

**SOUND RECEIVED:  
Immersion, Listening and Anthrophony**

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## Contents

### Abstract

### Introduction

Literature Review 21

Methodology 37

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<b>Part One</b>	<b>Exploration</b>	
<b>Chapter One:</b>	<b>Immersion</b>	<b>45</b>
	Consequential Beginnings	50
	Hidden Experience (Non-perfect)	53
	Red Herrings	58
	Re-imagining the (Immersive) Past	60
	Acts of Immersion	66
<b>Chapter Two:</b>	<b>Listening – The Nature of Field Recording</b>	<b>70</b>
	Displacement of Sound	73
	(Non) Peaceful Meditation	82
	Memories of Sound	85
	Altered Perceptions in Immersive Spaces	94
	The Phenomenological Field	99
	Immersion in the Ear	103
<b>Chapter Three:</b>	<b>(In Between) Spaces: Towards my Anthrophony</b>	<b>105</b>
	Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces	107
	Transformation	118
	Doorframes and Sheds	123
	Routine Everyday Sonorous Spaces	128

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<b>Part Two</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	
<b>Chapter Four:</b>	<b>Electrification of an Environment</b>	<b>130</b>
	Immersion as Physical – Identifiable Sounds	134
	Immersion as Background – Recycled Pylons	142
	Immersion as Foreground – Imperfection	146
	Immersion Not heard	148
<b>Chapter Five:</b>	<b>Sonic Tracks – My Anthrophony</b>	<b>150</b>
	Terminal	153
	Reflective Immersion	156
	Inaudible/Sensing Immersion	160
	Red Rocks	162
	Expanding Echo	167

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	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>168</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>177</b>



## **Appendices**

Appendix One:	Interviews Transcripts	192
Appendix Two:	Sound Works	244
Appendix Three:	List of Illustrations	245
Appendix Four:	Glossary	271
Appendix Five:	Auditory Words and Soundscape Terms	277
Appendix Six:	Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences	282
Appendix Seven:	List of Technical Equipment with Images	287
Appendix Eight:	Conference Paper, Exhibitions and Forum.	300

## **Abstract**

Immerse yourself in a world of sound and approximations. This practice-led research is concerned with critically examining the roots and contemporary significance of immersion within sonic art and everyday life. This body of work has resulted from research into key issues repositioning the term immersion outside the normal parameters of art investigating the intertwining relationship between immersion, listening and anthrophony. The research has been informed by the working methods of selected contemporary artists using field recordings within various interior environments. Rigorous listening to works has also influenced and driven this research forward to search for definitions of immersion. The author analyses the sonic works produced by reflecting on his own practice, with the thesis focused on the works produced rather than any alternative historical notion of sonic arts. The thesis critically examines a collection of works perceived as immersive in nature and secondly explores the interaction with personal sonorous environments.

This thesis presents a series of informative and illuminating original interviews that have reinforced expanded elements of immersion presented in the examination of the practice-led aspects of the work. These primary source interviews give a wide spectrum of opinions and experiences enabling the term and practices of immersion to be viewed outside the commonly viewed perceptions and practices that immersion evokes with artists', audiences and individuals. Thirteen interviews with international artists', curators and contemporary writers reflect on their personal experiences of immersion in art and critical methodological influences and practices. The interviews also discuss the contested adjectives that the term immersion evokes and the wider reaching impacts of the term beyond popular usages of the term. These essential interviewees include: Alan Dunn (multidisciplinary artist), BJ Nilsen (field recordist and sound artist), Budhaditya Chattopadhyay (researcher and sound artist), Chris Watson (field recordist and artist), Christine Sun Kim (sound artist), Daniela Cascella (curator, researcher and contemporary writer), David Hendy (researcher and contemporary writer), Francisco Lopez (sound artist), Hildegard Westerkamp (composer and sound ecologist), Markus Soukup (film and sound artist) Matthew Herbert (electronic musician), Ross Dalziel (Local Curator) and Sebastiane Hegarty (visual and sound artist). This primary research brings together, for the first time, a broad spectrum of experiences, opinions and views on immersion in sonic art and everyday life and re-considers the challenges presented when examining this theme.

An accompanying collection of artistic recordings using three distinct methods is also presented as an integrated part of the thesis. First, using mobile phones to record the author's everyday travels, conversations and movements. Secondly, it utilises the habituated environments and the in/significance of each reverberation by presenting recordings using delicate contact microphones. The third method utilises the phenomenological and abstract memories from the author's autobiographical past, reconstructing the distant but real recollections. These methods illuminate the author's immersive resonating capsule of isolated existence including and portraying the fragmented and often distorted everyday sonorous experience.

Sound Received: Immersion, Listening and Anthrophony generates alternative and renewed thinking on immersion, re-definitions illuminating historical moments that have shaped much of the research. The unique collection of interviews and sonic recordings contributes to the expanding area of sonic discourse and offers a unique contribution to the field.

## **Keywords**

Sound Immersion – Listening – Anthrophony – Environments – Perception.

## **Introduction**

Immersion is one of the key words of the late twentieth century. Bass is immersive, echoes are immersive, noise is immersive.  
(Toop 1995 p. 273)

Sound exists in everyday life, from perceived mundane tasks such as travelling to and from work to simply relaxing. We do not choose to hear sound; sound is ever present and comes to us from every possible angle. The findings in this thesis establish innovative ideas that will support further research into immersion in sonic arts and everyday life. This thesis aims to investigate and establish how immersion is a vital element in everyday life, in contemporary culture and throughout the sonic arts. This is explored through three key elements that run through the thesis: immersion, listening and anthrophony. I examine immersion by focusing on how the term is perceived and what impact immersion has had on humans. The practice-led work that accompanies this thesis challenges immersion by listening to the everyday routines that surround and engulf human existence. In addition, the way we think about noise in our everyday lives is explored through and illuminates the original findings of the first three chapters. The anthrophony, memories and experiences of the author are captured from various environments in order to convey and further expand the meaning of the term immersion. In order to better understand immersion in everyday life I have utilised my own personal environments to illustrate the findings and further expand the future possibilities in this subject.

## **Immersion**

The term immersion has been written about in a rather piecemeal fashion within sonic art literature and has been predominantly explored in terms of sonic works dating from the past thirty-five years, but with limited definition or depth. With audio software and listening technology becoming more sophisticated, particularly in the past thirty-five year timeframe, immersion in art and everyday life emerges from the

backdrop of sonic arts to the forefront. In the following chapters, the reader will encounter examples of sound art within immersive environments with my own unique recordings and existing works demonstrating the artist's unique relationship to the practice of sonic arts and how this experience becomes a key component of their work. Audiences to the accompanying sonic works (See Appendix Two) will discover that whilst they listen to them, the work will bring forward experimental ideas developed over the course of five years' study of the subject of immersion and sound influenced by the main practitioners of sonic arts and tracking my own personal journey of immersion in everyday life.

### **Listening**

Significantly, this thesis and accompanying sound works are intended to amplify the listening experience, exemplifying what we as listeners hear in our everyday lives. The importance of each work lies within myself, chosen specifically as these artists and their works are key to my personal immersed journey throughout this research. There is no claim to one work being more important in terms of a historical timeline or having any greater impact than that of another. Each work has been used as an example to discuss and investigate immersion in sound art and everyday life.

### **Anthrophony**

The forthcoming discussion is informed by research undertaken from my Masters in Research (M.Res), where the findings highlight that whilst immersion is considered and readily accepted as a vital element of the sonic works, there are gaps between the theoretical and conceptual framework of immersion in art and immersion in everyday life. This framework of immersion emanates from a list of unique interviews with artists, writers, theorists and curators where they give their personal opinions and experiences of immersion through their own works and the works of others. Before the recordings for this thesis I presented the interaction between the sonorous environment and myself in the M.Res by utilising the space of my home

between early 2007 to the middle of 2008 that resulted in the findings for the M.Res that precedes this body of work. From the findings I discovered and presented links between listening habits changing due to the advent of the Sony Walkman in 1979 and the changing landscape of how distant environments are perceived, pinpointing moments of immersion and the lack of any wider concepts or adjectives of the term immersion outside usual populist usage. The year 1979 was established in the M.Res as the point in time when immersion in art and everyday life crossed, and listeners were enabled to control listening through a device whilst on the move.

### **Practice-led**

Armed with nothing more than a recorder and a genuine curiosity for considered, thoughtful listening, this period of research has resulted in a distinct, unique and kaleidoscopic spectrum of opinions on immersion in sound art. Not only do I explore my own immersive auditory experience, but also that of notable artists, writers and curators who have contributed their own personal experiences and thoughts through their own works. Whether sonic installations, CDs, curating exhibitions or participating in immersive sound art, these works are critically disseminated throughout the ensuing chapters of this thesis. This body of work acclaims significant everyday immersive experiences that explore boundaries between art and routine everyday activities as becoming intrinsically linked to the sonic body of the reverberate experience.

In Chapter One, *Immersion*, I explore the existing arguments, discussions and debates that attempt to research immersion, if any, and consider factors that have impacted upon artists and could well be conceived as immersion. The written texts that I investigate are essential, laying solid foundations for the reader and highlighting the lack of previous, in-depth historical or contemporary exploration which is revealed by any rigorous research. Key to this research are Sean Cubitt's (2007) findings where he considers immersion through a personal reflection of time

that becomes the ownership of the audience rather than the pre-designed deception of immersion. Chapter One maps the terrain of the contemporary immersive landscape, working with texts drawn from an array of sources with common threads including personal life experiences that affect the work of artists who use sound to provide connections between natural phenomena in their immersive works. Paradoxically, any incursion that defines such sonic works has to be considered subjectively personal to that artist and the particular sounds. In the chapter I debate immersion as an accumulation of listening, considered contemplation and personal engagement with new reflections and considerations that re-present immersion in art and everyday life. Using interviews with artists and key literature, I critically examine popular notions to underpin what immersion means in the context of everyday life. I also examine the wider adjectives of immersion from key sources that have attempted to problematise the popular notion of the term immersion as defined in the media, causing an uneven path where immersion and art collide.

An essential historical figure who contributed to the rise to prominence of sound as art during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and whose influence has supported my research in terms of understanding the impact of the immersion in everyday life that still has critical impact both on practice and theory, is Pierre Schaeffer (1977). With the introduction of the *Sound Objects* (2009), Schaeffer (1977) and Pierre Henry (1977) began to experiment with sound in the pure form, to break away from musical structures, and to strive for listening without the visual, divorcing the two and fragmenting the sound from its original source, *Musique Concrète* (1961). Their influence, particularly Schaeffer's (1977) has fed into the current popular practice of sound recordists with a sonic sensibility towards what could be described as occupying a place between sound art and music. Schaeffer (1977 & 2009) himself describes his work as challenging and often difficult to comprehend; he frequently and throughout his life became frustrated with revising and challenging his own work on *Sound Objects* (1977). Contrary to his own doubts about the work, what has

become apparent through this research is the subsequent realisation that his recorded sounds have challenged everyday notions of noise and asked questions of people and of their everyday resonant environment. By comparison and similar in impact to Schaeffer, whilst examining the linear methodological approach, I go on to discuss predominantly in Chapter One but also throughout the thesis, Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989), referring particularly to moments from his own personal life that had direct influence on his work. Importantly, over the course of this research I consider listening as the critical core value from which immersion evolves in sound art and in general day-to-day sonorous experiences with the two being coherently linked.

Chapter Two, *Listening – The Nature of Field Recordings*, closely examines sonic works that challenge listeners to question their wider sonic environment, providing sounds, which have been re-planted from their original source. Key to this discussion are interviews with artists Chris Watson (1998, 2007 & 2008), BJ Nilsen (2003-2004 & 2010), Francisco Lopez (2007), Alan Dunn (2008 & 2009) and the work of Katie Paterson (2008). These artists' contributions are important because their work challenges perceptions of the soundscapes beyond the parameters of urban life. Additionally their work alludes to phonascetics or the re-tuning of one's own experiences as being as important as taking into consideration philosophical debates on how such recorded sounds change perspective and raising the questions that I consider in this chapter.

The key artist interviews in Chapter Two are used as a backdrop, allowing the reader to experience alternative opinions of immersion from critically acclaimed sound practitioners all of whom view immersion as an essential aspect of their work and experience. In one instance when I asked prolific and renowned artist Francisco Lopez (2012) if he believed a work of sound can alter an audiences mind set in an interior space, he replied: "But of course! All human cultures have done that with

their 'music'" (Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email). This simple truth also supports my claims of focusing on the key point at which immersion becomes an integral part of everyday life. In this chapter I have discussed this key point and its relevance to present-day, 21<sup>st</sup> century sonorous living.

This second chapter re-considers technological issues and influences, which make the artists' sonic work discussed possible, focusing on those sounds that are least recognised. Predominantly artists who use complex editing software are searching for the perfection of the recorded sound by changing and altering the elements of imperfection that Schaeffer (2009) described as less telling when considering the actual dissonance of noise: "...harmonic sound will always be 'dominant'..." (Schaeffer 2009, cited in Chion preface) This dominance that Schaeffer (2009) describes is an area the artists in this chapter have all challenged in various ways. In the two final sections of this chapter, focus is placed on the perception of the sound and not the object from which the sound is from, articulating the relationship between the listener and the experience.

Chapter Three, (*In between*) *Spaces: Towards my Anthrophony*, discusses the alternative spaces that sonic works are being exhibited from and their immersive impact on audiences. In this chapter I predominantly draw on the work of O. Blaatt (2007), Kal Ross and Andrea Earl (2007) and Bruce Odland (2006). In a recent interview with Chris Watson (2012), Watson discussed the seminal work *The Morning Line* (2008, 2010 & 2011) by artist Matthew Ritchie (2011), describing it as careful in design and subtly connective to the soundscape. Watson (2012) alludes to how through attentive design and presentation, an installation like *The Morning Line* (2008, 2010 & 2011) will immerse the audience (Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 3rd December 2012, Skype). The chapter discusses innovative sonic ideals in the acoustic environments devised by artists such as Matthew Ritchie (2011) and



Carsten Nicolai (2005). Curators are continuously battling with artists over gallery spaces that are only designed as a viewing arena and in some cases issues with works not belonging in the space. This conflict is explored in depth through the work of O. Blaat (2007), a sonic artist and performer who has explored human conditions in what you could describe as non-sound friendly spaces focusing on one's past, present and future. Her work is a prime example of how a space that has not been designed to accommodate sound can be used to great effect and work favourably for the artist and the audience to engage with the surrounding environment.

Essentially when considering space, specifically exhibition spaces, whether interior or exterior, there are elements that need examining. These include everyday spaces and objects that we take for granted or tend to ignore as unimportant. This chapter will focus on installations, as these are often viewed by curators as immersive space – a space where we enter and immediately we are transported to some sort of immersive utopia. I argue that to be immersed is not just a routine act and that other external elements are critical to this happening.

Chapter Four, *Electrification of an Environment*, examines routine interactions with the natural sonorous milieu. The practice led work here has enabled me to investigate my own reverberate environment, as in the physical interaction we all undertake and experience most days and the significance of such experiences. I utilise the theories of the sonic body by Brandon LaBelle (2010) and Pauline Oliveros (2011) sonosphere. Using these two essential concepts, sonic body (2010) and sonosphere (2011) I explore the practice of soundwalks through the work of Hildegard Westerkamp's (2014) with research taken from a personal interview. I examine the sensibility that is experienced during such walks and the impact of the recorded environment on the day-to-day traveller. In my exploration of soundwalks I have used experiences of travel from my past and taken memories from them to reconstruct a narrative of my own immersive past. From those experiences, the

following questions have emerged.

The following questions have been answered specifically in the final two chapters that explore the interaction with sound. Can we immerse ourselves in the environment with active listening and what action results from such exercises? What is generated from these soundwalks, and why are they vital to understanding the urban spaces specifically, with sound being an increasing area of intrigue and exploration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Examining the background and foreground in terms of sonic relationships to one's own personal sonic habitat coinciding with part of the practice led work, this chapter links up with the *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013). This is a randomly recorded sound work with which I lay the foundation for my own personal immersive experiences.

Chapter Five, *Sonic Tracks - Anthrophony*, is a collection of recorded journeys from various locations from my everyday life with particular events influencing my own immersive happenings. In addition, I highlight a collection of immersive sonic works that throughout this research has played a vital role in influencing and shaping the thesis, principally the practice led work. In Chapter Four, with *The Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) the Soundwalk Collective (2011) produced *The Passenger* (2011) that recorded sounds from the Straits of Gibraltar between Tarifa and Tangier. A range of specifically chosen locales and fragmented sounds were recorded, mapping the journeys taken, the languages and stories of trade and migration. Transportation features in many of the artists' works discussed in this thesis, with the potential for and emphasis on any shared or travelled knowledge. Markus Soukup's (2009) ten-minute film *To or at a Distance* (2009), where perception of space is explored, is expanded upon in this chapter and has been a major source of influence in practice terms and across a range of sound works. Again to reiterate, none of these works discussed and examined hold any deeper or greater impact than the others. This collection of sonic works are presented in order to illuminate

and offer greater consideration and perspective, using the foundation laid in preceding chapters to facilitate a clearer understanding of immersion in sound art and everyday sonorous life. Critically emanating from the sound pieces is the exhibition of one work that is presented within the more popular notion of immersive spaces and secondly, a sound piece presented alternatively through the methods inspired by *Mail Art* (1962). Each piece is contrived and planned so that I have been able to use the interviews and influences that run through my research and practice.

Though this thesis does not offer an alternative history of sound art, an important aspect of it is to pinpoint specific moments that have brought immersion into the public domain or that have had a social impact. In the timeline (See Appendix Six), which is a collection of immersive moments that have influenced my own practice and this research, are artists, writers, academics, theorists, inventors, philosophers and pivotal historical events that have contributed towards immersion in sound art and everyday life and that form the consciousness of current discourse flux in sound research. Thus, central to this thesis is an invention that still resonates today, its aftershock still being felt as strongly as they were in 1979. This key historical event which changed the implications of immersion, happened in 1979 when the Sony Walkman (1979) (See Appendix Six) was released onto the public world of listening, radically altering the way a generation of people listened to their music. Significantly, it also drove forwards the technological age of art installations with headphones and other immersive sound works created since.

### **Immersion 1890 to 1979**

Immersion and the wider adjectives this thesis is proposing span a century of exploration and experimentation by artists, writers, theorists, academics, curators and more significantly in this instance my personal immersive reflection projected through the recordings presented in the final two chapters. Accordingly it would be appropriate to begin by charting a collection of significant inventions, theories and

events preceding the release of the Sony Walkman in 1979 that evoke and question such immersive adjectives in sound art and the everyday as a collaborative experience that I have investigated. All inventions, theories and events have influenced my own recordings and supported my own theories of what being immersed means in everyday life; the reader will encounter examples that represent and intertwine with art and everyday life.

During the past four decades the advances in listening technology from the Sony Walkman (1979) to Mp3 players has been so exponential up to this point that now one of the most recognisable listening brands today, Apple, has overtaken every other listening device on the global market. However the Sony Walkman is recognised as a visionary invention. This is accredited to Kozo Ohson (1979) general manager who under the guidance of Sony Founder and Chief Advisor, Masaru Ibuka (1979), and Sony Founder and Honorary Chairman Akio Morita (1979) created a stereo version of the Pressman, the small, monaural tape recorder that Sony had launched in 1977. It began with the invention of the first cassette Walkman TPS-L2 that forever changed the way consumers listen to music. Surprisingly, when first released many thought this new way of listening to music would indeed fail, so interest from retailers, specifically in Tokyo but also abroad, was less than enthusiastic. However, within a short space young people around the globe embraced Sony Walkman's (1979) new way of listening, creating a world shortage and demand at a premium. So we can see from this the technology was embraced quickly despite initial scepticism. This was because people realised the potential in a portal that could be personal and the chance to create one's own bubble of chosen sound.

This is the moment when being immersed began to enter an individual's life in contemporary culture but it was by no means the first technological or immersive life event that has gone on to shape what immersion means over the past one hundred

years. Those who chose to use a Sony Walkman (1979) whether it is on the train, running down a street or simply laying back and watching the world pass by were taking ownership of their personal soundscape. Creating a new sonic environment they could control and taking private listening practices into public spaces. This was the beginning of a listening revolution, an immersive sound revolution. Not only did this change artists' relationships with sound, it changed the general listening public. Prior to the Sony Walkman (1979) being immersed through personal listening was positioned in the domestic soundscape or concert hall, but now with this listening advancement the move from the home simply was spreading through exhibitions to personal listening. However, there has been a significant breakthrough made within both life and art that has contributed to a collaborated immersion that is considered and explained in this thesis. As already stated this work is not an alternative historical proposition of immersion in sound art but rather an opportunity to illuminate certain events contributing towards what it means to be immersed in sound and everyday life.

*Dickson Experimental Sound Film* by William Kennedy Laurie Dickson made in 1894 is the first recorded film with live sound. Previous to this, Jesse Walter Fewkes (1890) was starting use his recording cylinders in 1890 to record the indigenous people of American. The sheer excitement and impact Fewkes realised that by recording a voice at the same speed, pitch or tone into the wax cylinders would entice listeners allowing them into a world out of the reach of many. *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894) consisted of two men dancing and William Kennedy Laurie Dickson playing the violin into the large cone connected to the wax cylinder recording off-camera. However, though the experiment failed because of a lack of understanding of synchronisation, this was realised some years later by sound designer Walter Murch. This first failed attempt is irrelevant in the context of this thesis as what Dickson (1894) was proposing through this act was the possibility of shared and more significantly recorded collection of sounds with moving pictures.

Unbeknown to him or Thomas Edison, Dickson (1894) had performed the first sound and motion picture and has been rightfully acknowledged with this monumental event. Reflections of life could now, or were about to be, recorded and documented, these reflections made by events, artists', writers and theorists that contribute towards immersion being a relatively young experience through the guise of advancements with film and sound technology.

Such impacts and advancements in technology in relation to everyday life are significant when considering the documentation of routine events such as music being played. Considering early modern soundscapes – church bells, agriculture, singing and weather – all throughout human history noise has had profound impacts. However, the immersion this thesis is defining is the collaborative immersion by which we resonate through technology and modern everyday life. Therefore this point when *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894) was made is a defining one when immersion would be no longer just experienced in church halls or gardens of agricultural delights or even the hardship of a factory but when it presented possibilities of audible and visual curiosities to enrich the artistic practices and transcend ordinary immersive happenings. Linking the everyday and immersion through technology as demonstrated with *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894), is the starting point for when immersion from a listening technological perspective is crossing over into everyday life.

The new trajectory of noise was now to be found in the capacity to reach a new audience, to test and manipulate by challenging people's perception of environments, and to test public opinions. Recording and documenting key historical events would come later, but for now immersion was a life happening rather than a combined audio technological and life experience. In the coming years other significant events occurred, not just in art but technologically. Development and experimentation was advancing rapidly. For example, in 1906, at Ilchester,

Maryland, a fully submerged hydroelectric plant was built inside Ambursen Dam. Notoriously difficult to construct and even more so to render successful, the hydroelectric plant was constructed inside, giving rise to many other new inventions as a result. The significance of this is the effect on everyday life with immersion on a grand built scale that had resonating effects environmentally, socially and culturally resulting in new developments, homes, agriculture, workforce and social structures that still exist today and that are comparable to the advent of Sony Walkman in 1979. Lives were altered and choices were made available to vast amounts of people and individuals, who could now alter their personal environment creating capsules of immersive identity which might shift between simple life choices such as providing for a family or gaining employment security, and contemporary recorded sound to the underground Avant-Garde.

The way that art and technology had begun intertwining with life progressively during the early parts of the 19th century is described in the seminal piece of work by Luigi Russolo, his manifesto *The Art of Noises* (1913). Embedded within the narrative is the acceptance of noise being a relationship between all humans past, present and future. Five years later Erik Satie coins the term *Furniture Music* (1917) whilst sitting in a café and feeling perturbed by the noise from outside and the interruptions to his thoughts. Satie was questioning how to re-consider space through man-made noise or a composing of the space. By blocking out noises that were viewed by Satie as a disturbance he proposed that through filling interior spaces with a preconceived composition he could have clear thoughts. This is the first step towards ambient music and a rejection of the exterior sonorous environment. By noise filling a space that seemingly allows one to think coherently without uncomfortable dissonance with *Furniture Music* (1917), a relationship was forged between the space, the object and the listening ears. Similarly, as in Russolo, the relationship between the listeners and everyday life seem blurred through the reverberations around them that are challenged by these two seminal works.

Noise in art was not a new exploration, but a shift in how to project or perceive art was being played out. Marcel Duchamp's readymade *With Hidden Noise* (1916) illustrates this point. Duchamp worked with Walter Arensberg, asking him to place an object inside the work without telling him what it was. The results were a noise inside his readymade and the question arose whether it was important to know what the object inside was. This is of little significance except that we know that there is a noise from this object and the reverberations along with the collaborative experience engages *With Hidden Noise* (1916) (See Fig. 1) with the audience-surrounding soundscape. This initiates dialogue of the echo and stochasticity of one's relationship between object and noise. Randomness of noise is often an element of our sonorous world we overlook, but this is as important as with any in relation to immersion in life or art. In comparison, when we consider one of Duchamp's other readymades *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (1921), many interpretations of this work have been written about and one commonality in the debate is the impact of the body, whether it is arousal, control or uncomfortable situ of the piece. Inside the bird cage in *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (1921) were sugar cubes made from marble, perhaps to surprise anyone lifting the cage up, and as Jerrold E. Seigel (1995) comments: "What makes the object appropriate is that it provides an image of confinement, a metaphor for the inner space from which the sneeze cannot escape" (Seigel 1995 p. 171). So as with Erik Satie's *Furniture Music* the experienced is the collaboration between a work of art and the resound of an interior space.

This proposition of confinement coincides with the invention of short wave radio two years earlier. Each was not produced because of the other or vice versa, in fact quite the opposite; they are produced separate to each other's existence. Consider the value of technology and the rapid rise of inventions particularly in the 1920s from the Theremin to the cathode-ray tube, and the impact of the short wave radio cannot be underestimated or devalued especially when researching the way art and culture



permeated life around the 1920s. Culturally the radio informed across the social spectrum and specificity of class did not rule over who could listen. Compare this notion of inclusiveness to Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (1921) and the portals by which art, in particular every day, banal objects, could become the social and sonic spaces in which people could immerse themselves. Crossovers between auditive transmissions and everyday life were taking hold and were being presented on various alternative modern platforms.

First, a key example of immersion that combines art, everyday life and technology is proposed by Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) and Pierre Schaeffer (1948). Immersion is a challenge that concerns personal space, shared environment, memory and perceptions. Like in 1944 when Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) administers to wounded soldiers and the impact of this time on his aural memory resulting in a composer who symbolises the experimental sonic realisation of the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Minute ripples in one's life story that continue to impact throughout existence constitute an example of life and art intertwining to create the immersive traces that emerge throughout Stockhausen's (1989) compositions. I talk more about this in Chapter One, highlighting the bearing that events from one's stochastic life can have in creative practices.

Second, in 1948 at the crossroads between electronic music and John Cage's philosophy on silence, Pierre Schaeffer (1948) broadcast the revolutionary '*Etude Aux Chemins de Fer*' (1948). Montaged recordings of trains, whistles and steam were recorded onto tape and edited together through what Schaeffer (1948) entitled *Musique Concrète*. In an interview, Chris Watson (2012) describes the impact '*Etude Aux Chemins de Fer*' (1948) had on him and his subsequent outputs, noting that in 1948 this piece was beyond anything else being recorded or heard (Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Skype). Audiences were listening back to trains that they could hear everyday day and represented the transition of

technology moving and shifting through people's lives, towns, villages and big cities. '*Etude Aux Chemins de Fer*' (1948) was revolutionary in terms of listening to noises that were already common. Although this contrasts to *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894) from over fifty years earlier, there are similarities in the presentation of the progressive, technological and immersive everyday impact.

With Schaeffer (1948) recording noise that was familiar and that again crossed social standings this recorded piece stands out as a seminal moment in the modern map of immersion. Unlike Stockhausen (1989) serving time helping wounded soldiers and the noise resonating throughout his work, '*Etude Aux Chemins de Fer*' (1948) is an obscured outward projection of noise produced from trains.

Like Pierre Schaeffer (1948) and four years later John Cage's composition 4'33" (1952) though already conceived and preluded by much of Cage's credo up until then, 4'33" (1952) remains divisive in nature and still divides opinion, opens dialogue, inspires and frustrates many. John Cage (1952) almost immobilized experimental electronic composers like Stockhausen and Edgard Varèse at their source from moving towards a realisation of their work. Such was the impact of 4'33" (1952) that this separated with sudden reverberations creating significant differences in philosophical indeterminacy of their work, research and performance. 4'33" (1952) is a prime example of innovation and incorporating the acoustic properties of nature that Cage (1968) in particular wanted to express the expanding sonorous composition happening directly to each human. Despite critical analysis this though has most likely become the synthesis for much of the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century European compositions for exploration of immersion and this work has inspired my personal thinking and resulted in a final sound piece *The Long Grass Whispers* (2011-2013). Inspired and intrigued by 4'33", my own realisation of components contributing towards the analysing of Cage's (1952) seminal and life defining work.

This inspiration emanates through a TEDx presentation given by Professor Julian Dodd (2013) where he discusses John Cage's 4'33" (1952) examining whether this piece of work is music. Interestingly this discussion elaborates on what elements make a musical composition with a resonating legacy still apparent and questions the very root of musical composition in reference with everyday life. Dodd's (2013) series of conditions for according the states of musical composition culminate in his conclusion that that 4'33" (1952) cannot be a musical score. The root of the argument originates in the rule that the composer produces the sound, therefore it cannot be music (Dodd, 2013). However, Dodd goes on to state that 4'33" (1952) is a key example of conceptual art that challenges audiences to consider noises from the environment as unique. This argument led me to the conclusion that the sound pieces for this thesis are an interaction with sound rather than a composition or an archive of sounds.

Again to reiterate the term immersion should be looked at as farther-reaching than populist usage of the term to describe a piece of work that simply encompasses elements housed within an interior space and therefore one becomes immersed. This leads me to explore the nature of personal space and of people around us, as demonstrated by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). In Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) he trisects a semi-autobiographical experience that is an intense journey similarly with the two-recorded sound pieces *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013), predominantly the latter, which the listener will understand as this research concludes. *On the Road* (1957) epitomises my rationalisation and understanding of the sonorous world by presenting and laying foundations that are not smooth or rehearsed but are a representation of the imperfect parallels of life.

Max Neuhaus's sound activity *Public Supply I* (1961) manipulated telephone calls

resulting in a montaged feedback of incoherent sounds for the telephone caller to hear on their radio resulting in a dialogue of noise. The open airwaves of two networks, radio and telephone, illustrate this imperfect notion of immersion in everyday life that I discuss predominantly in the final two chapters, as demonstrated in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). These are similar to Schaeffer's (1948) cut and paste techniques that went on to inspire and be replicated across art forms alike predominantly with hip hop then throughout popular music of the late twentieth century and beyond. In the same year that Neuhaus (1961) was experimenting and delivering *Public Supply I* (1961), construction of the Berlin Wall began to stop refugees arriving from West Germany. Dissonance and freedom at times of great upheaval and chaos can become blurred so comparing the telephone networks with all those conversations being transmitted freely from one end to another the act of dissonance seems distant; however, as relayed through *Public Supply I* (1961) they become a chaotic sonic super highway of angst, gripes, anger and nerves. The fission of conversations was about to be realised in the form of the cassette tape that was invented a year later in 1962 morphing together *Mail Art* (1962) and cassette culture.

By the 1960s, Mail Art had expanded out of the experimental avant-garde of the 1950s by Ray Johnson into an expanding socially aware art form that most likely came about due in no part to Johnson's experiences at Black Mountain College and more significantly collaborative essence of the work: "...Johnson also encountered the musician and conceptual performer John Cage, dancer-choreographer Merce Cunningham and sculptor Richard Lippold" (Gangadharan 2009 p. 285).

Johnson (2009) would include either detailed or simple instructions for the recipient to add or alter the work then pass it on. This collaboration was a shared experience immersing together shards of people from the phonebook; the internet, mobile phones or personal stereos were yet to be part of public everyday living. "To a

certain extent, Johnson and his mail art functioned as invisible glue in the avant-garde scene. His mail art emphasized a relational aesthetic and the co-creative process of art-making in both embodied and disembodied forms” (Gangadharan 2009 p. 286). Johnson (2009) is actually performing random acts, taken out of the control of business, managers or marketing and being unknowing of the unknown, allowing whatever course it takes. This demonstrates that immersion, everyday life and art clashed whilst being inclusive and anonymous but collaborative without prejudice.

By comparison Maryanne Amacher (2012) began the *City Links* project in 1967 that would demonstrate and question perception of sound and space. Her exploration, spanning fourteen years, was of architectural design and performance as well as other conditions such as weather and the human body including surrounding environments and ever changing landscapes. Alex Freedman (2012) describes Amacher as the ‘artist’s artist’ remaining shielded behind her own audience, an audience Amacher (2012) chose to work hidden behind much of her life despite the relative provoking element of her projects. This anonymity allowed her to work closely with her materials specifically as demonstrated in *City Links* (1967) that encouraged each individual body and audience to be the listening device.

Only two years later and somewhat paradoxically Alvin Lucier (1969) first performs *I am sitting in a room* (1969), where his voice was recorded and played back repeatedly. This was achieved by using a microphone with his speech becoming obscured with each playback recording allowing natural frequencies of the room to also be heard. Lucier (1969) was inspired by acoustic space and the physical nature of that space posing questions to considered architectural developments. Considered analytical in his ideology and unlike Maryanne Amacher, he is a sound artist who through projects like *City Links* (1967) proposed an investigation of the outward impacts upon the spaces that people could readily associate with.

Lucier (2009) according to Douglas Kahn (2009) notes that *I am sitting in a room* (2009) is only suited to everyday architectural space, not to be performed in an anechoic chamber. "It is a room with no room resonance, no resonant frequencies to be reinforced, and thus the performance would be interminable" (Kahn 2009 p. 28). This is important to note in terms of immersion and the wider notions of immersion in everyday life. Though through an enhanced or modified spaces, audiences can be altered by the adapted features that offer this element of manufactured immersion. This leads onto a manufactured immersion that has subsequently shaped the past thirty-five years: as stated earlier the release of the Sony Walkman in 1979 is a seminal moment in time that changed social forms and perceptions of personal space, radically allowing people to control their own immersive experience at will.

Retrospectively examining various chronological examples of immersion in art and how immersion appears in everyday life has allowed me to unravel any formulaic description of immersion and shift towards a nonlinear exploration of immersion through current mediums of practice led research. Immersion cannot, for example, be an element of art or everyday life that can be explained by viewing a painting for a few minutes then claim a shift of mindset altered thought patterns as to create a space for immersion to slot in to.

The following chapters begin, not by mapping chronologically any events but a series of key elements that form immersion in contemporary sonic studies by questioning and exploring a collection of sonic happening that shape the art of immersion and the crossovers in everyday routine life.

## Literature Review

To begin this investigation into the sonorous, routine happenings that shift between art and the regular mundane tasks that are part of everyday routines, I research the critical and popular contemporary theories and sonic works that are vital across the sonic arts spectrum and since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These have formed popular critical discourse connected to sonic arts with particular key references to immersion and everyday life. Forming a language and foundation to this exploration of immersion is vital in particular as this is an interdisciplinary research thesis that utilises fields such as ethnography. This is illustrated through the sound pieces and qualitative research interviews with artists, writers and curators. These questions form and support my findings in this thesis, with the sound pieces illuminating and exploring my personal immersive journeys, memories and actions.

The central theme of examining and contextualising the term immersion in the thesis I directly address themes to firmly categorise each work or written material as part of the wider adjective of immersion that I investigate. This is partly demonstrated in the introduction and leads to a richer categorising of immersion in the ensuing five chapters which allow for greater in-depth investigation of the term that made possible autonomous extraction of information from the interviews undertaken and from the sound piece recordings. As stated in the introduction the investigation began with phase one, M.Res, which I completed in September 2008 centralising the key point where I demonstrated that immersion in combination with technology entered the public consciousness in collaboration with everyday life. Transpiring from phase one was a clear gap in existing literature. Artists who use sound cite John Cage's theories on silence and Pierre Schaeffer's *Musique Concrète* (1948) as being core to understanding human relationships to everyday noise and how interactions in everyday life shift and alter all the time. This results in problematic

audience interactions and further misgivings as Cage (1968) is still much debated and more often than not leaves audiences perplexed, whereas Schaeffer (1961) is still on the fringes of the public consciousness. This is not true of all artists; but a predominant portion, myself included, place Cage's (1968) and Schaeffer's (1961) theories at the centre of their ideology and inspiration. Considering this, my research examines and bridges a theoretical gap between theories that are over fifty years old and current discourse in sound art and everyday life, whilst presenting a coherent and accessible body of research of the term immersion. To achieve this I have interviewed key individuals in the field of phonography, curatorial practice and theoretical material to further explore this gap. So now phase two, this thesis investigates further the personalisation of the immersive experience from an artistic viewpoint and everyday experiences with an overlapping between the two. It is one where artists may or may not consider immersion key to their work respectively and one which highlights the significance of immersion in everyday life.

Rather than allowing the entrenchment of fastidious borders that researching the term immersion could become, the continuing literature constitutes a broad range and considers beyond the general notions of immersion in contemporary literature. Such examples of this become frequently apparent and more so with dozens of texts available through various sources that discuss themes of virtual reality as the main portal for immersion. For example Garth Pain (1999), Oliver Lowenstein (2000) and Myron W. Krueger (1991), among others, have highlighted cultural influences from a number of virtual interactive fields that I decided are not part of this thesis as I have focused solely on the banal everyday life occurrences and not virtual ones. Other predominant theories of immersion coincide with galleries, installations or public performance washing over the audience with sound or interactive technology and media supposedly as with reverberations immersing listeners and audiences by simply being what they appear.



For a greater understanding of immersion and critical to re-examining past work, particularly in reference to the expanding field of sound art research, is the paradigm between memory, listening and routine happenings. This is continuously being questioned with key historical references towards Pierre Schaeffer's *Musique Concrète* (1961) and John Cage's *Silence* (1968): two of the most prolifically referenced within an increasing amount of contemporary research. Examples of their influences is vast amongst the arts, but one piece that is at the juncture between re-examining the ideology of silence, *Musique Concrète* and everyday life is a work entitled *Fünf* (2010). This compilation released by German label Ostgut Ton of field recordings devised and brought together through recordings made from two Berlin clubs: Berghain and Panorama Bar. These recordings were taken whilst the buildings were empty, then given to the resident DJs to make music from. Interestingly, Emika (2010), who created and devised *Fünf* (2010), sought to explore the resonance of the buildings. Emika (2010) created the composition *Cooling Room* (2010) from the field recordings and this represents the ideology of *Musique Concrète* (1961) by reconstructing the resonant structures of an interior space from a series of mundane banal noises. This is until the re-worked field recordings are performed in the clubs with performance the personification of Cage's 4'33" where the realisation and textual happening impress beyond *Musique Concrète's* (1961) non visual linear principles that sound is listened to more intently without any visualisation. Performed by the DJs alongside a series of instructions by Emika (2010) this created a musical piece then listened to by an audience in an interior space. This has influenced my recordings because I view my work as neither a performance nor a listening exercise with visualisation and this enables sound pieces to be positioned in the everyday that do not exist because of editing and are not performed via a series of instructions.

This however has altered with current discourse re-examining these theories and how they are positioned in contemporary urban life. With this in mind I focused on gathering as much critical research from sources that are actually questioning sound art discourse and this new direction that is currently happening. For example, Seth Kim-Cohen (2009) from *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* (2009) considers alternative forms of thinking rather than insulated philosophical theories of sound art. Significantly, considering alternative avenues of sound art with key historical points led me to establish and state in the introduction that this thesis is not offering any alternative timeline of sound art but one of reflective instances to address and affirm immersion beyond normal popular practise but situated in everyday life.

The research has been developed over the five chapters: The first three chapters: *Immersion, Listening – Nature of Field Recordings* and *(In between) Spaces: Towards my Anthrophony*, discuss the interaction with sound while the final two: *Electrification of an Environment* and *Sonic Tracks – Anthrophony* are a consequence of the practice based research. A significant part of the research has been examining the philosophical engagement with sound art. Salomé Voegelin (2010) argues beyond the use of the term sound art, but as categories and strategies to develop sound art beyond a terminology; as an act or doing. In her *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (2010) Voegelin engages with current discourse with theories of sound. Significantly, Voegelin challenges the visualisation of language, contesting the structure and how listening and reading engage philosophies of sound. Re-positioning the discourse on sound art as with Seth Kim-Cohen (2009), in particular the area of listening and the immediate experience, which Voegelin points out: “Listening produces such a monistic value similarity between time and space, whose differences are worked out in a signifying practice by the ‘inhabiting’ subject” (Voegelin 2010 p. 125). This is

important as such a crossover between art and everyday sonorous life allows for layers of people's opinions, experiences and theories emanating from sources Salomé Voegelin (2010) and Seth Kim-Cohen (2009). The anticipation of collective sensing of sound in everyday environments is argued both singularly and collectively with physical notions of the sonic body realised within interior spaces.

The experience of being immersed in a space with all other elements reduced allow this 'inhabiting' that Voegelin (2010) and Kim-Cohen (2009) discuss in different forms. For example, rather than accepting the sound to be a relationship with the audience, there arises moreover a combination of participant and the sound working in collaboration. One of Voegelin's (2010) influences and someone who challenges the relationship of memory and sound is David Toop (2010) and his work *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener* (2010). In terms of a philosophical innovation Toop (2010) describes the metaphors of sound with narratives by combining a broad spectrum of arts from painting, poetry, design, sculpture and installation, it is intertwined with everyday life. Silence is one of the key components emanating from all the work of Salomé Voegelin (2010), Seth Kim-Cohen (2009) and David Toop (2010) that explores the deep rooted influence of sound on the visual world through all these different mediums. Similar to Toop's (2010) and Voegelin's (2010) research is Daniela Cascella with the book *En Abîme: Listening, Reading, Writing* (2011), that explores the significant moments of recalling sound through memory and with my recordings this plays a vital element as understanding how we perceive the environment we exist in for a particular moment and time changes and is interpreted differently each time. Cascella's (2011) diary captures the political, historical and cultural flashes, considering what could be described as sound walks through her engagement with her personalised sonorous landscape. In the interviews for this thesis Cascella (2013) describes her realisation of sonic experiences.

Between listening and the other senses, between the experience of a soundscape and its representation, between nature and artifice. I'm interested in *how* a soundscape takes shape in the singular perceptual experiences of each listener when it is transported and translated in an interior space. I'm also interested in how the space of the listener – between the sounds recorded, and the 'playing back' of our everyday listening places – takes form.

(Kent, J. Interview with Daniela Cascella, 2013, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, Email)

The above statement is important in relation to my practice as I aim to examine and relay my sonorous experience rather than create any performance or mechanically edited sound works. Cascella (2013) states here that she is interested in how everyday sounds formulate from recorded sounds back into listening and this essentially is what my final two chapters have achieved. By doing this each recording has relayed this message of routine and personal anonymity whilst repositioning immersion as a term and as an experience.

Essential to a clear understanding of other sound ideas, philosophies and origins that cross between art and life occurrences, unspectacular or not from some of the most renowned and celebrated artists is Robin Maconie's book entitled *Stockhausen on Music; Lectures and Interviews* (1989), with interpretations and personal life experiences that shaped Stockhausen's sound world from times when he would sing for American soldiers injured during the second world war and in German hospitals with the emotions of scared homesick men being played out through his music. These experiences gave Stockhausen exceptional insight into human emotions that would seep through into his later sound pieces. Possibly viewed by many as diametrically opposed to Stockhausen in terms of ideology and composition (1989) is John Cage, whose work *Silence* (1968) holds key concepts forming a variety of theories and statements on the performance of sound, experimental techniques history and definitions. Particular interest arises in a written piece entitled *History of Experimental Music in the United States* (1958) where Cage sifts through themes of the nature of experimental actions and composition of sound. Secondly a text

entitled *The Future of Music: Credo* offers a duality between the composer and music. These texts have been chosen as examples of John Cage's (1968) work, who as a pioneer of experimental music influences, how we think about sound, and in particular for this thesis, immersive sound.

Explorations of immersion within sonic environments attempt to map the sonic landscape with origins of immersion and key to this is Rob Young's (2002) collection of essays *Undercurrents: The Hidden Wiring of Modern Music* (2002) and *Sound: Documents of Contemporary Art* (2011) compiled by Caleb Kelly (2011). The latter explores the engagement and boundaries of sound utilising some of the most prominent figures in art referring to their theoretical writings. As discussed in the introduction, the Sony Walkman (1979) was a point in the sonic timeline when immersion became a public adventure, accessible to not just the few but many throughout the world. Back in the seventies the music industry was evolving dramatically in terms of technology and as William Furlong (2011) discusses in the essay *Sound in Recent Art* (2011) a time of great change was occurring and this essay alludes to a time pre-Sony Walkman (1979).

## **Engulfed**

With this personal introverted listening in mind, notable works that examine what a device can challenge and how this can be perceived are Shuhei Hosokawa's *The Walkman Effect* (1984) and Michal Bull's *The World According to Sound: Investigating the World of Walkman Users* (2001). These two articles present arguments about urban everyday life emanating from the cultural impact of the Sony Walkman and expanding the knowledge of changing listening habits particularly since its advent in 1979. Their conceptual frameworks share a commonality of the everyday and are demonstrative of how using such devices has challenged perceptions of the soundscape within an already heavily built resonant environment.

Hosokawa's *The Walkman Effect* (1984) asks difficult questions about human autonomy and proposes that using such a device allows the listener to transcend the reality of everyday in a unified moment of singular recall. Such moments can be an alteration of environments whether through personal actions or physical acts of actual walking. By comparison Michal Bull (2001) talks about strategies of Sony Walkman users and significantly how environments are managed including private, interior, exterior and environmental spaces translating into personal imagined reconstructions. Where both articles are related is their examination of how a user of the Sony Walkman is engulfed, potentially leading to the auditory personal experience. Such complex navigations through space are discussed by both and reveal that Sony Walkman users are reconstructing their environments through a technological and social method.

In relation to this research the examination of the everyday and how this shifts the everyday experience from a routine action to collaborative one with user, technology and interpersonal embodiment is essential to understanding my own recordings. The recordings presented in Appendix Two and explored through the final two chapters relay these local immersive moments by investigating the relationship to everyday notions of routines such as journeys, actions, memories and environments that are inhabited. The Sony Walkman reflects and reaffirms the central point which this research is hinged upon as the listening habits being reformed emphasise the notion that one event or device can change a culture or a habit. Immersion of course has always been a critical element of human music and noise for thousands of years but this moment in time and space is essential for us as humans living in urban environments now. Critical because routines shift daily with the use of technology and what is essential to understand is how the personal and reflective nature of such devices can impact a human life.

## Everyday and Routine

One of the main research aims I state is to explore the experience of the everyday, auditory experiences and the transition into sonic art and everyday life. Field recordists exploit this action of transferring recorded sounds from one environment to a structured experience, allowing the listener to comfortably inherit the noise at their leisure in their own personal space. Artist and writer Brandon LaBelle (2010) combines auditory everyday life, environmental and social concerns with perspectives on contemporary spatial theories in *Acoustic Territories/Sound Cultures and Everyday Life* (2010). Labelle gives a fluent account of varied perspectives of auditory experiences and knowledge in particular on contemporary society and representation of human resonance.

This aligns with significant authors David Toop (1995 & 2004) and Alan Licht (2007) who all emphasise the stochastic experience of sound, noise, silence, voices and music, engaging the readers and giving prime examples of major influences and key moments in the sonic trail that this thesis is in part investigating. As I demonstrated in phase one, for the previous sound work *Sound Received* (2008) I recorded a series of sounds that expressed my own immersed noise environments over a period of one year, the normality or realisation that ephemeral sounds experienced daily and the sonorous nature of environment cannot be duplicated but individually can be an experience as rich and immersive connecting with the urban lived-in space. LaBelle (2010) uses the term 'atmospheric pressure' (LaBelle 2010 p. 199) to describe architectural senses and the ephemeral nature of sound embodied throughout one's everyday experiences within built spaces. This is important to note as the experiences I have investigated are my own but are also common and not spectacular; however, utilising LaBelle's (2010) descriptions and the relationship between humans and the built space has endorsed further my theories of immersion in sound art and everyday life.

With these potentially controlled routine journeys through space, what was important to establish was how spaces are explored in the new discourse on sound art and the crossovers into everyday life. The following journals are critical in understanding the modern relationships between art, listeners and everyday environments where possible crossovers of immersion in sound art and everyday life become more apparent leading to new critical discourse about immersion. Brandon Labelle's *Sharing Architecture: Space, Time and the Aesthetics of Pressure* (2011) and Christoph Cox's *Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism* (2011) both explore alternate approaches to how sonic environments are written about and discussed. They conceptually rationalise paradoxes between the visual and the nature of any sonic spatial significance, questioning boundaries. Labelle (2011) tests these boundaries by exploring the body as a sonic structure and its impact on an acoustic space. By comparison Cox (2011) takes a different angle and examines sound in the routine sense of experiencing but similarly they arrive at the same point of the research. For example Cox (2011) states below that if we compare or consider sound as something that occurs not only to a human, both physically and mentally, but also interactions with environments. He proceeds to further ask for artistic works of sound to be reconsidered in terms of the actions and long-term impacts of artistic works.

If we proceed from sound, we will be less inclined to think in terms of representation and signification, and to draw distinctions between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, mind and matter, the symbolic and the real, the textual and the physical, the meaningful and the meaningless. Instead, we might begin to treat artistic productions not as complexes of signs or representations but complexes of forces materially inflected by other forces and force-complexes. We might ask of an image or a text not what it means or represents, but what it does, how it operates, what changes it effectuates.

(Cox 2011 p. 157)

In contrast, Labelle (2011), in his analysis of sonic structures and the reverberations between the body and the object, concludes that the everyday is a combination of the structural and an understanding of emotional projection in the examination of



routines of everyday sound. Such happenings are combinations that cannot be predicted but can begin to be viewed as the flow of sound through invisible waves passing through space and time in partnership with all things around including structural space and everyday routine experiences. Similarly Sean Cubitt's *Immersed in Time* (2007) is essential as it raises questions about the popular usage of the term immersion by elaborating on a diverse range of art forms. This work supports the better understanding of the term immersion in sound art and the current expansive research field of sound.

From the early origins of the term sound art, dating back to William Hellermann's *Sound Art Foundation* (1982), a constant evolution and dissolving of the term sound art has been occurring. This has been assisted by a set of artists, composers, writers and researchers heralding the prelude to current thinking on sound art including Erik Satie (1982), Arthur Pétronio (2007), John Cage (2000), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) and R. Murray Schafer (1977 & 1994) to note as important figures. I utilise their works, research and theories to further deconstruct then reconstruct my theories on immersion within a sonic trajectory through reflective practice and analytical findings. I adhere to a clear plan resulting in definitive clarification of immersion in everyday life and with artistic practice within a sonic work presented as part of the thesis to highlight this random or polluted subsonic highway of noise.

In the contemporary context, the sonic surroundings and changing perceptions in everyday life have been principally supported and celebrated by the research of R. Murray Schafer (1977 & 1994) in his work *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1977 & 1994). Schafer's (1977 & 1994) research explores human sonic experience from phases of nomadic living to city dwelling examining particular aspects of soniferous life. Schafer's (1977 & 1994) research is

mainly focused on being subject to unnecessary noise overloaded by blocking out or our ability to decipher or make distinctions through complex aural environments. At the start of phase two this work is positioned as crucial, since the use of findings about the everyday experience appeared to match much of my own research aims, although theoretically my research has positioned itself between an ethnographic study of personal experiences and the artistic, abstract and minimalistic directions my work has taken.

Practices of field recordists and the transplantation of sounds from their original source to an immersive environment and importantly Schafer's (1994) work on *The Vancouver Soundscape* (1973) inspire and inform the activity of soniferous fragmentation, discomfort and perception of acoustics in cityscapes. This is important to note as much of the research on perception has been comprehensively examined by Schafer (1994) utilising psychoanalytical research to distinguish what is the contextual meaning of visual perception in a soundscape. Perceptual meanings of sound have largely been the domain of the acoustic researchers such as Barry Truax (2001), who re-address and re-examines the behavioural understanding of *Acoustic Communication* (2001). Whereas traditional research methods have explored perception, it has been Schafer (1977 & 1994) and Truax (2001) who have searched deeper into the processes and behavioural perspectives of sonic studies being the prelude and inspiration for much of the research written today.

A key source of written materials and theories that directly follow on from Schafer's (1977 & 1994) and Truax's (2001) investigations into the sonic environment. From the article *Reflections on Sonic Environments* (2011) by Vincent Meelberg and Marcel Cobussen (2011) supports my work on the sounds of everyday and the composition of different sounds that engulf our daily personal environments. Salomé

Voegelin's (2012) short piece entitled *Ethics of Listening* (2012) perpetuates the difficult relationship between language, listening and perception; and finally Budhaditya Chattopadhyay's (2013) recent article *Auditory Situations: Notes from Nowhere* (2013) discusses problems of identifying one's locale within a sonic environment. These articles are critical to my work as they are all linked through the act of listening, difficulties of situations and deciphering relationships between the listener and the sonic environment.

### **Infinite Locality**

This research considers acts of listening as one of the essential elements that contribute to the experience of immersion in sound art and everyday life, raising philosophical questions about art and the everyday, particularly targeting one's own imaginative powers. The sound works that accompany this thesis that connects the theory and practice allows readers to relate their own personal experiences of immersion. The French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard (1964) has been described as having an '*unusual mind*' (Gilson cited in Bachelard, forward 1964), and with his philosophy on the "*intimate immensity*" (1964), which looks into the deeper route of inner grandeur, the human ability to transport the mind or daydream, as Bachelard (1964) states, the "*mark of infinity*" (Bachelard 1964 p. 183). He describes what originates within the expansion of our mind: by magnifying the imagination we experience infinity. Where times and space allow us to expand the environment beyond the restrictions of everyday scale. Critically this relationship between the theory and practice is bridged by examining Bachelard (1964) and how this expansion of the human mind is a key element when re-considering the impact of immersion on our everyday lives.

Rooted in my listening is the infinite imagination of grandeur that Bachelard (1964) terms and what I listen to over the time of the research happened organically. In my

previous research, what I have listened to has directed my own personal immersive journey throughout the work. Therefore in the discography are a number of sound pieces that through my own day to day experiences have all become relevant and as already discussed in the introduction all the works are an experience of my time spent researching with each work accorded the same importance. Key recordings, which have become essential to the research aim from the discography, start with the Alan Dunn (2008, 2009 & 2010) series of soundtracks that chart his journey through time and space with themes of morality, war, transport and mystery. Dunn's work passes through phase one of the research to present. Dunn's (2008, 2009 & 2010) soundtracks are important to this thesis, as the routine experiences of the local environments was critical for the recording process and research thereafter. Due to all my recordings being positioned in my local sphere through memory and routine everyday journeys the process of understanding their impact or significance in wider conceptual term was important to establish. My recordings are examples and demonstrations of my immersive experiences that illustrate the everyday immersive experiences. Achieving this through Bachelard's (1964) infinite prose raised philosophical questions that I discuss and analyse in Chapters Four and Five in greater depth.

