

How can performance act historiographically?

Enacting the New York avant-gardes of the 1960s and early 1970s

Submitted by Andrew Thomas Field, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research in Drama in April 2012.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with extending the role that live performance might play in our understanding of the work of the interrelated avant-garde performance communities that emerged in New York in the 1960s and early 1970s. This is a practice-led project that uses my own performance work as the site of its enquiry.

In the last decade performance itself has begun to play a significant role in our understanding of and relationship to past performances, in the main through the increasing pervasion of re-enactment as an acknowledged historiographical trope. However, as a consequence of its association with re-enactment, the nature of the historiographical role afforded to performance is still primarily determined by its proximity to the archive and institutionalised modes of performance history. Challenging the primacy of the re-enactment as a means of embodied engagement with past performance, this research project explores how manipulation of my own performance practice might generate new forms of historical knowledge. In particular my focus is on using this practice to develop a new understanding of how the work of this earlier period altered y the experience of the urban landscape for those participating in the work, audience and performers alike.

Structured around a rigorous analysis of three specific works from across this earlier period, I conceived a series of spatial 'blueprints' that were applied to my practice to create three new performance pieces. Using my own research and practice to renegotiate the relationship between live performance and the archive, I demonstrate the possibility for a new historiographical approach to past performance. This approach emphasises the role of the participants in the performance as generators of an alternative form of historical understanding embedded in ways of operating in the city.

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LIST OF ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

DVD – Performing Historiography: three works by Andy Field

INTRODUCTION

The presence and circulation of a representation tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyze its manipulation by users who are not its makers.

(de Certeau 1984: xiii)

This research project is concerned with the relationship between certain trends in contemporary performance practice and the work of the interrelated artists that constituted the avant-garde performance scene(s) of New York in the 1960s and early 1970s. Its aim is to use performance itself as a means by which to explore our engagement with this particular historical moment. In so doing I want to challenge the role that performance, through re-enactment, presently plays in art-historical discourse and use it instead to develop unpredictable new connections between contemporary practice and the work of this earlier period. Consequently this project is an enquiry into performance's potential to *act historiographically*, as a space in which to experiment with how we write the history of performance, generating new ways of knowing about past works.

As such the project uses my own performance practice as both a form and a site of historical inquiry, encouraging an attendant coalescence of the roles of artist and researcher in its realisation. Whilst the project makes use of a rigorous critical framework to provide context and focus for this practice, it is the practice itself that forms the basis for my investigation and in that practice that my conclusions will be articulated. This written component of the project is intended to support and document the practical research undertaken. It will explain the theoretical basis of the project, justify its methodological approach, outline the means by which the practical work was devised, provide a comprehensive description of that work and map the conclusions that emerged from it. This written component will be formed of three major parts.

i. Context and Methodology

In the first section I will begin by arguing for the need of a new means of engaging with the work created in New York in the 1960s and 1970s located in the 'doing' of contemporary performance.

Central to this is an identification of my interest in the unconventional relationships that many of these works construct with the city. I want to consider these works as constituted by a range of discursive practices embedded within the restless network of places and relations that make up the urban environment. With reference to the writing of Michel de Certeau, I will emphasise 'the point of view of enunciation' (de Certeau 1984: xiii) in any reading of this work; that is, the importance that should be placed on *how* the participants in the work experience the piece, or more particularly, how their relationship to the city is reconfigured through their contingent encounter with the work.

This emphasis is a consequence of the similarities that such works share with my own contemporary performance practice, which is likewise concerned with reconfiguring the experience of the urban environment. My interest is in better understanding this relationship. I want to find a way of considering how this earlier plurality of embodied re-writings of New York might have some influence on my own work in London; to explore how such evasive practices might nonetheless find ways of persisting in work being created today.

Having identified the focus of my interest in the work of this earlier period I will outline how conventional means of engaging with that work are inadequate in the context of this emphasis on spatial practices. Fundamental to this is the question of how past performances such as those of 1960s and 1970s are represented for a contemporary audience. I will look at the discourse around the ephemerality of performance and the emergence of re-enactment as a prevalent means of overcoming performance's

supposed 'disappearance'. I will analyse a range of contemporary re-enactments and demonstrate how they re-iterate modes of re-presenting past performance that, in their efforts to make that performance *visible* for contemporary witnesses, bear little relation to the embodied experience for the work's original audience. As such a re-enactment only rehearses the effacement of those elements of the earlier event that I am most interested in engaging with.

In response to this analysis of the limitations of re-enactment, I will propose a new means of engaging with this past work that posits a different role for performance in the 'writing' of an art historical discourse. Building on Rebecca Schneider's notion of 'flesh memory', (Schneider 2011: 6) I will construct a theoretical basis for the possibility that, in the direct and contingent relationships it forges with the city, my performance practice might serve as a *site* for the re-emergence of those contingent spatial practices that defined the work of 1960s and 1970s. Resisting the notion of history as strictly linear and knowledge as a function of visible representation, I will describe how such an approach aligns itself with some of the key tropes of postmodern history through recourse to the writings of the theorists Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes and the historian Hans Kellner. Fundamental to this is the consideration of the role of history not as the uncovering of the past, but as the generation of new, contingent meanings within the present.

In this way I intend to explore the potential for my practice to embody a different approach to understanding and describing the performances of this earlier period, explicitly upsetting our conventional terms of engagement with this work. This deliberate re-conception of performance's place within art historical discourse serves as a means of enquiry into its ability to *act historiographically*; that is, ways in which performance might contribute not only to the direct study of history but the changing nature of the discipline itself.

In the final section of this first part, I will outline a methodology that identifies in practical terms exactly *how* my practice will be used in this historiographical process. This methodology will involve three 'case studies' that each explore a single piece of

work from this earlier period. Crucially, I will emphasise that these 'case studies' do not constitute replications of these earlier works but instead represent a means of interrogating our present understanding of and relationship to this earlier work.

ii. Three Case Studies

In the second section I will then focus on the case studies themselves. I will begin by outlining how I chose the three works from this period that are the basis for my case studies; Claes Oldenburg's *The Store* from 1961, Meredith Monk's *Juice* from 1969 and Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece* from 1971. In so doing I will emphasise how these pieces all embody a similarly direct engagement with the city of New York whilst also encompassing a broad spectrum of artistic practices from this period.

From here I will describe in more practical terms the process of constructing my case studies from these original works over the course of the three years of this research project. This begins with an outline of the methodology that I used to engage with the archival remains of these earlier works, followed by a description of how this research was used to generate the new performances presented in September 2011. Central to this is a brief description of a series of preliminary sketches created in the development of each of these final works.

The most significant part of this section will be a detailed description of the construction of each of the three case studies, in the order in which they were undertaken. In each case this will incorporate firstly an analysis of the work to derive from it a spatial pattern that articulates its relationship to the urban environment. This will then be followed by a description of how this pattern was used to derive an entirely new artwork.

This section will then conclude with a short consideration of the way in which these case studies relate to my wider performance practice. It will consider how my work

has been transformed by this study and what the implications of those changes might be for that work's ability to generate new relationships with past performances.

iii. Conclusion

This written component of the research project will then conclude with a short consideration of the relationship between this project and more conventional modes of producing performance history. It examines the kind of challenge this project presents to received notions of what constitutes historical knowledge, and consequently how it begins to act *historiographically*.

iv. DVD: Performing Historiography

This written component accompanies a DVD that documents the practical work undertaken as part of this study. This DVD includes video footage of all of the performances alongside original scripts, audio recordings, images and reviews, as well as a brief synopsis of each of the three works.

i. **CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY**

a. **The relationship with the city in the New York performance scene of the 1960s and 1970s**

The experience on the road was something mapped out but not socially recognised. I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most paintings look pretty pictorial after that. There is no way of framing it, you just have to experience it.
(Smith, cited in Wagstaff 1966: 16)

Tony Smith's seminal early 50s joy ride along the unfinished New Jersey turnpike and into a moment of self-revelation about what should or even could constitute a work of art was first published in *Artforum* in December 1966, in the midst of a new period of artistic experimentation in and around New York city. During the period of around a decade and a half from the late 1950s through to the very early 1970s the rapidly-changing city incubated a wave of convention-challenging artists working across visual art, music, dance and performance, generating a new set of discourses around the place and purpose of art that are neatly crystallized in Smith's description of a non-representational and unbounded encounter with 'a reality... that had not had any expression in art.' (cited in Wagstaff 1966: 16)

This period could perhaps be said to begin in 1958 with Allan Kaprow's hugely influential essay 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock', first published in *Art News* in October of that year¹. This essay serves as a significant marker of the point at which a generation of post-abstract expressionist visual artists more or less directly influenced by the work of John Cage and Marcel Duchamp began to make explicit the use of performance in their creative practise. These 'happenings' artists as they became known included Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Al Hansen, Red Grooms and Robert Whitman alongside Kaprow himself. They formed an integral part of a burgeoning

¹ 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock' by Allan Kaprow in *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958) 24-26, 55-57. Reprinted in Kaprow, Allan (1993) *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. J. Kelley, Berkeley, University of California Press. All page numbers refer to the latter.

network of interrelated artistic communities in the city exploring similar post-Cagean ideas around the notion of art as a *process* rather than an object and performance as consequently a valuable means of articulating this formal shift. This network of artists also included minimalists such as Robert Morris, Robert Smithson and Tony Smith, Fluxus artists including George Brecht, Yoko Ono and George Maciunas, and the community of dancers concentrated around the Judson Church in Washington Square, such as Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton and Lucinda Childs.

Towards the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, these communities and their ideas found some synthesis in the work of Meredith Monk. As she has stated in interview with Edward Strickland², Monk arrived in New York at the end of the happenings period and collaborated extensively with happenings artists including Dick Higgins, yet she was also intimately involved with the final days of the Judson Church dancers. Synthesising both these influences her explicitly theatrical work suggested a reaction against this wave of 1960s artists, and as such might be said to loosely mark the transition to a very different set of performative strategies in the body-based practices of 70s artists such as Vito Acconci, Dennis Oppenheim and Marina Abramovic, and the more contained and theatrical spaces explored by artists including Robert Wilson and Richard Schechner.

As has been stated, Tony Smith's description of his late night voyage is a useful means of approaching some of the important values and ideas embedded in the work of this period. As he asserts, what was at stake in much of the discourse of this period was the conception of what might constitute a work of art and *where* it is that that work is constituted. Fundamental to this is the notion of an art that there is 'no way of framing'; (Smith, cited in Wagstaff 1966: 16) an art that you just have to experience.

It is this same movement beyond the frame to an unbounded, *experiential* conception of art that Kaprow makes in his eulogy for Jackson Pollock. Just as Smith stares out at the unframed artificial landscape and in so doing, renders everything else 'pretty

² Strickland, E. (1997) 'Voices/Visions – an interview with Meredith Monk' in D. Jowitt *Meredith Monk*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 133-155.

pictorial', (Smith, cited in Wagstaff 1966: 16) so Kaprow's experience of Pollock is of paintings that 'ignored the confines of the rectangular field', continuing out indefinitely into the 'world of the spectator' (Kaprow 1993: 5), and as such it holds up the artificiality of these contrived boundaries and suggests, for Kaprow, that the only meaningful way forward is to 'give up the making of paintings entirely'.

Pollock, as I see him, left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street.
(Kaprow 1993: 7)

As such, the circumscription of the discrete art object or the dance or theatre event as a *representation* of some scenario or affect is increasingly undermined by an emphasis on the currency of the 'unframed' experience. And as Kaprow suggests, in a significant amount of this work this notion of the unframed experience was given a literal and even geographical dimension as the work extended beyond familiar institutional contexts to forge new experiential relationships with the urban environment.

Many of the works considered 'happenings' in this period were what Michael Kirby termed in a 1965 article in *The Tulane Drama Review* 'non-matrixed' performances (Kirby 1965: 25) occurring in unusual locations in the city; that is, performances that resist the matrices of character and place that determine more conventional drama. These 'non-matrixed performances' do not demand a 'suspension of disbelief', (Kirby 1965: 25) but instead emphasise the performance's relationship to its immediate environment. This was particularly the case in the work of Claes Oldenburg, who, as Barbara Rose describes (Rose 1979: 25) was influenced enough by Kaprow's eulogy for Jackson Pollock to actively seek Kaprow out as a potential colleague and supporter. Across the first half of the 1960s Oldenburg created a number of non-matrixed performances in unusual locations across Manhattan, including *The Store*, (1961) a gallery-cum-installation and a performance space in an empty shop unit on the Lower East Side, *Washes* (1965) for a swimming pool at the Riverside Plaza Hotel on West 73rd Street and *Moveyhouse* (1965) in the cinema of the 41st Street Theatre. Alongside this George Brecht and Allan Kaprow produced an extensive array of happenings and 'event scores' throughout the decade that invited people to perform specific actions and activities in a range of contexts. Examples include Brecht's *Time-*

table Event (1961) for a railway station and *Direction*, to be performed whilst walking along a street, and Kaprow's larger-scale happening *Calling*, (1965) a convoluted series of movements around New York that begins with the simple command '**In the City**: People stand at street corners and wait.' (Kaprow 1966)

At around the same time in the mid 1960s the group known as the Judson Church Dancers began producing their own range of non-matrixed performances embedded within the fabric of the city. These included Lucinda Child's *Street Dance* (1964) and towards the end of this period Trisha Brown's celebrated site-specific works including *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) and *Roof Piece*, (1971) a game of Chinese-whispers with bodies played out across the rooftops of the city. At the same time as Brown's experiments in urban choreography, the late-period Judson Dancer Meredith Monk began creating large scale performance pieces that traversed both significant periods of time as well as the physical geography of the city. A single piece such as *Vessel* (1971) lasted a whole night, moving from Monk's own performance loft, through the Performance Garage on Wooster Street and an empty parking lot in the same area. Monk's earlier piece *Juice* (1969) had lasted even longer, occurring in three parts in three locations in Manhattan, spread across the space of four weeks.

In the process of taking their work beyond the frame of its conventional context in a gallery or a theatre, these artists were exploring ways in which the urban environment they inhabited could be intimately braided into the fabric of the work itself. In part at least, the city becomes not just the setting of the work, but also integral to its form. As Kaprow states:

The environment is not a setting for a play which is more important than the people; the accented or oblique activity within the environment is the event. *There is an absolute flow between event and environment.* [my emphasis] (Kaprow in Schechner 1995: 187)

This emergence into the real, what Kaprow termed the 'blurring of art and life', (Kaprow: 1993) ensures that in part at least the work must be understood as being constituted not by its material components but by the network of interactions it generates between the performers, the audience and the urban environment. Just as the concomitant turn towards minimalism in sculpture during this period 'takes

relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision', (Morris 1995: 232) so too here the emphasis shifts from the internal relationships of the circumscribed performance event to the external relationships that the piece conditions between those encountering it and the city it (and they) inhabit. It is, as Oldenburg states, 'all circumstance, created by circumstances, the result and fruit of circumstances.' (Oldenburg 2005: 84) Considered in these terms what the piece *does* to its audience is as important as the physical objects or events that constitute it.

It is this element of the work of this period that I am most interested in exploring. I want to better understand how these site-specific pieces functioned as a set of discursive spatial practices embedded within the everyday activity of the city of New York. To consider the relationship between the physical structures of these pieces and the kind of evasive and contingent re-encountering of the city that those structures conditioned.

b. Resemblance to my own performance practice

The reason for this emphasis is that it is in these contingent spatial relationships with the bustling urban environment that this earlier work has the most significant resemblance to my own performance practice and that of the other artists amongst whom I work.

My fascination with this kind of unbounded and non-representational encounter with the urban landscape can perhaps be traced back most formatively to my limited experience of Forced Entertainment's *Nights in This City*, a guided bus tour of Sheffield created in 1995, that, like Tony Smith's revelation on the New Jersey Turnpike some thirty years earlier, encouraged it's audience to gaze out of the window at the dark, industrial landscape with a different kind of attentiveness. As artistic-director Tim Etchells describes in a letter written whilst creating the piece, 'sometimes it seems all we need to do is gesture to the window and ask people to look.' (Etchells in Kaye 2000: 22)

Etchells' exhortation formed part of a document of the work he created entitled 'Nights in This City: diverse letters and fragments related to a performance now past'.

(Etchells in Kaye 2000: 13) Also included were a list of questions that the company devised for the citizens of Rotterdam, as part of the process of recreating the show for the city's R Festival in 1997; their means of approaching the unusual task of recreating this garbled articulation of their home town in a place they knew very little about.

These questions were deliberately peculiar and particular – an attempt to generate the kind of unauthorised, psychogeographic encounter with place upon which the first iteration of the piece relied:

If you had killed someone and had to dump the body where would you take it?

If you had to say good-bye to a lover where in this city would you most like to do it?

Where in this city might be the best place for a spaceship of aliens to land?

(Etchells in Kaye 2000: 16)

These archival fragments became the basis for an entirely new piece that I devised for the Edinburgh Festival in 2007 and then later recreated at both the Brighton and Dublin fringe Festivals in 2008. It was through this piece that I first began to explore the kinds of relationship to the urban environment that are so constitutive of the earlier New York work described above.

Entitled *Exposures*, the piece was an invitation for participants to re-map the city using nothing but a disposable camera and a list of twenty four questions, statements or instructions, one for each exposure on the camera. Like Forced Entertainment's questions to the people of Rotterdam, these provocations encouraged the audience to consider their relationship to the city in unlikely ways; writing over the familiar streets with a rhetoric frequently borrowed from cinema and music:

Exposure 7

Take a walk on the wild side

Exposure 9

What does the future look like?

Exposure 15

The siege lasted three months. Finally they broke through. Suddenly the streets were alive with the shudder of machine gun fire. Grubby and exhausted you dragged yourself here. One last stand. A place to fight in. And a place to die in.

Exposure 18

You can hear music.

The conclusion of this piece was an exhibition in which the pictures taken by people as part of the experience were collected and displayed together as a plurality of expressions of the city; a co-authored psychographic map of Edinburgh.

Exposures has become incredibly formative in the development of a recognisable set of spatial practices within my own work. These have also undoubtedly been influenced by further exposure to a range of more established artists making unconventional performance pieces in urban environments. These include the audio-based pieces of Janet Cardiff and Graeme Miller, the work of Gob Squad including *Super Night Shot* (2004) and *Saving the World*, (2008) and the digitally-mediated encounters of Blast Theory, with whom I was fortunate enough to do a two month residency at their home and studio in Portslade in 2009. Additionally, my role as artistic director of the award-winning Edinburgh Festival venue Forest Fringe has ensured that my own work is in intimate dialogue with that of a range of emerging artists involved in similar experiments in urban space. These include Ant Hampton, Duncan Speakman and Melanie Wilson, who all create site-responsive interactive works using headphones; artists such as Richard DeDomenici and Kim Noble creating unsettling comic and political interventions in public spaces, and the game-making collective Coney, with whom I have worked very closely with on a number of different projects.

Perhaps the most immediately recognisable trope to emerge in my practice following *Exposures* is the regular forsaking of conventional spaces for presenting performance

work. As with artists like Kaprow and Oldenburg, I have frequently made work that functions not simply outside traditional studios or auditoria, but more significantly work that dispenses with the kind of circumscribed frame or 'stage' space associated with 'matrixed' forms of artistic representation. Instead my work more frequently functions in negotiation with the network of places and relations that constitute the context I am working in, be that the streets of a town or a city, the lobby of a theatre or the crowded environment of a nightclub or party.

Within these everyday contexts the piece is generated in the interaction between participating audience members and the unbounded environment. As with *Exposures*, the work is not so much a discrete visible entity as an indeterminate network of spatial relations. *The Last Walk of Carlow Man* (Eigse Carlow Arts Festival, 2008) is a sound walk made up of a series of randomly ordered audio tracks, with the chance sequence inviting the audience to assume certain unpredictable relationships to the town of Carlow. *Checkpoint* (Shunt Vaults and The Southbank Centre, 2007-08) is a pervasive game primarily made up of the numerous actions and strategies employed by its participants to try and smuggle objects from one side of a large public space to the other. Finally *The Motorcycle Baptism* (BAC, 2008) is an intimate piece about rites-of-passages that is remade each time it is enacted in the relationship it engenders between its two audience members.

In these pieces then, there are spatial strategies at play that are certainly in dialogue with the work of the New York artists identified above. Primarily these works invite the audience to reconfigure their relationship to the surrounding environment through participation in non-matrixed performance events embedded in the fabric of the city; what, after Kaprow, we might term a blurring of art and life. These participatory events often rely on the re-purposing of familiar urban activities, such as taking photographs or simply walking through the city. Indeed, a piece such as *Checkpoint* is founded on the requirement for participants to behave as if they are non-participants; simply 'ordinary people' moving through a public space. As such this work has a structural relationship to event scores such as George Brecht's *Three Telephone Events*, (1961) *Direction* (1961) and *No Smoking Event* (1961), or Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*. (1961) In each case the (re)enacting of seemingly mundane activity forms the locus of

the piece; familiar spatial practices repurposed to create new experiences of the urban environment.

This discourse might be extended to include not simply my own practice but that of the other artists I have been working alongside. Works like Blast Theory's *Can You See Me Now* (2003) and *A Machine to See With* (2010) are similarly engaged with the re-negotiation of the audience's relationship the city, mediated as it currently is by new technologies such as mobile phones and GPS. Similarly Ant Hampton's 'autotheatro' pieces *The Bench* (created with Glenn Neath, 2010) and *The Quiet Volume* (created with Tim Etchells, 2011) and Melanie Wilson's *Every Minute Always* (created with Abigail Conway, 2011) all use audio-based instructions to encourage the audience to play out the activity of meeting a stranger on a bench, in a library or in a cinema; in doing so these works generate a now-familiar interaction between work, audience and the urban environment.

These pieces represent examples of the interrelated practices of a loose community of independent artists and collectives creating work since the turn of the century in or around Greater London. They outline a set of recurring themes and strategies emerging over the last decade in this country that my own work is in frequent dialogue with. Undoubtedly the spatial practices of some of the New York artists described above are of genuine relevance when trying to better understand this community of contemporary makers. I am interested in exploring this relationship, in considering what these interrelated approaches to urban space might tell us about both my own practice and the work and artists of this earlier period.

c. Adopting the 'point of view of enunciation'

Whilst not suggesting a linear historical continuum connecting my own work to that being created on the other side of the Atlantic half a century ago, what I hope is beginning to emerge is a field of discourse that is worth exploring, connecting my own work to this earlier period through our comparable interactions with the city.

