

# Soundwalking in Contested Space



The plaque, that reads 'Pentrich Revolution June 9, 1817. Near here was Widow Hepworth's farm where a servant was shot dead.'

Ph.D. by Published, Established, and Creative Works  
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## Abstract

Soundwalking is an expanding creative discipline with its origins in situationist practices and soundscape studies. Beyond its application as a creative medium soundwalking has far-reaching potential for artistic research in a range of different disciplines. My thesis, informed by over two decades of leading art walks and composing soundwalks, interrogates my own soundwalking practice, through which I am investigating contested space. I consider findings from six of my soundwalks composed between 2013 and 2018 and guide the reader through my process and the methods of [aleatoric composition](#), [temporal shift](#), [synchrony](#), and [ordeal](#) that, in combination, distinguish them from those of fellow practitioners and researchers.

Alongside writers and theorists such as Tim Edensor, Brandon LaBelle, and Frauke Behrendt, social geographer Doreen Massey provides a firm theoretical foundation through her conception of space as ‘the product of interrelations’ and imaginable as ‘a simultaneity of stories so far’ (Massey, 2005, p. 9). While Massey adopts a generally progressive tone in her articulation of space, in recognition of the human potential that can be realised through spatial encounters, I place emphasis upon its contested nature, as a product of the unequal power relations that arise out of the everyday interactions of human beings.

My contribution to knowledge is both thematic and methodological, through my core concern of human-contested space, the specific combination of methods that I apply within my practice as research, and in the ways these methods encourage deeper appreciation and understanding. My research journey traces a path through contested urban and rural space and exposes the lived realities of human experience when utopian or hubristic visions falter or fail. My findings are directed towards researchers investigating contested space, be it from artistic, social-historical, or environmental perspectives.

# Dedication

To my parents

Colin Brown (1927-2014) and Jean Martin (1928-2022)

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisors Danica Maier, Ben Carpenter van Barthold, and Kevin Hunt, for their critical support throughout the process of writing up my Ph.D.

I would also like to acknowledge the curators who have offered a platform for my research, and the numerous participants in my soundwalks, without whom none of this would have been possible.

Many thanks are also due to Tim Brown for proofreading and to Deborah Page for her unfailing support, enthusiasm and good humour.

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<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/fa42dd05cf1b66111b1dbbc23287b225>

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Photo credit: Andrew Brown throughout, unless stated otherwise.

## Introduction

Soundwalking is an interdisciplinary activity appealing to the full range of human senses, and applicable to various ends and means. As founding director of the Centre for Digital Media Cultures, Frauke Behrendt (2018, p. 251) states, 'soundwalks are used across a wide range of academic disciplines as well as artistic/creative practices, including as method, tool, and methodology.' The key aim of my practice as research has been to explore how my soundwalks cultivate an appreciation of the contested nature of the human environment, with particular emphasis upon its soundscape. In pursuing my soundwalks I create opportunities for direct and multi-sensorial engagement for both myself and participants (my preferred term for the people who actively experience my soundwalks), and by establishing dialogic encounters through which knowledge of contested space and soundwalking practice itself can be shared. Reflective writing offers a further means of examining and disseminating my findings and engaging with relevant discourse.

Within the upsurge of interest in soundwalking as an artistic medium and research tool, my approach is distinguished by its focus upon contested space, as well as my idiosyncratic bricolage methodology that has evolved through the art walks that I have led in public space since 1995, and from 2007 onwards, through soundwalking. I am aware that the role of artist researcher/psychogeographer involves certain privileges and freedoms, with space evidently more contested for some of its co-creators. The opportunity to observe and critique comes with an obligation to bear witness and to amplify the voices of those who are marginalized.

In this exegesis, I give a brief description of the composition of my thesis, the background to my soundwalking practice, and a definition of my key terms. I describe the journey that I have taken in my research and tease apart the differences between my approach and those of other art walk and soundwalk practitioners, before considering my core methods. Having established the coherence and distinctiveness of my methodology, I conclude with a description of the various and interconnected ways in which I contribute to knowledge and identify potential directions for further research.

Due to this being a Ph.D. by Published, Established and Creative Works, the research undertaken has occurred prior to its commencement. This exegesis functions as a prism through which I interrogate the primary research and the contribution to knowledge that occurs within and through my practice. Practice as research theorist, Robin Nelson (2013, p. 26) writes that the ideal is for ephemeral work undergoing assessment to be experienced directly. Each of my soundwalks produces embodied knowledge about a specific contested location and thus demands to be experienced in situ as a live event. For practical purposes, I have selected *Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield* as the most appropriate soundwalk for live examination. Future readers who wish to experience this soundwalk, or others that I have composed, are invited to contact me.

The six soundwalks and the publication introduced below are the core constituents of my thesis and have been developed from commissions, invitations, or in response to callouts from UK and internationally based cultural institutions and organisations.

## Soundwalks

*A Walk through S* was selected for the Vociferous Void exhibition curated by Professors Neil Brownsword and Anne Helen Mydland at Bergen Academy of Art and Design (KHiB, now part of the University of Bergen). The exhibition formed a key component of the 2013 British Ceramics Biennial that attracted 36,000 visitors to the former Spode factory site in Stoke-on-Trent. *A Walk through S* was developed through a series of residencies within the artistic research project *Topographies of the Obsolete*,<sup>1</sup> a collaboration between forty artist-researchers from KHiB and the following partner universities/institutions: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art Copenhagen; Muthesius Kunsthochschule, Kiel; Sheffield Hallam New University; Buckinghamshire New University; University of Newcastle; and Nottingham Trent University.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://topographies.uib.no/>

*A Walk through S* took place on three occasions during the Biennial, at 2 pm on Friday 27 September, and at 10.30 am on Saturday 4 and 11 October 2013.

***OpenCity Aix*** was selected for the Mobile Audio Fest by curators Elena Biserna and Peter Sinclair from the Locus Sonus research centre and presented in dialogue with the work of fellow participating artists including Owen Chapman, Steve Jones, katrinem, Christina Kubisch, Eric Maillet, Maria Papadomanolaki, Irena Pivka, and Brane Zorman. The festival was ‘a 4-day event exploring the relationships between mobility and (new) forms of listening and sound-making [and was] conceived as a series of rendezvous in Aix-en-Provence and Marseille’ (Locus Sonus, 2015).

*OpenCity Aix* was developed over a two week period and performed three times, at 11 am and 2 pm on Friday 20 November and 4 pm on Saturday 21 November 2015.

***OpenCity Berlin (West)*** was composed for the symposium UrbanTOPIAS. Discussing the Challenges of Changing Cities, which ran from 27-29 October 2016. I was invited by Kate Brehme, an Australian independent curator based in Berlin, to compose a soundwalk that offered participants a more direct and interactive experience of the city. I was recommended to her by the co-artistic director of B\_Tour,<sup>2</sup> Yael Sherill, for whom I had previously composed soundwalks *OpenCity Berlin (Ost)*<sup>3</sup> and *OpenCity Belgrade*.<sup>4</sup>

*OpenCity Berlin (West)* was performed at 5 pm on 28 October 2016.

***Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield and Giltbrook***. The initial inspiration to compose the two *Pentrich Rising* soundwalks came from reading a plaque at a junction on the A610 in Derbyshire, that described a killing that took place in the vicinity in June 1817, during what has become known as the Pentrich Revolution.<sup>5</sup> In 2016 I learned that The Pentrich and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.b-tour.org/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Brown, A. (2014). *OpenCity Berlin (Ost)*. [B\_Tour, 8-9 August 2014]

<sup>4</sup> Brown, A. (2014). *OpenCity Belgrade*. [B\_Tour, 27 September 2014].

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/jun/07/englands-forgotten-armed-uprising-pentrich-revolution-celebrated-derbyshire>

South Wingfield Revolution Group was in the process of applying for Heritage Lottery Funding. I approached them and was commissioned to compose a series of soundwalks to mark the bicentenary.

I would typically have free reign in identifying the routes that my soundwalks take, but on this occasion, it was suggested that I follow trails already mapped out by local historians associated with the organising group. I chose the start and endpoints of the original march that the revolutionaries took. I led the soundwalks over two weekends in June 2017, during the bicentenary commemoration events and they have been repeated on numerous occasions since. I re-stage *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield* each year around the time of the anniversary.

***OpenCity Nine Elms*** was originally commissioned by curator Rosie Hermon for the Winter Trails: Remapping Nine Elms festival<sup>6</sup> and re-staged for London South Bank's Art Night Open.<sup>7</sup> Hermon's (2017) original invitation was for me to create a 'multi-layered mapping of the constantly changing space through our bodies and through sound, and to draw attention to and activate under-investigated or unexplored sites or trails'.

I designed *OpenCity Nine Elms* to be fully accessible to wheelchair users. It was staged at 3.15 pm on 16 December 2017 for the Winter Trails festival. For Art Night on 7/8 July 2018, I scheduled it to capture the varying moods of the city, at 6.30 pm, 8.30 pm, 11 pm, 1 am and 3 am.

## Publication

I drew upon contemporaneous notes made during the composition process of the *Pentrich Rising* soundwalks in the following piece of reflective writing:

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<sup>6</sup> <https://nineelmslondon.com/events/winter-trails-remapping-nine-elms/opencity-nine-elms/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://artnight.london/art-night-previous-editions/>

*Soundwalking: Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage*. Humanities journal (2017) (see Appendix H)

In January 2017 Dr. Les Roberts, of the University of Liverpool, and guest editor of the special issue of the open-access journal Humanities on the theme of 'spatial bricolage', invited me to contribute an article. Within it, I used my *Pentrich Rising* soundwalks in an exposition of spatial bricolage that drew upon Doreen Massey's (2005, p. 9) consideration of space as 'a simultaneity of stories so far'. My 6,000-word article was structured around phenomenological scholar Max van Manen's (2011) four essential categories of experience through which to consider our 'lived world' - spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality. I proposed the soundwalk to be 'an expanded form of cinema, with the flexibility to provoke both states of immersion [and] critical detachment [and made the case for soundwalking as a means of investigating] ecological and socio-political issues alongside aesthetic concerns' (Brown, 2017).

