The Development of Live Art in Liverpool from 1979-2013: Toward Pragmatic Recommendations for the Sustainability of Live-Art Practice in Liverpool

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Using The Bluecoat Arts Centre as a case study this thesis discusses the emergence and development of live-art practices in Liverpool since 1979 and analyses how these practices have developed in Liverpool in relation to local conditions, the national institutional infrastructure for live art, and dominant discourse around live-art practice.

The thesis provides pragmatic recommendations for improving the sustainability, diversity and development of live-art practices in Liverpool and is based on analysis, discussion and evaluation of my first-hand professional experience and in-depth knowledge of programming, presenting and supporting live art in the city from the year 2000. Analysis and discussion of comparative live-art activity in Manchester offers an expanded context within which assertions and recommendations are tested and evidenced in order to provide useful insights into the institutional infrastructure for the live-art sector at a regional level.

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Introduction

Using The Bluecoat Arts Centre in Liverpool as a key case-study this research is specifically concerned with examining how live art has developed as a field of practice in Liverpool since 1979, with an emphasis on developments from 2000-2013. Based on comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the institutional infrastructure, local conditions and national contexts that have impacted upon the development of live art in the city, the main aim of this research is to consider and present pragmatic recommendations for the sustainable future development of the broadest diversity of live-art practices in Liverpool. In line with this aim the thesis provides a critical analysis of how I developed the live-art programme at The Bluecoat[1] between 2000 and 2006. A comprehensive range of programme planning and strategy documents, authored by me and relating to these developments, are included in the appendices. The key assertions and recommendations that are made throughout this thesis are in dialogue with the appendices which have been analysed to explore the pragmatic choices and strategies available.

A focused, comparative consideration of live-art activity in Manchester is presented in order to expand the context of the analysis and to further evidence the validity of the recommendations.

The Term Live Art

The term live art was first used in relation to programming activity in 1985 with the performance festival and platform event *8 Days, A Review of Live Art*, which became *The National Review of Live Art* (NRLA) in 1986. The format for the NRLA had its nascent

[1] The Bluecoat Arts Centre was renamed The Bluecoat in 2008 and I refer to it as The Bluecoat throughout the thesis.

origins in an event that was organised in 1979 by Steve Rogers, and which took place at Midland Group Arts Centre in Nottingham. The event was called *Performance Platform* and it ran for another year under the same title. In 1981, 1982 and 1983 the event was called *Performance Art Festival*, in 1984 *4 Days of Performance Art*. The NRLA moved from the Midland Group Arts Centre to the Riverside Studios is 1987, and then from 1987 was based in Glasgow.

Use of the term was also beginning to be seen in publications such as *Live Art Now* (1987). From 1990-1992 Lois Keidan was in post in the Visual Arts Department in the London Office of what was then called Arts Council of Great Britain, and it was during her time in this role that the term live art was considered with an emphasis on cultural strategy and policy as opposed to the term being used as the description of an art form. Keidan's paper 'National Arts and Media Strategy: Discussion Document on Live Art' (1991) introduced live art as a strategy for the inclusion of diverse art forms and artists. Keidan's paper was in part based on areas discussed and some recommendations from 'Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity: Action Research Project. A Report to the Visual Arts Department of the Arts Council of Great Britain' by Michael McMillan (January 1990). This report was commissioned to consider how the Arts Council might widen its view of performance or live art, and to 'recognise the importance of interdisciplinary work' (McMillan 1990:3).

Keidan's aim while at the Arts Council was to reconfigure live art to reposition it as a term that aimed toward the development of a cultural strategy and to position it within developing policies around diversity across art-forms. Keidan was responding to the fact that at this time, live art, in line with other art forms and not uniquely, reflected the arts as still predominantly white, middle class, and elitist, as outlined in McMillan's report.

Throughout this thesis I also use the terms performative and performativity to cover the broadest range of live and performed elements of arts practices and processes across all art-form definitions, in addition to, and occasionally instead of, live art and performance. I use the term performative as a way of referring to works which might not primarily, or in their entirety, constitute a live work or action. I also use the term to refer to aspects of related practice, material, contexts and spaces, for example, an archive of performance-related documentation has an element of (and further potential for) performativity, though it is not necessarily consistently performed in its own right. Performativity points to the potential for, as well as to actual and realised, performance/s, where the aim is to capture something of the essence of performance, or where the live aspect or quality is particularly ephemeral or difficult to extrapolate from a number of related and layered components. Use of these terms also allows for easier reference to the broadest range of practices which could be referred to (but are not always best described in every context) as live art or performance, and which include installation, interactions, work that is activated by audience or spectators, dance, time-based work, new-media, film and video. Performativity is also used in the context of this research to refer to work where the initial or main imperative is not to directly present a performance as such but which might include an element of performance, for example, certain tactics and strategies employed within the context of political activism.

The three reasons for scoping the research within the time-frame 1979-2013 are integral to the analysis of live-art activity in Liverpool and to the national context within which these developments took place.

First of these reasons is that the research will demonstrate that a number of significant factors, which I cite as the beginning of a particular institutionalisation of experimental-

performance practice in the UK, were initiated in 1979. By 1979 artists had developed tactics and strategies through experimental and interdisciplinary-performance processes and practices in order to find ways of working beyond the institution. However, in 1979 presentational frameworks (namely performance platforms) were being developed and that began to formalise certain aspects of experimental performance that had hitherto been sited outside of the institution.[2] Prior to the period considered in this research experimental-performance practice that was broadly referred to as performance art[3] was generally sited outside of the institution both physically and ideologically. Since the beginning of the 1960s performative practice as a vehicle for social, cultural and political analysis has been a prominent element in the ecology of arts production both in the UK and internationally. Even before this, interdisciplinary practices and the blurring of art-form boundaries were associated with experimentation and the exploration of political and radical ideas. The interdisciplinary nature of much experimental work during the 1960s reflected the ability of performance to capture culturally and politically relevant material, and to deal with it in an immediate and engaging way. A myriad of live performance events and happenings helped to shape an idea of performance practice that still resounds and characterises a general understanding of experimental live work today. Throughout the 1960s artists were, of course, rejecting what they perceived to be the obsolete art object, in what has been articulated as a decisive, determined and concerted shift toward process and ideas. In broad terms this resulted in a blurring and hybridisation of art-form categories as artists actively and consciously pluralised fields of practice, and defined their work as challenging traditional structures and institutions. Artists became increasingly concerned with a more direct relationship to audience, seeking to

[2] For example *National Review of Live Art* (NRLA) which was the UK's most prominent national live-art event can be traced back to *Performance Platform*, a one-day event that took place in 1979, organised by Steve Rogers at Nottingham's Midland Group Arts Centre.

[3] This research also considers practice that would have come under the heading of experimental theatre and work that originated from modern and contemporary dance and choreography.

minimise the gap between art subject and viewer and establish a more immediate and direct experience for both artist and audience. This was an attempt to not only break down the hierarchical relationship between art institution and artist, and for that matter institution and audience, but also to open up different fields in relation to the understanding and reception of art.

Second the research is concerned with an analysis of institutional frameworks for the development of live art in Liverpool rather than with tracing artistic developments in performance-art practice *per se*. As such this is the most useful timescale for taking into account a range of pertinent factors such as cultural policy, funding processes and frameworks, and developments within relevant arts-organisations and sectors. Practical aspects relating to the presentation of live art are usually afforded only cursory analysis in the context of academic research despite the pervasive and consistent dilemmas that this presents for a considerable number of arts-organisations central to the development of live art in England. This thesis seeks to articulate a more detailed analysis of the presentation of live art in order to present a specific, detailed and accurate account of the significance of local conditions and concerns and how they impact upon the sustainability of the broadest diversity of live-art practices. This close critical analysis of the development of live art in Liverpool not only considers the practical implications and procedural structures of presenting work, it extrapolates from this a way of understanding this very complex field of practice on a national level.

Finally, as the main aim of this research is to offer pragmatic recommendations for the future sustainable development of live art in Liverpool it is important that the research extends to 2013 in order that it offers a timely overview of relevant activity.

Chapter 1

The Bluecoat Arts Centre and the Development of Live Art in Liverpool

In the 1967 publication, *Art in a City*, a study of the visual-arts ecology in Liverpool in the 1960s, John Willett asserted that Liverpool's environment is unique in its ability to engender interdisciplinary practice in the arts, citing the early happenings by artist and poet Adrian Henri, in which poetry, visual art and pop music came together, and the way Stuart Sutcliffe's brief career oscillated between painting and popular music.[1] Willett discerned amongst the small bohemian scene that was at the core of his study of contemporary art practice in the city an ease with which artists so inclined could work across art-form boundaries. Admittedly the examples that Willett gave to evidence this claim, such as Henri and Sutcliffe, were few in number, however, as a starting point for an analysis of the development of live art in Liverpool (toward recommendations for improving the sustainability of live-art practices in the city), this observation is pertinent, and well-grounded within a rigorously researched, and broader overview of the arts in Liverpool. *Art in a City* set out an ambitious vision for how Liverpool could most effectively build on what appeared to Willett, based on his considerable and wide-ranging research, to be its significant and unique relationship to arts practice. Willett's study, though firmly based on the visual-arts infrastructure in Liverpool, considered a number of broad issues that impacted upon the arts at a national level, such as government-initiated cultural policy, artists' practice, education, audiences, access to the arts and social and political conditions.

Willett's observation, that Liverpool was uniquely placed to provide useful conditions for the development of interdisciplinary practice, was indicative of two trends in the city at the end

[1] Stuart Sutcliffe was the bass guitarist with The Beatles from 1959-1961.

of the 1950s and into the following decade which, whilst part of the general post-war breaking down of old social structures and hierarchies across the whole of the UK, found particular resonance and articulation in Liverpool. First, there was a much greater move towards a popularisation of culture away from its long-held position of lofty elitism. The biennial John Moores painting competitions at the Walker, for example, became genuinely popular events, attracting increasingly large and diverse audiences beyond those that the gallery already enjoyed, and when the Walker staged a memorial exhibition of the work of Sutcliffe (a previous John Moore's Exhibition exhibitor) in 1963, some 10,000 people attended, many of them undoubtedly Beatles fans. Galleries, and the Walker in particular, had longed since ceased to be the preserve of the few, but this period witnessed an unprecedented opening up to a wider constituency**.** By the 1970s theatre in Liverpool, principally the Everyman, was witnessing a greater local engagement through plays that both reflected topical issues about everyday experience in the city and captured the imagination of an increasing number of people who would not necessarily have regarded themselves as regular theatre-goers. Above all, the democratisation of culture in Liverpool was seen in an explosion of community activity, from the pioneering work of The Blackie,[2] to myriad neighbourhood initiatives involving an array of arts and cultural activities by and for local people, such as carnivals, photography workshops, the free school and free press movements.[3]

Second, the city's perceived rebellious spirit was not confined to its politics, but was beginning to be articulated through popular culture as well. Innate self-belief, however deluded, Yosser Hughes' 'I can do that' mantra in *Boys from the Blackstuff* combined with a sense of going against the grain, has long been perceived to characterise aspects of

[2] Established in 1968 by Bill and Wendy Harpe, The Blackie was the UK's first community arts venue, with this allegedly being the first use of the term community arts in the UK.
[3] Manifestations such as The Scottie Press, The Liverpool Free Press and Scotland Road Free School were representative of community activism that developed during the early 1970s.

Liverpool's creativity. From the early 1960s it was seen in the way the confidence, intelligence and quick wit displayed by the Beatles came across as being distinctly un-English, not the way things were normally done. As Paul du Noyer has claimed, 'To be from Liverpool, even before the Beatles and mass-media begat a certain self-consciousness about the city's identity, was to be at one remove from standard-English reality'.[4] Rebel voices, not necessarily oppositional, but more likely individual and maverick, have rarely struggled to be heard in Liverpool, whilst local audiences, never shy of expressing an opinion, nevertheless remain open to whatever artists throw at them.

Though in 1967 Willett found little more in the way of performance art to report on than Henri's live actions, his sense of the conditions being right in Liverpool for experimentation and the cross-fertilisation of poetry, art and music was realised in the following years when the city witnessed a growth in what was eventually to become known as live art. In 1967, the same year as the publication of *Art in a City*, Fluxus artist Yoko Ono performed at The Bluecoat in Liverpool[5] at the invitation of Dave Clapham, a young lecturer at Liverpool's Regional College of Art who had seen this then unknown artist in a happening at London's Alexandra Palace, in the *14 Hour Technicolour Dream* event, the coming out of London's underground alternative scene. In Liverpool, instead of performing to a more singular audience comprised of hippies, Ono found herself facing a packed audience comprising Beatles fans (Clapham had informed the local newspaper of Lennon's interest in this artist whom he had met at her exhibition in London's Indica Gallery), the curious, and Liverpool's avant-garde, including Adrian Henri who sat in the front row and participated in the performance, wrapping Ono in bandages. From the evidence of the short documentation,

[4] Paul du Noyer, from 'Subversive Dreamers: Liverpool Songwriting from the Beatles to the Zutons' in *Writing Liverpool*, eds. Michael Murphy and Deryn Rees-Jones, 2007, Liverpool University Press p.241.
[5] Yoko Ono presented *Concert of Music for the Mind* (which included *Sweep Piece* and *Wrap Piece*) and premiered *The Fog Machine* at The Bluecoat in September 1967.

filmed by Granada TV and photographed by local students, the event was extraordinary, the artist managing to hold the audience's attention, and even involving them on stage with what must have appeared as a series of absurd invitations. The next day Ono performed at Liverpool's School of Art in the main lecture theatre, to the disapproval of senior management who reprimanded Clapham for allowing students to be exposed to such a lewd spectacle as Ono simulating sex inside a bag with her then husband Terry Cox. [6]

It would, of course, be a generalisation to claim that Liverpool audiences have consistently attended live-art events and are always comprised of a diverse range of individuals, or that Liverpool School of Art has never embraced difficult and experimental performative practice. But Ono's experience in the city *does* reflect two key factors pertinent to the development of live art in Liverpool: that the city has provided a conducive environment and public reception for contemporary art practice presented in a live context; and that such work has had a presence in the city *despite* the absence of a formalised framework for support of live art in higher-education institutions at undergraduate, graduate level and emerging artist level.

The *comparative* dearth of live-art practitioners emerging from the city's higher-education institutions in Liverpool at the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s is notwithstanding the efforts of *Bomb Culture* author, Jeff Nuttall, who was Head of the Art School between 1981 and 1984. Under the influence of Nuttall, whose own work comprised poetry, visual art and theatre, the school produced artists such as Bob Connolly, Phil Hughes and Robin Blackledge, all developing distinctive live-art practices both in Liverpool and beyond, including internationally. All three eventually left the city, Connolly returning briefly to curate a weekend of Nordic live art during *Liverpool Live 2004*.

[6] Email correspondence between Bryan Biggs and Dave Clapham 2007.

Although, in terms of higher-education contexts in the city, there wasn't an established and consistent framework during key stages in the programming and development of live-art practice this hasn't necessarily been to the detriment of the nature and quality of the work that has been produced, and presented, in the city. However, ultimately it has led to there being a significant gap in the infrastructure and ecology for the support of live-art practice and in the development of a community of practising artists, who clearly position their work under the heading of live art, in the city. Since 2002 a vibrant context for the development of live art has been developed through Liverpool Hope University's BA in Contemporary and Performing Arts (CPA). The CPA course has been written, developed and delivered by a number of live-art practitioners such as Sharon Smith who taught on the CPA and dance courses from 2002-2005, and current academic staff Lena Simic, Gary Anderson, Mark Greenwood and Rachel Sweeney, and most recently Simon Piasecki who became head of Dance, Drama, Theatre Studies and Performing Arts in 2013. All of the aforementioned individuals are practising artists who describe their work as live art and who present work across a number of live-art programming contexts on a local, regional, national and international level. The artists mentioned are all actively engaged in academic research which articulates, contextualises and theorises their live-art practice. Of the higher-education institutions in the city, Liverpool Hope University offers the greatest potential in becoming integral to the live-art ecology of the city, in terms of artist development and programming of live-art work in Liverpool. Hope University's plans for an annual live-art festival (LOOP) which has a focus on durational live-art practice, is being discussed with The Bluecoat, which signals the potential start to a productive collaborative live-art programming initiative. There is also the potential for Liverpool John Moores University to develop a more sustained approach to developing live art through both the Drama and Theatre Department and through

the School of Art and Design. The nature of the institutional framework for the development of live-art practice in Liverpool between 1979 and 2013 is an important factor in considering opportunities for the sustainable development of live art in Liverpool and feeds into the pragmatic set of recommendations presented in Chapter 4.

The wider history of performative practice and audience engagement in Liverpool can be characterised by a clear understanding of, and concern with, local political and social conditions. Of course it is not useful to claim that this is exclusive to Liverpool or that other cities in the UK cannot articulate these considerations as part of their own live-art history, but it is important to articulate exactly *how* this aspect of creative activity has become manifest in relation to live art in Liverpool. The point of this critical analysis of the development of live art in Liverpool is not for the purpose of arguing for the city's uniqueness *per se*, but rather for the purpose of assessing what specific and precise recommendations are needed for the continued sustainability of the diversity of live-art practices in this particular city.

The Bluecoat (fig.1.1), Liverpool's combined arts-venue, has been hugely significant to artists' practice for over four decades. Built in 1717 The Bluecoat is a Grade One Listed building and is the oldest building in the centre of Liverpool. After functioning as a charity school for almost 200 years, The Bluecoat has, since the early years of the 20th century, been a home for the contemporary arts and has been positioned at the heart of Liverpool's cultural life.

Following Ono's first performance at The Bluecoat in 1967 (she returned some 40 years later for a second performance for the art-centre's reopening programme after its major capital

development in 2008)[7] the venue hosted several other events and exhibitions with a live element in the late 1960s, notably Mark Boyle and John Latham who then collaborated with the Eventstructure Group at The Blackie. The Blackie, located in Liverpool's Chinatown district, pioneered participative arts practice, collaborating with local people and artists from the international avant-garde, such as Meredith Monk, Judy Chicago and the Last Poets, working across a variety of disciplines including dance, music, poetry and visual arts. Though little of this was performance art as such, The Blackie has played an important role in the city as a venue that combines artistic experimentation across art-forms with audience interaction, an ingredient of much live art.

In 1974 Thames & Hudson published one of the first comprehensive accounts of interdisciplinary art practice, Adrian Henri's *Environments and Happenings*, yet in Liverpool, where Henri continued to be based until his death in 2000, performance art was fairly sporadic and undocumented in the 1970s. Performance art enjoyed a brief spell at the revived Liverpool Academy of Arts after the organisation relocated from its small shop front on Renshaw Street to larger renovated premises in Pilgrim Street, where under the direction of Murdoch Lothian, artists such as Roland Miller and Shirley Cameron, Rose Garrard and John Carson performed as an integral part of the gallery programme, and in 1979 Alastair MacLennan was part of a group-exhibition titled *Poste Restante*. During the 1980s Liverpool Academy of Arts presented the work of Celia Garbutt, Sonia Knox, Catherine Elwes, Silvia Ziranek, and Bobby Baker's performance *My Cooking Competes*. There were also very occasional performances, for instance by Stuart Brisley, at the Bridewell which was then the main artists' studio group in the city. Even the city's photography gallery, Open Eye,

[7] The Bluecoat underwent a major capital development between 2005 and 2008 which included a major refurbishment of the internal spaces of the building, the creation of a brand new and much larger gallery space, and a new performance space.

included performance. In 1980, during Alice Beberman's exhibition at the gallery on Whitechapel, she sent some students into Liverpool's shopping streets dressed in specially knitted nude 'Furbelow' outfits, only to see them arrested and imprisoned.[8] There was not though a recognisable centre for performance art as such, nothing to compare to Newcastle's Basement Group (later Locus +) or Nottingham's Midland Group - not until The Bluecoat picked up the mantle again in the late 1980s, by which time this area of performative practice had become known as live art.

By the mid-1980s the term live art was evident on the UK's cultural landscape through its use in festivals such as the annual *National Review of Live Art*, and booklets like *Live Art Now*, published by the Arts Council,[9] which now had a funding stream for live-art within its combined arts unit, together with an advisory panel. From 1988 onwards The Bluecoat enjoyed several years of funding from this Arts Council source for a series of thematic live-art commissions that took place both within the arts-centre and at city-centre sites. Liverpool provided an excellent location for such interventions, its urban fabric rich with found spaces, empty properties and a distressed public realm, the unfortunate result of years of economic decline on Merseyside. It was an environment that was to be exploited by the local month-

[8] For an account of this controversy see Chapter 18, '1980: Performers jailed for wearing "rude" costumes', in John A. Walker's *Art & Outrage: Provocation, Controversy and the Visual Arts,* 1999, Pluto Press, London and Sterling, Virginia.

[9] For continuity I use the term 'the Arts Council' throughout this research, to refer to the Arts Council England (Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland), and to refer to the two former organisational bodies , The Arts Council of Great Britain (1946 – 1994), and the Arts Councils of England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland (1994 – 2001), except of course where it is important to clarify and distinguish between the current and former organisational bodies of the Arts Council and the impact of organisational restructuring. Where the research highlights comparisons and/or anomalies between the different geographical areas on a national basis, I will clarify and articulate this when relevant and appropriate. The Arts Council of Great Britain was divided in 1994 to form the Arts Council of England (now Arts Council England), the Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Council of Wales. In 2010 the Scottish Arts Council was replaced by Creative Scotland. Where pertinent to the argument I analyse the impact of Arts Council activity and restructuring in closer detail.

[9] Although Live Art Development Agency is funded by Arts Council England, a number of their projects, initiatives and developments also relate to, and have influenced activity in, Scotland, Wales and, to a lesser extent, Northern Ireland.

long visual-arts celebration Visionfest[10] which took over non-gallery sites in the city, and later with greater ambition and resources by the Liverpool Biennial's sited public commissions. In 1988 the Tate opened its northern gallery at Liverpool's Albert Dock, and in the week of its launch Liverpool performance group Visual Stress (fig.1.2) presented *Death by free enterprise*, their first 'Urban Vimbuza' (fig.1.3) outside the Bluecoat, in response to the new gallery's arrival. It was 'a daring multi-media performance in which the Bluecoat's own slave history was exorcised by a combination of Zambian ritual dance and drumming, priests abseiling from the building, plastic planes flying overhead, bikers revving up, live radio broadcast, and cacophonous music all achieved, as the Liverpool Echo arts correspondent reported, "for a fiftieth of the cost of The Invention of Tradition" which was Gavin Bryars' and Bruce McLean's opening performance at the Tate.'[11] The recruitment of local people, few if any of whom would describe themselves as artists, let alone live-artists, into an interventionist art piece, together with the group's critical engagement with Liverpool's troubled history in relation to race, distinguished Visual Stress as a unique radical performance outfit - far removed from the live-art groups emerging in this period, such as Forced Entertainment,[12] who were producing touring shows for arts-centre venues, including The Bluecoat. Subsequent Visual Stress performances continued to interrogate Liverpool's history and to problematise its present contradictions. However, operating largely outside of the mainstream and unable to attract significant funding, the group was unsuccessful in trying to sustain its practice.

[10] Visionfest took place every October from 1992-1997. The festival was initiated and run by John Brady, former arts officer at Merseyside Arts Council.

[11] Bryan Biggs, 'Welcome to the Pleasure Dome: Art in Liverpool 1988-1999', in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool & the Avant-garde*, eds. Christoph Grunenberg and Robert Knifton, 2007, Liverpool University Press in association with Tate Liverpool, p187.

[12] Although Forced Entertainment would describe themselves as an experimental-performance company who work across different media including performance, installation and publication, the company are prominent within a live-art context both in the UK and internationally, and have come to be most readily associated with what constitutes live-art practice in the UK, certainly from an international perspective.

Other early Bluecoat commissions include Peter McRae's visually powerful durational piece *Avenue of Heroes* (1988) (fig.1.4), in which four women bearing huge white flags sit atop large plinths against the imposing backdrop of St George's Hall, amidst Victorian statues of now-forgotten male figures; TEA's *Baggages* from the same year, in which the group's four artists converge on the Bluecoat courtyard where they create a house from their collective costumes; and in 1989, in a collaboration between The Bluecoat and Ark Records, Leningrad music and art collective Pop Mechanica (fig.1.5) performing for the first time in the UK at St George's Hall alongside Liverpool artists.

Throughout the 1990s The Bluecoat started to develop its role in supporting live-art practices in Liverpool and continued to present performative work both within the building and beyond. Much of this work that took place in the 1990s were the building blocks for The Bluecoat's live-art programme that I developed at a more strategic level between 2000 and 2006.

The Bluecoat building, in terms of its physical appearance and its history, is an important factor in the consideration of its relationship to live-art and visual-art practice. Subsequent to major building repairs to The Bluecoat after it was damaged during a bombing raid in the Second World War, most changes to the fabric of the building had been make-shift and sporadic, until the major re-development was completed in 2008. Prior to this development, years of inadequate repairs and re-decoration, and the physical layout and quality of the spaces within the building, had led to the venue looking and feeling more like a community-arts space rather than a contemporary visual art gallery and performance venue. Janet Hodgson's work *I must learn to know my place* for the 1994 *On Location* commissions drew on the history of the former school building, onto which the repeated hand-written, light-

projected text of the title (lines doled out as classroom punishment) was inscribed onto the outside of the building. The work prompted the question of where culture resided, inside the institution or beyond it. The nature of The Bluecoat's early 18th century building continued to provide artists with a striking physical context, beyond its clearly defined gallery and performance spaces, within which to develop and present work. It is also a point of reference for those whose work deals directly with the history of the city, or with the building's former role as a school, as in Geraldine Pilgrim's *Traces* (2008) (fig.1.6, fig.1.7). Given these resonances, it is not perhaps surprising that so many artists have been able to develop work that pushes the boundaries of performance and interdisciplinary practice there. It is also important to note that before the building was refurbished between 2006 and 2008, the performance space (or Concert Hall as it was named) within the venue was not a typical black-box theatre space, but was a 73' x 20' hall (with a free-standing extendable raked seating-unit) that was used for music, dance and theatre performances. A full black-out could never be achieved in The Concert Hall as the room (which now houses The Bluecoat's restaurant) has eight very large windows (with curtains but no blackout blinds) and the space had only a very basic set-up for lighting and sound. While these characteristics meant that there were limitations to what could be achieved from a theatrical perspective, there was also a flexibility to the space which allowed artists to experiment and find different ways of working within it. The Concert Hall provided a space that was somewhere between a theatre and a site, what I refer to as a provisional space, and this had an impact on the nature of the work that was presented and produced there.

The aforementioned Visual Stress performances, which, like Hodgson's projected text, brought historical legacies into sharp focus by framing them in the present, were reflective of a wider black Liverpudlian performance expression that emerged in part through the annual

Oral & Black showcases at the Bluecoat (fig.1.8), and had such an impact on the city's performance scene in the 1990s. Arguably it was *Trophies of Empire* that provided a reference point for much of the culturally diverse live work that developed in the city in the wake of this 1992 exhibition and performance commission project. Coordinated by The Bluecoat with partners in Bristol and Hull the performance commission invited artists to respond to colonial legacies across venues in the three port cities. Groups like Verbal Images which included poets Levi Tafari and Muhammad Khalil and dancer Bisakha Sarker, Asian Voices Asian Lives, and Motsibi, all fused poetry, music, visuals and dance into new performance forms that found a natural home under the live-art banner. At the same time a processional work like Nina Edge's *Sold Down the River* (fig.1.9, fig.1.10, fig.1.11), travelling from the Bluecoat to the Albert Dock, was closer in spirit to Visual Stress, bringing together elements of carnival, spoken word, performance, protest, audience interaction and large numbers of people. It articulated a public issue, in this case betrayal, specifically the way Merseyside had been let down - not least by national government, departing industries and market forces. Such interventionist works were topical, critically engaged and celebratory, and though rooted in the local were also becoming increasingly connected to international contexts as part of a discourse in the UK and USA around black performance.[13]

The Bluecoat's exhibition programme from 1985's *Black Skin Bluecoat* onwards was instrumental in reflecting the work of emerging artists dealing with issues around race, identity and what was to become termed culturally diverse art practice. Live art operating in this territory found a natural home in the venue with artists such as Keith Khan, Delta Streete, David Tse, Kazuko Hohki and William Yang all performing. A series of live-art commissions

[13] See *Let's Get It On: The Politics of Black Performance*, ed. Catherine Ugwu (1995, ICA, London and Bay Press, Seattle), which includes contributions from Nina Edge and Kif Higgins of Visual Stress, alongside those from SuAndi, Chila Kumari Burman, Ronald Fraser-Munro, Guillermo Goméz-Peña and Keith Antar Mason from the Hittite Empire, all of whom presented work at the Bluecoat.

in 1997 interrogating the idea of independence was prompted by the gallery exhibition *Independent Thoughts* staged, like *Trophies of Empire,* as a collaboration, with provincial galleries and with artists from the UK and the Indian sub-continent, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of India's independence and the partition of Pakistan. The selected artists included Liverpool-based live-art practitioners Nina Edge and Asian Voices Asian Lives, and Rona Lee whose durational performance consisted of her stitching together an enormous Union flag from white fabric, in The Bluecoat's auditorium.

The Bluecoat, principally as a result of the vision of its Artistic Director Bryan Biggs, was also well placed to develop live work at the intersection of art and popular music, commissioning some seminal works in this area, long before curated programmes of contemporary artists plundering pop became commonplace. *Live from the Vinyl Junkyard* and *Mixing It* were two such commission series in 1996 and 1997, selected from open submission. They blurred the boundaries between the genres of art and pop music, and yielded such works as Jeremy Deller's *Acid Brass*, in which England's top brass band performed a concert of acid-house favourites; Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard's *Doing it for the kids*, a superstar tribute line up of Jarvis Cocker, Kylie Minogue, David Bowie, Morrissey and other tribute acts; Cornford & Cross' turning the Bluecoat gallery into a record fair for a day; and Phillip Jeck's *Off the Record* installation and live mix fashioned from scratchy discs in a room packed with dansette record players. None of these could claim to be part of the UK live-art touring circuit, the context instead being the Bluecoat's long relationship to the art/pop crossover, stretching back to cult US rock musician Captain Beefheart's first ever exhibition of paintings at the venue in 1972 and programming of visiting avant-garde music experimentalists such as Whirled Music (David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford and Max Eastley).

Development of Live Art in Liverpool and at The Bluecoat 2000-2006

By January 2000, when I became the live-art programmer at The Bluecoat, the venue had started to become part of the developing network of UK organisations promoting live art, programming touring productions and working with individual artists such as Richard Layzell, Bobby Baker and John Carson. The first live-art project that I contributed to the development of at The Bluecoat was a collaborative curatorial initiative and live-art commission called *Trans:action*. The artists who took part in this initiative were Max Factory (Sharon Smith, Phil Collins and Felicity Croydon) (fig.1.12) with a piece entitled *Across the Line* and Mem Morrison with *Tryptich.* The initiative was an attempt to consider and create new ways of touring live art and to make the process and making of the work integral to the touring process, with the selected artists creating works which evolved in response to each venue and city. From The Bluecoat the artists moved on to Warwick Arts Centre at the University of Warwick in Coventry, and finally to Arnolfini, the combined-arts centre in Bristol. The project took place over three weeks, with the artists spending a week at each venue and presenting a performance at the end of each of those weeks. The aim of the project was that the work would evolve in response to each venue and city, responding to the venue, the city and the local context. This project marks the beginning of my strategic development of live art at The Bluecoat, which positioned the venue's programme of live art within a national framework from 2000-2006.

During my first year at The Bluecoat I wrote a number of planning documents which aimed to extend and expand the performance programme to include a more embedded live-art focus. My key aims for the development of live art, as outlined in one of these planning documents (Appendix A) were: to generate an audience locally for live art; to encourage production of new work by local artists; to provide a platform for regional artists; to provide a critical

context for live art through events and discussions; to raise the profile of live art at The Bluecoat and; to link this area of work to other strands of The Bluecoat programme to encourage audience cross-over. My priorities at this stage were to develop the local context for the support and production of the broadest diversity of live-art practice and to open up opportunities for artists to develop (and importantly to take risks with) their process without the pressure of making work for an audience, or to show work in a supportive environment to audiences who were interested in seeing experimental performance work at various stages of development. Although The Bluecoat had had a vibrant performance programme, as outlined above, it became clear through discussions with artists that there was further potential to develop the programme through the provision of more regular opportunities for artists to present and see work in an informal setting.

The Bluecoat had received funding for specific, one-off live-art events and initiatives but by 2000 the venue still didn't have a dedicated annual budget allocated to the presentation and support of live art. A potential £5000 was allocated to the live-art programme for 2000-2001 from the budget for the performance programme, a programme which comprised contemporary dance, music, theatre and festival events. However, the relatively small amount earmarked for live-art programming and support was not necessarily guaranteed, with the possibility that some, or all of it, could be re-allocated to another area of the performance programme if income targets for events were not met (Appendix A). Despite attempts to consolidate and develop live art, lack of specific and guaranteed funding meant that my main objective of establishing a regular and frequent (weekly) programme of live-art events (performances, talks and/or workshops) could not be realised at that stage. In establishing a frequent event at The Bluecoat I was aiming to establish a community of artists and create a dynamic context for artist support, production of new work and critical debate.

In 2001 North West Arts Board agreed to support live art at The Bluecoat by building in £10,000 per year to its annual funding grant. Although this was still a relatively small amount of funding the fact that it was a budget allocated specifically to the development of the live-art programme allowed me to embark on longer-term and more strategic planning. I developed a weekly live-art event, *The Wednesday Sessions*, which ran from May 2001 until March 2002. These weekly sessions aimed to showcase and support the work of artists based in Liverpool and included performances, talks and workshops by artists working across a number of performative practices. Artists who took part in these sessions include: Paul Rooney (well-established contemporary visual artist working in performance), Mike Carney (live-artist), Philip Jeck (experimental musician and 'turntablist'), Mary Prestidge (dance artist) and Rebecca Reid (emerging live-artist and student at Liverpool School of Art and Design). The weekly events also included talks and workshops from people outside of the region, including Lois keidan and Daniel Brine from Live Art Development Agency in London. The regularity and frequency of these events allowed for sharing of artists' practice which led to collaborative projects, for example Mary Prestidge and members of Frakture, the experimental music group who regularly presented and programmed work at The Bluecoat, began to work collaboratively through improvisation to present workshops and performances. *The Wednesday Sessions* took place in The Sandon Room, a small space in the venue with a maximum capacity of 40 for a seated audience, the size and nature of the space lent it an informality which contributed to artists feeling that they could take risks and present work at various stages of development.

In the same year, 2001 I developed *Project Space*, another strand of programming that aimed to create spaces for artists to develop their process and practice and to present it to an

audience. One of my key aims with this initiative was to allow artists the opportunity to make work in response to the gallery spaces and to open these spaces up to sustained periods of performance activity, and not just one-off performative events. Artists were given the gallery space for a week in order to develop and work on a new idea and at the end of the week they were invited to present a short work in progress (if they felt ready to). Artists who took part in *Project Space* include Michaela Zimmer, a photographer who was interested in developing a more performative practice in relation to her photographic work, and Adrian Challis who had previously worked as part of a performance company and wanted to develop a solo-performance.

Live-art activity at the Bluecoat became increasingly closely aligned with the performance programme during the 1990s, in part due to the fact that the gallery has always been heavily driven and guided by an eight-week exhibition schedule, but also in line with broader developments across the live-art sector. The perception that the visual-arts programming schedule was difficult to disrupt was not based on anything other than standardisation of exhibition timeframes. As a result of this live art had not been *fully* integrated into the visual-arts at The Bluecoat, despite the fact that there have been a large number of events and activities that have been planned and implemented within, and under the programme heading of, the visual-arts programme.

The potential for The Bluecoat to further develop as a creative hub for artist development across the widest range of performative practice was explored and, to some extent, realised through *The Wednesday Sessions* and *Project Space*. These two projects responded to what artists in Liverpool were articulating in terms of the need for time, space and the context within which they could explore ideas and take risks. This was also a perceived need that was

being articulated through a series of meetings (Focus Live Art) that were instigated by Live Art Development Agency in London and which took place in different regions across England in September 2001. There is currently no comparable weekly session of live-art performances and discussions taking place in Liverpool.

In March 2002 I developed a business plan outlining and expanding on my main aims and objectives for developing live art at The Bluecoat. This business plan (Appendix B) subsequently formed the basis of a successful application to the Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP) stream of funding. The application to RALP was for £40,000 over a two-year period from July 2002-June 2004 to develop live art through dedicated funding to this strand of programming. The total budget for the development initiative was £63,500 (Appendix C) and the main aims and objectives as outlined in the business plan were to: support live-art practice in the North-West region by working with and profiling artists in local and international contexts; increase audiences for experimental, interdisciplinary performance practice in the North West; develop a critical context in Liverpool for live art; create access to live-art networks for the benefit of regional practitioners and; strengthen The Bluecoat's role as a supporter and promoter of live art:

> This plan is for a two-year programme of live art, building on, yet additional to and more developmental than our current support for this area of experimental art-practice. Through recent programmes of one-off live art events at the Bluecoat, we recognise a need for a more strategic approach to artists and audiences for this work in the North West, especially on Merseyside (Appendix B)

The rationale for developing live art at The Bluecoat and in Liverpool as outlined in the business plan stated that this was an opportune time to develop artists working in live art, and audiences for live-art practice. The business plan cited a perceived lack of a critical context

for discourse around live-art practice in Liverpool, and the need for more support to develop new work in the city, as key objectives. Liverpool Biennial also presented a potential context for presenting work, developed in the city, within a national and international event.