In both my own work in London and the artistic communities working during this earlier period in New York there can be identified a significant interest in creating work that is thoroughly embedded within the urban environment. Both make use of the re-appropriation or re-application of activities familiar to our conventional experience of that city as a means of inviting an audience to re-configure their relationship to it; what John Cage after Duchamp termed 'found processes' (Cage in Kaye 1996: 17) that imbricate the artwork into the network of places and relations that make up our experience of the city. And perhaps most fundamentally, it is this immersion in the contingent everydayness of the city, this blurring of art and life, that becomes the most significant feature of the work. It renders it uncircumscribable; a contingent network of interactions with the endlessly shifting metropolis. Returning again to Tony Smith 'there is no way of framing it, you just have to experience it.' (Smith, cited in Wagstaff 1966: 16)

However, it is also this shared emphasis on the experiential quality of the work that limits the depth or detail in which we can study this interrelation.

The explicit connection identified above between my work and *Nights in This City* is traceable because it is founded on an engagement with the material remains of Forced Entertainment's initial process, rather than that process itself. It is a response not to a way of looking but to the structure that invited that looking. What is less easily observable is the relationship between the experiences of those two very different cities that were produced as a consequence of asking those questions. On its own the identification of a *material similarity* in these works does not tell you very much about the embodied experience of space that the pieces might engender.

Similarly, the relationship between the work of New York in the 60s and 70s and that produced in the London I inhabit in the first decades of the 21st century has thus far been identified entirely through the material knowledge that we already have of that work. In the writings of figures such as Tony Smith, Allan Kaprow and Claes Oldenburg can be described conceptual approaches to space and the city that undoubtedly relate to the ideas and practices that are in circulation in and around

London today. Through the fragments of documentation that remain from the *doing* of this earlier work, scores, texts, photographs, videos, interviews, diagrams, contemporaneous newspaper articles, emerges an understanding of their form, content, reception and the even the process by which they were made, all of which again can be used to identify potential relationships with my own work and that of other artists I am working with or alongside. However, what is crucially missing in all of this is the *doing*. Through recourse to the archive alone it might be possible to illuminate patterns of similarity between the work produced in these two contexts, but that comparison will only ever be partial if it does not explore *how* those similar tactics and approaches are articulated in the doing of the work. This is especially important as it has already been identified how foregrounded that 'doing' is in both this earlier work and my own.

What is missing in this comparison is an acknowledgement of what Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* terms 'the point of view of enunciation'. (de Certeau 1984: xiii) In the context of this performance work, de Certeau's emphasis on 'the act of speaking' (de Certeau 1984: xiii) is to foreground the role of the audience member in *producing* the work through their experience of it. The *site* of the work is the manifold encounters that it engenders, between the audience, the performers and the city. This formulation is absolutely integral to an understanding of the work being created in both these artistic contexts. The work is circumstantial, a set of processes rather than a coherent object or event, generated out of the ephemeral interrelation of people and their surroundings.

From this perspective, both the performance work and the city it inhabits are constituted by a mobile network of fugitive encounters. Contingent fragments of action and interaction that cannot be aggregated into a static and observable whole, they remain 'daily and indefinitely other'. (de Certeau 1984: 93) This notion of *otherness* will become integral to an understanding of the problematic nature of describing, analysing and comparing these works. They occupy no discrete place from which they are observable and easily recordable. Instead they are perhaps most readily understood as the *alteration of the perception of place over time*; an encouragement to look at and engage with the urban environment in a different way.

Considered from the point of the view of enunciation, these works are a myriad of articulations irresolvable into any 'proper' place, defiantly unrepresentable and consequently antithetical to the prevailing logic of what Rebecca Schneider terms the 'patrilineal, West-identified (arguably white-cultural) logic of the archive'. (Schneider 2011: 100) All of which suggests a definite challenge in approaching any further exploration of the relationship between my work and that of this earlier period through the representative fragments that remain in the official archive.

d. The rhetoric of disappearance and the emergence of re-enactment

Despite the fact that it has been the fashion to herald performance as the medium of "disappearance," the irruptive quality of the past on stage has been an overwhelming source of inspiration in both drama and performance art as well as in the burgeoning of re-enactment practices, even if said (re)appearances of the past are theatrical, faulty and riddled with error. (Schneider 2011: 64)

The most significant problem with approaching the relationship between my work and these past performances *from the point of view of enunciation*, is the implicit unreproducibility of any set of contingent processes embedded within the moving, intersecting writings of the city. From the purchasing of items from *Oldenburg's ever-transforming Store* (1961) to the dispersed and unwitnessed acts of (mis)interpretation that constituted Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece* a decade later, there is an apparent ephemerality integral to this work, or at least to those aspects of it which I am most interested in. From the outset the contingent spatial practices that I am keen to engage with are implicitly bound up with a conception of performance as defined by its own disappearance.

This formulation is perhaps most associated with the performance theorist Peggy Phelan, who in her 1993 book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* famously stated

that performance is defined by its resistance to what she termed the 'economy of reproduction'.

Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented or participate in the circulation of representation of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. [...] Performance [...] becomes itself through disappearance. (Phelan 1993: 146)

As Rebecca Schneider demonstrates in *Performing Remains* (Schneider 2011: 94-96) this belief in the essentiality of disappearance to performance is intimately associated with the New York performance scene of the 1960s, through Richard Schechner, Phelan's former colleague in New York University's nascent Performance Studies department in the 1980s. As such the works and artists that I am keen to study are fundamental to a now-pervasive position that refutes the possibility of re-membering the work as anything other than performance.

This association of authenticity with the ephemerality of performance has in recent years foregrounded the limitations of the archive as a site of knowing. Indeed, in the introduction to their 2007 exhibition *History Will Repeat Itself* at Kunst-Werke in Berlin, curators Inke Arns and Gabriele Horn go as far as to suggest that the archival memory is a 'false' memory, (Arns and Horn 2007: 7) foregrounding the inauthenticity of an experience of the work which is 'always susceptible to manipulation.' Here, the archive is not simply partial, it is actively misleading. In its place Arns and Horn suggest that re-enactment can serve as a more 'authentic' means of engagement with the past; a 'direct and often physical experience of history'.

In re-created situations that are usually 'live', re-enactments make it possible to fully comprehend what the images mean through one's own physical experience and perception. (Arns and Horn 2007: 7)

The re-enactment shifts the terms of the encounter with the work away from the mediated archive and back towards the 'ephemerality' of body-to-body transmission. The work is made present again, re-presented, in the anticipation that this will allow for the kind of direct and embodied experience of the work that since the 1960s and through the writings of Schechner and Phelan is associated with authenticity in performance. As Jennifer Allen states;

While a reenactment may depend upon historical documents and artefacts – from newspaper reports describing an event to the clothing worn by key

figures – the body remains the vehicle that can carry the past into the present, that can give the past presence. (Jennifer Allen 2005: 181)

By re-inscribing the ephemeral body in the work the re-enactment fulfils the expectation of 'presence' that is required for the piece to justify its status as 'performance'. Re-enactment thus appears as an effective and affective re-embodiment of the historical work; a reappearance. Dragging the past performance back across the divide between absence and presence, the re-enactment offers the tantalising possibility of actually touching, seeing and experiencing the original work.

Consequently, as interest in the New York-based artists of the 1960s and 1970s has grown along with their influence, re-enactment has become an increasingly important means of re-presenting their work. In London alone in the period since I began this research project there have been a number of major exhibitions involving New York based artists of the 1960s and 1970s, all of which have involved re-enactments of their work alongside the presentation of more conventional archival material. In 2008, as this project was beginning, Tate Modern staged a series of re-enactments of happenings and events, including Allan Kaprow's *Scales* and Alison Knowles' *Make a Salad*. At the Hayward Gallery two years later in 2010, curator Stephanie Rosenthal created *Move*, an exhibition exploring the relationship between art and dance since the 1960s, incorporating into the exhibition re-enactments of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in Six Parts* and Simone Forti's *Hangers*. And at the Barbican less than a year later as part of their retrospective on the 'Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s', the venue hosted re-enactments of Trisha Brown's *Floor of the Forest* and *Walking on the Wall*.

In New York itself Marina Abramovic created *Seven Easy Pieces* (2007) at the Guggenheim Museum, a series of stage re-enactments of seminal pieces of performance art by artists including Bruce Nauman and Vitto Acconci. She then followed this with *The Artist is Present*, (2010) a retrospective of her own work featuring a number of performers re-staging early works including *Imponderabilia* and *Relation in Time*. On the museum's website the exhibition is described as an attempt 'to transmit the presence of the artist and make her historical performances accessible

to a larger audience³. Here again it is significant to note that the re-enactment is seen as a bridge between the *presence* of performance and the disappearance of the historical event; the body, though significantly not Abramovic's body, serving as vehicle for a wider audience to gain an authentic experience of this past work.

This pervasion of re-enactment is not however the sole domain of these major art institutions. Numerous projects also have taken place over this period in other smaller venues, often incorporating contemporary artists tasked with re-enacting the work of their predecessors. At Haus Der Kunst in Berlin in 2007 Robert Lepecki recreated Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, later re-staging his re-enactment at Performa 07 in New York. Elsewhere that same year the Birmingham artist Gavin Wade recreated Vitto Acconci's *Seedbed* at Stadtgalerie in Bern. In Aberystwyth in 2008 various artists were involved in recreating Fluxus events as part of a 'Flux Concert' at the Castle Theatre. A year later the Arnolfini in nearby Bristol hosted a collective re-doing of George Brecht's *Motor Vehicle Sundown* and in 2010 Eastside Projects in Birmingham hosted a re-enactment of Gordon Matta Clarke's *Bone Dinner*. Indeed, as recently as June 2011 the Trisha Brown Company re-enacted her seminal *Roof Piece* across the rooftops of lower Manhattan.

Venturing beyond the realm of those works that are explicitly identified as 're-enactments', this same investment in an embodied engagement with historical performances remains equally influential. Works such as Iain Forsyth and Sue Pollard's *Walking After Acconci (Re-directed Approaches)* (2005) and Mel Brimfield's *This is Performance Art* (2010-2012) directly reference historic works and artists, setting up a playful critical dialogue with the past within their avowedly contemporary works. Eva and Franco Mattes' *Synthetic Performances* (2009) and The Wooster Group's *Hamlet* (2007) braid the re-enactment of past performances with the use of contemporary technology to examine the limitations of digital or digitised memory. In contrast, the Performance Re-enactment Society's *Afterlive* (2010) uses the re-enactment of audience memories of past works to create a new exhibition of photographs by performance photographer Hugo Glendenning.

³ <http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/965> visited 2/11/2011

Whether institutional acts of embodied conservation, exploratory re-doings of past works by individual artists, or the practices and strategies of re-enactment incorporated critically or subversively by artists in the creation of explicitly new works, it is clear that the performance of performance history has, in the last decade, become increasingly pervasive and influential. As Abramovic herself has proclaimed, “Reperformance is the new concept, the new idea... Otherwise it [performance art] will be dead as an art form.” (Abramovic in Schneider 2011: 4)

Abramovic’s statement demonstrates the stake that is placed in re-enactment as the only means by which to sustain any viable trace of past performances. Braided into the discourse around presence, authenticity and performance, re-enactment offers artists and institutions a means of engagement with the performance work of the 1960s and 1970s that appears more authentic than the mediated site of the archive. It offers the tantalising possibility that these increasingly influential performances might *persist* into the present, whilst not contradicting the rhetoric of ephemerality and disappearance that is so intimate associated with this work; a solution to the question of how to remember that which is already lost.

Yet I am not convinced that the re-enactment as it is conventionally understood is adequate for this task. By unpicking more carefully the question of what constitutes a ‘performance’ in relation to re-enactment, with particular emphasis on what has already been termed ‘the point of view of enunciation’, I want to demonstrate that the experience of the past promised by the re-enactment is still founded on the kind of representation and reproduction that Phelan so strongly resists. As such, it remains as partial and unsatisfactory a site for this study as the archive itself.

e. The failure of re-enactment

It’s initially difficult to categorise ‘re-enactment’ as constituted by a coherent set of strategies or approaches. In the first instance, as has already been stated, there is a split between those created by the original artists and those in which the work is remade by a different artist. Alongside this there are significant variances in the degree of verisimilitude with which the artists involved approach the task of remaking

these past performances. For example in his 2007 recreation of *18 Happenings in 6 parts* Andre Lepecki was explicit in his attempt to 'rebuild with as much accuracy as possible the precarious architecture Kaprow had created within the Reuben Gallery', (Lepecki 2006: 48) even going to the length of building a large wooden box to contain the installation in order to 'de-territorialize our room from the institutional frame of the museum'. (Lepecki 2006: 48) This process is strikingly different to that used by William Pope.L in his recreation of Kaprow's *Yard* at the Hauser and Wirth gallery in New York 2009. Despite his installation occupying the same site as the original *Yard*, Pope.L intervened explicitly and politically in the accuracy of the re-enactment, acknowledging the changing nature of the space over time by recreating Kaprow's outdoor installation within the interior confines of the gallery and introducing additional materials such as plastic body bags as a way to 'bring some world back in'. (Pope.L in Barone 2009) Both these approaches might also be contrasted with Abramovic, whose recreation of VALIE EXPORT's *Action Pants: Genital Panic* eschewed any simulation of the original context or conditions of the work. Instead the re-enactment explicitly took the form of a living image or, in curator Nancy Spector's description, a performance of 'the photograph of the piece.' (Spector 2007: 21)

These three explicit re-enactments can then in turn be differentiating from those pieces identified in the previous chapter by artists such as Forsyth & Pollard and the Performance Re-enactment Society that make use of historiographic strategies for engaging with past performances in what are nonetheless foregrounded as new, contemporary works. Refusing the responsibility to *stand in for* any particular historic work, these pieces instead emphasise difference, inauthenticity and the historiographical discourse itself. The critical distance that this consequently opens up between these pieces and the past works that they reference or quote from provides a useful contrast to those re-enactments that are framed and determined by a particular historical subject.

Despite the differences identified between the strategies of Lepecki, Pope.L and Abramovic, they all share this desire to engage with and to some extent *stand in for* a recognised historical performance and as such all are invested in the notion that that past performance is already *lost*. All rely on this dichotomous understanding of

absence and presence that perpetuates the association of performance with disappearance. Indeed a re-enactment that generates this direct relationship with a individual past performance can only be a re-enactment in the acknowledged absence of an original; which is thus rendered historic, 'disappeared' and in need of the interpretive actions of the re-enacting artist to once again bring it back to any kind of life.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is Marina Abramovic's re-enactment of Bruce Nauman's *Body Pressure* as part of *Seven Easy Pieces*. Nauman's piece was created in 1974 as an event score to be enacted in any place with a flat vertical surface. Copies of this event score can still be obtained by anyone at the Dia:Beacon gallery in upstate New York. As such *Body Pressure* is still in process, each articulation of the score animating briefly the ongoing trajectory of the work. For *Seven Easy Pieces* however, Abramovic transformed this piece into a spectacle enacted by her on a stage at the Guggenheim, using a large vertical piece of Perspex as a wall. In so doing, she makes the original unbounded piece into a finite event. The 're-enactment' of *Body Pressure* requires the framing of the original as *that which has passed*; a discrete material event rather than a dispersed, unstable, infinite network of actions.

Here Abramovic seems to substitute presence for visibility, affecting a transformation in the work that brings to mind Maurice Blanchot's description of a damaged utensil that 'no longer disappearing in its use, appears' (Blanchot 1999: 421) not as itself but as its double. Abramovic demands that the piece be visibly present *as performance*, even though it's original presence was perhaps more defined by invisibility; as a network of practices that 'disappear' in their use. By emphasising that which must be seen, the re-enactment thus creates a representation, or an image, of the work that bears little relation to the more complicated and fragmentary original; what Schneider terms a '*monumental* relationship to history'. (Schneider 2011: 132) As Blanchot states 'only what has surrendered itself to the image appears, and everything that appears is, in this sense, imaginary.' (Blanchot 1999: 422)

It is this emphasis on visibility that defines the re-enactment and helps determine both what is assumed to remain from the original and the opportunity that an audience has to engage with those remains. As Jennifer Allen states:

In the eyes of the witness, the original event becomes historical by taking up time, and claims its status as history by appearing as a discrete event with a finite duration. In other words, the reenactment makes the origin, gives the origin a definition and an identity that it may not have had for itself. (Allen 2005: 185)

It is important to note here that Allen emphasises the audience's role as witness to the re-enactment; they are onlookers, their engagement with the work determined by its visibility. Here also, it is apparent that the means of engagement with the re-enactment determines retrospectively the form of the original. As witnesses to the re-enactment, the audience shape the original in its image, this more definitive double effacing the contingent fragments that constituted the original.

De Certeau outlines quite explicitly how this scopic vision of the work runs contrary to the 'point of view of enunciation' that I am keen to explore. To outline this opposition de Certeau describes the fictive vision of a city that one gets from the highest floors of its tallest buildings:

The division of space makes possible a panoptic practice proceeding from a place whence the eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and "include" them within its scope of vision. (de Certeau 1984: 36)

The city is transformed into an image, a discrete entity existing outside of vicissitudes time; an extant object constituted by streets and buildings rather than a network of places and relations constantly in the process of being produced anew by its users. This envisioning of this city is thus posited as a means of reasserting some illusory control over the fugitive acts and interactions that constitute the city at street level. Similarly, the re-enactment's scopic re-representation of the past performance, recasting the audience as witnesses to the piece rather than co-authors of it, could equally be seen as a means of reasserting control over its authorship, interpretation and identity.

In the first instance this manifests itself in the emphasis placed in the re-enactment on singularity and ownership in relation to the original work. Discussing Abramovic's *Seven Easy Pieces* and *The Artist is Present*, Schneider identifies the way in which Abramovic's re-enactments emphasise authorship, authenticity and good practice in relation to the artist's 'estate'.

The medial panic around reperformance is not necessarily about the lack of a material object (or the objectless "dematerialized" art) as much as it is about the singularity, the originality, of the artist and the restriction of rights to that artist's *work* – work that takes place as the labor of the live. (Schneider 2011: 130-131)

Here the re-enactment becomes a means of locating the original work within a historical continuum and thus limiting its use or re-use to those instances ordained by the artist and the artist's estate. The re-enactment both proclaims the disappearance of the original and outlines a legitimised way in which that work might make a re-appearance through the kind of live body-to-body transmission that bequeaths a work the privileged and temporary status of 'performance'. Such a process will allow performance art to exist within exactly the circulation of representations that Phelan's initial differentiation of performance was so keen to resist; or, in Abramovic's words, the re-enactment allows performance to achieve 'a stable grounding in art history'. (Abramovic 2007: 11)

These issues around authorship and control in relation to the re-enactment are not only a matter of legitimizing instances of reproduction. Utilizing the material remains contained within the archive, the re-enactment implicitly constructs a discourse around the original that places a problematic stress on authorship and intentionality. Andre Lepecki begins the written accompaniment to his re-enactment of *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* by referring to Allen Kaprow's notes on the original performance, underlying from the outset the emphasis on authorial intention in his approach to the original. Lepecki then goes on to even more explicitly underline the centrality that he ascribes to Kaprow and his writing around the original work:

So, why eventually accept to direct a redoing of *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*? First and foremost: Kaprow's extraordinarily generous personal consent. This was the crucial event in my decision-making process. And then, after going over Kaprow's notes, the realization that what is widely described in the scholarship as "the script" or "the score" for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* is rather

a massive textual and visual work, almost autonomous in itself in its prolific poetic ramifications and performative potentialities. (Lepecki 2006: 46)

In the first instance, then, the emphasis on consent re-iterates the significance of authorial ownership of the original and the concomitant finite singularity of 'the work' that this implies. Lepecki identifies the work with Kaprow's own notes on the piece, constructing his re-enactment in relation to the perceived significance of those notes. He describes the process of re-enactment in terms of 'issues' and 'problems' arising from Kaprow's text that he, the later artist, is required to 'solve'. As such the purpose of the re-enactment could be said to be to legitimize the singular *version* of the piece described in Kaprow's notes through imbuing them with a visible *liveness* which takes the form of a dialogue between Lepecki and Kaprow to which the audience are again *witnesses*.

The same might equally be said of Pope.L's re-enactment of *Yard*. Despite its differences to Lepecki's more faithful approach re-enactment, Pope.L still emphasises the significance of negotiation with the past artist's estate and an analysis of authorial intentionality. Pope.L explicitly frames his re-enactment in terms of this dialogue with Kaprow, for example in relation to his addition of body bags amongst the piece's mountain of car tyres.

The body bags reference the body bag-like containers Kaprow constructed out of tarpaper around the figurative sculptures [a Hepworth, a Giacometti] in Martha Jackson's courtyard. Kaprow wanted to hide something--I wanted to show something. (Pope.L in Barone 2009)

As such both Pope.L and Lepecki in their approach to the task of re-enactment bear out Abramovic's requirement that the artist should 'research fully the original material and enter into a meaningful dialogue with the artist or the artist's estate.' (Abramovic in Spector 2007: 21) There is a telling slippage here between the legal dialogue that Abramovic insists upon as a means of authorising and legitimizing the re-enactment, and the creative dialogue between past and present artists. Both circumscribe the piece and in doing so efface the role of audience and performers in its creation.

In this sense the re-enactment is perhaps best understood not as 'a new concept' as Abramovic would have it, but rather a function or extension of an existing

historiographical approach to past performance. It serves as the manifestation of an art-historical discourse ascribed the authority to stand-in for that which it describes as a consequence of a *liveness* that it shares with that earlier event. Yet in re-presenting the original, and thus rendering it visible, the re-enactment only serves to reinforce its disappearance as anything other than an image. This simulacrum of the original reinforces the authority of the archive, valorises authorial intentionality and eases institutional anxiety around singularity, authenticity and reproduction.