Having provided an outline of the soundwalks and the publication that comprise my thesis, the following section describes the route I have taken into and through my practice.

## Background

Walking is my preferred mode of both getting around and engaging with my surroundings. As a musician touring and performing live across Europe throughout the 1980s and 1990s, whenever possible I would seek opportunities for reflection and inspiration by exploring towns and cities on foot. More recently, the repetitive nature of commuting prompted me to seek alternative perspectives on the (over-) familiar city in which I work, and to turn routine urban walking into an exploratory activity, attempting to inhabit French political theorist Ivan Chhtcheglov's 'playful city, not the city of work but the city of adventure' described by writer McKenzie Wark (2011 p. 20). I concur with academics Maggie O'Neill and Phil Hubbard (2010) who state that walking is 'never simply about traversing a route from one place to another: the journey itself is performative, an act of place-making and an active engagement with the environment'.

As a musician my practice involves the re-contextualisation of audio material from popular culture and everyday sources, the results being both more intriguing to me, and certainly more socio-politically relevant than overtly musical sounds. My subsequent adoption of walking as an artistic medium in the mid-1990s emerged from an impulse to explore the sources of environmental sounds and to share what might otherwise go unheard and unseen. I began leading people on urban and edgeland walks, selecting resonant, liminal, or contested locations, such as derelict industrial sites. One such art walk, *Meat Grinder*,<sup>8</sup> was inspired by Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*,<sup>9</sup> and involved crossing the site of a former coal mine and an abandoned railway tunnel. My intentions in this work were to offer participants a challenging *off-piste* experience and to invite speculation on the site's former usage and future development. According to urban anthropologist, Cristina Moretti (2016, p. 78) 'walking tours [...] open a performative space: a time and place for inhabitants to take on, bend, and respond to the many histories, questions, and meanings that might be associated to particular locales.' The act of physically exploring and reflecting upon the pasts, presents, and futures of such sites has provided the impetus for my practice as research ever since.



Participants in *Meat Grinder*, a guided walk that I composed in Gedling, Nottingham, May 1997. Photo credit: Teresa Niedojadlo

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<sup>8</sup> Brown, A. (1997). *Meat Grinder*. [Gedling, Nottingham]

<sup>9</sup> Tarkovsky, A. (1979). *Stalker*. Moscow: Mosfilm

In 2006 an Arts Council grant enabled me to purchase an Edirol RO9 digital recorder, a pair of Soundman binaural microphones, and several iPod Shuffles. With these, I brought together my interests in walking and sound in the composition of my first soundwalk in Burnham-on-Sea.<sup>10</sup> In doing so I stumbled upon the medium's potential for merging temporalities and cultivating alternative and critical perspectives. As I wandered through the town and along its beach, while listening via earphones to the soundtrack that I had binaurally recorded the previous day, I found myself further attuned to features within the physical and auditory environment. In 2007 I undertook several walking interventions in the UK and Japan, in collaboration with writer Emma Cocker, and artists Simone Kenyon and Katie Doubleday, under the name OpenCity. Since 2009 I have pursued OpenCity as a solo research project. The term 'open city' is used to describe a city that is left undefended and uncontested during wartime; however, my adoption of the term is in response to its implication that cities are permeable, readable, and open for critique, and have used it as the title prefix for my urban soundwalks ever since.

As of May 2022, I have led 35 art walks and 53 soundwalks across a breadth of locations in Europe and beyond. Although I have since upgraded the Edirol RO9 to a Zoom H6 and purchased bone-conducting earphones, I still use the binaural microphones and iPod Shuffles to this day, as relatively low-tech digital devices that fulfil my needs.

## Key terms

In this section, I clarify my use of the key terms that appear within this exegesis.

## Contested space

My conception of contested space is located within 'the everyday' (see below) and, as such, I draw upon social geographer Doreen Massey's (2005, p. 9) description of space as 'the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny'. She defines space as the sphere in which 'distinct trajectories

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<sup>10</sup> Brown, A. (2007). *Burnham Walk*. [Burnham-on-Sea]

co-exist' and to be 'always under construction [...] never closed', and imaginable as 'a simultaneity of stories-so-far'. There is much to unpick in Massey's articulation of space, but the thread that forms the weave of my research is the recognition that space is inherently dynamic, and that contestation is an inevitable product of its coming into being. Education researcher Jane McGregor (2004) considers that the 'silences around space allow it to be organised to produce and reproduce practices which maintain persistent and unequal power relations. Understanding space as "socially produced" reveals current social arrangements which maintain and ossify such power relations, but which can then be contested and changed.' Political scientist Antje Wiener (2014) describes contestation as a social practice of rejecting and critiquing norms, and I apply soundwalking as a means of both exposing contestation arising from the everyday coming together of human beings, as well as of inviting critique.

## **Critical**

Composer, radio artist, and sound ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp describes the essential purpose of a soundwalk being 'to encourage the participant to listen discriminately and moreover, to make a critical judgement about the sounds heard and their contribution to the balance or imbalance of the sonic environment' (Westerkamp, n.d.). The critical judgements that I anticipate for myself and participants in my soundwalks relate not only to the sonic environment but also to the socio-political sphere from which they originate and whose power relationships they make manifest.

## **The Everyday**

Philosopher Henri Lefebvre's (1991, p. 97) definition of 'the everyday' is "'what is left over" after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis.' I take the view that commonly overlooked features of the everyday are as rich with meaning as 'the extraordinary' and spectacular and am keen to experience and share this richness. Max van Manen (2014, p. 223) describes shattering the attitude of 'taken-for-grantedness of our everyday reality. Wonder [being] the unwilling willingness to meet what is utterly strange in what is most familiar'. Soundwalking offers potential for a critique of what is overlooked through our typically habituated engagement within the everyday. Professor of Acoustic

Ecology and Sound Art John Levack Drever describes the porosity of the relationship between soundwalk participant and everyday life. He states that 'one of the underpinning goals of soundwalking is about circumnavigating habituation, in a process of de-sensitization and consequently re-sensitization, in order to catch a glimpse (*un coup d'oreille*) of the 'invisible, silent and unspoken' of the everyday' (Drever, 2009, p. 166). He goes on to describe soundwalking as 'a kind of liminoid activity [challenging] the wider social structure by offering social critique [...] of the official social order' (ibid.).

### **Performative research**

Contested space is emergent and multifarious and demands the adoption of a flexible and iterative approach. Brad Haseman (2006) describes practice-led researchers diving in 'to see what emerges [and] eschew the constraints of narrow problem setting and rigid methodological requirements at the outset of a project'. I likewise adopt an evolving and bricolage-based approach to my research.

### **Place**

For Doreen Massey (1991), 'place' is constructed out of a 'particular constellation of social relations'. Chinese-American geographer Yi Fu Tuan (1977, p.136), emphasises duration in the process of space acquiring 'definition and meaning' as place, while American philosopher Edward Casey (1996) stresses the physical or mental activity through which it is constructed. Place-making occurs in my soundwalks through a combination of duration, effort, and the coincidental coming together of participants and other human and non-human agencies.

### **Practice as Research**

My research could be described as practice-based, in that it contributes to knowledge of soundwalking. However, my application of soundwalking also contributes to knowledge of contested space, and thus, I find Robin Nelson's (2013, p.26) definition of practice as research most appropriate, it being 'comprised of multiple modes of evidence reflecting a multi-mode research inquiry'.

### **Public space**

I am curious about public space and how it is created, organised, and occupied. Moretti (2016, p. 77) writes of public space as being both object of research and a dynamic site of 'inquiry, interaction, imagination, and engagement'. For me, the act of listening while walking has become an autoethnographic strategy that exposes the power imbalances in public space. Moretti, citing anthropologist Henrik Vigh (2009, p. 77), echoes Massey in stating that walking is akin to 'moving within a moving environment [that is] always emergent and unfolding'. Moretti (2016) continues: 'Walking in public spaces thus involves multiple dimensions; it means engaging with the social space as it is, as it might be, and as it could be.' International research-creation project WalkingLab [n.d.] describes the approach of in situ knowledge gathering through walking as 'attuned to more-than-human entanglements and encounters'. My soundwalks likewise operate at the confluence of the human and non-human, from moment to moment, as space is continually created.

## **Socio-political**

I use the term 'socio-political' in describing power relations between members of human society.

## **Soundscape**

The locus of my enquiry is the soundscape, composer and pioneer of soundscape studies R. Murray Schafer's (1994, p. 7) term for 'any acoustic field of study'. Writer and academic John M. Picker (2018, p. 155) cites the International Standards Organisation definition as 'the acoustic environment as perceived or experienced and/or understood by a person or people, in context'. The context in which I apply the term 'soundscape' is the arena in which power struggles can be heard to play out, informed by social theorist Jacques Attali's (1985, p. 6) declaration that 'in noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men.'

## **Soundwalking**

As coined in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Schafer, when he established the World Soundscape Project, soundwalking is 'an empirical method for identifying a soundscape and components of a soundscape in various locations' (Adams et al., 2008). He differentiates a soundwalk from a 'listening walk', in describing it as 'an exploration of the soundscape of an

area using a score [a map] as a guide' (Schafer, 1994, pp. 212-213). Composer and researcher Owen Chapman (2013) asserts that soundwalking 'stipulates a consistent re-localisation of our listening perspective as paramount to coming to terms with the sonic character of an environment'. Frauke Behrendt (2018, p. 251) describes soundwalking as 'listening [...] in a variety of ways and with a range of purposes, while often featuring elements of talking, silence, and media'.