One piece for example that is inspirational through my research is *433 Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (2008) and *A Collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (2008) that are two sonic works that encompass locality from Wirral-based artist Alan Dunn (2008). His sound pieces explore first the nature of one's own personal space and the second a space that was meant to exist for the community but now serves as a series of tunnels with much mystery surrounding them. With this locality having such an impact upon my work, what was important to further explore Dunn's (2008, 2009 & 2010) wider impact was that which transposes between art and everyday life.

Other critically selected works are cited throughout the thesis and disseminated accordingly in relation to immersion. Works of significance are by Chris Watson, *Weather Report* (2003), *Wild Song at Dawn* (2007) and *Outside the Circle of Fire*, (1998) and BJ Nilsen, *Fade to White*, (2003-2004), *The Invisible City* (2010) and *The Short Night* (2007) with a collaboration between these two artists entitled *Storm* (2006). The latter work offers an interesting opposition to some of the works with predominantly Watson's (2003) work utilising recorded sounds from the natural environment as apposed to Nilsen (2010) whose sonic pieces comprise recorded urban environments extensively treated electronically afterwards. Two recordings are included by acclaimed Concrète practitioner Francisco Lopez (2005 & 2006), *Wind [Patagonia]* (2005) and *Hysechasterion* (2006). Lopez (2012) believes immersion to be a vital element of his work, as stated in his interview for this thesis, often leaving the listeners to consider their own opinions without any backdrop or context to the recordings. By contrast, Chris Watson (2012) and BJ Nilsen (2012) inform listeners of exact locations, times and the ideology behind the work that alludes to context being vital to immerse the listener. The thesis includes a personal interview with Francisco Lopez (2012) revealing that he believes immersion to be a component of his work. I explore this further to deconstruct sound works and their respective methodology to examine the compression of sonic transplantation of recorded sounds from actual environments to fabricated ones.

In conclusion, engaging with sound art and everyday life through this interdisciplinary practice based thesis I present and reveal an innovative first hand exploration that examines and pervades the gaps in the critical theory of immersion. By utilising past theories and practices by Pierre Schaeffer (2013) and his use of the everyday auditory-recorded happenings I open the possibility to investigate theories of over fifty years old that are in need of re-thinking in modern contemporary research on the subject of immersion. R. Murray Schafer's (1977 & 1994) ground

breaking research is also considered now as in need of re-addressing as this does not take into consideration the technological advancements in collaboration with human cochlear manifestations. These two combined with John Cage's (1968) seminal philosophy about silence supports the shift currently taking place of contemporary research on the resonant happenings. Supporting this is the manner in which contemporary writers Seth Kim-Cohen (2009), Salomé Voegelin 2010 and Daniela Cascella (2012) approach the esoteric materials and findings of these previous theories. Foundations for allowing an ideology of noise to be re-considered as to how listening impacts the routine everyday open a path for my research to expand and adjust the gaps with the research of routine immersion.

Through the primary sourced interviews in this thesis as they illuminate a series of personal opinions and experiences that shift boundaries most predominantly in everyday sonorous life. Each interview as stated earlier charts a series of unique moments both through art and in personal instances that each participant contributed. These interviews can only enhance the recordings that present my immersed journeys, memories and events throughout this research timeframe from phase one to this thesis, phase two. By doing this I add a dimension of personal resonance that is unique and cannot be re-imaged by anyone other than myself. This however does not prevent the listener being empathetic to my immersive tones and considering the findings in this thesis for their own everyday routines and reverberating environments.

## **Methodology**

This interdisciplinary practice-led research has four soundworks recorded using a collection of devices that include mobile telephones, Mp3 players and location recorders. These recordings are accompanied by 13 original interviews from internationally and locally recognised artists, writers and curators conducted in personal meetings, skype discussions and correspondence via email.

To make the soundworks I used the following recording devices and microphones; Apple iPhone 4s, Apple iPod 30GB, Edirol R-09, HTC Wildfire, Nokia XpressMusic 5800, Olympus LS-100, Sony Ericsson W910i, Tascam HD-P2, Edirol CS-15 External Microphone, JrF Contact Microphone and JrF Hydrophone. The equipment used to accomplish the recordings allowed me to explore and critically analyse the term immersion in sound art and everyday sonorous life. This was achieved by close listening to each work and examining the roots of the term immersion and how each work presented evoked and illustrated memories from my aural past.

### **Hi-Fi/Lo-Fi**

The signals and clarity of each recorded piece is essential and reinforces the impact of what the term immersion means in sound art and everyday life. This is produced in the soundworks by illustrating the imperfect reverberations of each work. By employing this method, I have been able to demonstrate my immersive experiences and abstract memories. This also supports the main aim and objective that being immersed can occur in an instance within everyday sonic environments we exist in which are not perfect or edited, as with high fidelity (Hi-Fi), there is no purity of sounds present. All the recorded soundworks are low fidelity (Lo-Fi) where the recorded noise is unpredictable and even uncomfortable at certain points.

In the interviews Alan Dunn (2008 & 2001) whose work encapsulates local identity

from Merseyside and contains shifts of movement through a series of soundtracks gives two one-to-one interviews where he leads me down a trail that explores his immersive experiences. BJ Nilsen (2012), a sound artist who works across Europe, discusses in an email interview his insight and personal experiences of other artists who attempt to immerse him through their work. Field recordist and researcher Budhaditya Chattopadhyay (2014) in an email interview explains his conceptual framework and the expected immersive results in his work. Internationally acclaimed field recordist Chris Watson (2012) gives a personal one-to-one interview elaborating on key works that immerse audiences, participants and listeners. Christine Sun Kim (2012) discusses her influences and process of applying an immersive element through technology. Writer and curator Daniela Cascella (2013) in an email interview proposes new methods by which to consider aural immersive environments and alternative perspectives on the term immersion from literature and everyday life.

In contrast, media historian David Hendy (2013) talks through his methodological approaches and the historical context of immersion from everyday life to music. Artist Hildegard Westerkamp (2014), whose research is best known for being part of the World Soundscape Project (1977 & 1994), talks explicitly in an email interview about pivotal moment from her experiences of being immersed that was not just happening in her art but through being present in a unique group talking about sound. Internationally renowned recordist Francisco Lopez (2012) discusses in email correspondence shifts between his ideology on immersion with the use of audio software and advanced technology as key elements to immerse audiences in his works. Installation artist Markus Soukup (2013) presents key examples of other artists' work that have influenced him and asks key questions about the term immersion. Artist Matthew Herbert (2014) talks about his hopes for his work when considering it immersive and what he wants to achieve by others listening to his



work. Local curator Ross Dalziel (2012) discusses key sonic works and the issues he believes that surround sound art whilst stating the problematic affirmations of immersion within gallery spaces. Finally, artist Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) describes instances when he became immersed whilst recording and highlights major components of his work, outlining what his recordings set out to achieve.

Each interview is an insight into the practitioners' personal descriptions and uses of the term immersion through their recordings, personal experiences of other artists' works with insightful and occasionally provocative uses of the word. These interviews feed into the chapters with parallels drawn between artists, theories and influences that have gone onto shape my own sonorous everyday recordings.

Obvious disparity emerges from interviews that reflect the current research field and the evolving sonic contemporary shifts, everyday life and issues concerning the ways in which sounds hypothesise us as humans within our soniferous environments. It is important to note that though some of the works discussed in the interviews appear only to offer examples, these do not constitute a conclusive list of works, neither an ideology defining immersion, but act as an expanding field of exploration and experimentation that will take my practice and research beyond this doctoral study as an on-going interdisciplinary ethnographic project.

Four recordings of my own personal immersive journey that I started recording in 2011 form an essential accompaniment to these primary sourced interviews. Alongside the interviews I immersed myself in the sonorous environments of everyday life to further expand and investigate my personal immersed instances.

The first sound piece *Garage Chamber* (2014) examines routines of everyday actions and challenges the term soundscape. The second soundwork *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) explores surrounding everyday elements that have

resonating impacts. The third soundwork *Terminal* (2011-2013) examines immersion through repetition and travel. The final practical piece *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) examines memories from past/present in relation to immersive accounts or manifestations. The soundworks all convey arguments presented in their respective chapters. Each soundwork explores immersion from different experiences and environments emanating specific moments in my sonorous life. These are also accompanied by a further three recordings: *Sounds from 7A, 16 and 10* (2007 - 2014) that was part of an exhibition entitled Home (2014) in Liverpool's Bridewell Studios and part of the Late Night event organised by Liverpool Biennial. *Imagined, Immersed and Dissolved Soundscapes* (2007-2014) was a sound piece, which formed part of the conference paper of the same title and presented at the Early Modern Soundscapes Symposium at Bangor University. *Terminal (0.59)* (2014) that formed part of a listening event entitled Do Not Feed Birds and friends present... Listen Hear! (2014) was presented at The Old Rose Lipman Library, London. In early 2007 I began recording my own personal routine sonorous journeys that included travelling to and from work, shopping in supermarkets, waiting for lifts and conversations. To record these unique and multiple immersive environments I use a number of devices (See Appendix Seven) including mobile phones and location recorders. This was necessary to examine the roots of my continuing research paradigm that included recording the imperfections of the sonorous every day. Instead of using advanced technology to record I chose to expand upon the recorded sound piece from original approach that emanates from phase one, *Sound Received* (2008) where I began this research trail. The practice-led rationale was that by recording the everyday, or more explicitly my every day, I could convey what I was aiming towards in terms of investigating immersion in sound art that eventually morphed, unintentionally at first, towards the intersections between art and routine everyday experiences.

Phase one was committed to recording using everyday devices such as mobile phones, iPods and tape recorders, which I successfully completed and present as part of the practical aspect of the work. Here, I follow the same route in using such devices (See Appendix Seven) instead of the traditional location recorder, which arguably does produce higher quality sound recordings but throughout the recording process I have been as spontaneous as possible, only recording when the noise presented itself to me. Therefore, a totally unique blend of ad hoc, improvised and experimental recordings are presented in the final section of the third chapter entitled *Doorframes and Sheds* that re-examines the use of the term 'soundscape' (See Appendix Five), and is accompanied by a visual work as a result of an expedition taken whilst on a three day research exploration along the River Mersey. In the final two chapters, which are practice-led and have come about as a result of the examination in the first three chapters, I present the *Electrification of an Environment* (Chapter Four) and *Sonic Tracks – Anthrophony* (Chapter Five), signifying and displaying my own personal immersed noise. The recordings contain all the mechanics from recording process with little or minimal editing that allows microphone noise, environmental elements and essentially that of me as the recordist present.

### **Everyday Routines**

As stated earlier in the methodology, this on-going project mirrors the ethnographic element of the work and capturing the sonorous everyday experience is a vital mechanism that forms part of how lives are lived and explored. Ethnographic researcher Sarah Pink (2001, 2004 & 2012) examines the fundamental understandings of modern life and the everyday in her works *Doing Visual Ethnography* (2001), *Home Truths: Gender, domestic objects and everyday life* (2004) and *Situating Everyday Life* (2012). With rapidly expanding media, which sensory ethnographic researchers are now using in representation rather than the

traditional film, video and photography, Pink (2001, 2004 & 2012) offers a clear and contemporary insight into everyday life by using a multi-disciplinary approach utilising other forms of research including sensory and design. Similarly I have utilised personal and ordinary devices that are readily available; a large proportion of people own a mobile device. This offered me the unique opportunity to further explore and examine immersion in everyday routine contexts, as I did not want the work to be purified by editing software or any over-production.

## **Language**

Critically, one aspect that I expose as a feature in the research writing is establishing the use of auditory wordings (See Appendix Five) within the thesis in order to define the interrelating crossovers of sound arts in everyday sonorous life. Subsequently, the works examined proved problematic at the early stages in terms of defining sound art and writing about sound art and interconnecting with everyday life as many artists found this relationship difficult to bridge, often alienating listeners and audiences. Though the world of sound is infinitely complex, for this thesis I use auditory words where possible and appropriate to describe sound/soundings that exist in the sonic pieces researched throughout (See Appendix Five). These auditory words allow one to express the meaning of sound/soundings and as Pauline Oliveros (2011) states:

You might begin to notice how your attention changes when you use auditory terms instead of visual terms to speak about sound. Your dreams may become richer and soniferous. Your environment might come alive with sounds formerly unnoticed. The ear tells the eye where to look and the eye sometimes silences the ear.  
(Oliveros 2011 p.167)

This list of words (See Appendix Five), if utilised in everyday audible life and through this research would possibly seem alien; however, by doing so and adding to the list would mean discussing sound as a somatic body. By considering these words in my research and speaking in auditory terms the landscape of the research becomes

richer and more immersive. This list of primary auditory words is essential to creating an audible landscape that allows the recording and the body of the thesis to be merged, opening a clear verbal path for readers and listeners to explore their own auditory imagination and question the main thesis aims of immersion in everyday life whether individually or collaboratively.

Similarly as with auditory wordings, I include a list of soundscape terms (See Appendix Five), developed, published and used by R. Murray Schafer (1977 & 1994). Though not traditional in acoustic terms this list enables me to decipher the sonic works more coherently; by using this method I keep within the parameters of art and banal everyday rather than any scientific notions of sound. These acoustic terms are positioned and used within the sphere of the everyday. In fact since Schafer's (1994) research was published his terminology has become the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries' essential meanings for a host of sonic works. This I believe to be as essential as the language Schafer (1994) uses assists us to understand the soundscapes we live amongst as discussed in Chapter Three. For example, one term, *Schizophonia* (See Appendix Five) describes sounds that have been electronically recorded and placed somewhere else and in Chapter Two this becomes a relevant notion to consider because as discussed the simple task of recording then replaying is not necessarily straightforward and this becomes apparent through the interviews.

As a means of further delimiting sites of soundscape enquiry, I examine the methodological concepts of Salomé Voegelin (2010) to further instigate discourse on the term soundscape. This shift moves forward and draws upon contemporary links between listening and routine every day and considers listening, where hearing is the present, but also affected by the temporal, past, present and future all merging allowing us hearing humans to survey the soniferous landscape. This interaction

with the resonating environment is not simply a one-way practice; there are a number of factors that embody listening and I take a similar methodological route as Voegelin (2010), who states that: “Every sensory interaction relates back to us not the object/phenomenon perceived, but that object/phenomenon filtered, shaped and produced by the sense employed in its perception” (Voegelin 2010 p. 3). Explicitly, the ‘object/phenomenon filtered’ (Voegelin 2010 p. 3) is a principal characteristic that defines perception and experience within an immersive sonic environment.

To start this exploration, the first chapter, entitled Immersion, examines the theoretic backdrop to immersion in sound art and the everyday.

## Chapter One: Immersion

The man in the kitchen of number sixteen hears her voice again, saying darling can't you reach me can't you, and the plate in his scarred hand shakes and spills toast crumbs to the floor. He has no way of making silence, so he concentrates instead on the sound of his daughter dancing lightly up the stairs. She is singing a song she has heard on the radio, he listens but he does not recognize it. He puts the plate in the sink, he tidies the other things, the lids on the jam and the honey, the margarine in the fridge, the knives and the cups in the sink. He could not, he tried but he could not reach her.

(McGregor 2003 p. 114)

This ontology of the echo, as I'm suggesting, partially makes unintelligible the original sound. In this way, it operates as an acousmatic even that has the particular effect of "decentering" focus.

(LaBelle 2010 p. 40)

This scene above of a daily routine in abnormal circumstances might confuse the reader's notions of what could be classified as a straightforward sense of vibration.

The metaphor McGregor creates, "He tidies the other things, the lids on the jam and the honey, the margarine in the fridge, the knives and the cups in the sink"

(McGregor 2003 p.144) assumes the role of the everyday normal sonic reverb but these everyday routines signal the end of any everyday routine. The man is concentrating on what he can do so he can hear through a tunnel of relative noise and immersing himself in a moment of personal uncertainty in what LaBelle calls "...decentering focus." (LaBelle 2010 p. 40): everything around becomes an unbearable mass of noise and through ordinary routines allows the man to be immersed in a moment of thoughtful intent.

To begin an investigation into the immersive auditory experience, this chapter examines varying contemporary critiques, or lack of them, and examples of key immersive sonic artists and daily events that have shaped what we perceive to be immersion. Drawn from everyday life and pivotal immersive personal relationships

as illustrated by McGregor (2003) and LaBelle (2010) that are connected to sound and asking: What is immersion? The following examples range from a collection of the most well-known works to less recognisable pieces. These selected works also combined with the interviews, with critical assumptions made of where the term immersion is positioned within the interviewee's own paradigm. This then allows the critical research and dissemination to reposition the findings for immersion and the interpersonal phonetic structures of each selected work. There are personal narratives attached to each work examined that are essential for laying the foundations for original immersive discourse. Emanating from the work and interviews are findings that emphasise and embody distractions by noise that collide with a resonant structures, presenting a challenge or obstacle that contains an experience full of meaning and transformation.

In contemporary art exhibitions audiences are informed they will be immersed or will feel immersed in the work of art. This, I would argue, is an ambiguous claim to make for any artwork without considered planning and reflection. What does to be immersed actually mean? Are we to be plunged into a tank of water or have sound and light blasted at our senses? To demonstrate this ambiguity I have reflected from notes taken whilst visiting an exhibition in November 2011 at Liverpool's FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology). This was an exhibition of work by artist Kurt Hentschläger entitled *ZEE* (2011). Before entering the space visitors had the opportunity to read the following statement:

*ZEE* is an artwork that invites the gallery visitor to enter a space, which is both immersive and abstract. As the viewer has very little to 'view' in the traditional sense – there are no points of reference, nothing representational, no object – the viewer becomes a participant in an experience that is stimulated by light. By creating this condition and controlling the spatial environment, the artist Kurt Hentschläger gives us the opportunity to feel 'being' in ourselves – bringing our consciousness to the fore.  
Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (2011) Kurt Hentschläger –



Utilising my subjective sense of immersion that I had developed within my own consciousness I realised that I was being transfixed by a space where environmental factors such as the temperature were masking the true reflection that Hentschläger (2011) was intending for *ZEE* (2011). Hentschläger (2011) was expecting to eliminate time and space within the darkness; to magnify the conditions by hindering the audience visual senses. Elimination of space and time is a significant method to focus or magnify elements and by presenting a bare habitat Hentschläger (2011) does not immerse the audience within their own consciousness but dismantles the immersion he is exploring. This is done predominantly in partnership with the flexible exhibition spaces such as in FACT with the inclination to explore the actual functions of the spaces rather than the subject matter rendering the artwork just an additional plugin for the multi-functional space. Any form of immersion arrives at the cost of the technology as demonstrated with *ZEE* (2011) and this is a significant point to emphasis in this discussion because immersion is considered critical with all the artists interviewed for this thesis so surely immersion means more than an add-on for a multi-faceted space.

In the next section of this thesis, I demonstrate that immersion is a deep-rooted element that comes from the artist and the listener/viewer of the work emanating not only from everyday life but as a tool used by artists to enhance their reflections of the sonorous world. Original insights illuminate the diversity that the term immersion evokes amongst the interviewees for this thesis. Throughout this chapter I have engaged with this range of personal experiences from artists, writers and curators that significantly opens further discourse on immersion in sonic arts and everyday routine life.

In the interviews the participants were asked the question “Do you consider your art practice or the work you research to be immersive”? Below are a selection of answers from David Hendy (2013), Francisco Lopez (2012), Chris Watson (2012) and Daniela Cascella (2013).

Some of the ingredients of a soundscape are human-made, others natural, but few of those I study have been created as works of art in-and-of themselves, even if some of them (e.g. the interior acoustic of a cathedral) have sublime, unsettling, or at least interesting aesthetic qualities. In any case, I think of these soundscapes – whether natural and chaotic, or at least partly shaped by humans – to be very much immersive: in the physical sense of surrounding us, but also in the broader intellectual and emotional sense of being woven into the fabric of existence to the point where we don't quite notice them as separate entities, just part of 'existence', part of 'being in the world'.

(Kent, J. Interview with David Hendy, 2013, 30<sup>th</sup> August, Email)

I do most of my environmental recordings with multiple microphones and for my live performances and sound installations I typically use multi-channel surround systems around the audience (from quad up to hundreds of speakers), with blindfolds provided for voluntary individual darkness. All those elements naturally create a dramatically reinforced immersive experience of listening.

(Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email)

It [Immersion] is a crucial part of the engagement with my work so that sense of immersion I would gauge in many ways to the relative success of the work and how people felt about the work and whether or not they felt immersed in any particular environment.

(Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012, Skype)

'Immersive' is a wide-reaching adjective that can cover so many aspects of an aesthetic experience.

(Kent, J. Interview with Daniela Cascella, 2013, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, Email)

David Hendy (2013) from his perspective as a cultural writer on noise, explaining that immersion can be considered as simply a presence that has been part of the story of noise throughout the history of sonic experience. Hendy (2013) tells us that immersion has always been an element when considering noise and this is important as immersion informs us that at different stages of human evolutionary cycles from social to technological shifts, immersion is something that is part of the wider story. This further enhances the parameters of this thesis by examining

immersion during a specific moment in time and space. Magnification of a particular time leads to an examination of the possibility of reinforcing immersion by using, as Francisco Lopez (2012) does, certain elements such as blindfolds together with his manipulation of technology to greatly enhance an immersive experience. Lopez (2012) is known for his use of sensory manipulation whether it is changing the line of sight or altering the cochlear parameters to have an effect on his participants and this explicitly tells us that Lopez (2012) wants to achieve moments of audience immersion through a manipulation of senses. This then removes the routine everyday personalisation of immersion that I am focusing on and as with Kurt Hentschläger's (2011) work *ZEE* (2011), this becomes a further add-on or plug-in emanating from technology.

Shifting away from the manipulation of audiences with the usage of technology is Chris Watson (2012) who gauges success by what the audience senses about his work, immersion being one of the prime factors. Watson (2012) wants the listeners to engage with through the richness of the recorded sound by appreciating the depth of noise particularly through the narratives he builds in his recorded works. Daniela Cascella (2013), one of the most thought provoking writers in contemporary sonic culture, describes how immersion belongs to various facets of the arts. Cascella (2013) reaffirms, like Hendy (2013) that immersion does not just belong to now but throughout time and space immersion is attached and exists in many different forms, as in the everyday routine that this thesis has examined.

Each answer hails the diversity to understanding the immersive trail ahead with each one having alternative thoughts and patterns on the subject of immersion. Hendy (2013) and Cascella (2013) who are both contemporary writers in the field of sound, noise and cultural impacts refer to immersion in terms of everyday living whereas the artists Lopez (2012) and Watson (2012) refer to immersion through

their practice and the methods attached that have led to the two key areas used throughout in art and everyday life with crossovers and distortions examined. This is essential when considering the practical works created for the thesis as they convey the message of routines and of sharing a collaborative sense of immersion.

*Hidden Experience (Non-Perfect)* examines imperfect and chance experiences with comparisons to the pre-designed ones that an artist employs to immerse an audience, such as Francisco Lopez (2012). I present examples to examine the different types of immersion that artists experience and use in their work. This is followed by the subsection *Red Herrings* with interviews and individual immersive happenings that explore the perceived tone of immersion within sound art, debating towards a clearer understanding as to why immersion in sound art is viewed as, and possibly is, an overused term, appearing to be a critically important element in the sonic arts. Following on from *Red Herrings* I examine the personal relationships that have informed and offer further discourse towards a deeper understanding of immersion in sound art. *Re-Imagining the (Immersive) Past* examines one's own relationship with sound and the difficulties in tracing them back to one's own immersive past. Finally, this chapter examines how all these different forms of immersion from personal, mechanical, pre-designed or the occurring by chance have impacted on everyday life and the sonic arts. In the following section I have laid the foundations when considering personal resonating immersive experiences that arrive through life using Karlheinz Stockhausen's (1989) past happening as key to his future works.

### **Consequential Beginnings**

Daily routines compared to the acousmatic experience become ever clearer in forms of personal experience, for example when we hear the next-door neighbours slamming doors or practicing hand bells. This then becomes an immersive

experience or as Brandon Labelle describes earlier as "...decentering" focus (LaBelle 2010 p 40). The immersive scene occurring at the beginning of this chapter in Jon McGregor's *If nobody speaks of remarkable things* (2003) is defined through much of the regular or routine occurrences that appear to be taking place. The natural desire to want silence or block out or control in order to shield unwanted reverberations emanating from one's present then defining what lays ahead is a notable point in this immersive exploration of contemporary sonic art. The need to control noise in our personal environment emanates from the noise of the everyday such as traffic, office environments, television and radios. Such controlled environments create false spaces of silence and the importance and value of past memories echoing in everyday life adds weight to personal immersion occurring and transforming everyday spaces and thoughts. To demonstrate this alternative immersive experience I point to Karlheinz Stockhausen's (1989) own memories that draw upon from turbulent childhood living under forced Gestapo observation and the impact of those experiences on his later works. He talks about the noises, many from terrified American soldiers captured and taken to hospital, influencing his own notions of sound.

So what separates the routine everyday sounds and the sounds of fear and anxiety that Stockhausen describes? The impact of that experience on Stockhausen (1989) had lasting effects throughout his life and in the narratives present in his compositions and ideology. A performance at St Paul de Vence Music festival in the south of France was from Stockhausen's (1989) self-proposed *Intuitive Music* (1989) entitled *Unlimited* (1989) with a simple accompanying text instructing, "Play a sound with the certainty that you have an infinite amount of time and space" (Maconie 1989 p.116). This piece lasted several hours sometimes with one musician or just a vacant space, altering over the course of the performance. Stockhausen (1989) discusses the inspiration for this work around this period as methods for expressing

his musical mind; even though not many of his contemporaries at the time agreed with the direction of his compositions, his past aural life experiences fed through into his ideas. He knew that unassuming small changes to traditional forms of performance would alter or capture the attention of the festival guests, like the noise of soldier's recourse. In this performance at St Paul de Vence (1989) the musicians would walk off into the forest and then reappear to perform in the courtyard. As a space, the courtyard became a singular focus of passing moments in space and time, full of hidden immersive experience from Stockhausen's (1989) past. The constructed immersive experiences that Stockhausen (1989) creates are critical as they emphasise the temporal routine everyday one illustrating an instant and deep-rooted impact throughout his life. Stockhausen (1989) encourages the performers to be spontaneous within restraints becoming critical mass of the space and time. By positioning the performance in the environment he chose, scale become the signifier where each movement is enhanced and becomes this singular focus creating this intense performance.

So does this type of experience transfer into other artists' work like a pre-disposed requisite for immersive success? The simple answer would be no, as the interviews for this thesis demonstrate. Artist Francisco Lopez (2012) states that immersion exists as a component of his works through variations of methods that included altering his participants' senses such as using blindfolds and varying light; so why does Lopez (2012) need to change the sensory field of the participant? Lopez describes the way that altering what his participants experience goes on to "...naturally create a dramatically reinforced immersive experience of listening" (Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email). Lopez (2012) records, sometimes not being present at the recorded source, then aims to construct the immersive foundations after the event. Lopez (2012) implicitly states that immersion is an element that exists in art and by using postproduction software

allowing artists to make alterations that create diversions of immersion. This informs us that immersion for some artists like Lopez (2012) then is a tool to manipulate the audience or create another element of their work that had not previously existed.

Unlike Lopez (2012) the following section *Hidden Experience (Non-Perfect)* explores moments of sonic situ where the impacts resonate extensively throughout the works and question human relationships to the environment around us arriving from unexpected places or via chance happenings. This leads into the examination of juxtaposed attitudes by exploring the personal impacts across art and routine everyday life. Critically what is evident is the personalised immersive experience instead of over-produced, heavy-laden layers of indistinguishable noises.

### **Hidden Experience (Non-Perfect)**

Within the hidden experiences two artists interviewed offer contrasting examples of this through their works and methods. Comparing Francisco Lopez (2012) with artist Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) and the immersive elements present in their respective works, first, as already stated, Lopez (2012) will exploit the sensory field of the audience and this informs us that immersion is considered as simply an easy trick to capture audiences or change the thought patterns. By contrast, Hegarty (2013) describes how one of his works he believes evokes a form of immersion and to illustrate the difference compares it with the type of manipulated immersion Lopez applies.

In the sound work *Duet for Radio*, a covert recording of a telephone conversation with my mother is edited, removing my own voice and replacing it with static silence of telephonic communication. The duration of this silence is reduced and/or extended, so at times my mother's seems to be speaking to herself, whilst at others, she disappears into the absence of her own forgetting. The silence also begins to implicate the listener in the lack of reply. *Their* silence becomes part of the conversation, as they listen to themselves not speaking and hear *their* silence merge with the other silences present.

(Kent, J. Interview with Sebastiane Hegarty, 2013, 24<sup>th</sup> July, Email)

Hegarty (2013), above, explains his method of adding or manipulating a layer that inspires immersion in the experience of the listening to *Duet for Radio* (2012). Is this any different to Lopez's (2012) method of manipulation? The key difference that separates the artists is the personalisation of the work rather than the perceived outcome. Hegarty's (2013) recorded sound of his mother in *Duet for Radio* (2012) is an apparition speaking as though you are sitting in front of her and filling in the manipulated gaps of silence. This is critical to note in the routine everyday immersion I have explored, since while with Lopez (2012) there is a changing of parameters, the actual recording from Hegarty (2013) emanates from a raw source of intimate personalisation that listeners can relate to more readily rather than being asked to relinquish one of their senses as with Lopez's (2012) many works. *Duet for Radio* (2012) is a work of manipulation too with gaps of silence altered but this only goes to draw listeners further in to the recording and resulting in an enhanced series of uncomfortable realisations. Listeners offer no answers, neither can they ask any questions in return, but can consider their own spectrum of listening through fictions, stories and environments. Hegarty (2013) offers more than just one moment of immersion throughout his work that happened to be part of the recording process.

Hegarty (2013) goes on to describe one moment of immersion whilst recording for a work entitled *Resistance #4* (2013):

I attached two contact microphones to a wire fence, pressed record and released pause. The sudden hum of air passing over the wire enveloped me in an emerging harmonic soundscape, inaudible to those around me. The sound at once *distanced* me from the situation, whilst absorbing me into it, rubbing out the visual boundaries of fence and skin and immersing me in the landscape I could hear appearing to disappear.

(Kent, J. Interview with Sebastiane Hegarty, 2013, 24<sup>th</sup> July, Email)

Interestingly, what occurs both by recording the sound and being present in the environment, Hegarty (2013) explains how he became immersed in the surrounding soundscape, repositioning his listening intent, creating a unique moment recorded



and echoed in the final work. *Non-perfect* is an unbounded chance of immersion happening at one particular moment, personal and resonant that renders *Resistance #4* (2013) a work where individual or solidarity of experience is at the core of the piece. Stockhausen (1989) also exploited from his aural past and this impinged upon his legacy of compositions. Such occurrences are not necessarily as profound but can be equally reverberant. So compared to Stockhausen's (1989) *Unlimited* (1989), which at the core was a pre-constructed event with aspects of imperfection from the musicians walking on and as with Hegarty (2013) the audience can be captured and enveloped by the soundscape, but this happens without any pre conditioned composition. The immersion here is both an aspect rooted in the listening and aural presence of their past.

So these otherwise ordinary aural routines are interrupted by unexpected events or occurrences, like a traditional performance or a soundscape recording altered and thus turning our temporal attention to the present; we are immersed in an environment or amidst chance happenings of immersion. So as Sean Cubitt (2007) comments on immersion:

...familiar experience from the history of private silent reading, and more recently from the apparent mismatch between the time experienced watching a film and the hours that have gone by unnoticed when we emerge from the cinema into the street, immersion in narrative forms has been an available escape from quotidian stress, and the butt of humour, for centuries.

(Cubitt 2007 p. 222)

So conventionally immersion has been described by such definitions, however, if we examine what Salomé Voegelin (2010) describes as the "...sonic life-world that we inhabit, with or against our will, generating its complex unity" (Voegelin 2010 p. 11). In this sense then, immersion is not something that has materialised over the past 100 years but since we could draw, paint, dance or ring bells. Sound is immersive and the experience of being immersed at cinemas, concert halls, festivals or arenas

is simply part of the story and one that is easier to accept in terms of how we perceive to be influenced by a such large scale events being projected from interior spaces.

First, an examination of comparisons and parallels between everyday lives and how artists' works, for example, those of James Turrell (Cubitt 2007), illustrate light and perception for the viewer in order to inspire contemplation. The immersion that Cubitt (2007) is trying to gain distance from is the conventional forms that he talks about, for example, the passing of time spent immersed in an activity. Being invited to be part of an event, occasion and happening simply creates a structure to become immersed in a work of art or a collective gathering. Rather, he invites the reader to consider other aspects of immersion like repetition or euphoria but critically points toward the dangers of new media and immersion as possibly having a negative aspect. Cubitt (2007) draws from artists' desires and methods to send audiences into pre-conditioned spaces, expecting overwhelming use of elements to saturate the audience or listener.

Cubitt (2007) does this by considering James Turrell's (2007) light works and installations, participation in relation to the act of what could be described as a *happening*, such works invite viewers to experience the work beyond the normal parameters of a painting or sculptures. Turrell (2007) is working towards a purity of form or an act of seeing the sublime in his works with light and colour and in *Milk Run* (1996) (See fig. 2), a series of works by the same artist, the use of colour is explored to offer the audience the opportunity to experience stark visions of colour within a room of near complete darkness. Eventually when audience members' eyes begin to adjust, shades of colour appear from one end of the room projecting vivid shades onto the retina with a purity akin to swimming in the ocean for the first time, when you feel the salty water coat your body, the true immense power surrounding

the minuscule human form.

Significantly, much of the analysis of James Turrell's (2007) art and how the structure allows audiences to absorb events from his work goes relatively unnoticed by visitors to his work and it is more commonly described in terms of a specific contemplation, quiet or considered. However, Cubitt further observes that, "Such immersion Turrell believes to be primal, an effect of the externality of the eye, its emergence into the world, its receptivity, the first pleasure of illumination, even before the appreciation of movement." (Cubitt 2007 p. 220)

Cubitt (2007) continues to discuss immersion as a tool and creative practice having no fixed time in the history of art with discussions in this field being relatively new in terms of how perception of a variation of art works and ideologies have been pieced together in recent contemporary times. Like Stockhausen (1989), the everyday is a vital cog in his works; the similarities between Turrell's *Milk Run* (1996) and *Unlimited* (1989) are not strikingly apparent but rooted deeply in both works, perception and familiarity that affects the audience, the 'primal' that Turrell (2007) elaborates on. This also leaves open the possibilities of immersion being utilised as a deception to coax audiences into the work or environment, suggesting that somehow being immersed will enhance the feeling of engagement with works and spaces leaving the core ideals vulnerable to elaborate insincere immersive notions. In this section I have discussed that immersion emanates through time and can be present in an artists work, like Stockhausen (1989), through past events. In the next section I'll discuss this disparate notion of immersion from above. This could be described as a forgery that does not come from a life experience but through technological fetishes.

## Red Herrings

Hal Forster's (2004) observation that one such technique that has been manipulated to form a type of immersion is to overwhelm the audience, as with James Turrell's (1996 & 1989) light and space works. "It seems phenomenological, but its phenomenology is somehow *faux*" (Forster 2004 p. 327). Hal Forster (2004) notes a major difference between being immersed and what other artists will use to give the feeling of being part of the work or to make you become overawed by their work. Stockhausen (1989) invited the audience into his sonorous world using their memories and conceptions of the soundscape, unlike Turrell (1996 & 1989) who applies a sense of being overawed or consumed by the light and space throughout.

Phenomenological resurgence in contemporary literature towards thinking about art and contemplation has resulted in many considerations of how distraction is a major part of art even before any technological multi-media influence that changes what the spectator is experiencing:

...one term is bound up with another that it opposes. And there is such dialectic of de/materialization in art after Minimalism, and a stress on the phenomenological does recur whenever the object in question – the art, the body, the space – seems to be too virtualized.  
(Forster 2004 p. 330)

Forster (2004) asserts that immersion can be borne out of "...technological enhanced interactivity..." (Forster 2008 p. 328), whereas audiences taking part in the work can find themselves having an enjoyable experience, resulting from the actual space itself causing the audience to find themselves in a space out of normal context. A recent similar experience occurred to me whilst touring the Liverpool Biennial 2012 in the old Royal Mail Sorting Office, Copperas Hill. I felt a great sense of size and of the privilege to be allowed access to this building, with the result that the installations and paintings became secondary; I stumbled upon this space, and as I was not being confronted by the art, it became a distraction and I was immersed

in that body of space. Taken away from the art positioned within the vast space I noted the effect of my own reactions to each work and the element of disappointment all originated in the interaction between the space and works. Gaston Bachelard (1964) says that the imagined space is an observation, exaggerated and underlined by the reaction of the viewer. So my reaction was one of exaggeration where the space took control of my senses.

In an interview with local artist and curator Ross Dalziel (2012) I asked him about his intentions and process of transferring environmental sounds from the natural soundscape to an interior immersive one. He argued that:

I think there is a misguided tendency in sound art to believe that sound is somehow a pure material outside of discourse and language and to reproduce it within a 'pure' immersive environment is an essentially transformative and profound act.  
(Kent, J. Interview with Ross Dalziel, 2012, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012, Email)

What, then, is the 'pure' environment that Dalziel (2012) describes in reference to re-positioning of sound from one environment to another? Sound as discussed in the methodology polarises discourse, challenging authors on how to tell the story of sound art. So this 'pure' environment resembles Turrell's (1996 & 1989) light works and goes onto give the impression that such sanitised sharply designed meditated spaces do not challenge audiences or even give justice to the works and ideas being projected.

For example, as Stockhausen's (1989) personal performance compositions are capable of communicating when we consider immersion and sound art in particular, sound is something that is not about one's relationship to an object or between two things but about the relationship with what is listened to. If we take Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) recording in the Cley Marshes, Norfolk, for his piece *Resistance #4*

(2013) and we use what Dalziel (2012) says is the misconception, that such a transformative act is a red herring within sound art, I would temper this statement from Dalziel (2012) by adding the words of R. Murray Schafer (1977): “Since no sound can be present at all places at once, aural space is to be regarded merely as potential” (Schafer 1977 p. 115). This anticipation of potential from an auditive space is a positive understanding of soundscapes, for example when Hegarty (2013) was enveloped by the harmonic soundscape. James Turrell's (2007) formative design, on the other hand, with invitations for audiences to experience immersion through a pre-determined, design-led space leaves sparse potential to be intuitive or to be a random act. Perhaps this occurs in prose, but importantly, the soundscapes recorded from the environment offer greater randomness and potential immersion. It was not Hegarty's (2013) figurative relationship to the surrounding landscape but the sounds he heard that immersed him whilst focusing on the random sonic sonosphere.

This relationship where randomness and chance immersive moments are possible shifts the discussion onto tracing our sonorous lives, whether diminutive or extreme, from events from the past in memory, stories and fictions. In the next section *Re-Imagining the (Immersive) Past* I outline how individual experiences are critical from the position of an artist and how these important instances then transfer onto the audience through the work.

### **Re-Imagining the (Immersive) Past**

Being connected and listening to the past is a reciprocal exercise, Salomé Voegelin (2010) suggests: “This knowing is the experience of sound as temporal relationship” (Voegelin 2010 p. 5). Working in conjunction, creating small ripples that eventually become large swirls of the uncontrollable character of ones aural past; this is an expressiveness partnership when considering sound and Re-Imagining the

(Immersive) Past, seemingly fleeting or as Voegelin (2010) describes as ‘temporal’ that suggests whilst noises skip in and out of one’s life, actual life experience allows us to re-imagine sound. Stockhausen’s (1989) aural past is evident throughout his compositions and his rigorous discipline as he explains whilst talking about his childhood:

In January 1942 I was put into a national academy for training teachers. It was complete isolation, everything militaristic, uniform, no civilian condition...The whole day was completely organized; there was not a single hour left unaccounted for in the collective schedule.  
(Maconie 1989 p. 19)

For his part, Stockhausen (1989) has stated that this experience and strict training had an impact on how he approached much of his work but more specifically his relationship with re-engaging his aural past. Speaking more specifically about his time spent translating and playing music for injured American and English soldiers, times of forgotten morality, as Stockhausen (1989) describes, “There was always food available, they weren’t lacking for that, but it was when they felt their lives no longer had any meaning that they liked to have me play for them” (Maconie 1989 p. 22). So, he quickly realised that sound was deep-rooted in the human condition, a saviour or release for a man with nothing or little left at stake.

Interestingly, in *Artificial Reality II* (1991), Myron W. Krueger (1991) states that sound is important to our sense of self, and without recognisable sounds in our lives we will ignore or block out such sounds even if these sounds do not necessarily generate perceived fruitful undertones. Stockhausen (1989) chose not to block out sounds of soldiers screaming in agony or their fear of being tortured by German officers and thus he had a deep understanding of how him playing music for the wounded men could support their own incomprehensible position. These events enhanced further the understanding Stockhausen (1989) had for sound and what he could achieve through his compositions. By delving deep into the roots of some of

the most significant composers – Schoenberg (1989), Berg (1989), Stravinsky (1989) and Bartók (1989) – he transcended beyond other 20<sup>th</sup> century composers and immersed himself fully in his work. Listening to his work, one can appreciate the depth of exploration that has contributed to such a sublime collection of compositions. Immersion then, when considering Stockhausen's (1989) work, is generated from his aural past, influential events and circumstances that transpired to be key elements in his ideology and conceptual framework.

While I illustrate immersion as a broad ranging term here, as discussed in the introduction, what is also essential is a consideration of the various qualities and definitive characteristics of immersion. Alan Licht (2007) describes how scale and perception of scale have altered where shifts in perceptions have been challenged over the past century and in this section I argue how, through scale, re-imagining the (Immersive) past allows for audiences and artist' to work collaboratively to create defining works.

Sound installations represent a dramatic extension of music's sense of scale, as time duration has been the way that music has approximated other arts' sense of scale, certainly as much as volume or orchestration has.

(Licht 2007 p. 122)

Licht (2007) explains that scale is not just about size but also relates to the way in which artists can adjust the perceptual field of the audience by allowing them to consider new dimensions within a given space. This could be through magnification of sound or through presenting sounds that are out of the range of human hearing.

To demonstrate this use of scale and collaboration, Doug Hollis's (2000) sonic outdoor installation *Persona* (2000) (See fig. 4) is a piece that enables invited participants to look over the hills of eastern Washington and listen to the noise emanating from and around a specially designed wind-mast. As the title *Persona*



(2000) suggests, the audience is the narrator where the stories, memories and fictions of that landscape are foregrounded in the reactions of the audience. This element is critical in that it allows the conveying landscape to be re-imagined, as with any urban landscape where change is perpetual. This acts as a metaphor for the lives of the audience, as thoughts are evoked and stories, memories and fictions reignited through a magnified version of the noise rolling past the wind-mast and the visual altercation between the viewer and the landscape. I would argue that Hollis (2000) is using this moment of contemplation overlooking the hills to look beyond statements on social forms; the interest lies in the ability to scan the environment and place this experience in the participant's audible past. But like Stockhausen (1989) with his experimental compositions, Hollis (2000) is using his large-scale installations to explore the roots of landscape and environment, where the invited participant is essential to the work itself, inevitably distracted by sounds and being reminded of a place, a time and the changing landscape of eastern Washington. Hal Forster's (2004) comments on the differences and similarities between distraction and immersion are demonstrated here, and what Hollis (2000) creates is manipulation, capturing the attention and reflecting it back on to the listener/viewer, rather than creating a distraction.

What is the difference between Doug Hollis's *Persona* (2000) and Stockhausen's (1989) act of musical experimentation? I would argue that they both offer the same act of re-imagining the past. First, Stockhausen (1989) did not choose conventional spaces to explore the possibilities of his radical conceptual compositions. Second, *Persona* (2000) as an installation uses an unconventional wind-mast to support the animation of an individual's aural past and imagination. Both situations have similar results, whereby they both create environments composed from individuals' thoughts, imagination and symbolic perception; the relationship to what is heard rather than what we actually listen to. This collaborative relationship between the

environment and the prescribed sound then informs audiences of their own importance across the spectacle of routine everyday environments. This oscillation between listener, viewer and shifting milieus goes to reinforce routine immersion beyond the popular concepts and places it within the sphere of all humans. Stockhausen (1989) and Hollis (2000) have demonstrated the consequence of interrelating everyday structures and spaces with noise created from the past, whether through the artists' aural lineage of memory or by asking the audience to form stories from a changing landscape.

Achieving this by utilising an environment that is neither routine nor over-familiar is sound poet Arthur Pétronic (1968) whose work uses a limited number of words, instead obsessively focusing on sounds of breathing, percussion and whispered phonemes with the use of complex harmonic layers, a technique intended to immerse the listener in the piece between the layers of sound. Pétronic's (1968) piece entitled *Cosmosmose* performed by Claude and Lydia Kilian, Odette and Guislain Versaille, Jacqueline Witier from the LP *Futura Poesia Sonora* (Cramps Records, Milan) highlights these techniques. You will not hear sounds that have been treated and recorded in a studio every day, however the sounds that play out in our day to day lives are not there by choice nor do they decide when to appear or connive with each other. Instead we get the montage of noise that makes up everything we hear around us and it is these randomly forged sounds that entice our minds to fall into a state of content or at times frustration. Pétronic (1968) evokes natural intrigue and inner clashes that openly test one's ability to decipher the deeper, darkest parts of his own artistic soul.

Phonetically, Pétronic (1968) was making a statement, recalling what he does not want the listener to hear; rather what noise can be listened to, if any. Immersion is often an overused adjective to describe a piece or more commonly an installation. A

piece of work that will inform and engage the listener or audience member will be described as “immersive” or having “immersive qualities”, however hearing what is not there can be the immersive element. So far the immersion I have explored here is more attached the emotion of the artist or listener. What if the work of, for example, Pétronio (1968), a surrealist, whose sound poems immerse, challenged us to hear what is not present instead of what we think we have listened to and to carefully decipher this into a coherent narrative? He is offering us the listener his raw explicit emotions but wants us to challenge what we think are around us, walls, floor, empty spaces, what is left behind; our own relationship with our personal immersed space.

Listening not to what is being directly said, but the background element. Pétronio’s (1968) significance has not been noted in the realm of sound art in any great detail, but his complex methods are as vital to understanding various methods of immersion as Karlheinz Stockhausen’s (1989) early life was to affect him throughout his life and compositions. So why do I consider sound poet Arthur Pétronio (1968) significant in this immersive examination? Pétronio (1968), a relatively unknown artist whose work crossed between *Musique Concrète* (1961) and his ideology on sound poetry, enabled alternative forms to be integrated into one another with everyday noise being the critical mass amongst the compositions. Considering *Cosmosmose* (1968) more closely and listening, especially in an urban environment, again connects with Karlheinz Stockhausen’s (1989) introverted projection of his self.

In this section I have discussed the methods of scale in of emotion or a location as an immersive element. In the next section I discuss the methods by which to immerse audiences and the significance of such acts.

## **Acts of Immersion**

At the beginning of this chapter I posed the question ‘what is immersion?’ Drawing on a survey of the field as well as a range of original interview material I illuminate immersion beyond the popular notions and concepts of the term in sound art and everyday sonorous life. Immersion as discussed earlier is quite often a generic term to describe the way a work of art can invade the senses utilising technology to barrage the field of sensory engagement. Other simplistic methods, such as blindfolds in Francisco Lopez’s (2012) work and altering the sensory field through light and temperature levels, form a popular immersive experience but not an everyday one. This, however, is not enough when considering the term, as immersion is something that exists throughout time and space as demonstrated by David Hendy (2013) and Daniela Cascella (2013). This is demonstrated in the works of Stockhausen (1989) most notably where the recall of significant experiences can be key with routine actions of everyday routines that amass throughout daily lives such as travelling, working, talking and reading; building stories and fictions in our lives.

Immersion in the art world is a critically misinterpreted element that requires reconsideration away from the populist forms attached to it. Immersive actions demonstrated in this chapter can be a sole experience of a resulting life event or a formula to alter a space with detailed actions acting as a barrier between receiving unwanted resonates of noise. Though sound art discourse is relatively young, immersion is an element that has become synonymous with the fusion of technology within a sonic work. Such elements as headphones and elaborate installations figure in the wider public sphere, and knowledge of them is associated with acts of immersion. The presence of noise in one’s life, whereby even non-hearing has an impact, can be real and unrelenting. This I demonstrate in the next two chapters.

Noise leaves no space for a theoretical or philosophical foot to lodge

itself between the heard and the felt for language to assert its right over the work. Noise *is aesthetic* simultaneity. It demands a consideration of itself in its sensorial complexity without recourse to art historical, political, relational, social etc. theories that present it with a language that precedes its encounter and immobilizes its present production.  
(Voegelin 2010 p. 74)

Salomé Voegelin (2010) describes how noise is possibly being positioned within an incorrect set of considerations. Conversely, I believe that multiple sonorous events happening at once with reciprocal and cognitive influences have long-standing echoes throughout individual lives, and that while listening in such unpredictable stochastic environments does not draw attention at first hearing, throughout sound art there have been prime examples of this having lasting immersive impacts. I have demonstrated that immersion in sound art is an essential aspect of critical works that portray the aural environments of the everyday yet can take us away from that everyday into a perpetual trigger of personal thoughts and emotions. I have shifted my focus from the populist and diluted versions of immersion that Cubitt (2007) illuminates with Turrell's (2007) work, of penetrative senses happening in one clear moment. Routine, sonorous everyday life is imperfect and as Ross Dalziel (2012) argues, while sound art is somehow being perceived as a 'pure' (Dalziel, 2012) material, one can consider immersion as an imperfect element that has existed throughout human history.

In the next Chapter, *Field Recordings*, I examine field recordings and artists that use this as their main source of material that which they consider to contain key immersive elements.

This leads into the subsequent chapter which examines field recordings and immersion through everyday occurrences, including the inspiration found by field recordists and artists in their personal journeys across everyday routines.

The best atmospheres are immersive: they submerge listeners in a different sonic reality. They transport listeners to another sense of time or place. An ambience of a Buddhist monastery can whisk listeners through their headphones to Tibet.  
(Virostek 2012 p. 31)

The above passage comes from a book entitled *Field Recording: from Research Wrap: An introduction to Gathering Sounds Effects* (2012) that amongst many new contemporary sound recordists has become a popular handbook, supporting them in their quest for sound searching. It claims that by building an atmosphere through field recordings, immersion is a prerequisite for this type of singular linguistic recording. Similarly as discussed further in Chapter Three a soundwalk can be viewed as immersive, in particular the work that takes place after a soundwalk combining to create a visual abstract of the recorded sounds.

This gives gallery visitors an immersive experience, which is based on sound, and brought into the visual and tactile realms. Visitors choose their own route through the place of the soundwalk, all routes leading back to the ear. (McCartney 1999 p. 31)

Visitors will have an immersive experience but is this simply because the work is placed in an interior setting. I argue that this is the case, and that immersion is far more complex with elements of everyday sonorous life impacting upon the aural perspectives we retain. In the following chapter, *Listening: The Nature of Field Recording*, I have also focused on the transformation of sounds and noise from their original source to man-made ones like a designed interior spaces. The intentions of transplanted fragmented sounds that field recordists have manipulated to submerge their audiences into a state of immersion is explored, and whether this leading into an immersive type of experience is necessary or assumed.

Interestingly, unlike these preconceived moments of immersion the chance, limitless immersive occurrences demonstrated here through Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) and the transonic methods he presents like with his installation *After Forgetting* (2003)

where the inexplicable gestures between hums and silence gives reminders and signals that derive from our urban and domestic soundscapes. These memories can be latched upon and re-triggered in what Hegarty (2013) calls the present environment (Kent, J. Interview with Sebastiane Hegarty, 2013, 24<sup>th</sup> July, Email).

## Chapter Two: Listening

### The Nature of Field Recordings

Most of the sounds busy people listen to are signals of activity. This explains their immunity to the sounds of nature. One of the essential differences between the natural environment and the engineered environments in which most people now live is that nature can't be shut off with a button. Things that can't be generated or shut off with buttons or switches attract little attention in the modern world.

(Schafer 2003 p. 38)

Recordings open up to complexity. They do not create a fixed aural presence, but a mutable entity that allows the listeners to slide into the space of their own fictions and favour the emergence of an eventful auditory narrative.

(Kent, J. Interview with Daniela Cascella, 2013, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Email)

Field recordings from distant or familiar environments challenge perceptions, and soniferous urban life, homogenized by noise that splits and comes at us from all directions, reverberates unceremoniously in our ears, producing signals of intent that leave us wanting to block our ears from the blare of such unwanted sounds.

R. Murray Schafer (2003) explains through much of his research, which originated from his seminal work *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1994), that as we live our lives amongst the cars, buildings and pavements, going from place to place or from work to home, we always try to turn away from engineered sounds, resulting in our inability to want to enjoy, explore or even accept the natural sonic environment. This chapter demonstrates how artists, predominantly field recordists, use nature and subsequent recorded sounds to immerse their listeners. Beyond the parameters of the busy suburban lives that many of us dwell in, field recordists are presenting and documenting natural soundscapes that can change our view of our place within a sonic territory. Daniela Cascella (2013) asserts that field recordings are changeable and offer listeners the opportunity to create their own stories in collaboration with the personal environment they find themselves in. Cascella's (2013) incisive sonic language explains the



beauty of field recordings and the intertwined, intricate relationship between the listener and the soundscape to examine beyond the parameters of those noise relationships that can be easily perceived.

In this chapter, I examine the nature of listening and how we identify with familiar and unfamiliar sounds from local or distant, unattainable soundscapes, not through physiological methods but by research predominantly from sound recordists and their recorded works that portray the world's sonorous environment. Listening to field recordings and considering the various perspectives presented through original interviews gives a unique insight into personal methods and influences of conveying such sounds in an immersive environment.