What is inevitably missing in this discourse is the presence of the audience as not simply witnesses but *co-producers* of the work. As de Certeau states, 'the presence and circulation of a representation tells us nothing about what it is for its users.' (de Certeau 1984: xiii) The terms of engagement with the re-enactment are defined by an entirely different set of spatial and social relations to those that governed the original. If I am interested in how this work might be understood as a dispersed plurality of contingent encounters with the urban environment, then there is little new that I can learn from this form of re-enactment. It recasts its audience as witnesses, generating a different relationship to the work than that invited by the original, and by extension transforming the way in which the audience encounter the urban environment through the work.

f. 'Flesh memory' and the queering of time

The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled.
(Foucault 1997: 124)

What I have thus attempted to identify is the inadequacy of conventional forms of re-enactment as a means of engaging with the past *through performance*. It has been shown that those strategies of *representation* and *interpretation* associated with re-enactments as varied as those of Abramovic, Lepecki and Pope.L nonetheless rehearse a similar emphasis on the re-enactment as an image that stands in for the

past. Yet that seductive image is deeply problematic as a means engaging with the messy contingency of past performance practice. It is what Roland Barthes, in his *Discourse on History*, refers to as an imaginary elaboration; a 'tautological fantasy' (Barthes 1997: 121) in which the past event is constructed by the simulacrum that claims to re-present it. Far from being a means of engaging with past performance, the re-enactment is in fact 'no more than the signifier of the speech act as an act of authority,' (Barthes 1997: 122) reaffirming the place of the artist as author and interpreter of the work and the institution and the archive as the gatekeepers of a strictly linear history.

Returning again to Blanchot, what I am interested in is not the illusory image of the past performance that appears when it is dislocated from its context, but the *use* that is made of it at that time as a means of encountering the city. Initially this re-emphasising of the work's contingency might seem only to reinforce the inevitability of its disappearance. The city is no longer the same city and the audience are no longer the same audience and consequently this would seem to preclude the possibility of engaging with works so bound up with their particular circumstances. Such a position however relies upon the elision of presence and absence with appearance and disappearance. It makes an assumption that because a work is not visible, it is no longer present. What if instead we were to begin, as Blanchot does, from the assumption that the disappearance of the work does not preclude its presence? That in fact, disappearance is a condition of the work from the outset and as such is not a function of the ephemerality of live performance? If the work is always disappearing into the fabric of the city, might that *process* of disappearance continue to persist beyond the limited scopic terms of the conventional re-enactment?

For de Certeau, the movement from the image of the city that is appreciable from its rooftops to the 'blindness' (de Certeau 1984 93) of the streets is similarly a movement into disappearance, as the distant watcher becomes irreparably lost in the crowds. The city is defined by restless movement, constantly drawn and redrawn by its inhabitants; an entity defined by its otherness. These *acts of writing* are determined not by visible structures of power but by innumerable tactics or *ways of operating*, 'practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques

of sociocultural production.’ (de Certeau 1984: xiv) As with Kaprow and Smith’s description of an art that occurs not within the confines of the frame but out in the world of the spectator, de Certeau’s ‘art of making do’ (de Certeau 1984: 30) is fragmentary and embodied; a form of social re-organisation that occupies no circumscribed space, constantly caught in the act of disappearing.

The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. [...] whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into “opportunities.” (de Certeau 1984: xix)

It is this very otherness of a tactic that opens up the possibility of its persistence beyond the particular circumstances from which it emerged. It is a process rather than an object or an action and as such it is not *of* that context but is instead a means of altering it. Thus whilst any contingent iteration of that tactic is dependent upon a particular place and time, the tactic itself does not belong to that place; indeed, it is defined by its placelessness. By occupying no definite place the tactic suggests the possibility of its own reoccurrence in multiple places and circumstances.

Thus whilst any original work may retain its ephemerality as a finite performance event that occurred within New York on a particular date, as a set of embodied practices or tactics the work does not *belong* to this context. It exists only in the transformation that it enacts upon the city, and that process of transformation, that *way of operating*, may persist beyond this instance into any number of other similar moments. As Diana Taylor suggests, the contingent liveness of this kind of embodied memory ‘exceeds the archive’s ability to capture it’ (Taylor 2003: 20) but this does not preclude the possibility of its persistence beyond that archive, as ‘ritualized, formalized or reiterative behaviour.’ (ibid) Whilst the material circumstances of the piece are reduced to historicised images, the tactical interventions it makes within the urban environment might well remain by having never occupied such an absolute position.

This kind of placeless persistence is what Rebecca Schneider evocatively terms *flesh memory*; embodied traces of poses and gestures that resist archival visibility.

In the archive, flesh is given to be that which slips away. Flesh can house no memory of bone. Only bone speaks memory of flesh. Flesh is blindspot. Disappearing. (Schneider 2011: 100)

Schneider emphasises the *otherness* of this flesh memory. Flesh memory is not found in visible remains such as photographs, texts and authorial notes; it does not try to contain memory within such discrete and visible spaces. Flesh memory is *performed memory*; constituted by irruptive, unauthorised acts of reoccurrence. Rather than the linear chronology imposed by the material archive, flesh memory suggests the possibility of living bodies as a site where time can fold in on itself. A means of disrupting the historical continuum through embodied re-memberings of past gestures, or perhaps past 'tactics'.

The resiliently irruptive rub and call of live bodies (like biological machines of affective transmission) insist that physical acts are a means of knowing, bodies are sites for transmission even if, simultaneously, they are also manipulators of error and forgetting. (Schneider 2011: 38)

Like de Certeau, Schneider identifies knowing with doing; knowledge is embodied and transmitted as *ways of operating in the urban environment*. Such a formulation identifies Schneider's flesh memory with Michel Foucault's conception of an 'effective history' that has 'more sense in common with medicine than philosophy'. (Foucault 1997: 126) Foucault rejects the linear constants that determine conventional history and instead sites history in the instability of the body – 'the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies' (Foucault 1997: 125) – and the kind of contingent *tactical* manoeuvres that de Certeau would later associate with his art of making do.

An event... is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked "other". (Foucault 1997: 124-125)

The self-consciously theatrical entrance of Foucault's '*masked* other' finds its echo in Schneider's description of what she calls *temporal drag*, alluding both to performing body's ability to play between opposed positions (male and female, then and now) and the potential contained within this gesture to physically drag something of history into the present; 'an affective (and temporal) jump between bodies.' (Schneider 2011: 75) Schneider identifies such embodied knowledge with a 'feminine' and then 'feminist' (Schneider 2011: 76) lineage of subjugated historical practices, underlining as Foucault does, the political dimension to this *queering* or *othering* of history. Here,

history becomes accumulation of radical appropriations, reversals and disappearances, buried within the present tense of the performing body; insulated from appropriation by the institution.

What I thus want to suggest is a new approach to art-historical discourse that emphasises performance's potential to *queer* conventional art history and thus explore new relationships to the past beyond the threshold of visibility. An 'effective history' constituted by embodied practices and *ways of operating* that fold time in a manner that is irruptive, unauthorised and avowedly non-linear. Performance then, rather than limiting itself to creating material doubles of the absent past, is perhaps better considered as a radical site for a form of 'fleshy' memory not constrained by 'our heritage of Enlightenment investments in straightforward linearity'. (Schneider 2011: 182)

Performance is no longer a tool for digging up the past, but the site where we go looking for it.

g. Playing 'in time' in my own performance practice

In an affective reverie, troubling the archive-driven tracks of a strictly linear approach to time [...] reenactors use their bodies to chase moments of forgetting where something learned (about time) becomes something played (in time), and where something played can touch or generate experience, even if "only for a minute." (Schneider 2011: 42)

Rereading history through Schneider and Foucault presents the tantalising possibility of a new way of framing and interrogating the relationship of my present performance practice to the work of the 1960s and 1970s. Without denying their status as past events that occupied a particular time and a particular place, this re-conception offers the possibility that past performances might additionally be understood as constituted by a series *ways of operating* that are placeless, unbounded and defiantly *other*. In their very otherness such tactics are not so beholden to a mode of history that

identifies memory with images and assumes anything that is not visible is consequently *absent*. This new emphasis on *ways of operating* ascribes a placelessness to the work that frees it from this reductive absence-presence binary, opening up the possibility of 'touching' the past to the present, generating new kinds of experience of the past even if, as Schneider states, it is "only for a minute".

How then is such a means of engagement with the past to be embedded within the doing of my own practice?

In the first instance it is important that past performance does not become the *subject* of this contemporary work. As with the conventional re-enactments described above, such a *looking back* necessarily constructs a critical distance between the *original* and the present work. That critical distance becomes structurally integral to the way in which the original work is encountered through the contemporary event. The audience are invited to enter into a mediated discourse with the historicized action that bears little relation to the experience of the piece for the original audience. As such the re-enactment does not approach the kind of 'affective reverie' (Schneider 2011: 42) that Schneider identifies with the possibility of bodies *playing in time*, rubbing up against the grain of a linear archival history. Instead these bodies are witnesses or spectators to an authored *interpretation* of history.

The value of my practice as a *site* for this project is not in its relationship with the past but in its relationship with the city. As has been outlined above, my own work shares with much of the work of this earlier period an emphasis on stepping beyond the artistic frame, reconstituting itself as a contingent experience of the city itself; a way of looking at the world resulting from the peculiar circumstances in which it places its audience. This shared focus on the role of the audience in *producing* the piece through their discursive encounter with the city suggests that both are equally bound up with ways of operating that are irruptive, fragmentary, placeless and decidedly *other*. As my work *disappears* into the use that is made of it in the city, it holds open the possibility that those tactical operations produced by the works of this earlier period might reoccur.

It is important to underline that this does not constitute a *replication* of this earlier event or a simulation of the experience of that event for a contemporary audience. I want to resist the pull of historic comparison and the conceptual distance it places between one work and the other. Returning to Barthes, such an approach only leads back to the paradox in which that which we are seeking compare to contemporary practice is always already constructed by that contemporary practice. I want to avoid the tautology of historical representation by founding my investigation on an acknowledgement of difference. I am seeking to explore how these two very different events and these two very different cities might be playfully drawn together in time through the ahistoricity of the embodied tactic.

h. A methodology for an 'effective' history

The emphasis in the construction of a methodology for this project is not then in recreating the work of the 1960s and 1970s but in considering a way in which my own practice might accommodate new relationships to those past performances. I want to think about ways in which I can reformulate my own work to generate the kind of experience of the past that might be considered to be, in Foucaultian terms, an 'effective history'; a disruption of linear time to create an irruptive, embodied, ephemeral knowledge of how this past work persists in my own practice; what Susan Melrose, following de Certeau, describes as 'knowledge as action.' (Melrose 1994: 76)

My methodology for doing so will follow Rebecca Schneider's simple assertion that 'something learned (about time) becomes something played (in time)'. (Schneider 2011: 42) In this sense I want to begin with what might be learnt *about* the historical event from the material debris we are left with of it. Crucially, this process begins with the acknowledgement that those fragments do not constitute either 'the work' or *all that we can know about the work*. Following Hans Kellner, I want to look 'crookedly' at these traces:

To examine the historical text, we must see it "crooked," even if doing so makes it harder to attain the precise purpose of the text. To see the text

straight is to see *through* it – that is, not to see it at all except as a device to facilitate knowledge of reality. (Kellner 1997: 132)

When considering the traces of the historical event I am not trying to look *through* them to the ‘reality’ of the performance they might be thought to refer to. Instead I am reading this work against the grain, crookedly, as a means of deriving from it a structure for my own practice that bears no immediate resemblance to the material content or authorial intention of that earlier event.

My relationship to these fragments is perhaps best explained in the figure of the footprint. A footprint does not make a claim to be *the person who walked*. It does not tell us why they walked or what they were thinking when they were walking. The footprint does not *stand in* for the walker but it might, if considered rigorously and imaginatively, form the framework for a new movement that contains within it the flesh memory of some of the actions and gestures of that earlier walker. Similarly, my analysis of the debris that remains from this earlier event does not demand that that debris *stand in* for the event. It examines that debris *as debris*. This material is not considered as containing any *a priori* knowledge of the earlier work. It must be approached with an agency and a creativity, to produce *from* these traces a new means of exploring my own practice.

As has already been stated my emphasis in this exploration will be on the relationship this work engenders with the urban environment. I will begin with de Certeau’s already-discussed formulation of the city as constituted by ‘networks of... moving, intersecting writings... shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations in spaces.’ (de Certeau 1984: 93) From this perspective the city is not a visible ‘place’ made up of streets and buildings, but the myriad ways in which that place is articulated by its numerous inhabitants; what de Certeau terms a ‘space’ or a *practised place*.

Space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of actualisation, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. (de Certeau 1984: 117)

I want to situate the past work in the gap between 'place' and 'space', as a means of modulating the audience member's contingent encounter with the city; what has already been termed the *point of view of enunciation*. The importance of considering the city in this way is that it challenges me to explore not how the physical work fitted into the visible cityscape, but how it altered the way in which its audience 'produced' an experience of the city. In other words, how the piece exists not as a definite historic object, but as transformation and movement; the kind of unframable experience of space that Tony Smith describes on the New Jersey Turnpike.

I will focus on a series of three 'case studies'. Each of these studies will involve an engagement with a different specific work from this earlier period, spanning a range of different artists, movements and approaches, all of which facilitate to a greater or lesser extent a direct interaction with the city. I will approach each of these case studies with the same rigorous methodology. In the first instance I will consider the 'place' in which that work is physically located; the urban lexicon of the New York neighbourhood which contains the work. I will then consider how the work is visibly constituted within that landscape as what I have chosen to term a 'site'; a rhetorical figure disrupting or subverting the city's syntax. Most crucially I will then intuit how this relationship between the work and the city might generate a contingent experience of space for the participants in the piece, both audience and performers; how they could *use* the work as a 'tactic,' destabilising their relationship to the urban environment.

Returning to the figure of the footprint, I am interested in analysing how the visible remains of the piece suggest certain 'tactics' for re-configuring the physical city, in the same way that the footprint suggests movement in a certain direction across the physical landscape. And just as the walker's possible movements are interpreted through examination of the relationship of their traces to the surrounding environment, so too I will derive a framework for the work's 'spatializing operations' through examining the way in which the traces of the work relate to the lexicon of the city.

Resulting from this will be a framework that traces the contours of the past event's relationship to its environment. Here then, my work becomes the site in which this

learning *about* the past performance facilitates a playing *in or with* that past performance. Crucially that framework does not *re-present* the earlier work but instead emphasises a means of re-organising my own practice. It is in this re-organisation that this process holds open the possibility for the past performance to return. This reconfiguring of my own practice creates a space of temporal uncertainty in which living bodies chase the ghosts of past movements through the city; an 'effective history' constituted by *ways of operating* and transformations of power relations. I am interesting in seeing how the *kind of transformation* that the work affects will function within the context of my own practice for a different audience in a different city. How will that process of spatial transformation manifest itself in my work and what new kinds of knowledge might that generate?

This formulation echoes what Hans Keller sees as an older, more classical approach to the exploration of the past, in which 'the poet could claim as strong a hold upon reality as the historian'. (Kellner 1997: 132)

History in this mode (Voltaire, Montesquieu, Gibbon) presented itself as matter for active reflection and judgement, rather than as an image of a missing reality empirically proven by critical methodology. The historical narrator was as active and "visible" in his text as the fictional narrator of the eighteenth-century novel, perhaps because both narrators had a certain sort of reader in mind, a reader competent to ponder the problems and paradoxes of whatever material was at hand... – in other words, a reader equal to the author. (Kellner 1997: 132)

In this brief passage Kellner identifies two significant tropes that usefully frame my own historiographical approach. In the first instance there is an emphasis on the author's agency in the creation of this history. Keller identifies the 'visible' figure of the historical narrator, so too by locating my research within the doing of my own practice I foreground this history as an act of creation rather than a neutral or objective uncovering or representation of the past. Secondly in Keller's analysis, the reader is the 'site' where historical knowledge is generated. So too I am resisting the kind of authoritative position that the re-enactment gives to the artist to speak *about* the past work, instead generating an embodied historical knowledge in the actions or 'tactics' of the audience. Like Schneider, Kellner describes history as 'reverie,' (Kellner 1997: 137) a playing in time that might generate entirely new relationships with this earlier work. It is this kind of reverie that I am seeking to generate.

i. Bringing performance and history 'to the crossroads'

This thesis poses the question of how performance might act historiographically, which, to reiterate, concerns how performance might contribute to or challenge our present understanding of how the history of performance is produced. In the proceeding sections I have sought to outline a means by which performance might function not simply as an adjunct to discursive, archival history, but instead serve as a viable historiographical process in its own right. An embodied historical knowledge that resides in the interactions of performers, participants, practitioners and cities. A knowledge that, in Diana Taylor's words, 'exceeds the archive's ability to capture it' (Taylor 2003: 20) and is instead disseminated in messy and untraceable ways through the experience of those that encounter the performance.

In so doing I have tried to articulate a potential challenge to what constitutes legitimate historical knowledge in the field of performance; who that history is written by and if it must be 'written' at all. As such, my work relies upon, and should be considered within the context of, a broader challenge to the archive and the academy articulated within the field of performance studies.

Central to this challenge is a reassertion of the value of the kind of embodied knowledge that I have made the basis of my own study. This is a knowledge that must reside within the doing of performance and as such challenges our present conception of what even constitutes knowledge.

By taking performance seriously as a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge, performance studies allows us to expand what we understand by "knowledge." (Taylor 2003: 16)

For both Taylor and Dwight Conquergood the valorisation of these *other* means of knowing is part of resistance to a dominant, Western cultural paradigm that 'neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize' (Conquergood 2002: 146) alternatives to empirical observation and critical analysis.

Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context. The visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation, silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares, and other protective arts of disguise and secrecy-what de Certeau called "the elocutionary experience of a fugitive communication." (Conquergood 2002: 146)

Considered in this context, the turn towards embodied knowledge in this thesis is a self-consciously subversive gesture. It not only seeks to point up the limits of historical knowledge as it is presently understood through the archive, but also to provide new space within our conception of performance history for those that presently find themselves excluded from the writing of it; the audiences, participants and performers whose 'fugitive communication' cannot be contained within the archive. Beyond that it may even, as Simon Jones suggests, undermine the very possibility of any judgement on what has or hasn't been learnt from this historiographical study.

Hence, practice-as-research is that which flees textual practices. Furthermore, and most outrageously, if it does so, ontologically it is also *outside of judgement*. Since the laws, rules and standards by which one judges the discipline's 'outputs' must themselves have been phrased out of some textual practices that attempted to come to know performance. (Jones 2009: 30)

However, as should be apparent from the emphasis I have already placed on the archive as an initial basis for the development of my own case studies, this challenge to the archive and the academy should not be considered an attempt to entirely eliminate them. Instead the aim of this project is to draw together both 'legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry' (Conquergood 2002: 152) in a reconsideration of the inherent value and purpose of the performance archive. By using performance itself to ask how it can act historiographically I am foregrounding the interaction between these contingent theatrical encounters and the ordered and legible archive; knowledge embodied in the movements in the city and knowledge articulated in texts and documents. Like Conquergood, my radical move is 'to turn, and return, insistently, to the crossroads.' (Conquergood 2002: 154)

ii. THREE CASE STUDIES (PART 1)

a. Choosing my case studies

This research project consists of three separate case studies, each an independent iteration of the methodology outlined above. The visible traces of the past performance, the debris it generates in the form of notes, images, film, eye-witness descriptions and post-hoc analysis, are used to construct a spatial figure that then becomes the framework for an entirely new piece of performance work. Through reconfiguring my work in this way I am attempting to generate a different kind of knowledge of the historical event, an irruptive memory located in embodied actions; a history that is always in the process of disappearing into the city. This process in turn leaves its own traces in the shifts it enacts on my own work, transforming my relationship to the urban environment. This is a kind of historical knowledge that resides not in the sanctioned archive but in the new ways of encountering the city.

Consequently each of these three independent studies has its own value and its own set of potential outcomes. Each is a new means of exploring a specific past artist and a specific past performance. Yet at the same time it is also apparent that these three studies cannot be taken in isolation from each other. Each consecutive work implicitly impacts upon the way in which I approach the next. Indeed as these new meanings accumulate in my practice they could be said to constitute a greater discourse with this historic period; a Foucaultian 'effective history' written in the iterative transformations of my work. As such, how each separate study relates to the next and how my work as a whole has been transformed from the beginning of this research project to the end are perhaps the most valuable measures of how that practice can function as a new mode of historiographical discourse.

For this reason I have endeavoured to choose pieces as the basis for these studies that, whilst remaining very different, share enough traits that they might when considered cumulatively in this way generate an interesting and resonant discourse. The three pieces I have chosen to focus on are Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*, (1961) Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece* (1971) and Meredith Monk's *Juice*. (1969)

In the first instance I have chosen these three pieces because their relationship to the city of New York is direct and specific. In all three cases the city is not simply the *site* for the work but is also integral to its form. Oldenburg's *The Store* not only occurs in and around a shop unit on the Lower East Side, but additionally its form is determined by that of the neighbouring stores. *Roof Piece* relies upon its relationship to the city's rooftops to give it its distended structure. Monk's *Juice* occurs in three very particular locations over three different nights, each of which not only accommodates the work but determines the form that the piece takes; from the immersive spectacle of the Guggenheim Museum, through the conventional formality of the Minor Latham Playhouse to the intimacy of Monk's own apartment. In each case the work is not simply written on the city, the city is written through the work. There is in Kaprow's terminology an 'absolute flow between environment and event'. (Kaprow in Schechner 1995: 187) Consequently to encounter the work is to encounter the city with no means of delineating the two. These pieces are all operating within the terms set out in the previous chapter as being the aspect of the work from this period that I am most interested in engaging with. This is work that is unframeable, that resists conventional forms or contexts for art and instead produces itself from the living fabric of the city.

Yet at the same time as choosing these pieces for their structural similarities I have also deliberately sought to engage with a broad range of practices from across the interrelated avant-garde performance communities in New York during this period. As has already been briefly stated, Oldenburg was one of the figures most associated with the Happenings movement at the beginning of the 1960s and like others associated with this movement including Kaprow, Red Grooms and Robert Whitman, he approached performance from a visual art background and continued throughout his 'happening' period to be supported by visual art institutions such as the Green Gallery, which was partly responsible for funding *The Store*. (Glueck 1969: 29) The form that *The Store* takes undoubtedly reflects this grounding in visual art; Oldenburg uses 'plaster and enamel' (Oldenburg 1967: 62) to *write over* his urban environment, casting himself still as the craftsman or the painter even as he also plays the role of the storekeeper. This process of fabrication, to paint in and with the urban environment remains an integral part of Oldenburg's performance practice, from the

messy scenography of 1961's *Fotodeath* (Oldenburg 1965: passim) to the cinematic imagery of disks-in-rotation that pervades 1965's *Moveyhouse*. (Oldenburg 2005: 53-87)

Trisha Brown was one of the most successful choreographers to emerge from the communities of dancers around the Judson Church, a group strongly associated with the Happenings movement as is well documented in Sally Banes *Greenwich Village 1963: avant-garde performance and the effervescent body*. If Oldenburg's work reflected his grounding in visual art so Brown's performances reflected dance's emphasis on the body. In contrast to Oldenburg her pieces were written almost entirely with and on the performer's body, through deliberately simple yet precise movements. In the case of *Roof Piece* Brown described these movements simply as 'joint articulation and perpendicular and parallel lines'; (Brown 1975: 26) earlier non-studio pieces were simpler again, such as *Leaning Duets*, which involved pairs of dancers balancing their weight as they leant away from each other, and *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, the title of which famously describes the piece in its totality.