It is necessary to distinguish between soundwalks that feature active listening *sans* mediation whilst on the move, and those that utilise recording technology to detach sound material from its original context (acousmatic), and thereby bring about both temporal and spatial dislocation. A key feature of my approach is the synchronised synthesis of a 'live' soundscape with a binaural field recording previously captured in situ. Binaural recordings exploit the acoustic shadow of the human skull and the brief time lag between the arrival of sounds in each of our ears. A binaural recording played through a pair of earphones retains something of the original sound's directionality, offering an impression of spatial immersion. The impact of listening to a binaural recording while positioned at the precise location from which it was originally taken, can be doubly effective. The temporal shift that occurs between recording and playback creates a space in which changes in the immediate environment become apparent. I consider temporal shift in further detail on page 54 of this document.



The changes in an arable field in Derbyshire between recording and playback phases of *Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield*

## Space

My understanding of space is informed by Doreen Massey, whose relational perspective sits within a wider 'spatial turn', an academic evolution involving, as Professor of Management Robert Chia (1995) describes, 'a critical revision in our ontological commitments from an ontology of *being* to an ontology of *becoming* [and] emphasizes a transient, ephemeral and emergent reality'. Massey describes space as 'a cut through the myriad stories in which we are all living at any one moment' (Edmonds and Warburton, 2013), constructed through 'a simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey, 2005, p. 9), and thus in a state of perpetual re-configuration. She explicitly differentiates her conception of space from the classic absolute notion of space as a subdivided and stable entity, asserting that space is 'the dimension that presents us with the existence of the other' and the political question of 'how we are going to live together' (Edmonds and Warburton, 2013), that chimes with my own core theme of human contested space.

## Strategy and Tactics

I turn to French scholar Michel de Certeau for his postulation of strategy and tactics, the former representing the manipulation of place to gain an advantage over potential adversaries by 'a subject with will and power' (de Certeau, 1988, p. xix), perhaps an organisation or even a city. By contrast, the tactic insinuates itself 'into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety [...] it must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities"' (ibid.). I tactically situate my soundwalks at the point in which space is created, participants and I both constituents and witnesses in each new and momentary configuration. In 'For Space' Massey (2005, p. 46) takes issue with de Certeau's binary and the implied stability of the 'city as system'. Massey argues that 'even the most monolithic of power blocks has to be maintained' and I concur with her, that both strategic and tactical entities are subject to the same natural laws of spatial construction.

Having defined the key terms that I use in this document, the following section considers the developmental path my research has taken.

## Research journey...through contested space

My research has been shaped by the evidence of contestation I have found within the locations in which my soundwalks are composed. Each one reveals present-day contestation, as well as a multiplicity of contested pasts and potential futures. For example, the Spode factory site in Stoke-on-Trent exposed the spatial demarcation between the boardroom and the shop floor, with the works bell providing its sonic corollary. Navigating the interstices between Aix-en-Provence's various zones produced sudden changes in ambiance and socio-economic conditions. In the vicinity of Berlin's Zoologischer Garten train station, the contrast between the city's wealth and the scale of its homelessness felt jarring, even more so when considered in relation to the treatment of animals in the nearby zoo. State infiltration and surveillance of local protest groups 200 years ago on the rural Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire border resonate in the present day. On London's South Bank, the hubristic developments at Nine Elms appear to fly in the face of climate change and predictions of catastrophic flooding.

Doreen Massey suggests that by adopting a classical 'empty' concept of space people become trapped in their imaginations, and unable to envision alternatives. She (1994, p. 169) asserts that 'places cannot 'really' be characterized by the recourse to some essential, internalized moment' and that 'the identity of any place, including that place called home, is in one sense for ever open to contestation' (ibid.). This strikes a salutary tone in contemporary debates that attempt to position a society and its culture in relation to a supposed former 'golden age'. Massey's progressive agenda foregrounds the limitless new combinations and opportunities for human growth that flow from her conception of space as 'the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity' (Massey, 2005, p. 9). She also recognises the possibility of disharmony resulting from the coming together of disparate elements, writing that:

places do not have single, unique 'identities'; they are full of internal conflicts. Just think, for instance, about London's Docklands, a place which is at the moment quite clearly *defined* by conflict: a conflict over what its past has been (the nature of its

'heritage'), conflict over what should be its present development, conflict over what could be its future (Massey, 1994, p. 155).

Citing French philosopher Bruno Latour, Massey (2005, p. 147) argues for greater emphasis on co-formation (beyond simple coexistence) and the inevitability of conflict, declaring that 'what is at issue is the constant and conflictual process of the constitution of the social, both human and non-human.'

The following sections trace my research journey through six locations in which I have explored contested space through my soundwalking practice as research.

## **Stoke-on-Trent**

I first read Doreen Massey's *For Space* (2005) during my participation in the Topographies of the Obsolete project at the former Spode factory site in Stoke-on-Trent. In her text Massey interweaves the temporal with the spatial and applies her conception of space to real-world locations and the fundamental question of how we live together, an issue central to my own artistic research. If space continually comes into being through the interactions of multiple agents, each on their own distinct trajectory, then a soundwalk offers a means of interrogating this living phenomenon. And if the soundwalk is performed in a location in which the social dynamics of contestation have been and continue to play out, such as the Spode site, opportunities arise for exposure and critique of contested space. Despite cultural theorist Mark Fisher's concept of hauntology being apposite in relation to the sense of hopelessness hanging over Stoke-on-Trent and other post-industrial cities at the time, I share Massey's optimism about human potential in space-making towards progressive change.

A further key reference point for me emerged at this time through my re-reading of the chapter 'The Discarded Factory' in Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (2001), in which the journalist called out the hegemonic nature of the global systems within which humanity is entangled. The theme of local contestation within an overarching system of meta-contestation struck a powerful chord and informed my participation in Topographies of the Obsolete through which I sought to explore the impact of global flows of capital and labour on the company and its particular socio-political context in the Potteries. Within the grand narratives of

globalisation, the rise and fall of a specific industrial enterprise might appear insignificant, yet the disappearance of a social and cultural fixture can leave a deep impression on the lives and identities of individuals and communities. *A Walk through S* offered both participants and I the opportunity to experience the varying ambiances and intensities of contestation within the factory site at a particular point in its transition from industrial powerhouse to post-industrial ruin to mixed-use 'creative village' (Spode Museum Trust, n.d.). The subsequent soundwalks in my thesis have built upon the intersection between Klein and Massey.

After having been in continuous operation for 230 years, the Spode factory closed in November 2008, in the face of competition, technological change, and the company's own decision to outsource production to the Far East, thereby undermining its unique selling point as a producer of high-end collectible ceramic ware.<sup>11</sup> After its collapse, administrators and equipment resellers picked over the remaining assets, and Stoke-on-Trent City Council took on the ownership of the site.<sup>12</sup> Its future hung in the balance for several years, among many others within a city riddled with post-industrial decay and apparent ruination. Self-declared 'photographer of abandoned places', Matthew Christopher (2012) has argued that 'ruins represent failure on both micro and macro level, with cracks appearing to spread between building, organization, town, city, nation state and beyond.' Stoke-on-Trent's degradation seemed to mirror that of many other industrial towns and cities in the UK that experienced decline under successive British governments impelled by a neoliberal agenda and more recent government-imposed austerity measures.

When I arrived on-site in March 2012 my first impression was of its comparative silence, in contrast to what I imagined in its heyday must have sounded like a bustling mini-metropolis. Having previously worked in industrial settings I could readily imagine the cacophony of the factory floor, the voices of the workers shouting above the noise of machinery, kilns being loaded and unloaded, and items being transported around the site. Although largely emptied of machinery and product, 'the imprint of the former and the shards of the latter provided a consistent reminder of what once took place there' (Brown, 2015, p. 23). As Professor of

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.spodemuseumtrust.org/history-of-spode-3.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.spodemuseumtrust.org/historic-spode-factory.html>

Human Geography Tim Edensor writes, ‘the process of decay mocks the previous compulsion for order. In industrial ruins, a radical re-ordering, or dis-ordering, carries on, now immune to the imperatives of production and progress, to the will of managers and time-keepers’ (Edensor, 2002). Evidence of the ‘will of time-keepers’ took the form of the works bell that still hung outside the management block. It had fallen silent, lacking the cord connected to its clapper. Inspired by Schafer’s description of the role of the church bell in the construction and maintenance of an acoustic community (Schafer, 1994, p. 215), I conducted a repair and recorded its sound for inclusion in the soundtrack of *A Walk through S*. The bell would originally have functioned to demarcate the working day across the site and communicate the authority of the ringer (The Museum of Everyday Life, n.d.).



The Spode works bell, post-repair

One could easily fall into romanticising industrial demise and, as Professor Neil Brownsword (2021) puts it, be ‘complicit in a retrospective idealisation of the past’. The rationale for the Topographies of the Obsolete project to which *A Walk through S* contributed, was to challenge ‘politicised amnesia’ and to ‘seek out greater critical discourse to the realities of

these transitions and their impact upon people, places and traditional knowledge' (ibid.). The material traces that remained in workspaces offered glimpses into working lives and I was inspired to explore the site for further evidence of the factory's power structures. Examples emerged in the form of worker's stories set against global-scale narratives; the company's decline and visions for the site's potential future; and the competing imperatives between design creativity and commercial enterprise.