There are five sections in this chapter, examining different methods and results of field recordists' work whilst considering immersion as a factor in each sonic recording. The first section, *Displacement of Sound*, examines sound as identifiable by location, discussing why this act of sonic displacement occurs and what impact it has on the works. The section explores field recordists Chris Watson (2003, 2008 & 2012) and Felicity Ford (2013) with their recordings from the natural, every day and domestic environments, which inform listeners of these distant and close-to-home sonic landscapes. Their ideas and personal thoughts on immersion as voiced in their sonic works are examined, together with what they perceive to be an immersive entity and whether this can be said to exist or not. The second section, *(Non) Peaceful Meditation*, focuses on a distressed immersion, what influences and lengths these sound recordists will go to in order to portray shifting soundscapes. This draws primarily on an interview with BJ Nilsen (2013) regarding his recorded and edited pieces that evoke an uncomfortable catalogue of works portraying a distressed immersion. The third section, *Memories of Sound*, investigates the usage of familiar soniferous locations in my own work and in the work of Alan Dunn (2008)

whose locale *lo-fi* CDs have become a rare but essential listening for anyone living close to the River Mersey. Section four, *Altered Perceptions in Immersive Spaces*, investigates the familiarity of sounds that we have never heard before but somehow feel we recognise, and why perceptions of these recorded sounds represent knowledge of the truth (epistemological) through these recordings and subsequent works. The final section, *The Phenomenological Field*, considers the soundscape as a space not just verbalised, but one that is receptive of an experience where we consider not only the source from within the place but from within our imagination.

Field recordings can propose immersion explicitly to the listener or can be subtly layered within the foundations of the sonic fabric of each piece. Though this research does not offer an alternative historical timeline, it is essential to start by highlighting Ludwig Koch (1955) who worked in the science of ornithology. Though to say he was simply an ornithologist would not only be missing out a vital part of his work, but also of the history of sound recordists. Koch (1955) was a pioneer of wildlife recording, capturing their soundscapes and a vast array of rare moments in nature that has, perhaps unbeknown to some of today's sound recordists, had profound and long-lasting effects. First, Koch (1955) was unrelenting in his desire to explore, using all kinds of home-made microphones and recording contraptions in hostile weather and terrains to research and document the environments of scenes out of the reach of many. Koch's (1955) *sound books* offered illustrations of animal sounds and their habitats that had never before been attempted, opening the world of these animal voices in an unprecedented way. For the most part, technological advancements have aided the surge in contemporary field recording with portability being one of the principal factors.

Koch's (1955) *sound books* offered sonic portals into distant environments and similar developments exist now where portability of recording technology enables

field recordist and artists working within a sonic discipline to explore the sonorous world. Improved availability and affordability of equipment including microphones and location recorders has enabled accessibility to a greater spectrum of interested parties, specifically since the turn of the century with such devices becoming more portable and easy to use. In contemporary terms, artists who use field recordings in their art also have a wider range of platforms from which to stage their works including CDs, blogs, radio and podcasts, to name a few. Unlike Ludwig Koch (1955) who was active at a time when technological discovery was occurring on a daily basis, we now have artists attempting to push the boundaries with their ideology whilst using some of the most cutting edge audio software and microphone technology. This, however, is less significant here than the ideology and perception of their work, which is more vital to the overall understanding of the term immersion.

Field recording is often described as a documented exercise, one for the archives for future listeners to experience sounds, but for this chapter the focus is on artists that use field recordings that do not simply record to archive but to pinpoint the present and the ephemeral nature of the changing dissonant echo of our soundscapes. But do such resonant experiences actually impact upon our daily routines or have any serious infinite ties to the place of origin? The first subsection *Displacement of Sound* will examine and demonstrate shifting immersive experiences through recorded sounds linked to various interior environments chosen by artists.

### **Displacement of Sound**

Being immersed in the environment is a conclusive practice, it will happen in an instant without prior notice. In Chapter One, Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) explained his experience of being immersed whilst out recording and the events that followed. There are sounds we do not hear such as environmental sounds existing out of our

range of hearing and Chris Watson (2003 & 2008) explores this field of uncertainty, highlighting the unheard for an exciting, emerging and engaged listening experience.

Field recordings propose exciting insights into a *sonorous* world we cannot obtain easily: bringing the sounds of nature and various exotic sonic environments to our own sound world of intrigue then guiding listeners down a trail of discovery. Chris Watson (2003 & 2008) takes us down this road of discovery by recording sounds that appear to be out of our range audibly and geographically. Alternatively these sounds can be turned into something we recognise entwined with our own sound world as demonstrated by BJ Nilsen (2003-2004) whose manipulated sound works on the one hand seem alien but the on the other sound familiar, transporting the listener to locations that feed into our everyday lives, immersing us where we are in a normal environment. Chris Watson's seminal piece *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) is a vast audio journey, which highlights nature at its most beautiful and profound:

This is cinema for the ears. Episodes of rain, thunder and wind are rendered in stunning fidelity; headphones and closed eyes are essential. Watson's way with a microphone is nothing short of awe inspiring. Chris Watson *Weather Report*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/release/rzdp/> (Dec. 10, 2007)

Here, Watson (2007) is described as being a master of the microphone with the ability to add narrative and form to the sound pieces he creates. The recorded sound passes onto the audience; documented physical evidence of something possibly existing within a space: more than just a distant land of forests or barren landscapes, but of real time explosions of noise and echoes.

So compare this to how we perceive the audible world and one of the biggest obstacles for many people today is the fact we live in such a visual world. During an interview in 1971, Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) describes the visual/sound culture

of the period in the late 1960s and 1970s, in a manner as relevant today as at any other time. He elaborates:

Our whole tradition is visual: our intellect, our senses, are trained to respond to visual information. Our concepts are visual, the words we use to describe them are visual. We haven't even words to describe sounds, or very few, that are not visual in what they express.  
(Maconie 1989 p. 25)

Engagement reaching a peak with the complete immersive sound experience of discovery, Watson's (2003 & 2008) recorded sounds shout louder without stressful interruption, are more informative, and a collective spirit runs through the three sound pieces on *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008). Watson (2003 & 2008) builds, more than most perhaps, a clear auditive trajectory for the ears, resulting in a self-proposed state of meditation. As with the visual, sounds can be unwanted, so what can be difficult is trying to consider your ear, or as David Toop (2010) discusses in *Sinister Resonance* (2010), what we can learn from sound in particular whilst we live amongst contemporary environments. So he goes on to say we should "...think of sound as an ear, a mirror, a resonant echo, a carrier, a shell. A word in your shell-like" (Toop 2010 p. 53). I would argue that recordings like *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) (See fig. 5) are the echo of noise made, the copy of an occurrence, built into a narrative for the listener to accept and be part of the drama. The meeting of visual and sonic environments that Toop (2010) is contextualising, by re-positioning how listeners use and contemplate their relationship with the sonic environments, benefits from the relationship of the recordist and proposed environment. As I listen to *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) absorbedly from start to finish a number of times in different locations – trains, buses, bedroom, kitchen, garage, beach and fields – I reflect on Toop's (2010) words "A word in your shell-like" (Toop 2010 p. 53), and reconsider how I interpret my understanding of recorded sonic works. Familiarity is formed from the routines of noises we exist amongst and signals that are repeatedly unconsciously part of the everyday. So how does this relate to Watson's *Weather*

*Report* (2003 & 2008) and the routines of everyday life? Essential to Chris Watson's (2003 & 2008) work is the fact we have not previously heard his version of what is being played to us. We know these sounds exist but they are trapped beneath the man-made sound world: we convince ourselves we can barely hear the sounds of pigeons cooing or traffic lights beeping. However, throughout *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) is a fixed drama in time and space where noises are similar to traffic lights or a bus trailing past our ears and comparable to our daily lives: an echo of urban sonic stochastic routines.

So this echo of an urban stochastic routine is a key and hidden element in Chris Watson's (2007) sound pieces that engage and immerse the listener in an unknown sonic world populated by sounds that do not normally enter our lives amidst the metropolis of the every day. In an interview, Watson (2012) describes to me how he believes his work to be immersive. Watson (2012) stated this to be a primary aim throughout his recordings:

It (Immersion) is a crucial part of the engagement with my work so that sense of immersion I would gauge in many ways to the relative success of the work and how people felt about the work and whether or not they felt immersed in any particular environment.

(Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Skype)

Watson (2012) informs us that he wants each listener to his works to feel an involvement that is more than just being immersed by a shower of light or being engulfed by elements. Earlier I discussed Sean Cubitt's *Immersed in Time* (2007) where he describes the popular perceived notions such as being immersed whilst in a cinema. Cubitt (2007) defines immersion as a primal element of the human condition and one that does not simply happen whilst having our senses tested to extremes. Watson's (2012) work does not converge with such boundaries but instead through a layered experience of perception, knowing, familiarity and increasing knowledge of changing environments the work immerses each listener in

a personal act of engagement. Watson's (2012) work, or this type of immersion that Cubbit (2007) explains as primal, achieves wider success as illustrated in Watson (2012). As a sound recordist, he generates narrative using this principle of immersion to elaborately mirror everyday sonorous soundscapes and to create dialogue between himself and the audience. In *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) what is set before the listener is not just flat lines of signals where only one noise is occurring, but a multitude of noises and signals in tandem with the natural environment; waking and sleeping, life and death, pain and glory, all happening within a paradigm of routine phenomena and much like the urban soundscape, this mirrors actions of our everyday lives where we cannot control or predict the next reverberation or echo. The ebb and flow of the recordings captured by Watson's *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) is comparable to the everyday stochastic experience of built environment where traffic lights control traffic moving and stopping, where there is the flow of office workers at certain times of the day. This ebb and flow is illuminated in *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008) and acts as a portal of engagement for the listener to form a relationship with and results in a displacement of sound from one environment to another.

Amongst other sound works from Chris Watson (2007) is a piece from *Sonic Stream Exploration* (2001-2008). The human body and health care environments are used in *Wild Song at Dawn* (2007), which is a series of recordings taken over three days at dawn and dusk of an area adjacent to the Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Springfield Park. Watson included children who were patients, their parents' and carers' recordings of the park with all the wildlife from Springfield Park in the work to capture the outside soundscape and bringing it into the hospital environment. Being so close to these sounds but being out of reach of them highlights the space outside in order to transport patients, hospital staff and visitors away from the emotions of the busy children's hospital. This work encompasses the ability to bring normality to

the foreground and shift the seemingly normal to the extraordinary, immersing people in these everyday sounds taking place just outside the hospital window. Environmentally greener sounds are recorded and then altered in such a way that clarity and time compression add weight to essential listening experience. This compression of time and space positioned adjacent to the hospital is an interesting point as with a new hospital building imminent and the space *Wild Song at Dawn* (2007) was recorded from will no longer exist as a green space in which birds can sing. The engagement is also demonstrated through time compression of a micro sonic environment that existed at one unique moment and through the relative engagement of each participant, the immersion becomes a personal narrative formed for listeners to attempt and recognise the value of engagement rather than the actual recorded piece. This contribution is the essential core value of the work and the element that allows it to become immersive but only in terms of the displacement of sound created by each recordist that Watson (2007) used.

Watson (2012) describes in his interview with me the importance of the patients' contribution to the work:

[I] spent a week at Alder Hey and part of it was to get people to contribute rather than me as an artist say this is it and present them with the work and I wanted people to contribute to it as that was part of the work, part of the process, a sense of engagement. So we had patients and staff from the hospital got into the park alongside the hospital about three o'clock in a May morning and we recorded all aspects of the dawn chorus and I led some sound walks and took people out recording at sunrise and sunset and then I worked with these sounds when I made the piece.

(Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Skype)

Watson's (2012) facilitation of this act of engagement demonstrates how important the people occupying the space can be in achieving an immersive piece of work.

The act of engagement does not just happen at an exhibition or whilst listening, as if water was being thrown in your face, but with a sound piece this engagement can be at the core of the work, as in *Wild Song at Dawn* (2008) with patients, families



and staff at Alder Hey Children's Hospital all contributing. They were involved in feeling the equipment, operating the recorders, walking the soundscapes and exploring the varied array of noise. I compare this overcoming of the hurdle of sonic displacement by actively engaging the patients to when Stockhausen (1989) was playing music for injured soldiers. Adapting the way an individual's mind-set alters in situations of distress or anguish, for example, while being treated in a hospital, supports the time spent in the environment, and exploring the soundscapes in and around listeners can be personally immersive as with any displacement of sound.

A 2010 installation exhibited at Kew Gardens entitled *Whispering in the Leaves* (Watson, 2010) (See fig. 6) presents a dawn to dusk chorus of the Central and South American rainforests amongst the many rare and tropical plant life presented in a 3D soundscape. Astutely and tightly wound sounds were designed around the environment in the Palm House, bouncing from ceiling to floor, in-between trees, rare plants and flowers; surprising visitors and reminding them of how powerful and beautiful these recorded sounds from thousands of miles away can be. The experience at Kew Gardens was aided by the soundtrack of planes ploughing through the sky onto Heathrow airport with timed perfection every thirty seconds. This was like a reminder of a thirst for global travel with planes landing and taking off as they pass with ringing tremors over Kew suppressing most sounds; however, this aspect I found fascinating, the constant reminder that outside the wonderful plush surrounding of Kew Gardens was a metropolis bursting with man-made sounds. This focus on the internal was something Watson (2012) describes in detail:

So that is one of the largest interior environments I have used and the strange thing about that is it is all recorded on location in a rainforest and not in an interior environment but I felt the acoustics were very well reflected but of course that is also a real rain forest in an interior environment in the glass house, and a very unusual situation but I think perfect and it worked.

(Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Skype)

One fascinating aspect of this work is the way in which Watson (2012) considers this interior space as a replica or an echo of a true rainforest. A true rainforest does not have brick pathways, nor are its trees intertwined with steel stairs. This space is marshalled and controlled unlike the true Central and South American rainforests. So the major importance to Watson (2012) is that his work engages the audiences using multi-channelled immersive sound recordings played amongst leaves, trees, plants and the building. Watson (2012) measures the success of his work by the audience's reaction to it. Essential to the installation and the environment is the immersion of the visitors into recorded soundscapes using the surroundings and noises in conjunction with one another.

Compare this to what curator Ross Dalziel (2012) describes as the intention of altering interior spaces in order to integrate an immersive experience "...the intent to use a 'blank' interior immersive space however somehow seems to me, problematic; a context-less 'acousmatic' space without its own discourse beyond the staging of an artistic act" (Kent, J. Interview with Ross Dalziel, 2012, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012, Email). Dalziel (2012) explains here his personal intention of transferring sound from its place or origin to a new alternative or foreign fabrication and what he views as the complexities of the interaction between the sound and interior space. Therefore is the selected interior space that Watson (2012) and Dalziel (2012) utilise for multi-channel sonic installations the significant factor in bridging the gap between time and space through the engagement of listening?

This relationship between the recorded echo, sound and space from Kew Gardens evokes Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* (1964). The claustrophobic heat and overhanging leaves onto narrow paths are transformed by the sound; narratives echoed and intrigue created. Rare exotic plants and trees construct new spaces; inventive space and time through sonic audile memories which Bachelard (1964)

realises through the phenomenological role of the imagination. Watson (2012) alludes to perception of space; sounds recorded from the rain forest but reflected in what he perceives as a large interior environment to house *Whispering in the Leaves* (2010), referring to this as a “...very unusual situation but I think perfect and it worked” (Kent, J. Interview with Chris Watson, 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Skype). Miniature is, as Bachelard (1964) pieces together, a representation of the imagination. Watson re-imagines a vast space, that is, rainforest, magnifying the sonic *resonant* (See Appendix Five) experience in the historic Palm House.

Displacement of sound is the point at which the interior space clashes with how recorded sounds are perceived and projected. As with Watson (2012), who believes the success of the works is gauged by listeners’ experience, so it is inevitable then, that spaces like with the Palm House at Kew Gardens is irrelevant. Where I would argue the space can become the immersive hinge if you like, one where the trees and leaves render listeners at an improbable end where the recorded sounds are being passed onto the audience then archived in the digital ether.

As with most nuisance noises the general inclination of most people is to close the double glazed window, turn up the radio or walk into a quiet place to reflect on thoughts or breathing. Unlike displacement of sound the next section examines recorded noise havoc that some artists will methodically situate for the audience to question and relate to their own time and space. One could argue that noise could be an immersive tool which we are overawed into accepting, often without much choice.

However as discussed in displacement of sound, immersive experiences can arrive where sound is not owned by the recordist but acted upon by the participant through engagement and this enables propositions of sonic environments to be examined

personal to circumstance. In the next section I'll analyse how experiences of immersion can be perceived as uncomfortable or evasive but when we explore closer such works can evoke immersion.

### **(Non) Peaceful Meditation**

BJ Nilsen's (2003-2004) audio work focuses on the sound of nature with its effects on humans being the core element. *Fade to White* (2003-2004) comprises an edited recording of a roller coaster, encompassing sounds of nature, technological mixing and human acoustics. This piece draws on elements of Chris Watson's (2012) work that present field recordings as sounds of meditation and documentation, then with suggestive elements of movement and unpredictability evokes the everyday sonic cacophony of noise. One review suggests that: "Nilsen has little interest in melody or percussion, instead choosing to focus on a sound that could be considered industrial ambiance: an atonal M83, if you will" Goldfried, Evan, BJ Nilsen *Fade to White*, <http://www.cokemachineglow.com> (Jan. 13, 2008).

However, I would argue that BJ Nilsen's (2003-2004) work encompasses a fervent exploratory nature, almost giving a futuristic sound. His use of acoustic layering aspires to connect the sounds and guide people who only hear noise from man-made urban environments to consider what they are listening to and discover the combined world of nature and the self. Nilsen (2012) in his interview with me describes his feelings about such discovery: "Listening back to the build-up of a storm is one of the most intriguing sound dramas one can ever encounter" (Kent, J. Interview with BJ Nilsen, 2012, 17<sup>th</sup> December, Email). Replaying of the recorded event Nilsen (2012) suggests can be a powerful exercise, one that differs from the actual live event where the unpredictable nature of weather can surprise or even alarm. Nilsen (2012) evokes tension and emotions using sounds of nature including weather imbued with drama, rather than allowing the listener to relax back allowing

the sounds flow. Here, one has to sit forward and listen to a thunderstorm, for example, that forces one to look at the skies.

The impacts on Nilsen's (2012) work and what immersion means to him can be explained by his experience of another artist's work that encapsulated his personal engagement with immersion. Maryanne Amacher's (1999) notion of connectivity to sound, most notably the *Third Ear Phenomenon* (1999), accords with space and one's universal power to penetrate conceptions of space. In my interview with Nilsen in 2012 he points towards the influence of Maryanne Amacher's (1999) sonic work as a key moment in his evolution as a recording sound artist:

That did it for me, I was aware of the third ear phenomenon... but never experienced it before or after in such power. [Amacher] literally got into every inch of my body and as much as I loved it I also had to escape it, I walked around Paradiso listening and tuning in and went further out on the street and it was still there, outside the Paradiso it was still penetrating the centre of my head! One if not the most beautiful sound performances I have ever attended to.

(Kent, J. Interview with BJ Nilsen, 2012, 17<sup>th</sup> December, Skype)

In this depth of space Nilsen (2012) sensed an immersive moment emerging from the mind, establishing a distressed immersion. This emanated from the occurrences of routines and like Amacher (1999) who transcends the normal sonic experimental subject. Nilsen (2012) reveals how acts of retrospectively searching within one's sonic environment, self-creating tension and drama, is critical in the sound pieces he records and fastidiously edits. (Non) peaceful meditation forms from the uncomfortable unique experience, one that makes perfect sense and is as hypnotic as fire. Recordings of distressed immersion are sounds that are not about offering the listener something to feel relaxed or at ease with but as a subjective portal of an echoed response for the listener, to evoke imagination from the everyday, the banal within perceived natural phenomena. Noise does not wander around the human ear giving us only the harmonised versions: noise presents an uneven, unbalanced and

unpredictable *stochastic* (See Appendix Five) texture that prompts listeners to either pay attention or mindfully reject.

Like Amacher's (1999) *Third Ear Phenomenon* (1999), the kind of listening that Nilsen (2012) is inviting from his audience, and which requires subjective attention, has to be intentionally pursued and this was the method Amacher (1999) created and one Nilsen (2012) is willing to allow his listening intent and experiences to explore. Being a sound artist and open to sonic possibilities allowed him to absorb the work and actually experience what Amacher's (1999) *Third Ear Phenomenon* (1999) was designed to achieve. His intentions became the immersion by which he allowed himself to become personalised with the work and experience a unique individual moment.

In conjunction with what I have labelled as *(non) peaceful meditation* comes a responsibility of the listener to actively engage in order to access these sometimes complicated sound works. Salomé Voegelin's (2010) work by contrast notes that listening "...is the lived and concrete experience that constitutes the world as a sonic life-world and the subject reciprocally generated within it. Objectively and subjectively are partners rather than adversaries in such a conception" (Voegelin 2010 p. 5). Essentially, the relationship between the listener and the sonorous world cannot be denied or left in a place to be forgotten. Both work in tandem but appear unrelated and occasionally within our daily lives the profound, subtle, inaudible, the racket, the subsonic or transonic, all combine to fabricate a moment of immersive power for a split second. Voegelin (2010) describes the routines of the sonic everyday as an inevitable happening with many possible outcomes attained by chance or by taking an active part in the surrounding sonic reverbs. Whatever the outcomes, humans are part of the sonority of their surroundings and if we attempt to block unwanted noises then we have instantly recognised the significance of this

intertwined relationship.

Interestingly where occurrences like *(non) peaceful meditation* are concerned, we will most likely be in a place familiar, rather than spectacular, to us in our daily lives. There are spaces and moments connected to the past and present that interweave themselves around the sonic landscape. In the following section the emotion connected to a site is examined through a selected range of works that examine everyday spaces that evoke memories.

### **Memories of Sound**

From the noises of *(non) peaceful meditation* originates the remembrance of locality and, as in the previous section where noises that are abrasive allow listeners to explore the unsystematic nature of noise, then *memories of sound* constitutes moments of aural remembrance. Alan Dunn (2008), an artist I have examined in this chapter who could not be described as a traditional field recordist, does not go out into the field to record or document soundscapes. His work is a collection of edited montages that he wishes the listeners to become part of: unlikely soundscapes such as those emitted from buses and tunnels. His works, like BJ Nilsen's (2003-2004, 2012) can be stressful, uncomfortable and full of drama and to demonstrate this Dunn (2008) has created a collection of seven soundtracks, *Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (Dunn, 2008), *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (Dunn, 2008) *Artists' uses of the term 'revolution'* (Dunn, 2009), *Grey is the Colour of Hope* (Dunn, 2010), *Soundtrack to a Catastrophic World* (Dunn, 2010), *A History of Background* (Dunn, 2011) and *Adventures in Numb4rland* (Dunn, 2012). I will focus solely on two essentially local soundtracks, first examining *Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (2008) which relates to the relationship between the Mersey Tunnels (2008) and the everyday commuter, and second, a sound work *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of*

*Dripping Water* (2008), which highlights the sounds that exist in Liverpool's Williamson Tunnels (2008), with the locality being the primary factor.

The locality and experience of individuals within the two tunnels differs, with one being in use and the other not. First, the Kingsway Tunnel that connects Liverpool to the Wirral and is used by the public as a convenient way to commute between two destinations. Second, the Williamson Tunnels, where one man's ideological reasons behind the tunnels remain largely debated, from such ideas that Joseph Williamson was preparing for Armageddon or had a vision to create jobs and give people back some dignity through work and achievement at a time when there was none for the poorer classes of Liverpool, most likely the latter. Visitors to the Williamson Tunnels often enter not knowing anything about the establishment or function of the tunnels. These uncertainties further add to Dunn's (2008) soundtrack of dripping water, adding layers of intrigue, suspense, imagination, and mystery. The commuter space, or the visited space, by contrast, have similar emotional values where both can be viewed as great engineering exploits but with one a routinely visited space and the other a destination often prompting questions about usage. This dissimilarity of the sonority changes the perception of our relationship with each of them.

Field recordist Lasse-Marc Riek (2013), who shares a similar philosophy to Dunn (2008), considers personal triggers and attachments critical when thinking about spaces. When asked what inspires him, "...it started for me with the emotion and with the site. I was so influenced by this idea more than any other" (Lasse-Marc Riek cited in Lang & Carlyle 2013 p. 175). Rather than being inspired by one of his contemporaries or a figure from the past, Lasse-Marc Riek (2013) states the importance of being connected to a place, location or soundscape. As demonstrated earlier in Chapter One through the work of Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) this personal experience is vital to being immersed and letting the echoes reverberate. So Dunn (2008) already recognises that relationship between the potential listener and the



location and this interlinks with the familiarity in my work and my surrounding environments and routines. I go on a listening exercise for a *Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (2008) to explore my familiarity with the spaces. Though I have travelled many times on this journey, like others, this time it was altered by the sounds of a constructed soundtrack by Dunn (2008) to test or even question my awareness through the tunnel. From where I sit on the number 433 bus from New Brighton to Liverpool at 8am with my earphones on and iPod playing the Alan Dunn (2008) aboard the bus numbered 433 *Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (2008) I slowly start to listen beyond the earphones, not fully focusing on the tracks playing but the inevitable approach towards the tunnel. A packed bus with commuters and early morning shoppers, at least four people with headphones in, one in particular with noise seeping out and annoying their next-door neighbour. I begin to hear the hum of the engine, brakes squeaking and doors being thrown open, all these noises infiltrate Dunn's (2008) soundtrack which become part of the foreground.

For Alan Dunn's (2008) *Soundtrack for a Mersey Tunnel* (2008), being on the number 433 New Brighton to Liverpool bus, he created a soundtrack to the Mersey Tunnels that extracts space and time within the soundscape of a tunnel. In a 2008 interview with Alan Dunn (2008) he explained how listening to his work can become one's own immersive moment; "People can listen on their own iPod and make their own immersive installation, some tracks work on some days others don't and others are stand-alone." (Kent, J. Interview with Alan Dunn, 2008, 9<sup>th</sup> September, Liverpool) This point of tracks having greater or lesser impacts at different times is interesting if considering everyday routines as Dunn (2008) is informing the listener of potential personal and resonating immersive moments constructed from one's own memories of an environment. Alan Dunn (2008) invites people to listen, feeling with their senses the soundtrack within a busy noise environment, to replicate personal journeys through the Mersey Tunnel. The experience of particular works alter each

time you travel, for instance whilst listening to the track entitled *Under The Bed* by Claire Potter (2008), the tempo of journey altered each time, background noise speeding up as if somehow I had pressed the fast forward button, then slowing down with people's actions becoming comical as a result of listening to this track. But this would change as the environment had altered surely? What caused my episode of imagined movements? Throughout listening to Dunn's (2008) work I understood my action that I was intent on the piece becoming the main distraction of everything around me. The soundtrack to people sitting, standing, pressing buttons, looking, staring, sleeping and all on a bus that is wholly normal for someone working in a big city travelling back and forth day on day; my memories of sound became more apparent and clear, each bus journey I had most likely taken was unlike this particular one as I had wanted the journey to be immersive so my intent allowed my memories to conceptually be what it was.

Listening to a recorded soundtrack and allowing the environment around oneself to influence and alter the environment can mean allowing the acting of sound, as Cage (1968) often described, to interfere. With this use of the iPod as the listening device I discovered that I was taking aural snapshots of the journey undertaken and playing them back later that evening, linking each track to a certain space or mood. Michael Bull (2007) elaborates on experience of using iPods: "iPod use provides one way in which the urban dweller navigates through the mundane spaces of the city, frequently preoccupied with their own mood and orientation rather than the spaces passed through" (Bull 2007 p. 40). The iPod was just the tool by which I listened to the tracks and essentially unimportant when I consider the everyday routines and the immersive experience of this journey. I argue that we don't just simply pass through as a transition in space but that combinations alter the mind-set as the noise from travelling on a bus, train or through a tunnel is not blocked out and interacts with the sound being listened to, inevitably altering your thought pattern. This

alteration acts as an immersive playback through noise that was already in the environment and creating a double negative; Alan Dunn (2010) considers it to be another of type of immersion, making people do a double take, like playing a recorded drip against the backdrop of real drips in the tunnels, like playing the noise of a train on a train. Similarly for field recordist Felicity Ford (2013) when asked by Angus Carlyle about her non-voice elements that appear in her recordings, she describes travelling to record a radio show. A 24-mile journey that Ford (2013) eventually decided to do as a night walk, recording along this route: "I experienced a very primal sense of listening. You become so conscious of your own sounds that listening takes on a new, very feral dimension." (Ford Cited in Lane & Carlyle 2013, p. 91)

This potential to be immersed in a familiar space that Dunn (2008) has explored informs us that immersion can happen whether or not you are listening to music but can occur through the interference of the space combined with everyday routines. The significance of the routines and locality might have more impact upon a local resident but the possibility to engage is present and incorporates a field of immersion outside the gallery space and shifts towards a sonic environment. Within the sound works created for this thesis are elements of this routine immersion where interactions with my daily environments become more apparent through exploring the in/significance of each routine or action.

The second piece explored from Alan Dunn's (2008) soundtracks is *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (2008) that was composed by Alan Dunn and Jeff Young, combining historical and new sound works to highlight the theme of dripping water. An interesting point that arose from the interviews with Alan Dunn (2008) when I asked him if he had ever used the term immersive, he stated:

I haven't, not deliberately not used it, maybe that is my background from using site-specific locations words. I think along the lines of captive audience works, that equals to sound or art in dental room or doctor's surgeries where you can be mentally immersed.

(Kent, J. Interview with Alan Dunn, 2008, 9th September, Liverpool)

As Dunn (2008) explains, he is interested in exploring a diverse range of everyday phenomena, captive audience works (Kent, J. Interview with Alan Dunn, 2008, 9th September, Liverpool) where existing perceived prosaic spaces are re-imagined with Dunn (2008) achieving this by magnifying the routine, normal and banal. This is demonstrated in *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (2008) by amplifying dripping water. Not in a physical sense but through a conceptual exploration behind the human relationship with static environments; ones where dripping water, echoes, temperature and conventions appear out of balance with the surrounding urban landscape.

Though I listened to the work at the Williamson Tunnels in 2011, I decided to listen to this soundtrack around various friends' and neighbours' homes, as I wanted to explore outside the titled space. The results were changeable each time and from the notes taken at each location derived a sense of personalisation that emanated from the environment. For instance, in my own living space, echoes of previous tenants with their tragic stories came to the forefront of my mind and this instance has remained part of my memory of sound for *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (2008) ever since. On one other occasion in the house of one of my neighbours who collects vintage bicycles, I sensed the cold steel of the bicycles piled up in his house with this recall of dripping water reflected across his hall way revealing the hoards of bicycles. I soon reflected that with each episode of playing Alan Dunn's (2008) *Music for the Williamson Tunnels: A collection of the Sound of Dripping Water* (2008) within each domestic space, what became apparent was my personal amplification of what I could see and hear that

was out of place or unusual. Like the mystery surrounding the creation of the Williamson Tunnels, each domestic environment has differences that make my memories of sound become more apparent and immerses me in other people's sonic environments. This then informs us that immersion can be about individual experiences rather than collective ones and can appear essential in routine everyday domestic lives.

In this case, Dunn's (2008) exploration of tunnels and confined spaces using planned sound works that can be experienced on a daily basis has a direct relationship with the sound work produced for this thesis. Each piece in the final chapters explores a world of the everyday and this is an interesting point to note regarding sound works that engage similar themes. This similarity is clearly demonstrated through parallels of the practice-based recordings and Alan Dunn's (2008) soundtracks and is of significance to a wider listening domain, something that is in the subconscious, operating intrigue in the mind of people using such places on a daily basis such as the Mersey tunnels or other locations of everyday use.

Capturing sounds of environments that we either accept as normal as in Chris Watson's (2003 & 2008) recordings, or locations that Alan Dunn's (2008) soundtracks highlight as places of necessity, reveal sounds that listeners can become immersed in through their own relationship with the environment. BJ Nilsen (2003-2004) tears down boundaries between the metropolis and nature and finds a medium uncomfortable to some but revealingly beautiful in construction and delivery.

Compare this essence of locality to one that is heard in your personal space and time where sound is about the past, present and the future, as Katie Paterson's (2008) sonic piece *Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008) (See fig. 7) which reminds the

listener of an occurrence, altering and shifting. In recent decades ice melting is seen as the barometer from which we all conclude that the world's oceans are rising and that global warming is something inevitable but which we on the most part react to in sitting by and turning the gas ring on, leaving the TV on standby or turning the key in our internal combustion engines. Katie Paterson's (2008) sonic piece *Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008) was directly plugged into the melting ice by using a microphone immersed into a glacial lagoon and connected to a mobile phone where it can be dialled (07757001122) (See fig. 8) and listened to live. The ambient sound of the lagoon transferred over your mobile phone created a powerful listening experience from the comfort of your air conditioned car or well heated home. Everyday life circulates around our own immersive spheres from the home, work and travel and here one takes a decision one wants to listen to sound through one's mobile phone that one almost certainly knows is a significant signal and a wholly personal experience that cannot be repeated and that will be different each time one calls 07757001122. Paterson (2008) encourages the listener into the portal to become the sound recordist and hear sounds unique to you that will evoke different thoughts and emotions.

The prevalent use of a mobile phone indicates a direction and an ease by which people want to accept sound in art. With 60% of the global population owning a mobile phone, it would appear futile to deny the inevitability that an artist would use this tool to highlight what is happening in the world. The experience of listening to the ice melt was almost a ghostly experience; with figures walking in and out of the space, one becomes acutely aware of the soundscape around oneself immediately after hanging up the phone.

This juxtaposition between a fixed place with Paterson's *Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008) and Dunn's (2008) transitional works is interesting as this allows the

engagement with one work to become personal and magnified. For example, Paterson is relating the ice melting to mobile phone usage, maybe unwittingly, but she places the mobile device at the core of the work. The potential to create an immersive memory of sound is realised, using an everyday item but not one that can be transitional; it can evoke memories of ice. Dunn (2008), conversely, is engaging with listeners to allow their memories to draw and capture an essence of their daily routines by igniting their familiarity with their local environment.

The fixed position of *Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008) in particular highlights a lack of sensory engagement with the environment: I dialled 07757001122 and listened to ice creaking and wind making the microphone hiss and crackle but this did not evoke any immersive memories unlike Dunn's (2008) essential local works where my knowledge and actual experience of sensually experiencing the spaces allowed for a better understanding of a shifting landscape.

Retrospectively, in order to engage with one's own local soundscape, a perceived notion of understanding how the altered soundscapes affects one is essential, for example, spending repeated time on the same bus every day listening to the same noise of the bus and movements of other passengers. Compare this to a noise thousands miles away but intuitively we engage and express empathy as the ice melts whilst using a device that represents the modern communication, an everyday act engaging with the environment.

This then leads to perceptions of personal space and identity created by artists, inspired by these memories of sound. Everyday routine occurrences that we share with neighbours, friends, and work colleagues or in moments of joy or anguish alter how perceptions of spaces immerse us in time and space. An altered perception in immersive space examines an individual ability or opportunity to change sonic

thought by exploring personal identity through sound and the body.

In this section *memories of sound* and immersion are an inevitable occurrence but not necessarily an easy one to achieve. As Alan Dunn (2008) states, he is searching and attempting to capture attention, which he does through provoking the simplest forms of routines or banal happenings such as travelling through a tunnel or dripping water. The connection to the work presented in Chapters Four and Five utilises this notion of capturing attention to reconsider how we perceive memories of sound and by generating this immersion it is possible through a reflective memory of sound, shifting onto how perceptions then can be altered in an immersive space. In the next section I'll the shift from *memories of sound* and personal reflections to how such sonic memories can be altered within an immersive space is critical within sonic arts.

### **Altered Perceptions in Immersive Spaces**

Sound reroutes the making of identity by creating a greater and more suggestive weave between self and surrounding.  
(Labelle 2010 p. xxi)

Alterations that artists pose upon audiences challenge various modicums of the human sonorous surroundings and familiarities occurring from everyday routines. By emphasising one's identity, artist and writer Brandon Labelle (2010) trisects viewpoints between everyday occurrences and forgettable background noise. He suggests that everything in our lives including lived in spaces and friendships are locations within our own sound sphere that set off flares reminding us of situations, good or bad memories and conversations. These experiences should not be pushed aside or thought less of because we cannot see the sounds reverberate, as many choices made during our daily routines are enhanced with sound, inevitably impinging on our thought patterns.



Sound flowing through an interior space and altering the perceptions experienced by willing participants, or methods of sound manipulation used with sounds coursing through and binding together forming synapses, affect the audience in both negative and positive ways. The importance of how audiences and individuals react and reform the sounds that they have heard, which have been recorded from some distant or foreign landscape and subsequently edited for the purposes of a sonic work, cannot be underestimated or dismissed. Individuals will relate sounds to experiences or simply attach the sound to something from their everyday usage. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century artists have a vast array of tools to manipulate, a range of trickery at their disposal, allowing control in what the listener hears. Barry Truax (2013) in journal article entitled *From Epistemology to Creativity: A Personal View* (2013) discusses how, as children, we gain valuable listening skills, but more significantly in relation to how listeners identify within a body of space, Truax (2013) elaborates further: "This process not only involves identifying sound sources and causes, but also the socially constructed meanings that derive from and are attached to such aural experiences" (Truax B. 2013 <http://journal.sonicstudies.org>). Truax (2013) describes to the reader the way that soundscapes can be manifested through our own knowledge and experience from our personal sonic environment.

Therefore, with listening habits being challenged continuously, many of the sonic works that are presented to listeners are not alien, nor do they hold any form of mystery that perhaps twenty-five years ago would have had audiences clamouring in disbelief. Sound artists now have to manoeuvre amongst the ocean of everyday perceptions and the onset of one's own personal sound sphere in order illuminate their practices. This everyday immersive experience that sonic artists are now challenging and experimenting with demonstrates how lives have converged with perceptions challenged amongst fast paced urban sonorous soundscapes.

Writer Jon McGregor's (2003) *if nobody speaks of remarkable things* (2003) reminds

readers of the intertwining connections that people share amongst their communities. “In the kitchen, the old man refills the kettle with fresh water, and sets it to boil again. He thinks about his wife, and thinks about what she doesn’t know. He hears shrieking from outside, laughter, children running.” (McGregor 2003, p. 71)

The coherence of McGregor’s (2003) analysis from human perception to source of noise located that reverberates through memories with events from a veritable location cannot be underplayed. McGregor (2003) demonstrates that whilst a dramatic life-changing experience is happening before the reader building up in the background through barely audible banal chores like turning a tap to refill a kettle and the old man is not alone or standing in a vacuum. This is generated by the energy and simple actions the sonic body takes, as Salomé Voegelin (2010) illustrates:

I am not just a thing, however, but I am thinging with other things to whom I am the agent of their thinging. I am intertwined with the world of my own perception, equivalent and yet in charge through my doubt in its always-already-thereness, bound to it by the generative nature of my own perception that also generates myself.  
(Voegelin 2010 p. 93)

Voegelin (2010) asserts the dynamic between the body, noise and objects as not just a singular focus of the sonic relationship, so that we have to consider what we don’t consider, all the things that we are, are in constant flux (*thinging*) Voegelin (2010), which are simply not blocks unrelated to each other in parallel universes. So as with McGregor’s (2003) novel, the simple actions of everyday movements map the terrain of the sonic body. I would call this *stochastic immersion*: immersion that is unrelated to one thing or one happening. No rule or instruction is present but immersion at any or one point, then listening operates the sonic self when immersed. Sound is never about what we expect to happen or any sudden great epiphany before our ears, but instead the constant *reverberation* of noise that surrounds everything; *resound* noise back in association with all objects.

With interjections of sound throughout one’s daily thoughts highlighted here in

McGregor's (2003) work, he poetically and subtly enhances the power of the world that surround us. Memory holds a firm part of McGregor's (2003) writing and the reader's relationship to his own environment and the actions happening all around. With the kettle being turned on and set to boil, does this action remind the old man of a time spent together with someone he loves, or simply sets himself into hypnotic state of thought on the events that are occurring? Throughout the art world audiences will unwittingly step on minefields of familiarity triggering memories, thought patterns or simple tasks ahead and as Elena Mannes' *The Power of Music* (2011) examines, theories and research on how music and sound resonates with humans and what happens throughout our lives and what the effects are on our bodies and brains throughout a lifetime. Mannes (2011) describes how the human brain uses power predominantly to absorb sound, more than anything else. So it is inevitable that as an experience, sound draws audiences in closer than other art forms, particularly within immersive spaces as these defined interior arenas are designed or modified to interact with audiences in a way they would not normally experience in such sonic landscapes.

Being in that moment when one realises or begins to enjoy a recording of birds' dawn chorus, being able to absorb the natural wonder this offers, we can begin to arrive at, not in the sense of any kind of revelation, but a simple understanding of our own primal lineage. Thus Voegelin (2010) writes that we are in constant relation with everything around us, a constant flow of energy with nature, as one entity resonating together with others. Hildegard Westerkamp (2014), one of the most prominent figures in field recording, pronounces in an interview I did with her the moment she was learning about sounds in the environment during the World Soundscape Project (1977 & 1994) which she was a member of, and the impact this had on her:

When I was part of the World Soundscape Project in the 70s, we often

listened together to environmental recordings that we had made. I was struck by the powerful impact that this kind of listening had on us, listening to recordings of environmental sounds in the studio context. Precisely because we listened to the sounds apart from their original context in the environment, i.e. schizophrenically, we listened much more attentively. (Kent, J. Interview with Hildegard Westerkamp, 2014, 9<sup>th</sup> May, Email)

Now did Westerkamp's (2014) ideology shift being around similar individuals working on the same project? Yes, this is a moment when Westerkamp (2014) did not change but was enabled to be more aware in an environment where everyone's listening ear was attuned together in a sole project. So this awareness is a type of immersion, a personal one, free from gallery spaces, large-scale installations or projected films, so big on the screen they overpower all the human senses: an altered perception. This informs us that at particular moments when recorded sound is being explored even at the basic level of re-listening, the impact re-positioned her intent altering her perceptions from a singular exercise to a group one where different facets of each other listening became emphasised. This movement inspired Westerkamp (2014) throughout her career and I asked her in an interview whether this personal desire and affinity with transferring sound from original source to where the recordist wants the listener to have a resonant experience have an impact on the work. Westerkamp (2014) explains:

Both for my radio pieces as well as for my compositions I recorded any kind of soundscapes, human, mechanical, urban, noisy, quiet, busy soundscapes, mostly to create awareness of a soundscape's quality. The point was (and still is, by the way) to immerse listeners and audiences in their own listening, in order to alert them to the conditions of the soundscapes in which they live.

(Kent, J. Interview with Hildegard Westerkamp, 2014, 9<sup>th</sup> May, Email)

Appealing to an audience through tonality is a familiar means to draw an audience into the work as a symphony of the piece, unlike the more traditional field recordings that are seen as documentary, recording a piece for an archive. Causing the listener to become aware of their personal soundscape, Westerkamp (2014) goes about constructing the experience that will ultimately forgo long distant soundscapes but

focus solely on the singular human form.

Although sound is an immediate response of activity of the everyday, from all around our sonic dissonance will aid sleep, wake us up, annoy us with the want for peace, disturb concentration, and collude to become a symphony of unstoppable restlessness; there amongst all this is our ability to use the mind to decipher and change the sonosphere within ourselves and alter the personal immersive space. In this next section another key consideration following on from what I discussed earlier in Chapter One is the phenomenological bridging between the artists, the listener, sound and the interior space.

### **The Phenomenological Field**

While this is historically and socially the predominant stereotypical conception of sound recording, the phenomenological approach - unknown but in fact intuitive to most people - is, in my view, a much more interesting and profound way to understand and work with sound recordings.  
(Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email)

Francisco Lopez's (2012) approach and ideas using the phenomenological method, as he states, is a lesser-known conception. This however should not distract from the opportunities phenomenology offers listeners in terms of understanding and challenging emotional and sensory experiences. What does it actually mean to challenge or attempt to understand a conscious experience? Are we to dissect the emotional value of what is being listened to or the reality of the reverbs connecting groups of people to an environment? Lopez's (2014) view is that this offers a more profound way to build a relationship with a sonic environment. Earlier I discussed how Lopez (2104) uses various methods to manipulate the audience's sensory field and the way he feels that distance or immediate relationships to the sound are unimportant but the layers in between are what have a greater impact (Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email). I would agree with

Lopez (2014) that there are layers beyond the normal reciprocal approach of recording and listening where memories, fictions and stories unfold, immersing us within the phenomenological field.

The idea that this essential experience that Lopez (2014) states is more important than other more traditional listening methods can be explored further by alluding towards memory of space (Bachelard 1958). This evokes one's personal inward sense of the quasi experience that Gaston Bachelard (1958) poetically exposes in his seminal textbook *The Poetics of Space* (1958). This work resonates with Lopez's (2014) beliefs and ideology where Bachelard (1958) similarly connects concerns of certain spaces in conjunction with tracing of memory through individual consciousness. This is particularly important as it contributes further to what could be perceived as a personal immersion, grand yet miniscule, but resonating none the less.

Far from the immensities of sea and land, merely through memory, we can recapture, by means of meditation, the resonances of this contemplation of grandeur. But is this really memory? Isn't imagination alone able to enlarge indefinitely the images of immensity? In point of fact, daydreaming, from the very first second, is an entirely constituted state. We do not see it start, and yet it always starts the same way, that is, it flees the object nearby and right away it is far off, elsewhere, in the space of elsewhere.  
(Bachelard 1958 p. 183)

Is this an aspect or act of immersion? And can it be easily accessed or understood? As this thesis is both exploring sound and interacting with sound I consider these questions in the practice-led chapters too. This however cannot be explained wholly through my own experience, so significantly an interview with renowned artist Francisco Lopez (2012) opened up further debatable avenues.

Maybe an underestimated or lesser-known aspect to wider listeners is the phenomenological one that Francisco Lopez (2012) comments on when asked

about transferring recorded sounds from their original source with the intention of using in an interior space to immerse the listener. What Lopez (2012) says about there being an intuitive (2012) facet to how we understand sound, environment and our own personal depth of relationships that emanate on a lesser, popular note is intriguing, as arguably this would not be an element considered by many without prior knowledge, so this goes unheard. Lopez (2012), like Bachelard (1958), surmises about the space that we look at or listen to but do not necessarily visit, that we have no need to have a geographical consideration of the source of something tangible like the polar caps creaking or waves crashing but we can gaze upon them through poetic meditation. For example, one could cast one's mind back to a time when polar expeditions were made by great explorers, reverently feel comforted, and nostalgically accept what we feel by this. Should I necessarily take into account any considerations as to how soundscapes feel, smell, or sound like, without prior experience, for example, of knowing what the salty air tastes like from a personal experience of my own standing on Nine Mile beach situated in Western Australia?

When we travel, our senses are tested by the noise, shifting climates, exotic tastes and conversations we absorb from these miniscule memories, which evoke from time to time, without prior warning, thoughts of remembrance: for me I often get the taste, smell and noise that the West Kirby beach creates in my aural mind.

Immediately, it takes me back to Nine Mile beach in Western Australia (See fig. 9), a stretch of the most pristine, dreamlike beach with sea that no one is allowed to swim in for fear of being eaten by salt water crocodiles, stung by box jelly fish or attacked by a host of sharks that visit all year round. That salt hitting my mouth leaves me with that memory of the purity of the ocean crashing onto the beach, no other human in sight, the tranquil arched paradise. The phenomenological field allows for an expansive spatial awareness but one lacking a substance to replace any form of physical experience. I can recapture the moment of stark contrast between the

sublimity of soundscape and the sublime cruelty of nature. So within this personalised immersive instant, personalised only to myself and connected by two locations, two very different soundscapes are generated regularly through memory and the ability to imagine a newly formed space inside my mind.

Field recordist and active researcher Budhaditya Chattopadhyay (2014) considers the phenomenological element in personal experience and when I asked him the question of his experience of immersive environments, he stated that he compares immersion to a transcending of the mind beyond its normal parameters. He goes on to describe how, “In Indian cities sounds are overwhelming, and they always provide an immersive experience by the sheer presence of sound all around. That is why I need contemplative distance to safeguard my individuality.” (Kent, J. Interview with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, 2014, 10<sup>th</sup> May, Email) This is similar to the experience of Sebastiane Hegarty (2013) who describes to me how he became ‘enveloped in the soundscape’. The comparable difference between the two artists is that Hegarty (2013) in one instance is becoming actively part of the soundscape, whereas Chattopadhyay (2014) challenges that engagement away from the actual physical location.

Conceptually being actively engaged and listening to field recording one then also becomes a controller of all the imagined fields one has created. In this sense all field recordings offer potential as a sociological tool by which to explore soundscapes. By attuning myself to inhabit a sonic landscape distant or close I am being positioned by others who have been part of that soundscape. The artist is an element of the sound, dubbed out maybe, but still present as noise bounced off their parabolic reflector or captured by a contact microphone. They sit still breathing slowly, thinking and focusing on the noise levels that their recorder is set at, ensuring that no human elements are allowed to interfere, but this by design is already a human interaction



and in an instant they become a shadow or a mark on the recorded piece.

Immersion by artists who use field recordings or ask the listener to be part of the soundscape creates a contingent relationship that does not occur through any historical interpretation but is predominantly a shared experience.

In the next section I discuss field recordists and artists who manipulate the site and concept of field recordings record with their ears and use visual markers, the methods by which to formulate decisions about negotiating the landscape/soundscape.

### **Immersion in the Ear**

This collection of artists' interviews nearly all expressed their desire to immerse their listeners as if it was some prerequisite condition of their work and, in the case of Chris Watson (2012), an aspect of success that is judged on how he plans to immerse the audience. BJ Nilsen (2012), on the other hand, uses immersion to draw the listener into his work organically by allowing the listener to locate their position amidst the noise. Whereas Alan Dunn's (2008) interview does not make use of the term immersion, it can be present in his work through the listener's collaboration. Dunn's (2008) compilations require the listeners to immerse themselves physically, then create an immersive moment by jointly working with the collection of sound works to listen and provoke personalised responses. This is similar to Chris Watson's acts of engagement, where participants actively take part in the recording process. The major difference between Watson and Dunn is that Watson views an audience's immersion in his work as an essential paradigm of success in his work. Dunn (2008) also does not measure success by the events the audience/listeners are exposed to, but rather the hope or optimism that his work inspires someone to take that second look at, or listen again to, a normal or extraordinary environment.

This apex between Chris Watson (2012) and Alan Dunn (2008) can appear ideologically close but conceptually apart, as Watson (2012) invites responses from the audience as the core of the success, whereas Dunn (2008) illuminates the occasional banal environment with connected musical subject matter and does not ask audience reaction to be a judgement of success, instead one where a personal journey can be the field of the experience. Field recording as a practice is viewed as the lonely hours spent sitting still recording, waiting for the natural symphony to go from the inaudible to resound. BJ Nilsen (2013) affirms that interior spaces for certain sound pieces will alter dependent on the original design for the work and by varying such spaces then elements can change resulting in a compromise (Kent, J. Interview with BJ Nilsen, 2012, 17<sup>th</sup> December, Email). Significantly both Watson (2012) and Nilsen (2013) consider their work immersive with the technical and interior environment the key factors, whereas Dunn's (2008) approach is more open to interpretation for listeners. These three demonstrate the diverse range of usage and opinions of the term immersion, informing us that utilising one term as the key adjective to address many artists' interpretations can be a precarious route.

In the next chapter I will examine different spaces that have perceived to immerse audiences or participants with the space being the conduit that this is achieved. This chapter also creates a route between the examination of immersion and towards the interaction with immersion in the practical pieces.

### **Chapter Three: (In Between) Spaces: Towards my Anthrophony**

...the whole universe of studio work (even without “transforming” sounds, all the work for selecting, editing, “polishing”, time-structuring, etc.) and the entire endeavour of how to deal with virtual and real space according to our goals (which dramatically vary between artists).

(Kent, J. Interview with Francisco Lopez, 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> December, Email)

Francisco Lopez (2012), responding to my question about editing recorded sounds, proceeds to describe and distinguish between the challenge artists set themselves to achieve in their results and the actual results, which differ from artist to artist. For example, with studio editing, the results can be altered each time. This raises the question of what exactly artists are attempting to achieve when they change or transform sounds. Are we actually listening? Do we hear what is being played? Building upon the previous chapter where this sonic residue is a fraction of the works under consideration, this chapter examines the fragmented peripheral figures that sonic pieces create or leave behind. Importantly, the layered experience is what goes unnoticed, what is left behind, what is not heard or seen, or the fusion between listener and noise.

This unnoticed layer that Lopez (2012) is alluding to is also critical to the work of the artists discussed in this chapter and as in Lopez (2012) this layer of uncertainty can become the essential aspect of the work and results in a form of immersion. Could this uncertainty be explored through Lopez’s (2012) method of sensory manipulation or the physical actions of artists who interact with the environment? (In between) spaces examines the environments sonic installations are projected from and whether artists consider these to be immersive. Original interviews with artists, curators and writers Francisco Lopez (2012), Ross Dalziel (2012), Chris Watson (2012), BJ Nilsen (2013), David Hendy (2013), Daniela Cascella (2013) and Matthew Herbert (2014) expand and explore notions of immersion from everyday routine spaces and objects. They are accompanied by a series of installations of my

own work which similarly explore themes of (In between) Spaces and which bridge the gap between theoretical explorations and practice-based work, in other words, demonstrating the connection between my work and this thesis.

In this chapter I examine such methods as well as how evoking such an environment can be an act of immersion, demonstrated in the section entitled *Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces*. This transpires through my own interaction with the three sonic works examined that challenge my perceptions of interior spaces and the meaning of being immersed within these fabricated environments. In *Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces*, first, Keiko Uenishi (O. Blaat) (2007) who presented a piece at the *City of Women Festival 2007* in Slovenia exploring layers not heard; second, an installation entitled *My Psychotic Heart* (2007) by Kal Ross and Andrea Earl (2007) that not only provoked listeners' thought patterns but re-tuned and shifted sociological opinions of mental health; and finally a piece that I stumbled upon whilst travelling around Australia, by Bruce Odland (2006), "*Good Vibrations*" (2006) was an attempt to bridge the gap between public awareness of learning disabilities and the myths attached. This section examines the fabricated environments that these three installations created and critically the way in which the environments became the focal point of the dimensions of each sonic piece.

In the second subsection, *Transformation*, considerations of noise and objects positioned on the parameters of installations then pose the question of whether those objects that are not considered give pretence to the notion of our being receptive to our surroundings. So being receptive to less recognised objects of our built surroundings – arches, walled gardens or sheds – leads me to the questions: do we consider these spaces or are they a transition space? Are we immersed unknowingly and as a matter of routine? Do we move out of the spaces the artist

uses to the everyday spaces positioned on the edge of peripheral mind? The final subsection, *Doorframes and Sheds*, examines routine, standard spaces that are considered part of the everyday, spaces not normally used to transmit recorded sound from but as already built structures; non-traditional exhibition spaces. Notably there are prime examples to be found in artist David Cunningham's (2008) series of installations *The Listening Room* (2008) that explore relationships between noise and objects that we usually consider lifeless or lacking any *resonating racket* (See Appendix Five).