Despite *Juice* being staged two years before *Roof Piece*, Meredith Monk emerged later in the New York scene than Trisha Brown and Claes Oldenburg and her work might be seen as a symbiosis of the practices of both. As she describes in an interview with Edward Strickland, Monk arrived in New York at 'the end of the happenings period' (Monk in Strickland 1997: 136) and was struck by their playful visual language, incorporating that experience into the quotidian movement vocabulary of the Judson Dancers. In so doing Monk extended her practice towards theatre, music and ritual, as is apparent from Monk's titling of *Juice* as 'a theatre cantata in three parts'. (Banes 1987: 153) Sally Banes called Monk 'more the child of Artaud than Cage', (Banes 1987: 149) and indeed *Juice* is a transmutating, interdisciplinary composition whose practices are more closely aligned with the later spectacular operatic works of Robert Wilson than they are with the practices of Oldenburg or Monk. As Mark Berger describes *Juice*:

Elements of character and interpretation, heroes and heroines, plots and subplots, development and climax are all present, but kept in a state of flux: a

metamorphic ordering of segmental parts that shift focus, disassemble and reassemble, spreading out in a multidimensional, musically organized tableau. (Berger 1997: 45)

In each case, then, I am confronted with a totally different set of practices emerging from a series of interrelated performance contexts. Nonetheless these three very different artists are all engaged in the kind of unbounded relationship with urban space that this project is located around.

As has been made explicit already, I am not however interested in attempting to 'recreate' any of these already well-documented ways of working. I am instead interested in the point at which those very visible practices disappear into the city, through their 'use' by an audience. A consideration of these artists and these works from the point of view of their enunciation. And I'm interested in how my own practice, with its own very particular history and context, might provide a culture in which I can explore the discourse between these works not in terms of what they are but *what they did*. A set of relationships in and with the city, explored and understood through my re-writing of my own very different urban landscape.

b. Structuring my analysis - Place, Space and Site

I chose to structure my analysis of the archival remains of each work to foreground this explicit emphasis on their relationship to the city. To do so I created a framework to shape and direct my engagement with these material remains. This framework not only provided a foundation for a spatial analysis of each of the three past works, it also ensured a crucial degree of continuity in my approach to each of them.

In developing this analytical structure I again returned to de Certeau and his distinction between place and space:

In relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. (de Certeau 1984: 117)

In making this distinction de Certeau situates his study at the intersection between these two positions; at the point at which the concrete and geometry of the urban

landscape becomes a city through its contingent articulation by the walker. This, then, is also where my own study needs to locate itself. Consequently my analysis of each of these pieces similarly concerned itself with this movement from *place* to *space*.

In each case I began with a consideration of place; that is, the physical landscape in which the piece was located and an analysis of the kinds of experience of the city that landscape might be producing. Following this I considered how each piece *intervened* in that landscape. This included both the physical presence of the work in that place and the modes of engagement it invited from its audience. In other words, how did the piece *as an event* relate to the pre-existing *place* in which it had been located. I termed this section of each case study an analysis of 'site' in consideration of the emphasis on the physical interrelation of the piece and the surrounding urban landscape. In the final section I then extended this analysis beyond the work itself into a consideration of how the work might transform the way in which its audience and its performers encountered the urban environment. Extrapolating from the earlier consideration of both the experience of the city and the experience of the work, I attempted to describe the how the work might *reproduce* the city as a new kind of practiced place; a 'space' in which the familiar is remade in potentially significant and radical ways.

In this manner I sought to provide myself with a structured that ensured demanded the piece always be contextualised within a wider consideration of its place within the urban landscape. As such my research was always focussed on the question not simply of how the piece itself functioned, but how it functioned as a contingent encounter with the city in which it was sited.

c. Engaging with the Archive

As is clear from this description of the analytical process behind these case studies, at the foundation of my methodology was a thorough and multifaceted engagement with the archival remains of these earlier works. As has already been emphasised, the intention of this study was never to entirely dismiss the viability of this archive but rather to consider a different possible relationship between that material and the doing of performance; a relationship in which the archive provides shape and impetus to a practical study that is nonetheless firmly located within contemporary performance

practice. Thus a significant period of this study was spent carefully researching these works through engagement with a range of archival sources. It is important to note that this research was not wholly located around developing an 'accurate' impression of the mechanics of these earlier works, but instead took a wider focus. As such the lack of comprehensive information regarding the content of the pieces, such as the detail of every dancer's movements in *Roof Piece* or the gaps in the video documentation of *Juice*, was less significant than it might have been to an attempt at a more conventional form of re-enactment. Such details were less relevant to the kind of analysis I was generating than the form of the work and its place within the surrounding environment.

Following the structure outlined in the previous section and the equal emphasis that it placed upon the context in which that work was sited, my research considered a variety of sources that extended my investigation out into the wider physical and conceptual landscape. In the first instance this emphasis on the wider context of the work necessitated a degree of research into city itself. This included not only the artists' own reflections on the experience of New York at this time but also that of their contemporaries within the city's creative communities; figures such as Robert Morris, Robert Smithson and Allan Kaprow.

In examining the works themselves again the emphasis was as much on how the works were *sited* within this urban context as it was on the technical detail of each of the pieces. To this end I looked at a range of sources, emphasising the experience of the work for those encountering it or who were involved it, in addition to the perspective of the artists themselves. My research thus incorporated film and photography of the original performances, first-hand accounts from performers, participants, journalists, and the artists themselves and later reflections on the work from both the artists and writers who had extensively followed their work. These writers included the dance critic Deborah Jowitt in the case of Meredith Monk, the art historian Barbara Rose in relation to Claes Oldenburg, and the dance historian Sally Banes for the work both of Trisha Brown and Meredith Monk.

Finally, in deriving a sense of the way in which the works produced an experience of the city I looked extensively at the writing around other works by the artists involved, with particular reference to the experience for audience members and participants in that work. The aim here, as with all the archival research undertaken, was to develop a theory as to how this work functioned as a way of transforming the experience of the urban environment. As can be seen from such an extrapolation, this body of archival material was always subject to interpretation, to a certain way of *looking crookedly*, combining a range of sources to produce a theoretical blueprint for a new performance that made no claim of faithfulness to the earlier work from which it was drawn. As such my movement through the archive was as creative as it was rigorous; building not a detailed and accurate picture of the original work, but a looser more interpretative model of how that work might have functioned spatially and experientially.

d. The process of constructing my case studies

The process of constructing the case studies that constitute this research project was formed of two distinct phases. In the first phase between 2009 and early 2011, I created a series of preliminary sketches in response to the chosen earlier pieces, beginning with Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece*, followed by Oldenburg's *The Store* and concluding with Monk's *Juice*. These preliminary sketches represented a first manifestation of the methodology outlined in the previous chapter. I approached each piece in turn and constructed from it a spatial footprint that became the basis for a new work-in-progress performance of my own devising.

This preliminary phase in the creation of these case studies was significant as an iterative refining of the methodology that I was using to approach these past events. Each sketch required both a body of rigorous archival research and the creation of an entirely new performance event in response to that research. As such the creation of each of these new pieces had a marked impact upon my relationship to this past work and the structures and strategies that form the contours of my own performance practice. By the end of this first period I had accumulated a body of new knowledge relating to this earlier period, through the exploration of visible archival remains, new theoretical approaches to those remains, and perhaps most significantly knowledge embodied in the spatializing operations of my own new pieces. As a consequence I

now had a much clearer idea of the strengths of this methodological approach and a more disciplined focus on engaging with certain tropes within that earlier work.

In the second phase of the process these preliminary experiments became the basis for three final case studies realised in the public performance of three finished pieces in London in late 2011. Shaped both by the specific research carried out in relation to each work and by the broader experience of the preliminary sketches, these works represented the fulfilment of the project's stated aim; to explore the possibility for performance as a new mode of art-historical discourse.

e. Preliminary Sketches

Before describing in greater detail the final case studies I want to briefly outline some of the establishing criteria derived from the preliminary sketches that preceded them. This will involve a short narration of the process involved in creating those preliminary sketches, detailing specific elements from those initial experiments that significantly impacted upon my practice and methodology. In particular I will outline some of the specific ways in which my approach to this earlier work has shifted over the course of these preliminary investigations; points of interest that have emerged as key elements of my practical research since the beginning of the project. By demonstrating some clear examples of how my understanding of this earlier work has shifted in the gap between my initial analysis and the construction of my final case studies, I hope to frame the practical work undertaken and underline the way in which my own practice is able to sustain a discourse between these three distinct past performances. As such this short précis serves as a means of contextualising the work of the performances themselves.

Roof Piece

Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece* was the first work that I engaged with as part of this project. This period of research began in Autumn 2009 and involved some time in New York studying the film of the piece, funded by Brown herself and created by Babette

Mangolte, contained in New York Public Library's dance archive at the Lincoln Centre. In April 2010, I carried out a work-in-progress performance of *Archipelago*, a new piece of my own created in response to *Roof Piece*. This piece occurred across a number of sites in London, beginning in Bethnal Green and concluding at Battersea Arts Centre.

Perhaps the most significant refining of my methodology that emerged out of this initial exploration was the shift in emphasis that it enacted away from the spatial structure outlined by the original author, towards the requirement for a new structure of my own devising, generated from my analysis of this earlier work. It was through the difficulties that I encountered in the development of this first piece that I was most clearly able to establish what it might mean to read this earlier work 'crookedly'. To establish the degree to which the blueprint I derived from it must resist the terms laid down by the earlier artist and instead construct its own theoretical basis for an analysis of the work; a foregrounding of my presence within the process of reading the earlier work.

When initially approaching *Roof Piece*, my analysis of the work was framed first and foremost by Trisha Brown's own writing around the piece. I began with her description of the work as a 'simple, semaphore-like movement... continuously transmitted from one dancer to another' (Brown 1975: 26) across a number of city blocks in Lower Manhattan; a game of Chinese whispers with gestures and movements for a sequence of individual dancers each occupying their own separate rooftop. I then identified how Brown intended that this extended structure would result in the impairment of the dancer's 'kinaesthetic and intuitive systems' leading eventually to the 'disintegration and distortion of the original dance.' (Brown 1975: 27)

By beginning with Brown's own terminology and descriptions, I aligned my analysis too closely with her limited perspective on the piece. My consideration of the experience of the work was constrained by a framework laid down by Brown herself, focussed around this particular process of kinaesthetic impairment. I considered Brown's piece within the context of John Cage's similar experiments with sensory impairment, particularly a workshop he led in Marseille in which he arranged a group

of musicians to perform together whilst separated by distances that limited their ability to hear each other, resulting in a deliberate confusion as to 'what was art and what wasn't'. (Cage in Kaye 1996: 20) As such my analysis, whilst nonetheless approaching the work 'from the point of view of enunciation' (de Certeau 1984: xiii) found itself limited to certain tropes within that work already identified by Brown herself. As such the 'footprint' derived from it was too much a function of the conventional archive, without enough emphasis on that footprint as an entirely new entity in its own right. By failing to approach the work with enough 'crookedness', I implicitly undermined the scope of the new piece produced from it.

This really became apparent in the creation of that new work, *Archipelago*. Without a rigorous or comprehensive enough blueprint for the development of this piece, what was consequently produced was only ever a limited engagement with the questions posed by this research project. Too much of the audience's encounter with the city was shaped not as a consequence of my exploration of *Roof Piece*, but secondarily as a result of my adherence to the visible structure of that earlier work. The piece involved a series of pairs of participants each recreating an abstract installation at a different site in the city, using only materials they could find in that site. I created the first installation and then each pair in turn created their new version of the piece in response to the previous installation in the sequence; a game of Chinese whispers with objects played out across the city over the course of a Saturday afternoon. Thus whilst the piece certainly involved some resemblance to the form of *Roof Piece* in its sequence of increasingly distorted figures, the audience's interactions with each other and the city were of an entirely different order to those in the earlier work. Thus the possibilities for my audience to play *in time* with ways of operating in the city were necessarily limited.

As a consequence of this first engagement with *Roof Piece*, in the later parts of this research project more emphasis was placed on the theoretical approach that I brought to the analysis of this material. This was done primarily by foregrounding in my engagement with this earlier work the presence of thinkers beyond the original artist. In particular I focussed on the aforementioned writings of Michel de Certeau, with particular reference to his analysis of the experience of the urban environment,

though additionally I have significantly incorporated the work of Henri Lefebvre, Robert Smithson and Robert Morris into my analyses. This critical context allowed me to approach this work on my own terms, to engage with it crookedly and in so doing to be agent in the construction of new spatial models beyond the terms articulated by the original artist.

The Store

I began working on Claes Oldenburg's *The Store* in May 2010. Again this involved an extensive period of research in New York, focussed mainly around the Museum of Modern Art's Claes Oldenburg archive and incorporating a deliberately broad range of material including newspaper interviews, features and reviews, archive images, video, exhibition programmes, journal articles, retrospectives, critical appraisals and site visits. This material was used to construct a spatial figure that read in the traces of Oldenburg's a structural dualism in the piece's relationship to the city that remains the basis for my final case study.

This approach to *The Store* resulted in a new work-in-progress piece developed first in July 2010 and then again later the same year in September and October. Entitled *CAB*, this piece took the form of a late-night unlicensed minicab service and sound-piece for an audience of up to three people at a time. In developing these early iterations of *CAB* I began to consider unlikely dialogues between the spatial practices conditioned by contemporary digital technologies and these much earlier works. In particular I began to think about the way in which these digital technologies might *stand in for* very different components of this earlier work, nonetheless generating similar ways of operating within the city.

In the context of *The Store* and *CAB*, this consideration was generated out of my experiments in these works-in-progress with the use of an audio piece listened to through headphones as one of the key components of the work. In particular I became interested in the particular spatial relationships generated by contemporary digital

devices such as an iPod or iPhone that allow you to 'shuffle' through a large portable archive of digital music whilst moving around the city.

Listening to music in this peculiarly private, ambient manner functions as a means of modulating our contingent articulation of the geometrically defined urban environment. The music slipping into our experience of the urban landscape through headphones becomes a significant organising factor in our encounter with the city; we become the producers of our own self-consciously filmic urban realities. The addition of the shuffle function adds an explicitly discordant quality to this means of spatial organisation. Its chance distribution of artists and genres instigates a series of what might in cinematic terms be considered 'jump-cuts', fragmenting the continuity of our encounter with the urban environment with a series of dramatic and unpredictable shifts in tone and colour. As such the shuffle instigates a form of explicit spatial destabilisation, the physical lexicon of the city resolving itself into an endless sequence of contradictory 'spaces' conditioned by the chance distribution of the music device's automated playlist. Being confronted in this way with our own private acts of writing and re-writing undermines the possibility of retaining the impression of the city as a 'proper', stable entity.

Through these work-in-progress performances for *CAB* I was able to generate a discourse between this technology and the place that Robert Morris reserved for building sites within his own contemporary metropolis as 'small theatrical arenas', unique within the city as the only places where 'raw substances and the process of their transformation are visible, and the only places where random distribution is tolerated.' (Morris 1995: 69) In both the digital music device and the building site there is a making-explicit of the processes that structure our encounter with the urban environment – the spatial instability concealed in its definite-seeming forms. In reflecting on the similar rhetorical function that this random distribution of music might play to Morris' building site within the lexicon of the contemporary city, I began additionally to consider how other digital technologies such as GPS mapping and Google's 'street view' mapping service are shifting our relationship to the urban environment and how such technologies might similarly generate viable discourses with the spatial practices embedded in these earlier works. Consequently I sought to

remain open to ways in which those technologies could be meaningfully incorporated into the other pieces that constitute this research project.

Juice

Meredith Monk's *Juice* was the final piece I explored as part of this project, beginning in January 2011 with another trip to New York which involved an exploration of the extensive archive stored by Monk's own House Foundation, including silent cine film of the original piece alongside reviews, interviews, original show programmes and other articles related to the project. This resulted in a work-in-progress performance of a new piece entitled *Zilla!* in March, April and May 2011 at the Shunt Bar and Stoke Newington International Airport in London.

This was the largest and most substantial piece that was created as part of this project, the culmination of the methodological process developed over the course of the previous two preliminary studies. I approached *Juice* through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's writing on what he termed 'Rhythmanalysis', using his system for the analysis of durational phenomena as the basis for constructing a spatial framework from *Juice*'s tripartite structure. The new piece produced from this structure, *Zilla!*, was a three part performance piece that like *CAB* utilised digital technologies, in particular Google Street View, to trace the contours of the earlier analogue modes of operating within the city.

As a consequence of coming at this final stage of the first phase of this project, my analysis of *Juice* and concomitant construction of *Zilla!* shifted little between these preliminary stages and the final case study constructed less than four months later in September 2011. However, the development of *Zilla!* certainly emphasised particular aspects of my relationship to Monk's work that subsequently influenced the way in which I re-read the earlier works in the project. This influence manifested itself as a series of shared points of interest that emerged in the development of these final case studies. These changes in emphasis speak of the manner in which both my present performance practice and my understanding of these past performances are shifting in response to the doing of this research project. They demonstrate how the terms of this study have been altered to accommodate particular lines of enquiry and as such these emergent themes describe the construction of a historiographical 'field' for my work.

In the first instance, in these final case studies there emerged a dualism that manifested itself in an understanding of the pieces as both abstract representations of the city within the conventional terms of the authored artistic experience, and non-matrixed encounters disappearing into the contingency of the unbounded urban environment; the domain de Certeau classifies as 'a manifold story without author or spectator'. (de Certeau 1984: 93) In *Juice* this was perhaps most apparent in the way in which the piece produced an abstract representation of the process of locating *oneself* in the city, from the spectacle and multiplicity of perspectives of the Guggenheim to the relative intimacy and isolation of the loft, whilst at the same time requiring a physical journey across the actual metropolis to reach the show's eventual conclusion. In producing my final case studies this navigation between the representational discourse of art and the unbounded, unmediated discourses of the city became an increasingly pronounced element of my work on Monk, Oldenburg and Brown; an 'absolute flow between environment and event' (Kaprow in Schechner 1995: 187) generating moments of rupture in our familiar means of encountering both art and the city.

Another factor that became increasingly pronounced in the final analyses of all these works is the question of repetition and representation. My case studies became increasingly interested in how these earlier pieces play with acts of re-presentation and their relation to what Richard Schechner terms 'twice-behaved behaviour' (Schechner in Schneider 2011: 10) in the quotidian actions and interactions occurring within the urban environment. My engagement with the acts of re-presentation implicit in the re-iterative structure of Monk's *Juice* undoubtedly influenced the way in which I then approached the final studies of both the other pieces. In *Roof Piece* I became more concerned with the relationship between the individual acts of transmission and re-presentation that constitute each link in the sequence of the work, and in *The Store* more emphasis was placed on the audience's representation of the activity of shoppers in the neighbouring area, a parodic and self-conscious repetition that transformed the way the audience approached the city.

As this emphasis on repetition and representation became increasingly pronounced I necessarily became increasingly interested in the role that the audience played within these acts. All three works, it seemed, are to some degree engaged in inviting their audience to self-consciously play out or 'perform' these moments of repetition and re-presentation, with all the concomitant error and mistranslation that such embodied

repetitions necessarily incubate. In part at least my contemporary pieces became a means of inviting the audience to play out these strategies of repetition; an exploration of their potential to impact upon an audience's behaviour. I became interested in what Rebecca Schneider identifies as the potential for such conscious acts of re-presentation to trip 'the otherwise daily condition of repetition into reflexive hyper-drive'. (Schneider 2011: 14) How did these acts of re-presentation manifest themselves in the audience's 'performance' of the work, and what impact did that have on the way that audience produces an experience of the urban environment?

I have tried to briefly document some of the significant shifts that have occurred in the focus of this research project since the development of my methodology. In doing so I hope to provide a context within which the avowedly contingent, embodied and un-representable acts of historiography embedded in the three separate performances that constitute this research project might be considered in relation to one another. A framework within which those performances might generate a discourse around my ever-changing relationship to this earlier period.

iii. THREE CASE STUDIES (PART 2)

In the following section I will outline in detail the construction of each individual case study. In the first instance this will involve analysing the traces of the original work as a means of generating a spatial framework for a new performance. As has previously been stated, this analysis will be structured in three stages; a consideration of the 'place' in which that work is physically located, how the work is visibly constituted within that landscape as a 'site' and finally how this relationship between the work and the city might generate a contingent experience of space for the audience member. Following this analysis I will outline in practical terms how I devised a new performance around this spatial framework. This will involve a description of how specific elements of this new performance map the framework derived from my earlier analysis, with some explanation as to how the decisions made in that process relate to my earlier practice and the work of some of the other artists within my contemporary performance community.

a. Trisha Brown's Roof Piece

This analysis of *Roof Piece* begins with a consideration of the rooftop itself as an architectural figure within the city. Following Michel de Certeau, it is suggested that the rooftop presents an artificially scopic and panoramic impression of the urban environment, determined not by action and interaction but by visibility and power. In this context the object-like dance produced in *Roof Piece* by the transmission of a simple unit of movement across a number of city blocks is considered mimetic of this same rooftop perspective on the city. Seemingly existing as a coherent whole, the dance is a scopic simulacrum that feeds the voluptuous desire to both see and control. Yet at the same time as the dancer's body is being reduced to a textual component of a greater whole, the very fallibility of that body reintroduces error into the process and the illusion of a visible unity breaks down.

For each dancer in the sequence the spectre of a single unified dance is undermined by their own fallibility as interpreters and the piece becomes instead a myriad of private re-writings; a text without author or spectator. As such I seek to demonstrate how for its performers on their isolated rooftops, the experience could be said to rehearse the dismantling of a certain way of looking at and operating within the city that is, through de Certeau, implicitly associated with the elevated perspective that they occupy.

Place

What relationship do you have to a city from its rooftops?