In his evocation of industrial ruins Edensor (2002) writes of:

[...] sites where we can construct alternative stories to decentre commodified, official and sociological descriptions, and conjure up spooky allegories that keep the past openended, that acknowledge that it is radically unknowable whilst continuously telling stories that capture partialities. Counter-memories can be articulated in ruins, narratives that talk back to the smoothing over of difference. Away from the commercial and bureaucratic spaces of the city, ghosts proliferate where order diminishes. Ruins are spaces where the unseen and forgotten lurk, but they are especially important, because as Avery Gordon says, it is 'essential to see the things and the people who are primarily unseen and banished to the periphery of our social graciousness.'

I became fascinated by the variations in acoustics and ambiances across the site, and by how space, in its classical sense, was organised into zones of influence and access. Mark Fisher (2009, p. 33) recounts the crude spatial divisions of the Fordist factory along blue and white collar lines. Edensor (2009, p. 132), describes the manner of exploring ruins as contingent and improvisational, in contrast to the regulated nature of a site's production lines.



Aerial view of the Spode factory site, the red line showing the route of *A Walk through S*. Photo credit: Google Street View

Participants in my soundwalk were led through parts of the site once devoted to manufacturing before entering the vacant wood-panelled boardroom, in which the sound of cooing pigeons served to emphasise the site's abandonment and partial reclamation by wildlife. I imagined this area to have been largely out of bounds to all but the senior members of the workforce and that soundwalk participants might experience a mild sense of transgression when entering the boardroom and the plush-carpeted Managing Director's office. On leaving the management block the soundtrack featured an historian describing the collapse of the collectable ceramics market in the wake of foot and mouth disease and 9/11.

In gathering sounds of ceramic manufacture, I recorded a visit to Denby Pottery Company,<sup>13</sup> and Ray Johnson, director of the Staffordshire Film Archive<sup>14</sup> shared a variety of industrial recordings with me. I found an important sound source in one of the abandoned offices, in the form of a promotional VHS videotape produced by an American company that bought and sold used industrial plant.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.denbypottery.com/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.filmarchive.org.uk/>



Participants in *A Walk through S* are led through the boardroom situated within the management block. Photo credit: Louis Niedojadlo

In discussing my contribution to knowledge later in this document, I cite Robin Nelson whose model of practice as research triangulates between haptic/tactile, reflexive, and discursive forms of knowledge. Transposed into a linear form this schema describes my research journey, in which haptic and contextual knowledge that I and soundwalk participants have gleaned, informs the collective post-walk discussion. This in turn is reflected upon and developed into papers that I present at conferences and symposia, as well as publications that themselves influence my approach towards each subsequent soundwalk. In Stoke-on-Trent I contributed a paper to the lecture series 'Site Anatomy' and in Nottingham, I lead a discussion workshop *Digging through Dirt: Archaeology past, present, precious and unwanted*, that considered 'archaeology as a form of art practice, the archaeological dig experienced from an artist's perspective, as well as the ruin as site for artistic enquiry'.<sup>15</sup> In the reflective piece that I wrote for the Topographies of the Obsolete project publication *Site Reflections* (Brown, 2015, p. 22), I discussed the 'adoption' of post-industrial ruins and soundwalking as a means of interrogating such sites from both embedded and detached viewpoints. Such opportunities for reflection and engagement with broader contemporary

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.boningtongallery.co.uk/events/returns-discussion-workshops>

debate formed a key part of the project and have become established features of my methodology.

My experience of composing *A Walk through S* in Stoke-on-Trent informed subsequent investigations through soundwalking into post-industrial sites in Nottingham, Tilburg, and Berlin as well as engagement with Wasteland Twinning,<sup>16</sup> a project that unofficially ‘adopts’ apparently abandoned sites across the globe and generates discourse around the competing visions for their potential futures. Working at Spode brought about a shift in my relationship with site, in which notions of ‘adoption’ and ‘collaboration’ came to the fore. In my presence as an artist-researcher there and in other soundwalk locations, my role has taken on the character of both facilitator and observer.

## **Aix-en-Provence**

Aix-en-Provence<sup>17</sup> is a city situated thirty-five kilometres from Marseille and the birthplace of painter Paul Cézanne. It enjoys a reputation for high art and culture, including the hosting of an annual opera festival. The city’s well-preserved medieval centre features numerous grand houses and exclusive shops. French urbanism differentiates between zones for commercial, industrial, and residential usage<sup>18</sup> and in Aix-en-Provence, the contrasting zones butt up against one other and offer numerous experiences of liminality while passing between them. As with the Spode site, I focused upon Aix-en-Provence’s zonal aspect and its socio-political implications.

The curators of Mobile Audio Fest suggested that I start the soundwalk at the central l’École Supérieure d’Art and conclude it on the outskirts at the Vasarely Foundation, from where participants could readily return by bus to the city centre. In identifying the route between these points, I undertook a series of *dérives*, and after passing the residential tower blocks of Encagnane and crossing the footbridge over the autoroute, I stumbled upon a squatter camp.

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<sup>16</sup> Wasteland Twinning. Available at: <http://wasteland-twinning.net/> [Accessed 19 January 2022]

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions-/aix-en-provence-f-az-aix.htm>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.angloinfo.com/how-to/france/housing/building-property/planning-permission>

French Marxist theorist, Letterist, and founder of the Situationist International Guy Debord (1955) describes the experience of encountering thresholds thus:

The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance that is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the terrain); the appealing or repelling character of certain places—these phenomena all seem to be neglected. In any case they are never envisaged as depending on causes that can be uncovered by careful analysis and turned to account.



Aerial view of the Vasarely Foundation on the left-hand side of the image with the squatter camp top right of centre. Photo credit: Google Street View

A dried mud path led through the squatter camp alongside a fence upon which the residents had hung out their washing to dry. Beyond a railway bridge, a rubbish-strewn dirt track connected with a tarmac road that led to the entrance of the Vasarely Foundation, whose black and white structures loomed over the camp. The juxtaposition made this path an

obvious choice in planning the route of the soundwalk. I deliberated over the ethical issues of disturbing the privacy of the camp's inhabitants, but because the route followed a designated footpath that skirted the actual dwellings, and the fact that our presence would only be fleeting, I felt that it would have a minimal impact upon them.



The bridge across the autoroute that leads to the squatter camp. The Vasarely Foundation looms over the site.

Walking from the centre of Aix-en-Provence to its periphery, the evidence of diminishing wealth and living standards was impossible to ignore. Whereas the medieval city centre was well-maintained and comparatively clean, with its numerous celebrated fountains producing the refreshing sound of running water, the area beyond the autoroute told of abjection, as though waste and human beings alike had been pushed to the margins. The conspicuous wealth of the touristic centre contrasted with the comparatively austere residential district of Encagnane and the poverty of the self-built shanty. Picking up on the themes of *A Walk through S* concerning global flows of capital and labour and its impact upon the Potteries in the UK, the squatter camp offered tangible evidence of the failure of national and local government in responding to the consequences of globalism, human migration, and inequality.

That the soundwalk passed through such starkly delineated zones and concluded at the Vasarely Foundation felt especially poignant, as its creator Viktor Vasarely was a celebrated modernist visionary who once declared that ‘not only are the tangible elements of building design (comfort, hygiene, space, light) important, but the intangible, mental elements must also be taken into consideration in the design of a city – these are just as crucial to our health as oxygen, vitamins or even love’ (Vasarely, n.d.).



Participants in *OpenCity Aix* passing through the squatter camp. Photo Credit: Lise Godard

Within the local context, these words appeared laughably utopian and led me to dwell upon other futuristic visions that all too often fail to live up to their promise. I wrote the article *Open City* (see Appendix G) in response to a call out for short papers by the online platform PAUST (Performance Architecture Urbanism Space and Theatre), an interdisciplinary group whose aim is ‘to promote the connection between architecture and performance theatre’ (stellamygdali, 2015). In this article I described the making process of *OpenCity Aix* and how the soundwalk responded to the socio-political context of Aix-en-Provence, bringing about ‘a confrontation with the city’s unequal distribution of wealth, and unsustainable urbanism’ (Brown, 2016). I also highlighted a moment in the soundwalk of ironic significance when, as the group passed beside the squatter camp, a voice on the soundtrack described the wealthy of past centuries choosing to construct their homes outside the city.

## Berlin

The UrbanTOPIAS<sup>19</sup> symposium in Berlin offered me an opportunity to explore the multi-layered and utopian vision of another European city. Urban historian Brian Ladd (1997, p. 3) describes the cleaving of memories to Berlin's physical settings, 'whose buildings, ruins and voids groan under the burden of painful memories'. In the process of composing the soundwalk, I felt myself summoning up the spectral presences of a multitude of past inhabitants, including children in the now-empty playground whose voices I featured in the soundtrack.

Issues of contested space derived from gentrification and human migration were key topics within the UrbanTOPIAS symposium. However, the proximity of the host venue to the Zoologischer Garten station presented another blatantly contested space, featuring the economically active and their socially and economically marginalised counterparts in the homeless community. The non-human, in the form of zoo animals, provided a further counterpoint to the latter.