Commitment to artist development is reflected in the budget (Appendix C) where £22,500 of funding was allocated to regional showcases, an associate artist initiative (referred to as Attached Artists in the budget) and artists' expenses. Other budget lines show an allocation of £4,300 for fees and expenses to the associate artists for the delivery of workshops in colleges and a further £1,100 allocated to artist fees for the delivery of workshops at The Bluecoat. For the associate artist initiative it was proposed that three artists would each receive £3000 over a 12-month period plus other fees and expenses (as outlined above) for the delivery of workshops.

In the business plan the associate artist initiative is articulated as being 'a two way process, the artists receiving support to develop their practice, The Bluecoat gaining creative input from the artists which will have programming and audience development benefits.' (Appendix B) The artists taking part in the initiative were expected to: generate interest in live art from students; feed into live-art programming at The Bluecoat; present work and open up their creative process to the public; generate debate around live art; be involved in the planning for a regional live-art platform and; contribute to the evaluation of the initiative. With critical reflection on the expectations placed on the associate artists it is clear that the programme, as reflected in the following schedule from the business plan, was too prescriptive and formulaic:

20 days developing own work, using Bluecoat resources (admin, technical, rehearsal space)
5 days presenting own work in progress for public, educational groups and their peers
2 days presentation of completed work as public performance
1 days participation in artist forum events

13 days college workshops (these to be paid in part by colleges, so days variable, dependent on demand)
2 days contributing to Bluecoat programming, working with curatorial staff
3 days input into devising final regional showcase, working with Bluecoat staff
1 days evaluation, in collaboration with Bluecoat staff
3 days preparation/meetings

While the intention behind the scheme was laudable, and the activity outlined potentially valuable for the artists, the initiative privileged the needs of The Bluecoat over the development of the artists' practice in a very formulaic way. The attempt to formalise the relationship to that extent was questioned by the three associate artists Adrian Challis, Rebecca Reid and Roger Hill who were, justifiably, critical of these expectations. To some extent the business plan for live art at The Bluecoat was shaped by its inclusion within an application to the Arts Council, and this highlights how the strategy for the support of artists developing live-art practice was becoming framed within regional, and subsequently national, funding agendas. Although this was not necessarily a feasible outline of activity for the three associate artists at this particular time in the development of their practice, the associate artist model is, in general, a very productive one and there are some aspects of the proposed plan that can be considered in moving forward with future pragmatic recommendations for artists' support. For example, artists contributing to the programming and curatorial planning for live-art programmes is established practice, and this could be developed to take place on a more regular basis, with artists guest-curating strands of the live-art programme. Artists taking live art into further-education colleges on a more strategic basis rather than as a one-off workshop, with the aim of offering an overview of the range of practices that live art encompasses. The business plan also outlined the aim of developing a regional live-art showcase of artists working in Liverpool to take place during Liverpool Biennial (14 September – 24 November 2002). A showcase of live-art work did not take place in

Liverpool, however, The Bluecoat established links with Tamsin Drury of hAb, a live-art producer based in Manchester and central to the development and support of live art in the region, and formed a conduit through which Liverpool-based artists were introduced to the platform and showcase opportunities that were being provided in Manchester.

By 2002 The Bluecoat had embarked on a programming collaboration with Live Art Development Agency and had secured £25,000 from Arts Council England (National Office) for a specially commissioned programme of live art, entitled *You Are Here,* to be presented within the context of *Liverpool Biennial* (2002).[14] *You Are Here* looked at 'the complexities of contemporary identities and asked whether Internationalism is a geographical or a cultural concept' (*You Are Here* brochure). The programme was developed as a dialogue between the selected artists and their work, and Guillermo Gomez-Pena's large-scale performance installation *Ex-Centris: A Living Diorama of Fetishized Others* (fig.1.13) which was commissioned for Liverpool Biennial's International Exhibition. Over a period of four days British-based, international artists working with live and time-based practices contemplated, contested and critiqued ideas of cultural difference, displacement and hybridity. The programme comprised work by Oreet Ashery (fig.1.14), George Chakravathi (fig.1.15), Suki Chan and Dinu Li (fig.1.16), Stacy Makishi (fig.1.17), Silke Mansholt (fig.1.18), Kira O'Reilly (fig.1.19), Qasim Riza Shaheen (fig.1.20) and Mad for Real (Cai Yuan and JJ Xi) (fig.1.21), was presented within the context of a high-profile, international visual-art event, and aimed to convey the contradictions and complexities of contemporary identity.

[14] Liverpool Biennial was established in 1998 with the first *International Exhibition* taking place in 1999.

The *You Are Here* programme explicitly addressed issues of cultural difference and was in-line with Live Art Development Agency's articulation of live art being a cultural strategy rather than an art-form.

For *You Are Here*, Stacy Makishi (a London-based artist who is originally from Hawaii) presented a performative work that responded to the themes set out in the programme, called *You are here....but where am I?* The work took place at sites around Liverpool city-centre: Lime Street Station; Liverpool Pier Head; and The Albert Dock. Makishi performed a series of playful and poignant actions in charged sites of departure and arrival, based on the artist's characteristically humorous performance style. Makishi spent two hours at a time at each site, encouraging members of the public to engage with her in conversation and in small performative interactions, for example, helping Makishi to catch her own tears in a glass vial. The conversations, which were instigated and guided by Makishi, were framed by her poetic musings about place and identity and were based on her own experiences of interactions with, or interrogation from officials at, points of arrival and departure. She described the piece as being about 'partings and our painful and magnetic yearnings for the exotic isle of elsewhere' (*You Are Here* brochure) Makishi's performative rituals and interventions engaged members of the public in Liverpool as participants, eventually leading to the participant creating their own passport.

In the *You Are Here* brochure the piece was described as an 'interdisciplinary piece (part installation; part one to one interrogation) [which] explores the politics of language, borders, immigration and cross-cultural identity'. The work was successful as both an intimate one-to-one performance and a highly visible work in Liverpool's public spaces. Makishi was an unusual and particular presence at all of the sites where the piece took place, but during the

interactions with members of the public, she created a very intimate conversation with that particular person, drawing them into an alternative reality within the broader context of the continuing day-to-day activity taking place around them.

For *You Are Here*, Silke Mansholt presented *Homage To The Heart,* a solo performance that she developed and first performed in 2001, in London and Brighton, and in 2002 at the *National Review of Live Art* in Glasgow. Along with two other solo performances *Orphan* (2003) and *Die Gehangte* (2004), *Homage To The Heart* was an exploration of 'German-ness', or more specifically Mansholt's 'German-ness', and her personal history. Mansholt saw these performances as journeys that allowed her to liberate herself from the weight of her past in terms of cultural identity and her country's history, while also intending them to be a celebration of the beauty of German culture. Mansholt understands her works as an attempt to explore and heal what she perceives to be the problematic relationship between 'the English' and 'the German'. Embracing England as a place of creativity through her position as an artist from 'outside' affords her the space for critical thinking. This was part of a triple bill with George Chakravarthi *Great Expecations* and Qasim Riza Shaheen *Conversing with Angels*.

Oreet Ashery's work on 'otherness' has been created through her alter ego: the orthodox Jewish male Marcus Fisher (Mar-Cus translated in Hebrew is Mr Cunt). Marcus is based on her close friend in Israel who became an orthodox Jew. Having lost touch with that friend as a result of the fact that she had issues with this decision, Ashery decided to use her practice as a way of thinking through and framing the issues and tensions. Ashery invited audiences to

interact with her alter-ego in a number of ways.[15] For *You Are Here* Oreet Ashery presented Marcus Fisher in a series of one-to-one performances, in a work called *Say Cheese* that took place in the Holiday Inn Hotel, opposite Lime Street Station in Liverpool. During the one-to-one encounter the audience member/participant was invited in to the room where Marcus Fisher was on the bed. Individuals were encouraged to join Fisher on the bed, and there was a script available for the individual to engage in a pre-written scenario. There were a number of options available to participants in this one-to-one performance: sit quietly; physically engage with Fisher; stage a pillow fight. All participants in this work took a photograph of themselves with Fisher, with a camera set up at the end of the bed, and a shutter-release cable that the participant used to take the photograph. The participant in the work became the person who documented and recorded the intimate engagement with 'the other'.

In the three examples outlined above, audience and participants were implicated in the work in very specific and direct ways, potentially made to feel as though they were the 'other', or at least positioned within situations that were constructed in order to afford participants/audience a sense, or an intellectual understanding (or both), of what being other can mean. *You Are Here* highlighted that the way in which a number of artists deal with notions of identity is not to describe their own experiences as such, but to offer an experiential understanding of 'otherness'. The tactics employed by Stacy Makishi and Oreet Ashery rely on the audience member being engaged in a very direct and personal performance, with the artist reconfiguring both the physical and conceptual space to allow for

[15] Marcus Fisher first appeared in a series of Black and White self-portraits taken inside in a private space, he then left his room and interacted with the outside world, which is documented in *Marcus Fisher's Wake,* a film made in 2000. In the film Marcus Fisher's life is narrated by a female American voice. During the film Marcus Fisher sits in a Soho cafe, he smokes, lies in the park just next to a group of people who are picking up rubbish around them. He helps them to pick up the rubbish, but feels that he is part of the rubbish as well. Marcus Fisher smokes in an all-male Turkish cafe in Berlin, dances with men in Israel, goes to the sea in Tel Aviv and throws away his cigarettes; his one and only vice – this action is inspired a Jewish custom of going to the water once a year and throwing all of your sins into it. Throughout the film Marcus Fisher searches for a way of belonging.

a consideration that all notions of identity are complex. In light of developments in arts funding and resourcing it is important to be able to fully articulate the importance and resonance of performative practices such as these (which involve a small number of audience members in meaningful engagement) and in a way that is specific to the place and context within which the work is presented, in this case Liverpool.

You Are Here resonated with Liverpool's long and complex history, specifically in relation to cultural identity. Liverpool (along with other port-cities) is historically a city of arrival and departure, characterised as a place of transience, where many thousands of people have passed through on their way to many other destinations. *You Are Here* was a programme of work which successfully and subtly alluded to the sites of its presentation, without over-articulating the history of the city. The artists in the programme excavated something of the local conditions of Liverpool, and more specifically of The Bluecoat, and presented work that was both about the city and the personal material being explored. As a programme *You Are Here* was a very successful and focussed way of consolidating aspects of The Bluecoat's live-art programme, and opened up another context for artists in Liverpool to work within and in relation to.

You Are Here encompassed durational gallery-based work, performative intervention in public spaces, theatre-based performance, performative-installation and political activism, and the diversity and complexity of practice represented in the programme reflected my aim of creating a space at The Bluecoat for the consistent development and support the widest-range of live art. The evaluation of the programme for Arts Council England states that '*You Are Here* allowed The Bluecoat to re-position itself as a catalyst for live art in the city,

demonstrating the potential to bring regional, national and international live-art work together.'

While *You Are Here* was a success in terms of artistic quality and audience engagement: 'The breadth of the programme, presented in very different locations in the city centre, from the intimacy of a hotel bedroom to the bustle of Lime Street Station, meant that a very wide range of people were attracted to *You Are Here'* as outlined in the evaluation to the Arts Council (Appendix E). The scale of the project was ambitious and the resources available were limited in terms of delivering the event. 'The process worked well as a collaboration, and also revealed our shortcomings as a venue and in terms of human resources, which need to be addressed.' (Appendix E). *You Are Here* relied heavily on a small number of volunteers and The Bluecoat's Front of House Manager working alongside me to cover all aspects of the delivery of the programme, from logistical planning to implementation of all practical aspects of each performance.

One of the lines of enquiry that emerged from critical reflection on *You Are Here* was a consideration of the particular challenges associated with making and producing solo-performance. In March 2003 I received money from the Arts Council (as an individual and practising artist) to programme and deliver a two-day symposium interrogating a range of solo performative practices. The symposium took place at (and was in partnership with) The Bluecoat and comprised talks and performances from 30 artists including Giovanna Maria Cassetta, Silke Mansholt, Rodney Fraser Munro, Rebecca Reid, Lena Simic and Gaynor Sweeney. Many of the artists who were part of the symposium positioned their practice within live art, and a considerable number of the artists who were part of The Bluecoat live-art programme between 2000 and 2006 were producing solo works. This is significant in that,

although some of the work that I programmed during this time could be described as theatrical, I was mainly interested in artists who were developing autobiographical material, or who were working with material that they had a particular relationship with, in the way that all of the artists in *You Are Here* had developed work that articulated something of their personal or cultural experience.

The associate artists who began working with The Bluecoat in April 2003, Adrian Challis, Roger Hill and Rebecca Reid, all described their practice in terms of being an exploration of ideas through the framework of their personal, lived experience, and this was borne out by the way in which their practice developed during the time that they developed their practice at The Bluecoat. The associate artists initiative was given the title Live Art Bluecoat (LAB) and was outlined in the business plan to run from April 2003 until March 2004. Support for these artists continued on an informal basis after March 2004, particularly with Roger Hill who continued to have a very close working relationship with The Bluecoat and still does. Subsequent to being an associate artist at The Bluecoat, Hill was instrumental in setting up the artist collective *If Only* (based at The Bluecoat) with other Liverpool-based artists including Mary Prestidge, Mary Pearson, Jo Blowers, Phil Morton and Philip Jeck, artists who all position their work within the field of live art, and who work across a variety of performative contexts including dance, experimental music and physical theatre. Since developing his transgender performance practice at The Bluecoat in 2003 (the opportunity of becoming an associate artist afforded him the context and impetus to leave his role as a lecturer in Community Arts at LIPA[16]) Roger Hill has become a significant figure on the performance and live-art scene in Liverpool. As well as developing his own live-art practice,

[16] Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

Hill has initiated opportunities for other live-artists to develop and present work, for example through *Tranny Hotel*, a pan-European festival of transgender performance that takes place in a hotel in different city in Europe on an annual basis. It's not too ambitious to claim that the associate artist initiative has had a long-term and lasting effect on practice in the city through the work of this particular artist. A close analysis of local specificity is a significant factor in the development of live art in Liverpool, and this includes mapping the influence of key individuals who have had an impact on practice in the city. The importance of specific individuals, in the programming and support of live art is often discussed in terms of there being an over-reliance on individual programmers and curators within venues, and the risk this poses to the sector in terms of continuity and sustainability. While I would agree that the live-art sector currently relies heavily on individuals in arts organisations to champion the sustainable development of live art (as is evidenced through my own experience and analysed in this thesis) it is also important to consider how a mapping of other individuals contributing to live-art practice, within a city, can offer a strategic and sustainable approach to supporting this area of practice.

By 2004, The Bluecoat had played a significant role in programming and commissioning live art in Liverpool for over four decades and 2004 proved to be a particularly challenging and defining year in the arts-centre's relationship to performative practice. I had been successful in consolidating and developing the live-art strand of activity, increasing resources and funding, and positioning The Bluecoat more firmly within national discussions and developments since 2000. The number and diversity of projects which took place at The Bluecoat during 2004 pushed the organisation to the limits of its capacity in terms of delivering events, attracting audiences and, most importantly for this part of the discussion,

providing differing and appropriate levels of support for the array of artists who worked with the venue.

Many of the artists who presented work at the Bluecoat between 2000 and 2004 offered a good example of how The Bluecoat operated and functioned as a *particularly* effective venue for live art. Of course The Bluecoat is not entirely unique with regard to some of the factors that I highlight, there are other arts organisations that provided (and continue to provide) similarly effective contexts and conditions for the production and presentation of live art. Through programming activity and artist support (both with the associate artists and other artists in the city) I had begun to understand how The Bluecoat could (and did) act as a provisional space.

My use of the term provisional-space in the context of live art has been developed to consider both the physical and temporal space of live-art programming contexts, and with close reference to an understanding of site-specificity, and site-responsiveness in relation to performative practices. It covers a number of aspects of how we understand the term provisional, including: temporary, provisory, temporal, interim and tentative. I originally developed the notion with detailed reference to the work of live-artist Lena Simic and further develop it here in relation to a close critical analysis of my own programming practice in Liverpool (within which I also include the artists' support programmes and development, residencies, discursive events and conferences, new commissions, collaborative and cross-disciplinary projects discussed above) and in specific reference to The Bluecoat. I cite The Bluecoat as being an organisation and venue which, particularly between 2000 and 2005, encompassed a number of the key characteristics essential for the successful programming, producing and development of live art. My idea of a provisional space is one which allows

for the optimum autonomy and freedom from institutional and organisational decision making and constraints, while also providing artists with access to the context and support mechanisms that an organisation is able to offer. I first explored the idea of The Bluecoat as a provisional space in my essay 'On Tactical Self-Sufficiency and Provisional Spaces', where I primarily considered aspects of Lena Simic's practice with specific reference to her performance project *Medea/Mothers' Clothes* which she presented at the Bluecoat in 2004 (fig 1.22, fig 1.23) as a way of articulating my use of the term 'provisional space' and to explore the role of the producer/programmer with specific regard to live art.

Medea/Mothers' Clothes took place as live performances in The Bluecoat performance space on 30 April and 1 May 2004 followed by, from 1 until 6 May, an installation in the same space. In drawing out a number of factors relating to the conditions of its production I highlighted Simic's negotiation of the Bluecoat as a provisional and contingently autonomous space. By contingently autonomous I mean a framework that provides a physical space, a context and a set of mechanisms which offer differing levels and types of support according to the artist's requirements at various times during the course of the project. Simic's negotiation of The Bluecoat in this way is a tactic which I believe offers a useful framework both for understanding significant aspects of live-art practice and artists' creative processes and the key issues regarding the role the live-art producer or programmer.

Drawing on Simic's everyday lived experiences, *Medea/Mothers' Clothes* was an autobiographical investigation of motherhood and a critique of accepted normative discourse that surrounded this role. In the piece Simic employed the Medea figure, not as a character to perform or represent, but as an abstracted entity to juxtapose with her own lived experiences, and the experiences of the 19 women who originally participated in the project, personally

known to the artist through the two mother-and-toddler groups in Liverpool that she attended with her sons at this time. *Medea/Mothers' Clothes* included material gathered from Simic's performance journals, filmed footage of everyday activity such as shopping, washing and eating meals, sound recordings of the artist performing monologues from Euripedes' Medea and portraits of the 19 mothers, along with an item of clothing given to the artist by each of them, for inclusion in the performance and installation. Given that the material for the project was largely autobiographical, gathered from daily experiences situated in and around the artist's home and focussed on her connection with the women who attended the mother and toddler groups, it would have been easy to argue for the piece to have been presented or sited in a space closer to that community rather than in a city-centre arts-venue. However, in *(Dis)Identifying Female Archetypes in Live Art*,[17] Simic pointed to the reasons why it was important for the piece to be presented at the Bluecoat. First, it gave her the opportunity to work with her material in a live-art context, opening up the possibilities for intervening in the Medea myth beyond its more traditional theatre context. Second, citing the venue as the conceptual framework for the project allowed Simic to enter the mother-and-toddler groups 'publicly, as an artist' and afforded her 'the freedom to start seeing the mothers differently' (Simic: 116). So, the Bluecoat provided an important reference point throughout the development of the piece, despite the artist not needing to use the venue as a rehearsal or production space due to most of that process taking place in and around where she lived.

That Simic was able to utilise the Bluecoat and its programme as an important, but not imposing, context for *Medea/Mothers' Clothes*, meant that the project was able to operate with the autonomy of a touring performance or theatre work, while resonating with the

[17] Lena Simic's PhD Thesis *(Dis)Identifying Female Archetypes in Live Art* provides a theoretical framework for Lena Simic's live-art practice and draws on the three performance projects that comprise the artist's research into female archetypes: *Medea/Mothers' Clothes*; *Magdalena Makeup and; Joan Trial*.

organisation and the space. The relative proximity of the venue to the area of Liverpool where the mother and toddler groups took place afforded the immediate audience for the piece (the 19 women who contributed to the project) an experience of the performances and the installation as constituents of a community rather than individual audience members, while giving them the space to view it outside of the nuanced context of the mother and toddler groups. This coupled with the simple fact of The Bluecoat, at that time, having a rather idiosyncratic performance space that bore little resemblance to a black box theatre, allowed for this first production of the piece to be experienced more as a sited work with The Bluecoat acting as a useful and provisional representation of the complex spaces, the home environment and the mother and toddler groups, explored by the artist in developing the project.

Among the number and diversity of artists who worked with the Bluecoat across the six-year period that I was programming and developing live art at the venue, in terms of articulating live art as a sustainable, constructive and conceptual space for artists, Lena Simic has proven to be one of the most successful. A number of other artists including Sharon Smith, Rebecca Reid and Sandra Johnston were among other artists developing performances for The Bluecoat that year and working in similarly innovative and complex ways, recognising the possibilities for artists to work self-sufficiently, without an imposed curatorial thematic or producer's input, while being able to rely on the venue to provide robust support and a resonant site for their performative practice. This reflects my approach to developing and programming live art and working with artists during the time that I was at The Bluecoat, and it is central to my interest in considering strategies for the sustainability of live art in Liverpool. The analysis of The Bluecoat and my outline of how we can understand arts-organisations as provisional spaces, provides an entry point to considering how (and whether)

live art has become institutionalised, which I discuss within the context for live art at a national level and the discourse generated by the live-art sector in Chapter 3.

Liverpool Live was a ten-week programme of live art that took place between 17th September and 28th November 2004, programmed to take place during the 2004 Liverpool Biennial, and was funded through a mix of grants including £50,000 from Arts Council England (Central Office, Visual Arts Department), The Nordic Council and Visiting Arts (see Appendix F for full *Liverpool Live* budget). Mark Waugh from the Visual Art Department at Arts Council England Central office had been keen to build on the success of *You Are Here* in terms of positioning live art within a large-scale contemporary visual-art festival (*Liverpool Biennial*) and was very supportive of The Bluecoat's subsequent application to the Arts Council for *Liverpool Live*. The programme featured over 50 artists, and was curated along a number of thematic strands. Although this programme included a large number of artists working international, there was less of an obvious emphasis on presenting work that explored identity as a thematic line of enquiry, as compared with *You Are Here* in 2002, though of course a considerable amount of work in the programme dealt with and explored notions of identity. The very nature of the programme, in terms of its ten-week duration and the huge range of work, signalled an ambitious attempt to present the diversity of performative practice being developed across different contexts under the heading of live art.

Presenting the programme over a ten-week period was also an attempt to resist the one-off festival approach to programming live art which I believed, at the time, didn't offer enough of a sustained approach to presenting live art in the city. I wanted to use the opportunity to interrogate and extend some of the ideas and claims of live art across an extended programming context, in order to test the capacity of live art as a programming context and

an art-form and to consider how audiences understood and engaged with live art. I also wanted to disrupt the festival timescale and dynamic, in order to offer a more democratic and diverse platform to a wider range of artists who might not necessarily have a touring piece of performative work to bring to the venue. One of my main concerns which developed during the time that I was programming work at the Bluecoat is that live art had become increasingly more aligned with the framework of theatre programming and touring due to the way that the sector had developed, and opportunities for developing gallery based practice were fewer, due to the resources and timing needed. I was keen to programme and commission a diversity of work including residencies, gallery-based practice and installation-work which took place in the public realm, dance, cabaret, theatre and time-based new media. My aim was to push at the boundaries of what the term live art could encompass in terms of practice in order to open up support mechanisms for artists working across the broadest diversity of performative practice.

Liverpool Live was an opportunity to create a focus around live-art programming over a more sustained, and as I thought at the time, in a more meaningful way than a four or five day festival would. With *Liverpool Live* I aimed to bring a more local focus back to the live-art programme that took place during Liverpool Biennial, and to create opportunities for artists based in Liverpool to develop and show work in an international context, on an equal footing with artists who were presenting work internationally. While *You Are Here* had clearly been a success I felt unable to quantify and qualify the impact and benefit it had had for Liverpool based artists, and I was keen to better integrate artists working locally, nationally and internationally. My other key aims for the programme were re-articulated in the final evaluation report (Appendix G) which went to a number of stake-holders including the Arts Council who were a key funder:

> No overarching theme was envisaged for the programme, rather a process within a conceptual framework that echoed and further extended that of the International 2004: art that is not curator-driven but exists as a result of dialogue between the artists (UK/international), the place (Liverpool) and its context, and the audience.

This re-iterates my attempt to create a less hierarchical framework for the presentation of live art within an international context, to create a programme which didn't privilege international or national artists over local artists.

The evaluation report includes the curatorial vision for *Liverpool Live* which proved to be too ambitious and complex as a programming framework. The process began with The Bluecoat engaging in dialogue with five of the artists who had been commissioned to make work for *Liverpool Biennial*. These artists were: Gustavo Artigas (Mexico); Paolo Canevari (Italy); Amanda Coogan (Ireland); Aleks Danko (Australia); Martha Rosler (USA) and it was proposed that these artists propose names of artists to be put forward for *Liverpool Live*. The proposal was that these artists would propose artists working in the UK whose work they felt was pertinent to Liverpool and appropriate to the context of local/global dialogue. The nominating artists were to consider artists pertinent to their own practice, formally, conceptually, or in terms of influence, were asked to think about the potential to collaborate with their nominated artists as an extension of their own proposed work in Liverpool Biennial. This collaboration could be through workshops, mentoring and critical feedback, or creating work together.

> It was intended that this process would produce a series of projects that would form the main core of the Biennial live-art programme. Artists were to be invited to produce work in relation to the context of Liverpool and the Biennial and potentially to the inviting artist's proposal. (Appendix G)

This original curatorial framework was not fully realised due to the process not being more rigorously managed by The Bluecoat (in part due to time-constraints, and the staffing resources referred to earlier in relation to *You Are Here*). However, the concept of the process provided a good starting point to thinking through a number of approaches to curating the programme, and in articulating some of what I was aiming to achieve in terms of proliferating the curatorial vision through collaboration with artists.

Liverpool Live included 36 separate events, some of which were one-off performances, others were discreet programmes of activity that took place over several days. A weekend of Nordic live art, *Magnetic North*, was co-curated with aforementioned live-artist and former student at Liverpool School of Art and Design (in the 1980s), Bob Connolly. *Magnetic North* was a two-day programme of live art that took place at various sites across the city, including The Bluecoat, The Adelphi Hotel, and The Walker Art Gallery. The programme included artists: Love Enqvist, Irma Optimist, Sons of God (Leif Elggren and Kent Tankred), John Court and performance group Baktruppen. A related performance, Maryland, by Liverpool-based Mary Prestidge, choreographed by Finnish choreographer Ulla Koivisto, was shown as part of this programme, a good example of how programming of international work can most effectively incorporate practice by artists based in the host city. As part of *Liverpool Live* I commissioned Mary Prestidge to curate a programme of work at the interface of dance and live art. Prestidge has been central to the development of dance practice in Liverpool since 1997 when she moved to the city, and was a founder member of X6 and Chisenhale dance spaces, which since the mid-1970s have provided a context for the research and development of new dance in Britain. For *Liverpool Live* Prestidge curated *In The 'Pool* an extensive programme of live performance, exhibitions, installation, workshops, improvisation jams and discussion events that took place throughout the *Liverpool Live* programme. In asking Mary

Prestidge to curate a programme of dance to be integrated with the live-art programme I was interested in exploring art-form definitions and boundaries, and in discussing where dance and live art met, and how is this pertinent to practitioners making work in Liverpool and wanting to work across art-form boundaries.

As with *You Are Here*, *Liverpool Live* was 'activated' by the work of two artists commissioned to make work for Liverpool Biennial, Amanda Coogan and Aleks Danko. Coogan made a live piece based on *Beethoven, The Headbangers,* a filmed work made for Liverpool Biennial. The live piece was staged in the front courtyard at The Bluecoat on the evening of the opening of Liverpool Biennial, and involved 100 people head-banging to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Aleks Danko's *Rolling Home* was a live performance, commissioned by Liverpool Biennial, using the history of The Bluecoat as a school to activate history and memory. The performance involved performers wearing the traditional Bluecoat School uniform 'rolling' of 7' high foam blue houses through the streets of Liverpool, from the Albert Dock to The Bluecoat front courtyard where a brass-band was playing to welcome them 'home'. Other events *Liverpool Live* included one-off performances by: Grace Surman; Liz Aggiss, Silke Mansholt and Sharon Smith.

The most challenging aspect of the *Liverpool Live* programme both in practical and artistic terms was the seven, one-week long artist residencies, where artists developed a project (based on their existing body of work, and in some cases extending previous performances) over the duration of their week in Liverpool, and which culminated in a performative work. The residencies proved to be a challenge in terms of resources (mainly time and people, but there were also financial implications), audience development, risk and complexity. One of the initial challenges, on a very practical level, was that, because the artists were arriving in

Liverpool with their projects at various stages, before the residency took place there was very little information to include in the printed brochure for *Liverpool Live* or any other publicity material which might be used to communicate the work and attract an audience to it. In most cases the artist residency projects didn't even have a title to begin with and was this exemplifies what has often been a problematic issue in programming live art in Liverpool, that it is important to strike a balance between articulating the complexity (and often subtlety) of the work appropriately while also trying to make it accessible to potential audiences.

The residency projects included artists Sebastian Solari exploring subterranean Liverpool through its underground drainage systems and Sachiko Abe (fig.1.24) performing obsessive paper cutting during a week-long installation. Denis Buckley's *Right to Think* (fig.1.25, fig.1.26, fig.1.27) saw him retreat to The Bluecoat for a week, communicating with individuals on a one-to-one basis through an intercom system and taking to the streets for daily performances, dragging behind him a steel suitcase in an act of resistance against his self-imposed incarceration. Beijing-based artist and curator Wang Chu Yu presented his practice and work in the UK for the first time (returning in 2005 as part of *China Live,* a programme of live art from Beijing, jointly curated by partner organisations from the Live Art UK consortium of live-art promoters). New York-based dance artist Bill Shannon worked in public spaces in Liverpool city-centre and developed and presented *BENCH*, a travelling street-dance choreographed and performed on skateboard and crutches. In the *Liverpool Live* brochure (Page 7) I described Declan Rooney's approach to his residency as being:

> In his response to the city in immediate terms, reaping and collecting evidence of sub-cultural activities and specialised groupings. Rooney will translate this source data into a series of connected performances: to be viewed individually or as a collective whole. Some work will be 'hit and run' type interventions, whilst others will be presented at specific times and locations.

Sachiko Abe presented a performance which she had developed over a number of years, so the process involved in realising her project was centred on practicalities with some artistic decisions about how the space might be configured. Denis Buckley had developed a practically much more complex idea, but one which required no further artistic development after the artist arrived in Liverpool. Again the issues were associated with resources and time to realise the project in a practical way.

Sandra Johnston brought her considerable research into notions of public space, territory and identity to Liverpool with her 24-hour site-specific performance *Afterwards* (fig.1.28), the final hour of which was open to a tiny audience in a Portakabin in The Bluecoat's front courtyard. Johnston arrived in Liverpool with a framework for her project, a performance which would take place over a 24-hour period, and this was part of a body of work entitled *The Room Series* which she had been developing since 1998.[18] I consider Sandra Johnston's project in some detail because for the purposes of this discussion, this is one of the projects with which I had the most involvement on an artistic and production level, and was a project which informed a more in-depth understanding of how programming live art can reveal the specificity of place and reveal the subtlety and complexity of local conditions in Liverpool. The project also revealed the challenges of attempting to articulate the full experience of a very process-based work to audiences who might only access the work at a certain point toward the end of the process. I spent four days with the artist, visiting different sites and spaces in Liverpool, discussing some of the themes that Johnston wished to explore in line with her body of work and working on ideas which would bring those themes into the context

[18] *The Room Series* is a set of durational works which Sandra Johnston began in 1998. By 2006 Johnston had developed 21 of these works. Johnston's work in Liverpool differed slightly to the works that she had produced elsewhere as in previous commissions a space had been selected for her by the commissioning organisation, but in this instance the artist decided on the space which she wanted to use.

of Liverpool in a very site-responsive way. This in-depth analysis forms part of a rationale for the importance of articulating, in detail, the variety of ways in which a work can impact on a city and an organisation, and can develop audiences for live-art work in a way which focusses more on quality of audience experience rather than audience numbers. It is becoming increasingly important to articulate the importance and impact of live art in the face of increasing pressure on organisations to open up their programme to larger audiences, and through a variety of digital platforms.

Sandra Johnston works across a number of different performative modes and media, predominantly making site-responsive performance actions that deal with contested space and notions of trauma. For her residency in Liverpool the more performative part of the project began at 8pm on the sixth day of the residency, and involved Sandra Johnston sitting in a parked car overlooking the River Mersey for 12 hours. Johnston then returned to The Bluecoat and spent the next 11 hours in a small portable temporary building that we had installed into the front courtyard of the Bluecoat specifically for this project, at the artist's request. The final hour of the project involved a small audience of 15 people being invited into the temporary building to see an hour-long performance. Capacity was limited to 15 due to the size of the space, which was a result of the artistic decision to present the work in a space of this nature, relating to the themes which Johnston wished to explore in this particular work. There had also been different audiences for the previous 23 hours of the project, where the artist had sat in the car for 12 hours and also when she was in the temporary building for the subsequent 11 hours.[19] Some of these audiences were unwittingly implicated in, and

[19] There were two windows in the temporary building, and for part of the time that the artist was in the building she had the door open, not with the express intention of inviting people into the space, but because the space was too warm at times. This says something of the sometimes incidental and 'non-artistic' decisions which might be made during the course of a project, which nonetheless contribute to how the work develops and is understood.

experienced this performative work,[20] and at times Johnston herself became the audience for small performative moments that she had set the context for but had no control over. For example, in her spoken text, Johnston described seeing a couple standing directly in front of the car that she was in, at 2am, seemingly completely unaware that she was in the car. The couple were chatting and overlooking the river, leaning against the balustrade of the promenade. Between the couple was a small floral memorial tribute that had long since withered and died, and was comprised of dead flowers, foliage and very faded plastic ribbon. Johnston observed that the couple were also seemingly unaware of this small memorial despite the noise which it made as the ribbon flicked against the railings in the wind, a sound which was quite audible to Johnston even from where she sat inside the car. Johnston created a narrative from this scene which placed her back in the role of artist and performer, however, during the time that she was watching this and other small acts unfold as she sat in the car, she was very definitely audience.

Related to the discussion of knowing and understanding how audiences experience a project, particularly where one audience may only see one aspect of it, is the question of how to quantify and indeed qualify who other audiences might have been. This is a different issue to the more common question of how to calculate or estimate how many people may have experienced a work which takes place in the public realm, based on statistics relating to footfall for the area, and which can be calculated provided that this sort of data exists. For example this is much easier when the work has taken place in a city centre or a town, as these

[20] This understanding of the 'unwitting audience' has been explored and dealt with in considerable detail within discourse around the history of performance art and within performance studies. Adrian George, former curator at Tate Liverpool explored this notion of the inadvertent audience, and how this extends to discussions around the 'unknowing performer', very effectively within the context of his exhibition 'Art, Lies and Videotape' (which took place at Tate Liverpool in 2003 and 2004) and also in his publication for the exhibition.

sort of statistics are more readily available for the purpose of economic analysis relating to retail, tourism and development.

I would argue that the full scope and complexity of Sandra Johnston's project *was* fully communicated to the audience of 15 people who experienced the work in the temporary building at the Bluecoat. The audience at The Bluecoat were part of a multi-layered experience, even though they were ostensibly only experiencing a small percentage of the overall project. For the final hour of the work Johnston performed, in a very quiet way and within a relatively intimate space, a text which she had written in the previous 11 hours, based on what she had seen, felt and thought about while she was in the car. She spoke the words from memory, as she lay on her side on a very narrow shelf which was built as close to the ceiling of the building as possible. The shelf was in the middle of the space and there was a drop either side of it, with a 2 foot gap between the shelf and the ceiling. The shelf was very narrow, and because Johnston was lying on her side, with her eyes closed, her body was necessarily tensed in order that she did not fall from where she was. For Johnston, this was about re-embodying the tension that she had felt (due to a number of factors and conditions) while sitting in the front seat of the car, and subsequently while she was in the temporary building. This element of the performance wasn't made explicit by Johnston through her spoken text, but the resonance of her experiences over the previous 23 hours were fully embodied by her, and thus communicated very powerfully to the small audience gathered in the space. The performance took place at 7pm and the hour of the performance brought with it a radical change in the quality of the light within the space, which went from twilight to dark, and no artificial lighting was used and this resonated with Johnston's experience due to the project taking place over a 24-hour period. To some extent the full implications and the resonance of this only became apparent to the artist once the performance had finished. In

relation to this it is important to note that I was also made aware of these nuances, through in-depth conversation with the artist, the day after the performance had taken place, and therefore I am, to an extent, an unreliable, and not entirely objective, source of information with regard to what the audience might have experienced during the work. However, I spoke with audience members immediately after the performance and, there was a palpable sense that, amongst other things, the embodied tension of the artist was communicated within the space and to the audience. It was certainly the case that the shared tensions of the audience which were evident within the space, played a part in the overall resonance and quality of the space within which this took place, and Johnston spoke about how this contributed to her understanding and experience of the piece. Anecdotal though this may be, within the context of this discussion, the main point can still be effectively made and evidenced; there were a number of complex performative dynamics at play, across the whole 24 hours of the project and these are necessarily a large part of articulating practice with regard both to audiences who might see the work, and critical writing which might result in response to a work.