Perhaps the most celebrated description of the experience of looking down on a city from above is that which begins Michel de Certeau's chapter on 'Walking in the City' from *The Practise of Everyday life*. Here de Certeau stands on the 110th floor of one of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre and describes the view of the city undulating away beneath him like a 'sea in the middle of the sea':

A wave of verticals. Its agitation is momentarily arrested by vision. The gigantic mass is immobilized before the eyes. (de Certeau 1984: 91)

For de Certeau this elevated view point has a dislocating effect, removing the watcher from any experience of the city as a living entity. Removed from the busyness of the streets, the city becomes something to look at, not something to live in; a 'stage of concrete, steel and glass, cut out between two oceans (the Atlantic and the American)'. (de Certeau 1984: 91) The city has been transformed into a texturology, the 'tallest letters in the world [composing] a gigantic rhetoric of excess.' (de Certeau 1984: 91) As such the myriad activity of the streets is effaced by the totalizing singularity of this panopticonic gaze. High above the noise of the streets, the watcher gazes down on a vast matrix of architectural figures; the urban landscape reconfigured as a single material text, rather than the infinite, unknowable accumulation of acts and interactions and encounters that constitute our everyday experience of it. From way up here New York becomes readable (and hence comprehensible) in its entirety.

De Certeau suggests there is a 'voluptuous pleasure' to be had in consuming this immobilized vision of the city. A transcendental ecstasy in escaping the 'bewitching' world of the streets to reach a place that allows the spectator to rationalise this 'most immoderate of human texts':

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Centre is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. (de Certeau 1984: 92)

For de Certeau then, this way of looking at the city is symptomatic of a particular kind of 'scopic and Gnostic drive;' (de Certeau 1984: 92) the desire to locate oneself outside of the city's dense network of places and relations as a means of understanding it, even achieving mastery over it. This mastery is for de Certeau a triumph of the certainties place over the vacillations of time; a function of the kind of power that allows one 'a mastery of places through sight':

The division of space makes possible a panoptic practice proceeding from a place whence the eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and "include" them within its scope of vision. (de Certeau 1984: 36)

From up on the 110th floor, at the level of penthouses and director's offices, the evasiveness and unpredictability of the city is transformed into a readable space

written by architects and city planners. The certainty of concrete and glass rehearsing the mastery of the powerful over the multitude that walks below.

Crucially however this totalizing view of the city remains a fiction; a voyeuristic fantasy that feeds a human desire to control the uncontrollable. The city that we gaze down on is never more than a *representation* of the city. A labyrinth of architectural figures bleached of the actors who animate them; the vision of a text lacking any act of reading or articulation.

The panorama-city is a “theoretical” (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices.... The ordinary practitioners of the city live “down below,” below the thresholds at which visibility begins. (de Certeau 1984: 93)

To mistake this representation of the city for the city itself is to misunderstand our place within the urban environment. It is through our actions and interactions that the city is produced. It is always caught in the act of its own creation; shaped by an intricate plurality of alterations and altercations. A restless text forever being written by actors who, when glimpsed from high above, are so easily lost amongst the buildings.

The view from the 110th floor is symptomatic of what de Certeau considers the fantasy of knowledge and power. This elevated perspective becomes a means of representing the gap between the false vision of the city as a concrete edifice created by the powerful, and its apparent reality as a network of places and relations produced through the daily activity of the ‘common man’ to whom *The Practice of Everyday Life* is dedicated.

This understanding of what constitutes a city, and in particular the city of New York, is essential to unpicking the spatial relationships that structure *Roof Piece*. In lifting her dancers up into the rooftops and away from the discordance of the street, Trisha Brown invites her dancers into a similar (mis)reading of the urban environment. As de Certeau would do a decade later from his much higher vantage point, Brown transcends the busyness of the city-as-event and effects its transformation into an image; a vast stage set of ‘concrete, steel and glass’. (de Certeau 1984: 92)

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Babette Mangolte's seminal photograph, taken on July 1 1973 during the piece's third and final iteration and first published in the New York Times shortly afterwards. (Mangolte 2007) As Mangolte herself identifies, the line of dancer Silvia Palacios-Whitman's back in the foreground strikingly echoes the angle of the rooftop, accentuating the geometry of the physical environment. Brown and her dances reflect the shapes and lines of this undulating cityscape, revealing 'the majesty and privacy of downtown roofs and the sculptural effect of its water towers.' (Mangolte 2007) This is a dance not with people but with buildings, an articulation of the city as a series of static architectural and sculptural figures; a vision of 'glistening white roofs and massive water tower that dwarf the bodies.' (Mangolte 2007)

Brown's piece, then, might be said to acknowledge the peculiar dislocation of its elevated perspective on the city through this interplay of choreography and architecture. Despite the piece breaching the walls of the conventional theatre space and spreading out over the distance of twelve city blocks, it makes no attempt to extend itself downwards into the streets below. The dancers remain isolated figures on their separate rooftops, performing in sympathy with what de Certeau might term the gigantic urban mass immobilized before their eyes. Consequently an initial mapping of the relationship that this piece conditions with the city must acknowledge that it sets up in the first instance an explicitly limited conception of what constitutes the city. A dance with a simulacrum no less 'theoretical' than the elaborate stage sets more commonly associated with proscenium theatre.

Yet at the same time as seemingly perpetuating this representational vision of the urban landscape, the form that Brown's choreography takes would seem to undermine it, reflecting not only the 'voluptuous pleasure' (de Certeau 1984: 92) in consuming a totalized vision of the city, but playing out the inevitable failure of that scopic desire.

Site

In analysing the structure of the *Roof Piece* I want to focus on its first iteration in November 1971, as a 'private performance' (Brown 1975: 26) for a group of eleven dancers led by Brown herself. It is in this form, with each participant/dancer sharing the implicitly twinned roles of spectator and performer, that the piece presents perhaps the most interesting relationship to the urban environment surrounding it; a relationship structured around what might best be considered an embodied event score enacted individually by each dancer. The seated audience present for the 1973 performances of *Roof Piece* shift the emphasis towards a more conventional relationship between performer and spectator and consequently dilute the efficacy of the piece as an event score enacted by the dancers on their isolated Manhattan rooftops.

Considered in its first iteration *Roof Piece* is a chain of repeated actions extended across twelve blocks of lower Manhattan; a sequence of 'simple, semaphore-like movement... continuously transmitted from one dancer to another, each stationed on separate roofs.' (Brown 1975: 26) The simplicity of these movements emphasises what Brown considered the self-contained, object-like nature of the dance; a unit of action to be replicated as exactly as possible by each dancer in the sequence.

Brown's reference to 'semaphore-like' movements in the piece immediately suggests the possibility of the dance as a coherent visual text; a static code extended across rooftops. As with Brown's earlier work the focus is on 'the dance and not the dancer;' (Brown in Goldberg 1986: 160) *Roof Piece* becomes a rhetorical figure whose texturology transcends any specific bodily articulation. In her description of the piece Babette Mangolte too highlights the telegraphic quality of the piece, referring to the extension of the dance across the New York skyline in terms of a textual 'transmission' from one dancer to the next:

Trisha was sending the movement down the line to Carmen Beuchat at the receiving end on White Street. After 15 minutes Trisha ducked below the ledge of the roof signalling to all the dancers on their rooftops that it was time for them to face South to be ready to transmit the movement originated by Carmen Beuchat on White Street back to Trisha Brown on the receiving end of the line.

The total piece was two times fifteen minutes or thirty minutes plus duck-time.
(Mangolte 2007)

Whereas Brown implies a semaphore-like transmission from one dancer to the next, here Mangolte suggests an even more direct and physical telegraphy. The dance connecting the dancers via an imagined thread or a telephone line extending right across twelve blocks of lower Manhattan, from sender to receiver. In this way *Roof Piece* presents at least *the possibility* of the dance existing as a comprehensible whole; a self-contained unit of movement occupying space across the New York skyline.

However, considering the explicit impossibility of actually comprehending the totality of the dance from any given rooftop, this impression of telegraphic extension across the city, relies upon a particular way of looking at the dance. As Robert Morris makes apparent in the context of his own minimalist sculptures, this impression of coherency is a consequence not of a direct *embodied* engagement with the world, but instead an assumed representation of the world based on what we can see before us.

Belief in this sense is both a kind of faith in spatial extension and a visualisation of that extension. In other words, it is those aspects of apprehension that are not coexistent with the visual field but rather the result of the experience of the visual field. (Morris 1995: 226)

It is significant here that Morris notes the importance of perception in this process. Morris describes an encounter not with the world as it is but as it appears to be through our experience of the visual field. We look and through looking assume a shape for that which remains unseen. As such the act of looking becomes implicitly associated not with the perception of reality but with the production of *a simulacrum* of the real.

The shapes of the dancers on their rooftops when considered purely as a visual spectacle satisfy our voluptuous desire for knowledge by offering the possibility of an imagined whole; a simulacrum that in the imagination extends across the rooftops of the city. As de Certeau might have it, the eye transforms foreign forces into objects that can be perceived and thus controlled, included within our scope of vision.

In this way the structure of the piece reflects the experience of the city from the rooftops on which it is situated. In its emphasis on the dance object rather than the dancer, Brown rehearses the process of disembodiment and theoreticization of the city that occurs from this elevated perspective. Like the city itself, the dance becomes a visual simulacrum; a totalizing texturology that satisfies the desire to see the whole, and consequently to master it.

Space

Here however, it is important to re-emphasise that in this initial *private performance* it was only the dancers themselves that has this privileged perspective from the rooftops of Lower Manhattan. Without a dedicated audience the dancers occupy the role of both spectator and performer. They are watchers but they must at the same time be do-ers. And it is in this interrelation between looking and doing that the piece produces its own equivalent of de Certeau's Icharus-like descent into the streets below.

Roof Piece was constructed around a series of improvised movements dictated by the first dancer in the sequence, Trisha Brown herself. The dancers had no prior knowledge of what these moves would be. Isolated on their individual rooftops by at least the space of a city block, each dancer was required to read the movements of the distant figure in front of them, a process that Brown would later use more explicitly in *Lateral Pass* in which the dancer's explicitly read Brown's body 'like a score'. (Brown in Goldberg 1986: 162) Thus in the first instance the dancers are cast as spectators, observing the movements being performed in front of them. Over such a long distance each dancer is required to be entirely concentrated on watching, on reading the semaphore-like movements being transmitted to them.

This visual score places the emphasis outside of the dancers. Rather than relying on the muscle memory of rehearsed gestures or responding through movement to their own presence in a particular space, their focus is on the act of *reading* the movements on the rooftop in front of them. The dancers were encouraged to 'work

diligently' (Brown 1975: 27) to maintain the accuracy of this reading, without recourse to personal interpretation or athletic virtuosity. As such their bodily presence as dancers is subjugated to the experience of the visual field. Their focus is on the representation of that which they see in front of them, on maintaining the accuracy and coherency of the dance-object as it passes through them.

In this context it is useful to remember that as well as being isolated by at least the space of a city block, each dancer can only see the back of the dancer in front of them. The body of the dancer has been reduced to a texturology, a vessel for the transmission of this unit of movement. In the eye of diligently observing dancer, the dance, like the city itself, is transformed from network of interrelations into an object to be observed and mastered. The relationship of one dancer to the next is thus crucially dis-embodied. The dancers' focus remains the dance itself and its imagined telegraphy down this chain of transmitters. The necessity to 'work diligently' in maintaining the accuracy of the dance reinforces the impression of the dance as a coherent object, larger than themselves, dictating and limiting their movement; a predetermined physical entity that they are operating within.

It is at this point however that the body re-enters the work, or to be more accurate it is through the body's failure to effectively maintain this dance unit that it asserts its presence. Whilst each dancer is encouraged to replicate these observed movements as accurately as possible, the task of doing so with absolute accuracy over such distances is impossible. It is at this moment of bodily interference that the object-like nature of the dance begins to break down.

The intuitive and kinaesthetic systems were impaired by the distance between buildings. Details and nuances were lost, or incorrectly translated, forcing an eventual disintegration and distortion of the original dance. (Trisha Brown 1975: 27)

It is important to note here Brown's emphasis on kinaesthetic impairment. It is the body itself which is causing interference in the transmission. The presence of the imperfect body undermines the exactitude of the dance as a visual simulacra; a self-contained unit of movement. The integrity of the larger whole is undermined by the performer's fallibility in a way that has been implicitly built into the structure of the

piece. As errors are compounded by further errors the impression of the dance as a coherent and stable entity becomes untenable and the object-dance disintegrates.

The dancer's body is a faulty transmitter, and the faults in that transmission necessarily shift attention back to *the process of transmission* and away from that which is being transmitted. As the dance object breaks down each dancer's body becomes the site of their own contingent iteration of the piece. As is clear both from Brown's score and Mangolte's description of the piece as a test of 'the erosion of movement', (Mangolte 2007) these errors were not to be considered aberrations but as an integral component of the dance. Through the incorporation of this degree of fallibility into the dance, the dancers re-emerge as *producers* rather than its transmitters. The further that the initial vision of an overriding transmittable unit of movement is eroded, the more the dance is reconceptualised as the product of each dancer's litany of misreadings and misarticulations.

What thus remains of the dance is, as in de Certeau's description of the bustling streets of the city, a network of 'moving, intersecting writings' composing 'a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces.' (de Certeau 1984: 93) Each embodied act of interpretation becomes its own independent narrative; a contingent component of a fragmented whole. As such the notion of conceiving of a coherent impression of the dance in its entirety from the limited amount that each dancer can see is problematised; counteracted by the awareness of that the when danced rather than imagined, the dance becomes a network of embodied misinterpretations that are as unpredictable as they are unseeable. The spectre of 'the dance' is held in check by the dancer's awareness of their own process of enunciation.

The space between any two of these dancers is marked through the errors in transmission that that space engenders in each dancer's re-articulation of the score they are reading. Through their kinaesthetic impairment the dancer literally traces the gap between themselves and the dancer they are observing and writes that distance on their own body. As such this bodily fallibility becomes a way of re-locating the

dancer in relation to the city around them; a means of anchoring the performer back in the real.

Each dancer's twinned roles as spectator and performer consequently effect a dismantling of the dance as a visually-orientated representation, from out of which emerges an experience of the dance as an evasive network of contingent interactions. Trisha Brown effects a collision of object and process; the impression of the dance as a coherent text projected across the cityscape is undermined by the fallible enunciation of that text by each dancer in the sequence. As such the dancer's are confronted with the disintegration of a particular way of looking at the dance. The seeming order and coherency of the piece is washed away by the multiple possibilities of its articulation. Such a description undoubtedly chimes with Monica Sulzman's description of performing in Trisha Brown's 1975 studio piece *Locus*:

The seminal structure of *Locus* is the cube. One of its properties, in the context of the piece, is the view it affords me, from within, of the vast, expanded structure of the entire dance. All around me plain and obstinate order overflows with boundless and startling possibilities. (Sulzman 1978: 122)

Here the initial simplicity of the structure of the piece presents the impression of a visible totality undermined, or indeed overwhelmed, by the boundless indeterminacy of its articulation. As has already been alluded to, this shift parallels that which de Certeau suggests occurs for the city-dweller as they descend from an elevated view of the immobilized city to once again become Wandersmänner; walkers of the thick and thin of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it.

As such the piece effects a transformation in its performer/spectators that necessarily has a bearing on their relationship to the city. In the first instance the dance binds itself to a particular way of looking at the city associated with the privileged view of the distant streets afforded the dancers from their separate rooftops. From here the city and the dance are imagined as definite figures; readable texts composed of perpendicular and parallel lines. Caught in this disembodied gaze, both become visual and theoretical simulacra; scopic representations of a network of contingent processes. For de Certeau, the knowledge of both the city and the dance that this way

of looking formulates is always a fantasy of knowledge; an imagined mastery produced by privileging the theoretical *langue* over its myriad evasive articulations.

Yet as has been identified this way of considering both the dance and the city is undermined in the earliest iteration of *Roof Piece* by the insistence on the piece remaining a 'private performance' in which the only spectators are the performers themselves. Like the participants in a happening, the dancers cannot dissociate the dance itself from their role in producing it. The extension of the dance across such improbable distances creates a desired degree of imprecision in the act of re-producing the dance which serves to further undermine its seeming coherency as a text or object. In the disintegration of one way of perceiving the dance (and the city bound up with it) is suggested the possibility of a different way of understanding of it; not as a single entity but as an accumulation of disparate actions and interactions. The dancer is thus relocated in relation to the dance occurring around and through them; not a consumer or transmitter of a pre-described entity but one of a plurality of writers of an indeterminate and unreadable text. As such this act of relocation prefigures that which de Certeau suggests is a consequence of the descent into the dark streets below, and the numerous contingent acts of writing that constitute them.

The piece thus serves as an echo and an encapsulation of the participants' relationship with the city. A synecdoche for the movement between the conception of the city as an concrete edifice and a matrix of disparate enunciations that de Certeau would later frame around a similar physical transcendence of Manhattan's busy streets.

b. Archipelago

The first task I faced in producing a new piece from the spatial figure derived from *Roof Piece* was in considering the centrality that the elevated 'rooftop' view afforded by the work has on my analysis of it. In my reading, this perspective, both literal and figurative, is implicitly associated with the possibility of the piece itself existing as a

coherent totality; a single visible entity spread out across the city. Yet for both logistical and artistic reasons I felt uncertain about directly replicating this same elevated view.

Instead I considered an alternative, more contemporary means by which we generate a similar impression of the city as a coherent and visible whole, through GPS mapping and in particular Google maps. As smart phones become increasingly pervasive, Google maps becomes a fundamental facet of our knowledge and understanding of the city. Its permanent presence on our phone and in our pocket realises the de Certeauian dream of the city rendered as a visible, readable texturology even as we walk its busy streets.

In order to foreground this perspective on the city my piece, *Archipelago*, would begin with each participant being sent via email or text message a set of co-ordinates. By inputting these into the Google maps function on a smart phone, the participant could direct themselves to a phone box which would serve as their private 'rooftop' for the piece. As such, from the outside the participant is considering the city in similarly pictorial terms to the dislocated panorama presented from the city's roofs.

The piece itself is then constituted by a literal chain of transmissions from one phone box to the next across the city. At the same time they are sent the co-ordinates, each participant is also given two phone numbers, each corresponding to other nearby phone boxes to the East and to the West. In the first instance they are required to use the phone they navigated themselves there with to call the first number, connecting them with another phone box to the west of them. The first call is made by me, not from a phone box but from a studio, and the others move in sequence from East to West till the final caller is returning the call back to a different number in my studio. Once all the connections are made I begin transmission of a recorded story which each participant is required to dictate as they are hearing it to the next phone box in the sequence. After ten minutes everyone hangs up and the chain is reconnected flowing in the other direction.

Here then the piece attempts to affect a similar impression of unity and coherency to that of *Roof Piece*. There is posited the possibility that this story exists as a stable entity, transmitted across the city from one participant to the next, each of which is required to maintain accuracy to the best of their abilities. Similarly the use of London's distinctive phone boxes, like the striking red of Brown's costumes, is

intended to encourage a projection of the piece out across the real streets of London. As such the sense of the work as a coherent and readable whole is bound up with the same way of looking at the wider city.

Crucially however it is not possible to maintain the accuracy of this transmission. The crackle of the telephone line and the background noise of the streets serve the same purpose as the physical distances in Brown's work, generating an aural impairment that manifests itself in each individual participant's attempts to listen and recite as clearly as possible. In the *performance* of the piece its seeming unity is broken down and each participant creates their own retelling of the initial text. Crucially, as with the version of *Roof Piece* I analysed, because there is no audience bar the participants themselves, there is no privileging of any version of this text. The intended consequence of this is that for the participants the piece undergoes a shift from the simulacrum of a coherent authored entity to an unstable plurality of contingent re-writings.

Archipelago like *Roof Piece* becomes a means by which to destabilise the scopic fiction of a coherent readable city. The error written into this chain of telephonic transmissions resists the illusory clarity of the digitally mapped urban landscape in the same way Brown's dancers challenged the de Certeau myth of their elevated perspective. As such both works could be said to function as challenges to perspectives on the city that are implicitly embedded within the form of the works themselves.

c. Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*

This analysis begins with a consideration of the city of New York as an urban landscape perpetually caught in the process of reinventing itself. This reinvention is identified in the writings of Oldenburg and others from this period with the figure of the building site and its associated debris; temporary ruptures within the smooth running of the city that are redolent of what de Certeau considers to be its essential instability.

I will argue that this instability manifests itself in *The Store's* dualistic construction as both store and gallery. These figures describe opposing relationships to the urban environment; the former encouraging a disappearance into the quotidian activity of the city, the latter generating a circumscribed 'non-site' in which the city becomes an abstract representation. I will suggest that this dualism results in a new kind of performative encounter with the urban environment, in which the parodic artificiality of Oldenburg's theatrical store is written over the real streets of the city; a making strange of the audiences' relationship to this over-familiar landscape. The uncanny experience produced as a consequence is considered in the context of Robert Smithson's similarly hyper-citational journey through the city of Passaic in New Jersey. As such *The Store* destabilises the seeming fixity of the city in manner that is at once shocking and strange.

Place

In *The Practise of Everyday Life*, de Certeau suggests that the experience of the modern city is defined by an inability to satisfactorily locate ourselves within its imagined totality. In walking the city we are adrift, caught in the perpetual process of writing ourselves onto the city without ever resolving that into the experience of a stable text. Our 'bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it.' (de Certeau 1984: 93)

For de Certeau, this experience of restless instability finds its apotheosis in the figure of New York, the embodiment of the American dream of glorious reinvention, a city forever in the process of rewriting itself.

Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future. A city composed of paroxysmal places in monumental reliefs. The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding. (de Certeau 1984: 91)

De Certeau offers a portrait of New York in which even the 'proper' place of the city is in a perpetual state of transformation, caught in a dialectical back-and-forth with the myriad contradictory attempts to locate it. The instability of the individual's performance of place articulated in the ever-changing fabric of the physical landscape they are attempting to grasp. This is a city defined by its lack of stability, by *movement*.

Despite being written nearly thirty years after Oldenburg's *Store* was opened this image of a city caught in a cycle of restless reinvention is hugely resonant with contemporaneous descriptions of the New York of the early 60s, particularly the area of Lower Manhattan 'below fourteenth street' (Rose 1979: 27) in which Oldenburg lived and worked. *The Store* was located on 107 East Second Street in the midst of the area of Manhattan known as the Lower East Side, a notorious slum of cheap, dirty red brick tenements, gaudy shop fronts and overcrowded roads jammed with cars from Brooklyn spilling over the Williamsburg Bridge.