The area around Zoologischer Garten station has long been a liminal and contested space, being a major transport hub, commercial district, cultural zone, and for many years a notorious setting for the city's drug culture and the associated sex trade.<sup>20</sup> Adjacent to the Kurfürstendamm and Europa Center shopping areas and the human throng in and around the train station, large numbers of people were sleeping rough. The sight of homelessness is an all-too-common feature of contemporary urban life, yet in this part of the capital city of one of the wealthiest nations on the planet, it felt even more glaring. In the ubiquitous and yet overlooked nature of this homelessness, I was reminded of the concept of 'unseeing' that writer China Miéville (2011) describes in his novel *The City & The City*. Although ostensibly set in a Balkan state on the margins of Europe, the novel's cityscape feels immediately

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<sup>19</sup> The International Graduate Research Program Berlin-New York-Toronto (2016). *UrbanTOPIAS. Discussing the Challenges of Changing Cities*. The 5th Annual Conference of the International Graduate Research Program Berlin-New York-Toronto: "The World in the City: Metropolitanism and Globalization from the 19th Century to the Present", Berlin 27-29 October 2016.

<sup>20</sup> *Christiane F* (1981). Directed by Uli Edel. Germany: Solaris Film

relatable to Berlin, in which ‘the boundaries and rules are learned, and strictly observed so that a person may only see what he or she is allowed to see, and, shockingly, both the tourists and the locals accept the imposed mode of behaviour and thinking’ (Matek, 2020).

The start point for *OpenCity Berlin (West)* was the Technische Universität situated on Hardenbergstraße, a busy six-lane arterial road with traffic lights that produced ‘pulses’ of traffic, suggesting an underlying rhythm of the city. The overheard train station announcements offered alternative destinations, parallel lives one could be living. At dusk, commuters were heading home, tourists had other places to be, and the zoo animals were settling down. In contrast, the homeless population seemed to exist in stasis, its opportunities constrained by a lack of resources and presumably also a need for community and medical support. In this urban space, the contrasting manifestations of an affluent society exposed the precarity of existence in different ways, the apparent mobility of commuters perhaps simply an alternative form of constraint?

As in previous soundwalks, the route for *OpenCity Berlin (West)* attempted to occupy the interstices between zones and to draw attention to disparities in power. In Berlin, to generate a feeling of trespass, I led participants from public space into an area located alongside the raised section of the S-Bahn railway, that had been adopted by homeless people. Shortly afterwards, by way of contrast, I led them through the access floor of a smart apartment block in Hansaviertel, the utopian post-war modernist complex designed by several of the luminaries of post-war architecture.



Hansaviertel in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Photo credit: dpa/Bratke.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.welt.de/kultur/article821827/Berliner-Hansa-Viertel-war-ein-Irrweg.html>

## Derbyshire

In his writings on hauntological music, Mark Fisher (2013, p. 21) identifies a melancholic yearning for a future that failed to arrive, the pursuit of a desired outcome that refuses to yield to contemporary realities, effectively a failed form of mourning. This feels apposite in relation to the romantic pull of the doomed Pentrich revolution and of our current turbulent times in which incompatible utopian visions continually collide. In June 2017 I participated in a 14-mile group re-enactment of the march along the route that the Pentrich revolutionaries had taken 200 years earlier. I imagined our group, of what appeared to be predominantly middle-aged and middle-class local residents, refusing to stop at the endpoint of the 1817 uprising in what is now the IKEA car park. From here, making our way towards Nottingham and joined by legions of fellow re-enactors, we would commandeer boats to take us down the River Trent to Newark and thence to London to overthrow the present-day government.

Each soundwalk presents a new creative challenge. Although I tend towards frugality in my use of pre-recorded music, the *Pentrich Rising* sound walks, resembling an historical re-enactment, invited a more filmic approach. I commissioned sound artist Leigh Toro to compose the musical motif. While researching music from the period he found a contemporaneous song based upon a poem written by Irish poet Thomas Moore entitled *Oft in the Stilly Night*<sup>22</sup> (Appendix M). Originally set to music by Sir John Stevenson, it seemed to reflect the collective and devotional perspective of the revolutionaries, many of whom would likely have been non-conformist in their religious practices.

My initial concerns that the rural location might offer less inspiration and sound material to work with, proved unfounded. Indeed, the fields, farms, and tracks felt as deeply inscribed and multi-layered as any city. Writer Robert Macfarlane (2015), in evoking ‘the English eerie’ concerning the stories of M.R. James, argues for recognition of the English landscape’s ‘uncanny forces, part-buried sufferings and contested ownerships’. Not only does contestation emerge in the day-to-day lives of rural communities, but also the histories and the socio-political context and manner of their telling. Authorised and often monocultural

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<sup>22</sup> Moore, T. (1817). *Oft in the Stilly Night*. Musical arrangement by Sir John Stevenson (1818). Available at: [http://www.james-joyce-music.com/song04\\_composer.html](http://www.james-joyce-music.com/song04_composer.html) [Accessed 19 January 2022]

mythologies ossify the narratives of our collective past, crowding out alternative perspectives.

The countryside is no Arcadian idyll but can rather be seen as another form of factory or warehouse, commodified, privatised, and industrialised. According to the campaign Right to Roam, 92% of the English countryside is off-limits to the public.<sup>23</sup> Walkers in England are granted limited access and on the condition of performing a 'legitimate' function, such as rambling. An example of the public's provisional access can be found in the very spot where the revolutionaries of 1817 were routed by mounted yeomanry, in the IKEA car park in Giltbrook, owned by leading UK property company British Land.<sup>24</sup> Their visitors' Code of Conduct (Giltbrook Shopping Park, n.d.) states that 'Giltbrook Shopping Park is private property and British Land reserves the right to refuse admission or require persons to leave if necessary.'



British Land sign, Giltbrook Shopping Park

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.righttoroam.org.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.britishland.com/about-us>

Contested space surrounds us, in nomadic as opposed to settled ways of living, and the competition between lobbyists pressing the case for commercial or leisure interests. It likewise surrounds us in the form of surveillance and in how space, considered in its classic sense, is carved up and policed. In the UK, at the time of writing, a criminal justice bill is passing through parliament that would extend police powers concerning the right to protest and deny Traveller communities access to sites. The same bill also proposes to criminalise trespass, with definitions so broad as to potentially include ‘cyclists going wild camping or people who have driven to access green space [with the intention to] deter people from accessing the countryside’ (Liberty, 2020).

As in the city, ‘ordering regimes’ (Edensor, 2009, pp. 124-5), both visible and unseen, direct our behaviour in the countryside. The dedicated right of way followed by *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield* passes through a farmyard and crosses someone’s garden, arousing a sense of trespass despite it being our right, such is the internalised nature of surveillance. To reach what remains of Hunt’s Barn, the initial rendezvous for the 1817 uprising, we are obliged to stray from the path and commit an act of trespass.



The remains of Hunt’s Barn, near South Wingfield, where the revolutionaries assembled before marching on Nottingham

Appreciation of what once occurred in this place invites reflection upon what has changed in the intervening two centuries. In 1817 the local textile workers and other tradespeople suffered the impact of a particular confluence of post-war, geopolitical, fashion, and weather-related events. In the present-day, human populations remain subject to the vagaries of global trade, climate change, warfare, shifting balances of power, precarity of employment, poor transport links, unequal access to resources and the legal system, state-sanctioned infiltration, and surveillance of protest groups, arguably to an even greater degree than our predecessors.

Fellow artists, writers, and filmmakers influence my practice, both in general terms and in relation to local specificities of contested space. For *OpenCity Berlin (West)* and the *Pentrich Rising* soundwalks, I used recordings of helicopters and drones to evoke the menacing sense of surveillance that pervades Kay Dick's novel *They. A sequence of unease*.<sup>25</sup> The sound of a military drone is somewhat incongruous in contemporary rural England, yet in keeping with my assertion that nowhere is wholly secure and immune from conflict. In his *Guilty Landscapes* series of drawings, Dutch artist Armando (Mak, 2015) offers glimpses into landscapes of suppressed trauma, anthropomorphising the muteness of trees that overlooked the horrors of the Nazi concentration camp at Amersfoort near where he grew up.



Armando. *Schuldig landschap (Guilty landscape)*. Available at: <https://krollermuller.nl/en/armando-guilty-landscape-1> [Accessed 30 January 2022]

In a similar way to Armando, I seek to explore and evoke the events, mundane or traumatic, that have occurred in every human contested space, and that surely will again. The notion that 'it couldn't happen here' fails to recognise the new permutations that arise in the ever-

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<sup>25</sup> Dick, K. (1977). *They. A sequence of unease*. London: Allen Lane

unfolding meetings of stories-so-far, not all of them benign. In her response to *Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield*, artist, and writer Janhavi Sharma (2022) described experiencing a sense of historical continuum:

Thinking about the structures of power today, the need for dissent in the socio-political dynamics of contemporary times, made me wonder if anything has even changed, if time has actually even passed. I would look at trees, stones, ruins around me and wonder which of them would have been spectators of these historical events. The work makes you think of landscape in general, and how it passively witnesses the world and its wars.

## London

Nine Elms Riverside was, at the time of composing *OpenCity Nine Elms* in 2017, the largest development site in Europe. Yet if projections are to be believed, the city of London and its riverside may become inundated as early as 2050 due to anthropogenic climate change (Climate Central, 2021). Ruins signify that what is habitually taken for granted as stable and eternal is anything but. The vast infrastructure being built on the Thames flood plain at Nine Elms reveals a hubristic display of financial and cultural capital, offering transport links and amenities for the affluent in a city with high levels of inequality and deprivation.<sup>26</sup> The new US Embassy that lies at its heart is described as representing ‘a complete fusion of urbanism, building, and landscape’ (US Embassy and Consulates in the United Kingdom, 2021), in a projection of human power that in 25 years may require major flood prevention measures.

