aan geluidskunst, alsmede het aanreiken van middelen aan het publiek die aanzetten tot auditief onderzoek. Tevens wordt er gebruik gemaakt van enquêtes en interviews. De documentatie bestaat uit foto, video en audio materiaal, alsmede (reproducties van) artefacten opgeslagen in een online archief, dat bestaat uit een logboek met citaten, associatieve opmerkingen, correspondenties, articulatie van ideeën, etc. Dit materiaal is tijdens het onderzoek verzameld als referentiekader of voor een “anarchiving” in de toekomst. (“Anarchiving” is oog en oor hebben voor dat wat aan het archiveren ontsnapt maar desalniettemin een gebeurtenis beïnvloedt en potentieel toekomstige

(auditieve) gebeurtenissen activeert. Het “anarchive” is een concept ontwikkeld door Erin Manning en het SenseLab collectief, een “laboratorium voor denken in beweging” dat een actieve verbinding tot stand probeert te brengen tussen onderzoek en creatie).

De dissertatie kent vier delen, onderverdeeld in hoofdstukken, en een introductie waarin de aanzet en doelstellingen van het onderzoek uiteen worden gezet. Deze introductie voorziet de lezer van een “roadmap” naar het auditieve en bevat een overzicht van elk hoofdstuk alsmede het online materiaal. Deel 1 behandelt het concept “middling in and with the event of sound's occasioning” en onderzoekt de ontmoeting met het auditieve via een aantal case studies. Kernpunt is de ervaring van “het tussenin” – de relatie (be)leven door de ene ervaring of gebeurtenis met een andere te verbinden. Deel 2 gaat kritisch en “po-ethisch” in op wat onderzoek in en naar geluidskunst zou kunnen betekenen en wat het kan bijdragen aan reeds bestaande kennis. Hier worden ook de artistieke series getiteld *Sonic Peripheries* (SP) - SP#5 (David Strang), SP#6 (Shawn Decker) en SP#7 (Stephen Lacy) – en de SP “Performative Encounter activity” beschreven. Deel 3 brengt in praktijk wat het onderzoek doet met de verstrengelingen tussen theorie en praktijk: het brengt de dissertatie tot een *niet-grens*. Hier worden fantasierijke verhalen gecreëerd aangaande “middling with/in the event” en een betekenisvol “tussenin”. Daarnaast wordt hier een verbinding gelegd met het “anarchief” van Manning e.a. In deel 4 wordt de extra case study gepresenteerd, een filosofisch geïnspireerde “poësis”/discussie over “kairos” en het (esthetische) experiment: *How is Nature; An Event. Image. Writing. Works in progress (process)*. Het hoofdstuk getiteld “Refrain: Middling With/In the Event” (strikt genomen niet het laatste deel) herneemt bepaalde aspecten uit het onderzoek en verknoopt, ter afsluiting hoewel met een open karakter, een aantal conceptuele draden. Het nawoord, een eindnoot of vertelling, bevat een “glimlach zonder een carto-mytho-graaf” – een verwijzing naar *Alice in Wonderland* en naar het begrip

“heccéité”, de “ditheid” van een gebeurtenis beschouwd als een relatie tussen beweging en rust, oscillatie en snelheid, ofwel een auditief gebeuren.

Aansluitend op de onderzoeksvragen die als uitgangspunt van dit onderzoek dienden alsmede de hierboven geformuleerde doelstellingen, kunnen de uitkomsten als volgt worden samengevat. Het curatorschap heeft geleid tot originele geluidskunst en optredens; het eenmalige experimentele karakter van deze gebeurtenissen, mogelijk gemaakt door dit curatorschap en van essentieel belang voor dit type onderzoek-creatie, schiep voor het publiek de voorwaarde voor het ontdekken van ervaringen via esthetische ontmoetingen; het maakte mogelijk dat de ambiguïteit van geluid in een speelse en heuristische manier kon worden ontdekt, daarmee nieuwe inzichten verschaffend aangaande het zich voordoen van geluid als een materieel, conceptueel en verleidelijk fenomeen. Als zodanig heeft dit onderzoek geleid tot nieuwe, belichaamde en niet-conceptuele kennis die op haar beurt de totstandkoming van een zogenaamde “vluchtige expressie” (“fugacious expression”) van het auditieve uitlokte. Dit neologisme is een aanduiding van “matter that comes to matter” (materie die er toe doet), waarbij het “meer dan” van een vibratie – een specifieke “ditheid” van een gebeurtenis – zich fysiek vertaalt (een individuatie of actualisering van zo’n “meer dan”). De performatieve kracht van de productieve ontmoeting met en ontsluiting van het onbekende en ongehoorde lokt het denken richting een kritisch perspectief van dat wat is en dat wat mogelijk zou zijn.