Sandra Johnston's practice and the work that she presented at The Bluecoat in 2004 are well placed within discourse about the body and performance, which although a thorough discussion and analysis of this is not possible within the scope of this research, it is important to acknowledge this. My development of the programme at The Bluecoat between 2000 and 2006 included a large number of projects at the interface between dance and live art, and work which positioned the artists' body at the centre of their practice. While work of this nature had taken place at The Bluecoat prior to me developing the programme there, I focussed on this area of activity both in terms of presenting work, and also creating opportunity for interrogation and discussion of these practice, as with the aforementioned

example of the two-day symposium that considered solo-performance practice.[21] This was an area of practice which allowed for an exploration of site-specificity on a more subtle level than artists who were responding to more linear narratives of the city's history and politics.

Sandra Johnston's project, and indeed her entire body of work, exemplifies one of the issues associated with the documentation and archiving of practice which is related to the fact that her work translates inadequately to any media outside of the live performance, and because of this Johnston reached the decision not to have her work filmed or photographed. Sandra Johnston agreed that I could take one photograph of her during her performance in the temporary building which as can be seen (fig.1.28) even in comparison to the very brief description of the work, is a very inadequate representation of the performance. For all of the reasons outlined above in the description of her practice, the subtle complexities of the piece, and resonances which are beyond a specific visual or piece of text, are completely lost in documentation, thus presenting a very inadequate version of the work. This issue is by no means unique to Johnston, it is one of the most discussed issues with regard to the problem of representing performative work after the live performance has taken place, and even with

[21] There is a considerable amount of artistic and performative practice, research, and practice as research, which explores and deals with sensate forms and modes within performance, and how this links with site-specificity and the local and a large number of courses and research which consider intimacy, corporeality and somatic elements across a wide range of performative practices (including a recently developed MA in mindfulness at Bangor University, aspects of which place an emphasis on 'presence' within performance). In her PhD research, '(Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance: tracing a transgressive style in contemporary performance practice', completed in 2003, Josephine McMahon discusses the work of performance company Bodies in Flight (of which Sara Giddens is co-director with Simon Jones). McMahon places specific emphasis on Sara Giddens' choreographic impulses: 'As a result sensations created within Giddens' choreographies can be felt, via a corporeal memory, the traces, memories and (re)creation of the sensation in the perceiving bodies that is made manifest in and through the choreographed movement. Giddens' work demonstrates how the body becomes a conduit for the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) in (syn)aesthetic performance. Such present(ed) physicalities, both (im)mediate and removed from the mediated, emphasise the performing body and its potential to signify and connect with the receiving bodies in the audience, making 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999:13). Thus the body becomes site, sight and cite of performance in the (syn)aesthetic processes of interpretation.' Johnston describes her own practice in these terms: '[My] actions are experiential in nature developed from the direct revelations of a body inhabiting space, light and motion often in relation to the behaviour of others. Each work is developed from observations made between the tensions that exist regarding the history of locations, in dialogue with the vibrancy and insistence of the passing moment'.

advances in technology it is an issue which prevails across a diversity of performative practices. This question of documentation and archiving links specifically to recommendations for the sustainable development of live-art practice in Liverpool, and is further outlined in Chapter 4.

The evaluation of the *Liverpool Live* programme (Appendix G) reflects the difficulty of creating a profile for the programme and developing audiences:

> As previously mentioned, the programme was difficult to sustain from the point of view of marketing and audience development and future plans should take this in to consideration. A shorter, more focussed programme with less residencies would maximise the use of resources more effectively. The duration of the programme was, in part, a very successful and crucial factor and did allow for the development of new work in a very interesting and exciting environment. It was, however, very difficult to sustain the momentum and profile of the programme over such a long period of time.

Liverpool Live was a very ambitious programme in terms of the amount of work presented and, as evidenced above, the fact that many of the projects required a considerable amount of development and input from the limited (in numbers) team at The Bluecoat. As with *You Are Here* a considerable amount of the practical delivery of the project, marketing, audience development and artistic input was carried out by me, with support from a small team of volunteers and the Events Coordinator (Ema Quinn). Presenting the programme over ten weeks made it unwieldy, lacking in focus and difficult to articulate to audiences. That said, *Liverpool Live* succeeded in building momentum for live art in the city, and for artists based in Liverpool was a very valuable programme of work. As with *You Are Here* the programme encompassed a huge range of performative practice including installation, intervention, political activism, theatre-based performance and dance.

A reflection of the success of *Liverpool Live* is outlined in a set of meeting notes (Appendix H) from a review meeting with Mark Waugh (the Arts Council's Combined Arts Officer at the time) myself and Bryan Biggs, Artistic Director of The Bluecoat: '10-week duration kept live art profile high throughout Biennial but put strain on Bluecoat to deliver such a full programme.' (Appendix H) The aforementioned issue regarding challenges to marketing the programme were also alluded to in the meeting: 'Marketing was difficult to sustain over a long period with, often, public events not being able to be announced till last minute due to the nature of the residencies.'

During the review meeting Bryan Biggs and I outlined future plans for the support and development of live art at The Bluecoat. These included the following:

> • working towards 2006 programme that would ideally be a) part of Capital of Culture 'paving' event, 'Cities in Transition: People, Places, Performance' and b) the live-art strand of the 2006 Biennial
>
> • 2008 aim is to have higher profile for this work through the 2008 Biennial and year round live-art activity. Currently researching particular geographical/cultural foci, eg Middle East, China

During the meeting Mark Waugh stated that he was keen to support the strategic development of live art in Liverpool and that The Bluecoat should put together a strategic, four-year plan for strategic developments. Waugh emphasised that we should be considering a more strategic approach to international programming and that we shoud begin discussions with Steven Brett at British Council and with Visiting Arts. He also suggested that we develop an international live-art curators' forum in Liverpool, inviting four curators from less well researched areas like Middle East, Central/Latin America and China to create a dialogue that would lead to international presentation in the 2006 live art programme. Although this forum

wan't set up, research and collaborative programming partnerships were set up with organisations and artists in Beijing, through activity with the Live Art UK consortium of live-art promoters which was established in 2003 (Live Art UK is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3) From this collaboration with the DaDao Festival in Beijing, partner organisations from Live Art UK collaboratively programmed *China Live* a programme of live art from Beijing that took place in 2005 the result of LAUK research trips to China. The Bluecoat had also further developed partnership working with DaDao Curator Shu Yang whose work I presented as part of *Liverpool Live,* and artist Wang Chuyu was one of the seven residency artists.

A key point in discussing the development of live-art programming in Liverpool, in particular reference to The Bluecoat's *Liverpool Live* programmes (subsequent programmes of live art that took place during Liverpool Biennial in 2006 and in 2008 were also titled *Liverpool Live*) is the way that the fabric of the city provides a fertile context for much of the work, especially in 2006 when The Bluecoat was closed for its capital development and its premises could not be used. This programme was curated by Tamsin Drury of Manchester-based hÅb, a significant promoter of live art in the North-West region, who sought to exploit the ruptured state of a city-centre undergoing a major physical transition of its retail core. In this context, the intervention of German artists LIGNA (fig.1.29, fig.1.30) whose synchronised choreographic actions, relayed through radio headsets to a volunteer team drifting through the central shopping area of the city, played with patterns of consumer behaviour, gently subverting the shopping imperative. Whilst the wholesale commercialisation of the city-centre, largely through the completion of the Liverpool One development in 2008, has closed down options for the type of found spaces that The Bluecoat was able to use in its early forays into site-specific live art, the predominantly retail environment that now surrounds the

arts-centre is perceived as having opened up different possibilities and strategies for live-art engagement. At the opening of the Liverpool One retail centre in 2008 Richard Dedomenici handed out helium filled black balloons bearing the words 'Bored of Shopping' in white lettering. The following day he repeated the exercise at the also newly-opened Bluecoat, this time with balloons bearing the legend 'Bored of Art', thus attempting to provoke consideration of the notion that there is little difference between art and consumerism. Dedomenici's direct engagement with people on the street had seen him, four years earlier during *Liverpool Live* in 2004 impersonating the Conservative MP Boris Johnson (who had offended many Liverpudlians in an article he had edited in the *Spectator* accusing the city of sentimental self-pity) and trudging the streets apologising to passers-by for his actions.

The Bluecoat reopened in 2008 and during the first year of its reopening presented a vibrant performance programme which included regular live-art events. The evaluation document points to how Liverpool Live 2004 exemplified the aims of The Bluecoat with regard to developing and sustaining the live-art programme:

> Live art is strategically important to Bluecoat's own plans. The 2004 Biennial programme [*Liverpool Live*] will be the final event before the building closes for a major capital development (for which ACE Lottery has already awarded £2.75million) – a celebratory event that will also put down a marker for and focus of the new Bluecoat when it reopens in 2007. (Appendix G)

In 2008 The Bluecoat was ostensibly better placed to programme, commission and provide a context for live art in the city. Indeed in some ways the new configuration of spaces in the building lends itself to a broader range of possibilities for live art. Shortly after the reopening of the building the venue presented a mini festival, *Happenstance*, including Yoko Ono's return performance, relayed live onto the city centre Big Screen; (fig.1.31) Rajni Shah's

durational installation performance works; participation in the national *Rules & Regs* initiative which encourages artists to work to a different set of rules to those framing their normal practice; and Common Culture's intervention of a phalanx of night club bouncers into the gallery spaces they had curated for the exhibition *Variable Capital*. The *Liverpool Live 08* programme of work featured the UK's first *Blackmarket for Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge* by Hannah Hurtzig's Mobile Academy (fig. 1.32), and in July 2009 another large-scale off-site event, *Twins*, by the Cologne-based Angie Hiesl was presented by the Bluecoat. However, this was not a sustainable programme of activity as it was due, in part to a significant uplift in funding (£300,000) that The Bluecoat received until 2011. Subsequent to this The Bluecoat live-art programme has been significantly diminished due to major strain on resources, cut-backs to the arts programme (across all art-forms), and the lack of a dedicated performance programmer.

A number of live-art and performance events still take place at The Bluecoat but since 2011 they have been largely presented in collaboration and partnership with other organisations, or are events by artists or companies which have been subsidised through project funding. For example, the Bluecoat have worked in partnership with Manchester-based Tamsin Drury to produce *Poolside Emergency* (April 2013), a Liverpool edition of Manchester-based performance platform *Emergency* which has also been presented in Liverpool at The Bluecoat in previous years. Much of the live-art activity that takes place at The Blucoat is in partnership with the aforementioned *If Only* collective, and with individual artists for whom support from The Bluecoat provided in-kind support to their individually received via the Arts Council's Grants for the Arts stream of funding. As well as receiving Arts Council NPO funding, The Bluecoat also has a relatively robust mixed economy with income streams from other funding bodies, trusts and charities, as well as income from rental of spaces (studio and

retail) and a separate trading company which runs other aspects of the organisation's activity. The Bluecoat could choose to commit its currently reduced (since 2011) arts budget to a live-art programme, instead of primarily dedicating it to maintaining its exhibitions programme. I am not simply arguing here that this is what *should* happen, obviously this decision has been made according to a number of factors and conditions that have been thoroughly considered. What I am arguing for in relation to the broader picture of long-term sustainability for live-art in Liverpool is that, in order for a strategic approach to be taken, all of the decision-making processes that take place at The Bluecoat and at all levels, need to be taken in to account, mapped and analysed in order to assess the full range of options for live art at the venue. To an extent The Bluecoat is managing to present a live-art programme, and it is certainly offering in-kind support to a large number of artists and performers in the development of performative work. However, as an organisation it is not taking an active lead in the strategic programming of live art, and live art has again become a marginalised strand of programming and field of practice within the venue. Having played a very central role in the development of live-art practice in the city, the organisation is in a position to take on the stustainable development of live art in Liverpool.

There have, of course, been other projects, besides those commissioned, programmed and initiated by The Bluecoat, in a position to contribute to the development of live-art practice in the city, for example: until 2011 the A Foundation's Greenland Street premises (its director former Arts Council Live Art officer, Mark Waugh); FACT, whose CEO Mike Stubbs who was instrumental in developing Hull Time Based Arts as an important venue for radical art practices, including live art; and the artists themselves, who have generally not come through regular fine art or live-art educational training routes. These include the aforementioned Roger Hill, whose transgender alter-ego Mandy Romero is Liverpool's self-appointed 'Queen

of Culture' and, as discussed earlier, whose interventions and contributions to discourse have been a consistent feature of live-art activity in the city since he was an associate artist at The Bluecoat; and Gary Anderson and Lena Simic, who have established The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home in their own house in Everton close to where they teach at Liverpool Hope University (where, as previously discussed, the Creative and Performing Arts course is developing a rigorous critical framework for live art). The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home constitutes another reflection on the idea that it is imperative to consider specific conditions and contexts in order to diversify approaches to understanding live art and its development. Anderson and Simic bring their respective artistic practices to the project which they set up in 2008, initially timed to provide a dissenting voice during Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture. The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home seeks no funding, other than a percentage of the artists' own wages, and considers issues of 'the private/the public, the familial, class and money matters'.[22] Like many of the other examples of practice outlined in this analysis and comprehensive overview of live art in Liverpool, their initiative, which locates a critical practice within the home and opens it up to other artists, is an attempt to do away with the separation of art and everyday life, but it does so through integrating the creative process much more rigorously into their lived experience.

This brief mention of one of the most interesting live-art projects currently being explored in the city demonstrates Liverpool's continuing conduciveness to live-art practice. Though not immune to wider developments, live art in Liverpool has benefited from drawing on the particularities of place, of history and perhaps on a certain cultural separateness. As a result

[22]www.twoaddthree.org

the live art that the city has experienced over the past 40 years can be described as autonomous and distinctive - with a rich variety of contexts and voices - attempting to and often succeeding in transforming artists and audiences into active participants in visual culture.

The tracing of this particular history is not an argument for Liverpool's unique approach to the support and programming of live art. Nor am I suggesting that all live-art practice that takes place in Liverpool has to connect with the historical, social or political resonances of the city. It is particularly important to reiterate this in light of the considerable tendency, that can be evidenced across a variety of publications and other media, to argue for Liverpool's uniqueness in broader cultural terms, particularly with regard to and perhaps as a result of the city being awarded the status of European Capital of Culture 2008, the delivery of which necessitated an examination of what characterises culture in the city. This level of analysis *is*, rather, for the purpose of and essential to understanding the rich variety of contexts available with regard to live-art programming in the city.

The case-study of The Bluecoat allows for informed consideration of where the venue is (and has been) positioned in relation to live art in the city, it provides a starting point for understanding how the venue can develop its live-art programme, and how it needs to function in relation to the broader live-art ecology and infrastructure in the city. The Bluecoat doesn't always necessarily need to be at the centre of production, programming, commissioning and supporting live art, but it can play a strategic role in creating a robust overview and infrastructure for this field of practice in the city.

This analysis provides a template for evaluating the current position and status of live-art practice in Liverpool in terms of the infrastructure and ecology of this diverse field of work. It is a robust starting point to move forward from toward manageable, achievable and pragmatic recommendations for creating a sustainable infrastructure for the presentation and support of live-art practice in the city.

Chapter 2

Analysis of the National Context in England Part One: Arts Council England and the Vulnerability of the Live-Art Sector

This chapter provides an overview of the national funding context in relation to the live-art sector in England (with specific reference to Arts Council England) within which live art in Liverpool and at The Bluecoat has developed. The aim of this is two-fold: 1) to provide a clear picture of the national funding context within which the live-art programme at The Bluecoat and in Liverpool developed between 2000 and 2013 and; 2) to provide a clear picture of the national funding context within which the pragmatic recommendations for the development of live art in Liverpool (as detailed in Chapter 4) will be implemented.

The live-art sector continues to be exceptionally vulnerable to changes in Arts Council England's strategy, agendas and decision-making for three related reasons. First, because the Arts Council have not strategically invested in the infrastructure of the sector to a sufficient extent either before, or since, the late-1980s when they introduced their live-art stream of funding. Second, because live art has been an Arts-Council-driven term and context since the late 1980s. The term live art was first used in relation to programming activity (in 1985 with the performance festival and platform event *8 Days, A Review of Live Art*, which became *The National Review of Live Art* (NRLA) in 1986), but it was used by the Arts Council, with reference to experimental performance practice that could not easily be categorised under other art-form headings, before it was widely adopted as a term used by artists, or used consistently as a programming term within venues. In 1988 Arts Council England produced a booklet called *Live Art Now*, and by this time had set up an advisory panel and a funding stream for live art within its Combined Arts unit. From 1990-1992 Lois Keidan (Co-Director of Live Art Development Agency from 1999 to date) was in post in the Visual-Arts Department in the London Office of what was then called Arts Council of Great Britain. It

was during her time in this role that the term live art was considered with an emphasis on cultural strategy and policy as opposed to the term being used as the description of an art-form as outlined in Keidan's paper 'National Arts and Media Strategy: Discussion Document on Live Art' (1991).

The third reason that the live-art sector is *particularly* vulnerable to the national funding context is that it has not been sufficiently strategic in diversifying its funding base in order to become more financially resilient. This could be seen as something of a catch-22 situation. If the Arts Council don't invest in the live-art sector then how can the organisations and individuals that comprise the sector be in a position to strategically plan and build capacity toward less reliance on Arts Council funding? As evidenced in the previous chapter, lack of specific investment in live art from the Arts Council has led to it being programmed and supported on a sporadic basis, even within the organisations which are (or have been) central to its support and development.

Live-art practice has also been consistently influenced by, and vulnerable to, Arts Council funding agendas due to the fact that the infrastructure for the sector has become particularly centralised through Live Art Development Agency in London, and subsequently through the agency's coordination of the national live-art consortium Live Art UK. That the live-art sector is still relatively small compared with other art-form sectors such as dance, theatre and visual art, is also a factor to be reflected on and taken into consideration in this mapping of the centralisation of live art in England.

Live Art Development Agency was established by Lois Keidan and Catherine Ugwu in 1999, in response to a tender by London Arts, and Lois Keidan has since remained as a director of

the organisation. Live Art Development Agency (LADA) has been a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)[1] of Arts Council England since April 2012 with secured funding until April 2015.[2] Prior to securing NPO status, LADA was one of Arts Council England's Regularly Funded Organisations, and has been a fixed-term client of the Arts Council since 2000. Live Art Development Agency were (prior to 2012) also able to apply for specific project funding through Grants for the Arts (GFA), Arts Council England's funding stream that was open to both Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs), non-RFO status organisations and individual artists. Grants for the Arts is now no longer available to the Arts Council's fixed-term clients (NPOs), and LADA's 19.6% increase in revenue funding reflects a consolidation of their previous RFO annual funding, and specific project-based GFA funding. This is an important point for two main reasons: 1) from 2000 to 2012 LADA were able to apply to the same funding stream that individual artists were applying to for projects, and were therefore in a position to shape activity and practice by devolving funding to artists via initiatives that they (LADA) had devised; 2) in increasing LADA's revenue funding by 19.6% the Arts Council recognised the importance of the subsidiary activity and initiatives that the organisation were previously fundraising for on a project-by-project basis. While this allows LADA to consolidate activity, the fact that this is not the trend with regard to other arts organisations' funding and revenue mix in relation to live art, places LADA even more central to national initiatives and programmes of work.

In 2000 the arts received the largest ever increase in funding, of £100 million per year, and by 2003/04 was in receipt of £337 million funding per year. The rhetoric generated by the Arts

[1] National Portfolio Organisations are arts organisations which receive annual revenue funding on a three-year agreement basis.
[2] Live Art Development Agency Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding: 2012/13 - £234, 487, 2013/14 - £239, 880 2014/15 - 246, 117. These figures reflect a 19.6% increase on their RFO (Regularly Funded Organisation) funding.

Council in the context of this increase was understandably optimistic and focused on investing in risk, innovation, experimentation and the potential for the arts to effect meaningful change. Priorities with regard to the increase in budget, as highlighted in the Arts Council Annual Report for 2001 were to address the needs of theatre in England:

> We believe that the extra £25 million a year for theatre will enable artists to rediscover a sense of adventure and artistic innovation, and to broaden the range of theatrical output to the needs of a wider public. Indeed our aspiration is no less than to help theatre to reinvent itself for the 21st Century. (Peter Hewitt Chief Executive ACE, ACE Annual Review 2001).

This commitment to enabling artists to 'rediscover a sense of adventure and artistic innovation' within the theatre sector could have been to the benefit of the live-art sector, had the sector adequately articulated its role in proactively contributing to the reinvigoration of theatre practice at this point. Live-art practices are consistently pushing the boundaries of performance in terms of form and content, but there is still inadequate detailed articulation of the extent to which live-art practice has impacted on and influenced other art-forms. In relation to theatre there are a number of companies, most significantly Forced Entertainment, who are recognised as having had a significant impact on mainstream theatre practices in England. For the purposes of this part of the discussion about funding, I am highlighting that discourse around the impact and influence of live art on other art-forms focusses on the lack of recognition of this fact. There have not been any meaningful practical recommendations as to how this can be used to strengthen the live-art sector via closer alignment with the theatre-sector with more specific and strategic approaches from the live-art sector. There are obvious reasons why this is the case, not least the argument that live art needs to be maintained as a field of practice that operates outside of the mainstream, for fear of diminishing its role as a space for artists to take risks (which I challenge in the next chapter). However, in terms of practical recommendations for developing live art in Liverpool, I consider that closer

alignment with the city's theatres (as well as with the visual-art sector) to be necessary as well as a very positive strategy for both theatre and live art.

The injection of funding into the theatre sector coupled with the relatively small, though for The Bluecoat significant, investment in live art at the venue during this time (between 2001 and 2004) provided a good opportunity, on a local level, to test collaborative programming at, for example, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse theatres and at The Unity Theatre. Although this was not explored at the time and despite the fact that the funding picture is less optimistic than it was in 2001, it provides a starting point for discussions around closer partnership working in the city. The Bluecoat has, at various points over the past 34-years, been in a position to consider the variety of ways in which live-art practice could become less reliant on a small number of organisations and to contribute to developing the infrastructure for this field of practice on a much more local and regional level. Between 2000 and 2006 The Bluecoat was in receipt of more funding for live art than at any other time since it had programmed experimental and contemporary performance practice. Although the level of funding was still relatively low, there was potential to allocate a proportion of it to generate longer-lasting and more robust partnerships in the city, and to build on the momentum created through the wealth of live-art activity that was presented and supported there. Some key partnerships were formed during this time, for example, with Tamsin Drury of hAb in Manchester, who continues to be involved in live-art activity in Liverpool and at The Bluecoat. However, it was difficult to dedicate any further time and resources to longer-term strategic planning and partnership building while managing the demands of practically delivering the programme. In Chapter 4 I use this as a starting point to recommend that the model of the independent producer, with a close working relationship with a venue, is the most productive way to begin building the infrastructure for live art in a city, referring to the

examples of Helen Cole who established and runs InBetween Time Productions in Bristol, and to Tamsin Drury of hAb in Manchester.

In 1998 the National Live Art Promoters Forum[3] was set up as an informal network of programmers from organisations in the UK who consistently presented and supported live art. The organisations that were most regularly and actively represented in the NLAPF were: Live Art Development Agency (London); Arnolfini (Bristol); Fierce Festival (Birmingham); Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff); Colchester Arts Centre (Colchester); ArtsAdmin (London); The Greenroom (Manchester); NOW Festival (Nottingham); New Moves International and; Tramway (Glasgow). The first significant project that emerged from this forum was a programme of meetings entitled *Focus Live Art*, which took place in Birmingham, Brighton and Manchester in 2001.[4] These focus meetings were initiated, organised and co-ordinated by Live Art Development Agency with support from Mark Waugh, the Live Art Officer at Arts Council of England national office, and considered a number of aspects of provision for the live-art sector. The impetus for the content and scope of the *Focus Live Art* meetings arose from ongoing and consistently articulated concerns and issues discussed during NLAPF meetings, specifically discussions that centred on the need to 'raise awareness and appreciation within the funding system of the contribution live art can make at regional and national levels'[5] and the questions and issues addressed throughout the *Focus Live Art* meetings were both outlined and summarised by Live Art Development Agency. New Work Network,[6] an artist-led membership-based network set up to consider and support pioneering

[3] I occasionally refer to the informal grouping as NLAPF for convenience though it was not formally referred to by this acronym.
[4] The Manchester meeting took place on 5th September at the Greenroom (performance venue), the Birmingham meeting took place at West Midlands Arts on September 7th and the Brighton meeting took place at Brighton University on 24th September.
[5] Live Art Development Agency website accessed 3 December 2012.
[6] New Work Network (NWN) began in 1995, although it was formally established in 1997. The Network was not successful in securing National Portfolio Funding in 2011 and was subsequently unsuccessful with their Grants for the Arts application. Although NWN received funding from other sources, their Arts Council support

arts practice,[7] echoed some of these questions and concerns and was also involved in the planning and delivery of the *Focus Live Art* meetings. Live Art Development Agency received a small grant from the Arts Council of England to set up and run these meetings and the Regional Arts Boards (representing the regional areas where the *Focus Live Art* meetings took place - Birmingham, Brighton and Manchester[8] and the areas where delegates were based) supported the programme either by hosting a meeting, and/or providing financial support for delegates' expenses. The *Focus Live Art* meetings took place shortly after a major restructuring of the Arts Council was announced in July 2001 that would see the 10 Regional Arts Boards (that were established in 1990) merged with the Arts Council of England, to form Arts Council England with 9 regional offices, for example, Arts Council England North West. This formation of a single development organisation with 9 regional offices took place on 1st April 2002. It was asserted by the Arts Council that this restructure would allow for more decision making at a regional level, and would improve and strengthen the relationship with local authorities. Subsequent restructuring of the Arts Council took place in 2006, with significant scaling back of national activity, and the regions (ostensibly) being given further decision-making power.

The majority of meeting attendees were representatives from organisations, and advocacy on a regional level was intrinsic to the aims and objectives of the meetings, hence the significant representation from Arts Council England regional offices. The artists who attended the

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was a significant factor in levering other income, and as a result of losing this support the network closed at the end of October 2012.

[7] NWN describes pioneering arts practices as experimental, interdisciplinary and boundary-breaking practices which may include fine-art based performance, new media, live art, experimental dance, site-specific work, sonic art, moving image, sci-art and socially engaged practice among others. (New Work Network website accessed 3 December 2012. New Work Network's website is no longer live but can be accessed through The British Library UK Web Archive portal at: www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/target/30670859/collection/26312782/source/collection).

[8] The Manchester meeting was supported by: North West Arts, Northern Arts and Yorkshire Arts. The Brighton meeting was supported by: South West Arts, Southern Arts and South East Arts. The Birmingham meeting was supported by: West Midland Arts, East Midland Arts and East England Arts.

meetings could be described as being mid-career artists with either well-established posts within academic institutions or an established relationship with Live Art Development Agency, or other arts organisations supporting live-art practice. The *Focus Live Art Meetings* were described in the summary document as 'an unprecedented series of meetings', pointing to the fact that not only had this level of field research into creating an overview of the sector not taken place until 2001, but that this was also an extremely important opportunity to garner information and translate it into workable recommendations. The meetings afforded a number of people involved in making, producing, supporting and presenting live art the opportunity to think creatively about the future of live art. Concerns raised for discussion were devised by Live Art Development Agency and were consistent across all three meetings. The questions considered issues such as resourcing for both artists and organisations, how live art fits within funding agendas and the funding system, the hybridity and diversity of practices encompassed by the term live art, and how parity might be achieved across the regions.

All of the questions set out at the beginning of the meetings reflect a consistently articulated set of concerns outlined by Live Art Development on behalf of the live-art sector. In the summary document from the meetings Lois Keidan and Daniel Brine stated that they were not aiming to achieve a set of recommendations but were instead intending to consolidate the list of priorities which they deemed to be of most significance to the sector at that stage. Keidan and Brine asserted that the findings provided the basis for a national overview of live art activity in England. At the end of the report they state:

> The Focus Live Art initiative and this report, which draws together its main concerns, essentially acts as a review of the live-art sector. This paper offers many departure points for development. How to resource these developments is not so clear. However, the logical step is for there to be an injection of national provision from the Arts Council which would provide sufficient backing to take the sector forward.
> (Keidan and Brine: Focus Live Art Summary 2001: 17)

The summary document provides a comprehensive overview of the issues raised in the meetings, and is effectively an advocacy document for the attention of Arts Council England that outlines challenges for the live-art sector with the main recommendation being that significant fundraising on a national level was necessary in order to take the sector forward. As highlighted in Chapter 1, a dedicated budget for live art was essential for The Bluecoat be in a position to develop and sustain a live-art programme and artist support initiatives. This set of meetings and the publication of the notes was timely for The Bluecoat, and in offering a national overview of consistently articulated concerns and questions, were instrumental in helping the organisation to secure dedicated funding for its live-art programme.

The *Focus Live Art* summary document consistently and frequently references national provision via the Arts Council throughout, and in relation to every aspect of the priorities set out at the beginning of the report. The argument, made on behalf of the live-art sector since the early 1990s, that ongoing gaps in provision need to be filled by support from the Arts Council, has diverted attention from other possible ways of viewing and understanding the range of actual and potential working methods, partnerships and organisational responsibility that could have been, and now need to be, developed. In order to develop a sustainable, diverse and robust area of practice that is well integrated into organisational programming in Liverpool the diversity of contexts that live art has the potential to span in terms of resources has been considered and analysed.

Lack of sufficient provision was also discussed in the *In Time* publication, a collection of case-studies commissioned and edited by Live Art Development Agency where a more rounded and narrative overview of the live-art sector is provided. Highlighting and outlining challenges and gaps in provision has, for all of the reasons outlined above, become the most

prominent and sustained discourse in relation to live art, and one that drives both activity within and perceptions of the sector. Strategies for increasing provision and support for the live-art sector now need to outline a much more specific and, at the same time, diverse range of sources of funding. Where, in 2001, The Bluecoat was looking to the national context to open up strategic opportunities for increased resourcing into live art, the current funding context (in 2014) at a national level suggests that a much more local (and regional) approach is required toward a more sustainable blend of funding, income sources and partnership working. A clearer and more detailed articulation of live-art practices locally and regionally is required, particularly in light of the fact that subsequent to the Arts Council re-structure which took place in 2006 (and which introduced greater decision-making at a regional level) the re-structure in 2010 took decision-making away from the regions and centralised it at the national office.

The development of partnerships has long been a key priority for the live-art sector, and this was outlined in Lois Keidan's 'National Arts and Media Strategy: Discussion Document on Live Art' (1991). Keidan highlighted areas for development, including, for example, establishing strong partnerships between artists, organisations and the Higher-Education sector. While the development of robust working partnerships have been on the agenda for some time, a more focussed and strategic approach is required in developing and maintaining feasible, manageable and sustainable collaborations. In the *Focus Live Art* summary document, under the heading 'The potential to develop national partnerships and initiatives' Mark Waugh states:

> ACE and RAB mission statements tend to be broadly similar, but the priorities are open to drift and negotiation. This suits Live Art with its absence of fixity, and its product which is open to disappearance. The product is excitement and engagement, not 'capital'. (Keidan and Brine: 2001: 2)

Waugh's statement points to a lack of clarity, or what he refers to as drift, from the Arts Council, while seeming to present the discrepancies between Arts Council National Office's shifting priorities and those of the Regional Arts Boards as a positive rather than negative factor. He also ostensibly begins to address two of the main questions set out by Live Art Development Agency in the introduction to all three of the *Focus Live Art* meetings: How can the perception that the needs of live art are at odds with funding agendas be broken down and How can funders be persuaded to see live art as a solution, not a problem? (Keidan and Brine: 2001: 2). The claim that the particular characteristics of live-art practice allow it to fit well with Arts Council funding structures, is positive although it is contingent upon Arts Council maintaining fixed and clear aims and objectives, leaving live art vulnerable to shifts and changes in both Arts Council aims and objectives, and organisational restructuring. This has become particularly clear in light of the major organisational restructuring that has been taking place within the Arts Council since 2012, as a result of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review,[9] which is also pertinent with regard to the relationship between national overview and *regional* restructuring.

With regard to the 2001 funding climate, it could also be argued that while, in general terms, these funding *priorities* (risk, innovation, experimentation) reflected aspects of live-art practice, it was not argued clearly how live art was, or is, better placed than any other art form with regard to Arts Council funding *objectives* and *structures*, given that within application processes there is an emphasis on clearly articulating and evidencing what outcomes will be, and on audience engagement in terms of numbers:

[9] The 2012 restructure included reducing the nine Arts Council areas to five. As detailed previously, significant organisational restructuring has taken place a number of times during the timeframe covered by this research (1979-2013). Some restructuring has been classed as internal, where organisational changes affecting the running of Arts Council were implemented. Other restructures have had greater impact and have radically changed the processes and protocols affecting a broader range of stakeholders.

> AC raised the issue of the relationship between Live Art practice and the funding system and the feeling that the need to demonstrate a product often means that difficult to fund ephemeral work is not prioritised. (Keidan and Brine: 2001: 7) [10]

Live art, in many ways, is the least well suited field of practice with regard to the Arts Council's funding structures. A significant aspect of live-art practices (in very general terms) is as much concerned with exploration of process and material, as it is with the production of a final performative work. The fact that this issue was raised could have been a good starting point for a strategic discussion regarding how the sector could support artists to articulate the benefits and outcomes of their practice where there is no final project or performance. However, the argument in favour of live art suiting Arts Council funding objectives and procedures is only ever very vaguely asserted anecdotally, and there is rarely any in-depth analysis of how, specifically, it meets Arts Council aims and objectives more effectively than any other art form. As mentioned above, the live-art sector needs to become more adept at clarifying, defining and evidencing the benefits of real and meaningful 'risk', 'innovation' and 'experimentation' as they relate to artists' practice, to counter their use as terms that obscure a move toward less interaction with live work and a greater homogenisation of work and audience experience, all of which is presented under the ostensibly positive definition of 'convergence'.

In 2010 it was announced that as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review Arts Council England's budget was to be cut by 29.6% from £449million to £349million by the end of 2014, a loss of £100million between 2011 and 2015. This had an immediate (if slightly less severe than anticipated) impact on 880 regularly funded arts organisations who each received a 0.5% cut, effective from April 2011 for 2011/2012 financial year. The Arts Council were

[10] Focus Live Art Northern meeting minutes, Adrian Challis quoted.

asked to reduce administrative costs by 50% and to only pass on 15% cuts to their regularly funded organisations, having previously made 15% cuts to their operational and administrative expenditure in 2008.

Local Authority funding cuts have also had a significant, and in some places devastating impact on arts provision across England. Newcastle has seen considerable local authority arts-budget cuts, originally announced as 100% cuts in 2012 though this was subsequently revised and a 50% cut has been made to the £1.2million core arts grants, with the council setting their arts budget at £600,000. Liverpool City Council has limited cuts to 10% per year until 2016, and this affects a number of arts organisations. Reduction or cuts in Arts Council funding can also jeopardise an organisation's funding from their Local Authority, if the organisation is no longer deemed to be financially robust enough and proves too great a risk in light of significantly reduced funding.

In Arts Council Commissioned report 'Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy', Tom Fleming and Andrew Erskine state:

> as we look to make the arts more sustainable we are also interested in how the sector can operate more effectively in a commercial environment, by learning from creative businesses and making better use of finance.
> (Fleming and Erskine: 2011: 1)

Arts organisations and institutions are responding as effectively as they can to the increasingly constraining expectations placed on them by the Arts Council in terms of evidencing and justifying their worth within the context of increasing economic difficulties. However, it is evident that this is to the detriment of the arts. The Bluecoat is an organisation that is particularly vulnerable to shifts toward a more commercial environment, due to the

nature of the building, its business model and its mixed economy. The Bluecoat has relied on a mix of income from studio and retail-space hire, and one-off or regular room hire bookings, since it began functioning as an arts-centre in 1927. While there was occasionally lack of available space due to room bookings during the time that I was programming and supporting live art there, there wasn't a sense that commercial hire of space in the building was prioritised over the arts programme. Since The Bluecoat reopened in 2008, it has established a much more regular programme of outside hires, including weddings, functions, conferences and performances.[11] These outside hires bring in a considerable amount of income, and of course this is a sensible business model for The Bluecoat. However, there are clearly a number of issues with this framework, not least the very practical issue that demand on spaces in the building makes it more difficult for the arts-team to book the performance space and other rooms for arts-related activity. Many conference events and weddings utilise a number of rooms in the building, including the performance space and rooms that are used for discussion events and workshops. This is compounded by the timescale on room hire and bookings. Events such as weddings are often booked many months, up to a year, in advance, and often before the arts programme has been finalised for the forthcoming season of activity. This means that The Bluecoat's performance, talks, and workshop programme is, to some extent, shaped by the availability of space in the building.