### **Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces**

When thinking about contemporary gallery spaces, that can be bespoke built, that can morph, appearing different with each exhibition, how do we know what future recorded sounds are going to be reverberating around these spaces and are they viable spaces? The short answer is we do not know, it is difficult to predict. In order to answer such a question I choose three installations that I have visited, taken part in or happened upon that had an impact on my thoughts and rationale about what a space actually is used for. First I consider what sound/noise means in our lives, the inevitable to and fro, the constant, eternal experiences thrown at our senses, and also whether this relationship has any impact when experiencing a sonic work. Not only our sense of hearing, but noise itself can makes us think differently, change; we can find it tiresome or joyful; and as I do not offer any historical alternative I can highlight a relatively modern influence from the past one hundred years of thinking about space and sound that takes into consideration this fraught relationship to sound/noise. The three locations visited for this section are Ljubljana, Liverpool and Sydney between 2006 and 2007; unplanned visited to three installations that altered my views of being immersed.

Erik Satie (1982) is a key source of inspiration in my work. Satie (1982) coined the

term *Furniture Music* (1917) and as discussed earlier influenced the lineage of sonic arts. Satie (1982) did not suddenly change how people listened but he demonstrated a possibility of altering an interior environment with *Furniture Music* (1982). He allowed the space to become a commodity, the immediate noise was irrelevant but it became possible to alter a space by adding a layer of background music, thereby altering one's mindset to create a pleasurable, controlled, sanitized experience. This highlights the shift that could occur by altering routine everyday events like drinking coffee in a café and being able to have in the background a pleasurable sound. This was the beginning of what would become ambient music and like Ludwig Koch's (1955) influence on field recording, Satie (1985) is a pioneer and his work unintentionally a prelude to much of the installation art that has become apparent in the past one hundred years, especially with recent rapid advancements in technology. Satie (1982) shares responsibility, along with Kurt Schwitters (2013) perhaps, for two unique moments in the timeline of installation art where both categories manipulate and invite everyday occurrences into an everyday environment and are banal yet at the same time sublime.

With *Furniture Music* (1985), ringing in the subconscious of contemporary sonic installations, has conceptual links to O.Blaat's (2007) works. As an experimental sound artist, O. Blaas (2007) utilises sound mixed with space and interaction with the intention, alongside technology, to seemingly immerse willing volunteers into an environment that alters the mind-set, offering freedom and control throughout an immersive design of the space. But how does O. Blaas (2007) achieve this immersion? By supplementing her work with the bouncing and reverb sounds around the interior space that exists between the viewer and the work; by explicitly exposing our own self-awareness and belief in the work, building a rapport and altering the mind-set by immersing the audience.

Personal preferences tend to manoeuvre me away from artist performances; however, at first, this performance appeared not to be in relation to any space or object. This altered after around ten minutes when the reverbs of sound in collaboration with the audience and the women's shoes created a weave of unusual effects with O. Blaas's (2007) movements resembling a mix of traditional Japanese dance movements and tai chi. This did not just happen in the centre of the room but O. Blaas (2007) moved and shifted between corners, walls, people and objects creating a connectivity between all these elements. The connection is unique as the one off performance could not be repeated and, like the everyday sounds people hear in their urban sonic environments, the random connectivity is the relationship between people and sonorous milieu. There was no instantaneous eureka moment where all these actions and connectivity's altered my mind and immersed me in the interior space. However, what did occur during O. Blaas's (2007) performance was a gradual absorbing of the space into my subconscious: for moments afterwards, outside Cankar Hall in Ljubljana, I experienced the appropriation of my sonic body (LaBelle, 2010) from the surrounding objects and sonic environment.

By creating such ephemeral sounds from O. Blaas's (2007) performance that are not dictated by technology, rather supplemented by it, O. Blaas's (2007) performance was balanced between the sound, the listeners and the technology. O. Blaas (2007) used her body and the surrounding objects, including the audience/participants utilising the space using a Wii controller with a laptop to immerse everything within the room. This balance heightens one's perception, offering an ability to interact with more fluidity and honesty. The hearing of these sounds opens an unspoiled portal for audiences to explore, continually expressing the synchronizing functions of an environment, which could be viewed as immersive. This can be explained through what I discussed earlier with Salomé Voegelin's (2010) work, observing that immersion is not something that has simply happened, but a natural phenomenon

from reading to dancing as an essential element of the fabric of listening, noise and silence. Mailman and Paraskeva (2013) argue that there is a complex philosophical relationship between the performer and technology "It's an old but potent dream to interrelate, music, dance and visual art" (Mailman & Paraskeva [2013] Cited in

Wyers & Gilieca 2013 p. 35) Where does immersion sit in this relationship?

According to Mailman & Paraskeva (2013), technology can be a tool that bridges the gap between the audience's conceptions of a performance and a space, allowing one to manipulate and integrate those elements. Therefore, O. Blaas's (2007) manipulation of the space and the technology bridges the gap between the audience and her work, whether it is hectic, calming or charged. She achieves a mind-challenging subconsciously dynamic sonic piece that perfectly highlights the unknown and mysterious elements of an immersive sound environment. From O. Blaas's (2007) performance the key aspect is the relationships between the objects and the space but notably in the background was the role of silence that O. Blaas (2007) used. Her views on silence are key to her understanding of listening as she states below:

I would consider 'silence' to be a part of music, and am also curious to see what our ears would perceive while no actual sounds are registered. [Sometimes ears would hear things even though there are absolutely no sounds, especially right after intense sounds are given, for instance.] I am interested in the whole concept of 'listening'.  
(Escudero, Guillermo Interview O. Blaas 2004, <http://www.loop.cl> July. 24, 2008)

By considering all the elements here: space, sounds, silence & the audience, O.Blaas (2007) ultimately achieves a performance with minimal touches of sound that reaches a level of interaction that as an audience member I was able to experience and have remembered ever since. Mainly being present at the performance was not enough but becoming part of the space and one of the objects, I became attuned to other objects in the room as well as the artist. I also registered the silence at the performance and noted that at first the silence was unbearable,



like building of tension, however this was exactly what O. Blaat (2007) set out to achieve; as she states above, silence is key to her exploration of listening. This was demonstrated in the opening sequences of this performance and though there was sound being created at the performance this did not occur straight away but the tension building up towards the creation of the first sound drew me in and captivated me.

This change of focus or energy is illustrated by David Toop (2004) who considers silence to be an essential aspect of music and performances over the past one hundred years and notes that silence can completely change the dynamics of a work:

Playing on the threshold of silence can turn your body into a war zone of cramps and tremors, provoke clumsiness and mental panic, push your concentration levels beyond all previous limits, expose every flaw of structure and execution and finally turn a docile audience into a howling mob.

(Toop 2004 p. 251)

David Toop (2004) simply assigns this not to any overbearing factors that can overawe or swamp the work and the listeners while solely focusing on the act of listening. O. Blaat's (2007) minimalism is a clear expression of her own experiences and this is intriguing as up to this point it is the audience that get most credit but this isn't the case, O. Blaat (2007) has the creative inventiveness to be subtle without invading the personal immersed space of the individual taking part in her work. According to Prendergast (2000) "...what's most intriguing about minimalism is the way the very music is a product of individual experience and invention" (Prendergast 2000 p. 93). While the audience do not initially realise it O. Blaat (2007) is actually ensuring audience commitment throughout the life of the work by manipulating a certain type/set of responses.

While O. Blaat (2007) effectively finds balance through discipline of trade and

creative talent in a trade-off by inviting the audience to creatively participate. Others have equally found this balance through provocative and co-collaborative ideas that challenge the core of our being socially and politically. One such collaboration *My Psychotic Heart* (2007), an installation (See fig. 10) by Kal Ross (2007), a sound engineer, and Andreas Earl (2007), a writer for television, theatre and radio, that took place in the summer of 2007 at Liverpool Cathedral's Oratory. A fascinating work was showcased which pulled one through a journey of enduring mental illness as a near-sighted experience. Leading up to visiting the installation I had decided that cycling four miles to the Oratory on a hot dry afternoon would clear my mind and allow me to focus on what I was about to experience.

Not one for the faint-hearted, this work challenged the audience and myself every step of the way. Guided on entering as to the correct way to head without walking straight into a wall or even worse a piece of scaffolding situated in the Oratory, one then allows one's eyes to adjust and decides which direction to head whilst figuring out what one needs to do next. A headphone appears in front and it's time to listen. One finds oneself in the middle of a therapy session with individuals discussing their mental health issues. With similar quieter conversations swirling around the room at a low volume and after listening to all the recordings and heard the external sounds the audience then one realises there is a story between all the people speaking from different sessions. As soon as one enters the Oratory one is transported into an environment that easily becomes the mind of any of the individuals expressing their innermost feelings. The most revealing reflection that comes from this installation is the ability to transport one's own mindset into dark space as even the most balanced person can be challenged and immersed into their own mind, to ponder death, fear, love, comfort, anxiety, seclusion and confusion.

The Oratory was arranged so audience members would walk around the edge of the

space with listening stations and headphones attached positioned on plinths leading to a final pair of headphones at the front centre of the room. Around the centre of the room hanging from the ceiling were long pieces of white clear material that were moving and interfering with every visitor. At near darkness Ross and Earl (2007) manipulated the dark and cold atmosphere to act as another character, one that is always present in the room propelling your thoughts in and out of the intertwined stories.

The recordings used were taken from multiple psychiatric sessions and then re-recorded as to protect the identity of the people taking part. Listening in this environment had an extremely powerful manifestation amongst the listeners so taking part should not have been taken lightly.

To begin to understand what this group of people have been through with mental illness, we have to first come to terms with the space evoked in these recordings, enabling us to be immersed in the void of the mind that is being played out in the Oratory. Telotte asserts that, "In various manifestations, technology demonstrates how we have tried to 'create ourselves' and the world we inhabit" (Telotte 1999 p. 20). *My Psychotic Heart* (2007) relays back to the audience core altering perceptions, and physically confuses the audience as they experience dark and cold surroundings in the Oratory and this adds to the realisation that they have just been present at a moment when someone is expressing their most raw thoughts and feelings. The perceptions of the space were challenged through the anxieties of the patients and this is important when considering immersion and the relationship of audience to sound work within an interior space. Throughout time each lived in or created interior space contains stories and fictions and even though the patient stories in *My Psychotic Heart* (2007) did not originally exist within the Oratory, what was critical in my understanding of it as an immersive space was this element of

stories and fictions being transcribed into it.

Like O. Blaat's (2007) sound performance in Canker Hall where the effects occurred over the time of the performance and immediately afterwards, the stories in *My Psychotic Heart* (2007) also created a lineage of narratives in relation to the visitors at any given moment. Unlike the more popular notion of immersion, as discussed earlier, that informs visitors they will be immersed even before entering the gradual and temporal impacts of immersion become apparent, without being informed of any immersive intentions. Both installations contain this thread of what Alan Dunn (2008) referred to in his interview with me about being connected to a listening audience through everyday narrative using routine and everyday objects and stories.

This connectivity was also present in the third and final example by artist Bruce Odland (2006) who is predominantly known for his large scale, public space, sound installations that transform city noises. "*Good Vibrations*" (2006) was composed of a converted caravan (See fig. 11) travelling around Australia with a multi-sensory adapted live interior environment created primarily for young people with specific learning needs. On its journey it used multiple interfaces to capture collected sounds and images for the public to engage and explore various sensory challenges. I first experienced this work when it was parked outside Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art for the public to engage with and experience the sensory explorations recorded from its journey.

When I entered the caravan, the light, vivid colours within the interior were warm and engaging with peculiar noises sounding from various interfaces. Once acclimatised to the environment, visitors also felt a depth of containment here that guided participants to a single area of interaction. This was a completely interactive object that allowed visitors to play back and create their own sounds from a bank of

sounds and images that students had been given the opportunity to download onto the caravan's computer database. At that moment, I was that person they had downloaded the sounds for, as the first sounds began, feeling my way around the panels with each one testing perceptions of disabilities through shots of memories, some more abstract than the next. I suddenly got the feeling that I get when wearing headphones, I was part of my own story with the world outside being blocked despite the presence of other people in the caravan. Momentarily, I had an individual, unique experience through someone else's transition. The technology enabled the audience to interact, to play with the idea of restricting outside influences but simultaneously having to come to terms with all the elements making up the caravan's core elements. The modified caravan was not the critical element of this work that made me consider it an immersive space, rather the previous days and weeks of travel around Australia's east coast where individuals had left their sensory mark inside the inner workings of the caravan's bespoke design. There was the evidence of journeys from one town to the next gathering information and translating it onto a useable interface so that users/audiences could subscribe to the sensory challenges these young people were illuminating.

At the time I visited the caravan I was backpacking around Australia and was about six months into the journey where I had worked as a face to face fundraiser, fruit picker and hospital porter, all for short periods of time, to fund my continuing travel. My own journey had taken shape and the future route was planned, up to this point at least, and after my own thirty minutes of testing all the interfaces in the caravan I departed and one element in particular made me consider my idea of my travelling. It was that I was not unique in what I was doing, my journey was not something of self-discovery but a series of recorded sensory happenings. Like the caravan I was recording my own challenges and relaying them to other travellers and my backpacking partner. We discussed with each other and with other travellers in

hostels our sky dives, our finding empty beaches and our plans for what to do next. Each instance of deciding what to do or where to go was a subconscious decision to test how far I was willing to push my body and mental endurance. This altered my perception of an immersive space, relaying the inaudible occurrences of others shifting the transition of my experience. This transition was the immersive (In between) space that led towards my anthrophony.

*“Good Vibrations”* (2006), in a post-John Cage sense, is more concerned with the space of the noise, less about the preconceived compositions, more about everyday objects letting audiences appreciate sound and elaborate upon their own personal sonorous spheres. This has allowed for artists’ like Bruce Odland (2006) to explore social and political issues, focusing on the core elements that society inclusively struggles to understand, making experience key. Gregg Wagstaff (2000), an artist working with sound and installation, describes the value of the sounds surrounding us: “One of the main reasons for doing this as far I am concerned is, as I have said earlier, that the soundscape is an indicator for social and environmental change” (Wagstaff 2000 p. 19).

My listening alters, becomes more acute; and installations such as those by O. Blaas (2007), Kal Ross, Andrea Earl (2007) and Bruce Odland (2006 & 2008) challenge my perceptions of noise, space and objects. The noises are interwoven in each piece by the participants, the individuals chosen by design and the live participant who contributes to the installations subtle silences, imagined landscapes and uncomfortable subjects that people share in partnership with each installation. Interestingly in sound art, “...appreciation of the total environments of sounds, both unwanted and wanted” (Licht 2007 p. 116), what can be heard and seen are two separate points. Appreciating and accepting what lies before us is only half the story. Both O. Blaas (2007) and in particular Odland (2006) produce and design spaces

that invite the sounds in, a kind of blanket of noise which we do not hear. Odland (2006), for instance, makes room to let in the wanted and unwanted, giving little choice for the audience not to accept.

*Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces* bring together three alternate explorations of interior environments that present forms of immersion emerging from collaborations between individuals, objects and the sonic environment. O. Blaat's (2007) achieves this instance of immersion through a binding together of these different elements resulting in a relationship between the audiences, interior space and object: the lasting knowledge that each imparts an impact upon another. In my case this lasted for several hours afterwards with the surrounding sonic environment and the random sonorous happenings illustrating these everyday routine relationships that O. Blaat (2007) interacted with in her sound performance. In *My Psychotic Heart* (2007) the emotion that was confronted by the audience within that interior space through stories and fictions questioned any impact of emotional significance attached to everyday routine spaces. The arranged interior space that made audiences feel isolated within the unfolding stories was the significant element, by immersing audiences within the character of the interior space. *"Good Vibrations"* (2006) extracted sensory information from various sources such as individuals, groups and environments with the caravan; an object in transition on the periphery of the resonant happenings of the participants involved. In this section each installation informs us that immersion can exist in the everyday with everyday object and stories in routine circumstances. Each installation demonstrates that objects positioned at the edge of a work can leave lasting impacts: O. Blaat's (2007) corners and shoes, *My Psychotic Heart's* (2007) unseen character and the transitional sensory recordings of *"Good Vibrations"* (2006).

In the following section I have analysed the consequence of objects that are part of our everyday environment yet can somehow give precedence to immersion being considered.

### **Transformation**

Allowing external objects to become part of the dynamic and changing our perceptions within a space, whether perceived within an interior or an exterior is not of importance. However, it is critical when considering everyday objects, banal seemingly meaningless ones. Like noise, man-made objects can be rejected or ignored and accepted as simply existing – archways, doorsteps, doorframes, radiators, pylons, goalposts or bins. But in the same way that noise can be shut off, these everyday objects can act of conduits to immerse us in a noise, signals of intent or symbols of sound. Throughout urban sound, objects can rapidly become peripheral shadows.

Standing in the frame of a door is seemingly nothing special, although granted this is a space that could potentially save you from an earthquake, but as David Cunningham's (2008) seminal series *The Listening Room* (2008) demonstrates, even our own living space can be a place of resonant sound. He uses sound to resonate back within a space and one ends up listening to the room, which demonstrates that even a space can be used as a sound. By using the dimensions of the room Cunningham (2008) enables the space to produce an audible noise. With great simplicity in construction, the installation series was there to allow the audience to listen intently without distraction; the arches and the building of the performance become the place for listening.

*The Listening Room* (2008) (See fig. 12) highlights the invisible nature of being immersed in a piece of sound flowing ambiguously. Delving into the unique



properties that subtly flow through this sound work, Cunningham (2008) uses the frequencies of the room and the movement of people in the space to produce an audible piece. It is not only the frequency of the room that changes the sound but also the light, heat, humidity anything that causes the air to move. Cunningham (2008) describes the work as a sculpture: "...the sense that there is a consistent structure, which is moderated by conditions of the space, just like a sculpture catching different patterns of light at different times of day or in differing locations" (Cunningham, David, *The Listening Room* <http://www.stalk.net> March. 20, 2008).

External forces having an impact on the transcendental nature of the piece, spiritual in design, formative in thought, *The Listening Room* (2008) considers what we do not normally consider. This provocative unpredictability runs through much of Cunningham's work and he celebrates this, even stating that people interacting in whatever way they like with his work is important. Speaking on a panel, he once gave an example of this: a group of young men playing football in the space. "The meaning is up to the visitor. [At] Sydney in 1998, which was spectacular venue, gunpowder store made of limestone. A group of young people came in and played football. [I] liked this, they were using the space how they wanted to interact" (Cunningham D, (2008) Panel interview at Staging Sound, 23<sup>rd</sup> April). The focus of the space was insignificant in comparison to the actions of the football being kicked around. A moving object in a static space was being controlled by the actions of the visitors and perhaps manipulated unbeknown to themselves by the objects on the edge of the space as controlled by the parameters such as height, distance or resonance of the walls: structural immersion.

Cunningham (2008) emphasises that a sculpture captures the imagination and inspires the beauty of human nature; however, it can also stir emotions such as anger like Cunningham's *The Listening Room* (2008). Here one can become

transfixed on the movement of oneself, bending the acoustics of the space around one's own imagination, becoming more aware of one's body and one's connection to the surrounding structures. Cunningham (2008) utilises pre-conditioned environments such as an arch or a doorway as the conduit where the sonic energy is channelled into vibrations that are physically connected and representational of that space.

Relating to such spaces that have become banal through the familiarity of the everyday, taking from sources that are so normal to us and which we accept as a basic condition of reality, like a doorway: like noise, such objects of banality can be one's own conceptual contingent through which we relate to our own environment. Reminded of and connected through a shared sense of knowledge and by using these shared or common bonds, we can experience individual constructed moments of shared noise. This thread by which Cunningham explores routine structures and spaces is also present in my work, through my own home and immediate surrounding sonic environment – my doorways, garage or shed. These encounters with such objects and spaces could be observed in terms of the personification of oneself within a familiar or foreign space.

An artist who examines and tests the personification of an individual experience within bespoke designed spaces is Carsten Nicolai (2004). A trained landscape architect, he explores sonic and scientific interventions that he refers to as containing hidden elements that are vital to the physical body of sonic work. In an interview with David Toop (2004), when asked how his training as a landscape designer overlapped with his sound works, Nicolai explains: "Landscape architecture and gardening is all about space and the complexity of thinking" (Nicolai cited in Toop 2004 p. 179). He states that there is an inherent connection between nature and the space that is also evident in his sonic works.

Nicolai's (2007) installations and in particular *Static Balance* (2007), where mirrors (See fig. 13) reflect the acoustic sounds conducted into the room offering the audience a chance to explore the space using our ears, transporting the viewer or listener and making them use their hearing as a guide, requiring their full attention to block any outside influences. The relationship the audience has with the work is already present through the familiarity of space and the sensorial encounter that is established. Nicolai (2005) has a body of installation work where there are clear links between being immersed and the concept of discovery. In 2005 Nicolai was interviewed for the German magazine *mono.kultur* (2005); describing the changes in his work, mathematics and sound, he goes on to illustrate:

When I first started with music, with high tones, I was not really aware of what I was doing, but I discovered that we don't know what we can trigger with sound. We know we can trigger emotions with sounds that we can hear, but when we go out of this range, we don't know anything about it.  
(Cannon 2005 p. 19)

Carsten Nicolai's (2007) interest lies in the relationship between humans and sounds, exploring the delicate nature of what triggers emotions. It is this venture to find these triggers that runs deep in the sonic arts from Nicolai (2007) to Cunningham (2008); something that cannot be recognised directly but which is a discreet, hidden and essential aspect of these sound works. It is their collective need to trigger certain factors such as sound and light around them that immerses the audience. Like being awoken from a long sleep we realise that sound isn't the only source at work, but that we are being manipulated by powerful unknown sources that naturally pull our conscious through a door to a place we recognise. This relates to what humans experience in their own living spaces, listeners finding themselves at the centre of sound and listening to music from the home stereo or iPod docking station.

Humans are not surprised by such installations or sound in a space as this urge to

be surrounded or wash oneself in sound that is imprinted throughout our past as Professor David Hendy (2013) explains from his radio series and book entitled *Noise: A Human History of Sound & Listening* (2013):

To trace the story of sound is to tell the story of how we learned to overcome our fears about the natural world, perhaps even to control it; how we learned to communicate with, understand and live alongside our fellow beings; how we have fought with each other for dominance; how we have sought to find privacy in an increasingly busy world; how we have struggled with our emotions and our sanity.  
(Hendy 2013 p. x)

This sympathetic truth outlined by Hendy (2013) identifies and traces a fault line of human sonic trepidation, one where belonging resounds and reverbs everyday human movements. With this in mind, I consider or at least begin to contemplate the personal interaction that part two of this thesis presents in the following two chapters. Challenges of examining another person's sonorous sphere, as discussed in the methodology, unlocks difficult methods and therefore moves towards a personal sonic awareness that is critical to fuse part one and part two together.

In this section discussed is the transformation from a static object producing little or no audible noises to one that generates soniferous signifiers, as in David Cunningham's *Listening Room* (2008) and Carsten Nicolai's *Static Balance* (2007), is significant as one that humans can relate to and explore. Critically these amplifications of static and everyday objects allow audiences to understand that within our everyday routines and urban lives all structures present a resonant frequency that leaves a lasting imprint. To transform such resonances from small trace vibrations to an auditive possibility is also a portal of interactivity. This alludes to the contact between humans and objects that transforms a static object and its existence into a producing, resonant one.

In the next section of this chapter I introduce my own work into a continuing discussion that interrogates the concept of immersion. In doing this I illustrate and convey my lived experience traceable throughout my own spatial and temporal points of reference.

### **Doorframes and Sheds**

To have control in our own sonic environments and considering our direct influence on the noises in immediate proximity, as within our built domestic environment. This is an everyday occurrence that has shifted as through our domestic sounds is essential and symbolic. Sound absorbing devices can now be installed in one's home to keep unwanted noise from stereos, washing machines and dishwashers seeping past doorways and into the pristine peaceful zones we create for ourselves.

The sonic traces from unwanted reverbs as with doors we have around our homes and the noises these doors resonate back to us when we open and close them can leave us exasperated. One door in my home has to be slammed shut, as the size of the frame with layer upon layer of gloss paint has made it impossible not to slam the door. When I hear the slamming, wherever I may be in the house I temporarily engage with that doorframe in my domestic environment. It makes me think about the noise resonating through to my neighbours, the Monday night group of hand-bell enthusiasts that are shaken from their rhythm, or who may be cursing the doorframe or me. Either way the noise generated is neither wanted nor unwanted; it is a reminder of quiet spaces yelling out like the planes over Kew Gardens or like being enveloped in a momentary domain of noise, the moment of split second immersion that pulls together a group of people in one singular retort of sonic tapering that is gone in an instant.

Doors are seemingly banal objects and functional at best but as Keiko Torigoe

(2000) describes: "The sound of sliding doors is a unique and essential sonic characteristic of Japanese houses. I first became aware of this fact almost 20 years ago, when I made an experimental radio programme on the theme of door sounds..." (Torigoe 2000 p. 9). My door slamming into the over-glossed frame is not a unique sound of British culture; recently however, I discovered that not all my doors make the same noise when slammed shut whereas Japanese sliding doors would not wholly differ one from the other. But Torigoe (2000) illustrates through the disappearance of Japanese sliding doors a wider adjective, one where natural environments are diminishing, modern urban life becoming uniform with a loss of identity. These cultural spaces of identity not only relate to our personal identity but also the sonic environment that we endeavour to make personable creates a unique noise that we remember and recall just as Torigoe (2000) had done. Such observed phenomenon has relatively new beginnings since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with sound artists (Katie Paterson, O. Blaat, Christine Sun Kim, Bruce Odland) emerging with environmental spaces explored. While the Sony Walkman in the late 1970's had an immediate impact on artists, where the impact lay was in the ability it conferred to readily use accessible and affordable technology. Space and awareness of one's insignificant self on the planet appeared to have a greater impact on sound artists; sound was the external phenomenon with deep-rooted influences, changing how spaces are perceived and listened to.

R. Murray Schafer (1977) demonstrated in his study of perception the cultural alternatives of different reactions to space:

...the Byzantine convention of reversed perspective, by which objects were frequently enlarged as they receded in space... Eskimos, as Edmund Carpenter has shown, would often continue a drawing over the edge of the drawing surface onto the back of the material...  
(Schafer 1977 p. 157)

Schafer (1977) goes further to elaborate that an Inuit perception is one built around

the acoustic, where there is no set position or parameters to allow their senses controlled freedom over their landscape. This is fascinating point; perfectly logically that an Eskimo would need to be aurally attuned to their surroundings more than we Europeans, for example. In the urban built environment major aspects are controlled: when we cross the road at pedestrian crossing, where we queue to pay for shopping, sleeping upstairs or listening to the radio. There is an existence where sonic traces are not bound to the visual but to perceptual intuitiveness existing in relation to natural sounds of belonging. Are Eskimos in a constant flux of immersion through their intuitive abilities? I would argue that such natural abilities are a primal instinct one cannot access readily in such busy aural environments.

In my sonosphere I have become attuned to the surroundings: West Kirby beach triggers immersive memories, as does the slamming of that doorframe. With this in mind I decided to explore my own shed, station myself within the four walls amongst the empty boxes, bicycles, half empty paint containers, various gardening tools and of course the collection of cobwebs and snail trails. Only surrounded by everyday objects, nothing special I think to myself, but amongst this host of machines, junk and boxes it starts to feel like my very own anechoic chamber. Though supposedly free from echoes my own chamber is only partially so; from the objects that lay in front of me I re-imagined a silence of an echoless space. I tried to imagine if my garage was to translate past sonic reverbs that have been in transit through the object's lifetime, how such lives have imprinted upon the silence. Long hours, days, weeks, months and years with no one passing through or even entering.

In 2012 I began recording every morning for two weeks in my garage and I present the sounds here as the prelude to the following sonic works as a method of constructing my own habitat to establish for the reader/listener a banal aural scenario for the work, *Garage Chamber* (2014) (see Appendix Two and fig. 14 to

17). At the start of this chapter I asked two questions, are we actually listening? Do we hear what is being played? First, deliberately sensing an opportunity to enhance audience experiences by relaying an unpredictable stochastic variable at the canopy garage door leaves the term immersion broken.

From the past generational era our personal spaces and sense of environment have been transformed, as examined by Sarah Pink (2012) and Joe Moran (2005 & 2007), with Pink (2012) pointing out that our personal relationship to the everyday is on-going and that it alters as we become driven by identity and understanding.

...being immersed in some way in the world we are trying to understand, something that is in part inevitable in that we are already living everyday life, but that is also intentional in our seeking to implicate ourselves in the worlds and experiences of others as they are constituted and performed in different contexts.  
(Pink 2012 p. 150)

Pink (2012) asserts that our boundaries have changed dramatically and that we share such everyday experiences with other people, finding similarity through our common rituals of space and environments. This commonality is a defining element when considering the spaces that sonic works, sound works, and sonic recordings are projected from; as earlier demonstrated, social issues can be deferred through manipulated bespoke spaces: the oratory, the caravan and a re-invented space. Following this then is a series of recordings of static moments in time with voices, footsteps and the hum of a freezer with my garage, with waiting for a phone to ring, to be called out. Not that the listener would or should need to know this but resonant frequencies recorded of course are as a result of the objects and movements from within the interior space and the routine events happening around the garage. The image, not a constructed one but one taken at the time of the recording, just one recording, is as vital to understanding the unmediated interior space. Interestingly recent curiosity in sound and notions of sound interspersed with the visual being separate are becoming fewer as Tim Ingold (2007) goes onto indicate when drawing



on his conclusions about descriptions of sound. There is a combination of dependency and misinformed assumptions in the perception of soundscapes. Later he goes on to describe his objections to this term soundscape:

...sound is simply another way of saying 'I can hear'. In just the same way, light is another way of saying 'I can see'. If this is so, then neither sound nor light, strictly speaking, can be an object of our perception. Sound is not what we hear, any more than light is what we see.  
(Ingold cited in Carlyle 2007 p. 12)

This being the case then the recordings from my garage reveal something entirely different from what I originally planned. Thirty-six minutes long and with Ingold's (2007) delineation of the term soundscape, herein lie my own doubts that come about through the term that R. Murray Schafer (1977) brought to prominence in support of his own research, and since has become the one term synonymous with the sonorous environment. The resonating frequencies that are recorded from my garage emerge from a combination of location, acoustics and the inner silent grandeur of the space. I am not present for most of the recording, only to start and end the recording, assuming that the sound is only being listened to so all the elements recorded are there to immerse. Not a host of perceptions but a collection of mostly everyday sonorous repetitions made by the humans walking down the alley way at the back of my garage. We are not listening to the perception of the space itself but the resonating frequencies of the banal, as Ingold (2007) explains: "...sound is like the wind, then it will not stay put, nor does it put persons or things in their place." (Ingold, Tim Cited in Carlyle 2007 p. 12) So essentially Ingold (2007) is saying that sound is not about the place or location but for this work should be considered a static recording not about sound, soundscapes or any perception of both. What we listen to is a recording, one location, one moment in space and time that neither represents my garage or the environment around me but the actions connected to the hearing of sound.

Finally, by comparison this then leads me to consider my final points and my reconsideration of *(In between) spaces*. In 2012 I took part in a Cape Farwell project entitled ShortCourse UK that was a series of expeditions around ecological and environmental sites in the United Kingdom. Three days exploring the edge lands of the river Mersey working in collaboration with architects, visual artists and writers with the resulting mainstay being a work that examined and opened dialogue about the changing environmental patterns of everyday life. In one instance we journeyed up the river Mersey and took one of the canal routes at Ellesmere Port, which led us to the Arpley landfill site located close to Warrington. Remarkably the most intriguing aspect of this site was that Arpley was adjoined to the Moore Nature Reserve, each sharing the same boundaries and ecological system. My intentions through this research and subsequent recordings transformed with final conclusions in this chapter with the adjoined work entitled *Untitled Map One* (2012) (See fig. 18) that is an accumulation of the recordings taken from the Arpley/Moore compilation together with the images (See fig. 19 to 29) taken during the expedition. Like Kal Ross and Andrea Earl's (2007) sensorally-engaged interior space, the designed unique map not only functions as a map but completes my argument against the soundscape and immersion as an interior spatial function resulting from various sonorous environments. *Untitled Map One* (2012) relays the whole journey from the river Mersey to the canals beginning at Ellesmere Port.

### **Routine Everyday Sonorous Spaces**

On my second and final journey alone from the River Mersey towards Moore Nature Reserve the peaceful calm waters allow me access to the site where my next immersive experience starts. Dirt roads lead around corners and down endless paths but finally arrive at the junction for Moore Nature Reserve. This time not led by an architecturally-inclined foray but a gentle sweeping and low lying walk, an immersive walk where a second soniferous work becomes increasingly graphic.

Unlike the recordings from my garage that emerge to go against the acoustic space and argue for the action of hearing as the immersive action *Untitled Map One* (2012), this illustrates my second and final journey intentions where I wanted to secure a clear impression of the way in which the land around the nature reserve was shifting and changing.

Analysing the original questions at the start of this chapter: Are we actually listening? Do we hear what is being played? Throughout the main three works, I critically research in the subsection *Three Locations, Three Installations and Three Spaces*, each work possesses elements of peripheral aural placement whereby the audience participates in the work whether at the edge of the piece or at the centre. Either way, the artist has created a sense of being besieged by the core values with these being sociological centred and giving a sense of vibration of consciousness. *Untitled Map One* (2012) neither conspires to engulf the viewer in the belief that the battle of the nature reserve is to stay alive, nor that they are looking at something laden with social entrapment. Neutral engagement was the plan of *Untitled Map One* (2012) and if one chooses, one can listen to the recordings taken from the first journey then perhaps the questions surrounding this area will come to the fore. However, this is eclipsed as you look at *Untitled Map One* (2012) and become aware that immersion in art and everyday life is just that, an everyday occurrence that is not just meant or owned by audio technicians with clever software altering and changing recordings to trick your aural perceptions but an immersive (*in between*) space that exists at the level of normality from out of the banal.

## Chapter Four: Electrified Environment

The sonority of daily life is a deeply impressionable sensing, impinging on thought and feeling in ways that give accent to the shifting self. The physicality of sound, as a movement of air pressure, of vibration, of interpenetrating exchanges from all around, forms an enveloping and effective influence. Such experience fills everyday life with an on-going material flux, forming a phenomenal life-force existing here and there in which we are deeply involved.  
(LaBelle 2010 p. 133)

In Chapter Three I examine a series of works and scenarios that consider peripheral sonic traces that are on the whole discarded and placed at the edge of our silent unconsciousness, most of these fractions of spaces containing valuable messages. In the following two chapters, I examine my interaction with sonic environments. As a personal life communication with no boundaries of space and time, so in contrast the attached works project the sonorous unravelling of an individual's reverberation. LaBelle (2010) explains that being enveloped in the counter exchanges of everyday pressure involves interaction or contact with environments. With the following recordings in this chapter demonstrates that immersion exists throughout one's life and that it often consists of suppressed or peripheral experiences and relationships.

This chapter examines and analyses the electrification of an environment accompanied by the sonic recording entitled *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) (See fig. 30). This includes the personal recorded sound piece that forms the first part of the practice-based research, as a collection of sonic works that explore the key questions of sound and source, together with the wider notions of immersion discussed in the previous chapters. It examines the layers that surround and interrupt our mental environments and the sonic piece included represents a collection of ambiguous immersive sound recordings from random times and locations that are not necessarily related to one another, but were recorded through a series of timed mechanisms using various devices. 'Electrified environment' refers

to the pylons, cables, streetlights, telephones, radio, television and illuminated bus stops I live amongst, that leave for me a sonic fingerprint and are thus represented in the recorded practical piece illustrating the interruptions from my daily immersive routines. *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) emphasises interactions with a soundscape from a physical, intensive and random listening viewpoint, allowing my personal sonic landscape to be explored. Throughout this chapter my personal and random interaction with sound/noise is ever present, enabling me to explore and interrogate the concepts of immersion that I discuss here.

Ever since I was a child the influence of everyday noise has been present, more so than the visual. I have been aware of this influence every single day since about the age of eight, remembering small routine tasks like getting the number 12 bus on Melwood Drive, Liverpool, listening out of my bedroom window for a bus passing so I could time the next one, or, as a twenty eight year old living above a butcher's, using their 7am morning chopping of meat as my alarm clock. Two very small, apparently insignificant incidents, but such insignificant incidents from my sonorous background have influenced my recorded sound pieces and theories. What connects these two incidents and many others throughout my sonorous life is repetition, with each action refined and repeated over and over, becoming a relevant and important aspect of everyday routines. This repetition creates immersion through singular moments that are unique to the individual as demonstrated through my sonorous experience. As Budhaditya Chattopadhyay (2014) explains, the intertwined immersive relationship between the noise of cities and that of individuals can be a reflection of the surrounding environment:

I equate immersion with a losing of the 'self' in the power of sound and an unquestioned following and enveloping of phenomenological experience presented by certain sonic environments. In Indian cities sounds are overwhelming, and they always provide an immersive experience by the sheer presence of sound all around. That is why I need contemplative distance to safeguard my individuality.  
(Kent, J. Interview with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, 2014, 10<sup>th</sup> May, Email)

Such influences from our environment can be explained within the context of the work of composer Per Grainger (2008). Ros Bandt (2008) describes how Grainger (2008) developed the new age of electronic music through interpreting the sounding world into a series of perceived sets of acoustic concepts using the Theremin. This interpretation is an essential point which with the interaction explains and categorises the act of recording, listening and re-positioning the recorded sounds into various sonic forms. I have examined such sonic forms from the perceived everyday routine noises that have influenced me and others through their recorded sonic projections. This position is partly illuminated by what Grainger (2008) describes as the never-ending source of sonic material waiting to be manipulated that will liberate any composer from the limitations that compositional music entails. Grainger explains:

But Free Music demands a non-human performance. Like most music, it is an emotional, not cerebral, product and should pass direct from the imagination of the composer to the ear of the listener by way of delicately controlled machines. Too long has music been subject to the limitation of human hand and subject to the interfering interpretation of a middle performer. A composer wants to speak to his public direct. Machines (properly constructed and properly written for) are capable of niceties of emotional expression impossible to a human performer. (Grainger [2008] cited in Bandt p. 10)

This illuminates my own habit of remembering and re-forging sonic memories that are in the process of emerging from my resonant past. Grainger (2008) lays down the foundations for a flexible and interchangeable approach for interpretations of sonic environments allied with Erik Satie's (1991) experimentations with ideas of altered personal soundscapes as discussed above. In the introduction to this thesis, I cite R. Murray Schafer (1977), who describes a soundscape as: "The sonic environment... the term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an environment" (Schafer 1977 p. 274). This thesis is primarily interested in the element of "abstract construction" (Schafer, 1977 p. 274) in this

definition, which allows a variety of forms of noise and sound to take place within many different forms and narratives. The opening section of this chapter investigates a series of methods used to demonstrate the sonic environment from a personal viewpoint, rather than documenting a sonic event as an artefact. Each recording exists within my space and time where inevitable sonorous happenings occur and impact within variable environments. I highlight key contemporary examples of such explorations of sonic environments, not using conventional means but rather approaches influenced by personal circumstances that have resulted in the final three sonic works. I interpret sonic environment by recording the everyday, as in Grainger (2008), using the environment around me as a bank of free sounds to create the “abstract constructions” (Schafer 1977 p. 274) that document *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013). In this chapter, by listening to *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), the listener witnesses the raw, often painful and even surprising collection of recorded signals of my space and time.

I propose that throughout our day-to-day lives amongst the electrified urban environment, we are exposed to a barrage of unrelenting signals that immerse human routines. Focusing on sonic environments and the manipulation of sound, I explore background, foreground and in-between layers to discover whether these notions of space transmit through appropriately recorded sound. An example of this type of immersion would be the telephone, which receives and sends encoded signals of what we are speaking which emerge at the other side as a representation of our voice reverberating in the recipient’s ear. Schafer (1977) describes the telephone as a new possibility where distance is not a factor and where humans have adapted to alter their emotions across this telephone space: “the Telephone extended intimate listening across wide distances. As it is basically unnatural to be intimate at a distance, it has taken some time for humans to accustom themselves

to the idea” (Schafer 1977 p. 89). This is an example of how one element in our daily lives can be regarded as an electrified immersive space that we are exposed to due to routine use of the device. A space occurs within which we exist for varying lengths of time to communicate messages friends, family, call centres and business associates.

Unlike the artists’ and works discussed above, I focus here on the manipulation and personal interaction of environments that examine one’s own identity amongst everyday routine reverbs. The first subsection, *Identifiable Sounds – Immersion as Physical*, examines a somatic interaction amongst environments utilising the work of artist Christine Sun Kim (2012) to demonstrate alternative formed positions. Sun Kim’s (2012) sonic works and critical relationship to her own personal everyday sonic journey that reproduces the personal experience of listening results from her unique position in the soundscape as someone who cannot actually listen with the cochlea and adapts her listening into other forms of representation. In the second subsection, *Recycled Pylons – Immersion as Background*, I examine a structure that could potentially represent immersion and how such a structure could be considered an essential aspect of immersion. *Imperfection – Immersion as Foreground* brings the focus to an immediate immersive experience from my own practice of recording and examining the condition of the recordings.

### **Immersion as Physical – Identifiable Sounds**

Exposing one’s senses to noise can be actively used to explain our own sonic environments. This can be expanded through the personal experience that Christine Sun Kim’s (2012) sonic works portray. Sensory experiences and texture act as interfaces positioned between the artist and viewer allowing for interpretations of a soundscape experienced through an alternative sense driven perspective. Sun Kim (2012) connects surrounding environments through visual methods by manipulating



recordings and images to express and investigate what sounds mean to someone who cannot hear any noise. Sun Kim's (2012) interaction with sound is wholly different as she cannot hear them, so has to illuminate the sounds using visual methods. This interaction is a vital part of the work, allowing Sun Kim (2012) to capture what a hearing person would say is normal, whether lo-fi or hi-fi noise. Not every noise recorded is indiscriminately discarded as a harsh unpleasant noise with the resulting visual piece a record of Sun Kim's (2012) physical experience in her unheard sonic environment. The visual piece the audience views is a tracing of what Sun Kim (2012) cannot hear, leaving behind a detailed visualised print upon her recorder, a reverberation perhaps felt through her body. Here, I focus on the interaction Sun Kim (2012) has with her surroundings and the recorded code or electronic signals of her soundscape; Sun Kim's (2012) electrified environment.

Sun Kim (2012) exposes sonic environment through an interaction of walking around the landscape, similar to the most common contemporary practice, the soundwalk, documented and investigated by Hildergard Westerkamp (2001) at The World Soundscape Project (2010) The World Soundscape Project describes how a soundwalk is meant: "...to encourage the participant to listen discriminatively, and moreover, to make critical judgments about the sounds heard and their contribution to the balance or imbalance of the sonic environment" <http://www.sfu.ca> (Jan. 14, 2011). Westerkamp (2001) further elaborates when describing a soundwalk as a tool for: "...exposing our ears to every sound around us no matter where we are" <http://www.sfu.ca> (Jan. 14, 2011). Sun Kim (2012) utilises her environment as a tool and a "bank of sounds" as Grainger (2008) refers to it, to capture the essence of what is affecting her sonic body (LaBelle 2010).

Brandon Labelle (2010) calls the sonic body (LaBelle 2010) a resonant rhythmic running through each journey between people, objects, noise and walking.

Interaction between person and objects create small stochastic ripples of rhythm in a sonic environment notably perceived as chaotic and unpredictable. During a recent interview (2012), Sun Kim (2012) explains that one aspect of noise she has control over that comes from her body is her voice. Her voice is an instrument that enables her to immerse the audience, which is illustrated within the piece entitled *Fact Time Signatures* (2012). In the interview Sun Kim (2012) continues to explain that in order to immerse the audience she has to have control over all the elements of the performance as they emanate from her sonic body (LaBelle 2010). This is in order "...to keep the sound aspect of my work ephemeral." (Kent, J. Interview with Christine Sun Kim, 2012, 21<sup>st</sup> November, Email). Sun Kim (2012) highlights this as important because control over what she is drawing from the environment is critical and the relationship with the audience crucial to conveying her somatic relationship to noise.

Noise is something she cannot hear, does not feel like a hearing person yet she has grown up with all the social conventions of the hearing world. This does not mean that the sound is irrelevant or insignificant: the physicality of sound still has influence on Sun Kim's (2012) physical form, influencing her ideas, knowledge and treatment of technology to immerse audiences from her own immersive perspective. Sun Kim (2012) admits the physical nature of her work is a core narrative throughout the experience of her ideology and one that leaves traces in the final resulting work as she explains in an interview for Hilobrow magazine (2012), "I push sound by constantly pushing it to a different level of physicality" <http://hilobrow.com> (June 22. 2012). By testing the boundaries of physical interaction with sound, Sun Kim (2012) is intensifying her relationship and illustrating to audiences how her perceptions are essential to her contact with sonic environments.

The identifiable sounds that Sun Kim (2012) identifies are vibrations and signals upon her body that are then visualised through technological means. Defining sound through the hearing experience is a critical point to note as sound is fundamentally a vibration, so any perception of sound as exclusive to the hearing is false as Christine Sun Kim's (2012) practice demonstrates. Her network of sophisticated works offer expanded perspectives on the discourse of everyday banal actions, in particular with reference to the social protocols of someone who has related to the hearing world through the sonic works of someone who is deaf. Of course vibration and visual communication both play vital roles in what Sun Kim (2011) is creating, however, this method, that offers such heightened perception, is structurally simple to appreciate and to empathise with. This is demonstrated in Todd Selby's (2011) film of Sun Kim (2011) that documents the artist as she records and performs a sound piece with the city urban movements recorded and re-produced in her many visual works. Selby uses these recordings with vibration and inventive techniques to highlight how Sun Kim (2011) reproduces the sounds.

The film represents and demonstrates a link with the sonic works produced for this thesis. Sun Kim's (2011) actions during the film include her recording at the side of a busy street or capturing footsteps of passers with the end results demonstrating the physicality of vibrations from an urban environment through visual methods. My immersion in social conventions, unlike Sun Kim's (2011), but like most hearing people, mean I carry on regardless of the impact of these everyday sonorous routines. For instance, ignoring a bus braking to an ear splitting stand still. We try to shield our ears and minds from such noises but like Sun Kim (2011) I have recognised that ownership of my sound has to be explored. The vibrations not only break our concentration but also send a reverberation through our body. Such impacts cannot be ignored over a lifetime and physically these will have the power of a force, such as gravity.

In an interview with the artist, she stated that her methodology is rooted in her everyday experiences “...my awareness of surroundings, and my struggle as a deaf person and artist, so I think my process is mostly (or perhaps purely) empirical rather than reading and seeing who has influenced me” (Kent, J. Interview with Christine Sun Kim, 2012, 21<sup>st</sup> November, Email). Exploring her own sensory actions is a vital and a crucial element of Sun Kim’s (2012) work, binding the personalisation of her relationship to the surrounding environment and to what or how these sounds are affecting her. This resonating method is a personalised immersive act where by using the surrounding echoes and reverbs produced from the everyday milieu, Sun Kim (2011) has created her own personal interaction with the surrounding everyday sonic environment whilst physically interacting with sonic structures and objects. A relationship similar to the experiences of Stockhausen (1989) and Hegarty (2013), who acknowledge the sonorous reverb that projects and imparts precedent throughout their lives.

The Tom Selby (2011) film showcases Sun Kim’s (2011) final visual works that originate from recordings that are presented as objects and liquids being moved by the reverberations, turning the recorded sonic instances into physical and visual forms. These are not unusual in their construction but differ in their results, especially if we reflect and attempt to look at this from the viewpoint of someone who cannot hear. First in the film Sun Kim (2011) is delicately applying mascara before journeying out onto the streets where she crouches with one knee on the floor with recorder pointing at a bus then people walking past before taking some quick notes then moving on. The film then cuts to Sun Kim (2011) in the studio with a collection of props ready to translate the recorded sounds. Unlike myself, whereby as I state above, my aural sense has always taken precedent over the visual, Sun Kim’s (2012) visual initiatives bring the sonic dissonance to the foreground. Daniela Cascella (2012) explains below the organic nature of listening through learning

about one's selfless expenditure of actually hearing what is around us.

To listen is to grasp a deeper sense of place, of self, of stories. In the Italian verb *comprendere*, to understand comes from Latin and means to embrace. It is expansive, not normative. It embraces diversity. *Sapere*, to know, comes instead from the verb that means to have a taste of, to catch a flavour. And *sentire* in Italian means both to feel and to listen. (Cascella 2012 p. 33)

The intricate and often challenging relationship that Cascella (2012) is describing whereby we gain an understanding of our place amongst the sonic environment is illustrated by Sun Kim (2012) who captures and illuminates this relationship. She creates textured listening stories from a sphere of dissonance that is reshaped and re-immersed. The trial of sound is not different from that of other sound artists, but what is essentially unusual is how the sounds are collected and processed. Sun Kim (2012) records and reproduces the noise of her environments whether on the street or with her own voice or through technology, so this is on her terms and she takes ownership of this dissonance from her sonic landscape.

With Christine Sun Kim's (2012) practice in mind I set out exploring my own surrounding environment utilising a soundwalk as the tool to do this. Organised by Fracture, a Liverpool based arts organisation that promoted free improvisation in music. Led by Phil Morton he arranges for the group to meet at the steps of Liverpool's Catholic Cathedral. The group were strangers having only met that morning. I re-engage with my environment and take some sort of ownership that can be disseminated into other narratives presented in the practice-based aspect of this thesis. The intentions are to premeditatedly absorb each reverb from the soundwalk and examine my own "...sense of place, of self, of stories." (Cascella 2012).

As the group of people nearby digest the rules and mantra set by their guide, immediately I hear a car braking abruptly at the traffic lights outside the Liverpool Catholic Cathedral, and nearly every participant in the group turns to observe this

wheel spin and without hesitation seems already tuned in, alert to any noise that is louder or more apparent than any other. This does not last long and soon the group appears in a state peaceful prayer exploring inner sanctums of their souls. Our first location is the steps of the Liverpool Catholic Cathedral and the guide asked us to split into groups of two standing back to back making sure we did not know that person.

First, starting to feel the breathing of your partner like some sort of physical human metronome controlling and calming breathing to a solid combined state. The racket of a cyclist churning up the street, with no cars around the sole cyclist his bearings on the bike obviously shot but all the same very loud. Like this bike the noise from the surrounding buildings, passing cars, walkers and visitors to the cathedral do not register, as they should. Noises become smaller and more complicated. We are instructed to follow the group leader and talk quietly with our partner about the noises and the city. We reach the second destination, which is the garden at the Bluecoat, a building dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and now one of Liverpool's busiest artists' hubs. We are told to pick a seat with the same partner and this time to look at each other whilst listening once again. Feelings of discomfort and irritability are my initial reactions, but soon enough the city noise has taken hold but this time through the person I am looking at; somehow they become my focal point of silence. These two soundwalk incidents altered my perception of relationships with other listeners, the interaction that re-formed the city sonic environment through a partnership first of dual, coherent, in sync breathing, then a refocus with uncomfortable visual contact with a stranger I had only met over one hour ago.

Silence becomes the element that I hear everything through in this soundwalk within a certain space, thereafter introducing the everyday routine element of silence into art and paving the way for contemporary sonic environments to be explored and

expanded away from the musical realms of the concert hall. John Cage (1968) is the dominant figure when it comes to silence in sound art, with his seminal piece 4'33" (1968) being the core for much of how silence is challenged, constructed and deconstructed. Objectively this then allows for the soundwalk to be put into a contemporary context whilst not held back by technology or any pre-formed performance spaces. Silence as Voegelin (2010) states: "...is not about opening up all sounds to the musical scheme or locking them into a musical time frame" (Voegelin 2010 p. 81), but the subject of sonic sensibility with the explored urban landscape opening communication between the environment I record in and the space I exist in everyday so therefore record in any preconditioned space or environment.

The portal I use this time on the soundwalk is my partner whom I am staring at intently trying to focus my energy, not to twitch or do anything awkward with my face or a synced breathing like an engine performing with two cylinders. Silence becomes the key element by supporting my focus and enabling the noise of the city to envelope my thoughts and hearing. The landscape for the everyday listener as mentioned earlier can be a difficult terrain to navigate; transport can frustrate, traffic lights hinder and construction work hamper. The soundwalk allows me to have an intensive relationship involving listening to the sonic environment, not an easy one but from a position to attempt to hear the idiosyncratic rhythms of everyday routines. I apply my experience either through recording whilst walking and wearing headphones and using contact and binaural microphones or through a partner as in the above experience, but ultimately it becomes an intensified one. From the soundwalk I listen then hear the foreground and background, unrelenting and changing without any sign or prior notice.

The physical interaction with a sonic environment as demonstrated by Christine Sun Kim (2012) can inform audiences of alternative representations of what the sonorous vibrations are imparting to us. Sun Kim (2012) takes ownership of the vibrations and echoes around herself and presents a field of communication to explore how and why the difference she experiences is so important to her. This is a form of immersion evoked by Sun Kim (2012) as the intense interactions created are formed through contact with the reverberations and the subsequent audience participations.

This physical interaction can also be sensed in other forms on a daily basis and the next section discusses this everyday contact using a structure that is positioned on the periphery of our built environments but ones that appear everywhere as a vital part of human living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the next section I have led with the practical work *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) that considers surrounding resonance structures and happenings and their significance on everyday life and immersion.

### **Immersion as Background – Recycled Pylons**

When I asked field recordist and researcher Budhaditya Chattopadhyay (2014) if he considered his work immersive he responded by explaining that first he has to consider a series of elements beginning when he processes the material, recorded sound.

I do consider my listening to sounds as immersive, and this process of immersion in listening is reflected in my field recordings. While I work with these field recordings in the studio as a composition by processing the materials, the spatial practice I involve decides how much of the immersive experience is transmitted to the listening audience.  
(Kent, J. Interview with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, 2014, 10<sup>th</sup> May, Email)

Chattopadhyay further expands that by using multi-channel diffusion he can project his work into an immersive piece. However, intriguingly and perhaps more



illuminatingly, he states that: “On the other hand, certain tonalities and textures that I repeatedly use in my work, such as industrial drones, surface vibrations and machine hums, do sound immersive in their methodology of engaging the audience.” (Kent, J. Interview with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, 2014, 10<sup>th</sup> May, Email). Chattopadhyay (2014) considers his work to be immersive by virtue of editing audio software but also would consider background noises he describes as drones and vibrations being immersive if they were presented to an audience. The layers exposed from the background outweigh the engineered one where Chattopadhyay (2014) positions any immersive ideology within his work. However from these two quotes there is a clear contradiction that Chattopadhyay (2014) has described, one where immersion is possible through reverberations produced from machines and the other from editing field recordings and conveying the immersive element to the listening audience.