Het reflectieve maar onvoltooide denken wat uit dit proefschrift naar boven komt, creëert zo een paar bescheiden rimpelingen die de aanzet kunnen vormen voor een toekomstig, open denken dat voorbijgaat aan het archiveren en zich beweegt richting het anarchiveren. Belangrijk is dat dit denken in en door geluid niet tot een eindpunt leidt maar zich ergens in het continuüm tussen gevoel en verstand blijft bewegen. Geïnspireerd op Whitehead’s filosofie van “het pure gevoel” wordt in het geschreven gedeelte gesteld dat puur gevoel en ratio geen opposities zijn, net zomin als de vermeende affect-verstand dichotomie.

(Deze positie wordt nader toegelicht in de extra case study). Het onderzoek bepleit daarmee tevens een genuanceerde relatie met betrekking tot kennis, zowel in de kunsten als ook in de wetenschappen.

De bijzondere zijnsvorm van geluid, of, beter gezegd, het zijn *worden* als een immer weerklinken van “het tussenin”, heeft geleid tot de ontwikkeling van concepten (en voorlopige neologismen) die een nieuw perspectief bieden op de filosofische esthetica en het nieuwe materialisme. Deze concepten – “middling with/in the event”, “fugacious expression”, “perceptual mannerism”, etc. – geven ieder op hun eigen wijze uitdrukking aan het auditieve gebeuren-voorbij-het-menselijke, en legitimeren tevens de verstrengeling tussen theorie en praktijk; zij maken een voelen en begrijpen mogelijk van iets wat in beweging is. Daarom werd ook gezocht naar methoden om het ongrijpbare te ontmoeten, daarmee tegelijkertijd methodologieën kritiserend die dat ongrijpbare (en de effecten ervan) trachten te objectiveren. De dissertatie brengt het schrijven en de auditieve praktijk, en maakt het schrijven zelf tot een praktijk (dat wil zeggen dat het een “perceptual mannerism” wordt). Het geschreven deel kan opgevat worden als een wetenschappelijk avontuur en probeert een openheid te presenteren die de kritische lezer kan verleiden tot een denken-voelen van de ambigue positie van geluid; het is daarmee een vorm van ethische esthetica die *een weg* voorstelt: een alternatieve vorm van denken die nagaat wat onderzoek-creatie betekent en mogelijk kan doen – hoe theorie de praktijk beïnvloedt en hoe de praktijk de theorie antwoordt.

Sonic Peripheries: Middling With/in the Event klinkt met opzet *voorbij* de kennisdomeinen van artistiek onderzoek, sound studies, en filosofie om aldus aanverwante resonanties op te wekken en de *ethos* die het geschreven deel oproept te versterken.

Biography

Petra Klusmeyer (born 1968 in Bremen, Germany) has been an art practitioner since the 1990s – initially in the visual arts, then shifting focus on exploring sound as medium and the sonic in philosophy. She holds a researcher position of Sound Studies at the University of the Arts Bremen where she teaches studio-based and theory-led courses and acts as supervisor to master students in the Faculty of Art and Design. She has an MFA in Fine Arts (1999) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and researched sounding art at the University of East London (2010–2011), University College Dublin (2011–2013), and Utrecht University (2013–2018). Under the guidance of Prof. dr. Marcel Cobussen and Dr. Sher Doruff, she has concluded her doctoral research on sound and aesthetics in the context of artistic research and philosophy (as practice) at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) of Leiden University.

Her artworks have been internationally performed and exhibited at ZKM Karlsruhe; Podewil, Berlin; Trampoline, Tokyo; Weserburg, Bremen; Canard Gallery Central, Mexico City; Galerie Herold, Bremen; Guangxi Arts, Nanning; GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen; among others.

She has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including several GEDOK grants, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Stipend, the School of The Art Institute of Chicago Trustee Scholarship, and the John Quincy Adams Fellowship.

Her sound works are published on Staalplaat, Boxmedia, Experimental Sound Studio Chicago and her independent label.

Petra Klusmeyer resided in the U.S. between 1988 and 2001; currently, she lives in Bremen.