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<sup>26</sup> Domman, M. (2019). *Indices of Deprivation 2019* [online]. Available at: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/members-area/member-briefings/local-government-finance/indices-deprivation-2019#:~:text=London%20has%20very%20high%20levels,homelessness%2C%20overcrowding%20and%20housing%20affordability>. [Accessed 19 January 2022]



Participants in *OpenCity Nine Elms* stand facing the entrance to the new US Embassy. Photo credit: Anna Roche

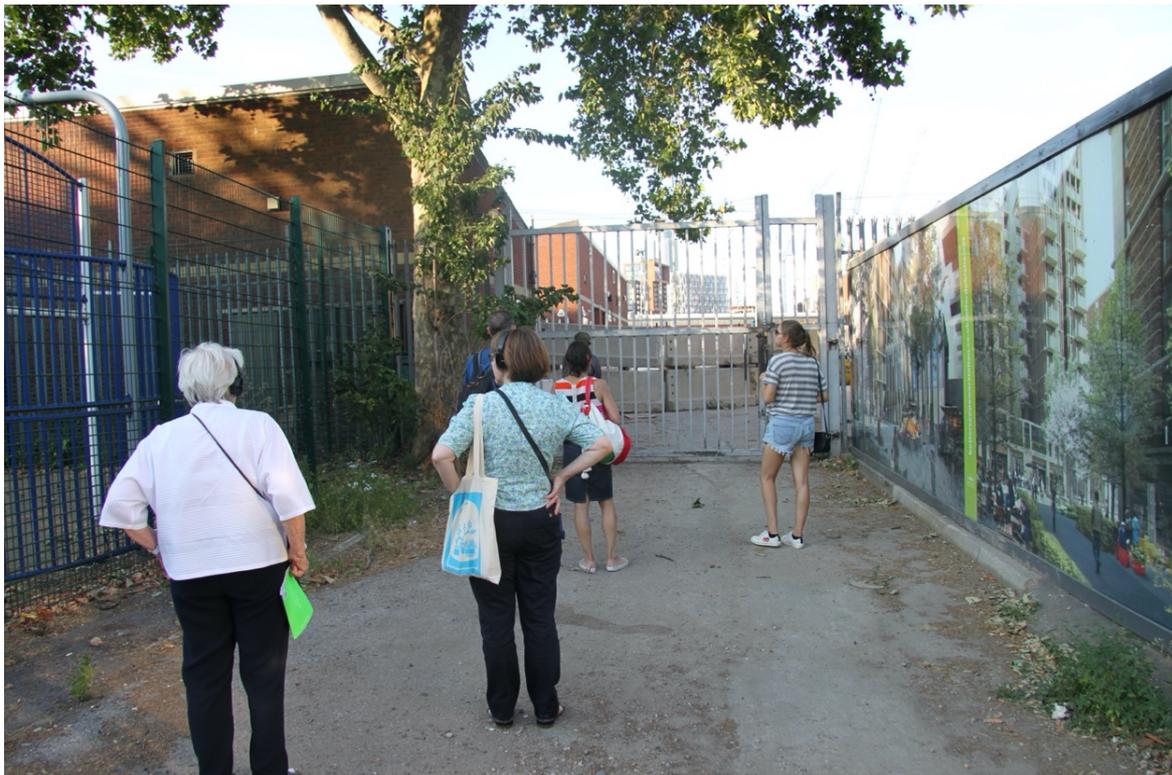
In composing *OpenCity Nine Elms* I considered the river's agency and implacable disregard for the human population along its banks. As recently as 1838 the area was described as 'a low swampy district occasionally overflowed by the River Thames [whose] osier beds, pollards and windmille and the river give it a Dutch effect' (Nock, 1965).



Map showing Nine Elms and Battersea Common Field (1818)

© 2022 Nine Elms on the South Bank

The Anthropocene is the term coined for our current geological epoch, but *OpenCity Nine Elms* alludes to an as yet un-named point further away in time, when much evidence of human activity will have been washed away - the 'post-Anthropocene'. The soundwalk concludes in the Savona Estate on Thessaly Road, containing a 'higher than average level of social housing - 59% of household spaces' in contrast with the national average of just over 18% (StreetCheck, n.d.). It leaves participants peering through a tall metal gate behind which a millpond that appeared on an 1818 map has long since been filled in. On the soundtrack, the wind rises in the long-since felled trees and birdsong struggles to break through into the contemporary urban soundscape. As evidence of the fast pace of change, three years after *OpenCity Nine Elms* was first performed, the tall metal gate that blocked access to the filled-in millpond has gone, demolished to accommodate a new building.



Participants in *OpenCity Nine Elms* stand facing the tall metal gate at the end of the soundwalk. Photo credit: Anna Roche

## Research context

In this section, I reflect upon the theoretical and socio-political contexts in which I compose my soundwalks. I also consider the creative context in which I situate my practice, including the work of several contemporary artists who use sound and/or walking in relation to contested space.

A celebrated lineage of psychogeographers, sound ecologists, sound artists, and artistic researchers offers a foundation upon which contemporary soundwalk artists and researchers including myself can build. Despite the inevitable overlaps that arise from drawing upon similar sources, each of us brings an idiosyncratic methodology and particular sphere of interest to what we do. My soundwalks distinguish themselves from others by the uniqueness of my methodology, the way my chosen methods encourage deeper appreciation and understanding of contested space, and in my focus upon contested space as a specific site of interest and engagement.

Evidence of the growing profile of soundwalking as a creative medium can be found in the activities of a variety of cultural organisations. These include B\_Tour, 'a nomadic curatorial platform dedicated to guided tours as an artistic practice in contemporary performance, sound and visual art' (B\_Tour, no date). Mobile Audio Fest (Locus Sonus, 2015) was 'an event exploring the relationships between mobility and (new) forms of listening and sound-making'. Museum of Walking's annual Soundwalk Sunday uses app-based technology and 'offers the opportunity to discover new walking pieces and sound walks'. The Walking Festival of Sound 'facilitates a meeting point for the international network of practitioners and researchers interested in sound and walking'. Further evidence of the burgeoning interest in soundwalking can be found on websites such as walk listen create,<sup>27</sup> Homemakers,<sup>28</sup> and Soundwalk Collective.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <https://walklistencreate.org/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://homemakersounds.org>

<sup>29</sup> <http://soundwalkcollective.com/#>

Within this diversity soundwalking offers artists and activists potential in the investigation of contested space and, in response to various constraints on rights of access to public space, groups and individuals have adopted a variety of tactical approaches. De Certeau's (1984, p. 37) differentiation between strategies and tactics can be applied in teasing apart the strategically 'authorised' sound sources (such as road traffic, aircraft, industry, commerce) from their asymmetrical tactical counterparts generated by more transient and unofficial assemblages. He writes that the tactic 'takes advantage of "opportunities" and [...] must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is the art of the weak' (ibid.). Having little or no influence over the 'authorised' sounds that dominate the soundscape I, along with many others, resort to the tactics of occupation and critique, in which contestation itself becomes a tactical resource, a challenge to the normative. My soundwalks emerge from my curiosity-led exploration and occasional trespass, and in their sharing make their own contributions to new formations of space.

Sound is an expression of the energy emanating from competition between different agencies, and the soundscape is the arena in which the contest is played out, and that forms the locus of my research enquiry. R. Murray Schafer (1994, p. 76) described the imperialistic nature of sound power, stating that:

The association of Noise and power has never really been broken in the human imagination. It descends from God, to the priest, to the industrialist, and more recently to the broadcaster and the aviator. The important thing to realize is this: to have the Sacred Noise is not merely to make the biggest noise; rather it is a matter of having the authority to make it without censure [...] Wherever Noise is granted immunity from human intervention, there will be found a seat of power.

Power not only grants itself the right to make noise 'without censure' but also to place curbs on the noise made by others. Jacques Attali (1985, p. 122) presciently wrote that 'it is possible to judge the strength of political power by its legislation on noise and the effectiveness of its control over it.' The new criminal justice bill mentioned earlier 'widens the

range of situations in which police officers can place conditions on protests in England and Wales, allowing officers to set conditions to prevent the noise generated by the protest' (Home Office, 2021).

As artist, writer, and theorist Brandon LaBelle (2018, p. 7) notes, 'sound is a powerful force from which we learn of the entanglement of worldly contact, one that extends from the depths of bodies and into the energetics of social formations and their politics.' Layla Curtis is an artist who uses the medium of locative sound, grounded in human entanglement with place, to tactically probe socio-political issues concerning contested space. Her app-based interactive work *Trespass* (Curtis, 2015) draws visitors to Freeman's Wood on the edge of Lancaster, and to decide for themselves whether to cross the threshold onto privately-owned land and thereby commit an act of trespass. Doing so gives full access to the GPS-located audio content, comprised of the testimony of local inhabitants, many of whom have been using the site on an informal basis for many years. In 2011 the property investment group that, under a Bermuda-based holding company, owns much of the site, erected security fencing, which prompted the local community to respond and ultimately seek Town Green status for it.<sup>30</sup> Curtis' work forms part of the activism that has taken place in relation to the ongoing contestation over the site. The recorded testimonies in *Trespass* provide historical context, but significantly give voice to the human stories that resonate and contest the iniquities of land ownership and invoke wider notions of trespass amid surveillance and control.

My soundwalks offer similar opportunities to Curtis' *Trespass* for participants to engage directly and sensorially with the contested ground itself, whilst reflecting upon its wider socio-political implications. In Curtis' case, this relates directly to public/private property and the murky world of offshore-owned investments. As my namesake, editor and founder of Art / Books Andrew Brown (2015) puts it, Freemans Wood 'is a place of territorial tensions where the interests of a local community collide with those of global capital, where the slightest action on one side of the planet [...] can have lasting ramifications for hundreds or even thousands of strangers on the other'. In *A Walk through S I* similarly highlighted the

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/town-and-village-greens-how-to-register> [Accessed 14 October 2021]

interconnections between the global and the local, and in *OpenCity Aix* and *OpenCity Berlin (West)*, the act of walking through the dwelling places of marginalised people raised the wider inequalities within comparatively wealthy Western European societies. Ultimately the soundwalk is a collective action in which we tactically insinuate ourselves into the contested spaces of the everyday and generate, as Brandon LaBelle (2018, p. 95) describes ‘soft structures of critical and creative togetherness’ through which the normative can be appraised.