During the 50s and 60s this area was largely defined by a period of substantial physical and social transformation. The Lower East side was the locus of a number of large slum clearance programmes enacted by controversial housing commissioner Robert Moses. These included such major developments as the Corlears Hook, (1950-1958) part of the East River Project, which cleared thirteen acres of decaying slums in the Williamsburg Bridge area of Lower Manhattan. (Garvin 1980: 76-77) At the same time the area was also subject to large scale movements in and out of the neighbourhood, with poor communities of black, white and Hispanic background all moved wholesale as areas of Manhattan were earmarked for development. (Garvin 1980: 76-77) Once people had been moved, those buildings that were not yet being developed simply sat empty.

In his writing of the period, Oldenburg acknowledges the stark physical manifestation of this ongoing process of shift in the 'brutalized environment' (Oldenburg 1988: 89) of rubble and building sites that surrounded him day to day:

When I lived in the Lower East Side there was a great deal of tearing down going on, especially between where I lived and where I worked. So I could pass through all these ruins all the time. (Oldenburg in Shannon 2009: 23)

These very physical manifestations of a landscape in flux presented a particular fascination to the artists of this period. In part at least this would appear to be a consequence of the fact that these moments of rupture in the seeming orderliness of the city articulate a wider sense of restlessness and instability in the spatial experience of the modern metropolis. In his *Notes on Sculpture* Robert Morris for example approvingly describes New York's construction sites as 'small theatrical arenas':

The only places where raw substances and the process of their transformation are visible, and the only places where random distribution is tolerated. (Morris 1995: 69)

In the construction site the city is articulated *as a process*, a physical manifestation of a perpetual state of disorder and shift that the finished edifices work so hard to conceal. In his description of the unfinished New Jersey turnpike, Tony Smith similarly emphasises the ability of such construction sites to articulate the unbounded, unstable urban landscape in a way that 'pictorial' art is singularly incapable of doing; what Smith termed a reality 'which had not had any expression in art'. In both these cases the building site resonates with the artist as a visual or literal expression of their transient, unstable experience of place. The building site is the point at which the material fabric of the city belies its seeming permanence to articulate itself as a *process* of perpetual transformation.

Like Morris and Smith, Oldenburg's writings attest to his fascination with this shifting social and physical landscape. Through financial expediency and creative curiosity, Oldenburg found himself during his time on the Lower East Side in the late 50s and early 60s at the epicentre of one of the greatest periods of spatial re-configuration in the history of a city which, according to Michel de Certeau at least, is defined by its refusal to consolidate any singular vision of itself. Oldenburg's experience is symptomatic of a restlessness which defines New York in particular and large modern

cities more generally. A metropolitan malaise in which we find ourselves adrift in an unstable present, unable to locate ourselves in any reassuringly definite place.

Site

In *Site-Specific Art* Nick Kaye unpicks the dualism inherent in the way Oldenburg constructs and frames Oldenburg's *Store*, as both 'a 'real' (functioning) store *and* a 'real' (functioning) gallery'. (Kaye 2000: 114) Neither of these articulations predominates in the structuring of the space, rather *The Store* 'plays on or through the *difference* between these sites'. (Kaye 2000: 114) Indeed *The Store* is defined by this movement between cohabiting yet contradictory spatial organizations; 'so Oldenburg becomes salesman *and* artist, the visitor customer *and* viewer, and the object commercial product *and* artwork.' (Kaye 2000: 114) As such, *The Store* embodies an evasiveness of meaning, an unlocatability, a fluctuation between mutually unstable readings of its form and function.

Each of these *readings*, is in part at least a product of the geographical place in which *The Store* is located, whilst at the same time codifying a particular spatial relationship to that place. What I want to unpick here, then, is how each of these articulations of *The Store* (as real (functioning) store *and* real (functioning) gallery) relate to the sense of place outlined in part one.

To do so I want to initially consider briefly another later 'site-specific' piece by Oldenburg, *Moveyhouse* from 1965, in which Oldenburg affects a similar conceptual dualism to that identified above in *The Store*. Oldenburg called *Moveyhouse* 'a happening of place', (Oldenburg 2005: 87) a fragmentary construction born out of its setting in an old movie theatre on 41 Street, New York. In this piece, presented alongside new happenings by Robert Whitman and Robert Rauschenberg, Oldenburg had the audience stand in the aisle of the old movie theatre whilst performers sitting in the seats performed actions described on cue cards distributed by a cinema 'usher'. In doing so Oldenburg diverges significantly from Rauschenberg and Whitman who both created more 'stage orientated' (Oldenburg 2005: 80) pieces for the cinema, with

the audience sitting in the theatre's seats and the action taking place on a raised area at the front of the auditorium. Thus whilst they both minimised the presence of the site itself in favour of the theatrical 'picture', in taking the audience out of the seats Oldenburg re-directs their attention to the building itself. Yet at the same time as incorporating the 'real' site into the piece, Oldenburg seeks to use the activity of the happening to suggest 'an abstraction of an actual movie theatre.' (Oldenburg 2005: 69) The cinema becomes an environment in which the *idea* of a cinema is mapped through the random distribution of actions ('applaud', 'open coke', 'laugh out loud') and symbols (a Mickey Mouse hat, cigarettes, white gloves) associated with it.

I want to read *The Store* slightly against the grain not as an environment or an exhibition but as a 'happening of place' structured in its relation to that place in a similar manner to the later *Moveyhouse*.

Importantly, however, in this formulation the place occupied and abstracted by Oldenburg's 'happening' is not a store as a discrete commercial unit within the neighbourhood, but rather that wider neighbourhood in its totality. Again following de Certeau I want to suggest that Oldenburg's *Store* functions as *synecdoche*, expanding 'a spatial element in order to make it play the role of a "more" (a totality) and take its place'. (de Certeau 1984: 101) *The Store* is the neighbourhood, a spatial device for referring to a larger whole. It *stands in* for the totality, serving as a means of referring to, engaging with and mapping the expanded place it inhabits.

As such *The Store*'s functioning as 'a real store' and as 'a real gallery' exist not simply in the dualistic relation that they bear to each other but also in the movement between different formulations of place. Considered as a 'happening', or a process-based encounter for artist and audience with the Lower East Side, the 'relationship of *difference*' (Kaye 2000: 114) that Nick Kaye suggests structures *The Store*, is re-articulated as the interplay of two cohabiting and yet divergent articulations of the city.

Returning then to the model set out by *Moveyhouse*, *The Store* as a store might serve the same function as Oldenburg's foregrounding of the physical space of the cinema. Its form is a reflection of the environment in which it is located. It seeks to project itself as being in a direct relationship with the businesses and the community that surrounds it. This attempted submersion extends to Oldenburg's role as the proprietor of his store, paying the bills, manning the store and living in the neighbourhood, undifferentiated from the working-class people and activity of the Lower East Side. As Oldenburg states:

In handling plaster and enamel I was behaving like the painter who was at the same time painting my stairway. When I carry my plaster and paints up the stairs, the neighbours assume I am improving my home. (Oldenburg 1967: 62)

Oldenburg seeks to *disappear* into the neighbourhood. His artistic activity reflecting the daily social activity of the Lower East Side. By implicating himself and his store within the fabric of the neighbourhood in this way, Oldenburg necessarily displaces attention away from *The Store* as a limited, contained entity, outwards into an unbounded sense of place. It asks to be considered only within the context in which it is found, to be considered as implicitly *a part of that context*. It inhabits the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood inhabits it. As such it serves as a foregrounding of the environment in a manner akin to the shifting of the shifting of the audience out of the cinema seats in *Moveyhouse*, encouraging in the first instance a direct and unmediated encounter with place.

The same is undoubtedly not the case in considering the store *as a gallery*. In this context *The Store* suggests an entirely contrary relationship with place, dislocated from the neighbourhood, existing in a realm of representation which is fundamentally at odds with its surrounding context. As Oldenburg has stated, *as a gallery* the piece articulated an estrangement from the 'brutalized environment' in which it was located:

Oldenburg: At the time I came to New York in 1956, I was forced to go into the rather brutalized environment of the Lower East Side, experience, and share that. It's maybe ridiculous that an artist should then try to present that experience in an art exhibition. The Store was ironic and recognized the fact that you couldn't really do that sort of thing.

[Roy] Lichtenstein: The masses were not going to buy it.

Oldenburg: The people who were going to buy it were Ileana Sonnabend and Leo Castelli. If you're dealing with transformation – transformed things – you are limiting your audience. (Oldenburg 1988: 89)

Here Oldenburg is explicit in his acknowledgement of the fact that as a gallery *The Store* is dealing in transformations; it is a space of abstractions. The environment of *The Store* functions as a visible, even theatrical representation of the surrounding neighbourhood. As with all Oldenburg's creations, forms collapse into each other. A jumble of scales and perspectives, the objects of the store are at once purchasable objects and the dislocated images of those objects displayed across the city in gaudy advertisements of varying sizes, from billboards to shop windows. At the same time their crude construction (lumpy plaster shapes and cheap, dripping enamel paint) and their random distribution across the space recall Robert Morris' description of the city's building sites as 'the only places where raw substances and the process of their transformation are visible'. (Robert Morris 1995) In *The Store* is articulated the experience of the Lower East Side in abstract, a cavalcade of images and forms and ideas articulating Oldenburg's encounter with the surrounding environment. As he himself states of one particular journey through the neighbourhood:

As we drove, I remember having the vision of "The Store". I saw, in my mind's eye, a complete environment based on this theme. Again, it seemed to me that I had discovered a new world. (Oldenburg in Rublowski 1965: 65)

This re-articulation in absentia of an encounter with place evokes in its construction Robert Smithson's definition of a *non-site* as 'a limited (mapped) revision of the original unbounded state'. (Smithson in Kaye 200: 93)

The container is in a sense a fragment itself, something that could be called a three-dimensional map. Without appeal to "gestalts" or "anti-form," it actually exists as a fragment of a greater fragmentation. It is a three-dimensional *perspective* that has broken away from the whole, while containing the lack of its own containment. There are no mysteries in these vestiges, no traces of an end or a beginning. (Smithson 1996: 90)

Like Smithson's *non-sites*, *The Store* is a fragment. It exists in isolation from the site to which it refers; as Oldenburg states, '[t]he aim of putting the store in an actual neighbourhood is to *contrast* it to the actual object [...] not as might be though in neorealist terms to point up similarities'. (Oldenburg 1967: 81) Whilst as a store, *The Store* articulated its desire to be considered implicitly *a part* of the place in which it is located, as a gallery it gestures towards that place *in its absence*. Indeed, it speaks of that absence, of the unavailability of the site to which it refers. As Smithson states, the

Non Site is 'a map that will take you somewhere, but when you get there you won't really know where you are'. (Smithson in Kaye 2000: 98)

The Store, then, articulates an encounter place as a movement between paradoxical positions. The site is at once unbounded and contained. It is disappearing into the contingent interactions of the city, and it is a visible representation of that impenetrable network of interactions. It is somewhere and nowhere; a site and a *Non Site*. A gesture outwards towards the quotidian experience of the Lower East Side and a theatrical abstraction that unpicks any notion of that place as any knowable totality.

Space

If, as has been identified, the structure of *The Store* could be said to be constituted by two contradictory means of encountering space, it is in the body of the audience member that these positions are necessarily reconciled, in that audience's unwitting performance within what I am choosing to consider a 'happening of place'. From this perspective *The Store* (upper case) must be considered as an event unfolding in time and as such constituted not simply by the time spent in the store (lower case) but also by the movement to and from that site. As Oldenburg himself states, the show is always constituted by a period that encompasses 'before as well as during... a look into one's continuous daily activity.' (Oldenburg 1967: 15) Indeed, it is this engagement with the audience's 'continuous daily activity' that will become crucial to the experience of the work.

The activity encompassed by *The Store* might reasonably be broken down into three interrelated units of movement.

1. Coming to *The Store*
2. In *The Store*
3. Leaving *The Store*

In the first and last of these movements, *The Store's* 'disappearance' into the surrounding neighbourhood solicits a familiar way of operating within the urban

environment from its audience. Returning again to the example of *Moveyhouse*, this is a 'positioning' of the audience to consider not the circumscribed space of art, but the unbounded 'real' space of the city, which they navigate as they would on any other errand or outing. Yet due to the fact that *The Store* is structured so explicitly as a parodic playing-out of a visit to a store, in venturing out to find it, the audience are always already participating in its performance of place.

This is made explicit as the audience enter the store itself. Here their participation is foregrounded; they move around the store, picking up objects and examining them, acknowledging Oldenburg as the storekeeper, from whom they purchase their goods. Yet there is always a symbolic 'theatricality' to this activity; a degree of imitation and repetition that troubles the authenticity of each gesture. As with the material Smithson's *non-sites*, this is activity dislocated from its usual context and thus rendered artificial and meaningless; a set of familiar gestures and actions that lead you nowhere in particular. This is perhaps most explicit in the fact that these gaudy plaster of Paris representations cost, according to Grace Glueck writing eight years later in the *New York Times*, more than double the \$60 a month it took to rent the space itself; 'a plate of meat for \$399.98, oranges for \$279.89, a sandwich for \$149.98, a man's sock for \$199.95.' (Glueck 1969: 29) Here, the act of purchasing items from a store is re-configured through the transformation of those objects into works of art whose value is no longer a seemingly a function of the object itself, thus the transaction becomes, in part at least symbolic and abstracted. Oldenburg himself also highlighted the parodic nature of this performance in *Store Days* with his own list of '13 Incidents at the Store', (Oldenburg 1967: 20) a fluxus-like itemisation of potential in-store scenarios, highlighting their artificiality within this abstracted pantomime of mundane urban activity.

The perceptual flux of this second unit of movement inside the store, will necessarily have a destabilising effect on the visitor's relationship to place as they return again to the city on leaving the store. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly suggested than in *Art International* journalist Ellen Johnson's description from 1963 of encountering the streets of the Lower East Side on first leaving the store. In her description of 'the curious, tawdry beauty of store-windows full of stale hors d'oeuvres, hamburgers on

Rheingold ads, stockinged legs' (Johnson 1963: 43) the theatricality of the interior world of *The Store* is written over the streets of the real city;

To walk along East Third Street is to walk with Oldenburg – it is somewhat like the sensation when driving around Aix and l'Estaque of driving through a Cezanne canvas. (Johnson 1963: 43-44)

Here Johnson vividly suggests the degree to which the experience of *The Store* has transformed the landscape of the city into something less immediately truthful or real, in a manner redolent of Robert Smithson's description of his own journey through Passaic, New Jersey as if 'in a moving picture I couldn't quite picture.' (Smithson 1996: 54)

When I walked on the bridge, it was as though I was walking on an enormous photograph that was made of wood and steel, and underneath the river existed as an enormous movie film that showed nothing but a continuous blank. (Smithson 1996: 52)

Both Smithson and Johnson describe a process of making strange and artificial something very familiar; a writing-over 'real' space that Smithson describes as akin to being 'on a planet that had a map of Passaic drawn over it, and a rather imperfect map at that.' (Smithson 1996: 56) Here the imitation and repetition that haunts the second movement of the piece is translated on to the movement through the city itself. This theatrical doubling seemingly generates a similar feeling to that outlined by Rebecca Schneider in relation to re-enactment; an explicit twiceness that 'trips the otherwise daily condition of repetition into reflexive hyper-drive, expanding the experience of the uncanny' (Schneider 2011: 14) or, in Johnson's words, a 'transformation' of the familiar city that is at once 'shocking and strange.' (Johnson 1963: 44)

Thus the *process* by which *The Store* is experienced articulates the same sense of instability that has resonated throughout this analysis. The form of the piece generates a way of encountering the urban environment that foregrounds the disconcerting citationality of our experience of this disorientating urban text. An uncanny confrontation with the evasive immensity and theatrical artificiality of the lived and living city; 'a reality which had not had any expression in art.' (Smith, cited in Wagstaff 1966)

d. CAB

I began the development of *CAB* by considering possible applications of the dualistic structure outlined above, in which the piece is as at once *disappearing* into the city and a visible representation of that city. The form that I settled on was that of a piece that was both a late night minicab service and a sound-piece, experienced on headphones whilst travelling across the city in the back of a car.

Like Oldenburg's use of a store, the minicab was settled upon as a regular feature of my quotidian experience of London. Minicabs are often the most affordable way to move between the outlying areas of the city that constitute my experience of it, those parts of the city not served by the underground or by buses, often at times of night that would render both redundant anyway. For myself and many others, the minicab forms part of a familiar urban vocabulary; the call to book, the arrival of an anonymous looking car and the quiet journey through half-familiar streets to your desired location.

Similarly, audio-based work is a common part of my present performance practice and thus seemed an ideal form for approaching this project. Additionally, the *form* of the audio-based work, in particularly the sound walk experienced whilst moving through a city, has become in recent years a familiar form of contemporary performance practice for audiences. Some seminal works such as Janet Cardiff's *Missing Voice: Case Study B* (1999) in Whitechapel and Graeme Miller's *Linked* (2003) in Leytonstone have been around for two decades and are still able to be experienced in 2011. More recently and perhaps more relevantly a significant number of my immediate contemporaries including Duncan Speakman, Ant Hampton, Tania El Khoury and Melanie Wilson have recently created very popular audio-based pieces for public spaces in London. Such a pervasion of audio works is demonstrative of a familiarity with the vocabulary of such work amongst contemporary audiences. This familiarity with a coherent artistic 'form', with its own set of expectations, was a necessary part of the dualism inherent in the piece; a means of encouraging the audience to consider the work in part at least as a circumscribed artistic 'space', bound by its own internal conventions, in the same manner as a gallery exhibition.

This form provided a dualism that was viably comparable to that identified in *The Store*. The piece is able to function as two similarly irreconcilable modes of engagement with the city. First as a familiar minicab ride through the streets driving the audience member(s) from one place they need to go to another, with the artist cast in the anonymous role of the driver in the same way that Oldenburg himself appropriated the role of store keeper. *CAB* was advertised via the internet on blogs and social networking sites. To ensure an audience that was as similarly attuned to the performance vocabulary of the piece as Oldenburg's art cognoscenti were to the vocabulary of the gallery, the piece specified that it was a minicab service for people out late at night at hard-to-reach live art and performance venues in London. To book they simply had to text a name, a date and a time and *CAB* would be there to collect them and deliver them to wherever they needed to go. In this manner the piece necessarily locates itself within the fabric of the real, intimately bound up with a movement across the city that is both actual and necessary.

Yet at the same time the piece is also able to foregrounds its contradictory status as a circumscribed artistic experience with its own particular aesthetic and set of conventions. As is always explicit once you actually enter the cab, this is not a real minicab journey and the transaction governing the piece is symbolic not monetary, thus rendering the 'role' of customer and passenger as parodic and theatrical.

The sound piece itself was constructed from sources that were very clearly not *of* the city; a found recording of a NASA space walk, a clip of Orson Welles in *Moby Dick*, an old American public information film about the cities and the countryside, a variety of different kinds of popular music, radio static, the sound of being underwater. The intention here was to present sounds that were akin to Oldenburg's use of plaster and paint or what Robert Morris might refer to as 'raw substances and the process of their transformation'. In other words discrete and identifiable units or blocks of sound that do not disguise the artificiality of their composition; that make explicit the process of re-presenting the city. As been previously mentioned, the structure of the piece emphasised a series of seemingly arbitrary jump-cuts between unrelated elements of the larger composition, a replication of the familiar vocabulary of the randomised musical playlist. In so doing I sought to further embed in the form of the work an

internalised artistic vocabulary that bore no relation to the everyday activity of the surrounding streets. An abstraction that speaks of the city *in its absence* and thus encourages the audience to consider the theatricality, that is the imitative and functionless quality, of their *performance* within this bounded artistic space; a space that might be at once the enclosed confines of the car and the virtual space of the audio itself fed directly into the audience member's ears.

Finally, within this audio were also embedded 'cues'; the retuning of a radio and the sound of a mobile phone ringtone as it would be heard by someone listening to music on an iPhone. These cues were intended to alert the audience to their own parodic *performance* of the role of passenger in a minicab, in a manner akin to the act of browsing and purchasing items in Oldenburg's store. In so doing I hoped to encourage this self-conscious *doubling* to leak out into the quotidian reality beyond the end of the cab journey, in a manner akin to that described by Ellen Johnson at the end of her experience of *The Store*.

Here then, as with *The Store*, it is primarily in the figure of the audience member that these contradictory relationships to the city are reconciled. It is the audience member that navigates their way between these two positions and consequently it is that means of navigation that the piece has the potential to generate new ways of operating in the city. A destabilising of the seeming fixity of that urban landscape that has the potential to be every bit as uncanny as that generated by *The Store*.

e. Meredith Monk's *Juice: A Theater Cantata in Three Parts*

This analysis uses Henri Lefebvre's notion of Rhythmanalysis as a means of deriving from Monk's piece a spatial framework that considers space as a function of time and the city as temporal as well as a geographic entity. This is a framework determined as much by patterns repetition and reoccurrence in time as it is by movements across the urban landscape. I will consider how the significant passages of time between the three parts of *Juice* might be considered elements within a rhythmic structure that consequently blurs the gap between the work and the city. Thus in manipulating the rhythms that govern the piece, Monk similarly modulates the rhythms that dictate the audience's relationship to the urban environment.

I will outline how the structure of *Juice* might be considered as a zoom lens that suggests a movement of increasing legibility as you progress from one stage of the work to the next; a locating of oneself within both the piece and the wider city. Yet where this seemingly linear process might find resolution in the piece's conclusion, instead what remains at the end of the piece is nothing but absence; not a place but instead a non-place. In this denial of finitude and resolution, the piece creates a rupture in what Lefebvre considers the oppressive linearity of the modern city.

Place

For Michel de Certeau the city is not a static, physical entity but a *practised place* that reveals itself in its enunciation. As such it must be understood as existing in both space *and* time. Indeed, the kind of *tactical* strategies that de Certeau associates with the everyday lived experience of the city privilege time over space. The city is rendered unstable and ephemeral in its contingent articulation by those *users* who encounter it. Consequently the city, as a *practised place*, is not solely a stable entity existing in space, but equally importantly also a process occurring over time. As such any analysis of how a work of art is *sited* within the city must take into account not only its relationship to the physical and social context that surrounds it, but equally how it locates itself *temporally*; how that work responds to and reconditions the rhythms of the city.