This varying perspective on immersion further enhances the following sonic work in this chapter and *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) both rationalises the industrial and natural phenomena of sound and captures flashes of immersion that are neither static nor modified. These recordings demonstrate, like Chattopadhyay’s (2014) conflict of immersive rationales, my own indifferences and the entity of my immersive journey with subsequent recordings. *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) represents the unedited surroundings from my environment taken close to my home and begins close to a row of pylons. These rise and fall into the distance close to my home and dominate my perspective as I look into the distance, with high voltage currents being transported in observed silence. Across most roads, a static connection of these pylons still carries on; all part of the super connected network keeping the country electrified, positioned in the background and never actually being as close as one could imagine or desire: pylons only ever appear in the background. Changing the dynamic of the spatial perspective of these objects as to

shape new a sonic habitat, as French theorist Michel de Certeau (1984) portrays in his seminal work the *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), I also offer a contrasted view point from that of the planners and energy providers. These pylons have offered me the opportunity to examine beyond reflections and absorb the sonic impact of this framed environment. However, instead of being framed, the land that directly surrounds them became expanded with ever more resounding possibilities.

The pylon is a temporary sonic constructed space that can be altered, replaced and renewed systematically but one that is cordoned off then changes and maps out the dynamics of landscapes. Every day routines and rules separate us from these electrified spaces for obvious safety reasons but also draw upon visual reflections that make people consider environments, futures, progression and dimensions of land. A renewed sonic habitat exists within these metal structures, a vibration of echoes and a sonic prediction of what is coming. Electric currents passing to our homes create the hum of light switches, red standby lights glowing, enabled by vast electronic networks. By viewing the electronic network that is received by our habitats and reviewing them, we can theorise that, surrounded by noise, pylons for example can act as conduits that carry this electrified noise to our domestic spaces. The source of this power is significant to note in considering the interior sonic space as this alters spaces. Like Cage (1968) on the everyday sonority he prefers to listen to rather than a musical composition in a concert hall, the pylon is a reflection of the everyday experience that is allowed in through alternatives means; like silence (1968) the pylon can be seen as a sonic habitat positioned alongside everyday objects and structures.

Earlier I discussed in the introduction and methodology the sonic body (LaBelle 2010), which connects us to everything around us, resonating back and forth.

Pauline Oliveros (2011) elaborates, describing the interaction between the body and

earth. The sonosphere (2011) is what humans inhabit and within this sonic habitation are the buildings and structures we erect, therefore when considering a pylon as a background noise what must be considered is the deeper resonant impact this structure is creating. What the sonic body (Labelle 2010) and sonosphere (Oliveros 2011) both demonstrate is this relationship between structures, every day and human body. Oliveros (2011) describes the interwoven physical reverbs with the sonic environment:

The sonosphere is the sonorous or sonic envelope of the earth. The biospheric layer of the sonosphere is irrevocably interwoven with the technospherical layer of the sonosphere.<sup>1</sup> Humans sense the sonosphere according to the bandwidth and resonant frequencies and mechanics of the ear, skin, bones, meridians, fluids, and other organs and tissues of the body as coupled to the earth and its layers from the core to the magnetic fields as transmitted and perceived by the audio cortex and nervous system. (All of this with great variation, of course). All cells of the earth and body vibrate. (Oliveros 2011 p. 162)

When considering immersion and the sonosphere (Oliveros 2011), all the lasting impacts of noise and vibration upon the body form a background stance then the impact arrives from a distant source. This source and the visual impacts are not the only element we observe when we witness a pylon, we are experiencing their background immersive vibrations having impacts within the everyday variations of routine life. The pylon is a representation of the background noise we neither hear immediately nor consider prominent as thinking beyond the parameters of our background is generally considered in the same way as the noise of traffic.

Illustrating these background apparitions is the sonic work *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013), as an abstract set of recordings that do not determine my life or yours but a vibration of the present. As in Percy Grainger (2008) and Christine Sun Kim (2012), the soundscape recorded is only the method to support a wider notion of immersion. *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) is recorded from the background I have discussed above and critically a row of pylons located on the Wirral where I

have experienced the peaceful stillness surrounding these structures while traveling alongside them. This resulted in me combining these background recordings with foreground ones that sound more personal but no less in/significant, as the next section examines.

### **Immersion as Foreground – Imperfection**

The *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) is a collection of randomly recorded moments, with over 300 of these moments recorded over a six-month period. The 43 presented in this thesis were all randomly selected. What the listener hears first hand is the crackling of microphone noise, wind gushing, breathing, silence, and static with no determined start or end. Play the *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) on shuffle or in the order presented – there are no rules. Imperfections are incorporated with no editing as all sonic elements including those of the recordist remain. The element of myself in the recording is fundamental, as discussed in the previous section, highlighting the relationship between the sonic body (LaBelle, 2010) and sonosphere (Oliveros 2011) to further expand on the immersive ideologies and adjectives in sound and everyday life.

As a sound recordist who views these imperfections as comprising an essential element within my recordings, it has been important to note why this translates through to everyday sonorous life. Many other contemporary field recordists, conversely, view a purity of sound as conceptually vital, such as artist Hiroki Sasajima (2013) who focuses on a diminutive level of sound, the micro level of detail that is beyond human hearing, that does not exist immediately at foreground level but sound as perfect and sublime.

I don't want there to be any trace of myself as a physical sound on the recordings, so I cut out my voice, my clothes, my footsteps and things like that. However, I am very aware that I am nonetheless surely present in the recordings.  
(Sasajima cited in Lane & Carlyle 2013 p. 128)

Sasajima (2013) still recognises flaws in editing out oneself here so this leads me to believe that for the purity of sound, such artists still practice what I refer to above as a red herring that exists in sound art. That somehow this purity transcends sound art above all other forms, that sound cannot be rough and has to be unburned. Ross Dalziel (2012) feels that his work is immersive due to the notion of immersion being attached to a sanitised technological removal of all human activity behind the recording device (Kent, J. Interview with Ross Dalziel, 2012, 18<sup>th</sup> July, Email). As I discuss in Chapter One, notions of popular immersion are general in terms of how immersion is used, but through the recordings for *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) I explore how immersion is prevalent in our everyday routine lives.

Through the arched recordings of the *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013), listeners associate with everyday routine experiences that represent the relationship between objects, elements and events. Noise is imperfect and associated with disturbance and here I have considered all forms of noise. Noise is not balanced, fair or rational and can be accidental or harsh so the *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) does not distinguish between the un/pleasant here. Each twitch, high pitch and uncomfortable recorded noise is no greater than the next, but is recorded directly close to my body, each sound presenting a foreground signal of noise and immersion. The flaws signal the reality of a given environment, not one cleansed or skimmed but one that has all elements present including mechanical workings and myself within it. A sanctuary if you like, perceived notes working inharmoniously to create a sonic elastic expansion that is stable, but still we have to consider that with the recording device, the tool by which I record this, is a collection of noise, my noise but not yours.

As regards Sasajima (2013), I cannot relay any personal relationship towards the recorded miniatures. Although I can listen and imagine the vibrations in the sand or from a water pipe, these do not enter my sonic foreground. As demonstrated

through the conceptual sound work *Electrified Environment* (2011–2013) the sonic environment of everyday life can be immersive and can alter our way of listening to our personal sonic environment. But is this piece background or foreground? Consider this, for the purpose of recording the work was never intended to demonstrate order of foreground/background but more to express imperfect/perfect elements that resonate in everyday stochastic life and therefore includes all dimensions from which the recording has been taken. In comparison to background we can have certain control of our foreground and even create zones of peacefulness or focused listening but even in an anechoic chamber the noise from our bodies is still vibrating so the foreground never really truly alters.

### **Immersion Not heard**

The invisible nature of noise is evident, action with noise, to recall a sonorous action from the habitat from the everyday. Footsteps echoed from alleyways or floorboards creaking, listening through inattention is the background/foreground temporal reaction of the hearing. We simply do not listen intently or consider the reverberations around us and maybe time constraints in contemporary life do not allow us to recall these everyday reverberations. But as the previous chapter suggests, immersion is not simply a matter of the ownership of editorial strokes but one that transpires from all around; past, present and future. Recognising noise as apparent all around with internal and external influences such as electrified objects like bus stops, overhead cabling or street lighting, the stochastic randomness of these objects we pass or walk under do impart small reverberations upon human life. We might not have the same experiences, for example like Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) at such early stages of life but none the less these static unspectacular objects combine to trail the tracks of our lives. Recalling what is not heard is not essential to understanding this type of everyday immersion but as in the first chapter where I discuss the popular notion of immersion as engulfment and

tides of sound being created to stimulate senses, by comparison these unintentional structures project noise that is strewn across habitual environments, impacting on our everyday banal lives.

Learning from Christine Sun Kim's (2012) methodology of relaying the sonic environment through a physical then a visual mode is an important one when considering immersion. The everyday notion of immersion, and the way in which, for a hearing person, noise from the urban environment is usually perceived simply as a series of uncoordinated confusions of sound. But which also exhibit a form of randomness, are present and vital as they help us remember in/significant memories. The next chapter now leads the discussion onto my anthrophony and tracking various key memories accompanied by two sonic compilations consisting of recorded sounds from these particular memories and events.

## Chapter Five: Sonic Tracks – My Anthrophony

Stepping out from the house, the acoustical view of the sidewalk opens up, which is dotted with rhythmical patterning drummed out by the step in all its metered and fluctuating dynamic. To follow this is to track the marks and scuff amidst the urban texture, forming a map of so many itineraries. From the daily stroll to the determined walker, the cartography of the step also traces out the audible events surrounding and aiding pedestrian movement. Rhythm, in piecing together the heat of the sound wave with the materiality of the built environment, sculpts out a time-space figure whose energies temporally demarcate the city.  
(LaBelle 2010 p. 105)

Throughout this thesis a fundamental characteristic is the examination of the everyday routine sonorous experience from using public transport, listening to music through headphones and everyday objects from our domestic soundscape all related through tangible immersive experiences. I have listened to each piece (see Discography) in various modes, from walking through busy urban shopping arenas or peaceful protected marshlands. My exploratory nature has led me to various locations that have also become part of my sonorous background. In this chapter I lead with a section and sonic piece entitled *Terminal* (2011-2013) (see Appendix Two) that examines the everyday act of immersion through man made noise or anthrophony, or noise humans make, create and ultimately then experience. Rather than objects humans create, for example the door frames, sheds, bins, pillars, post-boxes or pylons that are supposed to be static, silent structures, this chapter focuses on movement, moreover the shared immersive experience of travel and repetition of noise. Whether cargo, passenger planes, intercity trains, buses or ferries, they all share the common thread of engineered human noise, all creating resonant noise that perhaps we would call unpleasant or even irritating but are present in our everyday banal lives.

The journeys are recorded from my everyday routine travels, none more salient than



the next, just journeys with attached immersive experiences. A recorded relationship emerges between myself and the modes of transport interacting with the sonic landscape, whether it be a busy urban city centre or the peace of Burton Marshes. Experimental ideas of journey are conveyed, superseded by immersion, with caricatures of places visited and with the works produced containing elements of repetitiveness, randomness, burdens, speed, cold, joy and uncomfortable flashes. In the second section below, *Reflective Immersion*, I take from *Terminal* (2011-2013) the moments that demonstrate the ordinariness of the recordings to myself then contextualise the sounds with images from the locations. Ordinary moments are represented through silence, intent listening and the ferocity of conditions. Silence or, “When there is nothing to hear, so much starts to sound” (Voegelin 2010 p 83), infect the pieces like a constant thought, drawing the listener in closer and closer.

This then naturally leads to deeper, more intent listening and feeling with your ears, picking out the water bubbling, wings flapping or a fly buzzing. Uniquely, this piece uses some of the most sensitive contact microphones and hydrophones so as to unburden the need for over production and editing, leaving the work as natural as it was when first recorded and as close as possible to the way it was physically experienced through my sonic body. Still present, as in *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), is a mechanical microphone noise and that of myself, the recordist. Amongst these works are elements of speed with wind gushing past microphones, pulse racing, heart beats peaking and skin torqueing as the ferocity of conditions dramatically tear through the recordings followed by contemplations of structures that have attached relevant repeated experiences.

It is important to note is that during this period of research my main employment has been supporting individuals with learning disabilities and enduring mental health issues. This generated many sonic occurrences that have created lasting invisible

marks upon my aural mind. Most significantly the memory of places and structures, such as the Woodside Ferry Terminal that is one of three terminals connecting the iconic Mersey Ferries. Over a period lasting 18 months, four days a week, five hours a day I would spend my time supporting one person to the terminal routinely and obsessively acting out the same actions each time. The re-occurrences of devoting all this time here exposed an element of noise and reverberation I had not felt before. Days off were interrupted by the noise of the terminal creaking, water breaking over the side and the firm floor swaying but this was of course my version of sea legs: A reflection obscured in my hearing mind. Preceding the final subsection is *Inaudible/Sensing Immersion* that highlights the significance not only of sound but of the act of engagement through one's own past and the potential this may have upon the future sonorous recall of the person. This then is illuminated in the final section *Red Rocks* (2011-2013), as to demonstrate my own personal realisation of immersion from a past/present context of listening then transposing from memories.

Mediated by a banal experience, the following recorded works examine repetition and the memory of repeated events and immersive listening. Hildegard Westerkamp (2014) considers her listening to be immersive, highlighting the use of headphones and listening back in the studio as a particular immersive method that aids and attunes the immersive ear.

When I record and compose with environmental sounds I am deeply immersed in listening. It is precisely this experience of listening, which has attracted me right from the start to soundscape composition. My ears get drawn inside the soundscapes that I record and the experience is intensified by the use of headphone listening/monitoring while recording. In the studio the immersion into the sounds is intensified by the procedures of composing itself, discovering new sounds through editing, mixing and processing, discovering the piece itself. The fact that I am working with my own recordings of sounds and soundscapes and thus with the experiences of place and time while recording, contributes significantly, I believe, to this feeling of perceptual depth and immersion.

(Kent, J. Interview with Hildegard Westerkamp, 2014, 9<sup>th</sup> May, Email)

This immersive listening is connected to use of headphones, which is an altered state of listening that I also examine in Chapter Two when considering how artists can alter methods of listening. By comparison Markus Soukup (2014) only considers his work immersive once installed as an audio piece (Kent, J. Interview with Markus Soukup, 2014, 26<sup>th</sup> February, Email). Whereas for the practice-led work my intention was to explore and present the abstract events of personal repetition. Unlike Westerkamp (2014) and Soukup (2014), whom I highlight as they both have works that feature elements of transitions, my immersive projections come from an alternative place rather than being equivalent to their listening intentions.

The first section *Terminal* (2011-2013) examines the sonic everyday reoccurrence of sound and place. Unlike the previous sound work *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), this work and the following *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) (See Appendix Two) are both influenced and unified by events rather than random recordings that had no discerning beginning or end.

### **Terminal**

To illuminate my own immersive sphere I began exploring in the research that preceded this research entitled *Sound Received* (2008). Like this, the two works attached to this chapter only represent a small portion of my own personal sound world over the past years of research. They are all common sounds from familiar structures and environments but within each recorded piece is a narrative attached that is being played out even now in my everyday soniferous life. These recordings provide further examples of how we can be immersed by memories and events with mine recorded and exposed here for the listener to consider.

*Terminal* (2011-2013) can be listened to through headphones although this is not essential, as this will amplify the sounds but not to the extent of immersing the

listener. As already described this work is the result of repeating the same journey.

*Terminal* (2011-2013)

1. *Alarm* (1:00)

*Local security building*

2. *Ferry Arrival* (2:10)

*Ferry turning into the terminal*

3. *Terminal I* (0:59)

*Metal structure stresses and moves on the waves*

4. *Terminal II* (0:34)

*Metal structure stresses and moves on the waves*

5. *Waves* (0:20)

*Underneath the waves crashing into the terminal*

6. *Ferry Shudder* (0:52)

*Engines stalling*

7. *Ferry Beats* (0:23)

*Engines rhythmic beat*

8. *Vibrations I* (0:30)

*Ferry frame vibrating*

9. *Vibrations II* (1:01)

*Ferry frame vibrating*

Without implementing any editorial brush, *Terminal* (2011-2013) suspends any form of sanitized over produced soundscapes that may misrepresent my immersive experience and obscure the listener's recall. The synergy created between the listener and the aural environment is unique through repeated patterns related to events, occurrences and circumstances allowing each listener to *Terminal* (2011-2013) (See figs. 31 to 34) to interpret the recordings with their own personal

immersive memories. This connection allows my personal critical reflection on this daily journey where through *Terminal* (2011-2013) memories of this time can be realised individually and potentially collaboratively. This resonates with artist Markus Soukup's (2014) work *To or at a Distance* (2009) that questions perceived distances of travel. In an interview with Soukup he describes his intentions:

The main point for this work was to think about the phenomenon of travel and to produce a piece based on very subjective experiences, where the transitions between different and sometimes very far away spaces were important aspects. I think one of the reasons to work on 'To or at a Distance' was my ongoing fascination about this not fully explainable dimension you enter while being in transit.

I try to make work accessible from different directions, so that the audience can enter it without knowing or reading about the work before. I like to produce something, which works on various levels and where different people can relate to (in their own ways).

(Kent, J. Interview with Markus Soukup, 2014, 26<sup>th</sup> February, Email)

Soukup (2014) presents travelling as a sonic action, one where transition through actual space alters without the traveller being made aware. This does not however mean a lesser impact, in fact the impact of travel upon the *sonic body* (LaBelle, 2010) is great, as demonstrated through the two sonic recordings in this chapter – *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013). With each piece, travel was essential both in terms of the historical impact and the actual recording. One is able to capture the inner imagination, grand or minute, of objects, space and places from different times, great distances or even inaccessible environments. Gaston Bachelard (1958) talked about the power to transport the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity, an immeasurable immensity. This being the case, *immensity* Bachelard (1958) allows us to go into a limitless world. It is this limitless concept of individual or collaborative immersion.

Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere: we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless

man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming.  
(Bachelard 1958 p. 84)

The conscious experience, the phenomenological experience or the experience of something that is not accessible, readily represents an important factor when considering my own immersed body for which this practical sonic piece has been inspired and constructed from. The main body of work transpires from random, repeated everyday banal experiences for which an immersed occurrence is highlighted but not singular by any means.

Hildegard Westerkamp's (2014) collaboration with Norbert Ruebsaat (2014) from the Transformation CD collection entitled *A Walk through the City (2014)* is a subtly edited work where sounds are stretched, taken apart and replanted, embodying shifting listening experiences. Westerkamp (2014) uses the recorded sounds from the cityscapes of Vancouver where she created her own version of the soundscape from a deprived suburb. This goes on to further reflect Westerkamp's (2014) usage of recorded sounds and the ways in which she builds the immersive platform within the work. If we compare this with the methods from *Terminal* (2011-2013) that are actual recordings taken as a result of a job as a support worker for individuals with enduring mental health issues that demanded a daily repetitiveness through another person's addictive desires, this then shifts onto the implications of such duplication of an event through to recording the aural reverbs.

### **Reflective Immersion**

Though sensing something familiar and connecting the vibration to an aural memory, water lapping against the dock, creaking metal or a boat turning into dock, actual recorded events from one's aural past are not needed or logistically possible. Single noises from a location one has never been can in turn remind you of an element of a personal auditory territory. Brandon LaBelle (2010) elaborates that

vibrations are essential and effect autonomy of the aural senses. "...vibration is an influential, sensual flux performing as a vital contour to the psychodynamics of the emotional self." (LaBelle 2010 p. 134) He goes on to describe how such vibrations in underground terrains extend towards the body and leave or impart energy upon the sonic body.

A lasting imprint resonating in the backdrop forms from what LaBelle (2010) suggests lends itself to the dynamics of experience and one that *Terminal* (2011-2013) reacts to through the listener. Possibly counterintuitively, but provoking and encouraging one's own personal sonorous vibrations to move to the forefront and acting as a *reflective immersion* by being my everyday immersive journey and reflecting back onto the listener as their reflective immersive soundscape.

I map this out in the previous chapter through random recordings with short polarized immersive moments that may be considered uncompromising. In terms of charting one's own immersive, erratic timeline, the recounting of times spent crabbing, climbing trees or regular menial daily tasks is re-imagined through sensory projection rather than performed. Such inward sonority transcends noise beyond music, which is incorporated in our daily lives by popular, planned and timed musicians. John Cage (1968) says that silence is simply the unstructured milieu that we should consider more intently in our everyday sonorous lives. We do not count in the score outside, the traffic does not begin and end at our request, and clashing conversations overlapping do not distinguish themselves for our ears to separate. Cage (1968) says that popular music asks questions of us and tells us things not connected to our everyday lives, whereas the noise and autonomous listening is a literal action of our soundscapes rather than a staged composed one.

To iterate this reflection of autonomous listening, consider the installation *The Storm* (2009) by Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller (2009), that features a deserted

dentist's office within a traditional Japanese house that has a storm created with water and lights controlled by a central computer accompanied by a specifically designed sound track. Parallels can be drawn between the resulting piece and Chris Watson's *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008), with a story unfolding and sinister vibrations forcing a rhythmic symmetry with the surrounding environment. Again, as in *Terminal* (2011-2013), a human element appears in the piece, adding a layer of hypersonic reality, where the simple inclusion of a cough places *The Storm* (2009) securely with the audience.

There is the sense that being in an interior environment on a stormy day would be familiar, but the difference here is that this is a fabricated environment. Unlike Chris Watson's (2003 & 2008) recording *Weather Report* (2003 & 2008), this is a reproduction of an everyday incident, offering a reflective experience, one where the surroundings are visceral at our first mediation but our sonic body experiences then allow memory vibrations to become more apparent and bare. Interestingly Cardiff and Miller's (2009) work is described in all its reviews as being almost immersive and as captivating of the audience's attention. This is the central theme throughout their works, capturing attention, using a level that is not obscured or unfamiliar but balanced and natural. This can be illustrated by Cardiff's seminal work *40 Part Motet* (2001) that comprised forty high fidelity speakers arranged in an oval shape, presented in chapels and other spaces, which resulted in a stark reminder of the power of performance through the simple and clean positioning of the installation. No coincidence then that the majority of Cardiff's practice is based around her audio walks and the connection built up with the environment and the sonic body. Cardiff's audio walks are a personalized account of her life and personal environment through alternative spaces, that while probably not visible at first glance, become gradually more apparent and feed through into her installations.



By comparison, returning to Sebastiane Hegarty's 2013 work, *Resistance #4*, part of the Kinokophonography radio retrospective, Hegarty (2013) presented a sound piece where you could listen to field recordings of chalk dissolving and the poetics of dissolving ancient ammonites that explore time, space and sensation. With this research and practice examining states of immersion through exploration of local and personal sonic environments from my past, present and future, the value of sound to explore one's past, I have used recordings of my perceptual banal every day to expose and explore what could be described as modern soundscapes. This research is in a constant flux of movements, shifting between visual and audible, so these recordings are moments in space and time where imagining personal modern soundscapes for my research could change or alter at any moment. By comparison Hegarty's (2012) work communicates the banal, the fascinating, and is of course beautiful. In an interview Hegarty (2012) explains:

In addition to field-recording I continue to collect found sounds (answerphone tapes, audio letters, voice-o-graphs). The 'noise' of the record is seen as an inherent part of the recording process. In works such as *silence returned*, *mo(nu)ment* and the more recent, *Soliloquy for wax cylinder*, the injury and history of such noise becomes the *subject* of the practice.

(Kent, J. Interview with Sebastiane Hegarty, 2012 24<sup>th</sup> July, Email)

This methodological approach by Hegarty (2012) focuses his desire to be part of a contemporary group of recordists exposing the past and present. All these collected found objects have an attached past, someone's lost grievances or desperations; but these noises contain, like the dissolving of ancient ammonites, a resonant echo of re-imagination.

One of the key points that emerge from the interviews for this thesis is the sense that immersion comes from the different approaches the artists take. For example Chris Watson (2012) relies more heavily on the impact and reaction of the audience compared to Alan Dunn (2008 & 2011), whose work challenges us to go beyond the

normal parameters of how we view sound/noise within interior spaces. Writer Daniela Cascella (2013) alludes to immersion as being a personal response: “One could argue the immersion here is not intended for a specific environment but for the singular perception of each listener, who experiences dilatation of time and perceptual loss of any edge” (Kent, J. Interview with Daniela Cascella, 2013 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Email). This transposition between sound and listening opens up a varied spectrum of debate in terms of how to perceive an individual’s *recollection* of space and time.

### **Inaudible/Sensing Immersion**

In Seth Kim-Cohen’s *In the Blink of an Ear* (2009) the exchange between the listener, the environment and more significantly the non/acceptance of sound without predispositions is a central theme: separating the sound from the art and reconnecting it back together. Throughout this thesis I do not label noise as good or bad, but treat all noise as on the same level, with no discrepancies between different sounds or scenarios. So in basic terms how do we hear noise that cannot be heard? I discuss the work of art Christine Sun Kim (2012) above, an artist who was born deaf and who through her work takes ownership of the noises around her. I also refer to Seth Kim Cohen’s (2009) contemporary work that examines and repositions arts obsession with allowing sound as a pure voice. Within *Terminal* (2011-2013) the microphone noise, breathing, abrupt ends and my voice, are all audible throughout and this is the noise that is more than often ignored or condemned as a nuisance to the listener, an object in the way of the pure sound. This layer of noise allows the listener to hear what they have heard, not necessarily in *Terminal* (2011-2013) but from the minutes, days or years before my immersive journey was recorded.

As with all the elements of the recordings already discussed, I am present, and there is an unedited quality in the works comprised of the inaudible fragments that

exist within the recordings. My relationship with the surrounding environment does not decide what I hear or choose what reverberations I create; I am a cog in the constant shifting and clashing of elements. To the listener this is also critical, as this will set memories racing and opinions dividing. The often unedited recorded sounds are turned off or discarded as not finished or poor quality but this represents the everyday occurrences that take shape in every aspect of our daily lives.

In track two, *Terminal I* (0:59), the listener hears a floating terminal being stressed by the currents of the River Mersey with metal creaking and churning against water. There is nothing spectacular about this, and it most likely occurs whenever the currents become strong enough. The people who use this regularly as a mode to commute to and from work or like me spending hours there, just being there, unintentionally create these noises; each noise reminds me of the hours standing looking at the Liverpool skyline. In normal circumstances if I were to visit the terminal once a year this noise would simply fall into my unconscious. Seth Kim-Cohen's (2009) *In the Blink of an Ear* (2009) argues that such seemingly meaningless one-dimensional walks through soundscapes do not only occur within the realms of sonic arts. Returning to track two *Terminal I* (0:59) (2011-2013) I would consider this less phenomenological than *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) as the real time exposing of time and space, space and time offers up front listening and dual outer experiences for the listener. Kim-Cohen (2009) reflects on Luc Ferrari's (2009) *Far-West news, Episodes 2 and 3* (2006) and the interaction described by Luc Ferrari and his wife, Brunhild Meyer-Ferrari (2009) as: '...active participants in their environment' (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 183). Kim-Cohen goes on to explain that the Ferrari's are experiencing the senses within their own set of parameters: "...sense is an awareness of being aware: a conception that finds its most comfortable expression in the reverberant, expanded situation of sound" (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 184).

Simply exposed, *Terminal* (2011-2013) is an expression of one's self-awareness and for a listener the reverberations are the catalyst for aural awareness. In Daniela Cascella's *En Abîme* (2012) there are plotted narratives and anecdotes created and expanded through memory and repetitive actions: "I think of this space as a landscape in perpetual transformations – occupied by sounds, left by them, filled in by words across recollections or anticipations, and over again" (Cascella 2012 p. 72). This occupation of space by an enduring series of instances led me to record aspects of *Red Rocks* (2011-2013). Rather than the self-awareness of the immediate or near present this piece demanded me to search deeper into past events, exploring the crossovers of my current and past self rather than through a diary or writing an early memoir. In 2009 I moved to West Kirby on the Wirral Peninsula, which has views over the River Dee towards Wales and the Irish Sea. What was not obvious to me at first but became more apparent was the connection to my childhood that I had forgotten. In the next section *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) allows me to engage once again with past memories, environments and my senses.

### **Red Rocks**

*Red Rocks* (2011-2013) is the abstract reconstruction that I utilise to immerse myself back into a place once cherished and visited by my family, most of whom are not here anymore. Now as I fill in my recounted adolescence through *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) (See Appendix Two) and the perceived static position in my timeline that appears every time I walk across the sandstone outcrop looking out to Hilbre Island, I attempt this time to capture my resonant past with a recorder. Time separating visits; but the repetition of space and time, time and space still appears the same as if to draw me back and recount journeys travelled and time spent. Returning to a landscape fills my audible mind as an adult with happy carefree times and when I write about this time nothing compares to the actual space and time presence. As I sat recording *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) (See fig. 35) sensations became apparent

once again; salty air, cold air piercing my clothes, water numbing my fingers and the expanse of the Irish Sea meeting the Dee Estuary. However, as the final recording on *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) suggests, *Shells* (0:49), rings a note of remembrance for a man who once sat as a child listening and cracking together the hollow shaft of the shells (See fig. 37).

*Red Rocks* (2011-2013)

1. *Inside Red Rock* (1:07)

*Cavities*

2. *Long Grass Whispers* (1:26)

*Moving in Synergy*

3. *Red Rocks I* (0:38)

*Shifting Feet*

4. *Red Rocks II* (0:51)

*Shifting Arms*

5. *Red Rocks III* (0:22)

*Shifting Stones*

6. *Red Rocks Interrupted* (0:34)

*Interruptions*

7. *Shells* (0:49)

*Reoccurring Dreams*

Significantly more personalized than the repetitiveness of *Terminal* (2011-2013), with fewer moments of man-made noise, space and time, time and space, others have experienced this time and space, more will too, but the amplified recording of *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) is my time and space. Where does this leave the listener? First of all this is a private recording from a quiet past, nothing spectacular, just the everyday and even the banal. Routines are vanquished here too with just short

sounds of voices and laughing that *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) evokes and, with the revisits, the sensing of my own past becoming part of the environment. Unlike Keiko Torigoe's *Sliding Door Sounds* (2000) that I refer to in Chapter Three, the disappearing of the built cultural environment, *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) for the meantime is not in any danger of being replaced or upgraded. Environmental lapses of time will catch up and eventually envelop the space to create a refreshed microenvironment.

Though the sandstone rocks unevenly map a path to walk around the drenched sand, a simple action of walking around the twitchers and photographers, peaceful meditation covers the space, not disturbing the regular visitors but allowing documentation and identification of each species and current. The construction of this environment of people, standing in vital positions, still and peaceful, adds a reverence to the surrounding environment at that moment. As I crouch recording, listening and feeling the cold air, one noise gently sweeps past my ears, far from behind and more noticeable with intent listening. *The Long Grass Whispers* (1:26) (See fig. 36) shimmers over the collection of people standing, reminding me that the light breeze is making a passage, a time and space, clear and distinct yet subtle and evocative. I draw closer trying to keep a distance that neither shields nor obstructs the wind away from the grass but allows the natural sensual contours to flow evenly. For as long as I crouch I begin to recall brothers and cousins running and hiding from one another and in that instance I become enveloped in the environment intertwined with my memories; I am immersed.

Now, I listen back and the microphone noise, maybe even my breathing, have disturbed the reverberation but this point is an obscured documentation of that moment when a distraction altered the echoes and from my position in the grass this turns my attention, only alone as no other person there hears or acknowledges. To

reiterate again, this highlights the interpersonal nature of this piece and what appears to be the minimal aspects that go on to explain the embodiment of my imperfect immersive sonority.

Recognising the noise created by a series of intertwined climatic happenings that generate a kaleidoscopic array of discreet noises and fills the recorded soundscape as pieces of individual immersive nodes, *The Long Grass Whispers* (1:26) evokes the unedited, uneven expression of my personal immersion and provokes the temptation of one's personal realisation to recount the truthful past. Whereas in reality we fill the past with broken words, images or even imaginary creations, so when the past is revisited, my past at *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) is not what appears but what is present now or more accurately in the instance when recorded.

There are elements of one's visual life that culturally are considered moments of significance such as, being present at the birth of your first child, or remembering the look on everyone's faces when you deliver a talk that does not correspond with the successful swimming badge tales of others. These are intrinsically linked to my aural background too and speak louder now than ever before. The voices, my own thoughts and the after effects of my incredulous belief in what I have just done have been buried deep but now have surfaced. I have over the past three years been recording an aural diary for my two young daughters for, or if, they choose to listen to it when I am no longer around. But since I began, my own sonorous environment has presented itself directly in my ear with the recordings for two people who will go onto make their own audible narratives but have somehow now become mine. Like a retelling of my early life through a distorted microphone, one I had forgotten or blocked out, most likely the latter and as I move beyond my early thirties and into the lost middle ground.

The sheer force by which this has impacted me becomes more apparent when I read Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). Inharmonious distinctions are created from this semi-autobiographical journey where burdens and battles for interpersonal energy appear unnerving and on the edge of falling into a safety net or over the cliff:

Laredo was a sinister town that morning. All kinds of cab drivers and border rats wandered around, looking for the opportunities. There weren't many; it was too late. It was the bottom and dregs of America where all the heavy villains sink, where disoriented people have to go to be near a specific elsewhere they can slip into unnoticed. Contraband brooded in the heavy syrup air. Cops were red-faced and sullen and sweaty, no swagger. Waitresses were dirty and disgusted. Just beyond, you could feel the enormous presence of whole great Mexico and almost smell the billion tortillas frying and smoking in the night. We had no idea what Mexico would really be like.  
(Kerouac 1957 p. 274)

Kerouac (1957) was searching for meaning amidst a turbulent backdrop of radical social disturbances, cold war, McCarthyism and generational mistrust. He explicitly exposes his own sense of being through his work, diaries if you like, but seemingly unedited and unnerving, such as the account of Salvatore "Sal" Paradise's journey across an unapologetic landscape of insular opportunities. The sheer force of Kerouac's (1957) ability to reconnect with memories allows the reader to now, even over half a century later, in *On the Road* (1957), somehow re-imagine and reconnect with the soniferous sources that link with youthful expressionism. Counter-intuitively though any relation to *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) is a relationship countered by my own journey through a timeline of early accounts containing disappointments and escapism.

*Red Rocks I* (0:38) unknowingly recalls reoccurring narratives each time of a knell, a memory of figures long forgotten. Each trip to Red Rocks in the 1980's brought together parents, cousins, grandparents and friends in a convoy of cars powering through the Wallasey Tunnel towards the serenity of this little corner of the Wirral. As discussed earlier in Chapter Three, elements of recordings are difficult to



comprehend, more so the aspects of what is left behind and the layered experience. Taking this into consideration, and the receptacle sonic body that I have experienced through this recording, the explosion of my own hearing and memory confined to pinpoint moments, both vivid and blurred, burns an indelible mark into my sonic echo.

### **Expanding Echo**

Karlheinz Stockhausen (1991) *Four Criteria of Electronic Music* (1991) where he states the condition that humans are no longer the same when they hear organized sounds, that being music, specifically made by other humans. By comparison the sounds of everyday, my personal every day, revoke this notion of being affected by music and noise made by humans, not only through organised sounds but ones of re-immersed memories and random silentious acts.

Once we reconsider any notions of organised sounds equating to the ownership of music then we can consider our own personal identity through everyday sound and noise. There is a difference between what noises humans make and what noises humans design to make: noise can be made through engineering of structures, alarms created by humans inadvertently sounding out or stepping into environments once explored. This final chapter aims the sonic body at what makes this my personal immersive experience and how this can transcend beyond my boundaries onto others to contemplate their own immersive echo.

## Conclusion

In my recent everyday routine travels I have been commuting to Cardiff from the Wirral on a weekly basis by train to collaborate with other artists and writers exploring alternative modes of concepts by examining creativity as actions. For example, one colleague suggested to the group that we consider props from some early silent movies. Props that had been remade for a film that did not work yet still felt the same, weighed the same and appeared the same. One example we discussed was the telephone and how such an object made and reused throughout silent films was like a signifier; however, was this phone being used to trick the viewer or was it a metaphor for our own silent lives? Humans appear to be engulfed with silence – that is the silence of all the noise around us. We shut ourselves away from the traffic to have a peaceful moment, or close the windows to block out the hum drum of people walking outside but for certain we are immersed within our own sonosphere. This illustrates the human necessity or craving for those moments of sublime mindfulness portraying perfection of time and space with all considerations for the environment either just moved aside or shielded away.

The aims to explore and redefine immersion in this thesis have been achieved and the most prominent finding here is that immersion and everyday life coincide through our abstract memories. These abstract memories pose critical questions emanating from our surrounding environment that is shifting and being altered inconsequentially fast. Without consideration as technology and the urban environment become more intertwined immersion will become a key element of everyday life considered by many rather than the few as it is now.

Emanating from the thirteen interviewees and illustrating the significance of the findings are unique opinions and experiences of what immersion means. These

interviews have allowed me to expand the conceptual field of immersion. The spectrum of opinions and experiences not only gives insight into how an artist will create their art or attempt to challenge the audience's perception of immersion but also considerably project personal and life changing moments that relate to immersion in everyday life. This series of interviews offers distinctive moments in time and space for future researchers and artists to explore the field of immersion.

Collectively, this work adds to Liverpool John Moores University library of sonic culture and supports further research and practice-led work by the author.

### **Immersion**

Immersion is a vital element in everyday life and contemporary culture, through to the sonic arts. This is explored through three key elements that run throughout the thesis: immersion, listening and anthrophony. In Chapter One, the term immersion in contemporary art and life is discussed as detached and laboured in the understanding that, as with the artists in Chapter Two, immersive moments are created for audiences, listeners and participants to experience. One common thread emerges from the interviews: that artists attach an immersive entity to their works with various preconceptions already involved. Audio editing software such as Logic and Ableton requires many years of extensive training and practice that can then be operated and used for symphonies and installations projecting high quality clear sound and this could be viewed as part of the problem. When recorded sounds are edited for listening the 'pure sound' that, as Ross Dalziel (Kent, J. Interview with Ross Dalziel, 2012, 18<sup>th</sup> July, Email) describes in his interview, comes to prominence whereby somehow sound is viewed as a sublime perfect entity that is accepted within a perceived interior immersive space. Their pure properties are simply not true or cohesive where a less unified creation is the object of the listener's attention.

## Listening

Falling into conscious immersive moments occurs regularly, as with Sebastiane Hegerty (2013) and his moment of transfixed concentration and intent listening. Not the kind of concentration required for an exam or following a plot but one of watchful liberation where drifting away from the moment is considered daydreaming when actually the time and space opposes the widespread ideology of immersion. Hegarty (2013) demonstrates this through his work *Resistance #4* (2013), where an individual moment of fixed mindfulness can immerse you within an environment. It is this praxis where humans can experience the immersion of everyday life, and the way in which immersion should be understood rather than utilised or practiced by submerging audiences and altering interior spaces. Immersion will always be considered something that is easy to achieve through lighting a gallery space or enclosing the exhibition within a conditioned chamber but as the chapters for this thesis demonstrate, immersion is not only an essential aspect of art but just as importantly happens on a daily basis in everyday routine life.

In Chapter Three (*In between*) *Spaces: Towards my Anthrophony* the limits of immersion are foregone and instead replaced by a perpetual expansion of time and space through sonic relationships. O. Blaat's (2007) performance at the City of Women festival illustrates this by drawing in all the elements within the room where her performance took place and for that one instant, each person, object and dimension of the room was immersed. Each was affected by another, and this is one of the key findings of what immersion actually means. Immersion, as stated, is not simply a tool where a barrage to the senses evokes any textured understanding but such works as O. Blaat's (2007) evoke and engage the routines and actions of everyday life. Similarly to serialism (2012) where organisation and code is master and brings uniformity to music and its methods, immersion has been thought of in the same way, for example, works can receive an immersive tag because the work

exists within an interior space or light is being poured into a room.

In the final sections of Chapter Three I challenge immersion with two separate works that attempt to unhinge this immersive tag. *Garage Chamber* (2014) and *Untitled Map One* (2012) both exist separate from the final three sonic works but are positioned as originating in my everyday. With *Garage Chamber* (2014) the conceptual rationale as to why it exists is part of the paradigm of the work and the action of listening becomes the immersion and not the interior location. *Untitled Map One* (2012) as I describe above, is a visual piece, a map of a journey I took whilst recording on a Shortcourse UK expedition along the River Mersey. The map charts the route towards a landfill site and adjoining nature reserve and this silent link between my recordings and the end piece highlights immersion as a memory link to an event rather than a documented exercise of recorded sound.

### **Anthrophony**

In the sonic recording *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) the changes and unpredictable recall that I experienced argues against uniformed immersion and calls for an alternative perspective where through art and everyday life immersion can be experienced through stories, fictions and memories.

Sound received does not require a reconsideration of detailed facets of listening, rather a resolution for further epistemological implications for sound itself. In the interview with Daniela Cascella (2013), she recalls how the synthesis of sound works:

Recorded sounds don't have much to do with being transported elsewhere: they prompt us to regain and enhance our sense of being *here*, wherever it might be, after playing back unfamiliar sounds that act as bearers of a different perceptual dimension disclosed through listening. Ultimately we need to consider the re-presentation of the aural, and of what the act of representation does to the aural; of how each reference slips away from given systems of authority to be inscribed again and again into the now of

each singular listening moment.

(Kent, J. Interview with Daniela Cascella, 2013, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, Email)

Cascella (2013) provokes and rejects terms of normality for sound itself in everyday likeness, instead commenting that each impact of sound should be observed as an expansion of the resonant environment. David Hendy (2013) similarly, forgoes the idea that recorded and replanted sounds can transport you to that place and he goes on to explain when he was recording his critically acclaimed series *Noise a Human History* (2013) that his daughter asked him why he needed to travel thousands of miles to record a certain sound which made him actually consider why listening at the source was so important:

I wasn't sure of the answer – until I went there, and heard a scene out of Thoreau's Walden Pond unfold before my ears: the dripping of rainwater through pine-needles, the crunch of twigs under foot, the distant sound of a train passing through the woods, the cracking of ice forming on the water. Hearing this in situ allowed me to have a connection with Thoreau – an understanding of what he experienced: not just the sounds, but the sounds of THIS place, with this appearance, etc. Similarly, recording in a slave cabin in a plantation in South Carolina didn't sound very different to recording in a shed in my back garden acoustically. But emotionally, being there allowed me to 'feel' the history that had taken place there, to feel an anger that, I hope and believe, wasn't manufactured for the microphone. So sounds in their own location have a kind of sincerity to them – or rather, they can evoke a human response which is sincere and real.

(Kent, J. Interview with David Hendy, 2013, 30<sup>th</sup> August, Email)

Recalling sound and being at the place allowed Hendy (2013) to feel attached to those sounds, with an authentic realisation of what he was searching out and compiling and further adding a layer of periphery sonic dissonance to. Compare this to my own experience of recording at *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013): though memories are altered, disturbed and half-forgotten, the dissonance that I recorded attends to my memories and re-immerses them back in time.

Inducing such a reply then from *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) could have been abstracted from recorded sounds that reminded me of those times, but the emotional link to each environment is the essential immersive link. Here, I draw parallels with Karlheinz Stockhausen (1989) and the early life changing

experiences that shaped much of his ideology.

For Chris Watson (2012) immersion is vital and part of his paradigm, where being immersed is an indication of success and that his work is being experienced to its full potential. This though, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, The Nature of Field Recordings, is only a part of what makes Watson's (2012) work immersive. He collaborates and invites audiences to be part of, and even support him in, the recording. This is when the immersion begins to create unique foundations for his work to be such a success. Each artist discussed gives prime examples of how immersion is communicated through their and others' work.

### **Evoking Memory**

Embedded and attached within the sounds pieces, *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) are personal memories that have been evoked at various stages of the research. These are critical components of the work and each memory is a personal resonating moment of immersion that I have experienced from my aural past. The personal memories that accompany this thesis create an intimate resonating factor when considering immersion in everyday sonorous life. This is achieved by demonstrating how moments, unspectacular by the most part, have imparted and been revealed upon my own aural sonic body. Such small moments can, and will, have reverberating influences that re-emerge and present themselves through forgotten memories. The memories I have shared are unique and the routine noises that appear on the periphery of my aural mind and illustrate how one can be immersed from a position of remembrance or repetition. For example, hearing the continuous creaking of the Mersey ferry from my repetitive journeys across the river Mersey whilst working as a support worker.

In my practice immersion has been illustrated through everyday routines and everyday sonorous noise that is immersive. Not perfect or pure but inattentive, unbiased and relenting because it derives from everyday life as the stochastic experience of reverberations. In the interview with artist Matthew Herbert (2014) he states that rather than being immersed he feels connected to things.

Immersive is not the word I'd use. I'd prefer connected. It's listening music, i.e. music that listens. I point a microphone and then turn that in to music. Consequently it's an act of immersion in the story itself. In that sense I'd hope it's giving the listener either an experience they've never had before or a new version of something they've heard a 1000 times before. It's not a sound walk in the sense that I'd like people to be immersed in the experience of being alive rather than the disconnect of a solely musical experience.  
(Kent, J. Interview with Matthew Herbert, 2014, 13<sup>th</sup> November, Email)

This offers a simple solution to immersion and one that I had realised and worked towards before this interview was completed. Immersion is for my practical works the connection I have with my past, present and future. In *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) what is significant is how insignificant each routine, memory or story is when the reader considers their own immersive routines. Imagine that I have asked you to produce an immersive work and that each recording has to be short enough to fit an event, memory or story within these boundaries. Of course the time frame does not matter and the notion of one noise, such as an ice cream van ringing its tune, can be one person's idea of an idyllic moment from their youth; or the knells from a nearby church can remind someone of joyous or sad times. From our daily routine lives each event is repeated again and again by many people through time so the connectivity is essential to contextualising immersion. What I argue through the final two chapters is that my immersive experiences that you listen to are my immersive moments and not yours and for immersion to be anything other than a personalised connection means a shifting back to simple drenching of senses.



This confirms and develops further individual relationships within our immediate environment and lays the foundations for a constant flux of immersive happenings. This is similar to the way in which the immersive events that ruptured Karlheinz Stockhausen's (1989) early life where pain and suffering were replaced with people being made to feel happy through music for a singular moment. This realisation that a notion of sound, whether it be listening or noise that impacted one of the most influential artists and composers of the last 100 years, arrived through a distinct connectivity to oneself and others. This informs us, as Francisco Lopez (2012) alludes to in his interview with me, that humans will engage with an environment in a profound and conceptual way rather than with any stereotypical representation of sound that could be presented in an artificial space.

In the aims of this thesis, examples of how immersion can be perceived has been achieved through original and significant one-to-one interviews in correlation with the practice-led works. The relationship between the thirteen interviewees and the sonic works *Garage Chamber* (2014) *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013), *Terminal* (2011-2013) and *Red Rocks* (2011-2013) produces original intertwined shifting examples between perceptions of immersion that illuminates the rigour of the discourse within this practice-led work and the fluctuating terrain of contemporary sonic arts.

The research and finding from this thesis, in particular the original interviews can be further examined as I look to expand my practical work. In the next twelve months I have four exhibitions planned across Europe. Two of these are currently in production with the first one in the Rathbone gallery on the Wirral with a recorded piece being the background noise to a ceramics show that explores the theme of a journey. The second piece is for an exhibition in Istanbul taking place in April 2016. This work examines the how architectural shifts in building design are in constant

fluctuation. Both these works and others are utilising the findings from the interviews and from my own practice by examining the abstract memories that humans project.

From the work being exhibited in Istanbul is a paper that has been accepted and I will be presenting at the Contempart '16, Contemporary Arts Conference 2016. Also planned for the future is a book proposal for Continuum Books that emanates from my final two chapters. This is currently going through the process of being accepted. The working title for this book is *Sonic Tracks: My Anthrophony* with the planned completion date January 2017.

Within the discourse of sonic arts there is a flux of new ideas and research that is examining how notions of listening and sound are being perceived. From the practical piece and original thirteen interviews for this thesis is a unique opportunity for other researchers and practitioners to further explore the methodological approaches with the artists', curators and contemporary writers all give unique and original accounts of their work and practice.

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**Appendix One**  
**Interview Transcripts**

<b>Artists, Recordists and Writers</b>	<b>Page</b>
Alan Dunn	193
BJ Nilsen	207
Budhaditya Chattopadhyay	209
Chris Watson	211
Christine Sun Kim	216
Daniela Cascella	217
David Hendy	220
Francisco Lopez	224
Hildegard Westerkamp	226
Markus Soukup	229
Matthew Herbert	232
Ross Dalziel	233
Sebastiane Hegarty	237

## Interview Transcripts

### **Alan Dunn**

Artists, writer and project leader, Alan Dunn works independently and collaboratively with other artists' compiling audio works exploring themes such as Tunnels, numbers and revolution. His other key work has included community media project *Tenantspin* at FACT.

### **BJ Nilsen**

Sound artist, whose work is based on the sound of the environment and subsequent effects on humans. Recent release *Eye of the Microphone* (2012- 13) that presented recorded sounds of London to scholars and students at University Collage London.

### **Budhaditya Chattopadhyay**

Contemporary sound recordist and prominent early career researcher whose practice is featured in the celebrated book entitled *In the Field: The Art of field Recording* (2013) through a series of illuminating interviews.

### **Chris Watson**

World-renowned and celebrated sound recordist of natural phenomena whose work includes the celebrated and critically acclaimed David Attenborough 'Life' series.

### **Christine Sun Kim**

Sound artist and composer based in New York exposes her personal relationship with the medium of sound and spoken language predominantly through her use of technology.

### **Daniela Cascella**

Contemporary writer whose work explores sound, literature and listening that includes a recent online broadcast *Ora: voyages into listening and writing*.

### **David Hendy**

Media Historian and former current affairs producer with the BBC David Hendy has written and narrated on BBC radio 4 his most recent publication *Noise: A Human History of Sound & Listening* 2013.

### **Francisco Lopez**

Experimental sound artist whose work is based on a profound listening of the world pushing the limits of perceptions and questioning listening habits through thought provoking listening methods.

### **Hildegard Westerkamp**

Sound ecologist, artist and teacher that became a prominent figure particularly since being one of the key members of the World Soundscape Project, which was directed and founded by R. Murray Schafer.

### **Markus Soukup**

Sound and multimedia artist working works with moving image and installation winning the 2011 Liverpool Arts Prize for his piece entitled '*Chair Chair Sit In between*' (2011) testing the boundaries of language and film.

**Matthew Herbert**

British electronic musician who has worked under various pseudonyms, Doctor Rockit, Mr. Vertigo and Transformer producing significant works using elements such as bodily functions and a record using objects and situations taken from the food chain.

**Ross Dalziel**

Liverpool based curator and artist whose work includes collaborating with ham radio experts, radio stations and chemical factory workers responding to technological and social spaces to negotiate dialogues and relationships between them.

**Sebastiane Hegarty**

Artist, writer and lecturer, his interdisciplinary work explores sound, installations, photography and text. A recent piece entitled *A Tide of Silence* (2013) investigates the experiences of displacement.

## Alan Dunn

Alan Dunn is a prolific artist based on the Wirral whose career started at Glasgow School of Art and The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, graduating with a Masters' Degree in 1991. Since then Alan has produced several high profile compilations that he was nominated for at the Liverpool Art Prize in 2012. Alan is a lecturer of Fine art of Leeds Metropolitan University.

Dunn, Alan. Abridged Private Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008, Liverpool, 1 hour 15 minutes.

### JK: Tell me about the project 433

AD: So five years I started, the idea came from starting to have to travel through the tunnel every day, twice a day and started to think about this as an in-between space. Isn't quite home, work, Liverpool or the Wirral it was this space that interested me and the fact it lasted two and half minutes and thought that was a nice aspect.

### JK: So why do a CD?

AD: When I was at fact I was running a community web cast called Tenants Spin and we were able to do a few CDs so I knew the logistics, knew how much it cost, knew who to go to and how to do it, and I started to think, I was aware of a few compilations, certainly one called miniatures years ago which every track was one minute, I liked that structure, it is very obvious now to me the structure.

Similarly I was sitting on my bus sometimes listening to my iPod, sometimes watching other people listening to theirs, and thought it is quite noisy on the bus and became interested in the experience, these buses are old and its really noisy, so whatever people are listening to is added to by the noise of the tunnel and thought it would be nice if everyone glistened to the same thing for once. I thought could I broadcast in the bus, logistically it's too difficult, or broadcast through the river through a boat, could I get the sound to the tunnel and asked a few folk and it seemed difficult. So I thought, well maybe I will give people music at the toll and they can decide their own running order. But the simplest way was to produce the CD.

So had the theme, I remember buying soundtracks to films and not enjoying because it was separate to the film. So I used the word soundtrack as a suggestion so people would use it in the tunnels. The duration of the tracks to minutes thirty three and the bus I took was the 433 and that was a obvious link to cage and *silence* so its a kind a nice link, which helps getting funding, its nice little twist because its far from noisy So then I did some work with Chris Watson in FACT and knew he had recorded under water, and I like the idea of being under a tunnel and he used the word immersive using different sounds and speaker. All the tracks are new for this CD, I would issue an invitation or call through SoundNetWork, giving a brief but I cant pay you and only producing 433 so their very limited and given away free of charge. So a few people responded to the brief, which was very open. It started to breakdown then and we had futuristic sound tracks, the idea that it is the future and being a city underground, which a few people took that approach. Others took the approach of being on the bus and there is always voices, horns and traffic like collage piece, others were more, take James Chinneck who recorded someone in a confined space for two minutes thirty three, idea of breathing and claustrophobic. Others used ideas such as take the phrase 'Are we nearly there yet?' like being

trapped in paranoia.

**JK: I suspect the idea of recording sounds of the tunnels is a popular request Mersey Travel receives from artists?**

AD: I approached Mersey Tunnels to do this and they closed it off for a few times for us. And they were so amenable throughout the whole process; it's the same in the reverb chamber at Liverpool University.

**JK: Your work jumped out at me, what other ideas did you find came out of this?**

AD: Well, people can listen on their own iPod and make their own immersive installation, some tracks work on some days others don't and others are stand alone.

**JK: What does the phrase 'immersive sound' mean to you in your work?**

AD: Chris Watson explored that at FACT when he talked about being completely, at the detriment of other sensors, to lower us in a bath to immerse us in sound and he used those sorts of phrases, almost like dragging it out of those a hippy, therapeutic phrases. I remember seeing an installation, James Turrell, a Light artist in Halifax in a sort of capsule and your immersed in light and wherever you look and its gets in you eyes and it is in the foreground background and its the most amazing sensation. Turrell is interested in a sort of immersive light where it bleeds into everything.

**JK: That's a lot like David Cunningham's work 'The Listening Room'**

AD: Yes, it is like a claustrophobic as it does follow you around.

**JK: What sort of reactions from people have you had?**

AD: What's interesting is I am asking people to listen to it in a noisy environment, and people have done this, in the car or bus, some tracks suit it more. It is like John Cage's idea where music should be listened to in different environment. Like Chris Watson, I learnt a lot from Chris in the detail of the sound and he was almost trying to get rid of all other sound

**JK: So he is controlling what sounds there are**

Yeah its like two opposites, he is trying to immerse you in everything but try and control. Its lo-fi site specific artwork using my own artwork, my bus on the front.