The Bluecoat has a trading arm which manages both the catering offer and commercial hire of the building, and so income and profit from these areas of activity is not directly re-invested into the arts programme, but goes instead toward the infrastructure costs of the organisation. Of course this supports the infrastructure of the organisation, without which

[11] Discussion of The Bluecoat's business planning and trading arm activity is from an analysis of The Bluecoat's business plans 2009-2012 and 2012-2015, and additional activity reports, budgets and cash-flow reports.

there would not be any arts activity. Common sense suggests that it is counter-intuitive to argue against the commercial hire of The Bluecoat, however, there is a danger that the arts programme will be diminished in favour of activity that generates guaranteed income for the organisation, and to some extent this is already a reality for the organisation.

There are implications for the organisation in terms of brand, focus and profile. Due to the programme at The Bluecoat being wide-ranging, the issue of how the organisation is understood, and the question of whether audiences understand what they can expect from the programme has been consistently perceived to be problematic. With an increased number of outside hires which includes performances, there is a risk that The Bluecoat's artistic programme will be unclear to audiences who will associate the venue with work that is not in line with the organisation's artistic vision.

The arts has previously looked to business models and more recently social enterprise models and this is increasingly affecting and impinging upon artistic decision making, programming and audience development. Arts Council generated discourse which argues for closer alignment between business and the arts is obviously not a recent development and neither are analytical critiques of this imperative. In *'Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events'*, Baz Kershaw takes as his starting point economist J K Galbraith's 1983 Arts Council lecture which took place at The National Theatre, Kershaw writes:

> The underlying theme of the lecture was the need for a mutually respectful partnership between cultural producers and money makers, between creative artists and business people. This meant eliminating the traditional suspicions shared by the two sides, which in turn implied a recognition of equality of knowledge and expertise [….] Galbraith's liberal vision certifies a mutually beneficial symbiosis of art and money, culture and commerce, creativity and industry all working towards a 'civilization' in which the rapacity of the market may be paradoxically tamed by the general rise of an affluence more or less shared by all. (Kershaw: 151)

Kershaw's criticism of this idealistic view of the partnership between the arts and business is particularly pertinent in light of Arts Council generated rhetoric relating to the arts adopting more robust business models, and diversifying their income generation potential to include more commercial activity. Since 2010 there has been more emphasis than ever before on bringing the arts into closer alignment with commercial models of business and enterprise.

In the *Focus Live Art* Summary Lois Keidan and Daniel Brine state:

> If looked at from one direction Live Art is an unruly cross-artform anomaly that doesn't seem to sit easily within the system. But if looked at from another direction we can see that what Live Art 'is' and what Live Art 'can do' are synonymous with the funding priorities of innovation, risk, hybridity, audience development, social inclusion, participation, new cultural discourses and cultural diversity. (Keidan and Brine: 2001: 1)

Although the terms innovation, risk and hybridity *are* synonymous with aspects of how live art is described, they are also the mutable rhetoric of Arts Council's communication of its priorities, and are terms which are utilised to articulate Arts Council's general aims without presenting its objectives. The words innovation, risk and hybridity are used within Arts Council plans, without necessarily reflecting a vibrant arts ecology that a diverse and adequately subsidised arts sector fosters. For example, in the three papers commissioned by Arts Council England in 2011, and published under the title 'Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy', Tom Fleming and Andrew Erskine seek to bring the arts in to closer alignment with 'creative economies' in terms of practices and business models. They state:

> Here, we argue, that by working more entrepreneurially, flexibly and openly across the overall ecology (thus relieving some of the 'creative economy imperative'), art will not only get better, but it will be enjoyed by more people, on their own terms, and in deeper and more interactive ways. Here the flows between the arts ecology and creative economy create dynamic inter-relationship that thrives on innovation, collaboration and exchange: three factors critical to *Achieving great art for everyone*.
> (Fleming and Erskine: Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy 2011: 7)

This argument epitomises the way in which notions of collaboration and creative practice are discussed by the Arts Council to argue for broader engagement with the arts, in a way which is based on a fundamental misrepresentation of what a meaningful experience of, and engagement with, the arts should offer. While there is certainly some validity to a number of the recommendations put forward in the papers, there are also a number of significant risks associated with attempting to represent measures needed, in order to deal with the current funding climate, as ultimately conducive to increasing innovation and risk within the arts. In the key priorities section at the beginning of the *Focus Live Art* summary document, under the heading 'Demonstrate a genuine commitment to innovation, risk and hybridity', Keidan and Brine state that 'The funding system needs to find a way to get to grips with what these words and concepts really mean or stop using them.' (Keidan and Brine: Focus Live Art Summary 2001: 2)

While I agree with this to a large extent, this is a complex issue, and I am realistic about the extent to which this is a possibility. I am in no doubt that individuals within the Arts Council are committed to risk, innovation and collaboration, but the nature of the national funding body, and the systems in place to administrate its activity, are fundamentally at odds with a realistic evaluation and use of these terms. I would argue that it is the *live-art sector* that urgently needs to become more adept at defining and articulating what these terms mean with regard to the infrastructure of the sector, in order to defend against their misappropriation to less productive ends. Live art has been in a particularly vulnerable position since 2010, in relation to the ever-shifting objectives of the Arts Council, especially when those objectives pose a threat to the diversity of practices encompassed by the term live art. In 'Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy' paper 1, Fleming and Erskine discuss innovation and growth under the three main headings of experimentation, risk and innovation. Where the live-art

sector continues to discuss the blurring of boundaries and work that falls between different art forms in terms of artists' practice, these factors are discussed in terms of convergence in the context of this report, where 'Experiment, risk and innovation' are discussed in relation to the aim of increasing digital engagement with the live experience, under the heading: Theme 2 Positive shifts: digitalisation and convergence:

> **The experience:** Live art, street art and festivals have been a huge growth area for the arts ecology and creative economy over the past decade, often bringing arts activity to previous arts and cultural 'cold spots' (the informal term often given to geographical areas with relatively low levels of attendance and participation). With public spending cuts likely to see this type of activity shrinking, can digitalisation provide scalability and mobility, delivering the 'live' in alternative ways?
> (Fleming and Erskine: Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy 2011: 30)

Convergence, in this particular context, refers to the assertion that the combination of a number of factors, including implementation of new technologies is contributing to the perceived increased blurring of boundaries across art forms and live experiences within an arts and cultural context. This has led to the increasing tendency of merging the arts with the leisure and entertainment sectors in discussions regarding sustainability and audience development. It is argued that convergence in the mind of audiences and convergence in the market scope of organisations has changed the stage for arts and cultural organisations. One of the main arguments in favour of live art being a vital space for artists is just how effectively it works across art-form boundaries, and blurs the edges of art-form categorisation. Convergence is discussed clearly within live art and other art forms/sectors as a positive dynamic. Convergence is obviously not a negative factor per se, however, the appropriation of convergence by funding bodies toward strategies that might potentially diminish the amount and artistic quality of live-experiences available to audiences is a worrying trend. The subsequent potential effect on live art (and other art forms) is that it will offer a *less* meaningful space for both artists and audiences. This also highlights that a

reconsideration and analysis of convergence in relation to discussions regarding art-form boundaries and diversity of practice (as offered throughout this research) is urgent and timely. The emphasis here in this Arts Council commissioned report is on efforts to broaden but not necessarily deepen experience of and interaction with the arts.

It is not made clear how the experience of a live festival could be, even to a certain extent, replicated through the use of digital technology. Although at this stage the argument is not in favour of a complete replacement of the live event with a digital approximation, the discourse within these three papers certainly aims toward a notional idea of how and why that might be ultimately achieved:

> As recent research by MTM shows, arts organisations and audiences' are only at the start of a journey, with digital engagement very much still supplementing, rather than replacing, live engagement for most consumers. This research describes a pyramid of engagement for audiences, with the level of online sophistication rising from simply accessing information at the bottom to co-creation at the top. Just as the growth of the web has seen many false starts, with attempts to second-guess consumer preference and need often proving faulty, so we can expect the moving of audiences 'up' this pyramid to be far from straightforward. Experiment, risk and innovation will remain the means by which this relationship will be successfully employed. (Fleming and Erskine: Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy 2011: 29)[12]

There is undoubtedly potential to develop increasingly sophisticated technologies to facilitate and create interaction with work which can function across different platforms. The problem is that where experiment, risk and innovation are referred to as the means by which audiences access an arts experience via digital engagement (albeit with the ultimate potential of 'co-creating' work with artists being the main aim in terms of expanding the range of opportunities) this diminishes the scope of these terms in relation to the diversity of artists working within live art. There continues to be a relatively large amount of investment into

[12]MTM London is a strategic consultancy specialising in media, telecommunications and marketing.

digital technologies within the arts, and organisations such as FACT will be in an increasingly stronger position as the rhetoric relating to artistic practice centres around the most efficient ways to engage the largest number of people with a particular work, or a programme of activity. There is also a question relating to the amount of investment required for an organisation to be fit for purpose with regard to diversifying audience engagement via digital technologies, on a very practical level. This is aside from questions of diversity and how a rich and vibrant live-art ecology which encompasses a wide range of interactions with artistic practice can be fully and meaningfully represented. There is also the risk that smaller organisations, and those less inclined to rely on or utilise the range of digital technologies, may become increasingly more vulnerable to funding cuts.[13] The emphasis throughout the report is on how digital ecologies can be enablers for sustainability, innovation and growth, and considering how new technologies can be utilised in relation to audiences.

To state that organisations are playing an increasingly progressive role with regard to the application of digital technology belies the fact that there are also a large number of organisations who are simply not in a position to develop along these lines. In the main, arts organisations are nowhere near as advanced as companies and organisations within the private sector in terms of utilising technology to develop their relationship with the public. To state that they are playing an increasingly progressive role in the report offers an unrealistic and unattainable picture of how arts organisations might continue to develop, and only those who really are innovating in terms of technology, that is those whose mission statement and

[13] For example, The Windows Project, a literature development agency in Liverpool which was formally established in 1981 was unsuccessful in achieving NPO status in 2011. While this was not entirely due to the fact that the organisation had not fully embraced the potential of digital technologies in the delivery of its aims and objectives, this was cited (in the written feedback to the applicaton) as a factor which affected aspects of their activity, and demonstrated to the Arts Council a lack of commitment to moving in a certain direction.

artistic vision outlines this as a main priority and commitment, will flourish in the context of this vision of how organisations need to develop into the future.

The Arts Council's plans between 2008 and 2011, and for the subsequent ten years, were set out in Arts Council England's 10 year strategic framework: 'Achieving Great Art for Everyone', and other key documents that work out from, and build on, the strategic framework and Arts Council England's five main goals.[14] While it is difficult to argue with the laudable aim of (for example) reaching 'every child and young person', it is obvious that in the face of increasing cuts to arts funding that opportunities (for audiences) for a diverse range of meaningful interaction with the arts is likely to be diminished and is certainly under threat. There is, of course, awareness of what the implications of decreased funding will be for the live-art sector, and promoters and artists are addressing this in a number of ways, including in a number of ways including through critical discussion events.

The Live-Art Sector and the National Funding Picture in 2014

Under-investment in the live-art sector, and lack of capacity-building within it, contribute to the fact that the sector is comprised of a relatively small number of organisations who are strategically developing live art as a field of practice, which in turn has resulted in the centralisation of the live-art sector. This is compounded by the fact that Live Art Development Agency plays a significant role in shaping, steering and contextualising live-art practice and programming. Of the 21 England-based organisations that comprise Live Art UK (membership of the consortium is by invite), seven of these are London based. Of the other organisations, five are based in southern regions, two in the east and west midlands, and

[14] 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated, 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts 3: The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative 4: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

five in northern regions (with two of those organisations in Manchester). While Live Art UK is, of course, not entirely representative of all live-art activity in England, this analysis points to the fact that there is further potential for developing the infrastructure of the live-art sector in the north of England, and for factoring this into recommendations for how live art should be strategically developed in Liverpool in consider this broader regional and national picture.

Live Art UK was set up in January 2003, with financial support from Arts Council England through the National Promoter Development Fund[15] to support a two-year action research project which:

> Explored new models and partnership for the promotion of Live Art; developed new ways to increase the national and international visibility of Live Art; and initiated strategies for a more sustainable future for Live Art practitioners and promoters. (Live Art UK website)

and aimed to:

> develop a representative voice for the Live Art sector in the UK and act as a point of contact for national and international artists and promoters wishing to find out more about Live Art in the UK. (Live Art UK website)

During the action research phase of the network which ran until the end of 2005, Live Art UK comprised the following founding organisations: Arnolfini; Artsadmin, the Bluecoat, Chapter Arts Centre, Colchester Arts Centre, Fierce, greenroom,[16] Live Art Development Agency and New Work Network. Nottingham-based NOW Festival, New Moves International[17] and Tramway were part of both the original informal grouping (NLAPF) and were involved in the

[15] Arts Council England have run two major programmes of funding focussing on collaborative programming and curatorial partnerships between venues: Barclays Stage Partners 1995 – 2002 and the National Promoter Development Fund 2001-2004.

[16] Greenroom was unsuccessful in its application for NPO status and as a result of losing its main funding, the venue closed at the end of May 2011.

[17] New Moves International ceased trading and was wound up on November 30th 2011 due to financial irregularities. The organisations main funders were Creative Scotland and Glasgow City Council, and from 2007 until 2013 the EU Culture Programme, although the final two years of the EU funding has now been withdrawn.

early stages of formalising the network and its development into LAUK, but despite being committed to the network's aims these three organisations were not able to commit to the time required to attend meetings, or to the financial membership contribution that each organisation committed to the project. During the action research phase of LAUK each organisation was expected to make a financial contribution of £500 to the network in order to provide match funding to the amount applied for from ACE through the National Promoter Development Fund. At this beginning-stage representation within the LAUK network was limited to England and Wales, with no organisations from Scotland or Northern Ireland part of the core membership. In January 2010 Live Art UK expanded its membership to include 13 new partner organisations. This expanded membership includes Glasgow venue The Arches, who were a key partner on the delivery of New Territories and The National Review of Live Art (NRLA) from 1994 until 2006, when it was moved to Tramway, also in Glasgow.

Between 2003 and 2005 LAUK activity included: six meetings between the core membership group, two research trips to Beijing and a national meeting that took place in October 2004, to coincide with Liverpool Biennial, and Liverpool Live 2004. For the national meeting (planned as the first of an annual national Live Art networking event), Live Art UK invited 50 representatives, from venues across the UK, who were either in the process of developing a live-art programme, or who were programming live art on an infrequent basis. In 2005 Live Art UK worked in collaboration with The Chinese Arts Centre in Manchester, Live Art Development Agency and Shu Yang of the DaDao Live Art Festival in Beijing, to curate a programme of work by Beijing based artists working in performance, which took place in venues across the UK from 13th to 28th October 2005. The programme was financially assisted by Arts Council England, and a publication contextualising the programme was

financially supported by the British Council through its Artists Links programme,[18]which also provided an important and useful framework for the development of the partnership between LAUK and the DaDao Festival in Beijing.[19]

In 2005 Live Art UK successfully applied to Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts programme in order to consolidate and build on the findings and activity that had taken place from 2003. The application was for a two-year project, 'Live Art UK: Into Action', and the network received funding for two years totalling £121,826. The main objectives of this next phase of establishing Live Art UK were to: appoint a dedicated coordinator to manage LAUK activity; continue with the regular meetings between the core membership partners; develop the annual network event and meeting; undertake international field trips; establish a touring and audience development strategic commission; instigate a critical writing initiative.

The live-art sector still relies much more heavily on project funding than the dance, theatre and visual-arts sectors, with far fewer organisations (who are *specifically* and *solely* dedicated to the development and support of live art) being annually revenue funded as one of the Arts Council's National Portfolio Organisations. Of the 699 NPOs funded for the term 2012-2015 there are only ten who are explicitly and solely dedicated to the support, production and/or presentation of live art. This is taking into account that a number of organisations might not necessarily use the term live art explicitly within the organisation's title or mission statement, and by broadening out the definition to include organisations singularly dedicated to supporting, producing and presenting: performance that does not fit easily under other art-form categories and; contemporary performance.

[18]The British Council and Arts Council collaborative initiative Artists Links began in 2003 with a pilot scheme, and then continued with a project that ran throughout 2005 and drew to a close in 2006, bringing artists together from England and China.
[19] Detailed in Chapter 1.

Those ten organisations are: ArtsAdmin (London); Carnesky Productions (London); Duckie (London); Fierce Festival (Birmingham); hAb (Manchester); Home Live Art (London); InBetween Time Productions (Bristol); Live Art Development Agency (London); London International Festival of Theatre (London) and SPILL Festival of Performance (Ipswich). Of those ten organisations listed, six are London based, with the other four based in the West Midlands, the North West, the South East and the South West of the England.[20] Eight out of the ten organisations are members of Live Art UK, the national consortium of live-art promoters, along with a further 15 organisations: The Arches (Glasgow); Battersea Arts Centre (London); The Basement (Brighton); the Bluecoat (Liverpool); Cambridge Junction (Cambridge); Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff); Chelsea Theatre (London); Colchester Arts Centre (Colchester); Compass Live Art (Leeds); Contact (Manchester), Forest Fringe (Edinburgh), Hatch (Nottingham), Live at LICA (Nuffield Theatre Lancaster); Performance Space (London) and; Wunderbar (Newcastle). These 15 members of Live Art UK are not included in my first list of ten NPO funded organisations, for one or more of the following three reasons: 1) they are not NPO funded; 2) they are not in England, and the scope of this research is to position live art in Liverpool in the context of developments in England, and not the UK or; 3) they are not *solely* dedicated to the support and promotion of live art. For example Cambridge Junction and Colchester Arts Centre have mixed programmes of theatre, music and comedy. As such they are organisations where consistent dedication to the support of live art is compromised by potential reallocation of funding to ostensibly more popular programming, therefore the live-art programme is vulnerable to the economic climate. Live

[20] Annual Arts Council funded NPOs listed for 2014-2015: ArtsAdmin (£533,072); Carnesky Productions (£116,292); Duckie (£142,492); Fierce Festival (£130,612); hAb (£70,406); Home Live Art (£75, 435); InBetween Time Productions (£191,102); Live Art Development Agency (£235,846) and London International Festival of Theatre (£452,608). A full list of NPO funded organisations and their annual revenue from 2012-2015 can be found at www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/national-portfolio-funding-programme.

art is still perceived to be a financial risk, and to require investment that garners little, or no, financial return for the organisation, and this contributes to the perception that it can only be developed and presented if it is subsidised by the Arts Council.

Cambridge Junction, a combined arts centre in Cambridge and Colchester Arts Centre are wholly dedicated to supporting and presenting live art, and this is in large part due to the commitment from their respective Artistic Directors, Daniel Brine (former Co-director of Live Art Development Agency, current Artistic Director of Cambridge Junction) and Anthony Roberts (Artistic Director of Colchester Arts Centre) who both have a long history of supporting and promoting live art practices in England. The point that is regularly made, which I introduced in Chapter 1, is that the vulnerability of the sector is compounded by the fact that live-art programming and support relies heavily on the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of individuals within organisations, but that the infrastructure of the organisations might not be robust enough to support this vision. There is also the related risk that because it has proved difficult to embed live art within arts-organisations' programmes, if a dedicated individual leaves then live art may not subsequently be supported. The risk here being that should Daniel Brine or Anthony Roberts leave their respective roles then live art in those venues may not continue to be supported. It could be argued that venues with mixed-economies are in a more robust position to support live-art practices, due to the fact that the live-art programme could be subsidised by other income-generating activity, such as potentially more popular (by which I mean with broader appeal for larger audiences) theatre, comedy or film. However, the potential for this to work relies on a thriving programme that attracts enough audience to cover the programme costs, the overheads of the organisation and to then generate profit, which can then be used to subsidise what would be referred to as more risk-taking practice. Although, in theory, this would be a sensible way for organisations to

operate, it is difficult to implement it as a strategy due to the lack of guaranteed income from other strands of programming. This coupled with the challenges that publically funded organisations are already facing in terms of income generation through funding and sponsorship means that this model would need to be rigorously planned and implemented consistently over a significant period of time. That's not to say, however, that it should not be explored, and in considering pragmatic recommendations for Liverpool I return to an analysis of this as a potential model.

Chelsea Theatre in London explored the potential of increasing income through a more commercially viable comedy and live literature programme, with the express aim of re-investing any income from box-office into the live-art programme at the theatre. Francis Alexander, Artistic Director of Chelsea Theatre, began to develop a more sustained live-art programme in 2003. Prior to this the theatre had programmed a broad mix of theatre productions alongside performances by theatre companies who hired the space. For the past ten years the contemporary performance and live-art programme at Chelsea Theatre has been successfully developed and Alexander was keen to explore ways in which the live-art strand of programming and artist support could be more sustainably embedded within the theatre's activity. The main objective being to reduce reliance on outside-hires of the theatre space (Alexander has no artistic control over these outside-hire productions and they potentially dilute the theatre's artistic focus) which are essential to the financial sustainability of the organisation.[21]

[21] From an analysis of Chelsea Theatre's Business Plan 2012-2015.

In May 2013 I was commissioned by Chelsea Theatre to write a feasibility study and a business-case for this model of programming. My proposal for planning the business-case (Appendix I) included an initial SWOT analysis, which highlighted to the theatre that at that stage (June 2013) the strategy was high-risk from a financial perspective as it would require some substantial initial investment into programming that would still include an element of risk in terms of box-office income. Chelsea Theatre made the decision not to move ahead with planning at that particular point in time due a lack of sufficient resources and the difficulty in justifying increased expenditure on programming to the theatre's board. This commissioned research threw light on another issue, which is that arts organisations are compelled to consistently justify their artistic decision-making to a board of directors for whom the financial sustainability and robustness of the organisation is paramount. While this is, of course, entirely appropriate, tensions arise if board members are not wholly conversant with the complexities of live-art and performative practices, and therefore find it difficult to endorse artistic decision-making which includes programming work that they feel will not attract (or in some cases which they feel will alienate) audiences.

This analysis of how live art now operates at a centralised organisational level (that is, through Live Art UK membership organisations), combined with a strategic repositioning of live art at an institutional and local level (articulating the full diversity of practices, strategies and tactics that the field of practice encompasses) is essential in moving forward toward a pragmatic strategy, and will strengthen the sector at a national and regional level. Creating robust local strategies and partnerships is the most effective way to protect a diversity of

artists and practices from the implications of notional Arts Council strategies for financial sustainability across the arts sector as a whole.[22]

In mapping a course for live art that makes it a meaningfully functional and diverse area of practice in Liverpool, both within and outside of mainstream[23] organisations I am not suggesting that Arts Council funding is disregarded. What I am suggesting is that if the aim is long-term sustainability then alignment with Arts Council and other funding priorities can only be part of a more in-depth, well established and more embedded set of strategies.

[22] I am referring here to convergence, digitalisation, and what I consider to be a flawed and limited understanding of audience experience.

[23] My definition of mainstream for the purposes of this research, is in direct reference to building based arts organisations that are constituted as 'Company Limited by Guarantee' and with a board of directors, that receive (or have received at some point during the time that this research covers 1979-2013) a majority or considerable percentage of their funding from DCMS, Arts Council England, Northern Ireland, Wales or Scotland (now Creative Scotland).

Chapter 3

Analysis of the National Context in England Part Two: Mapping the Dominant Discourse around Live Art

This chapter maps the discourse that has developed in relation to key aspects of the presentation, production, reception and support of live art in England, through an analysis of how live art is understood and discussed, by the sector that supports it. It considers how these discussions reflect, and have affected, live-art activity in Liverpool between 2000 and 2013, and provides further insight into issues impacting on the institutional infrastructure for live art in England. The close critical analysis of the development of live-art activity at The Bluecoat is used to evidence, and in places to challenge, aspects of these discussions, in an attempt to provide more specific and alternative readings of some of the assumptions that are perpetuated in relation to live-art activity in England.

The areas of discourse that I outline here are organised under a set of main headings: do we still need the term live art; risk; audience/s and; programming live art. There is, of course, cross-over and slippage between these headings and the discussions do not fall neatly into these categories.

In 2010 Live Art UK commissioned 10 case-studies which were subsequently published as a collection entitled *In Time.* The collection was 'designed to represent some of the innovative and pioneering ways in which live art has both posed and responded to many of the exciting cultural challenges of our times' (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 5).[1] Although this particular collection of case studies represents only a very small selection of writing about

[1] The ten case studies are organised into three main sections: Infrastructure; Public Engagement and Legacies. The case studies cover: (**Infrastructure**) Professional Development; Artist – led Activities; Networks; Economies of Live Art (**Public Engagement**) Programming and Curating; Audiences; Internationalism; Education (**Legacies**) Critical Writing; Archiving.

live art, the fact that it was commissioned by Live Art UK, with all of the case-studies having been written or facilitated by Live Art UK partner organisations, means that it is feasible to assert that the publication is representative of aspects of the most prevalent discourse generated by the live-art sector. The *In Time* publication provides invaluable insight into many of the concerns that have been consistently on Live Art UK's agenda since 2003 and is therefore a crucial reference point for this analysis of dominant discourse.

Do We Still Need the Term Live Art?

The question of whether the term live art is still useful and relevant relates to five other areas of discussion: is live art a cultural strategy or an art form; is live art marginalised; how has live art influenced other areas of practice; how integrated is live art within other art forms; how does live art function in relation to 'the mainstream'?

The idea that live art functions as a cultural strategy is a prevalent notion:

> In the UK the term 'live art' is understood not so much as a description of a singular practice or discipline, but a cultural strategy to include a catalogue of processes and practices that might otherwise be excluded from more established curatorial, cultural and critical discourses: a strategy – or approach – that acknowledges ways of working that do not easily sit within received structures, and that privileges artists who choose to operate across, in between, and at the edges of more conventional artistic forms.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2005: 74)

Live art is articulated as a context within which a diversity of performative practices can be included, and contextualised. Keidan's paper 'National Arts and Media Strategy: Discussion Document on Live Art' (1991) introduced live art as a strategy for the inclusion of diverse art forms and artists. Keidan's paper was in part based on areas discussed and some recommendations from 'Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity: Action Research Project. A Report to the Visual Arts Department of the Arts Council of Great Britain' by Michael McMillan (January 1990). This report was commissioned to consider

how the Arts Council might widen its view of performance or live art, and to 'recognise the importance of interdisciplinary work' (McMillan 1990:3). Keidan's aim while at the Arts Council was to reconfigure live art, to reposition it: 1) as a term that aimed toward the development of a cultural strategy, and 2) within developing policies around diversity across art forms. Keidan was responding to the fact that at this time, live art, in line with other art forms and not uniquely, reflected the arts as still predominantly white, middle class, and elitist, as outlined in McMillan's report.

Live art is articulated as a context within which a diversity of different arts practices can be included, and contextualised, but it is questionable how effective this framework has been in allowing artists to negotiate broader, mainstream fields of production and presentation in theatre and visual art. Arguments in favour of live art being considered as a cultural strategy *rather* than an art form are compelling and valid, and if how it functions as a strategy was clearly analysed, articulated and evaluated then it would contribute to a more accurate understanding of the sector. Reluctance to describe live art as an art form obviously stems from the fact that as a term it, ostensibly at least, incorporates a very wide range of different practices and, therefore, it is difficult to characterise its constituent components. However, I would argue that live art needs to be understood as a cultural strategy, a range of processes *and* an art-form descriptor, and that a clearer and more consistent analysis of terms is essential.

The questions of whether live art should be maintained as a distinct term, and whether it is a term that refers to an art-form or a cultural strategy also links to the way in which live-art practices are compared to and positioned within other art forms including theatre and performance, contemporary dance, music and live literature and spoken word, and the

contemporary visual-arts, and how an articulation of the cross-over and distinctions creates something of a dilemma and to some extent a contradiction. There is a desire, from the live-art sector, to maintain live art as a distinct term, while also recognising the blurring of art-form boundaries and the extent to which live art has been well-integrated into other art-form areas and to call for its influence on, and better integration into, the mainstream. To some extent, the notion of live art as a cultural strategy now serves to perpetuate the unnecessary marginalisation of a set of practices which might well be more easily understood and well-integrated into other art-forms.

The assertion that live art is a space within which the greatest diversity of performative practice can be supported and presented underpins this research and provides the rationale for the recommendations put forward in Chapter 4 for its sustained development in Liverpool. The diversity of practice that the term comprises is one of the most significant factors in arguing for its continuation as a distinct term, however, this does not negate the fact that a more thorough analysis of why diversity is important is needed. In relation to programming in Liverpool, maintaining a programming strand that can encompass a diversity of different practices is important in order to allow for artists in the city to resist art-form categorisation and to experiment with ideas and process, while also offering artists and audiences a framework and an entry point to beginning to understand where their work is positioned in relation to other work and practice.

The assertion that underpins this research, and which provides the rationale for recommendations toward the strategic and sustained development of live art in Liverpool, is that the term *does* need to be maintained. The term is needed in order to make the broadest range of performative processes and practice available and accessible to artists, and to

audiences. Live art is a dynamic term which, more than any other art-form category, provides a context for performative *processes* to be framed, contextualised and understood. Live art is equally a description of a set of processes as it is a description of a range of performative 'outputs'. Often the term 'practice' is used and this conflates 'processes' and 'work that is presented to an audience'. In order to fully understand why the term live art is needed it is important to make a distinction between 'the process' and 'the work' in order to clarify that live art is better understood as a context for a diversity of artistic processes and a framework for artist support, and that its use as a programming term, under which the broadest diversity of performances can be presented is important, but presents a different set of considerations.

Artists may position their practice within the context of live art primarily because it is the most useful space for the exploration of ideas and processes without having to categorise their practice and shape it to fit within a particular art-form category. However, the work which emerges from that process might easily be categorised as, for example, theatre, visual-art, dance or spoken-word. Live art is a space and a context that allows for the greatest shifts between where an artistic process might begin, and how it might manifest as a work. The development of the infrastructure for live art in Liverpool must reflect this and should be premised, initially, on processes and not presentation, with the framework for the presentation of live-art practices becoming potentially more integrated into, for example, theatre, visual-art and dance programmes across the city.

Liverpool Live (2004) reflected the desire to present a programme of processes as well as performances. The seven artist-residencies exemplified both the challenges and importance of this, as outlined in detail in Chapter 1 with specific reference to the work of Sandra Johnston. Understanding the differences between a programme of work such as *You Are Here* (2002)

and *Liverpool Live* (2004) is important in articulating the full potential of live art as a space for artists to make and present work. While *You Are Here* included works that revealed aspects of artists' working processes. For example, Kira O'Reilly's *Blood Wall Drawing* was a performative work in which the artist divided the white walls of a gallery space into one-inch squares with surgical tape, and painted a thin diagonal line (in blood) from the left hand corner to the bottom right hand corner of each square. The artist also made it known (via the *You Are Here* brochure and interpretation panels in the space) the process by which her blood had been taken while she was in Ireland, the significance of this and her subsequent journey to Liverpool.

While this was a durational work with the process of production inextricable from the presentation of the work, it was a piece which had been shaped and structured prior to the artist arriving in Liverpool. There were some conditions and factors which remained unknown to the artist prior to beginning the work, for example, to what extent the work would be complete in terms of painting into each of the one-inch squares. There were also some unforeseen issues, such as the gallery walls being flawed in places which affected the overall quality of the piece. However, these factors did not significantly shift the parameters or the nature of the work.

In *Liverpool Live* (2004) I wanted the programme to reveal much more of the artists' processes through the residencies which allowed the artists to shape the work in direct relation to their experience of Liverpool, and I aimed to present the complexity of the process of devising work by revealing and articulating as much of that process as possible. Of course, each of the artists arrived in Liverpool with ideas based on their existing body of practice and prior research, so it wasn't the case that they were responding entirely to their local

environment in the conception and creation of the work. It was also difficult to fully articulate the full process of the residencies to audiences, as I outline in some detail in Chapter 1, again in relation to the work of Sandra Johnston.

The question 'do we need live art as a term' is also implicit within an analysis of how vulnerable the sector and field of live art are in terms of funding. The cultural relevance of live art is consistently being considered on a very practical basis, usually in response to issues of resourcing, and as evidenced in the previous chapter, in response to the national funding situation. In relation to The Bluecoat there are many risks associated with the reductions in funding to organisations that have taken place since 2010, which impacts upon whether these organisations are able to maintain live art as a prioritised or even distinct area of practice.

There is resistance from the live-art sector, to define what live art is in terms of art form, and this has ostensibly been with the aim of maintaining a field of practice accessible to the most diverse range of artists possible. However, this resistance has had the opposite effect in terms of diversity because the lack of detailed analysis of the development of live art as an art form has led to confusion about what live art is, and what it can be, in real terms, across the different contexts which it spans. The analysis of live art in Liverpool in Chapter 1, coupled with my recommendations to approach further analysis of the field in this in-depth way, offers a blueprint for achieving a more strategic overview of live art.

Discussions, which tend to articulate live art as a cultural strategy as opposed to an art form, make sense to an extent. However, there are two issues associated with this: it can be argued that any sector is *as* concerned with the strategy underpinning it as it is about the art form that it presents and supports, but this doesn't negate the necessity of clearly articulating the full

range of practice, artists and practitioners within the field and; the term cultural strategy is used very generally in this context, referring only to a very limited set of approaches to understanding live art. One of the problems associated with how the live-art sector discusses practice is its over-reliance on the mere fact of live art's diversity in arguing for its importance. While I am also highlighting that live art is a valuable art-form term and context because it encompasses such a diversity of practices, I am also stating that this is not in and of itself a powerful enough argument in terms of asserting its significance and understanding its influence on other art form areas, and that it is not the most robust argument for ensuring sustainability of the field of practice, and the term.

I am not suggesting that there is a complete lack of in-depth consideration or discussion of artists' practice and projects. There are a huge number of archives, publications, projects, initiatives and events which are solely concerned with discussing practice and describing the work of artists. My argument is that while there is an abundance of discourse relating to the work of particular artists, there is no strategic overview or detailed analysis of live art as an art form which places it within broader discussions about strategic development for the sector. All discussion about strategy is steered toward the relationship between live art and, for example, national funding bodies, organisations, other sectors and the support mechanisms which are in place for artists. But sustainable strategies for the sector, with regard to maintaining the broadest diversity of practice, also need to involve accurately evidencing the influence of live art on other areas of work while highlighting why and where it is distinct from other practices. Further to this, the way that the live-art sector characterises live-art and artists working within this field contributes to the limited analysis of the impact and power of live-art practice. More specifically for this discussion, there is an obvious resistance to discussing live art as an art form in any meaningful way. There is no case-study

in the *In Time* publication that considers live art as an art-form or positions it in any detail in relation to developments within other art-forms, for example, theatre, visual art, dance, literature and spoken-word.

There are a number of related issues around ideas of quality and art form, that often (particularly with regard to platform events and opportunities for emerging artists) become confused and conflated, leading to a lack of clear overview as to how encompassing of (and influential within) other art forms live art is. This is also one of the contributing factors to the confusion around, and a pre-occupation with 'what makes 'live art' live art' as opposed to, for example dance or theatre. This lack of clarity in itself is not necessarily to the detriment of the sector, and this is not an argument in favour of defining what live art is, or can be, too stringently. However, with regard to sustaining live art as a recognised and important sector with the influencing power that it claims to have, this needs to be acknowledged and addressed. In order for live art to develop meaningful influencing capacity across these other art forms and programming strands, then we need to become much more proactive in developing, extending and reinvigorating other art-form areas, and evaluating in meaningful and quantifiable terms what effect live art has on other areas of practice, rather than simply articulating what it *perceives* its influence on other practices to be. In the *In Time* publication Keidan and Mitchell refer to live art as a burgeoning area of artistic practice, arguing that the *In Time* publication makes the case for live art, and this highlights the way in which live art is consistently referred to as a new, emerging and developing area of work rather than a set of well-established practices and contexts. In her introduction Sonia Dyer provides an overview of the themes covered by the case studies:

> New art forms always have to fight for their place in the world
> (as photography had to, for example) and this is precisely where
> Live Art still seems to be at. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 13)

By 2010 this was simply not the case for live art anymore. The argument that live art is fighting for its place within the broader arts sector is usually attributed to the difficulty of defining what live art is, and the resulting lack of resources and lack of consolidation as an area of practice. I assert that it is, in fact, the underlying (albeit perhaps inadvertent) imperative to argue for live art as a unique space *because* of its self-sufficiency and independence from other art forms, that perpetuates its perceived marginalised status and the perception that it is under-resourced. I would go as far as to state that live art is not still fighting for its 'place in the world', but that in some ways it benefits the live-art sector to argue that this is the case in order to maintain its status as a 'marginalised' area of practice, and thus delay a full consideration of how institutionalised live art has become. To be clear, I do not cite the institutionalisation of live art as a negative condition of its development, I understand it to be an inevitable and largely positive aspect of how live art has developed in England since 1979. I evidence that the live-art sector does not fully recognise that live-art has become institutionalised, or articulate to what extent this is the case, and that this has contributed in part to its vulnerability, and the lack of realistic strategy for its sustainability.