Questions of ‘who gets to walk where, how we walk, under whose terms and what kinds of publics we can make through walking’ are asked by WalkingLab (n.d), whose guided walking tours have an explicitly ethical and activist intent. Their group walks overturn the familiar transactional sharing of authorised knowledge that lies behind the typical ‘official’ guided walk and turn encounters with place into opportunities for the discussion of pressing socio-political issues. For example, its co-director Stephanie Springgay (WalkingLab and the Reimagining Value Action Lab, 2019) describes the popular recreational pastime of walking as focused upon the individual body, but less so on the collective and relational experience, and the need to recognise that not all bodies have equivalent freedom of movement.

The collective walks of Gustavo Ciriaco and Andrea Sonnberger (2006) are similarly centred upon contested urban space. In their work *Here Whilst We Walk* I was part of a group led around the centre of Nottingham within the flexible boundary of a large elastic band, described by artist and academic Karen O’Rourke (2013, p. 45) as a ‘proprioceptive architecture that insiders and outsiders alike could see’. From within this mobile ‘frame’, the absurdity of our situation and sense of detachment from our surroundings offered fresh perspectives. The walk paused periodically as though to concentrate our collective gaze, such as when we coincided upon the scene of a (fortunately) minor car accident and stood observing it for an excruciatingly long period of time. This slow scrutinising gaze was also employed by the artists in drawing our attention to areas bordering the city centre that were ‘awaiting development’. As a resident, I found myself reflecting critically upon the city’s spatial organisation, which gives priority to the motor car and allows land to lie fallow that might otherwise be used to provide affordable housing. As with *Here Whilst We Walk*, my soundwalks cultivate an inquiring gaze, that, for example, can lead from encountering a wall

to becoming aware of its texture, to imagining what lies on the other side, and ultimately speculating upon who owns it, and to what end.

Within a soundwalk, the auditory sense is invariably bundled up with the visual, the haptic, and the olfactory. And when the soundwalk not only includes the opportunity to listen to a sound recording but also the live and uncontrollable soundscape produced by the environment in which it takes place, the additional dimension brings further layers of sensorial richness to the experience. Such layers are exposed in the *Electrical Walks* of German sound artist Christina Kubisch (2004), which manifest corporate and commercial power by bringing to our attention invisible fields generated by urban infrastructure and control systems. As with Kubisch's walks, the radio interference and mobile phone signals that intrude into my field recordings reveal the invisible forms of energy that surge around and through us. I retain these in my soundtracks despite their often-irritating sound, due to their suggestion of multitudinous layers in the contested land- (or perhaps ether-) scape.

As one of around fifty participants in Hamish Fulton's (2012) *Group Walk* in Birmingham, I was invited to choose one of the outlines on the floor of a long-since demolished industrial building in central Birmingham and to walk its length over a two-hour period. Moving at a snail's pace, through phases of deep ennui and renewed focus, I imagined the palimpsest of traces, evoking previous occupants of this site, and the new social and spatial configurations that would replace them. Such playful yet politically charged encounters with the urban environment invite a productive state of defamiliarization, of experiencing the world differently. Malin (Neuman, 2016), a participant in my soundwalk *OpenCity Stockholm*<sup>31</sup> described the experience as feeling 'in between', occupying an abstract space neither in the here and now nor the past, and not subject to physical laws'. Another soundwalk participant Ryan (Boulton, 2020), upon returning to the roads and houses at the end of *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield*, felt as though physically and historically he didn't 'really belong'. A similar intention lay behind the slow urban art walks on which I collaborated with fellow artists Simone Kenyon and Katie Doubleday, such as *Slow walk alongside the Council House*,<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Brown, A. (2016). *OpenCity Stockholm*. [Kungliga Konsthögskolan. After The Fire, curated by Elizabeth Black]

<sup>32</sup> Brown, A., Doubleday, K., Kenyon, S. (2007). *Slow walk alongside the Council House*. [OpenCity Nottingham. Nottingham: nottdance07]. Available at:

designed to cultivate a detached yet critical attitude to space, and the politics that play out within it. The question of what art can achieve in this regard is expressed by the Belgian-born, Mexico-based artist Francis Alÿs (2007, p. 124):

Can an artistic intervention truly bring about an unforeseen way of thinking, or is it more a matter of creating a sensation of “meaninglessness” that shows the absurdity of the situation? Can an artistic intervention translate social tensions into narratives that in turn intervene in the imaginary landscape of a place? Can an absurd act provoke a transgression that makes you abandon the standard assumptions on the sources of conflict? Can those kinds of artistic acts bring about the possibility of change? In any case, how can art remain politically significant without assuming a doctrinal standpoint or aspiring to become social activism?

Within the charmed circle of the soundwalk one can feel protected and through the apparent absurdity of our actions, at once detached yet attentive, we may intervene and raise questions within the public sphere.

Janet Cardiff is an artist who, in her ‘audio walks’ (her preferred term for soundwalks), exploits temporal shift. In *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)*, ‘part urban guide, part detective fiction, part film noir’ (Cardiff, 1999), a portal is opened onto an ambiguous temporally situated Whitechapel district in London. Cardiff states that ‘the virtual recorded landscape has to mimic the real physical one in order to create a new world as a seamless combination of the two’ (Cardiff and Schaub, 2005, pp. 4-5). In doing so she opens a temporally contested space within the imagination of the listener. As one follows the route through the urban streets, discrepancies emerge between what is seen and heard, reminders of the inexorable process of change. To experience *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)* over 20 years after its original composition is to witness the rapid transformation of the East End of London, in which the Whitechapel Library building that functioned as the audio walk’s opening location has long since become incorporated into the Whitechapel Gallery. Cardiff’s spoken directions

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[https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/18490650?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=5662094](https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/18490650?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=5662094)  
[Accessed 11 April 2022]

become increasingly hard to follow as the moments of their recording and playback become further stretched apart over time.

Slovenian dramaturg and producer Jasmina Založnik (2021) refers to the recorded sounds of a soundwalk as juxtaposing the recent past and present time. She cites my claim that we are enabled to navigate these different temporalities and ‘to imaginatively and sonically travel through time, functioning as snapshots of forever changing land and soundscapes, through evolving technologies, communities, and social practices’ (Brown, 2017). In a sense the soundwalk functions as an auditory time capsule, an archive of past times. The knowledge that Janet Cardiff generates through her audio walks is situated and speculative in a similar way to my own, being both sensorially embodied, and engaging ‘vision, smell and proprioception as much as listening’ (O’Rourke, 2013, p. 39), yet also critically engaged with the ever-changing soundscape and the socio-political milieu of the environments from which it originates. While these states of sensory immersion and considered detachment might appear contradictory, as the narrative arc of the soundwalk unfolds it invites ever-changing perspectives.

Having reviewed the approaches taken by several pertinent artists, the following section discusses my overarching methodology and the specific themes and methods that I employ in the composition of my soundwalks.

## Methodology

My methodology, and the contextual framework for my research, inform my decision-making and my choice of tools and methods. I employ a bricolage of ethnographical, auto-ethnographical, performative, participatory, sensorially immersive, situated, critically detached, and historiographical approaches that offer me the latitude to explore the physical and conceptual territory of contested space without being tied to any pre-determined pathway. Methods of aleatoric composition, temporal shift, synchrony, ordeal, and the distancing effect, form a unique confluence through which to experience and consider contested space.

Ethnographical and historical research enables me to bring the past and present socio-political composition of locations into my soundwalks. Through autoethnography, I draw upon my perspective of the culture within which I am a situated participant observer and critic. Adams et al. (2017) write that the purposes and practices of autoethnography are to 'speak against, or provide alternatives to, dominant, taken-for-granted, and harmful cultural scripts, stories, and stereotypes [...] articulate insider knowledge of cultural experience [and to] show how researchers are implicated by their observations and conclusions'. They also identify the opportunity afforded to auto-ethnographers to capture mundane experiences through their fieldwork and to share findings in non-academic contexts (ibid., p. 4). The mundane is captured in my soundwalks themselves, in the protracted periods on the soundtrack in which nothing much seems to be happening, and ambient sound comes to the fore. Findings are shared in the non-academic context of post-walk discussions.

Adopting Schön's (1991) reflective model, the contemporaneous notes that I write during the composition of each of my soundwalks are reviewed at its conclusion, together with post-walk feedback from participants (see Appendix Q). The threads that I gather on my research journey become incorporated into the weave of subsequent soundwalks, an approach that generates cumulative and actionable knowledge. Reflexivity forms a key pillar in Robin Nelson's triangular practice as research model. Writing reflectively and reflexively from outside the creative process (Nelson, 2013, p. 29) enables me to build insight and understanding of how and why I shape each piece as I do, and how each performs in its investigation of contested space. Through critical reflection upon key decisions and moments of insight via the written and spoken word, the tacit becomes explicit. As my enquiry has sought out, identified, examined, and shared examples of contested space – be it the former ceramics factory, the European city, the English countryside, or the urban riverside, the characteristics of each, including their changing and their contestation, become more discernible to me.