AD: One of the projects in the tunnel was to form a choir with the tunnel workers so I employed a German artist and they let us down to the engine room and kind of sing along with the machinery and the turbines and were completely cooperative and it formed a choir. A lot of the work I do I get feedback in 5-10 years so feedback can happen any time. Radio Merseyside did a piece doing a bit of a piss take, saying we have had radio for airports now radio for tunnels, we gave away a load to staff and other people but I am hoping this is a grower.

They were available on a recent tunnel walk. This led to a second one, the Williamson Tunnels, I was invited to do a piece and having been there on my own and the only sound is dripping water so I started researching artists who use the

sound and it's a very basic sound and here is an important history of artists recording this drips. A lot of historic work, I got permission from the Cage Foundation so there are important works on this inviting people to respond to the theme. A lot of Fluxus artists gave permission for this work so a mixture of artists. A lot of historical works going back to 1960's, and 50's so no time limit set on it. This and some new work and writing to people asking them to respond to this theme and send to me and this takes a year to. I can do it all over email sent digital and ideally listen to it in the tunnels. I like the idea of man made sounds interacting with the natural sounds of the tunnels.

**JK: Did you purposely go down a tunnel theme?**

AD: No, it's just a coincidence; I have just done a big project with some miners in Sutton Manor with an underground theme. That was a proactive whereas someone came to me and thought about linking it together. These for me we were about, there is a tendency to look at field recordings like Chris Watson, which I like but find hard to listen to sometimes. I come from a pop punk, indie background, I like people work that combine sit with a popular brand. Watson work is edited from real life, compressed, amazing stuff.

I'm interested in, crating the art, I just pull together other peoples work and writing and researching the contextual stuff like a research project.

**JK: They are really quality visual pieces as well.**

AD: Well, for years I had done, home made DIY stuff for years but for these I would really go for the digi pack. I'm not getting fees, production costs can be covered by grants hopefully cover the cost. It is totally professional I like that idea of it being semi professional but completely amateur but what interests me is getting it to the public, these works given away at tolls, at the Williamson Tunnels. To listen to this in the Williamson Tunnels you have to wear hard helmets so it's difficult. There are tannoys in the tunnels but if your whizzing in a car it impossible. More the idea of people taking it home and putting it on the computer, on the iPod and listening to the work themselves.

**JK: Have you ever used the term immersive?**

AD: I haven't, not deliberately not using it, maybe that my background from using site specific locations words, I think along the lines of people in well captive audience works, that equals to sounds/art in dental room and doctors surgeries where you can be mentally immersed.

## Alan Dunn

Dunn, Alan. Interview In Conversation, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, Liverpool, 1 Hour 5 Minutes.

ALAN DUNN: Do you want to test it?

JAMES KENT: **Yeah it's working I tested it all last night.**

ALAN DUNN: No, just you were saying about all those, I know what you mean about all those kinds of bangs and noises of sounds are you know and I think part of me kind of likes that but I've been doing with you know maybe the first question immersive I find those difficult with the none stop. So what I've been doing is I think is increasingly just mixing all the stuff up. Some of those CDs you might get the odd bit of banging and unlistenable stuff but there will also be a really pop song after it or you know so I quite like that kind of ...

JK: **Mixing it up.**

AD: Exactly it makes it easier to listen to I think if you know that you know...

JK: **Yeah, I mean I've been to a couple of things in Liverpool like them, you know the Fracture Nights and I've been to a couple of them were it's just banging.**

AD: Full on, I know, See I kind of like that but I also like to know that it stops then immediately go into a bit of poetry or a bit of pop or into - I think you know the Revolution CD that was a classic example of you would mix up some kind of noise and then a bit of you know, you know cash store talking and then it would be a bit of box song from the Sixties and then a bit of this you know I find that a bit you know ...

JK: **Yeah, that's good.**

AD: I wonder if that can be immersive as well if it's changing all the time I don't know.

JK: **Yeah because it could change your perception really with what's going on. That was actually my system from last year from that Hub Festival. The piece was also based on, you know when you're walking past people and if they say something it changes your mind-set, sort of based roughly on that as well. I sort of walk past people in town and try to catch them saying stuff and it was really, yeah.**

AD: Yes, so the question is whether it needs to be the same thing for a long time to be immersive. That's the question maybe and my preference is for things that change quite often. I use a lot of short – I think it's the duration because Chris Watson I was talking to, long tracks you'd give yourself time to get into them but I've become increasingly interested in shorter tracks. So when I'm asking the students to do a thesis for this background CD I've got a 30 second limit on it because you say well can you actually have because background music – the idea of background music is that it goes on forever. You know it's in airports, it's looped or it's endless, you know. I'm interested in saying what can you make it in 30 seconds, well what does that mean if it's only on for 30 seconds you know.

JK: **Immersion, [Alan: Immersive environment] immersive, immersiveness,**



**yes.**

AD: Yes so obviously with the kind of you know the Mersey Tunnel CD and I think the Williamson Tunnels is a good example because I remember from visiting that and just hearing the drip and not being able to see it and I thought it was great and the initial proposal was that people would walk around with headphones on listening to this.

**JK: They couldn't wear the headphones ...**

AD: Yes. So you can sort of get away with listening to it with ear pieces so that's quite, that was kind of the idea of replicating a noise that is already there. Because if there's a real drip there and you were saying about putting the trains in at the gallery, you know and if that's played at a train station I quite like that kind of double take of what's real and what's recorded. It's another way of immersion simply just not to put in the opposite of the space but to put the same thing as the space in the space, you know. So I think the Williamson Tunnels is about putting a drip back into somewhere where there are drips already exist.

**JK: How did the audience react like in the Williamson Tunnel?**

AD: I mean I say because none of the recordings are actually sort of you know, a lot of them have been, most of them have been tweaked somehow or you know and what we realise is actually it is very hard to be, to get silence in those tunnels because you're always going to be running tours and stuff. So I think, I mean I got an email from about four months ago from an American academic who visited the tunnels. Her husband, she lives in Chester I think and she picked up one of the CDs and took it home and thought it was fantastic listening to it at home. So she took her first visit to Williamson Tunnels the kind of images and the sounds and smells but listening to the CD at home completely randomly and that's what I love because there was no way I would reached her with my [James: No, no] work other than leaving the CDs on the counter at the Williamsons. So she's drawn there because of these follies and the drips and the, you know the story behind it and then came away with a CD. So I kind of like that you know. I think I have in that sense but maybe not in your kind of soundscape style. I've not used soundscape style. It's more maybe kind sort of song or spoken words or even this drip, the drip CD but there was still a lot of songs there and the people had used that as a kind of rhythm or this, you know.

**JK: I like the idea actually of your CDs that as you say you've got your drips and you've got maybe a pop song. It's really interesting and it draws people in actually doesn't it?**

AD: I think so. I'm more interested in how artists have used the sound of a drip. I'm not interested in putting the sound of drips back into drips only. I'm interested how artists have used it. So and the same with, I use the word revolution, I'm interested in how different arts have used that word or grey, the colour grey. Just how a whole range of artists have used that you know and the same with catastrophe and the same as background. I'm just interested in these themes that suddenly have, it's just one word themes but they explode open.

**JK: See how the artist will use them themes.**

AD: Because I think it would be fundamental. It's a bit like saying life, death, sex, birth you know. These are real kind of basic themes. I'm interested in - everyone for

centuries has kind of drawn in the same themes. It's as if we were grappling with you know the same issues all the time.

**JK: There's always catastrophe isn't there?**

AD: There's always catastrophe. There's always this, it's not revolutionist desire to change things and if not grey, there's always this desire to, grey is just, is the flatness isn't it? It's just the norm. Like today's weather it's just, it's boredom and art is always fitting against that boredom. So the idea of background is that you can't get away from background it's always [James: It's always present]. As soon as you make a sculpture, a painting or a CD that's the kind of foreground that you've always got to set it against - so I'm just interested in these themes that you know that writers have responded to, designers have, artists, musicians, composers so, so that's that. Which maybe helps answer the next in terms of influences, I've probably mentioned them through conversation you know. You are talking about Erik Satie and the fact that he in 1917 was writing music for theatres and then screaming at people because they stopped to listen to it. I love that kind of you know screaming talk over my work I like that, you know. Don't listen to my work and as a composer I find that, I like that kind of an artist's vision - that comes with visual arts. It's like an artist saying don't look at my work, you know. I've been looking at a lot of artists and there's a painter called Richard Haas, an American and he's - he would find a blank surface of a building and paint, you've probably seen it, he'd paint very detailed windows on to that building. So you don't see his work because it looks like a real architecture. I like that idea of spending hours and then saying well don't look at my work or don't listen you know. So I think Satie's quite interesting you know.

**JK: It's almost invisible, invisible work.**

AD: Yes and I was saying just before about this woman called Carol Kaye who to me is an incredible influence, she's not a sound artist as such but I think she has transformed pop music without anybody knowing. Yet she never wrote songs. She never, [James: She was always asked to do] always there, always asked to add stuff to songs.

**JK: Well she must be extremely talented.**

AD: She is when she plays bass, she plays you know and suddenly she'll play the riff to a Beach Boys song and say that come from country & western and it's not because you don't associate surf with country & western. She'll play a bit of Sonny & Cher and say that came from salsa beat you know because of, or a bit of The Monkeys coming from a jazz and the idea that she took all these genres which is what I try and do in the CD. She'll take a bit of jazz, put it into pop or a bit of samba and put it into pop and you know she's behind all this kind of fantastic you know.

**JK: She sounds really interesting.**

AD: Also she seems, as a person she said she was the one that never took drugs and never drank. So she was the reliable bass person so they always called on her because she would turn up and be incredibly efficient, creative and also sensitive to other people. She knew that Sinatra or Zappa or Brian Wilson was the star. She also knew the power she had in the background.

**JK: They needed her in many ways didn't they?**

AD: They needed her there. She made them shine brighter you know and that was

the real kind of interesting. So again she's quite an influential figure in terms of you know - I mean you isolate her base lines it's really nice to and it's making CDs of isolating base lines and isolating backing vocals.

**JK: So has she got a following or is she unknown?**

AD: Yes seems to have you know but she's never, she was saying that they never get credited on any of the records because they were session musicians you know and that was partly for and for tax reasons or for just because it was never done. I first heard about her there was a big radio interview with her in America, the Bob Edwards show and that's where I first became aware of how she's very articulate about what she did. So that was - so an influence, not quite a sound and immersive environment but influential none the less.

**JK: Has there been any other artists over the past few years that have influenced your work directly or you consider important?**

AD: Yes I mean I keep mentioning Chris Watson. Working with Chris Watson was a real eye opener in terms of because he came from a close punk background of Cabaret Voltaire and then had his hobby of recordings birds in his garden and he's worked with, you know interviewing pop stars for The Tube and then working with background stuff. Similar to Carol Kaye in a sense he puts his experience of Cabaret Voltaire plus Attenborough together with his art work. I think I like that because I don't come from a musical background - so I'm maybe drawn to these people that are not, you know bringing different things. I think he's been, in terms of how I produce my work I think you know Touch Music that you know Chris Watson the label when I was art student I was buying all this Touch compilations and they were really eclectic. They were mixing some interviews with Gilbert and Georgeson - strange recordings from Tahiti with some punk. I think I was really in love with them. They were cassettes in those days.

I remember one: There was one in 1986 I think about ritual, so again it was picking this one theme because everyone's been interested in ritual from shamans to religion to you know - everyone in this pub's got little rituals you know. So I love that theme that was very influential.

I think that also that you mentioned that actually Colin Fallows I remember buying his DaDa LP and thinking this is somebody in Liverpool whose got these global recordings. So in terms of people putting sounds together I think Touch, Mike Harding at Touch and Colin Fallows were, and this is all pre internet obviously but now it's easier to pull you know playlists together because what Colin and Mike did they made it tangible. It was an actual LP and an actual cassette, actual book. So it had a visual element. Had a clear theme and these fantastic recordings you know. So again they were quite influential.

**JK: And have you ever thought about putting the sounds in an outside or an open space? Have you always specifically chosen these interior spaces?**

AD: I kind of chosen these, yes these tunnels - the tunnels I've found here. I was drawn to tunnels quite a few times because this idea of cavernous and the sound has stayed in there and it's sealed almost. So I quite like that notion and for me it's about you know any artist that invites you to produce work for these CDs I make it very clear where this work is going to be heard. So you can almost gear it exactly for that space which I think is different from making an MP3 available because you've no idea where somebody is going to download that or listen to it. So the fact that,

and it's slightly a different answer to your question but the fact that you can only get the Williamson Tunnels CDs in the Williamson Tunnels and you can only get the Mersey Tunnels CDs actually at the toll booth of the Mersey Tunnel. So I think that was me trying to tie it in very much that. It's tight but that's like a concert then isn't it? If you want to go and hear a live thing and you had to go to that concert and the idea that you know I always liked when bands came to Glasgow and they played at the Barrowlands and they'd tweak some of their songs to suit being in Glasgow. You know I kind of like kind of so you get a bootleg and it's one of the cramps or something referring to being in Glasgow.

**JK: Changing that for the Glasgow audience.**

AD: Exactly even the translation or just songs. You know maybe that's part of trying to put a sound you know - I mean it's difficult these days with the internet in that I've invited somebody from Mexico to do a piece. They'll never be in Liverpool so I then have to describe the tunnels to them or I have to describe you know for example the - you're talking about things stuff outside of the next CD about background and really think about trying to broadcast that in you know railway stations, airports, all GP surgery, all the places where you know were Eno and Satie kind of thingy but I'm thinking well you know that's so if it's an interview about background in the background. So it's not background music. I'm not producing an ambient CD. It's more sounds about the background. So I'm wondering if that's sort of appropriate maybe it will be somewhere else. Because I'm doing this other project which is about, it's part of this, again this background CD I have been working on this it's most on my mind, you know, I've got some recordings from space. You know Manchester University have been recording Jodrell Bank and recording space and I know Jodrell Bank can actually transmit to space. So I was kind of half joking about my next Art's Council application might be about, you know when they ask about audience and where you're going to play your work back. Who is going to listen probably nobody you know. Who knows? It's the ultimate thing.

**JK: Yes I get all these recordings on Dark Matter. I found all that recordings really interesting and what people did like a whole theme of dark matter and this astrophysicist did these sound recordings of it and it was amazing.**

AD: Yeah, I kind of looking at that recently as well. There's quite a lot of recordings of stars and it's the radio frequencies and it's just mostly of you know - how do you kind of - that's the ultimate immersive environment I guess because so maybe that's just because looking at these, you know this notion of, this notion of recordings from well they're on the internet, they're called recordings from hell. You know there was a pipe dug in, I think in the Ukraine where they dug really deep - you know the world's deepest - the earth's deepest kind of - deepest tunnel or drilling hole rather and they dangled a microphone right down. You hear all these kind of - it's called the soundscape you hear all these gurgling sounds. You know it sounds like people screaming. It's just called Sounds from Hell, you know. I used to carry it around on my iPod just to play on the train to block out background noise but the point being that I kind of like these extreme environments. A CD might say well create sounds for the deepest point of the planet and also the furthest point from the planet, you know. So for me it's also about challenges to artists that I like you know.

So I'm less about putting sound in a gallery for example for people to nurse themselves. I'm not really, you know, I can see the advantages of that. I also find it a bit awkward. I was in Dublin recently there's a big exhibition about kind of immersive sound. You had to take your shoes off and lie in a vibrating bed and lie down and I was just incredibly self-conscious because you're in the middle of a museum; there's

people talking; there's a cash register going. I think you ask me to immerse myself in the middle of a museum with my shoes off you know. So in that sense maybe I'd like more control over where I immerse myself.

**JK: I think that's actually a really good point actually because even in Liverpool I went to a exhibition at the Bluecoat recently and they asked us to lie down and close your eyes and you're just, I'm waiting for someone to throw a bucket of water on me or something.**

AD: I know it's difficult. I mean but the few occasions where it has happened for me again is the project with Chris Watson at FACT we did a Winter's Tale and they set up a 10.2 surround in the box in The FACT and lowered the lights and Chris was introduced it all and everyone kind of calm and seated and introduced what we were going to hear. Which was more theatrical then – then I actually found everyone could then immerse themselves in but it had that crucial theatrical, Chris was going to introduce it; it's going to start at this time and you're going to be listening for 27 minutes. It's not just a walk in thing. I think that's it, get rid of all the outside crap.

**JK: It's a really good space the Box at The Fact.**

AD: Exactly it feels quite sealed in a cinema space and the curtains help and everything – I found that was the best use of it you know and obviously the size of it as well it's not a big cavernous thing. So and the other piece that I heard actually last year was a piece by Janet Cardiff in Leeds which was when she'd recorded an orchestra and each instruments played back in a speaker so you walk around as if you're walking around in and out of the orchestra and that was a really nice simple piece. Ironically Chris Watson was one of the speakers on stand. So the pieces that I like are actually just speakers on stands you know where you kind of move around maybe or you know. So no films; no leaves on the grounds; no smells just good, high quality sounds and I find that with Chris is what the sound is so pure and good and it kind of draws you in, you know you can't help being immersed in it because the quality's so good.

**JK: Between initial recordings of natural sounds in the production process are there any key elements that are vital to the sound work becoming a successful sound installation in an immersive environment?**

AD: For me again just to maybe answer the question again but for me it's about context, what that, whatever I record. So let's say I do the odd – I dabble out in recordings and put out under different names. All the CDs you've got. They've got my work on it but under different names you know. For me it's about – and again it's not just about the recording I make it's what the tracks are going to before it and after it is as important. When I'm actually recording something I'm thinking this would sound great after that track. So do you see the difference it's more like kind of creator then. That just dictates the speed or how I record something or you know or the quality of it side, you can do something like in the Mersey Tunnel I deliberately did something just off my mobile phone for 2 and a half minutes going through the tunnel the 433 bus because I knew that was going to be asked after Chris Watson's really crisp underwater recording of the same lengths. So I thought – so I think that's the process before I do the recording. It's as much after it do you see what I mean? In terms of any kind of you know if the questions about kind of post-production yeah it probably is like that. I do very little post-production really. You know I mean I can use audacity and stuff to a basic level but I don't really you know I do most of the editing when I'm actually recording it because it is important that that was two and half minutes going through the tunnel in the bus. There was no need to edit

anything. It was what it was. It was a bit like saying that's a tea cup, you know I was quite kind of pure record you know.

**JK: No I like that similar to what I've done with my train recordings. A lot of the recordings were I used an iPod; I used my phone. I also used a high quality Tascam one had different then mixed them up like but it was really it had a great effect in the space because it meant you could hear people talking – sometimes you could hear a train move and the really quality ones would actually shake the rooms.**

AD: Exactly yes and I love that kind of mixture thing. Too often I've gone to sound art surveys and the quality almost been all too good or too poor. I like it mixing up. I think you can get away with mobile phone recordings if it's followed as I say by really crisp recording. [James: Yeah you can do] So it means I can pull all that stuff off YouTube with permission but I use really low quality YouTube recordings. You see for Erik Satie piece it's a recording from the background of an orchestra off various PCs. It's quite low quality but because it's followed by a crisp one I can get – you know I think the ear can adjust to different kind of you know it's not like the stereo LPs were everything's top quality. So in that sense it's more like channel hopping or radios, you're tuning you know different qualities which I like so. Chris Watson and Janet Cardiff were it's visually very simple. I think you know the eyes are, you've got to get the eyes to stop working almost you know first and you know simple environments. I mean there is a bit of cliché in wanting those big heavy black speakers the general like speakers on a stand. The thing we did a project with, I don't know why I always talk Chris Watson all the time but Chris in this last year we found an old church in Headingly and we did a playback in this church and churches are obviously designed to be acoustically quite impressive you know. So that was an interesting thing.

As well as the box the second best environment I've ever heard is a church and that's no coincidence that churches are you know heralded as really acoustically sound you know and what we found was because we are in quite a new building the art school and I knew John Lewis is new as well. I don't know what it's like acoustically but the art school at least it's new and the acoustics are extremely bad in our art's school and that's including giving lectures, the background noise everywhere, because none of the walls go up to the ceiling, it's all hard surfaces, there's no kind of sound proofing and you know and actually I was with Chris there last year said this is actually it might have Sick Building Syndrome which means you can actually physically suffer from being in a building from 9-5 you know and he might tell this to you, he told this fantastic story just finally of he'd just come from Dublin and there was a new office built in Dublin. Then after a few months people had been reporting you need to ask him this story but my version of it is people had been reporting odd sightings, kind of little ghostly sightings of peripherals. You know you think there's somebody over there you know and one night this employee who was into fencing stayed after work to fix his rapier. So he put his rapier in a vice to sort of sharpen it or polish it. He'd gone to the toilet and came back and his rapier was doing this. You know and nobody it had been a locked room so somebody had twanged. So he did a further research and it turns out it had been a faulty air conditioning unit just off cycle and it had been sending out these background waves that caused that to thing and also caused cornea to vibrate slightly in people's eyes. So the corner of his eye was slightly kind of shivering causing an echo of the light. So all these ghosts were explained by a faulty air conditioning unit you know. So Chris was saying buildings are full of these little things that actually make you, they change you physically you know. I actually started thinking about the arts school and these are an immersive environment.

**JK: Is it a new building?**

AD: It is a new building, yes. We've only been in two years and it was not built as an art school because we actually lease – we only lease it for 20 years. So after 20 years it might become some other department. So it's like talk sense it's obviously an office block in terms of acoustics and space and height you know etc. etc. So again it's quite an interesting environment in the way that you know thinking about background noise and being able to immerse yourself because we're constantly talking to students in this constant background noise from projectors, printers and one of the students had an ultrasonic, a bat recorder as Chris Watson called it and he held it up to all the printers in the room and send them documents to print. So that a Word document with one word sent to print you'd hear all this kind of ultrasonic noise and then a full page of text would set off a different ultrasonic noise from the printer and Chris was all these sound waves are all you might not hear them but they're all there going into us. Air conditioning, strip lights he said were the worst. So I'm also thinking of you know well everywhere is an immersive environment in a sense you know but you've got to think be aware of what you're immersing yourself.

I'm working with the students at least they're on the sound art they have to be aware of playing it back in this building. I think it's just the context of it you know. Which is what I was saying earlier it's different from – don't just produce an MP3 that be played anywhere in the world. Think about where it might actually be heard in this building with all this stuff going on you know.

**JK: So anyway that was a new experience, what great advantage is there of using sounds in a gallery space?**

The huge advantage is that it strips people of the whole fear of the history of visual art you know. People are terrified of paintings and drawings and sculpture because they think it's weird. Suddenly you go in and see an – it kind of strips because sound art doesn't really have that history. It's not taught in schools. You know you don't copy Satie. You copy Picasso in school as a kid. You copy Warhol. You study – sixth formers look at Dali they don't look at you know Stockhausen. So I think one advantage is of kind of a blank canvas, you know for people, for the audience. I think a disadvantage is what I've been talking about and Chris Watson echoes this there's very few spaces being designed for sound art you know, the Blue Coat, Fact, Tate, Wilson Home Projects, not one of them has actually been designed. Churches have. You know and you know libraries in a sense have been designed to reduce sound and churches just amplify sounds but the disadvantages of actually the quality of you know where you stand and obviously theatres and cinemas have been designed for it but galleries haven't. Why the hell are they showing it galleries then? It's the worst place to try and squeeze – it's a bit like the old days when they had to black out all the windows to show video art, you know square pegs round holes. It's just not working though. Show it in a cinema. Why turn the gallery into a bloody cinema when there's a cinema next door you can just [James: Yeah just use that] people can sit and just use that you know? So I think that's a disadvantage.

I think you know I mentioned before the disadvantage are it's hard to immerse yourself in a gallery and it not – not even if she's handed a leaflet or if it's not theatrical - if there's a clear starting point or end point most people [James: Just walk in] walk in and you find it extremely hard to – because it's – there's a very thin threshold, you're outside with all the hustle bustle – you could be shopping – I don't know I'm thinking of the experience of going into a gallery, you know there is a real

world outside and it's all of a sudden you are in this environment. There's no decompression chamber. There's no kind of build up to it. [James: You need that, you probably need that moment of calm don't you just to] you do need that yes, sort of waiting room almost just to – so I think that's a – it's a challenge though – it's a disadvantage to a challenge of you know – then obviously I'm a bit more interested in the distribution of how you get the word out into the public and not in galleries. So through buses and tunnels and I am actually using galleries a lot less. The disadvantage of that of the sound quality because I'm relying on people hearing the stuff on good headphones or good speakers at home. I can't control that. In a gallery you can control the speakers at least you know. You can control the playback as the best quality expensive equipment. Once you leave that gallery you're in the hands of the receiver then you know because that's the risk you take you know. So that's ...

**JK: What are the technical issues in galleries?**

AD: Well I think that's a technical issue. They're simply not designed to may be play things back at the best quality. You know I think even the standard of the headphones in the gallery because self-conscious because it's hard to you know.

**JK: You're sort of stuck to the wall aren't you with the wire like?**

AD: You're stuck to the wall, yes and you know you try stuff with radio headphones but it's really difficult to you know especially if it's quite an aggressive sound how do you step from something into quite full on sound technically that's you know lots of sound leakage as well. I mean in those sound showers I'm not quite convinced by the kind of sound showers, which are direct. They seem a bit – they're not quite the answer I don't think you know. So I don't know. My suggestion is not use galleries basically that's my answer.

I did a project recently with residents FM this whole notion of radio being used to transmit sounds out was quite a big thing. You know there was a big article in this month's Wire that radio has you know so it's not about where it's heard but where it's transmitted you know. So you can listen to it a car if you want or you can listen at home or listen on the move you know and obviously get arts reviews radio quite a lot. So you know to distribute work for free which I like you know. It's got another advantage.

**JK: Is it possible that sound art works in an interior space can alter an individual's mind-set?**

Yeah, absolutely I think you know, you know anything that makes people you know, sort of trains the ear muscles and makes people think about – so at the moment I'm incredibly aware of the background noise in this place and because I'm researching it you know and I'm trying – struggling to hear you and hear myself but also I'm aware that even.

**JK: I think most people are aware when they're in a Wetherspoons because there's so much attached to it isn't it that we don't have music, we don't have telly or speakers on so.**

AD: But then if you go through the day and actually leave this building and then you become aware of you know is there any point today when we do actually have peace and quiet. Probably there's not really not total silence because there's always be traffic. But there's always going to be traffic or you can't get away from any kind of aeroplanes or traffic or even though – or fridges in – there's still kind of a low kind



of thing. So that's only about – it's more about awareness. I don't know whether it's about altering mind-set. It's just awareness of.

**JK: Has anyone come away from any of your work and completely changed or experienced a moment of epiphany?**

AD: Again the first time we worked with Chris Watson I think was with the Tenants Spin Project. So working with elderly people whose hearing was maybe failing but you realise that you could actually still train your ear muscles and you can go through life. It was almost that, there was almost that revelation of going through life with your ears and I've starting doing that since meeting Chris you know. I'm actually going through life not just you know they say you don't have ear lids. You know you can't shut stuff out but you can actually start to pick out nice sounds or you know you can actually not get annoyed by all the background stuff or urban noise. You can actually start to appreciate some of it.

**JK: But then I thought after well I knew I was going into this questionnaire did I do it purposely. That's probably yeah and I think that was probably the case actually. So there would have to be some other way of doing the test I think.**

AD: I think it's got to be a balance though hasn't it? I'm obviously more visual but I think you know over the past, let's say five years been more aware of you know, you know how I've always enjoyed kind of music / sound art but actually just trying to – I also think it's I'd go back to the I know it's the same point of doing these kind of compilation CDs it's not just about me being altered by one work, it's me hearing that one work next to another piece of work. You know I think that's interesting for me. So it's not just the one piece of work in the one gallery or in the one project. For me it's more kind of you know.

**JK: Because even when I listen to your work I've got big headphones – I put them on – I close my eyes and chill out. Your work introduces me to something else which makes me search that up you know – it's opened me up.**

AD: I think that's a good point because I don't want people to fall asleep during my CD. I think that's the interesting thing. I don't – and it's that you know because I think maybe we've talked about this last this notion of immersion being quite ambient and relaxing and sort of not new agey but a bit of transcendental. I've never gone down that path in a sense. Especially if you're recording a field with birds chirping. How do you then make that not relaxing you know and then because it moves into the realms of kind of therapy and hospitals use in background noise. So I think that's an interesting kind of you know.

**JK: Are there any further technical issues do you think arise from trying to use a sound to alter the audience's mind-set?**

AD: I think for me it's a big issue over. I've always been interested in this. I suppose you walk into a gallery and you know. I'm always interested in people, like the woman in Williamson Tunnels stumbling across stuff but having information. I'm always interested in even you know – how much information should you have about a piece of work before you hear it? Do I need to know how you recorded this or which train station it was or how you played it back or you know because that all helps alter the mind-set? Very rarely do you hear something about getting a label first, or a booklet or choosing that CD you know. I think it's always about you know, it's not necessarily a technical issue it's more just a delivery issue of you know - there's a process before you actually get to the sound. You choose to go to that

gallery. You read it or you choose to get that CD or you choose to – you know that's part of the whole build up in a sense to actually experiencing something you know. It's very rarely do you just stumble across something you know. There's always that conscious kind of decision.

**JK: Is your CD at the Williamson Tunnels is that available there?**

AD: As far as I know yes. As far as I know there's box loads behind the counter and there's still box loads at the Mersey Travel. Mersey Travel have got for to give out at some of the toll booths but what I like is I don't push them they might give out one a year, they might give out one a month. It will happen randomly you know. I've left it to them and they said well we might give it to the – because it was linked to the 433 bus we might give it to the 433<sup>rd</sup> car on the - you know the 43<sup>rd</sup> hour of the – I don't know anyways. They were going to make up all these things. Whether they do or not I don't know. I mean I could check up but I'm just trusting up but that email from that American lady was proof that the Williamson Tunnels are giving them out which is good. I do like that kind of slow, pondering, slow drip of the CDs. So the revolution CD was never – that was different because that wasn't tied to a particular tunnel or venue. That was more – maybe that's the first one I did that wasn't linked to a location you know. That was a bit more of a collection of songs I think and a spoken word so that was slightly different.

The Revolution CD was slightly different. So I didn't have the location beforehand so I did the CD and then afterwards I started to be leaving them in phone boxes. So there kind of home became phone sort of – I went to New York at the start of this year and I was leaving some of the Revolution CDs just you know next to the phone book in America phone boxes. So the idea that somebody if they don't have a mobile phone which is quite rare - so that was the revolution – they would go and make a phone call get this free CD they would just pick so. So that became the location for them was and that's partly because you know the first track on the Revolution CD was the phone number for Douglas Gordon, this artist that won the Turner Prize. So the idea was that the first track was a phone number for him. So you could phone him up maybe from this phone book – that's your revolution so it was just finding another way of you know distributing the CDs.

**JK: Did anyone ever get back to you or contact you through that?**

AD: Not me. No but that's a good question because I don't for me the act of doing it is more interesting than following up. The Williamson Tunnels I don't ask them for statistics or anything. If I get an email you know in six years' time that's great. If Douglas gets a phone call in three years' time for me that's good. That kind of you know slow burning thing because I'm not tied to it. The question you'd ask is it actually working I don't know but time will tell you know what I mean?

**JK: It's good not to know isn't it?**

AD: Well it's good not to know yes. It's not a big push to chase people up you know or stand and watch the phone box and see if anyone picks it

**JK: You never know what could have happened. It could have changed somebody's life, it could have.**

AD: Well that's the unknown factor you know.

## BJ Nilsen

BJ Nilsen is a sound artist based in Stockholm, Sweden and he has worked all around Europe recording and exhibiting his sound pieces. In the mid 1990's playing in numerous bands then going onto be known by the pseudonym Hazard and has collaborated on several projects with Chris Watson and experimental band Stilluppsteypa.

Nilsen, BJ. Interview via Email Correspondence 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your work to be immersive? Or have you used sound to immerse the audience within interior environments?**

BJ Nilsen: Yes I always considered my work to be immersive. Depending on the listening situation there are different ways to immerse a crowd with sound. Harmonious or with frequency Listening with very low volume can be very immersive for example and allows the listener to be drawn into the sounds.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

BJ: For me ground breaking event was to experience Maryanne Amacher at the 2003 Sonic Acts Festival in Paradiso, Amsterdam. That did it for me, I was aware of the third ear phenomenon etc. but never experienced it before or after in such power. She literally got into every inch of my body and as much as I loved it I also had to escape it, I walked around the Paradiso listening and tuning in and went further out onto the street and it was still there, outside the Paradiso it was still penetrating the centre of my head! One if not the most beautiful sound performance I have ever attended to. The work of Francisco Lopez, H3o, CMV Hausswolff is a few other examples of immersive sound artists.

JK: **Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring environmental sounds from the natural space to an interior immersive space?**

BJ: For me it is about tension, the tension involving weather, the sound of nature, real sound events. It holds a drama that everyone can relate too and its hard to beat, (Without it being a cheesy listening experience) but rather listening back in a concentrated manner the sound of a thunderstorm or wind in a shed holds an amazing tension and might be a deeply rooted sensation that perhaps also contains fear. Monitoring/ Listening back to the build up of a storm is one of the most intriguing sound drama one can ever encounter. Also what I am interested in is to create a sonic/geographic "time travel " where you can situate yourself in several places at once, through sound mixing the continents if you like.

JK: **Between the initial recording of natural sounds and the production process are there any key elements that are vital to the sound work becoming a successful sound installation in an immersive environment?**

BJ: Anyone can play-back sound in good speaker system set-up: It's that easy now. You could record your tube journey on your iPhone and put it through a few Genelec monitors and people might be impressed but Sound art is a delicate thing, it might seem simple but requires more than just pressing record and play button.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

BJ: Negative: well the lack of understanding what you trying to achieve, lack of sufficient equipment, I don't know of any gallery that's entirely built for sound, one other problem is when you have several sound artists in same room, it can create a cacophony and your initial message might not get through. I am part of *Freq\_Out* <http://www.freq-out.org/> and we have the benefit to be able to present our work in many various spaces as this is part of the concept, one always has to take in the consideration and sonic properties of the space itself while creating the installation.

Positive: well the opposite, people who can understand what you are trying to do.

**JK: What are the creative advantages and disadvantages of using sound within a gallery space?**

BJ: Advantages are that you might reach people who necessary are not from a sound background. Depending on the room perhaps one has to also try to separate the gallery interior from the installation work more with rooms within rooms. Hidden speakers e-t-c

Disadvantages are if the original installation is not made for that specific space you might have to compromise a lot. The above idea might solve this issue.

**JK: By Staging sound works in a gallery space what technical issues might arise?**

BJ: Most of the time lack of sufficient required equipment, also the visual disturbance of speakers, cables.

**JK: Is it possible that sound art within an interior space can alter the audience/participants midst?**

BJ: Very much so, I think it does. We might have to differentiate between sound-art installations and sound-.art performances.

**JK: What technical issues you think might arise from trying to use sound to alter the audience/participant mind-set?**

BJ: In my opinion, the main issues are not technical but compositional /spiritual. Room set-up, Equipment, but also the time aspect to experience it, light/darkness.

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

BJ: There was a German sound art festival called Für Augen nut Ohren in the beginning of the 80's. Tuned City Festival in Berlin.

## Budhaditya Chattopadhyay

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay is an artist and researcher exploring sound and listening and has recorded, written and exhibited a collection of works examining the interwoven relationships between cinema, sound and media using audio and written text in his on going research and practice. Currently based in Copenhagen, Denmark where he is working on his Ph.D. researching the perceptions and cognition of sound and media of cinema.

Chattopadhyay, Budhaditya Interview Via Email Correspondence 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your sound works to be immersive? For example I recently listened to *Landscape in Metamorphoses* (2008) whilst sitting on a beach looking at the Dee estuary, Wirral. At first I found the recording comforting then it slowly intensified my thoughts, feeling myself immersed as I watched my changing landscape intertwine with *Landscape in Metamorphoses* (2008).**

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay: I do consider my listening to sounds as immersive, and this process of immersion in listening is reflected in my field recordings. While I work with these field recordings in the studio as a composition by processing the materials, the spatial practice I involve decides how much of the immersive experience is transmitted to the listening audience. I think that to consider my work to be immersive, I first need to know the nature of the spatial practice I incorporate in my works. The degree of immersive experience greatly varies when I compose the works for stereo or compose the same material for multi-channel diffusion. On the other hand, certain tonalities and textures that I repeatedly use in my work, such as industrial drones, surface vibrations and machine hums, do sound immersive in their methodology of engaging the audience.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

BC: I am greatly influenced by classical music, both Western and Indian. In Western classical music I am fascinated with early and renaissance music and their modal structures – the way they exemplify an emerging sense of polyphony. The repetition of sound motifs in J S Bach's work and the textural explorations of György Ligeti are other major influences. In the Indian classical tradition the ancient form of Dhrupad has been instrumental in inspiring in my work the sense of inclusive and improvisational development achieved through a gradual unfolding of a specific architecture of sound. To be very frank, I don't find such kind of immensely striking examples of inspirational works from the contemporary sound art world.

JK: **Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring sounds from the natural environment to an immersive space?**

BC: The artistic intentions with which I develop my works can be understood as a way to provide a contemplative distance of observation for the listening audience. The places I am interested to explore and expose through sound, they, I believe, do need a keen ear of observation to understand their spatio-temporal nature, besides their social-cultural condition. The contemplative distance that I construct in my work is primarily intended to create a premise for observation, which works contrapuntal

to their immersive potential.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound within an immersive environment?**

BC: I equate immersion with a losing of the 'self' in the power of sound and an unquestioned following and enveloping of phenomenological experience presented by certain sonic environments. In Indian cities sounds are overwhelming, and they always provide an immersive experience by the sheer presence of sound all around. That is why I need contemplative distance to safeguard my individuality.

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world, with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

BC: Works of Max Neuhaus, Bill Fontana, Phil Niblock et al. Writings of Brandon LaBelle, Seth Kim-Cohen, Christoph Cox et al.

**JK: Finally, what I find interesting about your work is the various methods and personalisation of your recordings. One influence that has stood out in my own research and practice is Gaston Bachelard: *'Far from the immensities of sea and land, merely through memory, we can recapture, by the means of meditation, the resonances of this contemplation of grandeur.'* (Bachelard 1964 p 183) How would you describe such influences and methods in your work?**

BC: I think what you understand as 'personalisation', is meant to creating a context of personal intervention and allowing listening to unfold innately being in open-ended auditory situations. Further, my works investigate the phenomenological development of sonic experience at apparently locative but in essence itinerant and uncertain auditory situations that appear and diminish keeping likely chronicles in the field recordings. These are the primary drives for me, thus rendering the works 'susceptible to divine influences'.

## Chris Watson

Chris Watson is a critically acclaimed field recordist who has recorded a collection of sonic recordings exploring nature and the natural phenomena globally. Watson also delivers recording workshops across Europe for Universities and Wildeye, which is a practice led education and information project. Before all this Watson was also a member of the experimental music group Cabaret Voltaire during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Watson, Chris. Abridged Private Interview Via Skype, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012, 36 minutes.

James Kent: **Have you considered your work to be immersive? Or Have you used sounds to immerse the audience within interior environments?**

Chris Watson: Yes it is exactly what I am trying to achieve. It (Immersion) is a crucial part of the engagement with my work so that sense of immersion I would gage in many ways to the relative success of the work and how people felt about the work and whether or not they felt immersed in any particular environment.

JK: **I went to see you piece at Kew Gardens Whispering in the Leaves housed in the palm house and was interested in how you re planted the sounds of the South and Central America in this space.**

CW: How did you find the experience of that piece?

JK: **I filmed inside the Palm House, it was very busy and as you walked around and went up the staircases the environment changed you could see people different reactions. I found watching people responses fascinating.**

CW: I think you are absolutely right I judge that piece by how people reacted to it. The piece posed really difficult questions as to the replay level as there was times it was drowned out if there was a big school group or something who came in it would drown piece out but that's perfectly acceptable and the main aim in those environments is to immerse the audience in the piece and what I have found important is the replay level and having it just at the right level and is crucial for the sense of engagement with that kind of work. If you play it back to loud it just becomes that, you are having sounds played at you and people switch off and our ears and brain are very clever, quick at tuning into things like that.

JK: **I found at Kew that it was quite a delicate piece.**

CW: So what I wanted and why it was such a large scale piece, with 90 loud speakers in that space was that to put sound into the space without it appearing to be played back from loud speaks so we hid all the technology and that's why it was called Whispering in the Leaves as far as we could given that it was grade one listed building. As I said the replay level was crucial so it had to be played back at the sort of level you would experience those sounds if you were stood in a rain forest and that was what we set out to achieve and so if there was a lot of people in there and a lot of noise that you wouldn't be able to hear the sounds, that's fine because that reflects the reality of the piece.

So that is one of the largest interior environments I have used and the strange thing

about that is it is all recorded on location in a rainforest and not in an interior environment but I felt the acoustics were very well reflected but of course that is also a real rain forest in an interior environment in the glass house, and a very unusual situation but I think perfect and it worked.

**JK: I was really interested in another piece Wild Song at Dawn, which I picked up at FACT (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology) and found how you brought in the sounds from the park sitting alongside Alder Hey Children's Hospital and you got people to help with the recordings.**

CW: Yes we did one May when Laura Sillars was there and Ange Williams and spent a week at Alder Hey and part of it was to get people to contribute rather than me as an artist say this is it and present them with the work and I wanted people to contribute to it as that was part of the work, part of the process, a sense of engagement. So we had patients and staff from the hospital got into the park alongside the hospital about three o'clock in a May morning and we recorded all aspects of the daw chorus and I led some sound walks and took people out recording at sunrise and sunset and then I worked with those sounds when I made the piece.

**JK: I found intriguing that with the hospital right next to Springfield Park and bringing the sounds into the interior space when the park is right there with the hospital building stopping the experience of the park.**

CW: It like looking at a silent film when you are looking out of the window and you can see it but not hear it. This was actually an extension of another piece I did called for FACT with Alan Dunn called Winters Tale where I worked with some residents who lived in tower blocks in Sefton Park and did a piece there which was played back inside there living rooms and that was the sounds of the park. Again we got people out into the park at midnight recording the sounds at night and used some of the recordings the piece.

**JK: Who do you believe to your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

CW: The one that sticks out for me, one of the old ones and originals is Pierre Schaefer and really everything has grown out of his work as far as I am concerned and when I discovered his work as a teenager in the early 1970's it just blew me away and at the time I was in a band and was always interested working with location sound in our music and interested in Musique Concrete and then read about him n and heard his work and found it really inspiring and still do. In fact an album I made last year for Touch El Tren Fantasma, (The Ghost Train), was a homage to Pierre Schaeffer's work so he is the single most important influence in regards to my work and there are many other people iv met but his body of work especially his Etude aux Chemins de Fer piece recorded in Paris in 1948, just amazing for the time.

**JK: Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring environmental sounds from the natural space to an interior immersive space?**

CW: I regard it as music for a start so what I want to do is engaged and immerse, inform and entertain people with the work and that is basically it. I want to aim and try to do is communicate what I record on location but what I feel and I am really interested in this idea of sense and spirit of the place and am convinced it is



possible to capture and transfer that and reinstate it, especially in installation pieces and in CDs, like my sound tracks. There are a lot of intangibles connected to it and the sense and spirit of place varies with the content and am convinced it is possible to record it so quite often I am searching for that sense of engagement so first of all the place has to speak to me first before I expect to be able to communicate that to everyone else so what I am trying to do is immerse people in those environments, a sense of engagement and that is what I am trying to do.

**JK: So how do you formulate the term immersion in your work and in your own thinking?**

CW: It can be a deep sense of engagement with a place, which is my interpretation sound through immersion and when you can listen to something like any piece of music with headphones at night or performance in an installation then you can get an empathy with that place and your body starts to migrate towards certain sounds or you move away from others or be attracted by something that holds your attention then listen to them and savour them, sound or music almost like a decent glass of wine, not saying you can taste the sound but can feel sound and this is key, that is my impression of it. When I go to places and can feel that with certain works then I find that very satisfying and something I like to work towards.

**JK: Can you give any examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

CW: I particularly interested in a large piece of work called the Morning Line, it is a sculpture which has embodied in it a significant sound system so all of that I really like and enjoy, a perfect piece of work and it tours as well so it really work and I have seen people reactions to it in Spain and Turkey, a really powerful piece. The artists that I have worked alongside who has contributed pieces to that have found it successful and in is mainly an exterior work but works inside as well which they are working towards that so all the people connected to that project I have been really impressed by. Mark fell made a great piece when it was in Seville that I was really impressed by using electronic sounds rather than location sounds like I do but again the piece can work for many different sound works or soundscapes so that's currently one of my favourites. On key aspect that is key in this piece is that it is properly designed and iv learnt through experience it is absolutely the most important thing if you want to immerse and engage people in these sorts of sounds and music is the presentation of it and Professor Tony Myett who has done the work has done a fantastic job and sound s fantastic and that is also because he uses this system called Ambisonics, which is something I really like to do now with my work so I have been recording with sound field microphones. When you can defuse sounds into an Ambisonics system it is the best way of working inside or out in my opinion.

**JK: What are the creative advantages and disadvantages of using sound within a gallery spaces and what technical issues have you come across?**

CW: Lets go back to Kew gardens, which was an exception which was a huge scale engineering project, now most places the worst technical issue is the acoustics of the environment because most interior spaces are really bad, most gallery spaces the acoustics are really bad and so the work in order to succeed has to over come these poor acoustics. In fact the Palm House at Kew Garden wasn't that bad, although it was a greenhouse it was full of plant material that changed the acoustics significantly and interestingly it sounded like a rainforest to me even when there was no speakers in there or no people. I did some recordings at midnight when the place

was empty apart of tens of thousand of cockroaches but no sound or people but sound in the darkness like a tropical rainforest, it had that almost cathedral acoustics. And that because of the flora and trees in there whereas in gallery spaces they are designed in that 20<sup>th</sup> century idea of looking at things and not listening to things and the changes are yet to come and most of them have really ghastly acoustics.

**JK: So are you quite careful of the interior location you are going to present your work?**

CW: I try to be yes because if it doesn't work and the acoustics overcome the work then you have wasted your time and there is no point of doing something in some spaces as they are so bad, however sometime s I get offered to put work into places where it is difficult to decline the opportunity and last year I got commissioned to do sound works in the Louvre in Paris, which isn't a particular good location for acoustics but it an opportunity hard to turn down and we worked really hard to make the acoustics work. Some places you really have to say sorry, especially when you are commission to do a work but you have to tell them this is not going to work in this space or you need very specialised bits of gear to make it work so hopefully things will get better and galleries will get more attuned to working with sound.

**JK: Do you like your work to exist on-line or prefer or cd or installations?**

CW: I prefer people to experience the space and then I can use multi channel Ambisonic sound, I work very different for CDs and because I work in many different mediums, film, radio, television, cd and installations I think about the end product before I make a piece of work and some multi channel work is no good putting it on-line or on cd and quite often decline to do that or if I am asked to make a piece of work for a cd then its stereo an make a piece that works with that format and medium. You cant just squeeze things into different mediums if you asked to so I think you need to be careful to what the outcome is and produce the work accordingly. If i had the choice I would work with multi-channel installation in a decent acoustic spaces.

**JK: Is it possible that a sound art works within an interior space can alter an individual's mind-set?**

CW: Yes of course and that is partly part of the point of it and the work has to be in that place and embodied in that environment to change a mind-set and it goes back to presentation.

**JK: I am interested in sound walks and the various different techniques to immerse participants on them. What are you experiences of this?**

CW: I've done a few this year as part of a commission I had in Newcastle called *going with the flow* where I made a piece for the Sage Concert hall in Gateshead where I recorded the sounds of the rivers time, both sources from the pennines and the boarders right down through the Tyne valley to the North Sea so I made that journey in sound and represented in a piece. Part of the commission was to take people out on sound walks in different environments and it worked really well. We didn't do any recording; we just listened and was really satisfying.

**JK: I find with sound walks the participant's engagement is vital to the experience.**

CW: There is not point in doing the sound walk if you don't want to listen or talk all the way through it and sound walks are unique, that is what I really like about them, almost like a performance. I did one this year high up in the Pennines on the Heather Moorlands where I wanted to record the dawn chorus as part of the piece so I planted some microphones the night before and it was booked up, fifteen people came out at 2.30 am and they drove an hour out into the Moors and met them there and took them across this heather moorland with temperature of -2 and it was time of the super moon and so from 3am till 6am when the sun came up and to experience the sounds, the things you couldn't see all around you like the birds, flat high heather moorland, it was an amazing experience. The contrast to that was that at the end of the piece in the august at the end of my production period I took the people on a walk along urban Newcastle along the river, like taking a group along the Mersey, to the industrial part and did a similar thing there and it was great and totally opposite end of the spectrum but again people really enjoyed it and I got good feedback from it so there increasing popular activities.

**JK: Any further thoughts on the term Immersion in sound art - particularly within interior spaces?**

CW: Providing I can get it, I cant make something immersive that doesn't affect me, its quite personal thing so I have to get a feeling or something that speaks to me of the spirit of place before I can try and make a piece of work.

**JK: I like that point about the place being personal to you before you can make the work and immerse the audience.**

**I have listened to Weather Report quite a lot, wife and myself we both felt like the piece was conducting u, changing our heartbeats, taking us through the story.**

CW: That is interesting and that is one of the reason I was inspired to do Weather Report was the was the rate of change at the equator, the first track is like a soap opera, death, sex and dramatic events, cannibalism and as you go towards Iceland the rate of change decreases rapidly so I was really interested in that sense of time and how the sounds change through time. Some places such as the equator thing happen very quickly over twelve hours and 66 degrees north at Iceland on the edge of the artic circle things happen over thousand of years not twelve hours on the equator, on the Lapaich, the Scottish track is between over months rather than years so that really inspired me about doing that piece.

**JK: Is there any location, place or environment you would like to record?**

CW: I have just got an invitation to go the far north end of Scandinavia next spring north of the artic circle and looking forward to doing work up there especially Scandinavia, so yes that is one place I am looking forward to recordings sounds.

## Christine Sun Kim

Christine Sun Kim is a contemporary artist investigating her own personal sound world and spoken language through the use of bespoke hand-made technology. Born deaf Sun Kim challenges the perceptions of the aural world and what noise actually means.

Sun Kim, Christine. Interview Via Email Correspondence, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your work to be immersive? Or have you used sound to immerse the audience within interior environments**

Christine Sun Kim: Often times, I do not employ sound as immersive, but the more tech-savvy I become, the more immersive it is. For example, I recently did a thesis performance with piano wires and transducers:  
<http://christinesunkim.com/performance/face-time-signature/>

At the beginning of my process as a sound artist (I go back to 2008 or so) and it felt I was functioning as a blind photographer. I wasn't entirely satisfied with the process, so over the time, the approach gradually evolves in terms of philosophy and conception. For that thesis performance, I tried to immerse the audience with my own live-recorded voice (I have come to realize that my voice box as my only "instrument" that I have full control; it comes from my body, so I would know exactly what they would hear) and nothing would be saved on computer – to keep the sound aspect of my work ephemeral. Hopefully you'll find that short description on the website helpful.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

CSK: John Cage, Alvin Lucier and many others, however, I think most of my sound ideas rooted out of my everyday experiences, my awareness of surroundings, and my struggle as a deaf person and artist, so I think my process is mostly (or perhaps purely) empirical rather than reading and seeing who has influenced me. I think I no longer connect with sound artists like I did when I first started venturing out as a sound artist... because I'm starting to find their experience irrelevant and I have a very specific relationship with sound and verbal languages that I have to create and explore from scratch.

## Daniela Cascella

Daniela Cascella is a contemporary writer, whose work challenges practices of sound, provokes thought on both historical and contemporary literature and works extensively with Salomè Voegelin exploring notions of listening. Cascella is Early Career Research Fellow in the School of Arts at Oxford Brookes University and MA Course Leader in Writing at the Bergen Academy of Art and Design and holds a MFA in Art Writing from Goldsmiths, University of London.

Cascella, Daniela. Interview Via Email Correspondence 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered sonic works to be immersive?**

Daniela Cascella: 'Immersive' is a wide-reaching adjective that can cover so many aspects of an aesthetic experience. It might be relevant to consider the context in which it is used, especially today. I find immersive practices quite a challenge in perception, given how frequently and relentlessly our daily lives are in fact interrupted by messages, texts, alerts, and a range of stimuli that do anything to prevent us to experience unity and wholeness. All in all I'd say I'm interested in the element of duration at play in immersive practices. Moreover I have always been interested in modalities of impurity, so even in a work presented as immersive, there is always a part of me that would think of what's left, of what's not there, of what's behind the (actual and symbolic) walls, and so on. In this sense I'd consider the sound walk as one of my favourite immersive practices, because it can at once allow you to embody the immersion whilst also let interferences contribute to the experience.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

DC: I am always a bit wary of the word 'influence' as it suddenly prompts thoughts of linear trajectories and 'A-to-B' lineages, which is not how I work, or think of my work. Also, as a writer, I'm not sure how to answer this question (shall I mention the 'immersive writing' of Thomas Bernhard, perhaps?) However, any of the examples that I mention below are of relevance.

JK: **Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring sounds from the natural environment to an interior immersive space?**

DC: I cannot reply as an artist, not being one, but in terms of the experience of the listener in relation to sounds transferred from the environment to an interior space, I would consider this space as one that opens a possibility for listening as a creative, critical and cultural experience. Between listening and the other senses, between the experience of a soundscape and its representation, between nature and artifice. I'm interested in *how* a soundscape takes shape in the singular perceptual experiences of each listener when it is transported and translated in an interior space. I'm also interested in how the space of the listener – between the sounds recorded, and the 'playing back' of our everyday listening places – takes form. The condition of being removed from the original sound source opens up the imaginative site of individual engagement. Recorded sounds don't have much to do with being transported elsewhere: they prompt us to regain and enhance our sense of being *here*, wherever it might be, after playing back unfamiliar sounds that act as bearers

of a different perceptual dimension disclosed through listening. Ultimately we need to consider the re-presentation of the aural, and of what the act of representation does to the aural; of how each reference slips away from given systems of authority to be inscribed again and again into the now of each singular listening moment. In his book *Varieties of Audio Mimesis*, Allen S. Weiss wrote: 'What appears as real is always a palimpsest of effect and forms, of causes and effects, a dense web of significations well beyond conscious expectations and predictions. Sound recording simultaneously re-produces and re-presents. ... So-called recordings are always representations, interpretations, partial narratives that must nevertheless serve as our only access to the sounds of the past.'

**JK: Between the initial recording of sounds and the production process there are many key elements that are vital to the sound work becoming a successful sound installation in an immersive environment – what elements would you consider to be vital?**

DC: To consider everything that occurs (not only acoustically but also visually, structurally, socially and practically) in the exhibition space *apart from* the sound piece as such, and how it affects / interacts with / impacts on the sound piece.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

DC: I will never forget the Austrian Pavillion at the Venice Biennale in 2001. Granular Synthesis took over one big room in the pavillion and built a sensorial experience of sound and colour that was at once physical and emotional, constantly on the edge of perception. The installation was entitled *Reset* and it was possibly one of the most engrossing experiences I've ever had of an immersive work in a sound/light context.