That live art is an area of artistic practice that is growing and becoming increasingly popular is ostensibly a positive statement, but little reference to the fact that it is already a well-established context and art form, coupled with the lack of clear mapping of its history, is ultimately counterproductive to a sector which consistently finds itself arguing for the importance and position of live art within the broader arts ecology.

The influence of live art on other art-form areas, and the question of how integrated it has become within other sectors, needs to be thoroughly detailed and mapped if more sustainable strategies are to be developed. My recommendations that live art could and should be in closer alignment with other art forms may seem contradictory to the aim of maintaining it as

a distinct area of practice, term and context. However, what I am suggesting needs to be achieved is a balance which takes into account the integration of live art within other art-form sectors based on a clearer more detailed analysis of how integrated live art has already become. It has become increasingly important to re-invigorate the term, in order to strengthen the live-art sector, since 2010,[2] not to protect live art as a field of practice per se, but because live art is still (and increasingly so) a potentially significant and invaluable framework in arming against particular tendencies within the arts and cultural sector, namely convergence and homogenisation of arts and cultural experiences.

Obviously there are other perspectives that offer a critical analysis of some of the issues associated with live-art practice, but again, none which deal specifically and in detail with the particular question of 'do we still need it as a distinct area of practice and as a programming context?', within a broader and more in-depth analysis of the sector, as opposed to in reference to research which might consider, for example, artists' and curatorial practices.[3] This question provides the key to a broader risk analysis of the sector, and highlights how failing to articulate a clear and more strategic answer to it, has, in part, contributed to some of the issues regarding sustainability that the live-art sector continues to face, and needs to deal with, with increasing urgency. There is a danger that where live art ceases to be a financially sustainable area of practice, its relevance or currency could be called into question with less effective and meaningful recourse from the live-art sector[4] than there should be, given the strong arguments in favour of its significance and importance.

[2] By which I am referring to the formation of the coalition government who have implemented considerable changes to arts policy and funding.
[3] This also ties in with the central aim of this research, that being to evidence the impact that the increasing 'centralisation' of the live-art sector has had on the broader field of live art, which is much more so than any other art form, field or sector.
[4] Obviously I am referring to organisations which I discuss as being part of the live-art sector, but I also recognise that certain decision-making processes regarding programming are not always entirely within the control of the artistic and programming team.

Risk

A significant factor that I cite as contributing to an inadequate articulation of live art as a space for artists to develop processes and work, is that live art is consistently articulated as being risk-taking, and that artists working in this field are uniquely doing this as a matter of course and on a daily basis. In her introduction to *In Time,* Lyn Gardner[5] discusses the role of live art in the context of future world developments, with an emphasis on what she perceives as the full implications of increasingly rapid technological advancements in a political, social and economic sense. She states:

> We can't rely on the scientists to come up with solutions for our problems; the onus is on us to take action, to create our own individual and collective futures. To do that we need artists who can help us imagine that future using all the tools available to them, who can think beyond the world as we know it, imagine and reinvent the future. Who better to do that than those working in the field of Live Art, who through their practice have already proved themselves capable of thinking outside the box and beyond the often imprisoning forms of traditional culture? (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 9)

The terms 'traditional culture', 'traditional art forms' and 'mainstream' are never consistently or clearly defined, outlined or mapped in relation to this discourse, and resulting conclusions about the role of live art in relation to 'art form' and the broader arts ecology remain vague, limited and inaccurate. What 'beyond the often imprisoning forms of traditional culture' meant in 2010 when *In Time* was published, and what it meant in 2013 is very different to how it may have been understood at the beginning of the 20th Century and, for the purposes of this research, what it meant in 1979. Yet arguments centralising live art's capacity to provide a more risk-taking and radical context than other art forms are still among the most prevalent, and rely on definitions and perspectives that have not been sufficiently or clearly updated in the context of discourse generated by the live-art sector, or for that matter, in the context of discussions generated by other art forms and sectors.

[5] Lyn Gardner is a theatre and performance critic for The Guardian.

The second issue is that there is an expectation on artists who position their work under the heading live art to produce radical work either in terms of challenging other art forms, or with a world view or a political or social agenda. The development of the discourse around live art since the 1990s has contributed to this imperative which is to the detriment of the diversity of practices permitted access to the term and context live art. Of course I am not suggesting that artists who are making radical, ground-breaking and challenging work are not central to live art, I am stating that all of the assumptions associated with those terms need to be consistently revisited, challenged and updated in light of other developments across other art form areas and sectors, including for example collaborative and participatory processes within education, learning and participation programming and practice.

There is an implicit expectation of artists who access live art as a space (to develop and position their practice) to produce work that is challenging either in terms of the material or in terms of experimentation with form. As with any other field of practice, some performative works are not particularly ground-breaking or radical but this doesn't necessarily signal they are not a vibrant, significant or powerful practices. The point again here is that there needs to be a clearer definition of terms and better evaluation of what the discourse is, usually only anecdotally, referring to. As a result of the lack of clarity in relation to what the term traditional cultures actually refers to (and for that matter a lack of analysis and clarity around art form definitions) discussions regarding how live art breaks down boundaries or how it is cutting edge and radical are fundamentally confused and contradictory, while also on one level presenting a seemingly clear and common sense analysis. Little wonder that there is confusion about just how much live art has been assimilated into the mainstream and what the implications of this assimilation are.

This confusion is exemplified by contemporary performance company Forced Entertainment, who have been consistently referred to by the live-art sector as radical, and as challenging the norms of theatrical practice. The Sheffield-based company have been making performative works since 1984, including performances in theatres, gallery-based and installation work. Their work has been very influential on what might be considered mainstream theatre practices, to the extent that it is now difficult to locate where and how Forced Entertainment are themselves challenging the form. This is coupled with the fact that inevitably, across a 30-year period, particular ways of making, presenting and producing work remain consistent, regardless of how determinedly challenging a company or artist sets out to be. My argument here is that Forced Entertainment should still be regarded as an interesting and valid example of the relevance and power of contemporary performance practice situated within the context of live art, but because there is too much emphasis on practice under this heading being radical and challenging, discussions about Forced Entertainment inevitably default to a 'are they or aren't they radical, challenging, risk-taking anymore', when there are far more interesting and complex discussions to be had about the work of this company.

There is a considerable amount of in-depth analysis of the work of Forced Entertainment and they are one of the most studied and influential performance companies within higher education at undergraduate level. But in the context of *this* discussion they provide a good example of the inadequacy of how the power and relevance of live art is considered, because those discussions rely too heavily on a limited view of what challenging, radical and risk taking work looks like.

In his article about Forced Entertainment for *Performa Magazine*,[6] Chris Green asks:

[6] This essay was posted on 25th February 2013. Performa Magazine is an on-line magazine which publishes essays, performance documentation, interviews, audio and video material exploring 'Performa' which is a Biennial performance festival of new visual performance art which takes place in New York. The festival was founded by RoseLee Goldberg in 2004.

> The challenge, now the company has settled into its own format, is to avoid habit. The audience can find itself identifying techniques and devices rather than being surprised, shocked, or challenged. But, the question still remains, are they still challenging the norm if after three decades, they are the norm? (Green: 8)

My questions would be why should live art, and specifically in this instance, contemporary performance that is firmly positioned within live art, avoid habit, and why should there be a problem with audiences 'identifying techniques and devices rather than being surprised, shocked or challenged'?

Use of the terms traditional and mainstream also need to be challenged as they relate to material and forms of practice, toward offering a clearer and updated understanding of the arts sector as a whole, and specifically to challenge and reconfigure notions of instrumentalism with particular emphasis on discussions around radical practice.

It is this conflation of live art with radical practice that has, in some part, led to the sector's resistance to articulating live art as better integrated within certain practices, a central factor in the inadequate articulation of how influential live-art practice has been in terms of art-form development (across all sectors) and organisational change. This provides a good starting point for understanding how it might be repositioned more effectively and convincingly, for example, continuing to state that live art provides a space for artists whose work would normally fall outside of other art forms, which has led to the tendency (despite claims to the contrary) to distance live art from other practices and contexts. Rather than overstate these gaps between art forms, it may have been more useful for the live-art sector to map, and thus proactively broaden, the scope of work that comes under other headings: visual art, theatre, dance, literature and education and participation programmes, rather than remain in constant (if inadvertent) opposition to these other areas of practice and contexts. This ties in with my

earlier discussion about how understanding and clearly articulating live art primarily as a framework for a set of processes allows for both effective and useful integration into other art-form areas, while still maintaining it as a clear and distinct term, and as a space for programming for work which doesn't as readily fit into other art-form categories.

In the *In Time* case-studies Lyn Gardner exemplifies contradictions, relating to the discussion of where live art sits within other art-form sectors, as it is often manifest within discourse generated by the live-art sector:

> Assimilation can of course be a dangerous thing, and the purpose of live art is not to be picked up magpie-like as a pretty bauble that can be incorporated into the dominant culture, a culture that has too often marginalised Live Art and failed to find the time and space to embrace its quirks and individualities or develop the vocabulary to make it part of mainstream critical discourse. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010:10)

Gardner's assertion highlights the contradictions that arise as a result of live art being referred to, or defined interchangeably within the same discussion, as: cultural strategy; process; programming strand; art form; and specific work and practice of particular artists, without any clarity or real definition of terms. It is clear that, in this particular instance, Gardner is arguing that the visual vocabulary of the work of artists working in live art is often appropriated and presented in other contexts, for example 'mainstream' theatre, without a full understanding of the processes underlying the work. This is a valid observation, and one that is often articulated. However, it is not clear why this in itself constitutes a threat to live art as such, beyond the implication that if the visual vocabulary of some live-art practices is consistently plundered and presented within mainstream contexts then this will reduce the potential of live art as a radical space for artists. As I highlight above, this is an argument which is implicitly contradictory and limiting in terms of arguing for the sustainability of live art and its ongoing potential as an innovative 'space' for artists.

This links back to the discussion of live art as a centralised sector, and so discussions which focus on protecting live art from becoming institutionalised are misguided and have been detrimental to potential developments. The analysis of where live art is situated in relation to 'the mainstream' is frequently side-tracked into a discussion about appropriation of particular types of work, ways of performing and visual vocabulary because within one discussion the terms of reference shift without being properly defined. The live-art sector does not realistically reflect the full range of activity in terms of art form, and the needs of artists working in live art and experimental performance.

Audiences

Discussion about audiences, audience development and marketing are consistently dealt with, and to a large extent very successfully in terms of highlighting key issues affecting the live-art sector, through research carried out by individual organisations, and within the discourse generated and published on behalf of the sector, which draws on a number of different perspectives. The unique and complex challenges facing the live-art sector in terms of attracting audiences to see specific work, and more broadly in terms of audience development at an organisational level, are well articulated and thoroughly explored with reference to a comprehensive range of examples. From the discourse generated by the live-art sector, it is clear that live art offers a *potentially* successful model for how better integration between programming, marketing and audience development can be achieved. However, this is, in part, due to the scale of the organisations which have been most instrumental in developing live-art programmes, which means that more often than not programmers of work contribute significantly to marketing plans for individual projects, and audience development strategies across organisations. This also links to discussions about 'slippage' between roles within the

context of live-art programming. Any discussion focussing on audiences necessitates a consideration of both marketing and evaluation, and significant developments have been made in both of these areas since the late 1990s, both in terms of research which has led to more effective strategies, and also developments in technology which means that data capture and analysis can be explored in a much more complex way. One of the major areas for development with regard to evaluation (which of course is vital in terms of audience development strategies) concerns the relationship between qualitative and quantitative information and analysis of data, and is based on a clear understanding that often, more qualitative audience and participant experiences are overshadowed by the imperative to provide statistical analysis of how many people attended an event. While it is not within the scope of this research to offer a thorough analysis of issues associated with evaluation, audience development and marketing in this broader sense, or to offer recommendations as to how live art might best improve marketing strategies. The live-art sector has generated interesting and thorough audience-development initiatives, Fierce Festival in particular has carried out sustained analysis over a number of years and has gathered a substantial amount of significant research. In his case study which focuses on audiences in the *In Time* publication, Kevin Isaacs, Executive Producer at Fierce Festival states:

> As Live Art practitioners, whether we are artists or whether we are producers, marketers, venue managers or administrators, we often offer a much more personal and individual experience to our audience members than the norm. In practice, what does this mean to us as producers and venue managers? Well, at Fierce we believe that it means that when we look to engage our audience with new work where there might be some anxiety that it is 'difficult', we must not only make that event a 'witness experience', but also communicate the *experience*, as opposed to simply communicating what the piece of work is about or what happens in it, to the audience in the best way we can, and reinforce this at every opportunity. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 98)

Thus offering insight into two key challenges 1) attracting audiences to live art in the first instance, and 2) subsequently offering them meaningful engagement with the work at all

levels, and aiming toward ensuring that the audience experience all of the aspects and nuances of the work. This ties in with my discussion in the previous chapter about convergence - the worrying trend toward homogenisation of audience experience - and how live art potentially offers a breadth and depth of practice and audience experience across a diversity of art forms and contexts. This challenges the idea of convergence which underpins certain recommendations generated by the Arts Council via commissioned reports into sustainable strategies for the arts.

While I am not suggesting that Kevin Isaacs, in this particular quote, is characterising difficult work as being confrontational or directly challenging either in the themes explored or in the way that an artist deals with ideas (In the case study Isaacs refers to work which is difficult due to its complexity and subtlety, and work which is difficult on a purely logistical level) there are assumptions about live art being difficult in a very particular way. I am not suggesting that live art needs to be articulated as less challenging or less complex in order to appeal to audiences. It is important that the field of work and sector is recognised as encompassing and supporting the most challenging performative practices which are being developed. What I am stating is that there are a broad diversity of challenges associated with audiences and live art (which are to a large extent reflected in the examples of challenges outlined in the *In Time* publication) but that in order to deal with these sufficiently, greater analysis of the full implications of what a work might present in terms of challenges is required. I am arguing against homogenisation of the discourse which articulates the challenges associated with audiences and live art, and suggesting that greater integration of critical writing within programming and audience development activity (including evaluation) is a way to develop a greater diversity and plurality of perspectives on performative work, in a way which can feed directly into activity. There is a need to re-

invigorate the discourse around audiences to allow for a shift away from discussions about challenges and risk, toward a more complex reading of audiences and audience experience.

Clearly there are questions of 'quality' and 'success' associated with the dilemma of 'how can the audience fully grasp and experience the whole project', and this is not always very clearly discussed as a factor relating to the challenges facing the live-art sector with regard to audiences and audience development. In the case study on audiences in the *In Time* publication, notions of quality and success are only alluded to in very broad terms, very infrequently, and not in detail, as contingent factors in how we might analyse audience experience. There is a generalised and obvious understanding that in order to develop and maintain audiences then programmes of work must be of high quality, but at times there is an underlying assumption that the quality of the work resides in the very fact of its challenging nature. This is also reflected across the whole *In Time* publication, as there is neither a meaningful definition or analysis of what 'quality' might mean in the context of live art, or a problematising of quality through an analysis of the challenges associated with this term. This links with the perceived challenges relating both to critical writing and the lack of thorough and in-depth evaluation of work, because there are no resources to fully and meaningfully evaluate a project (a view reflected by Kevin Isaacs in his case study in the *In Time* publication). This is due to the fact that evaluation is usually linked with funding requirements rather than independently initiated by an organisation, and therefore is also used to argue for the importance of continued funding.

Isaacs goes on to outline a particular articulation of the relationship between artist and audience as reflected in the following assertion:

> consideration of the audience may form a critical part of the way a live artist develops his or her work, so that an unequivocal, but nonetheless unique and organic relationship between the artist and audience is created. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 98)

This is borne out in the work of a number of artists, and again, is central to my argument about the risks of trying to make all performative practice work across a number of different platforms in order to increase audiences. However, I would also add that within this quote there is an implicit assumption that the artist has a full understanding of the nature and the role of the audience before beginning a project. Occasionally this leads to an artist failing to build in 'contingency',[7] because to a large extent they rely too heavily on particular assumptions about individuals or groups of people.

There is still a tendency across the arts to characterise 'audiences' (albeit perhaps inadvertently and in subtle ways) as inexperienced, uninitiated, and not as well versed in experimentation and risk as artists and professionals working in the arts. Of course there is an understanding that many people who comprise audiences are also artists and professionals working across different art forms, nonetheless discourse reflects that audiences need 'educating', even if this *is* communicated in very subtle ways.

For the Programming and Curating case study in the *In Time* publication, Anthony Roberts (AR), Director of Colchester Arts Centre, interviewed artist Hugh O'Donnel (HO'D):

> AR: Is it an over simplification to say there are two types of audiences (but not exclusively two) – those that are 'Live Art savvy' like at the

[7] By which I mean conceptual rather than logistical contingency. If a work is wholly contingent upon a certain set of factors, and the balance of these factors is not right then the work 'fails'(and I use the term 'fails' advisedly, with a full and clear understanding of notions of failure and how they have been explored, particularly within live art and contemporary performance). Where a work relies on an audience or members of the public to 'complete' it, then there are an infinite number of variables which can affect the work, and the reading of the work by other audiences. A work which is conceptually rigorous usually demonstrates contingency or flexibility and will shift according to the outside factors affecting it.

> National Review of Live Art and those that approach it with no fine art training or background?
>
> HO'D: A lot of events I have been involved in, especially *International Multi Media Arts Festival Serbia* organised by Nenad Bogdonovic Mas Gallery, are events where usually the audience are the artists themselves. It seems like a meeting for performance and artists, and the audience is mainly made up of the artists and some of the locals that come to support the event. I personally feel to have a non-informed audience can be the most successful in terms of feedback on your work. I think there will always be at least three types of audience: 1. Informed audience in terms of their own practices and knowledge of being an artist; 2. The uninformed, the person off the street; and 3. Children. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 93)

I would argue that it is an oversimplification to say that there are only two, or even three types of audience, and that it is a more complicated picture than just 'informed' or 'non-informed', particularly if, as the live-art sector is keen to point out, that live art is the area of work which deals most effectively with the broadest range of questions and issues facing society today. The question of whether an audience is informed or not, actually tends to be premised on the question of whether they might have experienced this 'form' of work, rather than whether an audience (either individual or a group) has any prior insight into the material being explored. Hence the reason that assumptions about audiences and ideas about what is required in order to attract them to live art, are based on a narrow idea that people are reluctant to take a risk on the form of live art. It is not always the case that the artist has much more knowledge about, or deeper insight into, a particular idea or theme, and this is one of the things which keeps live art one of the most potentially vibrant areas of practice, that is, that an artist is often presenting questions rather than resolved concepts. It is important that this is also referenced in terms of artists' relationship to audience. Audiences are much more open to experimental performance experiences than is often assumed, and often it is the artists and the sector who inadvertently characterise audiences as 'not prepared

to take risks', or assuming that they will have a particular relationship with a piece of work or a performance.[8]

This question of the implicit hierarchy between artist and audience is sometimes even more prominent in live art (despite the fact that live art offers a broader diversity of audience experiences, and often involves the audience within the work) and is reflected in the following suggestion outlined by Kevin Isaacs:

> As Mark Ball, creator of the *Fierce Festival* and now Director of LIFT, suggests, Live Art can deliver one important benefit with far greater effect than most other art forms– that of explaining the world to an individual, or in this case an audience member, in a way that is both powerful and personal. Of course, music or a piece of writing can have a similar effect, but I would suggest that Live Art may give those moments a profundity that is unmatched by many other performative experiences'. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 98)

The assumption being that the artist inevitably has a greater insight into the world than any individual audience member. Even taking into account that the problematic phrase 'explaining the world to an individual' is just an unfortunate way of expressing a more subtle and complex interaction, I would assert that this is an assumption which underpins approaches to audience development. Even within live art which is alluded to as being more democratic than some other art-forms (what would be referred to as traditional theatre for example) there is an implicit hierarchy between artist and audience. The idea of democracy within live art is predicated on the proliferation and diversity of audience experiences but not necessarily implicit within individual projects. I'm not at all suggesting that this is unique to live art but that live art claims to offer a more democratic platform for artists and audiences. In terms of offering a more democratic, or embedded experience to audiences, through the

[8] Which ties in with the problem of lack of in-depth qualitative evaluation of projects.

use of technology, Kevin Isaacs outlined a project which took place as part of Fierce Festival in 2008:

> In 2008, for our eleventh festival, we got the audience involved on an even deeper level by asking them to effectively curate a portion of the festival by selecting those artists and companies that they wanted to see programmed into the festival as part of *My Fierce Festival*. Using a website www.myfiercefestival.co.uk, members of the public could look at all aspects of a piece of work from budget through to technical requirements, and select the sort of space in which it should be presented. The result – almost 25000 people taking part in the on-line curation, and more significantly, most of the events selling out well ahead of the show date with a large proportion of festival visitors being new to Fierce.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 99)

While I am in favour of initiatives such as this, I am wary of some of the implications of asserting that this offers a deeper and more meaningful experience to audiences, particularly in light of my critique of the rhetoric employed by the Arts Council to similar ends, that is, simulating meaningful audience engagement and involvement via a medium and framework which can only really serve to offer the minimal engagement with a project. As an audience development tool the Fierce initiative is an excellent tactic, and the fact that it attracted new audiences to most of the Fierce Festival events is entirely positive. The problematic aspect to this example is the overstatement of how meaningful the audience engagement with the online curatorial part of the project was, and how examples like this are utilised by the Arts Council to argue that meaningful engagement with live art can just as easily happen, and attract larger audiences, online. Audience development and innovative curatorial and artistic approaches are too often conflated, and any engagement with artistic practice is too readily interpreted and articulated as meaningful and in-depth. I am not suggesting that in order for audiences to have a meaningful interaction with an artist, or with performative work, they have to be intimately engaged in one to one performances, or part of a small audience in a sustained live performance, what I am saying is that all too often what amount to little more

than excellent audience development initiatives are framed as interactions with performative work, and that this will potentially contribute to a limited vision of what constitutes worthwhile audience engagement. In the case study on audiences, Kevin Isaacs states:

> I argue that the audience is, in fact, much more implicit and involved in the actual performance or depiction of the work than in any other art form. Something out of the ordinary is often asked of them. And this is hard. People don't always like to be asked to do things, or to make some sort of commitment to a performance that involves more than just watching. This case study considers what it is that makes audience development for Live Art unique, and hopes to find some answers amongst strategies that have worked in a number of scenarios.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 97)

I would strongly agree with this statement, particularly to evidence the importance of the live experience and why certain practices cannot be easily replicated, or aspects of them presented, via a different platform other than live audience interaction. Kevin Isaacs highlights this as a challenge but it is also one of the key factors, associated with live-art practices.

An area that links an understanding of discourse around audiences (and how this impacts on programming in Liverpool) with a discussion of programming activity is documentation, and the need for archives of performance documentation within the overall infrastructure for the successful and sustainable development of live art in a city.

Documentation and archiving of live art is directly related to audience development and the articulation and dissemination of work, and impacts upon developing the infrastructure for the development of live art in Liverpool. Related to this is documentation and recording of live work through critical and creative writing. The Critical Writing case study in the *In Time* publication features under the heading 'Legacies'. There are many reasons why this is an obvious heading for it to be positioned under, however, it does highlight the fact that

regardless of greater diversity of publishing platforms, along with a cultural shift in terms of perceptions of publishing and people's expectations and reading habits, critical writing is still seen very much as the tangible, if problematic and problematised, 'document' of work, rather than an active, open and ongoing reference for discussion which activates dialogue and critical discourse around artists processes and programming activity. This notwithstanding the fact that there are a huge amount of very creative and experimental ways in which critical writing around live art and performance has developed, and that this is a central aspect of programming activity and artist support. In 2007, Julian Warren was appointed as Arnolfini's first archivist.[9] In his case-study for the In Time publication he says:

> Given the inadequacies of video documentation of live events, which as well as being materially at risk often seem to fail to convey a sense of being there and from which it can sometimes be difficult to detect the essence of the work, projects that seek to develop more satisfactory and sustainable ways of describing and documenting ephemeral art work are taking place. One such investigation, together with a case study, has taken place at the University of Bristol exploring the potential of creating something like a score in order to capture the integrity of a work, from which, for example, future versions could be realisable and recognisable.

Animating and activating existing material, and developing innovative ways of documenting processes, beyond photography and film, toward a more integrated and layered and sophisticated approach to capturing the work, allow for a range of creative approaches to documenting and archiving work. A diversity of approaches to documentation also allows for potentially better integration of archival material and documentation within live-art programmes, festivals and exhibitions.

[9] Bristol is one of the main centres for performance archives in England. Bristol University has the most diverse and comprehensive live art and performance archives in the country. It holds the Live Art Archive which includes: National Review of Live Art Archive, Digital Performance Archive, Record of Live Art Practice, Arts Council England Live Art and Performance Archive, Franko B Archive, David Hughes Live Art Archive, Alastair Snow Archive and *Performance* magazine Archive. The Performing Documents Conference 12-14th April 2013 was a three day conference exploring 'cutting edge enquiry about the state of performance and its documents'. The conference covered a wealth of themes and issues which covered a comprehensive set of approaches to re-invigorating, re-configuring, re-enacting, performing and analysing performance archives and documentation.

One of my recommendations for the development of live art in Liverpool involves revisiting the *Liverpool Live* (2004) programme, and related documentation to use it as a framework for discussion around live art in the city A key part of this will re-involve 're-activating' some of the performances and residencies through a series of talks, discussion events and a display of documentation, as a way of directly linking documentation and archival material, with programming concerns on a local level. This will take place in November 2014, as a way of activating the pragmatic recommendations put forward at the end of this thesis. I would also recommend that The Bluecoat takes on the role of archiving live art in Liverpool, in the way that the Greenroom in Manchester did with the greenroom united project, an extensive and comprehensive archiving of 25-years of performance at the venue.[10]

It would be easy to separate out discussions of documentation and archival material from a discussion of pragmatic recommendations for the sustainable development of live art in Liverpool, however, I argue that due to a reconfiguration of the term live-art as needing an infrastructure that supports process equally, if not more than output, documentation and the archiving of that material need to be taken into account to make this a sustainable project. This links to programming in Liverpool through the possibility of revisiting performances and projects that have taken place in the city, in order to revisit how some of those worked, and some less well.

A well-organised archive of documentation from previous performance events would be an invaluable tool in considering programming themes and lines of enquiry, and in developing a programming strategy and framework informed by a rigorous conceptual approach as well as

[10] www.greenroomutd.org

a pragmatic response to the need to showcase artists work in order to provide exposure to the broader sector.

There are, and have been, several significant research projects focusing on live-art practice and related materials, and innovative projects which activate archives, such as Bristol University based *Performing the Archive: The Future of the Past* and the major research projects *Performing Documents* and *PARIP* (Practice As Research in Performance), which offer some of the most vibrant and creative research into archives, documentation and creative and critical writing. *Performing Documents* is a major collaborative research project which began in 2012, culminating in a series of public events, to coincide with *In Between Time* Festival of Live Art in 2013. When discussed within this context of documentation, audience development, and programming live art, the use and implementation of technology can be a positive and democratising platform for a great diversity of work to be explored.

However, investigation of, and more importantly the development of, archives and documentation is contingent upon being positioned within a vibrant sector which can support, present and develop new live work. The fact that archives of performance material are being very successfully and creatively explored deals with the question of what to do with existing archival material, it also informs the ways in which artists are developing increasingly innovative ways to document their work, and how to present their work after the live event. My concerns regarding recommendations for the implementation of technology outlined in the previous chapter are not connected with how it is effectively utilised with regard to archives and documentation, but with the tendency of the Arts Council, and writers commissioned by the Arts Council, to argue for increasing uses of technology as a way of replacing the live experience.

Live-Art Programming – Artistic and Practical Considerations

Discussions around the role of the performance programmer have developed in an attempt to articulate the diversity of functions that the title implies in relation to support for live-art practice. In line with this there has been a rise in the use of the term 'producer' along with the development of discourse suggesting that programmers have an increasingly collaborative role to play in the creation and delivery of artists' projects. This inclination, to position the programmer as central to artists' creativity, is problematic, not because of a lack of basis to the assertion that programmers and curators work with artists on a creative level, but because if unchallenged this sort of discourse reduces the autonomy with which artists are able to negotiate the useful context that the term live art provides. In *The Producers; Alchemists of the Impossible*, Helen Cole, former live-art programmer at Arnolfini, Bristol, states:

> As producer, it is my job [….] to spot the possibilities, to listen to the dreaming, to replay the thinking, until the work takes shape and becomes real. [11]

While I agree to a large extent that there are creative and collaborative elements to the role of programmer and producer, I strongly disagree that it is always or solely the role of the producer to see and judge where the interesting elements of a work might reside, or that a producer is solely responsible for shaping a work or making it a reality. In arguing for the continued potential for live art as a productive term for artists and a space for artist development it is increasingly important to look more closely at the performative tactics of artists whose work provides resistance to the increasing overstatement of the role of the programmer, and who are more than willing and capable of maintaining a rigorous and inspired practice of their own volition. My argument regarding the risks associated with what I perceive to be privileging the role of the producer over that of the artist is complicated by

[11] *The Producers: Alchemists of the Impossible* www.the-producers.org

other developments in this area, namely with regard to professional development for artists who move into programming and production, and who manage to balance a creative practice in both areas. What is important, however, is the development of the role of live-art producers who work across, or to some extent outside of, the institutional framework.

Rajni Shah, a freelance performance artist, writer and producer, who is interviewed by Philippa Barr (formerly of New Work Network) in the case study on professional development in the *In Time* publication was one of ten 'activators' involved in New Work Network's Connecting the Activators scheme:

> a one-year professional programme for ten artist 'Activators' that addressed leadership development for artist-producers working in multi-disciplinary arts practices. It was based on an innovative action-learning network, bringing together independent artists/ producers from across the UK. The programme provided dynamic and effective approaches to peer learning and knowledge transfer, includinga series of action-learning events, peer mentoring, individual pathway development and on-line forums.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 35)

Professional development opportunities for independent artist/producers are of course a very positive development. My discussion which questions the role of the producer as a creative collaborator, relates to programmers and 'producers' who are programming work on a full-time basis within mainstream arts organisations, or with well-established festivals, and more specifically critiques the discourse (rather than the actual activity) generated by the live-art sector. Although there was technical support, technicians were employed on a freelance basis and therefore would be paid from project budgets rather than core departmental budgets. This often meant that financial resources were limited and that certain aspects of project delivery would be implemented by the programmer (me) and the Front of House Manager/Volunteer Coordinator, and volunteers. This included implementing many of the practical aspects of project delivery ranging from painting and putting up shelves in temporary building, to

spending four days with an artist visiting sites, having in-depth creative conversations, and to a certain extent, helping to shape the work. My argument is that while this is all commensurate with the role of live-art programmer, producer, or curator, if the 'collaborative' nature of the relationship between artist and programmer is overstated then the risk is that it becomes the most commonly articulated version of events.

Live Art Programming - Local, National and International

I assert that live-art programming and discourse privilege established international and national frameworks, as a starting point for a discussion around globalisation and the possibility of 're-claiming the local' for more effective mapping and strategising at a local and regional level. I refer to the case study on *Internationalism*, in order to provide and evidence a more detailed critical account of the limitations of the discourse around 'internationalism' and national strategies for live art, and to consider the wider implications for live-art programming and support in Liverpool. In the case study about *Internationalism*, James Tyson, former live-art and performance programmer at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff and Helen Cole, former live-art and dance programmer at Arnolfini in Bristol outline a number of projects and organisations that:

> Provide an opportunity to reflect on examples of internationalism from within the UK Live Art sector, drawing out how the concerns and practice of Live Art provide a defining model of international arts practice where audiences, curators, artists and theorists connect to a wide and complex global network.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 111) [12]

The project and organisations that they considered and analysed were: Live Culture, a weekend of events, lectures, installations (with associated publications) that took place at Tate Modern in March 2003 (the overview of this event takes the form of an on-line interview between Helen Cole and Lois Keidan and Adrian Heathfield who co-curated Live

[12] James Tyson was the live-art and Performance Programmer at Chapter Arts Centre from 1998 until 2010. Helen Cole was the live-art and Dance Programmer at Arnolfini in Bristol from 1997 until 2010 when she set up InBetween Time Productions.

Culture); Goat Island International Summer Schools, a two-week workshop that took place in various different countries on an annual basis between 1996 and 2008 (Helen Cole interviewed Goat Island members Matthew Ghoulish and Lin Hixson); a long-term collaboration between Arnolfini and Performance Space (Sydney); an overview of Chapter Arts Centre written by James Tyson; an overview of Artsadmin and: a response to the British Council Showcase by James Tyson. The case study then offers a brief conclusion outlining some of the key themes identified from the overview of the various organisations and projects.

A key claim that is frequently argued for by members of Live Art UK, and which is central to the conclusions drawn from this case study is that:

> Live Art provides a defining model of international arts practice where audiences, curators, artists and theorists connect to a wide and complex global network. (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 111)

Although, of course, there is an element of truth in this statement, and there are certainly aspects of practice within the live-art sector (obviously the examples highlighted in this particular case study) that strongly attest to this, a more critical approach to evaluating and arguing this point more thoroughly and strategically (and in relation to organisational infrastructure and the creation of a theoretical grounding) needs to be developed. There is no doubt that certain projects that come under a live-art programming framework can offer real insight into ways of working effectively on an international level, and that live art has the potential to provide a defining model for good practice in this area but, as is clear throughout all of the case-studies in the publication, discussions default back to focussing on the economics of the sector and future sustainability at a national level and, as such, a considerable amount of the discourse takes on the role of advocacy and arguing for live art's importance instead of offering a thorough evaluation of where live art is currently

realistically positioned. As a former programmer of live art, I have a clear understanding and first-hand experience of the justifiable reluctance to fully detail the weaknesses or failures of initiatives, in favour of foregrounding positive outcomes and benefits when evaluating projects, however, because a considerable amount of the writing that deals with overviews of live-art initiatives is generated by organisations, full critical analysis has been filtered out of the discourse. While the same could be said for all art-forms, my argument here is that because it has become such a centralised sector, live art is over-reliant on a very narrow and relatively small amount of discourse to fully articulate its complexity.

In the Internationalism case study Lois Keidan and Adrian Heathfield state:

> Some suggest that Tate Modern has a dedicated performance programme because of *Live Culture.* If Tate Modern can present such work without compromise, censorship or apology then anyone can.
> (Live Art Development Agency: 2010: 112)

There is, however, a significant difference between a large-scale institution presenting live art and live art being firmly and strategically embedded within an organisation. I would also argue that live art is *not* presented without 'compromise, censorship or apology' in institutions such as Tate. There are practical elements of live-art practice that, when presented within large-scale mainstream arts organisations such as Tate Modern or the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), can become subject to more stringent regulations than those put in place by smaller arts organisations. For example the Guillermo Gomez-Pena performance, Ex-Centris, which took place at Tate Modern in March 2003, as part of Live Culture was the same performance that had been presented at the Bluecoat as part of You Are Here and Liverpool Biennial International Exhibition in September 2002. A number of the elements of the performance had to be changed when presented at Tate Modern. The Bluecoat performance included nudity, use of raw meat and pyrotechnics which were prohibited at

Tate Modern. Although this seems a relatively insignificant point to make in relation to what was a fantastically successful programme of work that was not, in broad terms, compromised as a result of these changes, it is important to begin highlighting the specific ways in which institutions are able or willing to amend their practices, at all levels, in order to accommodate what might be perceived to be more radical approaches to performance.

Another similar example involves the artist Shu Yang who, when presenting his performance *Dialogue in Chinese Style* at the V&A (one of the venues for the China Live Tour) was not allowed to use a 6-inch knife that he had previously used in every venue that was part of the tour. Of course there is a certain amount of common sense to be applied in all of these decision-making processes. There were obvious considerations related to both of these examples that needed to be taken into account. For example, at the V&A, the audience was larger than it had been at any of the other venues and the performance involved the artist moving around the space and in between the audience. The nature of the event was also slightly different, and was advertised as a more social occasion, with a DJ, drink and food.[13] However, both of these situations point to a significant aspect of the nature of the relationship between live art and mainstream, large-scale arts organisations (in this case visual art institutions), which is that there is inevitably compromise made on the part of artists when their work presents the more challenging aspects of performance practice. In the balancing act between maintaining live art as a radical and powerful space for artists, and the desire to position it within the mainstream, and to argue for its influence on a large scale, these seemingly small practical considerations need to be taken into account and kept on the agenda. That's not to say that smaller scale arts organisations do not have to respond similarly to the potential risks posed by certain performances and projects. When the

[13] This in itself reflects an important point and I consider it in some detail in Chapter 2 where I discuss programming and curating.

Guillermo Gomez Pena project, cited above, was presented at the Bluecoat during the time that I was the live-art programmer there, artists involved in the performance were prohibited from using naked flames as part of the performance. A key difference in that decision-making process, however, was that the Bluecoat were willing to enter into dialogue and to fully consider the risks before coming to a decision, and the decision was made in response to and in collaboration with the artists involved. The examples cited above were decisions that were made solely by the organisation, with no discussion with the artists or attempts to consider other comparable options.