This is of particular significance when approaching the *siting* of Meredith Monk's *Juice* and the relationship with the city that is consequently conditioned by the experience of that piece. *Juice* exists in fragments; three distinct yet ineluctably connected moments dislocated in time. As Sally Banes reports, between the first movement of *Juice* at the Guggenheim Museum and the second at the Minor Latham Playhouse was a sizeable three week gap with a further week before the final section in Monk's loft apartment. (Banes 1987: 152) Each of these three movements took an entirely different artistic form; a large-scale site-specific processional pageant at the Guggenheim, a proscenium arch stage show at the Minor Latham and an installation in Monk's loft consisting of costumes and video. These theatrical models circumscribed each piece as a discrete entity, with a series of definite beginnings and endings. These fragments are not identical, nor do they represent a neat linear progression from one to the next in any narrative sense. Instead the imagistic and musical themes of the piece remain consistent yet are re-organised and re-articulated in each architecturally distinct context. What *Juice* consequently consists of is a series of conceptual elements, like a set of musical notes, that re-emerge in unique formations in these three distinct moments; the totalising experience being what Monk herself describes as 'nonlinear, simultaneous, [and] mosaiclike'. (Monk in Zurbrugg 2004: 277)

This musical analogy is a useful one for understanding *Juice*. Monk herself describes the images that she creates in her work and the way in which they are put together as being 'musical' (Monk in Greenaway 1983) and quite explicitly gives *Juice* the subtitle '*A theatre cantata for 85 voices, Jew's harp and two violins*'. (Banes 1987: 152) What this thus suggests is a methodology that emphasises the arrangement of formal elements *in time* as much as in space.

This consequently has an important bearing on the consideration of the work as *a site within the urban landscape*. Site, in this context, should be understood as a rhetorical figure within the lexicon of the city that produces a particular form of encounter with place. In relation to *Juice*, this rhetoric functions primarily through patterns of repetition and shift between the three 'musical' movements that constitute the piece.

How best, then, to map the process by which these temporal patterns *produce* an experience of the city?

I want to begin to answer this question through the frame of Henri Lefebvre's discourse on Rhythmanalysis. Lefebvre's understanding of rhythm is not to be confused with the kinds of 'mechanical repetition' that the term normally refers to in the context of music:

While mechanical repetition works by reproducing the instant that precedes it, rhythm preserves both the measure that initiates the process and the re-commencement of this process with modifications, therefore with its multiplicity and plurality. (Lefebvre 2004: 79)

Considered as such the notion of rhythm functions as a framework for describing not simply ordered structural progressions but the denser, more complex interrelations of a range of temporal phenomena. What Lefebvre is describing is the basis for a whole new means of analysis, a polyrhythmic mapping of the manifold patterns of occurrence and reoccurrence that result from the interaction of place, time and an expenditure of energy.

One of the major sites that Lefebvre identifies for this new approach is the city. Significantly, Lefebvre describes rhythm as 'the music of the city'. (Lefebvre 1995: 227) Rhythm is a means of describing the myriad movements and utterances that constitute an urban landscape that is 'really temporal and rhythmical, not visual'. (Lefebvre 1995: 223) Even the most solid-seeming building is a process occurring over time, or rather, a series of cyclical and linear processes producing patterns of repetition and difference – the movement of figures in and out of the building, the cycles of maintenance and redecoration, the fluctuations in occupation and use, the building's gradual deterioration and eventual slow or sudden destruction and replacement. These processes are submerged within the busyness of the city – an ocean of 'murmurs, *noises* and cries'. (Lefebvre 1995: 223)

To glance at this city reveals nothing more than this *noise*; an impenetrable morass of discordant actions and interactions, full of sound and fury but signifying seemingly

nothing. The task of the rhythm analyst is to begin to unpick this dense polyrhythmia, to trace in it patterns of shift and reoccurrence that structure our lived experience of the city. Rhythm analysis is consequently a means of urban mapping that reflects de Certeau's notion of the practised place. It is mapping of the experience of the city over time; of the way in which the city is *used* or even *produced* by those that inhabit it. As such the rhythm analyst must begin with themselves; the way in which they encounter the city, in the collision of memory, their innate bodily rhythms, and their own movement through and interaction with the urban environment. As Lefebvre states, the rhythm analyst 'thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality.' (Lefebvre 2004: 21)

Site

The kind of engagement with the city outlined by Lefebvre in his writing on Rhythm analysis provides a useful frame of reference for exploring the relationship of Meredith Monk's *Juice* with New York, the city with which it is inextricably bound up. As has already been identified, *Juice* is structured by patterns of occurrence and reoccurrence in a movement through the urban landscape, both physically and temporally. These rhythms are the result both of what takes place within the piece, and the deliberate gaps that Monk inserts between the three parts of the work as it pauses and recommences in different locations in its four-week-long duration. Considered in Lefebvre's rhythm analytical terms then, *Juice* is not simply the action of its three circumscribed parts but also *the space between those actions*. They are equally constitutive of its rhythmical structure. Indeed, the importance of New York's presence in these *in between* moments is more explicitly expounded by Monk in reference to her slightly later piece, *Vessel* (1971) in which the audience was driven between various sites in the city:

We had actually thought of having performers on the streets along the way from one place to the next so that you would see them from the bus. But I realized that just looking at New York City out of the windows of a bus after having been through one theatrical experience and going to another is enough in a way. (Monk in McNamara 1972: 96)

Here then Monk makes explicit the significance of the rhythmical relationship that is being set up between the city and these circumscribed moments of performance occurring within it. This notion is further reinforced in studying the official documentary

footage created for *Juice*, a short thirteen minute black and white documentary film made by Gordon Steen and David Ludwig and produced by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Institute of Film and Television at New York University. This film does records rehearsals and performance excerpts from all three sections of the piece. The structure of this archival material is explicitly mimetic of the form of the piece itself, with an artificial 'gap' created between the first and second sections and the second and third sections of the piece. From the footage of performers singing and moving through the Guggenheim, the camera cuts suddenly to Meredith Monk in her loft as she eats her breakfast, makes her bed and discusses on the phone where she should go to purchase a warmer blanket. The camera then cuts again to the sounds and images of performers rehearsing in a dressing room at the Minor Latham Playhouse. Between this footage and the final section of the piece is a similar but smaller 'gap' in which Monk is seen walking down a street somewhere in the city. Such a format suggests the degree to which Monk considered those pauses between *Juice*'s three sections an integral part of the piece itself. The footage functions as a representation of the audience's encounter with the piece in its entirety, and a confirmation of how integral to that experience are these moments of re-submersion in the city's mundane routines.

Consequently the piece could be said to site itself in a curiously dualistic relationship with the city that recalls my earlier analysis of Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*. As with the distinction made between the framing of Oldenburg's piece as *a gallery* and as *a store*, *Juice* functions simultaneously as both a circumscribed abstraction removed from the bustle of its urban context and conversely an event or process that is inextricably embedded within that landscape. In material terms, *Juice* would appear to be a series of abstract sounds and images presented in conventional art spaces with their own set of internal relationships; a performance triptych, or for Monk '*a Cantata in three parts*'. Yet the structure of the piece denies the audience member the possibility of experiencing it in such delineated terms. To encounter the piece, as the documentary footage makes apparent, is to experience a Lefebvrian rhythmical structure, full of shifting and repeating motifs, that explicitly incorporates the spaces in between these acts; the 'music of the city' providing the counterpoint to Monk's carefully structured refrains. Thus the experience of New York becomes *part* of the experience of *Juice* and vice versa.

This sense of being 'simultaneously inside and outside' (Lefebvre 2004: 27) of the city is something that Lefebvre identifies as a necessary condition for the rhythm analyst to begin to unpick the rhythms that make up the urban environment. In 'Seen from the Window' this space is the balcony, which at once belongs to the public domain of the city and the private domain of the home. A place that is at once a part of the urban environment and removed from it, where the rhythms of the city can be both experienced and reflected upon.

Yet unlike either the balcony or *The Store*, the audience's relationship to *Juice* shifts over time as each of its three sequential sections unfolds. This movement through the piece is perhaps best understood as what Monk refers to as a zoom lens effect. This zoom manifests itself in the internal relationships between a series of repeated visual and aural elements that re-occur across each of the piece's three sections; the most widely discussed of these being the figure of a woman riding a horse down fifth avenue outside the Guggenheim, which re-emerged as a woman on a rocking horse at the Minor Latham Playhouse and finally as a horse figurine in the installation in Monk's performance loft. (Jowitt 2003: 131) As the internal relationships embedded in the piece shift over time, they necessarily transform the audience's relationship with the work.

Returning again to Lefebvre, this 'zooming' effect is a means of expressing a particular kind of rhythm embedded in the piece's sequential structure; a pattern of reoccurrence and difference played out across its three parts. Yet, as has previously been stated, these three sections are not experienced in isolation. The rhythms of the piece are inextricable from the polyrhythmia of the urban environment in which it is embedded. For the audience member, they both constitute part of the same encounter. Thus it is important to explore what extent this zoom-lens rhythm re-conditions our relationship to the city as it experienced in the gaps in between *Juice's* three sections. To begin to unpick the way in which the piece's position both inside

and outside of the city, might provide an opportunity, as Monk herself says, to 'see something that you took for granted in a different way'⁴; or as Lefebvre has it:

Works [*oeuvres*] might return to and intervene in the everyday. Without claiming to *change life*, but by fully reinstating the sensible in consciousness and in *thought*, he [sic] would accomplish a tiny part of the *revolutionary* transformation of this world and this society in decline. Without any declared political position. (Lefebvre 2004: 26)

Space

How then does the audience encounter *Juice*, how does that encounter shift or transform over time, and what kind of experience of the city is produced through this encounter?

Central to approaching this question is a consideration of the importance of memory in the experience of both *Juice* in particular and the urban environment in general. As Lefebvre identifies, memory is foundational to an awareness and understanding of rhythm. Memory is how we are capable of experiencing this *music* of the city, without which we could not acknowledge the repetitions and reoccurrences that constitute it.

No camera, no image or sequence of images can show these rhythms. One needs equally attentive eyes and ears, a head, a memory, a heart. A memory? Yes, to grasp this present other than in the immediate, reconstitute it in its moments, in the movement of various rhythms. (Lefebvre 1995: 227)

As such memory is an essential component of the experience of the city *over time*, and thus in the realisation of that city as a practised place; that is, an ongoing process rather than an architectural figure. Consequently the way in which we use, or make use of, memory is a crucial factor in how we as city-dwellers produce an experience of the urban landscape.

Juice is a piece that is similarly concerned with memory. Meredith Monk has spoken explicitly about her interest in 'using memory as part of a work'⁵ and in *Juice* this is

⁴ 'On site specific performance' A panel discussion recorded in the Amsterdam Gallery of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York, on November 7, 1994.

realised through a structure that relies upon the residue of the prior section or sections of the performance persisting in the encounter with its present iteration. *Juice* consequently requires of the audience that they use memory in particular ways in order to remain engaged with the work over the sporadic course of its month-long realisation. As Sally Banes has stated, the way of surviving the 'bewildering explosion of time, space, color, and imagery' that constitute an encounter with the piece, with particular reference its first section at the Guggenheim museum, was in seeking out 'an order with which to structure the fragments.' (Sally Banes 1987: 163) This impulse towards order is satisfied through the appreciation, facilitated by memory, of rhythms and patterns that emerge over the course of the piece's total duration; the omnipresent red figures, the buzz of the Jew's Harp, even the oft-cited triptych of ever-diminishing horses.

With each new section of the work, the audience become more *familiar* with these elements and more aware of the transformations being enacted upon them; they rely upon their memory of the last iteration as a means of navigating their way through the present action. As Nick Kaye suggests, (Kaye 2000: 93) each new location thus becomes a map of the previous site. Memory serves as a means by which the audience can *read* these residual maps and hence *locate* themselves within the disorientating landscape of the piece.

Consequently the way in which memory is activated within the piece might, in Lefebvrian terms, be considered relatively linear; that is, derived from 'social practise' (Lefebvre 2000: 8) and bound up with notions of perpetual progress and human agency. Memory serves as a means of deriving a meaning that emerges incrementally over the course of the piece; constructing order from its delirious fragments. In this context the figure of the 'zoom lens' suggested by Monk takes on a slightly different quality. In the first instance the rhythm associated with this zoom might appear to be cyclical, with visual and aural tropes reoccurring in shifted dimensions and context at each of the piece's three sites. However, from the audience's perspective, this zoom

⁵ 'On site specific performance' A panel discussion recorded in the Amsterdam Gallery of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York, on November 7, 1994.

movement is another facet of the linear process of locating themselves in relation to the piece; a perpetual movement towards a definitive resolution.

Significantly, Monk suggests that this impulse towards a legibility in the experience work itself, mirrors the desire for a locatedness within the landscape of the surrounding city. There is an implied conflation of the process by which the audience approach meaning in the work, and by which they seek to locate that work more specifically within the urban environment. Indeed, as the piece becomes focussed ever more tightly on a specific set of fantastical 'characters' and motifs, so those elements become increasingly imbued with a sense of their place within the very real city of New York.

For the audience, the initial encounter with the piece at the Guggenheim museum is quite explicitly a disorientating bombardment of confusing visual and aural imagery. The audience sits on the floor gazing up, they hear the chorus before they can see them yet the sound is echoing and inconclusive; what John Cage might term a 'plurality of intentions'. (Cage in Kaye 1996: 17) Period costumes collide with the work of Roy Lichtenstein hanging on the walls. A tangle of red legs and bodies walk, as one, slowly up the building's winding ramp. At one point the chorus run down these same ramps in an effect that according to Monk made the whole building look like it was spinning⁶. Over the course of the piece the audience's perspective on the shifting activity of the company was constantly changing; initially they gazed up, then they walked up the museum's ramps to view the static performers and by the end they gazed down from the ramps upon the parade of figures on the floor of the museum beneath them.

Here, then, the piece is experienced as a polyrhythmic spectacle, a bombardment of sensory experiences to be navigated by the unguided audience. As such, it might even be suggested that at this stage the piece resembles in abstract the disorientating strangeness of an encounter with New York itself; the plurality of

⁶ 'On site specific performance' A panel discussion recorded in the Amsterdam Gallery of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York, on November 7, 1994.

impenetrable voices and sounds, the perambulatory exploration of shop-window-like installations, the vertical perspective as the audience crane their necks up at the dramatic architecture surrounding them on all sides and then later stare down from on high, like de Certeau atop the twin towers, at the figures moving far below them. As Monk herself states, the audience were given 'the sensation of being *inside* the piece,' (Monk in Strickland 1997: 138) uncertainly inhabiting its unstable urban landscape.

When the piece recommences at the Minor Latham Playhouse there is a definite sense that this overwhelming quality has been replaced by something considerably more local and focussed, not least by the proscenium architecture of the small theatre itself. The cast has been reduced to seven clearly identifiable figures. The 'cathedral' like design of the opening section has been replaced by a small log cabin – a home. One of the first things that occurs within this context is that each of the four red-painted figures comes to the front of the stage and introduce themselves, stating where they live within the city and revealing some personal details about themselves. (Berger 1997: 45) Later on they perform everyday activities that reference the performer's real-life occupations or interests; Dick Higgins cooks a pork chop, Daniel Sverdlik, a chemist, mixes together chemicals. (Jowitt 1969: 33)

As such the piece not only offers new emphasis and meaning to the disorientating action of the first section, but explicitly begins to locate the piece within the city itself. These simple happening-like activities not only provide some imagined context to the distant red figures of the first section, but they also evoke a very specific sense of place, both through the personal descriptions of who these performers are and where they live, and also in the embodied allusion to the particular avant-garde context from which they, and Monk in particular, have emerged. There is here an implied conflation of the figurative and the geographical; the rhythms and *processes of memory* that facilitate the audience's construction of meaning from out of the overwhelming spectacle of the first section, similarly provide a means by which to locate that piece within the urban cityscape. Both constitute, in de Certeauian terms, a *strategic way of reading* which has as its aim the transformation of uncertainties into 'readable spaces'. (de Certeau 1984: 36)

This movement is extended into the third section of the piece, in which the audience can move at their own pace through a display of costumes and props from the first two sections and watch a series of videos in which the motifs of the piece, and the figures of the performers, are made incrementally more *certain* than in either of the two previous sections:

In this videotape, the four – each photographed alone – reintroduced visual or aural motifs from the performances, talked in natural voices about themselves, while the camera brought them even more intimately to the audience – hovering before a face, alighting on a hand or hip, etc. (Jowitt 1969: 33)

Significantly this section of the performance took place *in* Meredith Monk's home, a loft-come-performance space in lower Manhattan. Here then, the piece has reached what might be considered the apotheosis of a particular strategy of reading. A location which is at once the conclusion of a certain biographical movement within the piece and a physical movement across the city. Both these figures resolve themselves in Monk's loft, home to a static collection of props and video pieces that suggest an affirmative fixity; a definitive end to the linear progression seemingly projected by the piece.

Yet as has been identified by Nick Kaye in *Site Specific Art* and Sally Banes in *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, there is an explicit remoteness to this mediated environment, empty of anything bar the material traces of the performance.

At the museum, the performers were living sculptures that the spectators could hear breathing. At the Minor Latham, the audience was separated from the performance by a proscenium arch. Finally, at Monk's loft, though one could even smell the sweat on the costumes, the performers were made totally remote, once-removed by the video screen. The museum and loft had switched functions by the end of the piece. (Banes 1987: 153)

The result of this sequential movement towards a resolution is in fact an absence. Rather than a 'readable' site, pregnant with meaning and definitively located within some experience of the city, what the piece has resolved itself into is, in Robert Smithson's term, a *non-site*; 'a limited (mapped) revision of the original unbounded state.' (Smithson in Kaye 2000: 93) As a non-site, *Juice* (in this final stage) gives a definite form to the piece, but in so doing only articulates the failure of that form to contain that to which it refers. In other words, in the process of conclusively locating

itself, the piece effects its own erasure. 'There are no mysteries in these vestiges, no traces of an end or a beginning.' (Smithson 1996: 90)

Taken as a whole then, the rhythm constituted by these three sections conditions a particular *scopic* movement towards a fixed destination. From the purchase of the three-part ticket this delayed resolution is anticipated and the piece's patterns of repetition and reoccurrence (what Monk refers to as a 'zoom lens' effect) only reinforces a linear sense of progression towards *readability* in a piece that begins with an explicitly disorientating carousel of sounds and images. This rhythmical figure is not however confined to the internal relationships of the piece. Being so implicitly bound up with the city, it is also manifested as a particular kind of relationship with the urban environment. Again, this relationship is structured around a linear movement towards a kind of definitive *reading* of the city – a rendering of the contingent cityscape as a legible *langue* – as a means of locating oneself within it. Yet in their resolution these strategies are presented as self-annihilating, their fixity and legibility in contradiction with the evasive, unstable entities they seek to master.

These rhythmical figures are not *presented* to the audience but are suggested by their movement through the piece. They experience these processes in their encounter with the work and are consequently invited to observe, as nascent *rhythmanalysts*, what relation these figures bear to their polyrhythmic experience of the busy city they inhabit. As such they offer a disruption of the familiar rhythmical structure of our relationship to the city and thus represent a means of 'seeing in a different way'. (Monk in Zurbrugg 2004: 282) And as Lefebvre suggests, even this can be an almost revolutionary gesture:

[The Rhythmanalyst] changes that which he observes: he sets it in motion, he recognises its power. In this sense, he seems close to the poet, or the man of the theatre. (Lefebvre 2004: 25)

Here, then, the audience themselves become *poets* of the urban landscape through their participation in the rhythmical re-ordering that the piece enacts, both within itself and the city that is so intimately written through it.

f. Zilla!

Juice undeniably produced the most technically complex of the three spatial figures that I created pieces from for this process. I began with basic requirements that the piece should be constituted by three discrete parts separated by significant periods of time. Furthermore each should be both a self-contained performance event and part a wider rhythmical structure that incorporated those seeming gaps between each section of the work. Built around this structure the content of the piece would then need to affect certain rhythmical figures that would both draw the audience through the piece and by extension the city that was intimately bound up with it. In terms of this rhythmical figure, what was more significant than the off-remarked-upon 'zoom lens' effect produced by *Juice* was the *process of locating oneself*, in relation to the work and the city, identified above. The zoom lens is primarily a function of this narrowing of focus, and the concomitant cycle of repetition and re-presentation of motifs from one section to the next that this entailed; in search of some elusive sense of fixity and permanency out of the discordant plurality both channelled and generated by the work.

For the piece produced out of this structure I chose to focus on my long-term interest in disaster movies, and in particular the big Hollywood disaster movies of the 1970s. This subject matter, whilst very far removed from that of *Juice*, allowed ample scope to explore the kind of bold, often visual, recurring motifs that would become crucial to generating the piece's rhythmical patterns. The disaster itself would provide the most significant recurrent feature, akin to Monk's four red figures, and would also provide a useful arc for each discrete section of the work. Each of the piece's three sections would be constituted by a prelude to the disaster, the moment of the disaster itself and then the fallout from the disaster; though in each case this sequence of events would be viewed from a different position. I would use these shifts in the audience's perspective as a means of organising the rhythmical cycles that the piece demanded and *moving* the audience through the work as a whole, just as the different perspectives from which Monk's red figures were viewed helped define the rhythmical structure of the earlier work.

Emphasising again the inherent dualism of the work as both *of* and *about* the city in which it was located, the first part of the piece was constructed to be formally mimetic of the experience of the city itself. It was created for a large warehouse space in which the audience would move between different areas, their pace and perspective shifting in the process. The first part of the piece was an installation of Lego figures each with a name attached; a disorientating array of characters deliberately too numerous to encounter in their entirety. In the second section of part one a series of minutely detailed anecdotal descriptions of an anonymous city were juxtaposed with a top-down map of a city, and then interrupted by a ground-level live-feed of this map projected across the whole of the back wall; a worms-eye-view now accompanying what only moments before was a birds-eye view of the same scene. This jumble of perspectives was again designed to disorientate and overwhelm in a manner imitative of the dizzying experience of the city itself. The use of Lego figures however, along with the recycled excesses of the disaster movie genre itself, ensured that this representation of the city remained playfully parodic and artificial throughout, in a manner akin to both Monk's cavalcade of costumed characters and my own earlier work on *CAB*. This was always a self-contained theatrical experience, the piece's more intimate engagement with the city to be constructed later through the interrelation of the work's three discrete compositional parts.