I then have two examples that I've always experienced as immersive works, even though they are not made to be installed but, plain and simple, are recordings: Eliane Radigue's *Trilogie de la Mort* and Morton Feldman's *Piano and String Quartet*. One could argue the immersion here is not intended for a specific environment but for the singular perception of each listener, who experiences dilatation of time and perceptual loss of any edge.

Finally, I cannot but mention an amazing concert by Sunn O))) in an old church at the Donau Festival in Krems in 2007. A waterfall of drones and tonal modulations of guitar sounds made the concert transcend the limits of performance and turned it into a profound immersive artwork.

**JK: What are the creative advantages and disadvantages of using sound within a gallery space?**

DC: A different type of focus and a different type of experience. I worked in Italy as a curator for a few years, and when I commissioned site-specific sound installations from a variety of artists I tended to work in off-site locations, somehow reversing the immersion process from the recorded sounds into the landscape. The issue is always, how do we listen? I'm thinking here of the sheer physical conditions of listening in a space which is not usually set up for sound. In the past I've been sceptical of exhibitions in museums staging 'listening posts', that I always find very awkward to begin with. The most interesting experiments, I think, reside in artists engaging directly with the space and producing work that is not presented by a pair of speakers as such but engages in different ways with the elements of the gallery. This does not necessarily imply grand gestures: works by Rolf Julius or Maryanne Amacher engage with the space in a very subtle manner and yet retain a strong

element of site-specificity.

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world, with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

DC: Apart from the works and installations that I've mentioned above, all of which remain crucial in my understanding of immersive work, I would say *La selva* by Francisco Lopez and *Automatic Writing* by Robert Ashley, for the sounds of the interior spaces of the mind and for their capacity to let the listener perform the immersion, rather than being enabled by a specific place.

**JK: Finally, I am particularly interested a part in chapter 6 from *En Abîme: Listening, Reading, Writing*, where you say; 'I think of writing sound as the trace of the experience that makes it. It conveys the sense of shaping, step by step along the journey of the listening and the writing I, words into places at once familiar and strange' (Cascella, 2012 p 74) – I have considered Immersion to be tracing of memory, from memory induced by an experience within an interior space. Do you have any final words on immersion from your writing?**

DC: I can quote from a text that I will present in May 2013 at Bergen Kunsthalle as part of the *Re:Place* seminar organised by the Bergen Academy of Art and Design in collaboration with the Grieg Music Academy (possibly this will end up in my next book, too):

*"Recordings open up to complexity. They do not create a fixed aural presence, but a mutable entity that allows the listeners to slide into the space of their own fictions and favour the emergence of an eventful auditory narrative. Not the certainty of a pre-set agenda but the excitement of constant discovery. I'm interested in the shift from real to fiction and the sliding back from fiction to real that occurs every time we are confronted with recorded sounds. To evoke rather than document, to prompt the listener not to classify rigorously, but to interpolate imaginatively. Sounds are not vehicles of escapism and do not encourage a longing for easily imagined paradises. They trigger complex creative and emotional responses in the listeners. They point at a dark location, which is not far away, but in the everyday; they question and enrich the act of listening, as it is reflected and reported into one's surroundings. They invite to pay attention to the sense of wonder disclosed by attentive listening, and call for a closer scrutiny of what is unfamiliar although near. They present places driven by non-human rhythms; their mysterious nature resonates and although it does not belong to us, we are drawn to it. This alien dimension in moments of transition, from a habitual listening mode into a more peculiar one. Aural re-presentations take shape across a combined sense of not belonging to those sounds, yet getting closer to them and to their texture across the experience of listening: a heightened sense of place and time."*

## David Hendy

David Hendy is Professor of Media and Communications, School of Media, Film and Music, University of Sussex. Hendy's first book was *Radio in the Global Age* (2000). His second, *Life on Air: a History of Radio Four* (2007) won the Longmans-History Today Book of the Year Award in 2008. In 2013, he published *Public Service Broadcasting (and Noise: a Human History of Sound and Listening)*.

Hendy, David. Interview Via Email Correspondence 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered the sound works you research to be immersive?**

David Hendy: Yes. I don't necessarily think of myself as researching 'sound works': not being a sound artist, or someone studying 'sound art', I don't really think of the objects of my study as 'sound works'. One of the things I study is radio programmes – and I suppose it would be appropriate to think of them as 'sound works', since they are constructed out of layers of sound. But I don't really think of radio as a medium of sound, more as a medium concerned with time. Radio is sound in the same way that cars are metal – it's the material of construction; but radio works most clearly in and through time. And it is in this sense, as much as in the sonic sense, that I think of radio programmes as being 'immersive': they are woven into our sense of time, we measure time through them and they become part of our background life. Partly, of course, this IS a sonic phenomenon. We immerse ourselves in radio because the sound of radio drifts in and through and around us – it is pervasively 'there', and we think of it not so much as coming from a point in space as being 'in the kitchen' with us, etc. But mostly, immersion via radio is also through time: it accompanies us through the day, the week, the year, our life. The other object of my study is the 'soundscape' – and by this I mean the sounds through which we move in our daily lives. Some of the ingredients of a soundscape are human-made, others natural, but few of those I study have been created as works of art in-and-of themselves, even if some of them (e.g. the interior acoustic of a cathedral) have sublime, unsettling, or at least interesting aesthetic qualities. In any case, I think of these soundscapes – whether natural and chaotic, or at least partly shaped by humans – to be very much immersive: in the physical sense of surrounding us, but also in the broader intellectual and emotional sense of being woven into the fabric of existence to the point where we don't quite notice them as separate entities, just part of 'existence', part of 'being in the world'.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art, world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces that have influenced your research or ideology about the aural?**

DH: I can't claim to have any influences here from the world of sound art. My influences in my study of sound have been (a) radio programme producers (here, Matt Thompson is my main influence, and also probably Piers Plowright, now retired), (b) writers about sound (here, historians chiefly, such as Mark M. Smith, Emily Thompson). I have a perverse attitude I think. I find that the most interesting ideas about sound often come from those who mention it spontaneously, i.e. without over-intellectualising it. Thus, I have a different approach to, say, Hillel Schwarz. He studies what thinkers have thought about sound in the past. I am interested in how 'ordinary' people have experienced sound, without thinking about it too much and



thus abstracting it from the rest of their lives.

**JK: What you think are the key differences from listening to sounds in their original space (natural soundscapes) or sounds that have been transferred to an interior immersive space?**

DH: Though I think it is interesting, aesthetically, to take one sound and take it elsewhere, I think of soundscapes as being tied intimately to their 'place of origin'. They have a vernacular quality. When we recorded the on-location sequences for 'Noise: a Human History', it rapidly became very clear that we couldn't 'fake' the recordings, even if we'd wanted to (which we didn't). I couldn't possibly have stood in a field in South Carolina and pretend that I was in, say, Massachusetts: even a quiet background has some sort of acoustic signature. But something else was going on, too – see answer to next question below.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within an immersive environment?**

DH: I'm not sure if this is about 'sound art'. But it is about sound as an aesthetic experience – and the role of immersion in that. When recording Noise a Human History, my daughter asked me why I needed to bother travelling 3000 miles or so from the UK to record at a pond (she was referring to us recording at Walden Pond near Concord, Mass.). I wasn't sure of the answer – until I went there, and heard a scene out of Thoreau's Walden Pond unfold before my ears: the dripping of rainwater through pine-needles, the crunch of twigs under foot, the distant sound of a train passing through the woods, the cracking of ice forming on the water. Hearing this in situ allowed me to have a connection with Thoreau – an understanding of what he experienced: not just the sounds, but the sounds of THIS place, with this appearance, etc. Similarly, recording in a slave cabin in a plantation in South Carolina didn't sound very different to recording in a shed in my back garden acoustically. But emotionally, being there allowed me to 'feel' the history that had taken place there, to feel an anger that, I hope and believe, wasn't manufactured for the microphone. So sounds in their own location have a kind of sincerity to them – or rather, they can evoke a human response which is sincere and real.

**JK: Erik Satie's influence is deep rooted in a large proportion of contemporary sound studies – would you consider his *Furniture Music* the prelude for today's technological listening bubble?**

DH: No. I'd say the history of technological listening bubbles is a lot older. For Noise: a Human History, we went, for instance, to Maeshowe, a Neolithic chambered cairn in Orkney – a human-made building, which had its own distinctive acoustic quality. We don't know whether it was built primarily in order to have this acoustic quality – the quality was probably aside-product. But it was real enough on these terms. And when we come to the theatres of ancient Greece – e.g. at Epidaurus – or the great medieval churches, with their apses, curved domes, pulpits and sounding-boards – we are undoubtedly dealing with technological listening bubbles. Satie's Furniture Music is part of the story. But only part of it.

**JK: Do you think that an individual's mind-set or perception is key to a sound piece in an interior or exterior space?**

DH: Yes. I would go as far as to say that certain aspects of sound that have habitually been regarded as objectively measurable – e.g. loudness, 'noise',

'musicality' – are largely a matter of perception. Though I would also say that perception is culturally and historically determined – so that we respond as individuals partly as a result of certain cultural conditioning.

**JK: Your book and radio series entitled *Noise: a Human History of Sound & Listening* has contributed to the under-researched field of sound in terms of any chronometric timeline. One particular section that interested me was about our ancestors and their relationship to sound:**

*'Through Sound, then nature is our satnav, our clock, our calendar. And although we sometimes forget that today, when we have so much technology to help guide us, we would have been permanently tuned in to the natural soundscape for most of our past. As for our most distant ancestors, this soundscape would have been rich in significance everything in it grabbing their full attention.'*  
(Hendy 2013 p 23)

**I relate this being *tuned in* to being immersed and have you ever considered that our ancestors were immersed in the soundscape?**

DH: Yes, I would certainly say that I imagine – I guess – that our ancestors would have been immersed on the soundscape. This is partly because our pre-literate ancestors would have needed to have been attuned to the sounds around them: they would have had to notice danger etc. and in the conditions of the rainforest or ancient savannah, alertness to the sounds of other creatures and of other humans (or proto-humans) would have been essential. But this orientation extends right through to the present. Even today, we navigate our way through modern cities in part through sound: it is our ears that alert us to the dangers (e.g. speeding cars coming towards us) as much as our eyes – and, indeed, our sense of hearing responds faster than our sense of vision. So we haven't lost our skills in any profound cognitive way: we've just taken them more for granted.

**JK: Finally, could I ask about your research methods for *Noise: a Human History of Sound & Listening* and why you chose the method you did? Did this present any problems or make you consider other avenues of research?**

DH: I'm not sure I ever have a 'research method' as such. But my starting point was to avoid an 'intellectual' history of sound, which would draw on detailed thinking about the nature of acoustics over the past. I wanted to use sound as a different way to slice through social history – and for that history to be one that encompassed the experience and importance of sound for 'ordinary' people. I also wanted two other things: for it to be as global as possible in scope – so that it wasn't just a discussion rooted in the Anglosphere; and for it to be political – for it to reflect my own concerns with the profoundly unequal nature of society. In this sense, I saw the series and the book as really being about power – and sound or 'noise' as being a way of capturing inequalities and power-struggles through history. Methodologically, this involved me researching historical sources that were not first and foremost ABOUT sound, but which might spontaneously mention sound in the context of other things – e.g. accounts of slave life in the Americas in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, accounts of the French Revolution, etc. In order to create a 'global' story, I had to keep looking for parallels and differences and connections across cultures. In this respect I was heavily influenced by the curatorial ethos of my local museum, the Ashmolean in Oxford, which has a 'connecting cultures' approach. Doing it as a radio series also involved another methodological trope: looking for connections across time. This was a history series, but in radio – and especially for a radio series slotted in

between the World at One and The Archers on Radio 4 – you also need to hint at some sort of contemporary relevance. So it felt right, for example, to connect an episode about the sounds of the ancient Roman Games at the Colosseum with the sounds of the London 2012 Olympics, and the ideas about Cicero and rhetoric with the speech-making skills of Obama. This couldn't be overdone without it becoming too formulaic and predictable in itself. The series producer Matt Thompson, likes a sense of the unpredictable. He was delighted that the episode on Roman Games would also include a reading of George Orwell describing the shooting of an elephant in Burma.

One other aspect of the methodology worth mentioning. We decided at the outset that we would never use 'sound effects'. The sounds had to be 'real'. That meant either we went to a place ourselves to tell the story (we went to 56 locations altogether) and use the sound that was there, or we used sound archive recordings (from the British Library chiefly, but from other places too), or we used freelance recordings to get the right sound for us if we couldn't travel there ourselves. We're not sure how much of this would've been noticed by the listener. But, for instance, each episode had a slightly different theme music – a variation on the theme, but one which had as its core rhythm the words 'Noise: a Human History' tapped out on a talking drum which we recorded with a master drummer in Ghana. When I talk about the sound of a bell ringing out in Jamestown Virginia in an episode about colonies, even though I don't explain this fully, the bell we hear in the background is indeed the bell in Jamestown, not just 'any old bell'.

The overriding problem with a series telling the story of sound on the radio is that no sound of the past – at least before the start of recording in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century – any longer exists. We can travel to South Carolina and go the site of a slave rebellion in 1739, and tell the story, but we don't have the sounds of the rebellion itself. So we always arrive 'after the event', to be confronted with present-day soundscapes. Yet, with a bit of thought and patience, you can extract the elements of today's soundscapes that might evoke the past – by perhaps picking out certain signature sounds. In South Carolina, I told the story of slaves being hunted down by brutal white plantation owners with the sound in the distance of a pick-up truck starting up and dogs barking; in Belgium I told the story of the immense noise of battle in the First World War trenches against a largely silent backdrop, punctuating by the odd crow – a silence that, I hope, allowed imaginative space for the listener. There's no real sound recording of battle from WW1 – so any sound effect we would have mixed in would have been a fake; better to give space to the words describing it, and leave the listener to do the rest.

## Francisco Lopez

Francisco Lopez is widely considered an internationally acclaimed sound artist with an extensive backlog of work from around world. Challenging notions of natural and man made environments and in 2010 received the Quartz Electronic Music Award prize for the anthology 5-CD release Through the Looking-Glass (Paris, France).

Lopez, Francisco, Interview via Email correspondence, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your work to be immersive? or Have you used sound to immerse the audience within interior environments?**

Francisco Lopez: I do most of my environmental recordings with multiple microphones and for my live performances and sound installations I typically use multi-channel surround systems around the audience (from quad up to hundreds of speakers), with blindfolds provided for voluntary individual darkness. All those elements naturally create a dramatically reinforced immersive experience of listening.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

FL: I do not have any conscious influences when it comes to the generation and development of immersive experiences. A hypothetical list would go a long way into a very distant past, since immersion in music/sound is nothing new for human culture(s). A vast amount of traditional practices with sound (whether or not that is music would be another matter) deal prominently with immersion.

JK: **Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring environmental sounds from the natural space to an interior immersive space?**

FL: I specifically do NOT “transfer” environmental sounds. Any concept of transfer, reproduction, simulation, etc. has to do fundamentally -explicitly or implicitly- with a representational conception of sound recording. While this is historically and socially the predominant stereotypical conception of sound recording, the phenomenological approach -unknown but in fact intuitive to most people- is, in my view, a much more interesting and profound way to understand and work with sound recordings. In other words, environmental matter, revealed in the light of the expanded Schaefferian “sound object” concept, contains many more layers than the superficial representational one. My work somehow consists of exploring all those other layers.

JK: **Between the initial recording of natural sounds and the production process are there any key elements that are vital to the sound work becoming a successful sound installation in an immersive environment?**

FL: Indeed: the whole universe of studio work (even without “transforming” sounds, all the work for selecting, editing, “polishing”, time-structuring, etc.) and the entire endeavor of how to deal with virtual and real space according to our goals (which dramatically vary between artists).

JK: **Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

FL: So-called “sound art” tends to be predominantly non-immersive. Instead, it mainly focuses on symbolic, iconic, political, representational, info-mapping-based or object based approaches. Any popular music or DJ show is (naturally) more immersive than most sound art.

**JK: What are the creative advantages and disadvantages of using sound within gallery spaces?**

FL: The main advantage could be the hypothetical potential for a more decent financial reward (i.e., on par with visual/object-based gallery standards, which are gigantic compared to the meager survival of the typical “experimental musician”). The main disadvantage tends to be that we have to deal not only with a “gallery space” but rather with a “gallery mentality”: i.e., among others, infantile knowledge of the history of sound art /experimental music, absolute ignorance of the equivalent of their visual “abstraction” in sound, and no elementary understanding of the medium itself (absurd speakers or playback devices, sound “bleeding” in the same or adjacent spaces, etc.).

**JK: Is it possible that a sound art works within an interior space can alter an individual’s mind-set?**

FL: But of course! All human cultures have done that with their “music”.

## Hildegard Westerkamp

Hildegard Westerkamp is an artist, composer and ecologist. A prominent figure in the *World Soundscape Project* under the directorship of seminal composer R. Murray Schafer Westerkamp has also collaborated with prominent figures in acoustic ecology such as Barry Truax. Westerkamp has critically explored the practice of soundwalks over the past thirty years resulting in key sound works, critical papers and delivering key lectures around the world.

Westerkamp, Hildegard Interview Via Email Correspondence 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your work to be immersive?**

Hildegard Westerkamp: When I record and compose with environmental sounds I am deeply immersed in listening. It is precisely this experience of listening, which has attracted me right from the start to soundscape composition. My ears get drawn inside the soundscapes that I record and the experience is intensified by the use of headphone listening/monitoring while recording. In the studio the immersion into the sounds is intensified by the procedures of composing itself, discovering new sounds through editing, mixing and processing, discovering the piece itself. The fact that I am working with my own recordings of sounds and soundscapes and thus with the experiences of place and time while recording, contributes significantly, I believe, to this feeling of perceptual depth and immersion.

Whether my compositions can be considered immersive is another question. A composition in my opinion does not have any such absolute qualities. I can do my best through my own compositional process and through creating optimum listening conditions during playback, to help draw the audience's ears deeply inside the piece. But every listener brings his or her own listening attention and state of mind to the composition and may or may not have an immersive experience. A composition is simply a timepiece that allows us to explore our own listening, explore our own relationship to the composition and its messages.

JK: **Whom do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

HW: My influences originally come from Western classical music, having been exposed from childhood on to the music from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods. Only later when I studied music was I drawn to contemporary classical music, electroacoustic composition, jazz, as well as music from many parts of the world. R. Murray Schafer, John Cage and Pauline Oliveros all had great influence on my listening stance towards the environment and in particular on my philosophical, cultural and political thinking around sound, soundscape and music. The environment itself has given me many cues for my compositional process and in the 70s, when I started all this, many of us strove to break away from traditional indoor concert hall conventions, wanting to break through those walls and boundaries, and explore other ways of presenting music and sound. This included creating concerts for specific outside environments or if indoors, somehow altering the composition-listener relationship. Having electroacoustic concerts with the audience comfortably reclining on the floor was rather new and unusual then. Sound installations for specific interior spaces started to happen simultaneously around that time, but did not develop into its own genre until much later in the 80s and 90s. Once this way of

presenting soundscapes in installations was more established, colleagues who were well versed in the technology of speaker diffusion would help me to present some of my existing soundscape compositions in such a fashion. My first indoor installation happened in 1980 with my piece *Cordillera* at the Western Front in Vancouver as part of its first New Wilderness Festival.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of noise with immersive environments?**

HW: Noise itself tends to be an immersive environment through its pure sound power. Immersive in the sense of all-surrounding, penetrating through vibrations, often occupying the full frequency spectrum and being very loud, possibly overwhelming and damaging. This type of immersion is quite different from what I described above, in that the listener does not get drawn into the soundscape, but rather is confronted by it, cannot help engage in its dominant presence. Silence and quiet can also be an immersive listening experience, but there the ears are invited to reach out to the sounds that exist in quiet places, to search for them and to be curious.

I have been exposed to both and have usually had to leave those that are too loud, as they simply rattle me and I fear for the health of my (and other people's) ears, body and mental sanity. In particular I observe how very loud and long lasting exposure to low frequencies affect our nervous system. Many audience members seem to handle it quite differently than I do, as they do not leave the space. They are either numbed to the incredible impact of such sound power or they feel they need to prove that they can handle it. Some also feel pleasure in and are literally touched by this extreme rattling of their senses, indeed their whole being. This kind of high-noise exposure or immersion, if you will, speaks to me only of irresponsibility towards ourselves and our audiences. It signifies a deep lack of education about the actual physical and psychological effects of such exposure and the long-term consequences on our perceptual sensitivities.

In contrast, immersive listening experiences created by quieter soundscapes, do not confront our ears and bodies in the same way. Even though their content may confront issues for the listener, ideally they create a listening environment that allows for exploration of the sound piece, space to think and reflect and indeed allows for exploration of listener's perception itself.

**JK: Could you describe the artistic intention and processes of transferring recorded sounds from the natural environments to an immersive space?**

HW: When I was part of the World Soundscape Project in the 70s, we often listened together to environmental recordings that we had made. I was struck by the powerful impact that this kind of listening had on us, listening to recordings of environmental sounds in the studio context. Precisely because we listened to the sounds apart from their original context in the environment, i.e. *schizophonically*, we listened much more attentively. In addition we could play the sounds back at will and listen repeatedly, studying the recorded sounds in great detail. This is what fascinated me.

As a result I broadcast my programme *Soundwalking* on Vancouver Co-operative Radio with the intention of making people aware of the soundscapes they hear every day, but to which they may not pay much attention. As a sound activist at the time, I wanted people to become aware of ecological issues in our soundscapes and did everything to get people to listen more attentively to the environment. But this

did not just involve natural environments. Both for my radio pieces as well as for my compositions I recorded any kind of soundscapes, human, mechanical, urban, noisy, quiet, busy soundscapes, mostly to create awareness of a soundscape's quality. The point was (and still is, by the way) to immerse listeners and audiences in their own listening, in order to alert them to the conditions of the soundscapes in which they live.

**JK: Your work entitled *Transformations* with Norbert Ruebsaat particularly interested me with transition between spaces and the shifting listening experience crucial aspect of the work. How do you approach you work when considering interaction with the listener/audience/participant? Secondly how do you decide your methods when producing such works like *Transformations*?**

HW: In *A Walk through the City* the poem was the guiding vehicle for transitions between spaces and shifting listening experiences. The sounds I used for that piece were the sounds that the people living in the downtown eastside in Vancouver would be surrounded by on a daily basis, the poor, drunk, addicted and downtrodden at the time, whose voices you hear in the piece. Some of these sounds I processed (ex: a truck brake), mostly slowed them down or sped them up to create different pitches and harmonies, that would then become the melancholically, musical atmosphere or undertone of the piece.

I used similar techniques with the cricket sound in *Cricket Voice* and the percussive sounds from cacti and dried up plant leaves in the desert to create the musical context along side the recognizable environmental sounds. The underlying experience behind the compositional process was that of the very quiet desert where I could only record most sounds by making them myself, (except the cricket and our own sounds) i.e. touch the cacti and other plants, make them into percussion instruments. It was literally so quiet that the soundscape had nothing much to offer to my microphone. So, I had to search and become inventive, become an active soundmaker. This experience drove the structure of the piece and its musical exploration. The same searching for sounds transferred itself into the studio when I searched for the deeper music in the cricket sounds and all other sounds I had recorded there. The musical richness in them comes precisely from the fact that they occurred in a pristinely clear soundscape, quiet like a recording studio, but vibrant because of its living environmental context.

If you want to find out more about my compositional context there are a number of articles on my website, specifically, <http://www.sfu.ca/~westerka/writings%20page/articles%20pages/linking.html> but also others. The programme notes for the *Transformations* CD are quite extensive if you have the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. I am not sure whether they can be found on the website, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. In them I describe some of the processes in more detail.



## Markus Soukup

Markus Soukup could be considered an integral part of the Liverpool art scene with a large volume of output that includes web-design, curating visual arts, installations and sound performance and winner of the 2011 Liverpool Arts Prize with Soukup's works crossing disciplines and boundaries.

Soukup, Markus, Interview via Email Correspondence 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered the sound works you research to be immersive?**

Markus Soukup: It is an interesting aspect to consider the work as immersive, I did not consider my sound work as immersive as it was mainly the audio tracks for video work. But in a way it is immersive as soon as you install it as an audio visual installation.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art, world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces that have influenced your research or ideology about the aural?**

MS: I think in terms of sound it is not so easy to define this in an exact way, as the influences range from electronica, experimental and electro-acoustic music to film and video artists, who also work with sound.

As an example I would consider the soundtracks of Bruce Naumann's video installations as immersive. Apart from his video installations I have seen a sound only installation at the Tate Modern once, which was subtle, but had an immersive character.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-bruce-nauman-raw-materials>

From a music perspective I would include bands like 'Sonic Youth' and 'Einstürzende Neubauten', who had a big influence on contemporary artists working in the field of sound.

JK: **What you think are the key differences from listening to sounds in their original space (natural soundscapes) or ones that have been transferred to an interior immersive space?**

MS: Obviously as soon as you record the sounds they are a simulation of a real occurring sound situation. A real sound is a mixture of sounds coming from different sources and directions. A recorded sound tries to represent them, but lets say it is stereo sound, it has recorded all the different sources into a stereo channel (L / R - audio file) and it is played back via 2 audio speakers. When you record a natural soundscape, you will always only be able to record the 'mix' of the natural sounds around you.

To be able to technically transfer sound material into an interior space via stereo or surround sound systems is a fascinating technique.

I think the key difference is that an original sound is a result of a physical situation creating frequencies, where a recording seems to create the same or very similar

effect for the listeners ears by using the sound system or headphones, but it does it without the 'original source' creating the sound.

Since a while I consciously enjoy the listening experience of the everyday sounds around me – a very immersive experience itself.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within an immersive environment?**

MS: The 'Siren' sound installation by Ray Lee during Future Sonic 2007 at Victoria Baths in Manchester. We were working with Soundnetwork in the same space. So I had time to listen and to experience the amazing piece a few times.

Example: <http://www.invisible-forces.com/frame-siren.htm>

Simon Whetham played a life set during his project 'Cross Over' at Wolstenholme Creative Space in Liverpool 2011. It was a collage of field recordings, which were arranged in a very distinctive way.

I remember well the experience of Peter Cusack's installation, which included under water sounds of the Thames Estuary in the exhibition 'STILL – conflict, conservation and contemplation'. In 2011 we both were invited to undertake a production residency at Metal Culture in Southend to develop new work for that exhibition.

You find a video interview with Peter Cusack here:

[http://www.metalculture.com/archive/still-conflict-conservation-and-](http://www.metalculture.com/archive/still-conflict-conservation-and-contemplation.html)

[contemplation.html](http://www.metalculture.com/archive/still-conflict-conservation-and-contemplation.html) website of P. Cusack: <http://www.petercusack.org/>

**JK: Erik Satie's influence is deep rooted in a large proportion of contemporary sound studies – Your work reminds me of the approach that Satie took, particularly in reference to Furniture Music and transportation and displacement within a space. Have you ever considered this comparison within your practice?**

MS: No, I was not aware that you would relate Satie's work to my practice. But transportation and displacement are subjects I am interested in since a long time. I did a performance track once, which I made out of recordings from a chest of draws. If you are interested I will try to find it.

**JK: Do you think that an individual's mind-set or perception is key to a sound piece in an interior or exterior space?**

MS: I think the individual mind set is always very relevant for the experience. In what situation was the individual before the listening experience? What are the individual concerns at the moment? I think all those personal aspects have an impact how a piece is perceived or resonates I would say.

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world, with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

MS: Historically I think that sound art will in some respect significantly refer to John Cage's work I would say. In relation to the context of Fluxus I would also mention Nam June Paik who worked with Karl Heinz Stockhausen and the WDR studio for electronic music. In addition I would include Laurie Anderson and Joseph Beuys.

Some books (you might already know anyway):

Listening to Noise and Silence: Toward a Philosophy of Sound Art (by Salome Voegelin), Sound by Artists (by Dan Lander and Micah Lexier), Sound (Documents of contemporary art by Kaleb Kelly)

The Online reference <http://www.ubu.com/sound/> is very comprehensive.

**JK: Your work entitled *To or at a Distance* (2009) particularly interested me with transition between spaces and the experience of this transition being a crucial aspect of the work. How do you approach your work when considering interaction with the viewer/audience/participant? Secondly how do you decide your methods when producing such works like *To or at a Distance* (2009)?**

MS: To the first part of your question:

The main point for this work was to think about the phenomenon of travel and to produce a piece based on very subjective experiences, where the transitions between different and sometimes very far away spaces were important aspects. I think one of the reasons to work on 'To or at a Distance' was my ongoing fascination about this not fully explainable dimension you enter while being in transit.

I try to make work accessible from different directions, so that the audience can enter it without knowing or reading about the work before. I like to produce something, which works on various levels and where different people can relate to (in their own ways).

To answer the second part of your question:

The methods I used were dependent on the video material I had gathered. I decided to work with the split screen option. I used that in a critical sense to find out, in which way that set-up can enable the creation of different rhythms visually, but also in relation to sound. It started to become interesting as it made possible to see different moments within a clip at the same time again. The echoic sound-scape was a result of arranging the video in this particular way.

## Matthew Herbert

Matthew Herbert is an artist and writer working with some of today's most influential musical icons including Björk and Serge Gainsbourg. His most celebrated works *One Pig* (2011) and *Bodily functions* (2001) are works that explore themes of routine everyday happenings in life.

Herbert, Matthew, Interview via Email Correspondence 13th November 2014.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your recordings to be immersive? For example I listened to TESCO (2012) walking around my local supermarket recently and I found my own intent listening and concentration to be immersive.**

Matthew Herbert: immersive is not the word I'd use. I'd prefer connected. It's listening music, i.e. music that listens. I point a microphone and then turn that in to music. Consequently it's an act of immersion in the story itself. In that sense I'd hope it's giving the listener either an experience they've never had before or a new version of something they've heard a 1000 times before. It's not a sound walk in the sense that I'd like people to be immersed in the experience of being alive rather than the disconnect of a solely musical experience.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

MH: hotel lobbies, airports, restaurants or anywhere music and sound is used to consciously control and guide us. As much as I would dearly love to study music, after a day of music I crave quiet.

JK: **Between the initial recording of sounds and the production process are there any elements you would you consider vital?**

MH: Intention, context and moral integrity.

JK: **What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world?**

MH: Silence John Cage. In search of a concrete music Pierre Shaeffer.

JK: **Finally, what I find really interesting about your work is the various methods and influences present in your recordings. One that has stood out and influenced my own research and practice is Gaston Bachelard: 'Far from the immensities of sea and land, merely through memory, we can recapture, by the means of meditation, the resonances of this contemplation of grandeur.' (Bachelard 1964 p 183) How would you describe such influences and methods in your work?**

MH: I'm a practitioner and have less and less time for theory, which saddens me. I still dabble in art history since I did an Open University course but there aren't many of us making music purely from single sources so I feel like I have to make a lot of it up as I go along. The influences are more things like shit pop music like Calvin Harris as it enrages me - the wasting of music's special power on a banal moment.

## Ross Dalziel

Ross Dalziel is a curator and artist who has collaborated with FACT, PRS for Music Foundation and National Liverpool Museums to deliver installations, workshops and socially engaged projects utilising current research and shared knowledge.

Dalziel, Ross, Interview via Email Correspondence 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your work to be immersive? or Have you used sound to immerse the audience within interior environments?**

Ross Dalziel: I don't really consider the main body of my work immersive. I'm assuming the term immersive is being used here with respect to reproducing an effect of 3 dimensional audio space. Whether it refers to multi channel work in media art or the diffusion systems of contemporary music I'm not sure but I imagine it basically refers to something more sophisticated than stereo and closer to 'real' auditory experience.

I don't really approach installations with a sense of simulating or modelling space in this way or necessarily require diffusion of sound though some of my early work did use this. I've always felt a resistance to the temptation to revel in the phenomenology of sound in an 'immersive' setup and the feeling that you can make a 'realistic' emotional space. There's the feeling you should make things really fly around and go all 'skywalker ranch' on the mix.

A fixed media work for a 10.1 channel system at FACT in 2006 just saturated the acoustic space with tiny fragments of the sound of a domestic iron clicking that was recorded in an acoustics lab; in a way an attempt to interfere with my perceived expectation of using multichannel work: avoiding cinema style "just like being there" affect and playing with the expectations of electronic 'diffusion' or acousmatic music's sound palette.

A later work used 10 channels to distribute the sound of musicians practising across a large Victorian greenhouse to evoke a musical topology of the city superimposed upon the greenhouse's own topography of biological taxonomy in the context of Liverpool's botanical collection now sadly discontinued at that site. This was in collaboration with Imogen Stidworthy, Tim Lambert and Daniel Barrett.

JK: **Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

RD: I suppose Mark Bain, Janet Cardiff, Alvin Lucier, Pierre Schaeffer & Edgar Varese, John Cage & La Monte Young, Pauline Oliveros, Chris Watson, Philip Jeck and the Owl Project. Its worth noting that many of these artists are more like musicians and composers and some like Chris Watson engineers of recording and reproduction albeit in an artistic frame.

JK: **Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring environmental sounds from the natural space to an interior immersive space?**

RD: I suppose I struggle with how the technical process of making 'immersive' work affects intention. The technical construction of reproducing sound phenomena

inevitably alters an artistic intention: possibly side tracking artistic intent toward creating a materialist audio/visual experience.

Primarily I have tried to use sound recording as a form of drawing and a way to develop a partly non-visual and non-text based language. My background is in fine art drawing and video; I tend to think of sound recording as an extension of this.

However I remain drawn to the idea that there is something about sound as a medium or material that is somewhere between representation and phenomena: it's intrinsically time based and contextual and somehow not wholly part of visual art and not quite music.

I think there is a misguided tendency in sound art to believe that sound is somehow a pure material outside of discourse and language and to reproduce it within a 'pure' immersive environment is an essentially transformative and profound act. There is also the notion that because the phenomena of sound and its emotional impact can so easily be reproduced in space through ever advancing speaker diffusion systems; (tho' even the most basic 2.1 surround speakers from Asda can make startling experiences of sound) natural sound can simply be transferred to an interior space and suspended there as a distinct art object.

Sound gives the opportunity however to place a trace of a temporal event in a new context and space and allow it new playful dialogue with this context; the intent to use a 'blank' interior immersive space however somehow seems to me, problematic; a context-less 'acousmatic' space without its own discourse beyond the staging of an artistic act.

I've followed a notion to use sound only within temporal space; to play with it in non-interior non-controlled spaces: in the street or at a site of artistic interest; a space that cannot be described in dolby surround sound diagrams or 5.1 style nomenclature. My last multi channel composition tried to draw attention to the virtual fabrication inherent in immersive sound works played on 'blank' acousmatic stages, making a time based graphic score that triggered the arbitrary playback of sound files from the legendary 16bit SNES psycho-geographic game Earthbound each channel representing a section of the games audio file structure.

I tried to challenge the notion of the 'transfer' of the natural to the virtual through using antiquated synthesised audio content: a materialist technical reading of the digital sampling process opens up the 'transfer' of natural environmental sound as a space full of unnatural process and change.

I'd cite some of Christopher Cox's writing, in particular his recent essay "Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism" for the Journal of Visual Culture as a great overview of a lack of developed critical discourse in sound based art that I think is essential to answering this question, though I'm inclined to be less optimistic than he is.

I don't see 'sonic arts' as being separate from the rest of art history and philosophy but clearly there is some potential in it making valuable trajectories in these areas.

I think there remains a genuine confusion not just in my own practice, as to what artistic logics are at work in these cases.

In many ways there is a safety net in that sound based art can easily just exist somehow as a new resistant artistic/cultural material. You can easily apply Deleuze

here to almost any recent sound art via his description of visual art 'It represents nothing, but it produces. It means nothing, but it works' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983[1972]: 109) and to quote Cox from that essay sound based art has the potential to "reconceive aesthetic production and reception via a materialist model of force, flow, and capture". Whether this really will happen remains to be seen but its something Im pursuing although now in a different material space, inspired lately by Julian Oliver's Critical Engineering Manifesto <http://criticalengineering.org/> and earlier by Simon Yuills essay "All Problems of Notation Will be Solved by the Masses" <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/all-problems-notation-will-be-solved-masses>

**JK: Between the initial recording of natural sounds and the production process are there any key elements that are vital to the sound work becoming a successful sound installation in an immersive environment?**

RD: I think there either needs to be clarity on intention or some sort of critical reason for the sound to be present and an awareness of the structure of sound production and post production

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

RD: I love Janet Cardiff's 40 part motet. There is nothing superfluous to that piece, it avoids many of the concerns I have somehow reframing the frame of the reproduction of Tallis' 'Spem in Alium'. This profound spiritual piece of music is materially reproduced and allows you to reflect on the acts of performance and the interpretations of text while reflecting on an historical reading of immersive art, composition and music technology

Was equally enthralled and disappointed by "The Fragmented Orchestra" which I curated for FACT in 2008: this attempted to use a mathematical model for neuron behaviour from the field of neuroscience to generate a multi channel sound work in many ways a post internet post structural counterpart to Tallis' choral work with an art gallery blank stage replacing the context of the church. It doesn't have any of the latter's emotional or phenomenological impact but it remains a brave and fascinating failure as an immersive work; it just seemed to lack the production of something; to paraphrase; 'it means nothing (but it doesn't really) work' and became a technical exercise; in many ways it just needed more neurons!

**JK: What are the creative advantages and disadvantages of using sound within a gallery space?**

RD: The gallery space allows a space of complete virtual possibility and yet able to trigger emotional response in the listener but then hits some of the problems Ive listed in question 3.

**JK: By staging sound works in a gallery space what technical issues might arise?**

RD: Gallery space partitions hardly ever use advanced acoustic treatment, which is almost always a financial issue. The specifications for gallery space are almost exclusively for visual art and have not caught up with even video art. These partitions always have to be built from scratch within a space that has only the most minimal acoustic treatment that affects the production in many ways

**JK: Is it possible that a sound art works within an interior space can alter an individual's mind-set?**

RD: Yes - Whether this is an altered emotional or intellectual state or actual mind-altering experience. Technically some understanding of how the human mind and body responds to frequency is a good idea; it is worth noting that different frequencies can cause all kinds of response bordering on distress like the ability to prevent people seeing clearly by resonating their eyeballs as once noted by artist Mark Bain.

It makes me wonder though that if changing mind sets is the main goal it may be an idea to extend the technical specification to include smoke, mirrors, strobing and mind altering substances especially if you worked on the FACT installation by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

<http://soundandmusic.org/projects/sound-context>

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world, with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

RD: 40 Part Motet Janet Cardiff and her soundwalks

In a Room Alvin Lucier

Ryochi Ikeda

The Fragmented Orchestra

David Toop writing and curating, Simon Reynolds article "We are All David Toop now", Christopher Cox

John Cage writings and music



## Sebastiane Hegarty

Sebastiane Hegarty is an Interdisciplinary artist and lecturer examining memory and perceptions predominantly using sound to project his work from. Recent work includes the BBC Radio 3 episode from Between the Ears entitled It's Just where I Put My Words: A Voice Remembered (2013) where he explores voice, recording and memory in a sound portrait of his mother, who died in 2011.

Hegarty, Sebastiane Interview Via Email Correspondence 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

James Kent: **Have you ever considered your sound works to be immersive? For example I listened to *Silence of Nostalgia: 2002* in a park in West Kirby recently and I found my own intent listening and concentration to be immersive.**

Sebastian Hegarty: My practice is concerned with an exploration of the relationships between place, time and sensation. In particular I am interested in how sensation may alter our perception of place and time, evoking memory and displacing the concrete. In this way the work inhabits a zone where the concrete may to some extent be replaced by the emergent and diffused. The work becomes immersive, in that the borders dividing the work from its audience are less tangible and fixed, allowing the audience to be subsumed into the piece. Such immersion operates on a number of levels and is perhaps made most apparent by referencing specific works.

In the installation *after forgetting* (2003), the suggestion of rooms is created using doors, windows and a series of stud walls. The bare wooden frames of these walls are filled with acoustic cladding. The walls never fully enclose space and there are no determined paths through the installation, neither is there a focal point or conclusion: there is nothing to see and nowhere to arrive. Modifying the size of a door or shifting the position of a handle down or up in relation to the body, alters the perception of the place beyond. The 'kinetic melody' (A. R. Luria) or motor memory of gesture unlocks remembered particularities of places specific to each member of the audience: 'the feel of the tiniest latch remains in our hands' (Bachelard).

The wall's acoustic cladding, subtly muffles sound, resulting in an audible lack in the expected acoustic result of an action: The sound of footfall does not correspond with what we expect to hear, creating what feels like a *delay* between an action and its sonic consequence. This displaces the audience in time, absorbing them into the temporal and spatial stasis of the installation. The intermittent audible hum of a refrigerator, adds not only a cyclical dimension to the piece, but also a method of *extending* the senses. Although the hum is barely audible, when it switches off, the ear rushes into the silence, searching for information. The threshold of audition seems to be lowered, the tiniest sonic detail becoming conspicuous: the listening attention of the viewer immersed in the *present* environment.

In the sound work *Duet for Radio*, a covert recording of a telephone conversation with my mother is edited, removing my own voice and replacing it with static silence of telephonic communication. The duration of this silence is reduced and/or extended, so at times my mother's seems to be speaking to herself, whilst at others, she disappears in to the absence of her own forgetting. The silence also begins to implicate the listener in the lack of reply. *Their* silence becomes part of the conversation, as they listen to themselves not speaking and hear *their* silence merge with the other silences present.

In both of these pieces the audience are to some extent immersed in there own

interior and sensory experience. Perhaps this relates to your experience of listening to the *Silence of Nostalgia*, when you say you found yourself to be immersed in your own *intent* listening.

Since 2003, the majority of my practice has been concerned with sound and in particular, field-recording. It is interesting that the process of field-recording, requires my own immersion in listening; a listening that absorbs me in the location at *the* moment of apprehension. I remember recording the piece *Resistance #4* in Cley Marshes, Norfolk. I attached two contact microphones to a wire fence, pressed record and released pause. The sudden hum of air passing over the wire enveloped me an emerging harmonic soundscape, inaudible to those around me. The sound at once *distanced* me from the situation, whilst absorbing me into it, rubbing out the visual boundaries of fence and skin and immersing me in the landscape I could hear appearing to disappear.

**JK: Who do you believe to be your major historical and contemporary influences from the sound art world, in particular artists who have specifically used sound in interior spaces?**

SH: I consider my work to be time-based and interdisciplinary in nature. The work is therefore informed by a broad spectrum of artistic practice, including film, installation and sculpture. However, the influence of literature, music, philosophy and neuroscience upon the development of my ideas and practice cannot be understated.

In terms of influences from what can broadly be called 'Sound Art' and in particular explorations of 'interior spaces', I would highlight the following: Alvin Lucier (obviously, *I am sitting in a room*, but also more physiological *interior* works such as *Clocker*); Janet Cardiff (particularly the soundwalks, including. *The Missing Voice: Case Study B*), Guy Sherwin, Tacita Dean, Janek Schaefer, Christian Marclay, Sophie Calle (*La Visite Guidee*), Philip Jeck, Yoko Ono (word scores); Stuart Marshall; George Brecht (event scores); Katie Patterson, Ceal Floyer, Haroon Mirza, John Cage, Steve Reich, R. Murray Schafer and the broader soundscape movement.

**JK: Could you describe the artistic intention and process of transferring sounds from the natural environment to an interior immersive space?**

SH: I think to some extent I have responded to this in my answer to your first question. As that answer suggests the intention of transferring sounds is primarily aimed at exploring the relationship between time, place and sensation. Most recently this has focused on acoustic ecology and the perceptual geographies of sound and audition. The site of exhibition has shifted from physically constructed environments to the *situation* of media such as radio. The medium of sound provides an escape from the fixed boundaries of the gallery and exhibition space, and allows for an individual 'interior' relationship with its audience. The *winnall moors sound walks*, are intended to be heard through headphones whilst walking. The sound levels permit the solitary listener to hear their present soundscape through the recorded veil of a previous soundscape, a sort of acoustic palimpsest. The intention is not to trick, confuse or *entertain* the listener, but rather to immerse the listener in their attention, through a quiet and slight displacement of the apparent. The theatrical and entertaining is avoided, as this seems to interrupt the closeness of the listening relationship.

In some of my works, (e.g. *Soliloquy #1 -#3*), the *interior* becomes a place which is simultaneously spatial and intimate, physical and psychological. The compositions, based on found answerphone messages, were composed as brief interruptions (time *signals*) for radio broadcast. They operate as a momentary acoustic glimpse into closed and abandoned rooms; whilst in the situation of radio the private interior

is relocated into the terrain of the public. The brevity of these works is intentional; they are triggers for reflection rather than environments, audible cracks, which may undermine the surface.

**JK: Between the initial recording of sounds and the production process are there any elements you would consider to be vital?**

SH: My current practice fundamentally relies on field-recording and a primary concern when using these collected sounds, is that I alter them as little as possible. An 'original' is kept untouched and post-production is kept to a minimum, primarily aimed at removing 'noise', that is: background traffic, handling noise. However, this *noise*, is simultaneously seen as an inherent part of the recording process, and is kept and employed in some works, helping to reveal the presence/absence of myself recording, adding temporal qualities that remind the listener, they are listening to a *recorded* event.

In addition to field-recording I continue to collect found sounds (answerphone tapes, audio letters, voice-o-graphs). The 'noise' of the record is seen as an inherent part of the recording process. In works such as *silence returned*, *mo(nu)ment* and the more recent, *Soliloquy for wax cylinder*, the injury and history of such noise becomes the *subject* of the practice.

The extensive use of field-recording produces a vast amount of material which a system of classification can aid access to. During my PhD, when I was recording primarily on mini-disc, I established a sound archive with a self-devised taxonomy. Such a classification process remains essential to the use of the sounds gathered, helping me to locate and *remember* sounds. However, with the move to digital recording and the lack of a stored object (e.g. mini-disc, CD) the system has become a mix of computer files/folders and paper-based documents. The addition of a visual (photographic) reference helps me to reference and remember what recorded files contain. I am interested in the inherent reference to the subject of memory that such archival systems introduce.

**JK: Can you give examples of your own experiences of sound art (positive and negative) within immersive environments?**

SH: From a negative point of view, I found the exhibition *Sonic Boom* (Hayward Gallery, 2000) disappointing but useful. The problem of exhibiting sound is: it leaks. The scale of the exhibition was ambitious, but I found that many of the works, seemed to clash, and there was a real desire to *grab* attention, using spectacle and visual loudness. The overall effect was not dissimilar to a carnival or fairground. I felt *entertained*, and therefore my experience remained superficial and removed, rather than immersive. However, within this loudness, Max Eastley's *unremarkable* sound sculptures were quiet and uneventful, allowing me to focus my attention and *listen*. I also enjoyed other isolated works, such as Christian Marclay's *Guitar Drag*, but overall, I think the exhibition was best seen on CD.

Strangely, it is exhibitions which are not exclusively sound based that I have found to provide the most immersive experiences of sound. In particular the performed optical sound films of Guy Sherwin, which, although extremely physical and aurally and visually abrasive, still allow the audience to be immersed in their own sensuous experience. Similarly the film works of Tacita Dean, in particular *Fernstruhm* (2001), *Disappearance at Sea* (1996) *Sound Mirrors* (1999), which immerse the viewer in a situation where the relationship between place and time have become languid and opaque.

Stephen Vitiello's *World Trade Centre Recordings*, offer a very interesting form of immersive experience, in that they offer a sense of *remembered* interior. I have only heard these sounds as recordings (normally through headphones), but they still

immerse me in a listening experience that is saturated with a profound interiority in their evocation of memory, monument and loss.

The recent show at the Barbican, *The Bride and the Bachelors: Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns*, was the first time I have experienced the music of John Cage and Marcel Duchamp in an Installation context. The *curated* spatialisation of this music conspires to activate and choreograph the exhibition and its audience. The attention of the senses became immersed in the moment, the exhibition operating in a continuous state of mutability.

**JK: What do you regard as the major historical and contemporary installations, recordings or publications in the sound art world, with particular reference to sound in interior spaces?**

SH: Publications

*Silence*: John Cage

*Eskimo*: Edmund Carpenter

*Audio Vision*: Michel Chion

*Ears Have Walls: On Hearing Art*: Steven Connor (Essay)

*Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing*: Steven Connor (Essay)

*Intersensoriality*: Steven Connor (Essay)

*Noise, Water, Meat*: Douglas Khan

*Wireless Imagination*: Douglas Khan & Gregory Whitehead

*Touching the Rock*: John M. Hull

*The Soundscape*: R. Murray Schafer

*Experimental Music*: Michael Nyman

*Musicophilia*: Oliver Sacks

*The World of Silence*: Max Picard

*Music as Gradual Process*: Steve Reich

*The Audible Past*: Jonathan Sterne

Recordings

*Disintegration Loops*: William Basinski

*Blue*: Derek Jarman/Simon Fisher Turner

*Discreet Music*: Brian Eno

*Hymnen*: Stockhausen

*Five Pianos*: Morton Feldman

*But What About The Noise*: John Cage

*I Am Sitting in a Room*: Alvin Lucier

*Recorded Delivery*: Janeck Schaefer

*World Trade Center Recordings*: Stephen Vitiello

Installations

*Playing the Building*. David Byrne. The Roundhouse: London

*The Bride and the Bachelors: Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns*, The Barbican. Curated by Philippe Parreno.

*The Missing Voice: (Case Study B)*: Janet Cardiff. *The Whitechapel Gallery*

*Longplayer*. Jem Finer

*The National Pavilion of Now and Then*: Haroon Mirza

Films

*Blue*. Derek Jarman

*The Silence*. Ingmar Bergman

*Nostalghia*. Andrei Tarkovsky

*L'Argent*. Robert Bresson

*Cycles*. Guy Sherwin (see Guy Sherwin: Optical Sound Films)

*Prelude*. Guy Sherwin

**JK: Finally, what I find really interesting about your work is the various methods and influences in your sound pieces. One that has stood out and has also influenced my own research and practice is Gaston Bachelard: ‘Far from the immensities of sea and land, merely through memory, we can recapture, by the means of meditation, the resonances of this contemplation of grandeur.’ (Bachelard 1964 p 183) How would you describe such influences and methods in your work?**

SH: My creative practice has always been inclined toward interdisciplinary approaches, however, I consider my PhD as the starting point for the extension of my subject through the substantial reference of texts beyond the confine of fine art practice. As an indicator of the extent of this referencing, my bibliography was classified into subheadings of: Literature, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Music and Fine Art (it also included an extensive discography and filmography). The textual components combine to create a conceptual framework, which extend the textual and visual vocabulary of my practice. They allow me to discuss the work and subject by making connections, offering other directions into and through the practice. This is not assists with the dissemination of research it also provides a method of extending my own understanding and *opening* up the work to unconsidered collisions. During my PhD I saw a number of practice-led papers, where the practice had become merely an *illustration* of the theory. I wish to pursue a more organic approach, in which the practice and theory *animate* each other.

## **Appendix Two**

### **James Kent - Sound Works**

<b>Titles</b>	<b>CD Number</b>
Garage Chamber (2014)	1
Electrified Environment (2011-2013)	2
Terminal (2011-2013)	3
Red Rocks (2011-2013)	4
Terminal (0.59) (2011-2013)	5
Sounds from 7A, 16 and 10 (2007 - 2014)	6
Imagined Immersed and Dissolved Soundscapes (2014)	7
ShortCourse UK recorded sounds (2012)	8

**Appendix Three**  
**List of Illustrations Part One**

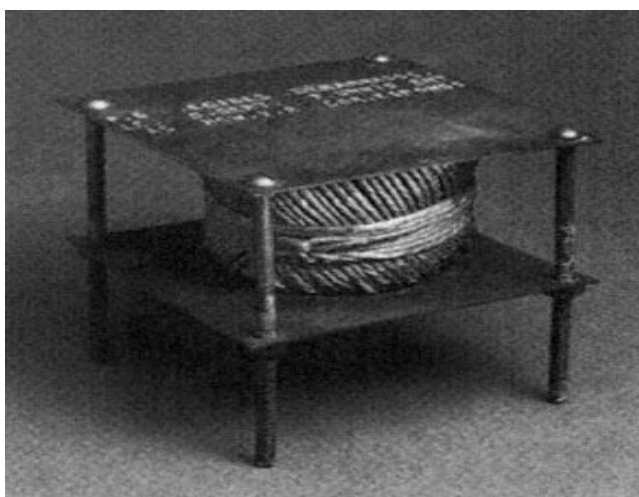


Fig 1.

Marcel Duchamp  
*With Hidden Noise* (1916)  
Ready-made

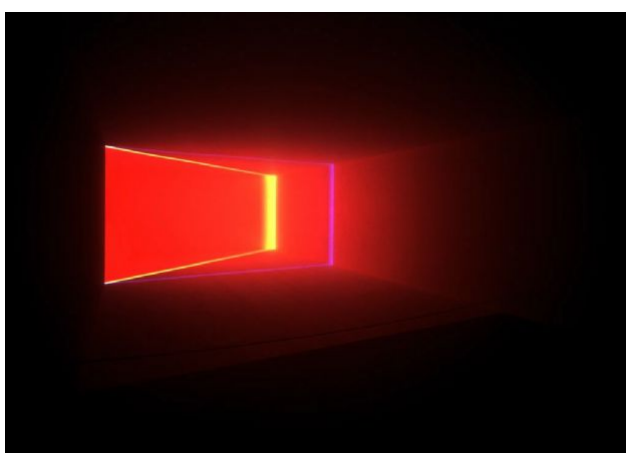


Fig 2.

James Turrell  
*Milk Run* (1996)  
Installation  
Washington, DC





Fig 3.

Karlheinz Stockhausen  
*Helicopter String Quartet* (1989)  
 Sound Performance



Fig 4.

Doug Hollis  
*Persona* (2000)  
 Installation  
 Washington State University



Fig 5.

Chris Watson  
*Weather Report* (2003 & 2008)  
 Sound Recording  
 Kenya, Scotland and Iceland



Fig 6.

Chris Watson  
*Whispering in the Leaves* (2010)  
 Sound Installation  
 Kew Gardens, London



Fig 7.

Katie Paterson  
*Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008)  
 Sound Installation  
 Iceland

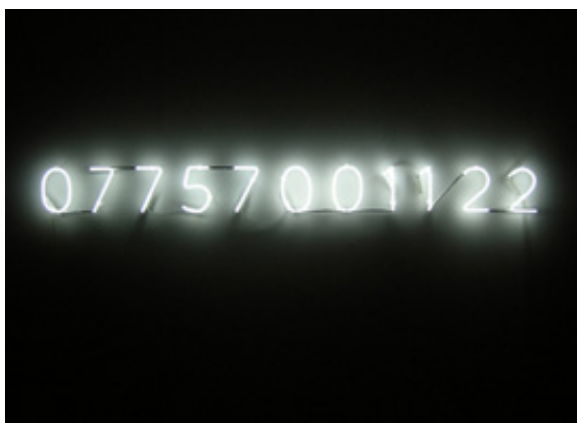


Fig 8.