However, since the Bluecoat re-opened after a major capital development it has become increasingly difficult for it to present risk-taking practice in *quite* the same way that it did prior to the development and organisational restructure. Before the development and restructure, the Bluecoat offered a perfect example of what I have referred to as a 'provisional' space, that is, an organisation with the infrastructure to offer a full range of support mechanisms to artists, while also allowing artists to work within the space in a more autonomous way. This point relates to organisational decision-making processes and brings us back to the discussion around definition of terms, particularly with regard to the importance of defining 'risk', 'innovation' and 'experimentation' in order to ensure that these are meaningful aims and objectives for the live-art sector to achieve. This is particularly important within medium-scale organisations where the assumption is that risk taking is easier to achieve, when in fact, in light of the current (since 2010) political and economic climate (and in reference to my assertions earlier in the chapter), it is likely to become increasingly difficult unless the live-art sector works strategically to ensure that this doesn't happen. The question here is not 'how useful is it to have live art profiled at a national level?' Of course there are untold benefits to having live-art practice profiled at a national level

within large scale and mainstream organisations. The ambition of Live Art Development Agency and the organisations that comprise the LAUK network in aiming to position live art at a national level within the visual arts has been laudable and to some extent has garnered invaluable results. However, I would argue that these perceived benefits still need to be thoroughly evaluated if the real impact on a wide scale and across the live-art sector as a whole is to be accurately assessed. A number of other questions also need to be considered with a view to developing sustainability and strengthening the live-art sector. The most important question and the one that I address throughout this research is, how can the live-art sector offer effective strategic input into live-art and performance activity that takes place in Liverpool. As I have argued and evidenced, I would strongly recommend that the emphasis needs to be on a radical re-consideration of priorities, and a paradigm shift in thinking which not only places the emphasis on activity on a local level, but also implements institutional change at a regional level, in the context of the re-configuration of an understanding of the relationship between international, national, regional and local.

Chapter 4

Pragmatic Recommendations for the Development and Sustainability of Live Art in Liverpool

This chapter presents a set of pragmatic recommendations for improving the sustainability of live-art practices in Liverpool, informed by the critical analysis of live art at a local and national level as outlined in the previous chapters. I position these recommendations for the development of live art in Liverpool within an expanded discussion of how 'the local' can be understood both as a sustainable practical operational context for the presentation and support of live art, and as a conceptual framework for the articulation of the importance of live-art practices in the city. The feminist theoretical framework, that I use to explore notions of how the local functions, is used with the aim of analysing approaches to programming live art.

A detailed consideration of relevant developments in the infrastructure for live art in Manchester offers a focussed comparison in order to both inform, and to evidence the feasibility of, the recommendations outlined. I have chosen to provide an in-depth overview of activity in Manchester in order to provide a relevant and useful comparison with a city in the same region as Liverpool, one which has consonant issues in terms of the regional infrastructure for the arts. I am focussing on developments in, and significant factors relating to, the programming, production and support of live art in Manchester. This comparative analysis offers the most pertinent insight into how my pragmatic recommendations for improving the sustainability of live art in Liverpool could be implemented. It also provides detailed insight into how the infrastructure for live art in a city can be made sustainable and robust in terms of artist support, strategic programming and curatorial, frameworks and collaborative and partnership working. This comparative analysis of live-art activity in Manchester offers insight into the anomalies in how live art in Liverpool has developed, since

2011, compared with other developments in the live-art sector at a regional level. As a context for understanding and further foregrounding the specificity of the development of live art in Liverpool, this is an invaluable comparative study, and one which presents a pertinent and robust framework for moving forward toward pragmatic recommendations. This chapter contributes a robust regional picture to the previous in-depth analyses of local conditions and the national context.

Overview of live-art activity in Manchester

This comparative consideration of the live-art sector and the infrastructure for performance in Manchester is based on: working knowledge of the arts-infrastructure and the development of live art and performance in the city through collaborative working with live-art producer, hÅb, performing arts venue Greenroom and dance development agency Dance Manchester[1]; knowledge and understanding of the activity of hÅb through involvement with the organisation's advisory board and analysis of hÅb business plans; and research into the arts-infrastructure and activity in the city. As in Chapter 1, this analysis draws on my in-depth experience and knowledge as a curator and programmer of live art in Liverpool, in terms of an understanding of how this analysis could translate into workable and pragmatic recommendations.

One of the most significant recent factors affecting the production and presentation of live art in Manchester was the closure of the performance venue Greenroom in 2011, when the organisation was unsuccessful in its application to become an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, having been revenue funded by Arts Council England for 25 years. Greenroom

[1] Formerly known as Dance in Greater Manchester (DiGM) until a re-brand in 2013.

was established in 1983 and until its closure in 2011, when it could no longer afford to trade in light of major loss of funding, the organisation developed and presented local, national and international performance. Greenroom had a 25-year history of developing and presenting an astonishing amount of contemporary performance, working with almost 4000 different companies and artists during that time.[2] Garfield Allen, Artistic Director of Greenroom from 1998 until 2011, said of the organisation:

> We're not a big venue so we can take risks on people who are trying something new. And as you can imagine, not everything we invest in becomes legendary, but our skill and experience gives us the ability to spot the best of the fresh and the new. That said, it's not about new trends – we're not a fad organisation, it's about talking to the artists and allowing them to use their integrity to produce what they want to produce. Quite often, we don't 'hang on' to these artists, they move on to other, larger-scale venues. To hang on to these artists would be wrong; what we do is invest in them at the beginning and then watch them fly the nest. (www.greenroomutd.org)

This artist-focussed approach to programming, with an emphasis on providing support at a certain point in an artist's career reflects what I was aiming to achieve at The Bluecoat between 2000 and 2006, though with a considerably smaller budget.

One of the key proponents of live art in Manchester is Tamsin Drury who founded hÅb, a development organisation, in 1996, and who has been developing and producing live art in Manchester for the past 20 years. Until 2011 hÅb worked very closely with the Greenroom (and had an office there, though was not employed by the organisation) and in 2011 hÅb applied for Arts Council NPO funding, successfully receiving three-year funding at £70,000 per year, an uplift of £44,300 from the previous year's (2011-2012) Arts Council RFO funding of £25,700 (with an overall organisational turnover of £56,700). In the same year hÅb also successfully applied for a further £42,000 from Arts Council funding to build the

[2] An impressively comprehensive archive of Greenroom activity can be found at www.greenroom.utd.org.

capacity of the organisation. hÅb were moving forward with an expanded remit in line with the recent award of NPO funding, and more significantly, in light of the closure of their key partner in developing and producing live art and performance.

Despite hÅb's uplift in funding, the investment from Arts Council for the support of live art and contemporary performance in Manchester reduced significantly in 2011, from £343,000 to £70,000. This considerable loss of investment to live art in Manchester was compounded by the fact that the main venue for the presentation and support of this field of practice had gone, leaving hÅb with a relatively significant increase in funding, but with no infrastructure in terms of a space to present and develop work, operational support (including marketing and audience development), and no broader context within which the live-art programme could be positioned.

The partnership between Greenroom and hÅb has led to a robust infrastructure for the production, support and development of live art in Manchester. This is an infrastructure which has, to some extent, been able to withstand the closure of Greenroom, due to the strength of the programming structures, artist support initiatives and collaborative partnerships established by hÅb, initially in partnership with Greenroom, and subsequently continued and developed independently of the venue. This factor points to one of my key recommendations: that the model of independent producer, working in partnership with, but independent of, building-based venues is the most useful for creating a sustainable environment for the development of practice in Liverpool.

While Greenroom had been a key partner in the development of live art, it was Tamsin Drury (hÅb) who had most recently strategically developed the artist support framework, curatorial

and programming vision and projects, and audience development initiatives for live art in the city. hÅb is a key organisation in Manchester, and with regard to the live-art sector, a significant contributor to live art on a local, regional and national level. As a model for how live-art practice can be developed in Liverpool, hÅb provides the ideal framework in terms of scale, partnership working, artist support and programming.

Recommendation One: The Bluecoat as a Lead Agency

My first recommendation is that The Bluecoat is clearly the most appropriate and well-placed organisation in Liverpool to instigate a more strategic approach toward improving the sustainability of live art in the city. However, rather than just considering strategies for its own programme, the organisation should expand its role to follow an agency model, such as Live Art Development Agency (art-form development) or ArtsAdmin (artist development). In order to initially prioritise artist development in the city, and to formalise working relationships with the artists who are currently engaged in activity at The Bluecoat (the *If Only* Collective, Mary Pearson, Tim Jeeves, Lena Simic) the organisation should consider how ArtsAdmin have developed as an agency that represents and advocates for artists working in live art.

The Bluecoat should consider how the infrastructure for live art in Manchester (and the development of hÅb's role) could provide a workable framework for the organisation to work with and develop an independent producer, who also works in partnership with other organisations across the city. *InBetween Time* (a live-art festival and producing/programming organisation) in Bristol provides another good example of how developing a significant live-art programme outside of, but in partnership with, a key venue, can be very successful. Helen Cole established *InBetween Time* in 2009, prior to which she was the dance and live-art

producer at Arnolfini (from 1997-2009). During 2011 Tamsin Drury developed the infrastructure and increased the capacity of hÅb to become the main producer and promoter of live art in Manchester. Other larger-scale venues and organisations were also presenting and producing work that would come under the heading contemporary performance or live art, including Manchester International Festival who commissioned and produced *Marina Abramovic Presents*, a programme of durational performance curated by Marina Abramovic and presented at The Whitworth Gallery in Manchester. However, no other organisation has the remit of supporting artists working in live art at a range of points in their career (from emerging to mid-career artists) on a consistent and comprehensive basis. This model for the collaborative support and production of live art across two key cities in the same region is central to considering the local as the most useful starting point from which to build-up a national and potentially international profile.

Recommendation Two: 'Reclaiming the Local' and Strategic Local Partnerships

Live art, as a diverse field with regard to a range of practice, and in cultural terms, is apparently well placed in allowing artists to map a course through the implications of globalisation. However, discussions around globalisation in relation to the arts *implicitly* reinforce a hierarchical relationship between 'the local' and 'the global', despite ostensibly reconfiguring local and global as equivalent and mutually contingent. As a result of this there are a number of assumptions that are adhered to as factual conditions in the production, support, and dissemination of artists' practice, in broad terms, and with specific implications for live art. In his essay, 'Liverpool Glocal',[3] Sean Cubitt states: 'It has always been clear that there is a direct relationship between the global and the local. No one knew they were local until they began to understand the nature of the global: "local" was simply *here*.'

[3] Biggs.B and Sheldon.J (Eds) (2008) *Art in a City* pp 107-121. Glocal refers to and draws on Thierry de Duve's ideas regarding the distinction between 'global' and 'local'.

(Cubitt: 146) The suggestion here being that 'the local' continues to function, fundamentally, as it always has, but that its 'localness' has simply been highlighted as such as a result of an understanding of its 'direct' relationship to 'the global'. The local is positioned, in broad terms, as a previously immutable factor that is impacted upon, and reinvigorated by, our awareness of its relationship to the global.

Cubitt goes on to say that 'The new dialectic of local and global is […..] not an either/or matter, but a both and one. With our shoes from China and our Korean mobile phones manufactured in the Philippines, our Asian-built computers using US software and our East German clothes, with our Costa Rican coffee in Portugese cups, we are woven into the web of the world. But we experience these things in one place, and tailor them for our deeply local wants and needs.' (Cubitt: 148) This reading of the local in relation to global economies implies an anodyne and simplified account of the complex mechanisms within which it operates, and again offers up the local as a space that is impacted upon, albeit one whose constituents are afforded a modicum of autonomy with regard to consumer goods.

Cubitt points to de Duve's vision when he states that: 'There may be a way to create a new global public, and if so it will come from exchange and collaboration local to local, locale to locale. After the exchange of things, that made world trade the driver of globalisation from the top, there comes the exchange of people to drive a new globalisation from the bottom.' (Cubitt: 148) He ends his essay with the assertion that 'neither the new global cultures […] nor the new local, with its intense understanding of how locality is formed in and responds to the global, are thinkable without the reinvention of old and innovation of new channels for communication within and across communities.' (Cubitt: 155). First, I will discuss the issue of exchange and collaboration as it pertains to a 'new global public' along with the idea of

communities providing channels for communication, and how this plays out in relation to live-art practice in Liverpool. Second, I will consider the problematic assertion of 'the new local' with 'its intense understanding of how locality is formed in and responds to the global'. (Cubitt: 155)

Feminist discourse that deals with the local in relation to debates around the politics of location and the terms marginality, Otherness, international, transnational, national and global, offers useful insight into reconfiguring the local as a workable space for artists' practice and the development of live-art programming and artist support in Liverpool. While feminist discourse presents a number of routes into a useful analysis of the local and the global, specifically in relation to live-art practice, I am not suggesting that it provides a complete strategy for a repositioning of the local in relation to live-art programming. Rather, the ideas considered here offer insight into some of the structures at play in relation to the local that are *conterminous* with live-art programming and practice in Liverpool, via a consideration of how meanings and identities are produced through certain configurations of power. A feminist position also proves useful here for its capacity to circumvent ethical arguments related to international artists 'using' the local instrumentally or prescriptively, because it not only presents an in-depth analysis of the complexities associated with readings of local, it makes available workable distinctions between, for example, transnational and international practice. It is also important to note here that in some ways certain aspects of feminist discourse also serve to perpetuate the reading of local that I have outlined as problematic, particularly with regard to, for example, transnational feminist theory.

The local has been discussed by a number of feminist theorists such as Doreen Massey, Elspeth Probyn, Caren Kaplan, Jacqui Alexander and Iris Marion Young. In *Space, Place and*

Gender Doreen Massey states that 'the term local is used with derogatory reference to feminist struggles and in relation to feminist concerns in intellectual work (only a local struggle, only a local concern)'. (Massey: 148)[4] Massey considers the local in terms of its connections with the global, and considers places as defined through connections rather than borders. Massey suggests that a 'global sense of the local', be considered, suggesting that arts practice developed and emanating *from* the local be used to reference the 'global'. (Massey: 148)

In her article 'Travels in the Postmodern: Making Sense of the Local', Probyn argues that we need to work with the notion of local, 'work more deeply in and against it' [5] adding that the 'local does not exist in a pure state'. Probyn frames the local as:

> only a fragmented set of possibilities that can be articulated into a momentary politics of time and place. Against the postmodern gesture of local, feminism can render the local into something workable, somewhere to be worked upon. This is to take the local not as an end point, but as the start. This is not to idealise the local as the real, but to look at the ways in which injustices are naturalised in the name of the immediate. In conceiving of the local as a nodal point, we can begin to deconstruct its movements and its meanings.[6]

The analysis of live-art in Liverpool, coupled with this particular assertion of the possibilities of the local point to a number of practical and conceptual ways to understand the local in relation to live-art, beyond an instrumentalist argument. The more consolidated and focused *You Are Here* and *Liverpool Live* programmes of work developed in 2002 and 2004 were a practical attempt to negotiate the local in terms of both a physical space, but also a political space, and to reclaim the possibilities of the local within the somewhat overbearing context of the Liverpool Biennial, with its imperative to impose readings of the city from an

[4] Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2004).
[5] Probyn, E. (1990) 'Travels in the postmodern: Making sense of the local' in L. Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London and New York: Routledge, 176-189.
[6] Ibid.

international perspective. Both of these live-art programmes were, amongst other things, an attempt to inhabit the local in a diversity of ways, and to work from local to local rather than from a hierarchical (international down to the local) position. While a large number of the artists commissioned and programmed within the context of *You Are Here* (2002) and *Liverpool Live* (2004) were dealing with notions of identity and place, they were doing so within a programming framework which emphasized the local encounters, rather than the international contexts within which many of these artists are operating, and which their work explores.

There are several potential problems associated with defining characteristics of the local. One is the tendency to characterise the local as real or authentic which Probyn warns against, and this is useful in beginning to challenge the idea that the local is impacted upon by renewed understandings of globalisation. The notion that the local is 'a fragmented set of possibilities' and the potential to 'render the local into something workable', (Probyn: 178) both offer opportunities for subverting the idea of the local as responsive to, and therefore contingent upon, global structures. Although Cubitt also argues for this when he discusses how cities (in this case Liverpool) demonstrate the potential to be less contingent upon a 'top-down globalising hegemony' (Cubitt: 155) he suggests that it might be as a result of 'passages from people to people rather than the intergovernmental or business-to-business models that otherwise dominate planetary affairs', (Cubitt: 155) he proposes, though with caution, that it is the role of art and culture to support this possibility.

Discussions about community are inseparable from discussions about 'the local' and I want to make a link here between the 'reclaimed' version of 'the local' that offers space for a more specific consideration and analysis of live-art programming, and Cubitt's thoughts that relate

to exchange and collaboration, and communities providing channels for communication. An interrogation of the local and specificity is cited here then as a framework for understanding the term live-art as a strategy (as well as a description of practice, or a programming term) as one way for artists and organisations to recover the term as a mutable tactic that offers a meaningful context for a real diversity of practices and approaches. Conversely, live art becomes the means by which a re-reading of the local, one that identifies assumptions implicit within discourse around globalisation and the arts, is achievable.

In considering some of the complexities of the local it is possible to see how live art can respond most effectively to what might be termed a 'reclaiming of the local'. Arguing for a strategic use of the local which could provide an autonomous space for artists working within live art, offers a potentially more flexible relationship between mainstream programming structures, and practice that operates tangentially to those frameworks, in partnership relationships that create a more democratic and flexible relationship between artists and institutions, in Liverpool, working in live art.

Live art has a diverse history in Liverpool, and in reclaiming the diversity of its development, and reclaiming one of its most potentially useful operational contexts, namely the local, this chapter provides insight into how live art could constitute a sustainable, diverse and autonomous space for artists and organisations. The institutional infrastructure in Liverpool has developed considerably in the last 10 years, particularly since 2008 when the city was European Capital of Culture. Since 2008 a number of strategic cross-art-form networks have been established, making it easier to navigate the arts-ecology in the city. Liverpool-based networks include Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortitum (LARC) a consortium of seven of the city's major cultural organisations, including The Bluecoat and Creative Organsations of

Liverpool (COoL), a collective of 31 arts-organisations. These networks offer a strong framework for looking strategically at performance practice across the city, and they provide realistic opportunities for a comprehensive mapping of the theatre and performing arts sector in Liverpool. Although The Bluecoat are part of the LARC consortium, I would recommend that, in terms of the performance and live-art programme, it would be advisable for The Bluecoat to become a member of the COoL collective to begin to position live art more firmly within the broader performing arts ecology. COoL was initiated by Hope Street Limited, an organisation who produce performance and provide professional development opportunities for theatre companies. Hope Street Limited developed a small festival of sited-work, *On The Verge,* which took place in October 2013, and there is potential for The Bluecoat to develop specific partnership working and collaborative programming with Hope Street Limited to develop this festival and potentially other programmes of work.

While Hope Street Limited provide invaluable opportunities for artists working in performance, the focus is on experimental and physical theatre, and this is reflected in the list of companies who have been supported and developed by the organisation, which includes Tmesis Theatre, Spike Theatre and Big Wow Theatre. Liverpool has a thriving physical theatre scene (including the annual Physical Fest, produced by Tmesis Theatre) which has evolved from Hope Street's sustained support for this area of work, and there are opportunities to work in partnership with the organisation to extend the breadth of experimental performance that they support and programme, and to support their move in to producing work in public spaces.

An art-form specific example of an effective local network is the Merseyside Dance Promoters Network (MDPN) which is steered by Merseyside Dance Initiative and comprises

membership organisations operating at all levels of activity within the Merseyside area (ie small, mid and large scale) including The Unity Theatre, the Bluecoat, Liverpool Empire, The Rose Theatre, Floral Pavilion, The Black-E, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse. The network will also be developed to bring Liverpool-based festivals such as Homotopia and DaDa on board in 2014. Longer–term (and resource-dependent) plans for partnership working include a live-art festival to be programmed in partnership with a range of organisations, and across the visual and performing arts sectors. A thorough analysis of the very effective partnership work that takes place in Manchester, through hAb, would provide a blueprint for establishing live-art programming capacity across Liverpool. Plans for strategic partnership working and collaboration would be developed by the live-art steering group and led by The Bluecoat.

In 2011 hÅb began to develop relationships with a number of Manchester venues including: Contact Theatre; Cornerhouse (gallery and cinema); International Anthony Burgess Foundation; Blank Media Collective; Z-Arts (formerly called Zion Arts Centre, where hÅb have been based since 2012); the Royal Exchange; and the Lowry. Programme development plans came under three strands, which each had a specific goal, two of which aimed to create a bridging programme between the Greenroom programme-development and advocacy role, hÅb recognised its significant role in artist development and advocacy for the live-art sector, and in ensuring the conditions were in place for a robust infrastructure for the sector in the city. hÅb reprioritised, and repositioned itself, to become both a development and advocacy organisation and a promoter of live-art. hÅb re-branded as Word of Warning (WoW) and

since February 2012 has presented 40 events over 54 days across different sites and venues, and reaching audiences of over 25,000 people. [7]

Live art is positioned centrally in relation to the arts infrastructure in Manchester, due to the strategic nature of the presentation of live art which hÅb programme across a wide-variety of contexts and spaces including theatre, galleries, out-door spaces. Its contribution to the performance ecology in Manchester is significant, and this is due to the fact that, as a very small organisation (effectively an independent producer with one part-time member of permanent staff, and an internship programme that provides additional support at key points during the delivery of events), a considerable amount of activity has to be developed in collaboration and partnership with venues. hÅb have consolidated activity to focus on the strategic development of: programming; artist development; support of emerging producers and advocacy for the sector across Manchester and the region. In 2011 hÅb began to develop relationships with a number of Manchester venues including: Contact Theatre; Cornerhouse (gallery and cinema); International Anthony Burgess Foundation; Blank Media Collective; Z-Arts (formerly called Zion Arts Centre and where hÅb have been based since 2012); the Royal Exchange; and the Lowry. Programme development plans came under three strands, which each had a specific goal, two of which aimed to create a bridging programme between the Greenroom programme-development and advocacy role, hÅb recognised its significant role in artist development and advocacy for the live-art sector, and in ensuring the conditions were in place for a robust infrastructure for the sector in the city. hÅb reprioritised, and repositioned itself, to become both a development and advocacy organisation, a promoter of live-art. hÅb re-branded as Word of Warning (WoW) and since February 2012 has presenting

[7] From information included in hÅb's most recent NPO funding application, submitted in March 2014, for potential funding from 2015-2018.

40 events over 54 days across different sites and venues, and reaching audiences of over 25,000 people. [8]

The success of the partnership delivery of live art in Manchester is a robust framework which The Bluecoat could consider as a way of strategically developing live art in Liverpool. It is clear that partnership working is vital in successful artist development and programming, in order to create a sustainable infrastructure for this practice, with the economic risk shared across a number of stakeholders, thus making the live-art sector more robust at a local level, The developing production partnership between Contact Theatre and hÅb, alongside the well-established existing partnership relationship that hÅb have with Live at LICA (formerly Nuffield Theatre in Lancaster) maximises opportunities for both collaborative artist support initiatives, and a very broad mix of programming. The partnership has produced Turn, which embeds dance development alongside renewed dance programming at Contact, Turn Prize and Works Ahead mentored commissions. In Spring 2015 a new performance venue, HOME, will open in Manchester, and will be the new home of Cornerhouse (gallery and cinemas) and The Library Theatre. The venue will house a 500-seat theatre and a smaller 150-seat flexible studio space. Interestingly, the opening theatre programme is taking place in sites across Manchester, which might be a pragmatic decision (based on the potential of the venue not being ready in time for the rehearsal and production process), and not doubt it is an attempt to position the organisation within the community, or at least to reach out to artists and audiences in order to attract them back into the building. While there is a 150-seat studio theatre within HOME, it is not yet been made clear what the remit or priorities of the organisation are in relation to live-art programming, and in terms of partnership and collaborative work it could be that hÅb have a contribution to make to this.

[8] From information included in hÅb's most recent NPO funding application, submitted in March 2014, for potential funding from 2015-2018.

Recommendation Three: Live-Art Steering Group

In considering possible frameworks for positioning The Bluecoat within the broader live-art ecology in the city, an initial step would be for the organisation to revisit previous programmes of work, specifically *Liverpool Live* (2004), in order to frame a series of talks and discussions, which would re-activate the issues which were being addressed through live-art programming at the venue 10 years ago. The purpose of the discussion events would be to consider both practical and conceptual issues related to live-art programming in the city, and to include discussion and analysis of the local, regional and national infrastructure for live art. The discussions would aim toward developing a live-art steering group in Liverpool, comprised of artists, arts-organisations, higher-education and further-education institutions and independent producers of performance and live art. The steering group would include Tamsin Drury of hAb who would be invaluable in providing a regional context for how live art needs to be developed in the city, with in-depth knowledge of programming live art in the city and at The Bluecoat. In terms of moving toward a more sustainable approach for developing live art in the city, setting up a more formal steering group, rather than (or as-well as) a network, will lead to more focussed activity, and a timed set of achievable targets. The initial set of discussion events should take place in November 2014 which marks 10 years since *Liverpool Live* (2004) took place, providing a good reference point for a comparative consideration of activity in the city as compared with then. In terms of resources this recommendation could be easily achieved on very little, or no, budget.

Recommendation Four: Strategic Programming and Curatorial Frameworks

Since leaving Greenroom hÅb have established a base at Z-Arts, formerly Zion Centre in Hulme in Manchester, which opens up a potential opportunity to work in collaboration with the newly established Sustained Theatre initiative, STUN Studio. Sustained Theatre is an

initiative, originally commissioned by the Arts Council with the aim of keeping 'issues relating to Black, Asian and minority ethnic theatre artists and practitioners alive and in the national debate'. STUN Studio is the North-West region' project which involves the hire of a dedicated performance space at Z-Arts (with the annual rental of the space coming from the Sustained Theatre budget for the region). This is an opportunity to embed a commitment to culturally-diverse programming, in-line with previous discussions about live art as a space for diversity both in terms of cultural diversity and cultural diversity. hÅb is collaborating with STUN through Live Art Development Agency's DIY programme, in a project that examines the potential for cultural cross-fertilisation in live art.

In 2012 and 2013 hÅb produced a considerable amount of work including: 25 new commissions; presenting the work of over 300 individual artists at platforms in over 140 performances and projects; 12 workshop/discussion/networking events. The organisation also offered internships for emerging live-art producers which involves experience of producing events and mentoring.

In 2011 hÅb developed *Word of Warning* as an umbrella programming strand, encompassing programmes of work either produced in collaboration with partner organisations in Manchester, or featuring contemporary performance or live-art presented by other organisations. Under the *Word of Warning* (WoW) programming strand hÅb presented over 50 events in partnership and collaboration with Contact, The Lowry and Z-arts. WoW programming included *Domestic*, a nine-day festival of live art which took place in a tower block in Manchester. hÅb's main aims with WoW is to ensure that live art and contemporary performance practice continues to be programmed in the city despite the fact that the city's main venue for this work has been closed for since 2011. hÅb are programming in the city in

a very strategic way, necessarily so due to the fact that the organisation has very limited resources compared with those of the Greenroom during the time it was operating.

Strategic programming of live art in Manchester, by hÅb, involves the organisation creating opportunities to present work with other, building-based, organisations. In co-promoting events with partner organisations such as Contact Theatre,[9] who might be less inclined to take a risk on more experimental live-art practices, hÅb are maintaining the space for a diversity of practices to be seen and supported.

Manchester's contemporary performance and live-art ecology has changed considerably since 2011. Beginning with the closure of Greenroom, there have been a number of key changes to organisations who are part of the infrastructure which supports live art in the city. The development of the aforementioned HOME venue which brings together the visual-arts and theatre through the amalgamation of The Library Theatre and Cornerhouse (gallery and cinema) opens up potential new opportunities for the development of live-art in Manchester. Their opening programme of performance is season of site-specific contemporary theatre, and there is also the possibility of collaborative programming with hÅb.

Through Word of Warning hÅb are well positioned to respond to the wide-range of organisations in Manchester with whom they have established partnership working. As an organisation independent from a building-based organisation, and the set of issues and challenges that venues present, hÅb can work much more flexibly and responsively to

[9] Although it's important to add that since September 2013, Matt Fenton, former Artistic Director of Live At LICA and The Nuffield Theatre in Lancaster, has been Artistic Director of Contact Theatre. Matt Fenton has been instrumental in the development and support of live-art practice, having developed the live-art programme at The Nuffield Theatre who are a member of the Live Art UK Network.

opportunities as they arise across the variety of programming contexts offered by the city. Although the closure of Greenroom in 2011 has had a devastating effect on the live-art ecology in Manchester, the range of opportunities that the WoW programme presents means that there is an evolving and growing live-art sector in the city. With an independent organisation taking a strategic lead on live-art development in the city, there is greater proliferation of these practice across a number of organisations, and live-art is not centralised within one main organisation. hÅb are working on embedding live art in mainstream venues in Manchester in a way that potentially supports the venue to take on this programming, thus eventually perhaps, allowing hÅb to develop projects in other spaces, and more site-specific work (such as the Domestic programme). Developing flexible and distinct curatorial frameworks and strands in order to strategically embed live-art activity within other performing arts venues in the city is an ideal model for the development of live art in Liverpool.

Recommendation Five: Strategic Regional Partnerships

Underpinning hÅb's strategic programming and development work is strong strategic art-form development, and advocacy at a local, regional, area and national level. In 2003 hÅb established the Live Art North West (LANWest) network which includes Axis Arts Centre (Manchester Metropolitan University's arts-centre) The Bluecoat, Live at LICA and University of Central Lancashire. The network's main aim is peer support and information and knowledge sharing. LANWest is strategically led by hÅb, and collaborates with the member organisations on a range of projects including: UCLan's *Derelict* programme of live art; with Axis Arts Centre on The Flare programme of work and theatre development initiative and with Live at LICA through the *Getting it Out There* artist support initiative. hÅb has developed a strong network at a regional level, and works in Liverpool in

partnership with The Bluecoat and Hope Street Ltd, which is good starting point for considerations of a more strategic approach to developing live art in Liverpool. hÅb is one of three lead-partners (with Compass Live Art, Wunderbar) in Taking Our Bearings North (TOBN) which has included a series of networking events connecting artists and producer/promoters the North. Two networking events have taken place (Leeds/Manchester), with the next scheduled for Newcastle in 2014. The aim is to connect the regions with a view to improved artist mobility, audience development and cross-programming. At a national level hÅb is an active member of Live Art UK.

In terms of the regional and area context, there is a strong infrastructure to support increased and more consistent development activity in Liverpool, and there have been considerable developments in strengthening provision in the north and north-west. Liverpool is something of an anomaly in that regard, and this points to the fact that The Bluecoat has not been in a position to maximise the potential of the networks and regional infrastructure that it is part of.

In relation to the development of live-art in Liverpool, hÅb's regional remit and reach needs to be taken into account. Although hÅb articulate the reach of the organisation to be regional, partnership working is only achievable on a sporadic basis due to the scale of the organisation and the need to focus primarily on Manchester. If the live-art sector in Liverpool were to develop according to hÅb's development priorities, then the live-art sector in the region would be substantially strengthened through collaborative strategic programming and artist support initiatives. This would build on the existing partnership which is manifest in

programmes such as the '*Poolside Emergency*, the Liverpool edition of Manchester's *Emergency* platform, produced by The Bluecoat in collaboration with hÅb.[10]

Recommendation Six: Closer Partnership Working with the Higher-Education Sector

There is potential for The Bluecoat to develop closer links with Liverpool Hope University through the development of a durational-live-art performance programme (LOOP) and related symposium. This partnership programming could initiate much better integration of the higher-education institutions into the live-art ecology of the city. LOOP has been notionally scheduled for November 2014, and it could form part of the series of discussion events intended to activate the more strategic planning of live art in Liverpool. Conceptual links between LOOP and the *Liverpool Live* (2004) programme could be made, through inviting artists who took place in the residency programme (which included Sandra Johnston, Denis Buckley and Sachiko Abe) to take part in the LOOP programme and revisiting the projects 10 years from the date that they were first performed. Stronger and longer-term links with Liverpool Hope University would also improve the framework for professional development and mentoring for artists in the city.

Recommendation Seven: Artist support

hÅb has managed to maintain its programme of early artist opportunities and platforms despite the loss of Greenroom which was a key venue in presenting the work of these artists. The impact that the loss of Greenroom has had, and will continue to have, on the city is far-reaching and long-term, and though hÅb have successfully created a robust infrastructure for

[10] In January 2012 hÅb created Word of Warning under which the public programmes of performances are developed and presented. The Word of Warning programme was established to attempt to provide provision for live-art and contemporary performance programming since the closure of Greenroom in 2011. Although some of the programmes of work produced go under the banner of being produced by Word of Warning, hÅb are still the producers. Word of Warning and hÅb are essentially frameworks under which Tamsin Drury works as an independent producer, with an assistant producer, volunteers and a trainee producer.

live art, the broader contemporary performance and small-scale theatre ecology has been significantly diminished by the loss of this key venue from the city.

hÅb work with Manchester-based artists but also provide programming contexts which have a national profile, and which feature national and international artists (including Stuart Silver, Wendy Houstoun, Michael Pinchbeck and Sheila Ghelani and Leentje Van de Cruys). The programme of work also creates a context within which artists can develop their practice over a sustained period of time, with on-going support. The infrastructure for the development of artists working in live art in Manchester is robust, with hÅb initiating the majority of those development programmes, including MethodLab (mentored commissions) and Emergency (performance platform to showcase live-art work from Manchester and across the region). hÅb have consistently provided progression for artists during the early part of their career. Through the aforementioned initiatives the development of high quality, risk-taking and cutting-edge performance, live art and dance (since partnership working with Dance Manchester, and the development of TURN platform for dance artists). The opportunities that *Liverpool Live* provided in 2004 for my investigation into how the term live art can, and does, accommodate dance, have been extended much further in Manchester through collaborative partnership programming between Dance Manchester, hÅb and prior to its closure in 2011, Greenroom. TURN began in 2009 and is the North-West dance platform for dance artists.

As an organisation hÅb have built capacity, and the infrastructure of the live-art sector in Manchester, to allow for the optimum level of support required to build a vibrant community of artists working in this field of practice. Acknowledging that artist development is a long-term investment hÅb has recently carried out a tracking exercise to map its success in this

area, recognising that not all artists will go on to maintain a practice in live art.[11] A number of artists who are or who have been based in the North West including: Drunken Chorus; Action Hero; Ellie Harrison; Drunken Chorus, Levantes Dance Theatre; Nic Green; Pigeon Theatre and Lena Simic have all been supported by hÅb. From this list of artists it is interesting to note that, while hÅb present site-specific and site-responsive work in public spaces, a large number of the artists who have been supported through the organisation are artists who make theatre-based live art. This is related to hÅb's collaborative relationship with Greenroom, and the fact the resources available for artists (in terms of space, programming context, marketing support) emanated from a theatre context. In comparison with the development of live art in Liverpool, which tended toward durational, sited and gallery-based work as a result of the nature of the building and the significance of the contemporary visual-art programme at the venues.

An interesting and useful exercise will be to track if (and how) the nature of the work that is supported by hÅb evolves as a result in the change of conditions of production and context. A collaborative working relationship between Liverpool and Manchester would be highly productive, based on how each city, in general terms, characterises a different approach toward live art, with Manchester's strong infrastructure for theatre, and through hÅb a strong touring infrastructure for live-art work to be seen across the region. Liverpool, with its strong visual-art infrastructure, has the potential to characterise its relationship with live art to be more focussed on the contemporary visual-arts. Both cities have large-scale festivals which reflect this tendency, Manchester with Manchester International Festival (a predominantly performance and theatre-based festival) and Liverpool with Liverpool Biennial, the contemporary visual-art festival within which live art in Liverpool has been positioned across

[11] Information from email correspondence with Tamsin Drury.

a number of different programmes, as outlined in Chapter 1. Mapping and analysing how local conditions impact specifically on the nature of live-art work which emerges from a city allows for a more general characterisation of practice to take place in articulating the regional picture, without danger that this characterisation of practice over-generalises or diminishes the complexity of live-art practice.

Recommendation Eight: Archiving and Collating Documentation

The Bluecoat have a very large archive of material relating to the building and the arts programme, which reflects a considerable amount of the live-art activity that has taken place in Liverpool since the late 1970s. It would be timely to establish a live-art archive in the city. The Bluecoat are well-placed to apply for Heritage Lottery funding, particularly in light of the fact that 2017 is the 300th Anniversary of the opening of the building, and dedicated funding toward an online resource (such as Greenroom's extensive archive of digitised material relating to the programme at the venue) would allow for the archive to be revisited, digitised and made available to the public. Funding at the right level would be essential, and fundraising targets should be based a realistic budget and a comprehensive understanding of the anticipated resources that would be required to carry this out, in terms of staffing, space and time. A sustainable infrastructure for live art in Liverpool requires a thorough mapping of its performance history, in order to continue to argue for the importance of this field of practice and the impact that it has had on the city. A specific performance-archive steering group would be set up in order to consider collaborative funding and shared resources in establishing a comprehensive performance archive for the city, across a number of organisations, and within which the live-art archive would be positioned.