The second part of the piece, designed to take place a week later, took the structure and major motifs of this first event, including much of the music, and provided a very different perspective on them. Here, as with *Juice* at the Minor Latham Playhouse, this shift is predicated on a process of localising the work, narrowing its focus and reiterating the confusing morass of the first section as a seemingly more definite, coherent entity. This part of the work saw the disaster of the first section replayed as a single figure's journey through London. The performer sat at the back of the room with a microphone and narrated a 'virtual sound walk' constituted by around two hundred images from Google street view, describing her journey to the theatre on the night of the performance and then her encounter with the disaster as she left later that evening. Again the Lego figure returned but in this case became a shadow cast onto the street view images by being placed in the beam of the projector. As such the audience themselves became the focus of the 'zoom lens' affect identified in the earlier work, as their apparent size in relation to the Lego figure shifted from the

miniaturism of the first part to the much larger shadow that same small figure now cast. The audience now looked *with* this single Lego figure, rather than gazing down at a huge collection of much smaller characters, thus emphasising the significant shift in perspective that the piece had affected.

The use of Google street view allowed me to further foreground this new, more fixed perspective and, crucially, to associate this transition *within* the piece with more a definite siting of the work within the city of London itself. Here this more stable perspective on the disaster quite literally allows the audience to locate themselves within the city as they follow a sequence of street-view images on a virtual journey across London to the site of the theatre. Additionally, the piece increasingly incorporates references to London within the work as a means of emphasising this more definite and visible image of the city. Just as the second part of Monk's work began with the performer's introducing themselves and identifying where in New York they lived, so *Zilla! Part 2* began with the performer telling the audience whereabouts in London they lived, accompanied by a Google street-view image of the actual building itself. The piece also deliberately incorporated a lot more personal detail; references to movements around London, memories, anecdotes and personal reflections. The aim here was to associate an increasing *understanding* of the work with an emerging sense of place. In so doing I hoped to be able to generate a conflation of the audience's seeming ability to read the work and their ability to read the city; something that I have identified as crucial element of the second part of *Juice*.

In the final part of the piece this localising rhythm reaches its apotheosis as the audience find themselves literally on the streets of their own local neighbourhood. Borrowing from my earlier work *Exposures*, the audience are tasked with sticking up a series of 50 cue cards that describe details of the lead up to and aftermath of the disaster. In so doing they end up actually *writing* the disaster on to the streets of their own area of the city. As with the installation at Monk's loft studio, the intention here is that the work and the city appear to have totally coalesced in a moment of absolute stability and visibility. The cards are a material artefact placed onto the actual city without any of the parodic or digital representations of the earlier iterations of the work.

Yet in this moment it is anticipated that the piece itself disappears, leaving nothing for each isolated audience member but an absence. In a manner knowingly reminiscent of Robert Morris' *Continuous Project Altered Daily* as the cards are pinned up the audience are left with less and less of the piece until at its completion there is nothing left whatsoever; the work has affected its own erasure.

Here, then, on the streets of the city, it is hoped that the piece has been able to generate an experience for the audience that traces the rhythmical contours of that produced by Monk's earlier work. A navigation towards a seeming legibility for the work and the world that resolves itself only in absence and instability. And perhaps a disruption of those linear rhythms that Lefebvre suggests dictate our means of engagement with any city, whether that be New York, London or somewhere else entirely.

OBSERVATIONS FROM MY PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

They [practitioner-researchers] should be prepared to have no answers, only witness statements. (Jones 2009: 30)

In this section I want to briefly reflect on the changes in my own practice that might be observed as a consequence of this research project. To map the various ways in which my work has been transformed by this explicit engagement with past performances and consider what the implications of those transformations might be for performance's potential as a form of embodied historical knowledge.

It is important to note that these descriptions are not intended to provide an *answer* to the question of how performance can act historiographically. The performances that constitute this study are their own wilfully slippery answer to this question in their paradoxical movement towards and away from institutionally circumscribed performance history. These observations are intended to sit alongside that work. They are, as Simon Jones might have it, 'witness statements' to the process by which my performance practice grappled with its own potential to accommodate a very different kind of historical knowledge.

In identifying the key areas of transformation in my work that emerged as a consequence of this process, I hope to gesture towards an understanding of performance's historiographical potential embedded and embodied in my performance practice. To outline the ways in which these shows articulate the possibility for a new kind of performance history.

A movement towards theatricality

Perhaps the most significant shift in my practice over the course of this study was a significantly more pronounced heightening of its 'theatricality', in the sense in which Rebecca Schneider uses the term to describe a particular kind of citationality, inauthenticity and knowing staginess associated with the theatre. A movement

towards mirrors, doubles and 'againness' (Schneider 2011: 50) that is laced with slipperiness and error.

In the first instance this can be seen in the tendency in these works towards a kind of *hyper-citationality*, in which the references to earlier performance work and popular culture already somewhat present in my practice are rendered considerably more numerous and explicit over the creation of these three works. This can be seen in the references to earlier artworks, such as the cards from *Zilla! Parts 1 & 3* and their clear formal and aesthetic relationship to George Brecht's event scores, and in particular *Water Yam*, or the echo of Forced Entertainment's *Nights in This City* in the similar late night journey through a city in *CAB*, or even the explicit mirror of Claes Oldenburg's seminal poster for *The Store* in my own online promotion of the same piece. It can also however be seen even more transparently in the direct samples from American cinema and music that reoccur across these works. *CAB*, a piece constructed almost entirely out of audio samples from other earlier works, begins with an excerpt of Orson Welles narrating a radio version of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Similarly, the first thing you hear in the initial installation segment of *Zilla!* is a sample from the 1974 film *Earthquake*. Both also contain samples from news bulletins and significant historical events such as the moon landings and the September 11th attacks. These layers of references accumulate in ways that are messy, playful and fundamentally theatrical; acknowledging the process of the works' construction and their indebtedness to a particularly American vision of art, culture and history.

Accompanying this there is in these three works a pronounced return to familiar theatrical tropes such as character, narrative and place; what Michael Kirby terms the matrices of conventional performance. Taking place in a series of phones boxes and taking the form of a secret message delivered to an unseen stranger, *Archipelago* makes deliberate reference to a history of espionage narratives and invites its audience to play along as opaquely framed 'characters' within this suggested universe. Additionally the messages itself takes the form of a linear narrative set in a fictional city. *CAB* implicitly sets up a similarly artificial environment in which the audience member and I play out the roles of passenger and taxi driver. *Zilla!* meanwhile constructs a linear and entirely fictional disaster narrative and, in part 3

especially, invites its audience to play along as survivors of this imagined catastrophe. In each case there is a mutually-acknowledged playing out of these coherent fictional scenarios; an explicit, theatrical *twiceness* to the behaviour of performers and audience alike that revels in its own knowing artificiality.

In each case it is important to note that this theatricalisation of my practice, constituted by a hypercitationality and an increasing deployment of the matrices of character, place and narrative in the works, has little precedent in the pieces upon which each work is based. The spatial structures determined by these earlier works do not necessitate the use of these kinds of strategies. Instead I want to suggest that the emergence of such strategies is an implicit acknowledgement of these works' historiographical character.

Recalling the subversive theatricality embedded in Schneider's notion of temporal *drag*, these works rehearse an association with a history that is messy, contingent and embodied. Their excessive accumulation of explicit citations and theatrical affectations are a foregrounding of their *illegitimacy* as conventional historical documents. Consequently the movement towards the 'theatrical' in my engagement with past performance could be seen as a means of aligning this project with an alternative seam of historiographical thought that incorporates everything from the writing of Voltaire (Kellner 1997: 132) to Victorian tableaux vivants (Schneider 2011: 133). This is a history that situates itself as a creative act rather than an archaeological science; a history that champions the theatrical for its slippery and subversive understanding of knowledge and exchange, even if, as Schneider suggests, that exchange is always 'faulty and riddled with error.' (Schneider 2011: 64)

The Question of Documentation

Another of the most striking things that emerged over the course of this project was an acknowledgement of the role that documentation plays not after but *in* the performance. In part this is perhaps an inevitable function of a development process that places such an emphasis on exploring the remains of past performances. There

is, however, a particular emphasis on the *performance* of documentation in this earlier work that undoubtedly influenced my own consideration of how documentation might function in relation to the work itself.

The document's potential to participate in the performance rather than simply record it is outlined most persuasively by Nick Kaye in relation to the work of another New York artist of this period, Vito Acconci. Discussing what he terms Acconci's 'performed photography', largely unwitnessed performances disseminated most widely through their documentation, Kaye identifies the degree to which such material transforms that which it purports to document.

Far from settling the identity of performance or making available an earlier event in another form, the 'documentation' of such activity frequently sought to further examine and complicate the field, time, and event of that to which it referred, as an extension of the original impulse and purpose. (Kaye 2012: 418)

This blurring of the distinction between an event and its recording becomes clearly apparent in Babette Mangolte's description of the careful process by which she documented Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece*, using three cameras positioned across the rooftops to capture a partial but coherent representation of an event that in Mangolte's words 'could be seen only in retrospect through recording and replay.' (Mangolte 2007) Here then, the burden of performance placed on her documentation is clear. The same could equally be said of *Juice*, in which the material remains of the piece, such as unwashed costumes and interviews with the cast, are explicitly incorporated into the body of the work in its final installation segment in Monk's loft. Here again any division between where the performance ends and the documentation begins becomes untenable.

If the documentation of such site-specific performances is irresolvable from the performances themselves, that documentation by implication begins to impact upon the way in which those participating in these works, as performers or audience, experience the city. Here the document becomes part of the experience of urban space the work is producing. Even more complicatedly, in the doing of performance itself even the *anticipation* of certain forms of documentation begins to shift the participant's relationship to the work and as a consequence to the city as a whole.

The significance of this to my practice became most pronounced during my work around Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece*. As has been stated, one of the key components of the piece was the lack of a singular version of the dance, thus opening up the possibility of the piece existing for those participating in it as a plurality of potential interpretations. In this context the partiality of Mangolte's documentation, and its similar emphasis on plurality, is of crucial importance to how the dancers perceive their role within the work. Consequently in the making of *Archipelago* it became increasingly apparent that despite the opportunity afforded by current technology to be able to document the work in its entirety, such a process would dramatically shift the role that documentation plays in relation to the piece's conditioning of urban space. Instead I was required to carefully shape the way in which the documentation participated in the performance of the work in order to create a deliberately *partial* record of the work.

In this way, my understanding of and relationship to the documentation of performance was transformed as a consequence of this project. In order to consider the work's relationship to the city as fully as possible it was necessary to approach documentation as participating in the performance, bound up with the live event from which it is produced and that it, in turn, produces. Importantly, this shifting of what might be considered the *purpose* of documentation presents its own challenge to current historiographical discourse, necessitating a documentation that might fail to satisfactorily record the live event for academic or institutional purposes. This conflict consequently returns us to Simon Jones' assertion that practice-as-research might sometimes have to exist '*outside of judgement*,' (Jones 2009: 30) in order to fulfil the potential it contains for an alternative, embodied knowledge.

The end of the night

I'm interested for the most part in what's not happening, that area between events which could be called the gap. (Smithson 1996: 60)

Finally in this section, and related again to the fraught question of documentation, I want to consider what happened at the end of each of these performances. Or rather, I am interested here in what didn't happen.

Despite their quite substantial differences, one of the things that most unified these works, and fundamentally differentiated them from my earlier work, was the deliberate inconclusiveness of their endings. *Archipelago* involved each participant hanging up their phones and disappearing off into the night. *CAB* similarly involved the audience member leaving the taxi and the car pulling away as the final act in the performance, thus again absencing me the artist at the moment of the piece's conclusion. Whilst each of the first two parts of *Zilla!* did involve more of unified sense of time and space and the familiar finality of a round of applause, the work *as a whole* was not actually resolved until the final section of the piece had been completed; an act that again required the audience member, or perhaps the artist, to be completely absent.

In each case the pieces produced in their conclusions not finality but what Robert Smithson might term a gap. A silence. A space in which nothing is happening. And like Smithson I am interested in this gap and what it might be said to represent.

The generation of this gap between myself, as the artist, and the participants in each piece is crucial in resisting the show's containment within the circumscribed historical discourse that this project necessarily entails. At the end of the show the participants, performers and audience alike, melt back into the city without the documented debrief that might seem like the necessary conclusion of a study that places such emphasis on those participants as *producers* of historical knowledge. They are gone before the show is even finished, before their experience can be re-cycled into discourse.

Consequently, without any deliberate intent on my part, each of these shows has been constructed in such a way that they resist the resolution of contingent experience into recollected accounts of the event. Returning to Smithson, the works could thus be said to contain 'the lack of their own containment'; (Smithson 1996: 90) resisting any

circumscribed conclusions, both physically and conceptually. Such a structure implicitly affirms that historical knowledge is not learnt *through* the performance by its participants, who are then capable of decanting this knowledge into discourse, but is *embodied in performance*. As Simon Jones asserts, knowledge is affirmed as something fundamentally *insubstantial*; 'something halfway between a noun and a verb – an *event*.' (Jones 2009: 19)

CONCLUSION

The best writing alongside, therefore, becomes a kind of manual without a model, a means to no end, a history that speaks of the future, a manifesto. (Jones 2009: 27)

Before considering the question of what has been learnt from this study, I want to begin by reiterating that one of its core principals was to challenge our understanding of what constitutes historical knowledge and how that knowledge is generated and articulated through live performance. From the outset I have sought to present the possibility of performance not as a tool but as a *site* of historical enquiry. To consider how we can re-examine our relationship to the past through an engagement with contemporary performance practice; to experiment with how that practice might itself become a way of talking about, even a way of knowing about, past performances. There has consequently been an emphasis throughout this study on the notion of an *embodied knowledge*, articulated through performance that by its nature resists reduction to written analysis. In other words I have attempted to draw my conclusions about our relationship to the New York avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s not *from* the performances I created but *in* those performances; to, wherever possible, let 'the work' *do the work*.

Consequently this conclusion should not be read as the culmination of or a reflection on the study's engagement with this specific earlier period. Instead, as Simon Jones' suggests this writing *alongside* the performances operates not as a reflection on what has come before but as a looking forward to the possibilities that this research project might open up for new conceptions of what constitutes historical knowledge in the field of live performance. To what extent does this study challenge the conventional place of performance within contemporary art-historical discourse and how has this challenge been made possible? In other words, I want to use this space to consider briefly how these works, and by implication the wider study, functioned not as history but *historiographically*.

Historiography is a consideration of the *discipline* of history, emphasising the shifting critical approaches and presentational strategies that shape and reshape the way in which we understand the past. Consequently to ask how performance might *act historiographically*, is to consider the extent to which performance is able to contribute to the discourse around the study and writing of history. A consideration of performance's potential to engage with history as a process rather than a subject.

My aim in this short conclusion is to examine how this study has been able to shift or upset performance's conventional place within the discourse around the history of live performance, in particular within the context of the history of the New York avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s. In this context it is perhaps instructive to return to the expectation that something will *come after* or from the performance to ensure it can achieve a grounding within the predominantly archival and literary realm of conventional performance history. This expectation manifests itself as a tendency for performance that seeks to locate itself within the domain of history to require thorough documenting and 'framing' by a written accompaniment.

Such a tendency can perhaps be seen in the material produced around Andre Lepecki's re-enactment of *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* and Marina Abramovic's re-enactment cycle *Seven Easy Pieces*.

In the first instance, publications were produced to accompany both these performances. These publications were in both cases given the same title as the performances they purported to document and included essays written by the artists and the curators they worked with, alongside photographs of the re-enactments themselves. Both were produced in hard back by professional publishing houses, intended for dissemination far beyond the scope of the initial re-enactment; indeed, both books are still presently available for purchase online from Amazon in the UK and the US and can be viewed at the British Library and the performance archive at the Lincoln Centre in New York.

The pervasiveness and seeming comprehensiveness of this carefully curated documentation has the effect of effacing that which it purports to represent. The performance event resolves itself into a documentary object and in doing so becomes accommodatable within a canonical archive of performance documentation housed primarily in libraries, museums and foundations that represents our predominant notion of *where performance history is located*. Thus whilst both re-enactments gesture towards the potential importance of the live in our understanding of past performances, that live event quickly becomes a temporary aberration within a historiographical lexicon that continues to emphasise the word and the document over the body and the gesture.

As has been emphasised throughout, this project does not aim to dismiss entirely the viability of this archive-led and institutionally-framed mode of performance history. Perhaps the clearest demonstration of this is the degree to which this study has itself been based on many hours spent researching in archives, museums and libraries. This has included many hours of research undertaken in the British Library collection alongside two separate trips to New York that allowed me crucial access to MOMA's unique archive of material on Claes Oldenburg, and to the performance archive at New York public library, which houses a wealth of material on both Trisha Brown and Meredith Monk. In addition to this I have also spent time exploring Meredith Monk's House Foundation, also in New York, and making use of online resources such as the avant-garde archive at UbuWeb⁷ and a number of dance and theatre journals accessible online via JSTOR⁸, in particular the Tulane Drama Review. The methodology devised for this project explicitly necessitated such a thorough consideration of such archival sources.

However, whilst acknowledging the value of such material, it is important to recognise the emphasis placed on ensuring that the performance work that served as the *site* for this study did not find itself circumscribed by this more widely-recognised mode of historiographical discourse. Crucial to this has been how and where that performance work, and my wider performance practice, has been located over the course of this

⁷ <http://www.ubu.com/>

⁸ <http://www.jstor.org/>

study. Throughout the last three years I have continued to be involved in performance activity that took place away from museums and academic institutions and was, superficially at least, unrelated to the trajectory of this study. That has included a month long residency with the performance collective Blast Theory, a national tour with the game-design company Hide&Seek and perhaps most significantly, the continued development of Forest Fringe, the organisation of which I am co-director, whose remit is to support the development of unconventional new work by a broad range of performance-based artists.

This tendency has manifested itself in the final performances in the work that whilst nonetheless engaged with and responding to prevalent modes of historiographical discourse, situates itself outside of that discourse. Unlike the re-enactments described above and elsewhere within this study, none of these projects were framed either literally (by means of their physical proximity to archives or art historical collections) or conceptually (by the naming and contextualising of the works) by their relationship to conventional performance history. Instead all three pieces were presented either totally independently or in association with small venues such as Apiary Studios in Hackney and Stoke Newington International Airport; artist-led spaces in London with whom I have previously worked outwith the terms of this particular project. It is notable also that *Zilla!*, one of the three pieces created for this study, is being restaged beyond the realm of the project, as part of a festival of new performance work at the Junction in Cambridge in May 2012 and with Hatch in Nottingham in the Autumn of the same year.

The importance of such a contextual shift is to serve as a means of resistance to the above-described tendency for art historical discourse to *return* to the document even as it asserts the value of the contingent and the live in our engagement with past performances. I have tried to legitimize a historiographical paradigm that presents its conclusions primarily within the *doing* of live performance. It suggests that my performances might encompass both a source of historical information and a means of historiographical expression, and in doing so hopes to expand present notions of what might constitute knowledge of past performances and where that knowledge is located.

This intention is echoed in the manner in which a DVD was produced for this project. Returning briefly to Abramovic, the publicly distributed DVD of *Seven Easy Pieces* was produced by a company called Microcinema who describe themselves on their website as specialising 'in the acquisition, exhibition, and distribution of independently produced works of an artistic [...] nature.'⁹ Such a formulation rehearses the same association of the performance with its documentation identified above and thus implicitly curtails the possibility of the performance itself as a viable mode of historiographical discourse.

Whilst clearly operating on a very different scale and budget to Abramovic in the organisation of my own video documentation, it is still worth comparing the approach identified above with the DVD accompanying this written component of my study. This DVD makes no suggestion that the documentation it contains represents a legitimate form of representation of the work, for 'exhibition and distribution'. Instead that DVD foregrounds the fragmentation of the live event as a means of denying the possibility that this record might *stand in* for the absent whole. However, importantly this gesture serves not to perform the *disappearance* of the original work but rather to suggest another possibility for its persistence. By emphasising the partial and contingent nature of any encounter with the work, this collection of documentary traces gestures towards the role that the audience plays in *producing* that work through their engagement with it; carrying the performance out into the city and beyond any imagined notion of authorial control. As such this DVD does not purport to contain or present any form of historical knowledge generated out of this project. Instead it performs the *otherness* or an *elsewhereness* of that knowledge, challenging our present historiographical discourse and making space for new ways of thinking about *how* the past persists into the present.

By drawing so rigorously and extensively *from* the institutional archive and yet refusing to frame its conclusions within that context or vocabulary, this study demands a different way of considering what historical knowledge is and where it is located. It

⁹ *Microcinema International: The art of the moving image*, retrieved from http://www.microcinema.com/about/our_company.html

posits *invisibility* as a mode of historical enquiry; an embodied discourse that cannot be reduced to its visible traces. This is a history written in the doing of performance, whose authorship and ownership is dispersed across all those involved, both performers and audiences. Here, crucially, 'history' is not an analytical engagement with the visible remains of the performance scene in New York in the 1960s and 1970s, but contingent gestures, modes of looking and strategies for operating in the city that are in dialogue with this earlier period. As such, this study challenges not only *how* we write history but who it is that's doing the writing.

In so doing it allows what Foucault terms an 'usurpation of power' (Foucault 1997: 124) within our historiographical approach to live performance, an 'appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it' by what he terms a 'masked other.' (ibid) In this instance that *other* is constituted by the anonymous audiences and overlooked participants whose role in the production of the performance is often ignored in the movement towards an authored, even 'monumental' (Schneider 2011: 132), version of performance history. This history becomes something from which they are excluded as anything other than silent witnesses.

My attempts at challenging or reframing present performance historiography are perhaps best understood as a response to this problem of *authorship* in the context of live performance, particularly in relation to the kind of site-specific practices discussed in this study. As the quotation from Michel de Certeau that began the introduction to this study asserted, 'the presence and circulation of a representation tells us nothing about what it is for its users.' (de Certeau 1984: xviii) From the outset one of the key aims of this study has been to ask how we can generate an understanding of this work of the 1960s and 1970s that includes or even emphasises the experience for the 'users' of the work, whether they be audiences, performers or occupy some position between the two. This study has demonstrated that in order to do so, our historiographical approach to past performance must be as dispersed and embodied as the actual works themselves. It too must resist conventional modes of authorship, stepping out of the familiar frames of historical discourse to create a knowledge of the past expressed as ways of operating. This then is what it means for my performance to be the *site* of this historical enquiry. It is not a product or

expression of a historical discourse, but instead the place in which that history is generated in the contingent actions and interactions that constitute the performance. This is history as something written on our bodies and on our cities, or as de Certeau might have it 'a way of thinking invested in a way of acting'. (de Certeau 1984: xiv)

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