Katie Paterson  
*Vatnajökull (the sound of)* (2008)  
 Sound Installation  
 Iceland



Fig 9.

James Kent  
*Nine Mile Beach (2006)*  
 Western Australia

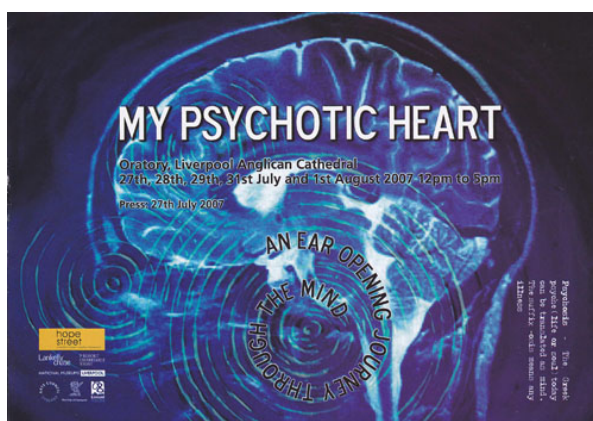


Fig 10.

Kal Ross and Andrea Earl  
*My Psychotic Heart (2007)*  
 Sound Installation  
 Liverpool



Fig 11.

Bruce Odland  
*"Good Vibrations"* (2006)  
 Installation  
 Australia



Fig 12.

David Cunningham  
*The Listening Room* (2008)  
 Installation  
 London



Fig 13.

Carsten Nicolai  
*Static Balance* (2007)  
Sound Installation  
Berlin/Leipzig





Fig 14.

James Kent  
*Garage Chamber* (2014)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 15.

James Kent  
*Garage Chamber* (2014)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist

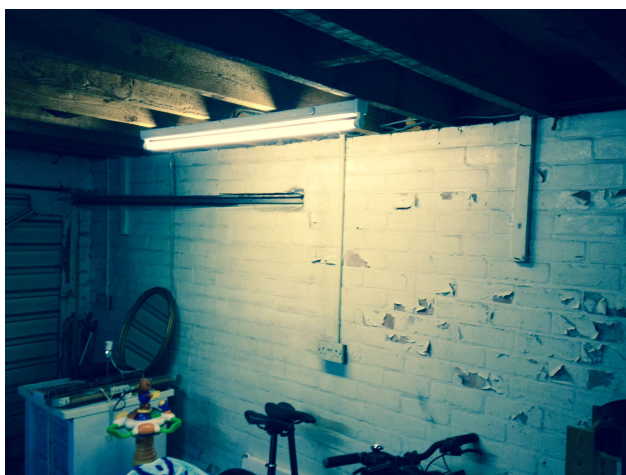


Fig 16.

James Kent  
*Garage Chamber* (2014)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 17.

James Kent  
*Garage Chamber* (2014)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



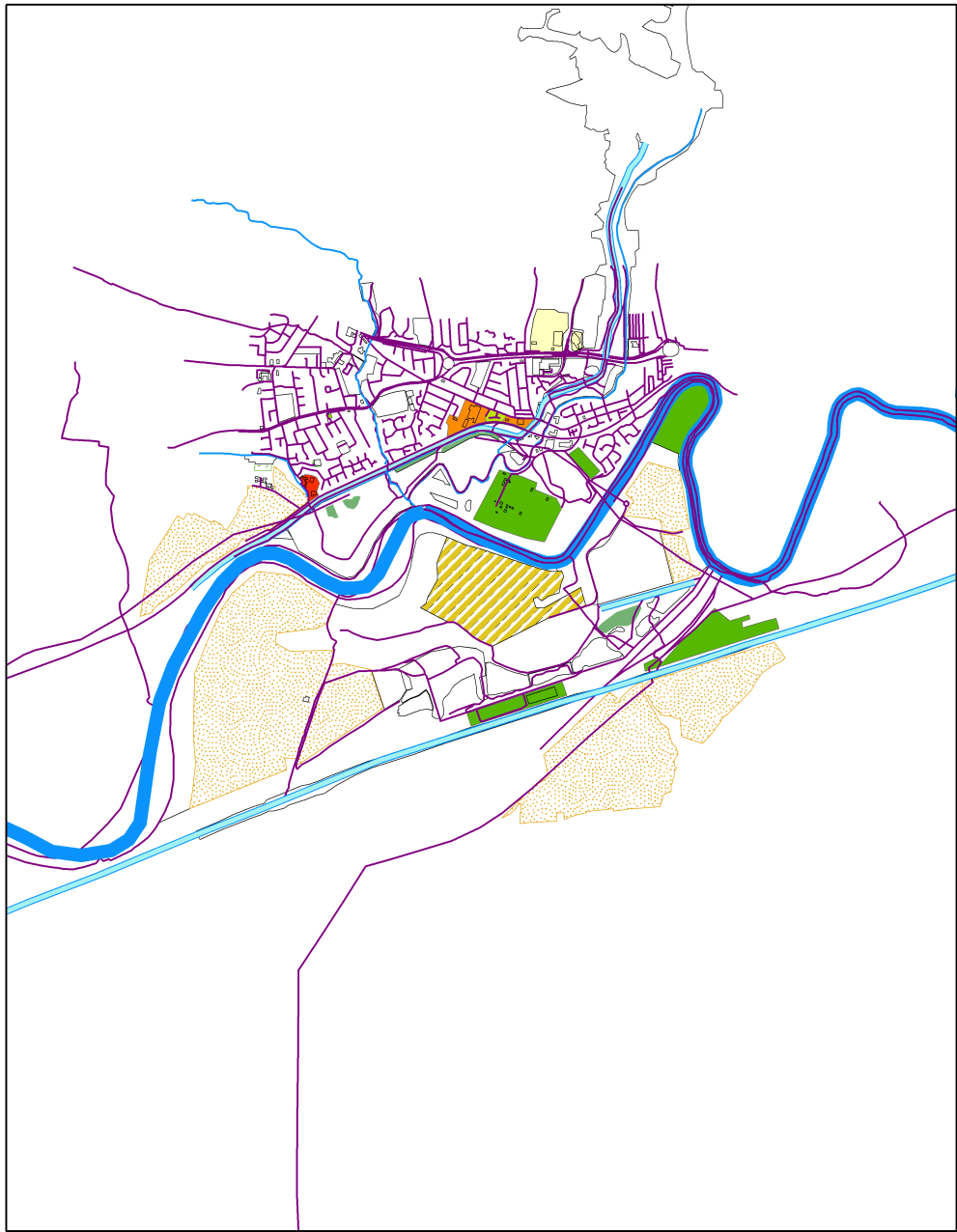


Fig 18.

James Kent  
*Untitled Map One* (2012)  
Digital Drawing  
Collection of the Artist



Fig 19.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 20.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 21.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 22.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 23.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 24.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist





Fig 25.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
Sound Recording  
Collection of the Artist



Fig 26.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
Sound Recording  
Collection of the Artist



Fig 27.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 28.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
 Sound Recording  
 Collection of the Artist



Fig 29.

James Kent  
*ShortCourse UK* (2012)  
Sound Recording  
Collection of the Artist

## List of Illustrations Part Two

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Electrified Environment (2011–2013)	261
<i>Terminal</i> (2011-2013)	262
<i>Red Rocks</i> (2011-2013)	266
<i>Long Grass Whispers</i> (2011-2013)	267
<i>Shells</i> (2011-2013)	268





Fig 30.

James Kent  
*Electrified Environment* (2011–2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist





Fig 31.

James Kent  
*Terminal* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist



Fig 32.

James Kent  
*Terminal* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist





Fig 33.

James Kent  
*Terminal* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist



Fig 34.

James Kent  
*Terminal* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist





Fig 35.

James Kent  
*Red Rocks* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist





Fig 36.

James Kent  
*Long Grass Whispers* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist





Fig 37.

James Kent  
*Shells* (2011-2013)  
Sound Recording  
Wirral  
Collection of the Artist



## **Appendix Four**

### **Glossary**

## Glossary

### Key Artists', Writers and Theorists

**Maryanne Amacher:** Seminal experimental artist working with sound and installation who was a student under Karlheinz Stockhausen with notable collaborations with John Cage and Merce Cunningham throughout the 1970's and 1960's. [Born. 1938: Died. 2009]

**Georges Braque:** Painter, sculptor and collagist and best known for adopting a *Fauvist* style. [Born. 1882: Died. 1963]

**John Cage:** American composer who was a pioneer of chance music, electronic music and non-standard use of musical instruments, Cage was one of the leading figures of the post-war avant-garde. [Born. 1912: Died. 1992]

**John Cale:** Musician, composer, singer-songwriter and record producer best known as founding with Lou Reed as member of the rock & roll band *The Velvet Underground*. [Born. 1942]

**Daniela Cascella:** Writer and curator whose work focuses on sound in particular the transient relationship between the two.

**David Cunningham:** Composer, musician, record producer and artist since 1970 and more recently creating a series of continuing installations based on real time exploration of acoustics. [Born. 1954]

**Ross Dalziel:** Interdisciplinary curator and artists working across a range of mediums and disciplines setting up *SoundNetwork* in 2005 which supports artists who use sound and music in their work.

**Delia Derbyshire:** Composer who for many years was largely unnoticed whose work includes famously composing Ron Grainer's *Doctor Who* theme. Derbyshire would go on to become a pioneer in the field of British electronic music. [Born. 1937: Died. 2001]

**Marcel Duchamp:** Arguably the most influential artist from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century with his *readymades* having deep lasting impacts through all art forms and into everyday life. [Born. 1887: Died. 1968]

**Alan Dunn:** Artist, sound curator and writer with current works including *stimulus respond book* and *Sign up*. [Born. 1967]

**Andrea Earl:** Award-winning writer for television, theatre and radio that includes popular TV shows such as *The Bill* and *Casualty*.

**Felicity Ford:** Artist who works with everyday items in particular such materials as wool. Ford completed a recent film sound track for the COI Collection Volume Eight: *Your Children and You*.

**Sebastian Hegarty:** Contemporary sound artist whose interdisciplinary practice includes archived recordings from his family life and one of his most recent pieces involves the poetics of dissolving ancient ammonites.

**David Hendy:** Professor of Media and Communication at the University of Sussex. Back catalogue of works that include, *Life on Air: a History of Radio Four* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and critically acclaimed *Noise: a Human History*, a 30-part series for BBC Radio 4.

**Ray Johnson:** pioneer in the *Mail Art* movement and for his connections to *Fluxus*. Johnson was a student at Black Mountain College. [Born. 1927: Died. 1995]

**Ludwig Koch:** Sound recordist who specialised in the sounds of animals and their habitats. Highlighted the significance of relationships between sounds of nature and humans. [Born. 1881: Died. 1974]

**Francisco Lopez:** Sound artist most noted for his use of *Musique Concrète* who has recorded in some of the most far-reaching destination on Earth. Vast catalogue of work that covers recorded sounds of rainforests to glaciers. [Born. 1964]

**Alvin Lucier:** Composer whose work explores the phenomena of perception through experimental music and sonic installations. Lucier has been accredited with being one of the great influences of the past fifty years in experimental composition. [Born. 1931]

**Carsten Nicolai:** Artists and founder of *raster-noton. archiv für ton und nichtton*, a network covering popular music, art and sciences. [Born. 1965]

**BJ Nilsen:** Sound recording artist since 1990 based in Sweden, working on documentaries and films. [Born. 1975]

**O.Blaat (Keiko Uenishi):** Experimental sound artist, composer, and core member of SHARE, Based in Brooklyn, New York.

**Bruce Odland:** Composer of sound and large-scale sonic installations based in the United States of America. [Born. 1952]

**Pauline Oliveros:** Composer and famous for her accordionist playing Oliveros has explored and experimented with methods of sound and established the *Deep Listening* practices. [Born. 1932]

**Katie Paterson:** Interdisciplinary artist whose work uses scientific modes to examine the romantics of the world.

**Arthur Pétronio:** Sound poet, composer and writer who wrote two of his most celebrated work work *Tellurgie* (1964) and *Cosmosmose* (1968) [Born.1897: Died. 1983]

**Lou Reed:** International and critically acclaimed musician best known one of the founding member with John Cale of the rock & roll band *The Velvet Underground*. [Born. 1942: Died. 2013]

**Sigur Ros:** Icelandic experimental band that combines landscape of their homeland amongst other elements in their music. Producing minimalist music to form a melodic sound. [Active since. 1994]

**Kal Ross:** Internationally renowned sound engineer and designer, working in theatre, film, music and television.

**Luigi Russolo:** Composer and Italian Futurist who is regarded as one of the seminal figures of the past one hundred years in art. He wrote his seminal manifesto *The Art of Noise* in 1913. [Born. 1883: Died. 1947]

**Erik Satie:** French composer hailed as a genius of contemporary classical music. Over the years Satie would be described as a precursor of movements and styles as varied as Impressionism, Neo-Classicism, Dada, Surrealism, Atonalism, Minimalism, Conceptual art, the Theatre of the Absurd, Muzak, Ambient music and Multimedia art. [Born. 1866: Died. 1925]

**R. Murray Schafer:** Director and main protagonist from the World Soundscape Project that he began in the 1960's with key published works in the 1970's onwards. [Born. 1933]

**Markus Soukup:** Critically acclaimed artists whose work explores the transition of space and time. Soukup predominantly uses installations, moving images and sound in his work.

**Karlheinz Stockhausen:** Critically acclaimed 20<sup>th</sup> Century composer whose work explored and tested the boundaries of space and time in classical composition. [Born. 1928: Died. 2007]

**Christine Sun Kim:** Sound artist and composer based in New York her work explores her personal relationship with sound, language and physical nature of listening. A TED fellow in 2013 and presented her work internationally. [Born: 1980]

**David Toop** Writer, musician and sound curator, most notably publisher a series of celebrated books, *Rap Attack*, *Ocean of Sound*, *Exotica* and *Haunted Weather*. Significant collaborations include with Brian Eno, Talvin Singh and Scanner. [Born. 1949]

**James Turrell:** Critically acclaimed artist who involves explores light and space impacting the eye, body, and mind with the force of a spiritual awakening. He is currently most famous for *Roden Crater*. [Born. 1943]

**Salomé Voegelin:** Contemporary writer and researcher exploring the boundaries between noise and listening. Voegelin critically acclaimed book *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (2010) considers the possibilities of sound outside the normal realms of discussion.

**Chris Watson:** Founding member of the influential Sheffield-based experimental music group *Cabaret Voltaire*. Prolific sound recordist most notably recording on the David Attenborough *Life in Cold Blood* series. [Born. 1952]

**Hildegard Westerkamp:** Member of the *World Soundscape Project* in the 1970's with critical works on sound ecology lecturing around the world and delivering soundwalks to explore human soundscapes.

## Key Concepts and Movements

**Fluxus:** An international network of artists, composers and designers with many of the early origins laying in the concepts of composer John Cage and his experimental music of the 1950's. Fluxus encourages a do-it-yourself aesthetic and valued simplicity over complexity.

**L'Objet Sonore (Sound Objects):** Developed by Pierre Schaeffer as a concept of removing the sound object, source or meaning and listening for sounds sake.

**Mail Art:** Born directly out of *Fluxus* movement where art was used to connect people using the American postal service.

**Musique Concrète:** Developed by Pierre Schaeffer alongside Pierre Henry as an experimental compositional technique that includes the use of raw sounds from the natural environment.

**World Soundscape Project:** Research group led by R. Murray Schafer in the 1960's to investigate human sonic habitats. Highlighting noise pollution and the changing soundscapes of Vancouver, Canada.

## Key Locations

**7A The Crescent, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 4HL:** Location for recordings from *Sound Received* for Masters in Research 2008.

**16 South Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5HQ:** Location from a proportion of sound piece for Chapter Four entitled *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) was recorded.

**10 Orrysdale Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5EN:** Location for some of the recordings on *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013).

**Kingsway Tunnel, Liverpool and Wirral:** Commuter tunnel that serves between Liverpool and Wallasey, Wirral. Queen Elizabeth II opened The Kingsway Tunnel on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1971.

**Liverpool Anglican Cathedral:** Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's architectural masterpiece, the foundations were laid in 1904 by King Edward VII and were completed in October 1978 marking it has the largest cathedral in the United Kingdom.

**Merseyrail Network, Merseyside:** Location for recordings from across the Merseyrail network for *Sound Received* from Masters in Research 2008 and *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013).

**Red Rocks:** Located on the Wirral Peninsula close to West Kirby and Hoylake. Positioned looking out towards Hilbre Island and is important site for many migrating birds from Siskin to Willow Warbler. Location for the sound piece in Chapter Five entitled *Red Rocks* (2011-2013).

**Queensway Tunnel Liverpool and Wirral:** Commuter tunnel that serves between Liverpool and Birkenhead, Wirral. King George V opened Queensway Tunnel, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1934.

**Williamson Tunnels, Liverpool:** A labyrinth of tunnels built under the Edge Hill area of Liverpool, which was controlled by Joseph Williamson around the early 1800s. The purpose of the tunnels is not entirely known.

**Wirral Peninsula, Merseyside and Cheshire:** Various and random locations for the recordings on *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) (*Soundscape*).

**Nine Mile Beach, Western Australia:** Stretch of beach situated in the north west of Western Australia between towns of Broome and Port Headland.

**North Wirral Plain, Hoylake:** This area includes wastelands, Pylons and scrublands, location for recordings *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013).

**Burton Mere Wetlands, Cheshire:** Protected wetlands located on the Dee estuary close the Wirral and a habitat to a plethora of wildlife including birds Kingfisher, Linnet and butterfly's such as the Green Veined White.

## **Appendix Five**

### **Auditory Words and Selected Soundscapes Terms**

**Rudimentary Auditory Words by Pauline Oliveros.**

<i>Audiate Audile Auditive</i>	<i>Call Call Up</i>	<i>Dissonance</i>
<i>Aural Auralization</i>		
<i>Aurality</i>		
<i>Echo</i>	<i>Inaudible Inaudibility</i>	<i>Knell</i>
<i>Noise Noiseless</i>	<i>Peal Phon Phonal</i>	<i>Racket Randomness</i>
<i>Noiselessly</i>	<i>Phonascetics Phonate</i>	<i>Recall Resonant</i>
<i>Noiselessness</i>	<i>Phonation</i>	<i>Resonating Resound</i>
	<i>Phonautograph Phone</i>	<i>Resounding</i>
	<i>Phonetic Phonic</i>	<i>Reverberate</i>
	<i>Phonics Phonogram</i>	<i>Reverberating</i>
	<i>Phonogramic</i>	<i>Reverberative Ring</i>
	<i>Phonographic Phonon</i>	
<i>Silence Silentious</i>	<i>Telephone Transonic</i>	<i>Unhearable</i>
<i>Silently Silentness</i>		
<i>Silent Sonic Soniferous</i>		
<i>Sonogram Sonor</i>		
<i>Sonorous Sonosphere</i>		
<i>Stochasticity Subsonic</i>		
<i>Supersonic</i>		



## Selected Soundscapes Terms from R. Murray Schafer

**Acoustic Design:** A new interdisciplinary requiring the talents of scientists, social scientists and artists (particularly musicians), acoustic design attempts to discover principles by which the aesthetic quality of the acoustic environment or SOUNDSCAPE may be improved. In order to do this it is necessary to conceive of the soundscape as a huge musical composition, ceaselessly evolving about us, and to ask how its orchestration and forms may be improved to bring about richness and diversity of effects which, nevertheless, should never be destructive of human health or welfare. The principles of acoustic design may thus include the elimination or restriction of certain sounds (noise abatement), the testing of new sounds before they are released indiscriminately into the environment but also the preservation of sounds (SOUNDMARKS), above all the imaginative placement of sounds to create attractive and stimulating acoustic environments for the future. Acoustic design may also include the composition of model environments, and in this respect it is contiguous with contemporary musical composition. Compare: ACOUSTIC ECOLOGY.

**Acoustic Ecology:** Ecology is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. Acoustic ecology is thus the study of effects of the acoustic environment of SOUNDSCAPE on the physical responses or behavioral characteristics of creatures living within it. Its particular aim is to draw attention to imbalance which may have unhealthy or inimical effects. Compare: ACOUSTIC DESIGN.

**Acoustic Space:** The profile of a sound over the landscape. The acoustic space of any sound is that area over which it may be heard before it drops below the ambient sound level.

**Aural Space:** the space on any graph which results from a plotting of the various dimensions of sound against one another. For convenience in reading usually only two dimensions are plotted at once. Thus time may be plotted against frequency, frequency against amplitude or amplitude against time. Aural space is thus merely a notational convention and should not be confused with ACOUSTIC SPACE, which is an expression of the profile of a sound over the landscape.

**Clairaudience:** literally, clear hearing. The way I use the term there is nothing mystical about it; it simply refers to exceptional hearing ability, particularly with regard to environmental sound. Hearing ability may be trained to the clairaudient state by means of EAR CLEANING exercise.

**Ear Cleaning:** A systematic program for training the ears to listen more discriminatingly to sounds, particularly those of the environment.

**Earwitness:** One who testifies or can testify to what he or she has heard.

**Hi-Fi:** Abbreviation for high fidelity, that is, a favourable signal-to-noise ratio. The most general use of the term is in electroacoustic. Applied to soundscape studies a hi-fi environment is one in which sounds may be heard clearly without crowding or masking. Compare: LO-FI.

**Lo-Fi:** Abbreviation for low fidelity, that is, an unfavourable signal-to-noise ratio. Applied to soundscape studies a lo-fi environment is one in which signals are

overcrowded, resulting in masking or lack of clarity. Compare: Hi-Fi.

**Moozak (Mooz, etc):** Term applying to all kinds of schizophonic musical dröol, especially in public places. Not to be confused with the brand Muzak.

**Morphology:** The study of forms and structures. Originally employed in biology, it was later (1869) employed in philology to refer to patterns of inflection and word formation. Applied to soundscape studies it refers to changes in groups of sounds with similar forms or functions when arbitrarily arranged in temporal or spatial formations. Examples of acoustic morphology might be a study of the historical evolution of foghorns, or a geographical comparison of methods of telegraphy (alphorn, jungle drum, etc).

**Noise:** Etymologically the word can be traced back to old French (noyse) and to eleventh-century Provençal (noysa, nosa, nausa), but its origin is uncertain. It has a variety of meanings and shading of meaning, the most important of which are the following:

1. *Unwanted sound.* The Oxford English Dictionary contains references to noise as unwanted sound dating back as far as 1225.
2. *Unmusical sound.* The nineteenth-century physicist Herman Helmholtz employed the expression noise to describe sound composed of nonperiodic vibrations (the rustling of leaves), by comparison with musical sounds, which consist of periodic vibrations. Noise is still used in this sense in expressions such as white noise or Gaussain noise.
3. *Any loud sound.* In general usage today, noise often refers to particularly loud sounds. In this sense a noise abatement by-law prohibits certain loud sounds or establishes their permissible limits in decibels.
4. *Disturbance in any signalling system.* In electronics and engineering, noise refers to any disturbances which do not represent part of the signal, such as static on a telephone or snow on a television screen.

The most satisfactory definition of noise for general usage is still “unwanted sound.” This makes noise a subjective term. One man’s music may be another man’s noise. But it holds open the possibility that in a given society there will be more agreement than disagreement as to which sounds constitute unwanted interruptions. It should be noted that each language preserves unique nuances of meaning for words representing noise. Thus in French one speaks of the *bruit* of a jet but also the *bruit* of the birds or the *bruit* of the waves. Compare: SACRED NOISE

**Sacred Noise:** Any prodigious sound (noise) which is exempt from social proscriptions. Originally Sacred Noise referred to natural phenomena such as thunder, volcanic eruptions, storms, etc., as these were believed to represent divine combats or divine displeasure with man. By analogy the expression may be extended to social noises which, at least during certain periods, have escaped the attention of noise abatement legislators, e.g., church bells, industrial noise amplified pop music, etc.

**Schizophonia** (Greek: *Schizo* = split and *phone* = voice, sound): I first employed this term in *The New Soundscape* to refer to the split between an original sound and its electroacoustic reproduction. Original sounds are tied to the mechanisms that produce them. Electroacoustically reproduced sounds are copies and they may be restated at other times or places. I employ this “nervous” word in order to dramatise the aberrational effect of this twentieth-

century development

**Soniferous Garden:** A garden, and by analogy any place, of acoustic delights. This may be natural soundscape, or one submitted to the principles of ACOUSTIC DESIGN. The soniferous garden may also include as one of its principle attractions a Temple of Silence for meditation.

**Sound Event:** Dictionary definition of event: "something that occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time." This suggests that the event is not abstractable from the time-and-space continuum which give it its definition. The sound even, like the SOUND OBJECT, is defined by the human ear as the smallest self-contained particle of a SOUNDSCAPE. It differs from the sound object in that the latter is an abstract acoustical object for study, while the sound event is a symbolic, semantic or structural object for study, and is therefore a nonabstractable point of reference, related to a whole greater magnitude than itself.

**Soundmark:** The term derived from landmark to refer to a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community.

**Sound Object:** Pierre Schaeffer, the inventor of this term describes it as an acoustical "object for human perception and not a mathematical or electro-acoustical object for synthesis." The sound object is then defined by the human ear as the smallest self-contained particle of a SOUNDSCAPE, and is analyzable by the characteristics of its envelope. Though the sound object may be referential (i.e., a bell, a drum, etc.), it is to be considered primarily as a phenomenological sound formation, independently of its referential qualities as a sound event. Compare: SOUND EVENT.

**Soundscape:** The sonic environment. Technically, any portion of the sonic environment, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages particularly when considered as an environment.

**Sound Signal:** Any sound to which the attention is particularly directed. In soundscape studies signals are contrasted by keynote sounds, in much the same way as a figure and ground are contrasted in visual perception.

## **Appendix Six**

### **Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences**

## Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences

Inventions and Technology		Art
1890	Naturalist, anthropologist and writer Jesse Walter Fewkes begins using his cylinder recording technique. Significantly recording Native American music containing Passamaquoddy songs, tales, and vocabulary.	1890
1894	Thomas Edison Kinetoscopic record of a sneeze. Edison would go to show this publically that same year.	The first known film with live-recorded sound entitled <i>Dickson Experimental Sound Film</i> by William Kennedy Laurie Dickson. 1894
1906	In Ilchester, Maryland, the first fully submerged hydroelectric plant is built inside Ambursen Dam.	Maurice Ravel composition <i>Miroirs</i> is first performed by Richardo Viñes. 1906
1910	Thomas Edison is believed to have demonstrated the first motion picture with sound. See 1984.  Hawley Harvey Crippen is arrested for the murder of his wife. Widely considered as the first arrest aided by wireless communication.	Georges Braque paints his early fauvist painting <i>Bottle and Fishes</i> . 1910
1912		Charles "Doc" Herrold begins first regular public radio broadcasting of voice and music from his "wireless telegraph college" in San Jose. 1912
1913	William D. Coolidge invented the Coolidge tube: X-ray tube with an enhanced cathode that would be used in modern X-ray machines.	Luigi Russolo writes seminal manifesto <i>The Art of Noise</i> . 1913
1914	Between June 28 <sup>th</sup> and December 28 <sup>th</sup> events occur that culminate in the First World War.	1914
1916		Marcel Duchamp creates the readymade <i>With Hidden Noise</i> . 1916

## Appendix Six

### Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences

Inventions and Technology		Art
1917	Civilian radio suspended during World War I.	<p>The term <i>Furniture Music</i> was coined by Erik Satie.</p> <p>Marcel Duchamp creates his seminal readymade <i>Fountain</i>.</p>
1919	Short Wave Radio invented.	1919
1921		<p>Marcel Duchamp creates readymade <i>Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?</i></p>
1923	The Iconoscope or Television (cathode-ray tube) invented by Vladimir Kosma Zworykin.	1923
1928	Sergei Eisenstein, Alexander Pudovkin and Grigori Alexandrov sign the <i>Statement on Sound</i> .	1928
1934	Ludwig Koch releases sound book <i>'Der Wald Erschallt'</i> ('The Wood Resounds')	1934
1937		<p>John Cage writes the manifesto, <i>The Future of Music: Credo</i>.</p>
1939	<p>Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann publish in <i>Naturwissenschaften</i> journal their findings on nuclear fission.</p> <p>Great Britain and France declare war on Germany after it invades Poland.</p>	<p>John Cage composes the electroacoustic composition <i>Imaginary Landscape No. 1</i></p> <p>Wassily Kandinsky creates his <i>Composition X</i>.</p>
1944	Karlheinz Stockhausen serves seven months in a War hospital taking care of heavily wounded.	1944
1948		<p>Pierre Schaeffer's first broadcast of the revolutionary <i>'Etude Aux Chemins de Fer'</i></p>

## Appendix Six

### Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences

Inventions and Technology		Art	
1952		John Cage composes seminal piece <i>4'33"</i> .	1952
1953	The Marlboro Man, the rugged cowboy first appears in advertisements for cigarettes.  Dr. David Warren invents the flight recorder: Black Box.	William S. Burroughs <i>Junky</i> is first published.	1953
1957		Jack Kerouac's <i>On the Road</i> is first published.	1957
1954	Sir David Attenborough produces <i>Zoo Quest</i> series for the BBC.		1954
1958	Engineers Jack Kilby and Robert Noyce invent the internal pacemaker.	Edgard Varèse composed <i>Poème Électronique</i> for the Phillips Pavilion at the World Fair in Brussels.	1958
1961		Max Neuhaus produces the sound activity <i>Public Supply I</i> .	1961
1962	The Audio Cassette is invented by The Philips Company.		1962
1965	James Russell Invents the Compact Disc: CD.		1965
1966		Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut create <i>Beatles Electroniques</i> .	1966
1967		Maryanne Amacher begins the <i>City-Links</i> project. This spans fourteen years.	1967

## Appendix Six

### Sound Received - Timeline of Immersive Influences

Inventions and Technology		Art
1968		<p>Arthur Pétronio sonic piece <i>Cosmosmose</i> performed by Claude &amp; Lydia Kilian, Odette and Guislain Versaille, Jacqueline Witier from the LP <i>Futura Poesia Sonora</i></p> <p>John Cage, Marcel Duchamp, and Teeny Duchamp collaborate for performance of <i>Reunion</i>.</p>
1969		Alvin Lucier performs/records <i>I am sitting in a room</i> .
1970		Artist Paul Kos exhibited his seminal sound piece <i>Ice Melting</i> .
1972		John Giorno's <i>Giorno Poetry Systems</i> introduces <i>The Dial-A-Poem Poets</i> .
1974	Edward Heath's Conservative Government introduced the 'three day week'.	
1975		<p>Lou Reed releases <i>Metal Machine Music</i>. The album is termed as <i>Noise Music</i>.</p> <p>Delia Derbyshire composes the music for the film <i>About Bridges</i> by Madelon Hooykaas and Elsa Stansfield.</p>
1977	New York City suffers a widespread blackout. Widespread looting, vandalism and arson take's place across the city.	James Turrell bought the extinct volcano Roden Crater with funding provided by the Dia Art Foundation.
1979	Release of the Sony Walkman TPS-L2.	



**Appendix Seven**  
**Technical Equipment**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Apple iPhone 4s	287
Apple iPod 30GB	288
Edirol R-09	289
HTC Wildfire	290
Nokia XpressMusic 5800	291
Olympus LS-100	292
Sony Ericsson W910i	293
Tascam HD-P2	294
Edirol CS-15 External Microphone	295
JrF Contact Microphone	296
JrF Hydrophone	297

## Portfolio of Recording Equipment







Apple iPhone 4s





Apple iPod 30GB





Edirol R-09





HTC Wildfire





Nokia XpressMusic 5800





Olympus LS-100





Sony Ericsson W910i





Tascam HD-P2



## External Microphones



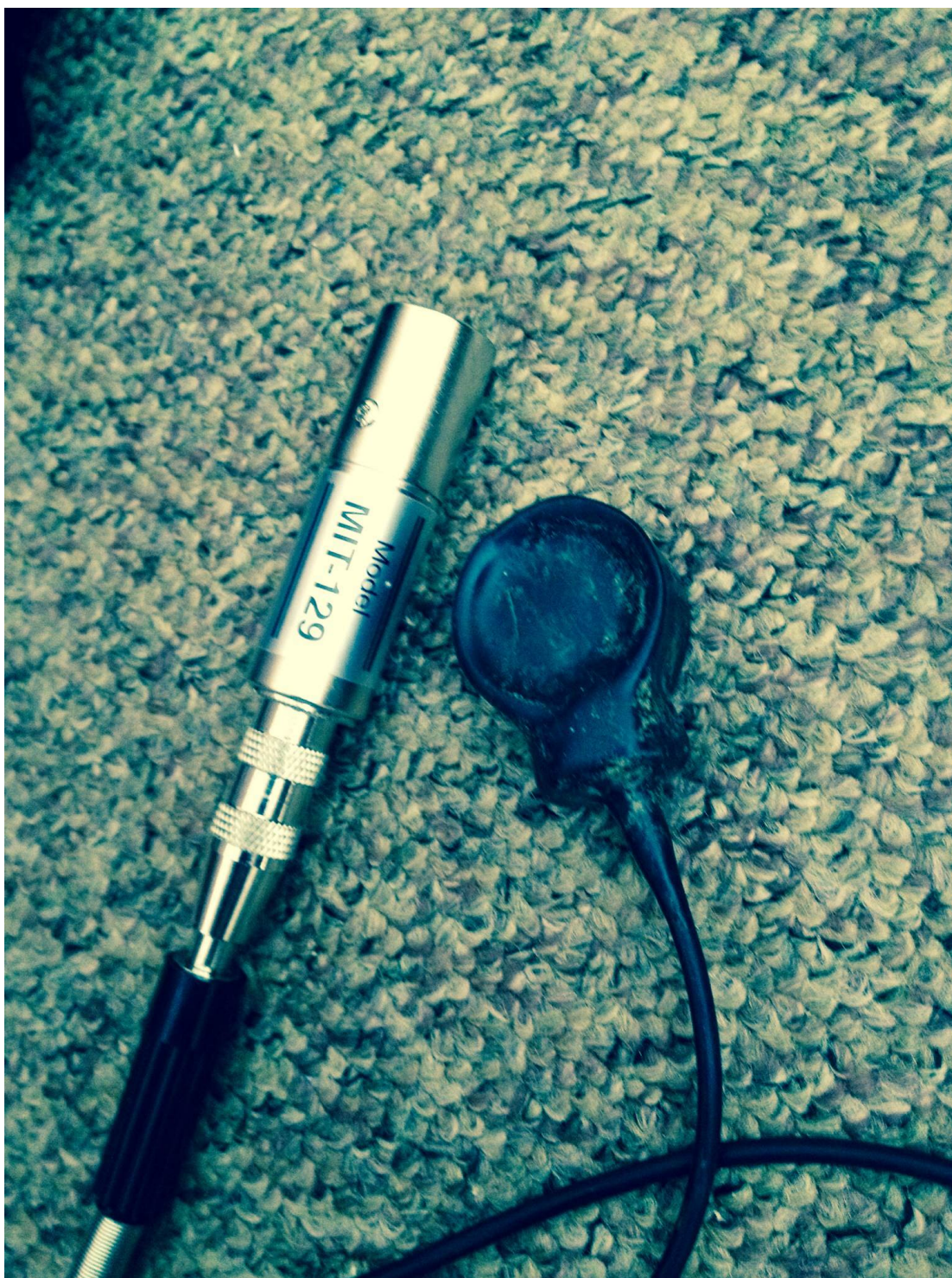
Edirol CS-15





JrF Contact Microphone





JrF Hydrophone

## **Appendix Eight**

### **Conference Paper, Exhibitions and Forum**

## Conference Paper

Paper delivered at the Early Modern Soundscapes Symposium.  
An interdisciplinary symposium, Bangor University 24th-25th April 2014

### **Imagined Immersed and Dissolved Soundscapes. (Accompanied by recording) (See Appendix Two)**

#### **Introduction**

In his 2013 work, *Resistance #4*, part of the Kinokphonography radio retrospective artist Sebastiane Hegarty presented a sound piece where you could listen to field recordings of chalk dissolving and the poetics of dissolving ancient ammonites that explore time, space and sensation. With my research and practice examining states of immersion through exploration of local and personal soundscapes and the value of sound to explore ones past I will demonstrate through this paper and what you will hear as I speak is the re-imagined early modern soundscape. I have used recordings of my perceptual banal everyday to expose and explore early modern soundscapes. My research is in a constant flux of movements shifting from visual and audible so this paper is a moment in space and time where imagining early modern soundscapes for my research could change or alter by the end. In an interview I did with Hegarty in 2013 he talked about the recording experience and being enveloped in the soundscapes. Describing the instance that he became immersed by the surrounding soundscape distancing him from the present on the Cley Marshes, Norfolk and the landscape with visual boundaries blurring together in an immersive state. In a time when we can record and relay readily the phenomena of natural soundscapes like sound recordist Chris Watson's expansive and poignant recordings of soundscapes and events we can listen everyday to a dawn chorus or the rituals of birds whose dimensions are presented through contemporary listening modes. Hegarty's work communicates the banal, fascinating, and is of course beautiful. It fascinates like water and as Hegarty observes:

In addition to field-recording I continue to collect found sounds (answerphone tapes, audio letters, voice-o-graphs). The 'noise' of the record is seen as an inherent part of the recording process. In works such as *silence returned*, *mo(nu)ment* and the more recent, *Soliloquy for wax cylinder*, the injury and history of such noise becomes the *subject* of the practice.

(Kent, J. Interview with Sebastiane Hegarty, 2012 24<sup>th</sup> July, Email)

Considering this then, listening to any soundscapes, Hegarty believes to be altering and challenging of ones perception of space, emerging into the world through receptive resonances. Such experiences of imagining early modern soundscapes are temporal with more popular exercises of music allowing this interaction to take place being more readily accepted. Like Hegarty, throughout my research and practice I use everyday perceived banal object to explore ones past: in particular through recording my personal soundscapes and recording my everyday soundscapes to consider early modern soundscapes. Without implementing any editorial brush the recording now being played entitled *Electrified Soundscape*, *Terminal* and *The Long Grass Whispers* suspend any form of sanitized over produced soundscapes that misrepresent my immersive experience and not obscuring the listeners recall. The synergy created between listener and the aural environment is unique through repeated patterns related to events, occurrences and circumstances so this significantly allows each listener to the three sounds works to interpret the recordings within their personal immersive memories. This connection

and not being detached from society allows a personal critical reflection where through ones own illumination of past memories can be realized significantly, individually and potentially collaboratively.

Bandon Labelle (2010) argues that we are connected to the soundscape through the *sonic body* (LaBelle 2010) something that connects us to everything around us resonating back and forth, past and present. Pauline Oliveros (2011) goes further to elaborate, describing the interaction between the body and earth by stating that:

The sonosphere is the sonorous or sonic envelope of the earth. The biospheric layer of the sonosphere is irrevocably interwoven with the technospherical layer of the sonosphere.<sup>1</sup> Humans sense the sonosphere according to the bandwidth and resonant frequencies and mechanics of the ear, skin, bones, meridians, fluids, and other organs and tissues of the body as coupled to the earth and its layers from the core to the magnetic fields as transmitted and perceived by the audio cortex and nervous system. (All of this with great variation, of course). All cells of the earth and body vibrate.  
(Oliveros, 2011 p. 162)

The *sonosphere* is what human inhabit and within this sonic habitation are the buildings and structures we build therefore when considering a structures as background noise to how I re-imagined an early modern soundscape and the deeper resonant impact this structure is creating. What the *sonic body* (Labelle 2010) and *sonosphere* (Oliveros 2011) both demonstrate is this relationship between structures, everyday and human body- past and present. The visual impact is not the only element we observe when we witness a structure existing in a soundscape; we are experiencing their background immersive vibrations having impacts within the everyday variations of banal life. The soundscape is a representation of the background noise we neither hear immediately nor consider prominent as thinking beyond the parameters of our background generally considered as the noise nuisance.

One is able to capture the inner imagination, grand or minute of objects, space and places from different times, great distances or even inaccessible environments. Philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1958) talked about the power to transport the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity, an immeasurable immensity. This being the case, *immensity* allows us to go into a limitless world. It is this limitless concept of individual or collaborative immersion, Bachelard states:

Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrest, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere: we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming.  
(Bachelard, 1958 p 84)

The conscious experience, phenomenological one or experiencing something that is not accessible readily is an important factor when considering my own immersed body for which these sonic piece have been recorded and constructed from as to enable me to re-imagine early modern soundscapes. The body of work transpires from random, repeated everyday banal experiences for which an immersed occurrence is highlighted but not singular by any means.



### **Scenario 1. Reflective Immersion – The Electrified Environment & Terminal**

The *Electrified Environment* (2011-2013) is a collection of randomly recorded moments, with over three hundred of these moments recorded over a six-month period with two presented today but also randomly selected. What the listener hears first hand is the crackling of microphone noise, wind gushing, breathing, silence, and static with no determined start or end. Imperfections with no editing or polishing as all elements remain including me the recordist remain. The element of me in the recording is fundamental, as to highlight the relationship between the sonic body and the space to further expand on the wider immersive adjectives.

As a sound recordist who views these imperfections as one of the essential elements in the recordings it has been important to note further why this in translates through to everyday sonorous life so we can contemplate the early modern soundscapes. Unlike many other contemporary field recordists who view a purity of sound as conceptually vital, like artist Hiroki Sasajima (2013) who focuses on a diminutive level of sound, the micro level of detail that is beyond human hearing that does not exist immediately at foreground level but sound as perfect and sublime. Sasajima explains:

I don't want there to be any trace of myself as a physical sound on the recordings, so I cut out my voice, my clothes, my footsteps and things like that. However, I am very aware that I am nonetheless surely present in the recordings.

(Sasajima cited in Lane & Carlyle, 2013 p. 128)

However, through the arched recordings such as *Electrified Soundscape* we can listen and associate more so with everyday experiences that represents relationship between the elements and the everyday. Noise is imperfect and associated with disturbance and here I have considered all forms of noise that is sound. Noise is not balanced, fair or rational and can be accidental or harsh so the *Electrified Soundscape* does not distinguish between the un/pleasant here. Each twitch, high pitch and uncomfortable recorded noise is no greater than the next recorded directly close to my body each sound presents a foreground signal of noise. The flaws perhaps signal a reality of soundscape, not one cleansed or skimmed but one that has all elements present including mechanical workings and myself. A sanctuary if you like, perceived notes working inharmoniously to create sonic elastic expanding that is stable but still we have to consider that with the recording device the tool by which I record - this is a collection of noise, my noise but not yours.

With Sasajima (2013) I cannot relay any personal relationship towards the recorded miniatures that he records but can listen and imagine the vibrations in sand or water but these do not enter my sonic foreground. As demonstrated through the sound work *Electrified Soundscape* the sonic environment of everyday life can be immersive and alter our way of listening to our personal soundscape.

Though sensing something familiar and connecting the vibration to an aural memory, water lapping against the dock, creaking metal or a boat turning into dock, actual recorded events from your aural past are not needed or logistically possible. Single noises from a location you have never been which in turn can remind you of an element of a personal auditory territory. Brandon LaBelle (2010) elaborates that vibrations are essential and effect autonomy of the aural senses. "...vibration is an influential, sensual flux performing as a vital contour to the psychodynamics of the emotional self." (LaBelle, 2010 p. 134) He goes on to describe how such vibrations in underground terrains extend towards the body and leave or impart energy upon

the *sonic body*.

By this imprint lasting and resonating in the backdrop forms from what LaBelle (2010) suggests lends itself to dynamics of experience and one that *Terminal* reacts to through the listener. Provoking and encouraging ones own personal sonorous vibrations moved to the forefront and acting as a *reflective immersion* by being my everyday immersive journey and reflecting back onto the listener as their re-imaged immersive soundscape.

Through random recordings with short polarized immersive moments that may be considered uncompromising in terms of charting ones own immersive timeline the recounting of times spent crabbing, climbing trees or regular menial daily tasks is re-imagined through sensory projection rather than performed. Such inward sonority transcends noise beyond music, which is incorporated in our daily lives by popular, planned and timed musicians. John Cage (1968) says that silence is simply the unstructured milieu that we should consider considered in everyday sonorous lives. We do not count in the score outside, the traffic does not begin and end at our request, and clashing conversations overlapping do not distinguish themselves for our ears to separate. Cage (1968) says that popular music asks questions of us and tells you things not connected to our everyday lives whereas the noise and autonomous listening is a literal action of our soundscapes.

### **Scenario 2. Inaudible/Sensing Early Modern Soundscapes – The Long Grass Whispers**

In Seth Kim-Cohen's *In The Blink Of An Ear* (2009) the transposed exchange between the listener, environment and more significantly the non/acceptance of sound without predispositions is a central theme. I have throughout my research not labeled noise as good or bad, but all noise is level, no discrepancies between noises. So in basic terms how do we hear noise that cannot be heard? Not like the art of Christine Sun Kim (2012), an artist who was born deaf and through the work she takes ownership of the noises around her. Inaudible, I am referring to Seth Kim Cohen's (2009) contemporary work that re-works arts over obsession with allowing sound as a pure voice. Within *Terminal* the microphone noise, breathing, abrupt ends and my voice is audible throughout and this is the inaudible that is more than often ignored or dammed as an nuisance to the listener, an object in the way of the pure sound. This layer of noise allows the listener to hear what they have heard, not necessarily in *Terminal* but from the everyday, minutes or years before my immersive journey was recorded.

In Daniela Cascella's *En Abîme* (2012) are plotted narratives and anecdotes through memory and repetitive actions, "I think of this space as a landscape in perpetual transformations – occupied by sounds, left by them, filled in by words across recollections or anticipations, and over again." (Cascella, 2012 p. 72) Now as I fill in my recounted adolescence through recordings and perceived static position in my timeline that appear every time I walk across the sandstone outcrop looking out to Hilbre Island I attempt this time to capture my resonant past with a recorder. Time separating visits but the space and time, time and space still appears the same as to draw me back and recount journeys travelled and time spent. Returning to a landscape that fills my audible mind as an adult of happy carefree times and when I write about this time nothing compares to the actual space and time presence. As I sat recording sensations became apparent once again, salty air, cold air piercing my clothes, water numbing my fingers and the expanse of the Irish Sea meeting the Dee Estuary but as the final recording, *The long Grass Whisper* rings a note of remembrance for a man who once sat as a child listening and cracking together the

hollow shaft of the shells.

Significantly more personalized than the repetitiveness of *Terminal* with fewer moments of man made noise, space and time, time and space, others have experienced this time and space, more will too, but the amplified recording of *The Long Grass Whispers* is my time and space, this is a private recording from quiet past, nothing spectacular, just the everyday, the banal.

Though the sandstone rocks unevenly map a path to walk around the drenched sand, a simple action of walking around the bird watchers and photographers, peaceful meditation covers the space as not to disturb the regular visitors and allow documentation and identification of each species being observed. The construction of this environment of people, standing in vital positions, still and peaceful, adds a reverence to the soundscape at that moment.

## Conclusion

As I crouch recording, listening and feeling the cold air, a gentle disturbing noise gently sweeps past my ears, far from behind and more noticeable with intent listening. The *Long Grass Whispers* (1:26) shimmers over the collection of people standing, reminding me that the light breeze is making a passage, a time and space, clear and distinct yet subtle and evoking. I draw closer trying to keep a distance that neither shields nor obstructs the wind away from the grass but allows the natural sensual contours flow evenly. Now, I listen back and the microphone noise, maybe even my breathing have disturbed the reverberation but this point is a obscured documentation of that moment when a distraction or even inconspicuous from the grass turns my attention but alone as no other person there hears or acknowledges. To reiterate again this highlights the interpersonal nature of this piece and what appears to be the minimal aspects that go on to explain the embodiment of my imperfect immersive sonority enabling consideration of early modern soundscapes through the reflection of my personal immersed and dissolved soundscape.

Finally, recognizing the noise created by a series of intertwined climatic and everyday happenings that generates a full kaleidoscopic array of discreet noises and fills the recorded soundscape as pieces of individual immersive nodes *The Long Grass Whispers* (1:26) evokes the unedited, rough expression of my personal immersion where I can reflect and re-imagine the early modern soundscapes through the imperfections of the sonorous everyday; I will finish with a quote by Adorno that realizes these imperfections: "Fidelity to one's own state of consciousness and experience is forever in temptation of lapsing into infidelity, by denying the insight that transcends the individual and calls his substances by its name." (Adorno, 2000 p. 81)

## Exhibitions

### **Sounds from 7A, 16 and 10** (See attached CD in Appendix Two)

James Kent, an artist and researcher explores the everyday sonorous environment of his personal immersed and dissolved past and present. His work examines noise and soundscapes that are perceived as nuisance or banal by recording the events using non-traditional recording equipment. By contrast the works recorded are presented within familiar everyday spaces such as back yards, gardens, cars, living rooms, doorways and sheds. **Sounds of 7A, 16 and 10** (2007 - 2014) has resulted from over five years of recording the reoccurring occurrences of living in three different spaces with over a thousand original recordings taken during this time here presented are twelve taken from that archive. Noises of living above a butcher, a house falling apart, neighbour practicing the art of hand bells and from midwife listening to a baby's heartbeat all illustrating James Kent's individual sonic body of space and time.

Bridewell Studios and Gallery present

# HOME

an exhibition exploring the meaning  
of the place we call HOME

Private View  
LightNight 2014  
16th May 16.00 - 22.00

Gallery Opening times  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11.00 - 16.00  
17th May - 1st June

Bridewell Studios  
101 Prescot Street  
Liverpool  
L7 8UL  
@BridewellStudio  
www.bridewellstudios.co.uk  
07437 191004

LightNight  
Liverpool  
2014

**Terminal (0.59)** (See Attached CD in Appendix Two)

**Terminal** is part of a series of recordings reflecting immersion as a collaborative experience through the banal and reoccurring noises taken from everyday travels.

**Terminal** was recorded whilst working as a support worker and spending hours each day with one person I supported at the same location (Woodside Ferry Terminal - Birkenhead) five days a week. I returned to the site after I finished working as a support worker to record the noise and the immediate memories of the time spent washed over me, immersing me in time and space.

**Do Not Feed Birds and friends present... Listen Hear!**

A listening event.

**Tuesday 6th May, 7pm**

Open School East  
The Old Rose Lipman Library  
43 De Beauvoir Road  
London N1 5SQ

A broad range of audio work compiled from open submission will be listened to in as near to complete darkness as we can muster.

The night will be split into two halves with time at the middle and end to chat, enjoy some quiet or just let your rods and cones come back to life.

Listen Hear! is inspired by Glasgow's 'Lights Out Listening Group' and happens here with their blessing.

## Forum

**Staging Sound, Forum, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008, Bath, 2 Hours.**  
**Abridged notes.**

David Cunningham, Lina Dzuverovic and Robin Rimbaud (Scanner)

This forum asks a panel of artists and a curator to consider what it is that makes sound so appealing to artists and audiences? Is it the immediacy of sound and the way in which it is connected to the present moment (of hearing/listening)? Or is it the different ways in which sound can access audiences that is its special appeal? Its potential for shared authorship and audience participation? And finally, has the spread of interactive gaming and digital technologies opened up more of a freeform attitude to making music / sound / noise?

David Cunningham Talk and Slideshow followed by answer and questions.

**Q. How can you make music without using music but the sound of a room?**

A. Noise Gate – studio equipment cuts off the threshold. Feedback and noise gate to control the level. This became The Listening room. Microphone in space was not directional. Loud speakers amplified to the point of feedback and fine-tuned. Resonances reflect wall to wall – floor to ceiling. Resonant frequencies dominant within the room using as a vocal bury of the different spaces.

Interior 2 microphones, 2 speakers. Electronically independent, electronically linked, Tate Britain, A position between two curves Stone Alcoves microphone feeding back into the other one, vice – versa dependent on the height, width and depth of the space, like listening to the architecture. Clerkenwell Magistrates Court, 3 microphones, 3 speakers system. Inhabited by the spectator/visitor. Important aspect – human level (not too loud) sound of people in the room modulates the feedback notes this is music not just a demonstration of a physical act, equally spatial or sculpture. Static sculpture changes according to light. Bruce McClean uses the word for any activity he takes part in. Likes this room we are sitting in now. Interior Kanazava Oct 2004

**Q. Do you intend to impose a narrative?** (Questions to David Cunningham)

No imposing. The meaning is up to the visitor. Sydney in 1998, which was Spectacular venue, gunpowder store made of limestone. A group of young people came in and played football. Liked this, they were using the space how they wanted to interact.”

**Q. Do you use EQ and Limiting?** (Questions to David Cunningham)

Noise Gate in duck mode, which let's sound through below a certain threshold – governing the system. Work can also be affected by humidity. Change the bass and treble, surface of the room/tiles high frequency-too mad. Alcove and the sliding doors the closest

**Q. Do you see the work being received with cultural questions or perception/ is it just aesthetically pleasing to you?**

No, I hate intrusive noise and background music and the reaction to it. Sitting on the roof listening to the city. Ecology of noise unsustainable business' opening up and closing again, sound of disorder, comprehensible cluster of sound.

Robin Rimbaud AKA Scanner talk and slideshow followed by answer and questions.

Staging sound, curious in reflection with no conscious decision, avoids being the person on the stage. Using mobile phone calls illegally listen to them broadcast them and released them on CD.

**Q. How does one deal with no idea of feedback? Does it move people? Does it make them feel angry, take risks?** (Question to Robin Rimbaud)

Recording people in the morgue spending the last moments with loved ones.

**Q. Hidden persons of ghosts? Is it traces of people in the space? Electronic tattoos – physical ghost traces? Michael Jackson is it a narrative thread?** (Question to Robin Rimbaud)

Follow a simple idea of memory, social issues, follow the same thread but do not move that far away. Move to trash on pc – find it with software everything is always able to resurface.

Speaker ghosts in buildings. Something that has been said in this room now will come back and remind you if you visit this room again in 20 years.

Lina Dzuverovic talk and slideshow followed by answer and questions.

**Q. What are your views on Interference?** (Question to Lina Dzuverovic)

The cultures of sound, finding a language instead of using sonic outdated example of video art used for five years then people who were rubbish started to use the term same thing has happened with Sonic.

Archive space interviewed artists – heart of the exhibition. Audience invited to play instruments. Found this problematic as people did not want to join in at first then got a CD and made the cover.

**Q. What do you think of the terms sound art and sonic art?** (Question to Lina Dzuverovic)

Sonic Art, Sound Art other stuff down to the viewer to put it in to a category It should be just art? Sonic/video exist for only political reasons Video Arts London pushed this for about five years then it turned into a ghetto in which no one would show. Sound art a device to get recognition in the gallery and institutions. Sound Art is Anglo-centric British. Does not exist internationally.