Conclusion to Recommendations

In using this comparative analysis of Manchester as a way of further highlighting the specific local conditions of Liverpool, and understanding how live art is positioned on a regional basis, in comparison with the national picture, it has to be noted that hÅb is an exceptionally efficient organisation. In 2012/13 58% of hÅb's income went directly into programming, with staffing representing 30% and overheads, including travel, 12%. As an organisation they would be considered sustainable from a financial point of view, however, resource-wise, the level of activity generated and the regularity and consistency of artist support will inevitable place a burden on the very small staff team. The organisation relies heavily on voluntary hours from the core team of one full-time producer (Tamsin Drury) and a part-time assistant producer. It is questionable how sustainable this is as an organisational infrastructure.

hÅb is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a sole director, Tamsin Drury, and an advisory board. Tamsin Drury has been an arts-producer for 30 years and is entirely responsible for the strategic development of the organisation, and a considerable amount of the hands-on delivery of the programme, including performances, workshops, artist development, and mentoring. Over the past 15-years hÅb has proved itself to be financially extremely efficient, delivering high output of quality programme with low overheads and nearly 60% of income going directly to artistic programme. Since 2011 has proven itself to be highly resilient in the face of a diminished infrastructure for live art in the city, due to the closure of the Greenroom. As well as being an Arts Council funded NPO, hÅb was successful in gaining 3-year Cultural Partnership funding from Manchester City Council in 2012.

From the start of the Word of Warning programme, the organisation has increased earned income, a not inconsiderable feat given the majority of work is on box-office split. The most

significant additional income is the value of the partnership support hÅb garners from co-promotion and co-production, a hugely significant amount. Additionally, hÅb is making full use of the match funding resources available through the Creative Employers Programme – both to supplement its staffing levels through two paid interns whilst also delivering its commitment to the development of emerging producers.

In terms of understanding hÅb as a potential model for a similar organisation to develop in Liverpool, it is sensible to take into account that an organisation of this nature is a difficult prospect for which to attract additional funds, hampered by external environmental factors. With 90% of individual giving and 67.8% of business investment going to London arts organisations – a small regional arts organisation working in a niche art-form, without a building to lend profile or against which to raise, proves a challenging prospect for fundraising.[12]

[12] Information from activity reports and budgets.

Conclusion

The assertions and recommendations outlined in this research are firmly grounded in a realistic and comprehensive knowledge of the live-art sector locally, regionally and nationally. I assert that there are still a number of significant mapping exercises which need to take place, to both ensure the sustainability of the live-art sector and field of practice, and also to arm against the potentially devastating effect of homogenisation on arts and cultural experiences. In 2014 we face a potentially more threatening state of affairs with regard to support and development for the arts than ever before. While this country has previously been through the worst of times in terms of political and economic support for the arts, we now have the added concern that the rhetoric around the democratising power of technology has been appropriated in order to argue (albeit not explicitly or in so many words) for the homogenisation of arts activity and audience experience. In the late 1970s, throughout the 1980s with the effects still being felt well into the 1990s, support and value for the arts were significantly diminished under Thatcher's government, this led to artists finding innovative ways to work outside of the system. In 2014 we find ourselves in a comparable situation with regard to the economic and political climate, but with a much more complex set of factors to negotiate.

My concern, as reflected throughout this research, is that the increasing range of alternative leisure activities available to audiences, coupled with a bleak outlook for the arts in terms of funding, will lead to long-term and even worse, irreparable erosion to the support mechanisms and frameworks for experimental practices across all art forms.

With this in mind it is my aim to extend and develop the discussions set out in this research, and to carry them forward toward the specific recommendations which underpin the imperative of this work. It is crucial that this research is now implemented in a practical way,

through further discussion of the themes and issues which I have highlighted and analysed and also through further research. This research will be invigorated through further discussion of its main aims and themes, and is clearly intended as a working document to be used in a radical and in-depth reconsideration of the live-art sector in Liverpool.

As a case-study based contextual analysis of the field of performance and the live-art sector in Liverpool, this research offers not only an original and detailed perspective on live art, but workable tactics and strategies for the development of the live-art sector in Liverpool, based on a realistic understanding of the breadth and complexity of this area of work, the organisations and artists that comprise the sector, and the potential of the sector to support the most diverse and vibrant area of performative practice available to a great diversity of artists, practitioners and other professionals within this field. I have been in a position to offer perspectives on the live-art sector in Liverpool based on my experiences as a programmer of performance within an organisation that has been key to the development of live art in England since the late 1960s, and also as a practising artist positioning my work within the field of live art. This research is well informed and enriched with considerable professional experience of the visual art, theatre and live-art sectors, locally, regionally and nationally, and is as useful to artists and performers working across a number of art forms, as it is to professionals working within arts organisations at a number of different levels.

Appendix A
Planning document for Live Art programme at the Bluecoat

Live Art Programme Outline 2000-2002

Focus
The focus for these next two years is on supporting the development of interdisciplinary and live art practice through a strategy that will:

• Generate an audience locally for this area of work

• Encourage production of new work by local artists

• Provide a platform for regional artists to experiment through interacting with other practitioners, perhaps from different creative backgrounds

• Provide a critical context for this area of work through events and discussions

• Raise the profile of live art at the Bluecoat

• Link this area of work to other strands of the Bluecoat programme to encourage audience crossover through marketing initiatives

Budget
A potential new budget of £5000 has been created from existing performance-programme grants for the live-art programme, dependent on confirmed box-office income from other strands of programming. If events from the music and dance programme don't reach their box-office target then some of this budget may need to be re-allocated to the main performance programme budget. CB will control this the live-art budget.

Programme
The programme should aim to be:

• Regular – weekly events. This is a priority.

• Not large scale or technically over-demanding (should be quick set up if performance/installation)

• Reasonably low cost

• Varied: forms of work presented, and mix of regional/national artists

Not confined to "performances", but live art in its widest sense, and also consider inviting people just to come and talk about live art, eg Lois Keidan.

<u>Potential programme/artists:</u>
Weekly events – informal talks and performance sharings

Project Space (possibly Spark Collective, Michaela Zimmer)

(Live Art event at opening of Becks Futures exhibition not now likely)
Live Art Seminar (NWAB/LADA) end July
then:
monthly events Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb/March
or
focus around a period, say Oct/Nov and Feb/Mar

Artists to consider (for example):

Regional/local connections:

Mike Carney (dance/Live Art)
Nina Edge (talk on various approaches to interdisciplinary work)
Philip Jeck (turntable performance/installation)
Visual Stress (video/talk about last decade's work)
Mike Mayhew (performance)
Colin Fallows (slide presentation on avant garde history re performance/music)
Max Factory (interactive performance followed by discussion about their approach)
Quarter Club (Manchester): Laurence Lane etc present their work (showcase of short pieces/talk about their programme**)**
Die Kunst (live gig by art band from Manchester/London)
(Paul) Rooney (live gig by art band from Liverpool plus talk?)
Bill Drummond (performance a la Richard Long piece presented last year at Hub Café, or more formal talk with films)
Yellow House (short presentation followed by discussion about their approach)

Outside region:

Lois Keidan/Daniel Brine on LADA projects
Brian Catling (showed spooky film in gallery last year: has long track record of solo performance work and would be interested in coming back to Bluecoat)
Any of hundreds of interesting and challenging live artists:
Mike Stubbs, Ronnie Fraser Munro, SuAndi, Richard Layzell, Robert Ayres, Laribot, Franko B

There are a lot of familiar names here, so we should aim to combine some of them (quality live art practitioners) with new names, especially from the region.
Some crossover here with Bluecoat Verbals and other aspects of the programme?

Spaces
Some events might require the Concert Hall, others could function in the Sandon, courtyards or off site. The Gallery is being used for the first event, Project Space, and there are possibilities to use it again if there are exhibition programme gaps. Aim to create an informal and accessible environment wherever we present the work.

Dates
See above proposed schedule.

Research
NRLA was useful CB [Cathy Butterworth] and BB [Bryan Biggs] went. re networking and seeing work. Other opportunities will emerge from the proposed NWAB/LADA seminars in June, and CB to see LADA soon re Biennial collaboration. Regional Platform for NRLA: hasn't been @ Bluecoat for a few years: re-establish connection with Nikki Millican

Planning Team

CB [Cathy Butterworth], DA [Dinesh Allirajah], CG [Catherine Gibson]
Input from SH [Sarah Haythornthwaite] as appropriate to her Connect/participation plans

Monthly meetings to begin mid-June?

Decision-making on programme

Marketing

Small separate budget available in marketing. Use of this to be mapped out in tandem with programming: print, distribution, ads, target audiences (build special relationships with eg LIPA, Chester College, Art School/JMU etc), raise profile in listings/other live art publications like Live Art Magazine (currently Bluecoat nil profile). CB to talk to CO'S re how budget is used (not on thousands of bits of print, but targeted approach to colleges etc – CB to do strategy notes re this)

Evaluation

As we go along, after each event. Be rigorous. If things aren't working, why?
Involve practitioners in evaluation. Set specific targets for audience numbers, critical feedback etc

Other issues:

Rehearsals/room availability/clashes

Event budgets: allocate per quarter, detailing individual event costs, and map out whole year

Free events/ticketed ones (how much to charge?)

Branding: Bluecoat Live TBC

Cathy Butterworth 29/05/00

Appendix B
Live Art Business Plan. Used in support of application to Arts Council England's Regional Arts Lottery Programme strand of funding to develop the Bluecoat's Live Art programme, March 2002.

LIVE ART BLUECOAT

BUSINESSS PLAN

2002-2004

By Cathy Butterworth
Bluecoat Arts Centre
Document completed March 2002

LIVE ART BLUECOAT BUSINESSS PLAN 2002-2004

1 Executive Summary

This plan is for a two-year programme of live art, building on, yet additional to and more developmental than our current support for this area of experimental art practice. Through recent programmes of one-off live art events at the Bluecoat, we recognise a need for a more strategic approach to artists and audiences for this work in the North West, especially on Merseyside.

For artists there are few opportunities to broaden the profile of their work beyond small, local audiences, nor a critical context in which to develop their practice. For audiences, particularly further and higher education students and other young people, there is potential - currently unrealised - to engage with live art through its capacity to draw in music, visual art, theatre, dance, film and video, multi-media and aspects of popular culture.

2002 in Liverpool is an opportune time to begin the process of creating new initiatives for live art. The Bluecoat is responsible for delivering a short, focused programme of high quality live art this Autumn during Liverpool Biennial, working in collaboration with leading live art promoters Live Art Development Agency (LADA), using the Bluecoat and other city centre venues.

We will launch our project, provisionally entitled *Live Art Bluecoat*, at this event, through: inclusion (by invitation) of one or two North West artists in the programme; staging a regional showcase event for live artists; creating other live art opportunities for regional artists and audiences. Towards the end of our project, a further showcase of regional live art work will be staged, building on the audience and artist interest generated during the Biennial live art focus, and informed by a scheme of “attached” artists.

Three North West artists will be attached to the Bluecoat in the period between the Biennial and the regional showcase in 2004. Neither residencies nor commissions, the scheme will be structured in order to develop live art practice and audiences in the region. Artists will be selected following research into the type of work and skills required, identified during Autumn 2002. They will use the Bluecoat resources - fee, rehearsal space, technical, administrative and marketing support, mentoring, contact with artists and other networking opportunities - to develop new approaches and ideas, with the potential to increase distribution of their work.

The artists would present public talks or works in progress; participate in workshop projects with regional colleges to cultivate student interest and activity in live art; and inform and feed ideas into the Bluecoat’s programme. The attachments will culminate in the artists’ active involvement in a regional showcase, featuring their own and other artists’ work. The scheme will also

provide a focus for other local artists to discuss and develop interdisciplinary arts practice eg through occasional fora.

In providing this supportive environment, the Bluecoat aims to nurture artists and new work, putting the quality of creative ideas and practice at the heart of the project. It will open up opportunities for regional artists to present their work within and outside the North West, as the Bluecoat develops partnerships with colleges and venues. It will also reveal to new audiences the processes involved in making live art.

The project will feed into our capital development, testing new approaches to promoting live art, influencing how our new spaces will function and piloting the role of the artist in maintaining an artistic presence when we close our facilities for construction work (anticipated 2004/5).

2 Aims and Objectives

- Support live art practice in the North West region, by working with and profiling artists in contexts from the local to the international
- Increase audiences for experimental, interdisciplinary art in the North West
- Develop a critical context in Liverpool for live art
- Create access to live art networks for the benefit of regional practitioners
- Strengthen the Bluecoat's role as a supporter and promoter of live art

3 Background

3.1 Artform context

The term live art is a useful category for areas of contemporary art practice that do not sit comfortably within single artform art disciplines. Yet it is - by definition - anything but another category. Its capacity to combine different media, to operate in unusual contexts outside traditional art sites, its unexpectedness and embrace of the unconventional and often taboo, make live art fertile terrain for artists seeking to challenge the norms of cultural production and consumption.

Performance art and experimental live work have often been accused of self indulgence. Such work however – with a long history going back to Dada and the Futurists, through the happenings of the 60s, its alignment with political activism, street theatre, radical dance, experimental music, performance and writing, and

the opportunities presented by the internet and technology today –often has at its heart an intent to demystify high art and a willingness to engage with everyday life. In an increasingly homogenous globalised world, the small interventions of the live artist are welcome interruptions into the bleached out, mediated experience that characterises much of our cultural life.

3.2 Bluecoat context

A combined arts client of North West Arts Board, the Bluecoat presents visual and performing arts by contemporary artists from the region, from the rest of the UK and internationally. Its artistic policy places emphasis on supporting the new and experimental, and live art is highlighted as an area where this can flourish.

Interdisciplinary art practice has long been a feature of the Bluecoat's programme, with Yoko Ono, for example presenting what was reputedly her first paid "happening" here in 1967. Under the Arts Council's Live Art Commission Scheme, the Bluecoat enjoyed over a decade of project funding to commission local and national artists working in a range of contexts. These have included processional street performances, writing/theatre-based works, night-time projections onto buildings, gallery installations, interventions into shops, clubs and civic sites. They have featured a life sized game board around issues of disability, a brass band playing acid house hits, live statues on plinths outside St George's Hall and much more. Artists have included Nina Edge, Yellow House/Philip Courtenay, Visual Stress, Janet Hodgson, Keith Khan, Jeremy Deller, Asian Voices Asian Lives, Philip Jeck.

NWAB has taken on ACE's support for this area of work by building a £10k revenue stream into its grant for the Bluecoat. In the current year (2001/2) this funding has been put towards a series of smaller events than the previous live art commissions (usually only between one and three a year). The current programme is outlined in Appendix 1.

The Board of the Bluecoat has endorsed the significance of live art to the organisation, as outlined in the 2002-2005 business plan. Live art is integral to the vision for the Bluecoat's planned capital development, which will substantially transform and extend the existing building over the next five years. Opportunities for experimentation and cross-artform initiatives will be at the heart of the new centre and spaces are being designed to facilitate this interaction.

3.3 Regional context

Live art practice in the North West exists in several different contexts, from higher education performing and fine art courses, to promoters like the Bluecoat and the Green Room, whose support for live art is demonstrated by its recent Method Lab commissions, which were presented at the National Review of Live Art in Glasgow.

Liverpool is well placed as a site for experimental work, despite there being at this moment no obvious higher education courses in the city producing live art graduates in any significant numbers. The level of provision, and hence number of practitioners, in Liverpool and on Merseyside is weak compared to Manchester, but there are positive signs of interest in live work with indications of increased demand from students on fine art and performing arts courses.

Audiences in the city have a history of exposure to cutting edge contemporary art through international visual arts events like FACT's Video Positive (which has commissioned several live art works) and the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art. There is an opportunity presented by this year's Biennial (September – November 2002) to raise the profile of live art, bringing it to the attention of a large, wide ranging audience made up of local, national and international visitors anticipated for this, the UK's largest contemporary visual art event.

The Biennial has commissioned the Bluecoat in partnership with the London-based Live Art Development Agency (LADA) to stage a short live art programme at the start of the Biennial, focusing on current practice. This is likely to be staged over two/three days at the Bluecoat and other venues in Liverpool and feature mostly solo works by 6 - 10 British-based artists working in performative live art practice. It is likely to take its cue from a major performance installation included in the Biennial's International Exhibition, devised for the Bluecoat by the influential San Francisco-based Mexican artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Entitled The Museum of Fetishized Identity, this piece will explore complex identities, hybrid personas and questions of whether internationalism is a geographical or a cultural concept. Funding for the LADA/Bluecoat programme will come substantially from ACE.

4 Rationale to develop live art

4.1 Now is an opportune time to develop both practitioners and audiences for live art in Liverpool, given:

a) recent developments in live art in the wider North West, as evidenced by the emergence of new artists engaged in innovative practice

b) an identified demand for live art input into higher education establishments in the region

c) a perceived lack in Liverpool of a critical context for discourse around live art practice and the need for more support to develop new work in the city

d) the opportunity presented by the Liverpool Biennial to profile live art practice by and for regional, national and international artists and audiences

e) the partnership being developed by the Bluecoat with the UK's leading live art agency (LADA), and the potential for artists from the region to take advantage of the promoters' and other networks this will open up

f) potential to develop live art audiences in the city from ones already attuned to experimental work and others interested in exploring "something different" in popular culture

4.2 In response to this situation the Bluecoat wishes to expand its role as a supporter of live art in the region and to this end has drawn up a set of aims and objectives outlined in this Plan (Section 2 above). We recognise however that we are unable to achieve this within the limited resources available for our current, revenue-funded live art provision. We therefore propose a focused two-year project, provisionally entitled Live Art Bluecoat, which will be additional to the work presented in our core live art programme, and which will be able to have a greater strategic effect on live art practice and provision in the North West. It will require the financial support of RALP and the commitment of partners in higher education.

5 Action plan

5.1 Biennial focus

5.1.1 Live Art Bluecoat will have a presence at the Liverpool Biennial in Autumn 2002, specifically:

• *International Live Art Focus*
The Bluecoat and LADA will select, by invitation, at least one artists working in the North West to include in the two/three day Biennial live art programme (see 3.3 above) in late September, alongside other UK artists. As well as inclusion in this programme, North West artists will be profiled through accompanying talks and open discussions about their work, targeted at artists and audiences, as well as in a showcase event (see (b) below for outline).

What sort of artists will be shortlisted? Potential artists to be invited will not necessarily be very well-established but must have a recent track record for innovative work: eg Suki Chan, Qasim Shaheen, Shamshad Khan, or demonstrate an ability to continue producing strong solo work, eg Mike Mayhew

What type of work will be presented? Budgets will be modest and pieces must be presented within a busy 2/3 day period, so it is likely that the work will be solo/small ensemble, focusing around a single human presence (as opposed, for example, to large scale spectacular events involving many participants, or discreet internet projects). The theme of the Biennial live art programme, with its

focus on hybrid personae, will also help to frame the selection. The piece(s) selected is likely to be a new work.

• *Regional Live Art Showcase*
Selected from an open submission and also staged during the Biennial period (14 September - 24 November), this programme at the Bluecoat - and potentially other sites/venues - will showcase new and emerging work from the region. An early invitation to artists (April/May) to submit proposals for this will determine the extent of interest, quality and ambition of the work and therefore the nature of the programme, which might for instance be a day long "platform" event similar to those held for selection of the National Review of Live Art, or a series of evening events over a longer period. Until this process takes place it is difficult to predict the number of artists involved, however we anticipate up to ten.

5.1.2 Having a presence in a high profile international art event, the Biennial, will help to raise the profile of this area of work (see Marketing, below). During the Biennial there will be several events alongside the live art programme aimed at stimulating debate around live art practice: LADA are in discussion with inIVA to stage a seminar in Liverpool focused on this area of work, there is a possibility of an informal grouping of UK live art promoters (which the Bluecoat belongs to) holding one of its meetings in the city, and there will be opportunities around the Showcase event to engage in critical debate, with regional artists talking about their work.

5.2 Attached artists scheme

5.2.1 The Bluecoat's regular live art programme, generally monthly events, (as well as the Biennial focus) will maintain the profile of live art activity over the period of this plan. To complement and in a sense "glue together" these events, there will be a scheme to attach several artists to the venue over a longer period in order to develop live art more strategically. Artists are likely to be attached over 12 months within the period early 2003 – late Spring 2004.

It is important to stress that this is not a residency nor bursary scheme, nor a series of commissions, though new work is expected to result from it. It will be a two way process, the artists receiving support to develop their practice, the Bluecoat gaining creative input from the artists which will have programming and audience development benefits.

5.2.2 The scheme will embody:

• A live art presence in the Bluecoat

• Advocacy to other artists and the public

• Education, introducing and stimulating interest in live art from students

- Creative input into the programme

- Networking opportunities

5.2.3 The scheme will enable artists to:

- take stock of their work and allow time to develop their practice

- receive a fee, as well as substantial help in kind: administrative, marketing, rehearsal, technical and curatorial support from existing Bluecoat resources

- take advantage of networking opportunities, bringing them into contact with promoters nationally and potentially internationally, eg LADA and the informal network of UK live art promoters; the National Review of Live Art, links created by the Bluecoat through its research for the International Exhibition of the Biennial, the ongoing Cologne exchange where a good network of contacts and venues exists for experimental work, including live art

5.2.4 Attached artists will be expected to:

- stimulate interest and participation in live art from students in higher and further education (see Partnerships below for activity targeted at colleges and at recent graduates)

- feed ideas into the Bluecoat's live art programme and recommend artists for consideration

- present work in progress at the Bluecoat, accompanied by events for the public to reveal the processes involved in making live art

- generate debate amongst regional artists through participation in open forum and other events

- be involved in planning a regional platform for the National Review of Live Art (late Summer/early Autumn 2003), generating interest from other artists in the region to participate

- present their work and select, with the Bluecoat, other artists for a culminating regional showcase event towards the end of the project (Spring 2004)

- contribute to the evaluation of Live Art Bluecoat

5.2.5 In the period September to December 2002 we will identify potential artists from the region for the scheme, drawing on a pool of names derived from those identified for the International Live Art Focus (short listed and selected), those

who responded to the open submission for the Regional Live Art Showcase, and other artists. Artists will be North West based and have a commitment to the region. They will need to have some relevant experience/track record (see criteria below) but we will specifically target those at a stage in the development of their practice where they will most benefit from this opportunity, rather than seasoned “workshop artists”. Ideally this would be artists who are several years into their professional practice, perhaps a few years out of college. We will above all however select artists who demonstrate they have the required creative and other skills to benefit from the attachment and achieve its objectives of opening up live art to a wider audience.

We envisage three artists being selected, working the equivalent of a day a week (45-50 days) Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Ability to carry out the tasks outlined above: can the artist demonstrate the required skills: communication, organisational, time management, teamwork, and is he/she self motivated?

- Past experience: has the artist previous workshop or other relevant experience?

- Stage of career: will the artist make the most of this opportunity to enhance his/her career?

- Quality and stage of development of practice: is the work at a sufficiently interesting point where the artist will benefit from the opportunity to concentrate on its development?

- Interest and understanding in a range of live art: does the artist possess sufficient breadth here and is able to effectively communicate this?

5.2.6 The artists will be contracted to carry out an agreed schedule of work, balancing time to spend on developing their work with the other tasks. This will result from a process of negotiation based on realistic outcomes and time commitments, but might encompass the following elements and time allocation:

20 days developing own work, using Bluecoat resources (admin, technical, rehearsal space)
5 days presenting own work in progress for public, educational groups and their peers
2 days presentation of completed work as public performance
1 days participation in artist forum events
13 days college workshops (these to be paid in part by colleges, so days variable, dependent on demand)
2 days contributing to Bluecoat programming, working with curatorial staff
3 days input into devising final regional showcase, working with Bluecoat staff

1 days evaluation, in collaboration with Bluecoat staff
3 days preparation/meetings

There could be additional workshop days if colleges can afford more. Artists will work independently and not necessarily at the same time as each other, however they will come together as a team at critical moments in the project, eg planning and evaluation.

5.2.7 The attached artists are unlikely to require a dedicated admin base, but would have access to facilities as required. They will be able to integrate into various organisational processes including relevant staff meetings, planning around the programme, marketing, educational activities, and the capital development, as appropriate.

6 Relationship to existing Bluecoat provision

6.1 This proposal will be additional to existing live art provision, which will continue throughout the period. It will not however ignore it and there will be potential for collaborative marketing and interaction between the core programme and project work

7 Partnerships

7.1 The partnerships with the Biennial and LADA already exist, principally for delivery of the live art element of the Biennial's Events Programme this year. The link with LADA will continue as the Bluecoat develops its work in this area, and the network of UK (and potentially international) live art promoters, part stimulated by initial meetings staged by LADA, continues to grow.

7.2 Critical to the success of the project, especially the attached artists, will be our relationship to undergraduate and graduate artists. Initial research indicates a demand for links with live art and interdisciplinary practitioners on higher education courses, as summarised below. Partners are currently being researched from higher and further education institutions in the North West with a view to securing a commitment from them to a) support public events, bringing students to the Biennial and other live art events promoted by Bluecoat, and b) arrange for the attached artists to do projects with their students, from visiting lecture day visits to more intensive blocks of workshops where affordable. Although part of the attached artists' work, we are asking the colleges to pay artists directly for this. If this is not possible due to financial constraints, colleges will however still be able to participate in the attached artists programme by bringing students to individual events at the Bluecoat: it may also be appropriate to organise a live art forum programme at a central venue (the Bluecoat) targeted at colleges, so that those students whose institutions are unable to buy in artists can still benefit.

The level of interest indicated so far is:

Hope University: fine art lecturer Lin Holland is enthusiastic about the proposal and is discussing with her head of department formalising a partnership with the Bluecoat for the next academic year. She sees live art as an important way of bringing the visual and performing arts elements of the Creative Arts campus at Everton together. There have been successful collaborative artists' projects between Bluecoat and Hope in recent years, notably the residency in 2001 by artist Navjot from India.

Liverpool Art School, John Moores University: Head of Contextual Studies, Colin Fallows, has indicated JMU's support for the idea, saying that they will participate subject to further discussion and will contribute according to the availability of budget. There is also a fruitful relationship between Bluecoat and the Art School's Centre for Art International Research (cair) and potential to work closely with them on this proposal.

Liverpool Community College: art lecturer Geoff Molyneux has indicated the potential for first year HND performance studies students to participate in the scheme

Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts: Lecturer Roger Hill has discussed with us setting up a live art module at LIPA which would draw on the attached artists resource as long as arrangements can be confirmed before their next academic year.

There is potential to extend the partnerships to the following: *Chester College* where live art practitioner and lecturer Simon Piasecki has brought students to our live art events and now wishes to develop a closer relationship with the Bluecoat; Alsager and Salford colleges where there is already support for this area of work; *University of Central Lancashire, Preston* and *Manchester Metropolitan University*, two institutions where good connections already exist between the Bluecoat and the Fine Art and Interactive Arts courses respectively.

7.3 Recent graduates on Merseyside will also be targeted. There is a recently created group called Art-Works, comprising mostly Liverpool Art School graduates and final year students, that meets regularly and has set up an email and reading group as well as other joint initiatives to address issues of post graduation survival and professional development. The Bluecoat is one of three arts organisations (with FACT and Static) supporting this group, and the attached artist programme will be of benefit to them and other young artists in the region, through artist forums around live art, and generating interest in the regional live art showcases.

8 Delivery

8.1 The Bluecoat Live Art Programmer (who is currently running the regular live art programme alongside delivering other aspects of our events programme, and who currently works four days a week) to manage delivery of the project, working in collaboration with other Bluecoat staff and representatives of LADA and the Biennial. Progress on the project will be given to the Bluecoat Board through regular reporting mechanisms. The Bluecoat's financial, marketing and administration systems will provide the necessary support to ensure the project is well managed.

8.2 The project will be managed in accordance with existing Bluecoat policies and procedures. Artists will be selected according to our equal opportunities policy. The proposal is being devised to be as inclusive as possible and we will target artists to achieve a mixture of gender and cultural background as far as possible.

9 Marketing

9.1 Who will marketing of the project be targeted at?

- Regional artists working in live art and interdisciplinary areas whom we will offer the opportunity to present and see work in a high profile international and regional showcase events. We will particularly target artists with less well established track records who would benefit from being attached to a supportive environment for a longer period to develop their work.

- Young people, including those in further and higher education on creative arts courses, recent graduates and a general youth audience interested in crossover cultural activities

- A wide range of specialist and general audiences including those attending the Biennial.
Marketing here will profile the North West artists and indicate the event as part of a longer
term development process to increase access to live art for a wider audience.

9.2 What marketing tools will be used?

- The Bluecoat's regular marketing tools: promotional print (season brochures, specific event brochures, flyers and posters), press campaigns, Bluecoat website, advertising, email and postal information, to encourage general interest in the project. A data base of interested individuals and institutions is being developed, this to be enlarged through audience data capture at the initial Biennial event.

- More targeted marketing would be used for attracting participants in the "attached " artists strand of the project, eg personal networking and presentations

to prospective student, graduate and other groups by Bluecoat staff and the artists. Colleges would use internal marketing to students.

• Artists would be encouraged to apply for the project's opportunities through advertising in regular channels (eg NWAB Digest, Artists' Newsletter, Live Art Magazine)

• The Biennial's marketing campaign for the Events Programme will include the live art programme and associated events, backed up by Biennial press work. Bluecoat's Marketing Manager is part of the Biennial Venues Communications Working Group and will liaise with the Biennial over Events Programme publicity. There are likely to be separate pieces of print for the Events Programme and the International Live Art Focus event, and Bluecoat will produce its own print for the Regional Live Art Showcases.

10 Schedule

2002

March	Submit RALP application. Further research into colleges/graduates demand
April-May	Initial approaches to artists will take place asking for expressions of interest, pending go ahead of scheme in June
June	RALP decision, artists formally invited to participate in Biennial
July-Aug	Planning for Biennial, confirmation of artists and map out rest of Autumn activity
Sept/Nov	Biennial live art focus, regional showcase event, identification of possible attached artists, develop college/graduate partnerships

2003

Jan-March	Select attached artists and agree schedules of work
April-June	First phase of attachments: introduction to Bluecoat, initiate college programme
July-Aug	Attachments public programme during summer, prepare for NRLA Platform
September	NRLA Regional Platform
Oct- Dec	Second phase of attachments with college partners, select artists for 2004 regional showcase

2004

Jan-March	Plan for regional showcase event
March or April	Regional showcase event
May-June	Evaluation

11 Target outcomes

• Number of artists directly supported:

Biennial focus	1 or 2
1st Regional Showcase	10

Attached artists 3
2nd Regional Showcase/NRLA Platform 10

- Number of artists indirectly benefiting
  (forum/discussion events, including graduate group) 15-20

- Number of higher education partner institutions benefiting up to 9

- Number of participants:
  Students: 7 institutions x average 20 students 140 possibly more if all 9 participate
  Other Workshop attenders (public) 40-60

- Number of audiences
  (difficult to estimate until nature of work is known: eg a one evening performance in the Bluecoat can be seen by 150-200 people, a durational piece in for instance a bus station lasting a whole day could be seen by several thousand people), so figures are notional:
  Biennial International Live Art focus average 8 events @ 200 1600
  1st Regional Showcase 300
  2nd Regional Showcase 600
  Works in Progress events 200

- Age range of audiences and participants
  Young adults (16-24), adults (25-64), older adults (65 and over)

- Number of new works produced/commissioned
  Biennial 1 or 2; Showcase events up to 10; = max total 12

- Number of workshop sessions (half day/evening)
  8 institutions x average 5 days = 40 x 2 sessions per day = 80 sessions

- Number of performance/viewing days
  Biennial x 2 or 3; Showcases up to 5; other opportunities for public to see work x 10; = total 18

- Number of artist days employed
  Attached artists: 3 @ 50-60 days = max 180 days
  Artists presenting work in the Biennial and subsequent showcases receive fees but these not calculated on daily rates, but given as lump sum to produce/present work

In addition there will be outcomes with less measurable outputs, eg:

• Artists' inclusion in a high profile international event and regional showcases will potentially lead to interest from other venues and curators beyond the region, whilst others will develop their practice at a critical stage in their career

• Young artists studying or recently graduated will benefit from the stimulus of innovative ideas and contact with the processes of live art

• Audiences will benefit from greater opportunities to see and learn about the processes involved in live art

• The Bluecoat will strengthening its role supporting live art and having the input of artists into its thinking about arts programming and developing new audiences

• A critical context will be developed which will benefit artists, audiences and venues promoting this area of work, expanding debate in this flexible and fluid, yet often marginalised area of arts practice

12 Evaluation and Legacy

12.1 Evaluation will be carried out using our regular monitoring and evaluation tools, principally questionnaires, data gathering, feedback sessions, documentation. Artists, partners, participants and audiences will be involved in the process and a report will be produced at the end of the project crystallising the evaluation.

12.2 This document will form the basis of Bluecoat's live art strategy, short and long term, leaving a legacy that can be built upon both in the interim closure period (as a means of maintaining a non venue based, artists-focused programme) and when we reopen.

12.3 The legacy for the region will be:

• increased public profile and audiences for live art, regionally as well as (through the Biennial) nationally and beyond

• enhanced level of live art practice

• development of a critical context for its production and reception

• several artists with increased networking and other opportunities to present their work

• live art on the agenda of several colleges

Appendix C

Budget for Application to Regional Arts Lottery Programme for Live Art Development at the Bluecoat

LIVE ART BLUECOAT BUDGET		YEAR 1 6 months July-Dec 02	YEAR 2 12 months Jan-Dec 03	YEAR 3 6 months Jan-Jun 04	TOTAL £	NOTES
INCOME						
Earned Income	Box Office	1200		1500	2700	events yrs 1&3
	Colleges		3000	500	3500	7 @ 500
Biennial Income	% of ACE grant	3000			3000	
	Marketing Support	2500			2500	in kind
Other Income	Workshop fees		500		500	public events
Bluecoat Support	Marketing	2000	500	2000	4500	in kind
	Admin	375	750	375	1500	in kind
	Tech equipment	300	300	600	1200	in kind
	Tech Staff	900	600	1300	2800	in kind
	Rehearsal	300	500	500	1300	in kind
RALP		9375	17950	12675	40000	
TOTAL INCOME		**19950**	**24100**	**19450**	**63500**	
EXPENDITURE						
Artistic Programme	Biennial Intnl Event	6000			6000	
	Regional Showcases	3000		3000	6000	
	Attached Artists		11250	3750	15000	
	Artists Expenses	375	750	375	1500	
	Materials, Hires	1400	200	1400	3000	
	Rehearsals	300	200	500	1000	
	Technicians	900	500	1300	2700	
	Tech Equipment	300	100	600	1000	
College Workshops	Fees		3000	500	3500	
	Expenses		700	100	800	
Other Workshops	Fees	200	400	200	800	

	Expenses	150	100	50	300
Marketing	Design/print	3000	1000	3000	7000
	Distribution	400	500	400	1300
	Website	50	100	50	200
	Press	500	400	500	1400
	Adverts/Selection	1150	450	1200	2800
Overheads	Staff	1850	3700	1850	7400
	Post	125	250	125	500
	Phone/fax/email	125	250	125	500
	Stationary	125	250	125	500
Evaluation				300	300
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**19950**	**24100**	**19450**	**63500**
BALANCE		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Appendix D
You Are Here Budget (Actual)

You Are Here	**Budget**	**Actual**
Income	@4/4/02	@
1/11/02		
Biennial (in kind marketing and admin support)	5000	3000
Bluecoat Live Art funds and help in kind: marketing, admin, tech	4000	3000
Other venues in kind support (Hanover, Lime Street Station, Holiday Inn)	1000	1000
ACE (£5k due)	25000	25000
NWAB/proportion of RALP funding (applied for)	6000	5000
Live Art Development Agency (Guillermo Gómez-Peña Talk fee and expenses)	0	1000
Box Office	0	590
TOTAL	**£41000**	**£38590**
Expenditure		
LADA curatorial fee	4000	4000
Project management fee	1500	0
Artists' fees	19000	17959
Artists' expenses: travel, accommodation etc	4000	2265
Artists' research costs	0	300
Materials	2000	3680
Tech costs	2000	1470
Promotion/marketing	6000	7420
Admin	1500	1500
Contingency	1000	0
TOTAL	**£41000**	**£38594**

Appendix E
You Are Here (2002) Final Report for Arts Council England

You Are Here: A Programme of Live Art for the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art 2002
A report by Cathy Butterworth for the Arts Council of England and North West Arts Board

Introduction
You Are Here contributed a significant live art element to the Liverpool Biennial programme. A collaboration between Bluecoat Arts Centre and Live Art Development Agency, it was staged between 18 - 21 September, with one commission continuing beyond these dates and several links with artists being further developed by Bluecoat next year. The diary of events is outlined in LADA's own report and in the accompanying programme brochure, both of which accompany this report.

This report measures the event against the project's aims and benefits as outlined in the original submission to ACE last year:

Ensure live work has a high profile at a major international visual arts event
The presence of Guillermo Gómez-Peña at the start of the Biennial (a two week workshop process followed by two performances of *Ex-Centris* at the opening weekend and then his performance lecture to launch *You Are Here*) had considerable impact in ensuring live work was profiled at the Biennial. By including his lecture within publicity about his work for the *International 2002* exhibition, and having *You Are Here* featured in other Biennial publicity, we ensured that cross marketing for *You Are Here* was effective in generating interest in the live programme, which took place in the week following the Biennial launch.

Alongside the publicly sited works in the *International 2002*, live work – represented by *You Are Here* - has undoubtedly played a part in giving the Biennial a visibility in the city, albeit limited to a few days, and a high public profile.

Enable a dedicated programme to happen so that live art is not lost amongst the plethora of events under the Biennial umbrella
Concentration of the *You Are Here* programme into a short period gave the event real focus and this, combined with distinctive print and effective publicity, media interest and large and enthusiastic audiences, helped ensure the event was not lost in the Biennial's busy opening period.

Allow the Biennial to work with the leading live art development agency in the UK, which will ensure a programme of quality and innovation
LADA's input was invaluable in helping us develop a high quality selection of work in a programme containing a variety of live art practice that reached audiences on a number of levels and in different contexts. To summarise:

• Guillermo's lecture (especially when seen in the context of the *Ex-Centris* performance presented in the same space a few days earlier) provided an inspired intellectual overview of performance art and the challenge to retain its transgressive capacity, and to be able to manoeuvre itself into new strategic positions in the face of a devouring global

media culture, especially in relation to what Guillermo terms an increasingly omnipresent "Mainstream Bizarre".

• Kira O'Reilly's *Blood Wall Drawing* performance installation in neighbouring Hanover Galleries attracted new audiences, drawn to the venue's exhibition of paintings by pop star Holly Johnson downstairs and other artists in the Biennial's Independent programme showing in the same building. Kira's quietly resonant piece, in which the walls of the room were gridded and scored by simple marks made in the artist's own blood, was left up for a further three weeks.

• A triple bill evening in the Bluecoat auditorium highlighted the potential for solo performance to engage directly in different ways in a conventional theatre context: George Chakravarthi's *Great Expectations* was precisely what its title implied, as the audience's anticipation of a sumptuous show - promised by a colourful programme handed out beforehand - was audaciously denied as it dawned on them that very little was going to happen. Silke Mansholt's *Homage to the Heart* transcended its theme of interrogating German identity, unfolding into a captivating dance piece. Qasim Riza Shaheen's development of his *Conversing with Angels* was a quiet meditation on the internal self and external forces.

• A large audience of train passengers, tourists and interested onlookers were attracted to Stacy Makishi's performances presented at two familiar places of arrival and departure, inside Lime Street Station and at a rather more blustery setting at Albert Dock. With a team of helpers, she carried out a series of intriguing and poignant actions, inviting audience members to join her on her journey to the "exotic isle of elsewhere".

• Twenty people, including students and academics, artists and arts administrators and an ex-Brookside actor, contributed to the success of Oreet Ashery's *Say Cheese*, in which her male alter ego Marcus Fisher interacted with them on a hotel bed at the Holiday Inn. The resulting video documentation of these one-to-one encounters provided a compelling TV experience when presented the following day in the Bluecoat.

• Suki Chan and Dinu Li further developed their *Shadow Songs* piece, using both the Bluecoat and Green Room spaces for rehearsals. The result was a dream-like, formally inventive multi media performance exploring dualities of Eastern and Western experience.

• Cai Juan and JJ Xi concluded the programme by staging a fight using soya sauce and tomato ketchup, inside a specially constructed perspex cube in the Bluecoat's busy front courtyard. The intended symbolism of this latest Mad for Real action as an East/West conflagration and ironic comment on global consumerism was not entirely lost on the large, Saturday afternoon audience, whose admiration for the exhausted artists turned to shock then sympathy when JJ slipped and gashed his leg on a broken soya sauce bottle and had to be rushed to hospital.

Help to develop audiences for live art in Liverpool and the North West
All the events were well attended, with good audiences for Guillermo's talk and the triple bill, and smaller audiences for the much-reduced capacity of *Shadow Songs*. Kira's wall drawing attracted 290 during the four days and an estimated 900 people in the following three weeks. 350 people saw Oreet's documentation in a single day, whilst her photographic exhibition and the other video programme, *Live Art Now – A Sampler* –

compiled from LADA's archive and showing a range of recent British live art, attracted a further 467 visitors. Approximately 500 Saw JJ and Cai's fight, and an estimated 1000 witnessed Stacy's performances.

The breadth of the programme, presented in very different locations in the city centre, from the intimacy of a hotel bedroom to the bustle of Lime Street Station, meant that a very wide range of people were attracted to *You Are Here*, many undoubtedly encountering live art for the first time. Whilst the ticketed events inevitably drew a more specialist audience – principally Biennial attenders (curators, students - including some from drama and dance as well as fine art courses, artists and others interested in experimental art practice) – it was encouraging to see more general audiences of all ages attracted to both the highly public events and indeed the free events at Bluecoat and the Hanover. There were a significant proportion of attenders who had traveled from outside the region for the event.

Develop the Bluecoat's capabilities as a live art promoter and catalyst
Delivery of the programme has been an invaluable experience for us, helping us assess our capabilities and mapping out our future work in this area. Working with LADA gave us the opportunity to present some of the best and most engaging work currently being produced in the UK. The process worked well as a collaboration, and also revealed our shortcomings as a venue and in terms of human resources, which need to be addressed.

The event has also helped to generate interest in the city in this area of work, from both audiences and artists, several of whom we are already in discussion with about helping them develop their work. In a way *You Are Here* has contributed to Bluecoat re-position itself as a catalyst for live art in the city, demonstrating the potential to bring regional, national and international live art work together. And there will be follow up events too, directly stemming from *You Are Here*: Oreet Ashery and Silke Mansholt for instance will be returning to Liverpool in the new year to further develop the work presented here earlier.

Contribute to developing live art practice in Liverpool and the North West
As stated above, the event contributed to raising the profile of live art in the region, and with contacts made through both *Ex-Centris* and *You Are Here* we are now engaging in dialogue with artists and others in the region working in live art (including Tate Liverpool, Collect Gallery and several colleges). This stimulus has come at an opportune time, as we start a two-year development of live art (supported by RALP) that will build the profile of live art through a series of "associate artists" and other strategies to encourage artists' practice and audiences' interest live art.

Strengthen Liverpool's international links with live art practitioners
The experience working with Guillermo and his team of international collaborators has established a strong link and potential network for further collaborations on an international scale. Bluecoat will be arguing strongly that the next Biennial should expand its focus on high quality international live art work and, independently, Bluecoat is keen to develop international links including artists' exchanges with, for example China, Germany and Latin America.

Appendix F
Liverpool Live (2004) Budget

Liverpool Live 2004

INCOME	**Budget**	**Actual**	**Notes**
Bluecoat Connect Budget	2000	2000	for participation project
Bluecoat own resources	4000	4000	
Foreign G/ment, Vis Arts, B Council	7000	2500	Vis Arts 2k, Norwegian Embassy 500
Nordic Council/Other Grants	7500	6750	Nordic Council
Academic Grants	3000	1200	In kind support for talk events (Hope,JMU)
Other Grants	1000	3000	LADA help in kind re LAUK seminar, curatorial advi
In Kind support Bluecoat:			
Marketing, tech, rehearsal, admin	7250	7726	
In kind support Biennial:			
Int artist/advisers' research trips	8750	8750	
Marketing	5000	5000	proportion of print, ads
Box office	2000	1825	
TOTAL INCOME	**47500**	**42751**	
EXPENDITURE			
Artist advisers' research	8750	8750	
Artists' Research	2000	1400	
Project Management fees	6000	6000	
Artists commissions	42500	43000	
Artists rehearsal/dev phase	1750	485	
Artists expenses	9800	9050	
Materials/tech	3500	5140	
Extra staff (assistants, FOH)	2000	4186	
Marketing and PR	9000	7650	
Documentation	1500	890	photos and video
Access programme:			
Seminar	3000	3000	LAUK event
Connect events	2000	2000	participation project Rice Lane City Farm
Other accompanying events	3200	1200	artists talks at colleges
Contingency	2500	0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**97500**	**92751**	
	-		
SHORTFALL: ACE grant	**50000**	**-50000**	

Appendix G
Liverpool Live (2004) Final Evaluation Report for Art

Liverpool Live
Bluecoat Arts Centre
17 September-28 November 2004

REPORT FOR ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

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Introduction, background and context
As a main partner in the third Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary art, Bluecoat presented Liverpool Live, an ambitious and enticing programme of live art and performance which took place over ten weeks at Bluecoat and other sites across the city of Liverpool. The programme featured over 30 events, including durational performances, residencies, installations, actions and talks, bringing together international and UK artists, including several from the North West of England.

Liverpool Live highlighted live art as an essential and exciting arena for artists and audiences. With its flexibility of form, irreverence for convention and ability to move fluidly across genres, spaces and ideas, live art is ideally equipped to respond to the complexity of our modern experiences. In its challenge to artistic process and practice, live art defies expectations of who is making art, how they are making it and who they are making it for.

Liverpool Live provided an unique opportunity to experience live art in a range of places and contexts against the backdrop of the UK's biggest and most significant international contemporary art event.

The Liverpool Biennial took place between 18 September and 28 November 2004. Following the success of Bluecoat's live art programme You Are Here at the 2002 Biennial, and in response to an expressed desire from the Biennial Board to increase the level of live work in the programme Bluecoat presented a greatly increased programme of work, Liverpool Live, for Liverpool Biennial 2004.

Bluecoat were keen to present a programme of work which had strategic relevance for the development of Live Art in the UK, and which built on Arts Council England's national strategy for the profiling of Live Art.

The Biennial provided a very strong and clear context for the presentation of an extensive programme of Live Art as it is strategically placed as the UK's largest visual arts event, engaging with contemporary practice in an international arena. Biennial Chief Executive Lewis Biggs positions live art:

"close to the soul of Liverpool. Performance is central to the city's culture, and Liverpool Biennial is dedicated to exploring the city as an exhibition context for overseas as well as UK based artists. I believe that Bluecoat's live art programme is a hugely important component of the festival's overall offer, and we look forward to promoting it within the marketing umbrella."

Live art is strategically important to Bluecoat's own plans. The 2004 Biennial programme will be the final event before the building closes for a major capital development (for which ACE Lottery has already awarded £2.75million) – a celebratory event that will also put down a marker for and focus of the new Bluecoat when it reopens in 2007.

Process

No overarching theme was envisaged for the programme, rather a process within a conceptual framework that echoed and further extended that of the International 2004: art that is not "curator-driven" but exists as a result of dialogue between the artists (UK/international), the place (Liverpool) and its context, and the audience.

Four researchers for the International 2004 exhibition were appointed: Yu Yuon Kim (Korea/New York), Cuauhtémoc Medina (Mexico), Sabine Breitwieser (Austria) and Apinan Poshyananda (Thailand). Each visited Liverpool and submitted 12 names of artists to be considered for next year's show. Following visits to Liverpool by the 48 artists, each submitted ideas for work they wished to present at the Biennial.

Following the curatorial model established for the International exhibition, Bluecoat began a dialogue with five of these artists – Gustavo Artigas (Mexico), Paolo Canevari (Italy), Amanda Coogan (Ireland), Aleks Danko (Australia), Martha Rosler (USA) and it was proposed that these artists propose names of artists to be put forward for Liverpool Live.

In considering artists for the Bluecoat programme, the international "artist researchers":

• suggested artists whose work they felt was pertinent to the UK, and appropriate to the context of local/global dialogue

• considered artists pertinent to their own practice, eg formally, conceptually, or in terms of influence

• thought about the potential to collaborate with their nominated artists as an extension of their own proposed work in the International. This might have taken the form of workshopping, providing critical feedback, an open forum, or even creating work together.

In tandem with this selection process we began a dialogue with other live art promoters and organisations, mapping out how they could use their own networks of international artists to contribute to the creation of a broader live art presence in the Biennial:

It was intended that this process would produce a series of projects that would form the main core of the Biennial live art programme. Artists were to be invited to produce work in relation to the context of Liverpool and the Biennial and potentially to the inviting artist's proposal.

Due to the timescale of the project and other factors, such as the availability of the International Show artists, the original proposal was not realised to its full potential. The dialogue between Bluecoat, the International show artists and their nominated artists needed to have been more rigorous and external factors made this untenable given the timescale. The process did however provide an extremely useful and fruitful curatorial starting point and very much informed the direction of the programme.

The principal venue was Bluecoat (interior and exterior spaces) but performances are also likely to took place across the city: sites included Tate Liverpool, St Johns Market, Dingle Reservoir, Liverpool Community College and a number of outdoor city centre sites.

The programme ran over the full ten weeks of the Biennial, unlike You Are Here's concentration within a single week. The decision to run the programme over this period of time was partly in response to discussions with Liverpool Biennial who expressed an interest in supporting a programme of live work which was to run throughout the entire duration of the International show.

Bluecoat also felt that an intensive programme of Live Art over a long period of time (ten weeks), provided an interesting platform for presenting a very wide range of work, and would allow for the development of new work through the residency projects. The ambition of the programme also allowed Bluecoat to move away from the more standard 'Festival' approach to presenting Live Art, building upon the organisation's commitment to the long term development of the sector and its potential.

Marketing

Marketing was developed in conjunction with the Biennial's and Bluecoat's marketing teams. Separate print and a marketing strategy were devised for the live art programme, as well as it being included in the main Biennial print, listings, advertising and website.

The Biennial produced for example 7,000 newsletters, 120,000 flyers and 200,000 programme guides with map, in addition to promotional folders, interpretation packs, invitation cards and other print.

Liverpool Biennial advertising was placed in publications ranging from the art press to Easy Jet in-flight magazine, the event was included in countless listings and there were 92 banners, 30 venue signs and over 18,000 fly posters. Illuminated posters were sited at railway stations including London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham and at Dublin Airport.

The cumulative effect of this marketing was considerable, attracting large audiences to the Biennial programme throughout the period. Targeted marketing as well as incidental visitors attracted to outdoor events meant that the live art programme drew good audiences, with for instance over 1000 people attending the opening night performance by Amanda Coogan.

The duration of the programme made it more difficult to sustain an intensive targeted marketing campaign throughout the entire programme.

Residencies
7 AND 7 IS

The original plan for the programme of residencies was for seven artists to be commissioned by Bluecoat to develop and present work for Liverpool Live through a process of engaging with the city over a period of one week each. While the timescale of each project varied, with some artists remaining in the city for up to 3 weeks, the general principles behind the desire to engage with artists and their practice were explored to varying degrees of success.

Growing out of a period of research and dialogue between the artists and the city, the work took place in a variety of contexts, including Bluecoat's performance space and other areas of the building, a renovated indoor reservoir, a 'portakabin' and Liverpool's central shopping area.

Sandra Johnston 25 September – 2 October

Sandra Johnston develops her work in reaction to intensive periods of observation in public spaces, most often experienced through 24 hour cycles, for instance in petrol stations, accident and emergency units, docks and harbours. 'Surveillance' actions are carried out deliberately unobtrusively, as the artist gathers analytical details about these ordinary places and the habitual behaviour of the people who occupy them. Movements, images and words are rapidly processed using sparse resources. Reflecting on the incidents observed, Johnston then creates live actions and installations that seek to fuse together both the factual qualities of the place observed, and the elusive, often inexplicable, residue of the human engagements that have emerged over the period.

For Liverpool, Sandra Johnston made several research visits and explored a number of different options regarding her engagement with the city. Finally deciding on the Albert Dock area and the River Mersey as a significant place in the city, Sandra spent 24 hours in a car parked overlooking the River. During this 24 hour period the artist processed the surroundings and the activity which took place. Sandra returned to the Bluecoat where she spent a subsequent 23 hours in a 'portakabin'. The artist used this time to distill the material which she had gathered during her time in the car. The 24th hour of this period was open to the public and the artist 'performed' to a small audience in the portakabin, from her place on a head height shelf where she lay.

This residency was successful in a number of ways. Sandra Johnston is a very experienced artist whose practice was facilitated well within the context of Liverpool Live and the Bluecoat's curatorial approach to working with artists, and its commitment to developing process as well as presenting work.

Denis Buckley- The right to think
2 – 9 October

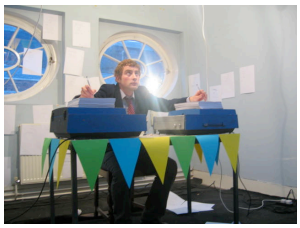
For Liverpool Live, Denis Buckley retreated to a one room house built especially for the action which took place at Bluecoat. The artist entered into a solitary retreat, inviting a live and on-line audience to communicate with him on subjects relating to personal and collective wellbeing. By day he could be spoken to live through an intercom, during the evening he was visible on-line and communicated through the internet. At night, he decorated his house by transcribing the discussions on the walls. Once a day he left the house and Bluecoat to walk through the city, dragging a steel suitcase by a chain, tied to his waist, before returning to his room.

Denis made several visits to Liverpool before the start of the project in order to research various aspects of the city and to negotiate how the project may come to fruition. Initially it was hoped that the project could be sited at the Albert Dock in order to engage with a wide audience of people. Due to a number of logistical reasons this option was not available to us and the project was finally sited at Bluecoat. The nature of Bluecoat as an arts centre, and the very wide range of people whom it attracted through its doors on a daily basis, meant that, in fact, it was more advantageous for Denis to be sited here.

During the week that Denis was housed at Bluecoat he engaged with over 500 people in person and with more over the internet. From the artist's point of view this project was hugely successful. Denis Buckley has maintained contact with a number of the people with whom he spoke during his time at Bluecoat and has continued a dialogue with these people. From Bluecoat's point of view this project drew a huge number of people to the arts centre, most of whom had a meaningful engagement with the centre and its programme of activity.

Declan Rooney 9 – 16 October





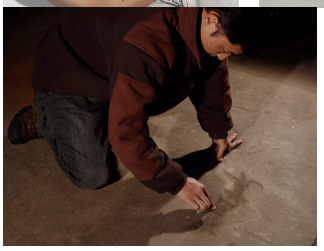


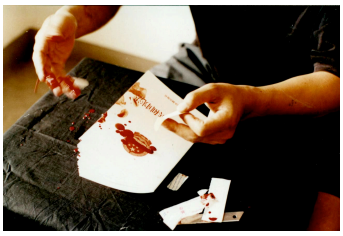

In the performative aspect of his practice, Rooney seeks to re-inhabit the body through experience, memory, cultural history and tradition. He is interested in the activities of the communal and the collective, both public and private and in creating a proactive dialogue with an audience, in actions that are both ritualised and spontaneous.

Declan's approach to Liverpool Live was in his response to the city in immediate terms, reaping and collecting evidence of sub-cultural activities and specialised groupings. The artist translated this information into a series of connected performances which could be viewed individually or as a collective whole. Some of the work was 'hit & run' type intervention, whilst other work was presented at specific times and in specific locations.

Wang Chuyu - Speak English 1-7 November





Wang Chu Yu is a performance artist and curator based in Beijing. He is a co-curator the DaDao Live Art (a.k.a. Shocker) Festival in Bejing in collaboration with Shu Yang.

Wang Chuyu's performance based actions are intense, provocative and often highly politicised. My Dreams, his performance for the now infamous Fuck Off exhibition in Shanghai in 2000, consisted of him sleeping and fasting for four days. In Reading he cut his finger then slowly

turned the pages of the Chinese constitution, leaving bloodied imprints of himself on every page. In Chemical Experiment he soaked the Chinese flag in acid, turning it from red to black, and in The Warm Celebration he clapped relentlessly whist wrapped in red silk in a critique of the cultural revolution's celebration of individual achievements.

Wang Chuyu's performances for Liverpool were the first time his work has been seen in the UK. Wang Chuyu's residency involved the artist spending a week in Liverpool and culminated in the artist presenting a performance at Pieces of China, a day of discussions and performances by artists from China.

Sachiko Abe 15-22 November

Born in Japan in 1975, Sachiko Abe has been living and working in New York for the past year. Her performances are compelling and eerily beautiful, as the viewer watches her preoccupied in precise and simple activities.
For Liverpool Sachiko Abe spent five days in Bluecoat's performance space during which time she cut individual sheets of white A4 paper into thin strands, some of them almost six metres long. The pervading calm of the installation, in which the audience was both intruder and collaborator, invoked pain, isolation and hypnotic control.

The audience response to this work, as recorded in a comments book, was surprisingly intense and confessional, and questions around the responsibility of the artist and curator in presenting work based on such intense personal experience were raised.

Sebastian Solari 1- 22 November



Sebastian Solari's art is intensely social, interrogating issues around disability and disabling environments. Often using his own body as a site, he challenges assumptions about public space, intervening with both its physical barriers and the attitudes that create them.

For Liverpool, Solari drew on a project started a year ago in the underground spaces below the streets of the Peruvian capital Lima, a series of interventions relating to manholes, sewers and other underground aspects of the urban environment. Solari sees such subterranean sites as alternative forms of public space, a context appropriate for Liverpool, which has a rich fabric of underground tunnels and spaces.

The artist spent three weeks in the city, exploring various sites and creating interventions into the fabric of the city. Sebastian also worked on a performance which took place at Dingle Reservoir, collaborating with a sound artist to create a
Live performance with live sound scape.

Bill Shannon

For Liverpool Live Bill Shannon originally proposed BENCH, a performance and video project with two distinct phases. The first phase is the “performance and image-capturing” phase -- a travelling street performance that is concurrently filmed by the performer himself with a happened-upon-by-chance / random audience. The images captured in this phase would be subsequently transformed into a video and sound installation to be viewed by a public audience in a gallery/museum setting -- the second phase.

This project ultimately turned out to be too ambitious from a technical point of view and Bill Shannon presented a series of his street performances. Bluecoat will continue a dialogue with the artist in the hope of commissioning BENCH for Liverpool Live 2006.

In the Pool
Bluecoat collaborated with independent dance artist Mary Prestidge on a programme of live work that looked at the relationship between dance and Live Art. The programme proved very successful in attracting a new audience to the more experimental end of the dance spectrum. Mary brought her wealth of experience, knowledge and expertise to the programme and again this added to the breadth of work that Bluecoat was able to present as part of the wider programme.

Magnetic North
Bluecoat worked in collaboration with independent curator Bob Connolly (Olympian Arts Trust), who has extensive knowledge of the Scandinavian live art scene. He proposed a selection of new work by artists working in this region: “The Nordic countries’ shared, widespread and early acceptance of conceptualism, and continued common tendency to what can only be called oddness, has produced a flourishing performance culture that pre-dates the current revival (of live work in the UK). This is largely unrecognised, and most of the newest artists are still unknown outside Scandinavia.” Artists Love Enqvist, Irma Optimist, Sons of God, John Court and Baktruppen all performed over one weekend during the programme.

Recommendations

Liverpool Live was hugely successful in its ambition to profile an enormous range of Live Art practices, over a period of time that afforded some artists the opportunity to develop new pieces of work during their time in the city.
As previously mentioned, the programme was difficult to sustain from the point of view of marketing and audience development and future plans should take this in to consideration. A shorter, more focussed programme with less residencies would maximise the use of resources more effectively.

Partnerships with individuals and other organisations proved incredibly productive, particularly hose developed with Live Art UK and Live Art Development Agency in the delivery of the Live Art UK vision meeting, and the LAX programme which took place at Tate Liverpool.

Although the proposed seminar and conference programme was not as extensive as initially hoped a number of artists talks took place throughout the programme.

The Live Art UK meeting served as a lively and interesting forum for the discussion of future strategies in the development of the sector. Bluecoat would be well positioned to host another Live Art UK meeting during Liverpool Biennial.

Cathy Butterworth 2005

Appendix H
Notes from meeting with Mark Waugh, Combined Arts Officer, Arts Council England March 2005

Live Art in Liverpool Notes from meeting at ACE, London 24 March 2005

Mark Waugh, ACE Combined Arts Officer
Bryan Biggs, Bluecoat Director
Cathy Butterworth, Bluecoat Live Art Programmer

1 Review of 2005
Bluecoat elaborated on its report on the 2004 Biennial Liverpool Live programme and what it had learnt from it. Key issues identified:

• 10-week duration kept live art profile high throughout Biennial but put strain on Bluecoat to deliver such a full programme.

• Particular strands recognised as giving distinctive flavour: eg international foci/residencies/networking events for live art UK sector

• Live art/new dance strand within the programme important as this is an area not generally interrogated

• Residencies especially successful: the risk of not knowing what will emerge, and using unexpected locations, gave the programme an edge

• These have also led to relationships with artists that will develop over next two years, eg Bill Shannon, possibly Denis Buckley

• Marketing was difficult to sustain over a long period with, often, public events not being able to be announced till last minute due to the nature of the residencies. Also missed opportunity to promote 'newsworthy' events through central Biennial marketing

• Good relationships developed with education groups eg JMU/Art School, Community College and Hope University, and potential to grow. Plus encouraging live art project with local community group (Rice Lane City Farm) that can be built on

2 Next programme
Bluecoat outlined its thoughts on next two years' development:

• working towards 2006 programme that would ideally be a) part of Capital of Culture 'paving' event, 'Cities in Transition: People, Places, Performance' and b) the live art strand of the 2006 Biennial

• work would all take place off site as our building closed, so important to develop partnerships with venues/sites soon

• have spoken to FACT as possible space for more moving oriented work, an MW suggested the new Independent Quarter as developing its profile through live art

• When Bluecoat reopens early 2007 it will be well placed to develop and present work in various contexts, including offering residency space to visiting international artists

• 2008 aim is to have higher profile for this work through the 2008 Biennial and year round live art activity. Currently researching particular geographical/cultural foci, eg Middle East, China

3 Next Steps
• MW keen to support the strategic development of live art in Liverpool. No commitment at this stage from ACE but **Bluecoat should put together a Live Art Strategy and submit to ACE** to indicate development over next 4 years

• Research should begin now:

Talk to Steve Brett at British Council and to Visiting Arts re research we need to do for 2006/8. Seek funding for research, which could include us visiting key events abroad and (see next):

Develop international live art curators' forum in Liverpool, inviting say four curators from less well researched areas like Middle East, Central/Latin America, China to create a dialogue that would lead to international presentation in the 2006 live art programme

Research foreign government/agencies support

Contact Sarah Raza, recipient of Decibel curatorial award at South London Art Gallery re performance work in the Middle East

Fig. 1.1 The Bluecoat, Liverpool

Fig.1.2 Visual Stress: *Zong*, the Bluecoat, Liverpool (1988)

Fig. 1.3 Visual Stress: *Urban Vimbuza, Death By Free Enterprise* (1988)

Fig.1.4 Peter McRae: *Avenue of Heroes* (1988)

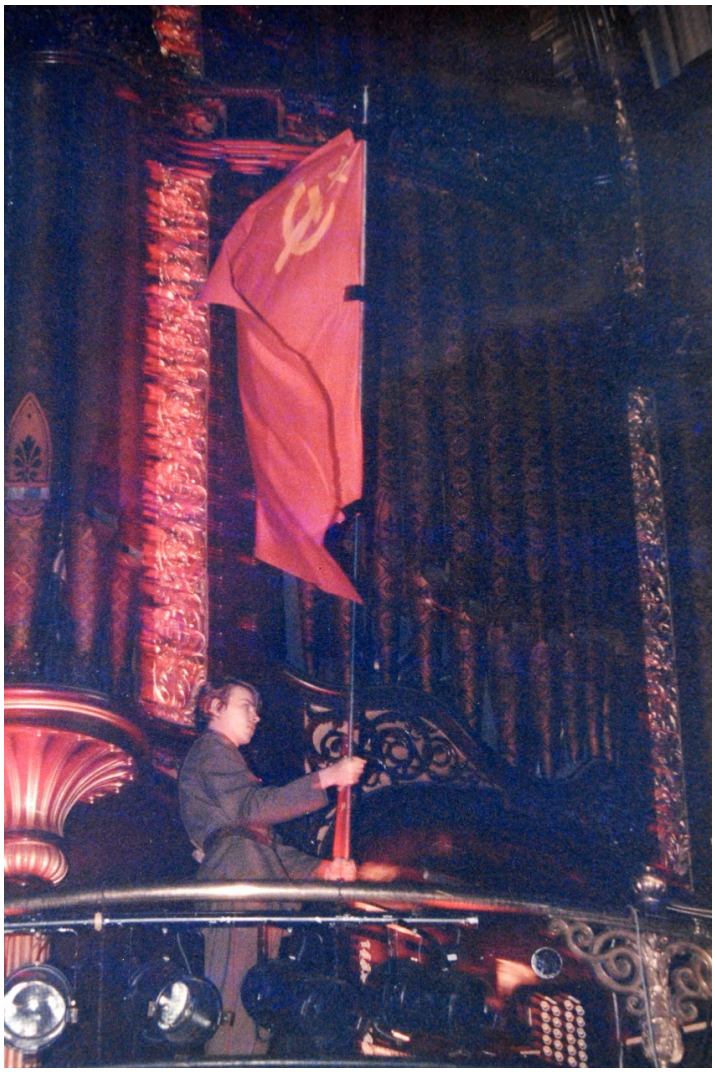


Fig. 1.5 Pop Mechanica (1989)

Fig. 1.6 Geraldine Pilgrim: *Traces* (2008)

Fig.1.7 Geraldine Pilgrim: *Traces* (2008)

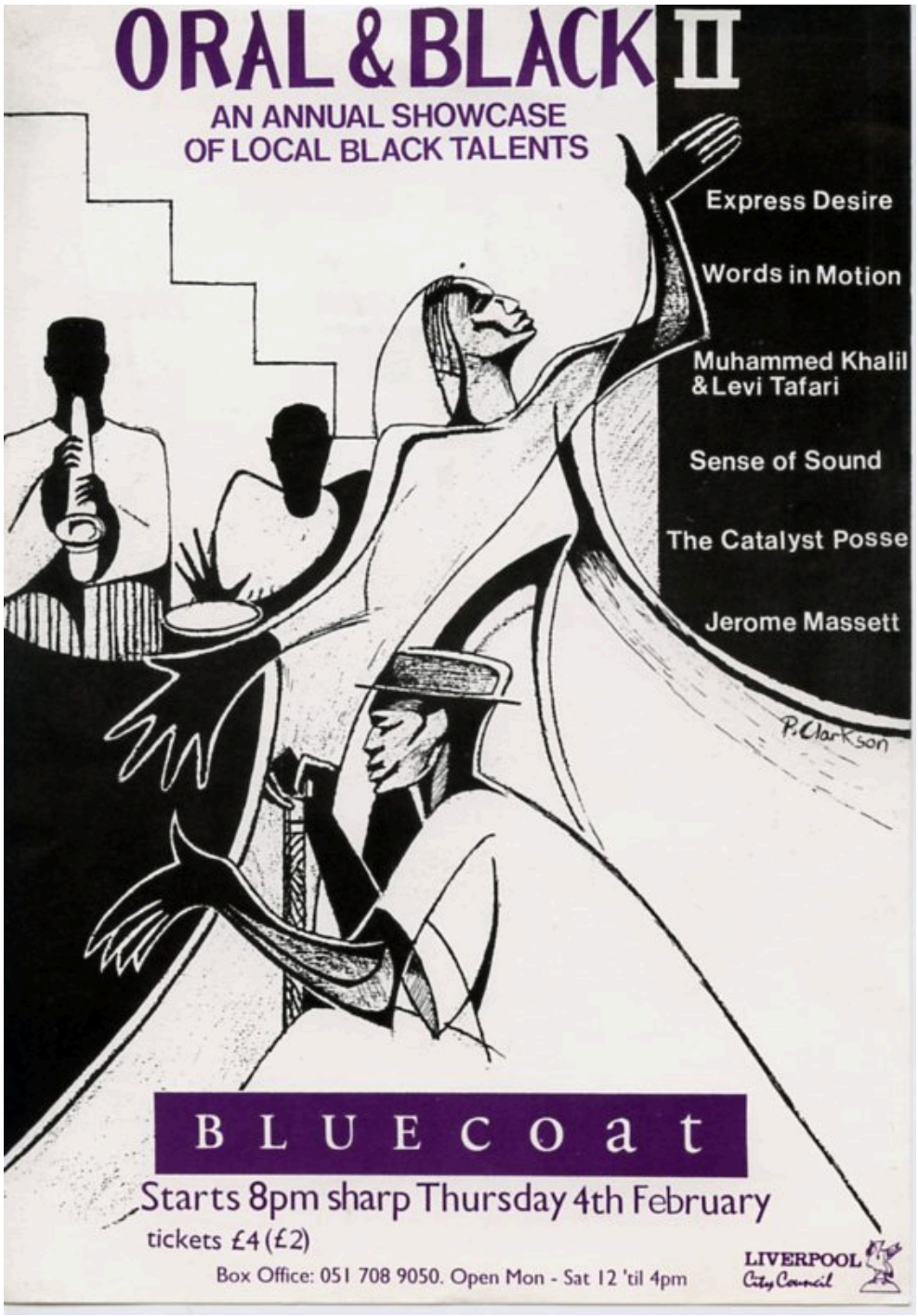


Fig. 1.8 Oral & Black Showcase Poster

Fig.1.9 Nina Edge: *Sold Down The River* (1992)

Fig.1.10 Nina Edge: *Sold Down The River* (1992)

Fig.1.11 Nina Edge: *Sold Down The River* (1992)

Fig.1.12 Max Factory: as part of *Trans:Action* (2000)

Fig.1.13 Guillermo Gomez Pena: *Ex Centris*: *A Living Diorama of Fetishised Others* (September 2002).

Fig.1.14 Oreet Ashery: *Say Cheese* , with Eithne Browne (participant in the work) at the Holiday Inn Hotel, part of *You Are Here*, Liverpool (September 2002) Image Courtesy Oreet Ashery and John Hansard Gallery

Fig. 1.15 George Chakravarthi :*Great Expectations* (2002)

Fig.1.16 Suki Chan and Dinu Li: *Shadow Songs: Princess Jin & The Lady of Atropos* (2002)

Fig.1.17 Stacy Maksishi: *You Are Here...But Where Am I?*
part of *You Are Here*, The Bluecoat, Liverpool (2002)

Fig.1.18 Silke Mansholt: *Homage To The Heart,* part of *You Are Here*,
The Bluecoat, Liverpool (2002)

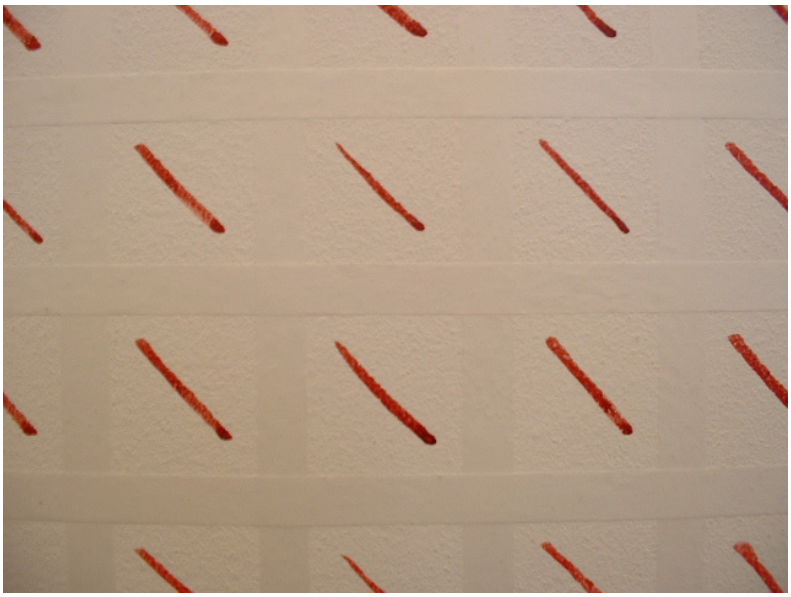


Fig. 1.19 Kira O'Reilly: *Blood Wall Drawing* (2002)

Fig. 1.20 Qasim Riza Shaheen: *Conversing With Angels* (2002)

Fig.1.21 JJ Xi & Cai Yuan Mad For Real: *Soya Sauce and Ketchup Fight* (2002)

Fig. 1.22 Lena Simic: *Medea/Mothers Clothes* (2004)

Fig. 1.23 Lena Simic: *Medea/Mothers Clothes* (2004)

Fig. 1.24 Sachiko Abe: *Cut Papers 2010* (2010)

Fig. 1.25 Denis Buckley: *Right to Think* (2004)

Fig. 1.26 Denis Buckley: *Right to Think* (2004)

Fig. 1.27 Denis Buckley: *Right to Think* (2004)

Fig. 1.28 Sandra Johnston: *Afterwards* (2004)

Fig. 1.29 Ligna: *Radio Ballet* (2006)

Fig. 1.30 Ligna: *Radio Ballet* (2006)

Fig.1.31 Yoko Ono on Liverpool Big Screen (2008)

Fig.1.32 Hannah Hurtzig's Mobile Academy: *Blackmarket for Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge* (2008) commissioned by The Bluecoat

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