The soundwalk, embedded and entangled in the complexities of the everyday and the ambiguity of the temporal, is an appropriate research method for exploring space as a 'product of interrelations' (Massey, 2005, p.9). The scholar, Joe Lyons Kincheloe (2005),

writes of the ontological complexity of a bricoleur's object of inquiry, always 'culturally inscribed and historically situated'. As previously stated, contested spaces are emergent and multifarious and require a flexible and iterative approach. Thus, the methodology that I adopt is multi-method and informed by the circumstances of each soundwalk.

Walking is a foundational method within my research, that brings me into contact with a multiplicity of others' trajectories and provides a backdrop upon which a primary methodological device, such as psychogeography, can operate. Within my soundwalks, I employ the situationist techniques of *dérive* and *détournement*, the former in the early explorative stage, and the latter in the planning and editing phases. *Détournement* takes both sonic and physical form, through my repurposing of found material and leading participants along unfamiliar paths, exploring and tactically intervening in the 'backstage' of the constructed 'theatre set' of the city. Creative writer Sonia Overall (2016) writes of urban areas 'rife with signage, street layouts and advertisements that pummel us with demands and commands. Rather than allowing themselves to be dictated to in this way, zoning out and following the path of least resistance, psychogeographers will question those messages and possibly refuse them.'

In the following section, I discuss the composition process of my soundwalks.

## Process

Each soundwalk that I compose is distinct yet based upon a similar sequence of phases within a time frame that may vary from a few days to several months. Before I visit a soundwalk location I often 'walk through' the area using Google Street View to get a rough idea of its shape and character. I also refer to historical maps and photographs, novels, and films to glean details of how an area has changed and to obtain a sense of its social composition and issues it currently faces, or has faced. On my arrival I perform a series of *dérives*, all the while listening, capturing field recordings, and taking notes. In doing so I am operating between states of drift and design, to identify a route that connects locations that I find resonant, but that will also be practicable when I come to share it with participants. Once identified, this route, in the form of a mental map, functions as one element of a two-part score, alongside

the composed soundtrack, both based upon the same narrative arc. In conceiving this arc for *A walk through S I* alternated between optimism and gloom, growth, and decline, invoking the challenges faced by the company and its workforce, within the wider context of movements in global capital, technological advances, and social change. As the route crossed thresholds the soundtrack shifted register, using flashbacks and flash-forwards through the life cycle of the factory and associated industry.

In the composition of *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield* I imagined the mood of the revolutionaries veering between resolve and trepidation, togetherness and isolation. I accentuated these emotions in the editing process by adding sounds that, by their footsteps or breathing, referenced a group or an individual. Two-thirds of the way through the soundwalk the route doubles back on itself and returns to its start point in South Wingfield, the mood lightening as it approaches the village. This offers participants an alternative unrealised scenario, in which the revolutionaries return to their homes and families, no doubt wet and hungry and still impoverished, but otherwise unscathed and in a position to explore other means of achieving their goals.

My use of technology in the capture, manipulation and presentation of digital sound follows from the specific requirements of the task and in correspondence with the environments in which I locate my work. My principal interest is in exploring and creating space, not in the technology itself. I capture field recordings using equipment that is accessible and portable, the earbud-like binaural microphones fitting discreetly inside my ears and the digital recorder in my pocket. In sharing the soundwalk with participants I hand out bone conduction earphones that facilitate a full mix of the recorded and live sound in accordance with my aleatoric approach. These earphones have the additional feature of producing a distinct vibration when playing loud sections of the recording, a sensation much like the controller on a video game handset, that compounds the sense of danger. The limited capacity of the iPod Shuffle and its vulnerability to moisture is outweighed by its comparative cheapness and ease of use, important factors when loaning out to twenty or more participants. When worn on the lapel of each participant, they signify a collective endeavour to both participants and passers-by in a more subtle form than Ciriaco and Sonnberger's elastic band.



others altogether. I introduce further material from my personal archive and online sources to accentuate the narrative arc of the soundtrack.

Once a soundtrack has been roughly edited, I upload it to an iPod Shuffle and subject it to repeated listening while walking the route, making notes, re-editing, and re-testing until I feel the soundtrack is sufficiently resolved. At this point, as a digital file, it becomes fixed, the temporal gap between it and the world around it ever widening. In the latter stages, test walks become rehearsals, establishing in my memory the points at which the soundtrack and landmarks are to be in alignment. Sound score and 'map score' activate one another and, as long as I maintain the correct pace, they remain largely 'in sync'. In combination, they operate in dynamic counterpoint with the acoustic and non-acoustic features of the external environment, within the aleatoric composition.

As they are based upon fixed scores my soundwalks could be experienced without my presence and I have occasionally made map and sound scores available for independent soundwalkers, dividing them up into short sequential numbered sections to facilitate periodic synchronisation. In practice, however, maintaining the synchronisation between soundtrack and location relies on the tacit knowledge of sonic and visual cues that I hold in my memory. In her audio walks, Janet Cardiff makes extensive use of spoken directions as both a narrative component and a means of maintaining synchrony. Because I lead my soundwalks in person and act as a pacemaker they can be tightly synchronised. Without the need for spoken instructions, non-verbal sounds come to the fore and the overall experience feels less obviously 'directed'. With me as the leader taking care of pacing and navigation, participants can have, what John Levack Drever (2008) describes as, 'the erstwhile unprecedented luxury of focusing on listening'.

I arrange to meet participants at a predetermined location and loan each a set of earphones and an iPod Shuffle pre-loaded with the soundtrack. After handing out the devices I deliver a scripted introduction (see Appendix P) that covers health and safety information and the operation of the device. I request that participants remain silent throughout the soundwalk although I might occasionally break my own rule to relay some historical information. After I have counted down '3...2...1' and all have pressed 'play' the soundwalk begins.



Participants in *A Walk through S* are introduced to the soundwalk. Photo credit: Louis Niedojadlo

At the end of each soundwalk, I ask participants to switch off the devices and invite their questions and responses. Andra McCartney (2012) writes that post-soundwalk conversations ‘provide a way for people to think through the cultural, musical, political, sonic, and social meanings of everyday sounds in particular places’. Local residents often lead the conversations that ensue, which may encompass issues of local and global concern as well as questions on the technical and logistical aspects of the soundwalks themselves. There is an ethnographic aspect to hearing what my interlocutors have to say about their lives and the social context of the soundwalk. This immediate post-walk phase acts as a bridge between the augmented reality of the soundwalk and participants’ reintegration into a more familiar form of reality. Because the presence of a recording device tends to inhibit conversation in these situations, I transcribe comments after the event to inform my reflections or invite participants to give their feedback via email or in the form of handwritten notes.

In the following section, I consider the key methods, of aleatoric composition, temporal shift, synchrony, ordeal, the distancing effect, and ephemerality, that recur throughout my soundwalks in creating receptivity and directing attention towards contested space. Although they form a unique combination that distinguishes my approach from other soundwalk

practitioners, they offer a potential taxonomy for a mode of soundwalking practice, and each offers further scope for artistic research.

## Aleatoric composition

An impetus behind my soundwalks is the cultivation of active listening in relation to environmental sound, building upon the legacy of the *World Soundscape Project* (Schafer, 1994). I achieve this through my application of the aleatory, described by writer Sebastian Jenner (2014, p.71-86) as enacting ‘a conscious engagement with the concept of chance’. My approach consists of bringing together a recorded soundtrack, itself largely comprised of aleatoric field recordings captured while walking a chosen route, and the live soundscape encountered while walking that same route. Aleatoric composition is well-established within the field of experimental music, a celebrated example being John Cage’s 4’33” that directs attention to the ambient sounds of the auditorium in which the work is performed. The aleatory can be found in Janet Cardiff’s audio walks by virtue of their embeddedness within public space, in which chance events inevitably occur. However, aleatoric sound appears to be more deliberately incorporated within Christina Kubisch’s *Electrical Walks* in an approach more akin to my own, in which the ‘happy accidents’ that occur outrun the limits of the artist’s creative imagination and forge deep connections with place. The origins of my incorporation of the unforeseen and the *genus loci* emerged between 1983 and 1986 in the outdoor performances of *The Colonels*, a collaborative *free non-idiomatic* improvised music project that I co-founded. The track *Deep Breathing* (1993),<sup>33</sup> enhanced by the sounds of birdsong and passing traffic, testifies to this approach. Then and now my role involves creating the conditions from which new spaces, ‘products of interrelations’ (Massey, 2005, p. 9) emerge.

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<sup>33</sup> *The Colonels* (1993). *Deep Breathing*. *Rezolucja*. Available at: <https://open.spotify.com/track/3idUrEOZdchNQEr38LXt1K?si=cfae127a1038418b> [Accessed 20 February 2023]

During the *Walking (as a Method) in Artistic Research* event hosted by Leiden University, sound artist Justin Bennett and writer, critic, and educator Alice Twemlow, considered the impact of wearing headphones upon the experience of the listener, concluding that the devices were essentially ‘pre-sensing’ for them, or cutting them off from the live soundscape (Bennett and Twemlow, 2021). Although my soundwalks, as artworks, do offer a measure of ‘pre-sensing’, the live soundscape is deliberately incorporated through my choice of earbuds, on-ear or bone-conducting earphones. Even bulky over-ear style headphones can be partially slipped off the ears to allow ambient sound to enter the ear canal. The result is a live mix between the unpredictable elements that form the acoustic environment (the unwitting and disparate ‘performers’ that we pass, from people in conversation, to songbirds, to falling raindrops), the largely fixed ‘map score’, and the unchanging sound score.

The sound score, through its apparent synchrony with the environment from which it has been taken, asserts itself to be the actual, the ‘acoustic’. Having been detached from its source it is in fact ‘acousmatic’ and temporally dislocated. Thus, despite being heard in an approximately credible auditory context, it cannot be attributed directly to a specific source. As a signifier with a tenuous relationship with its signified its status is, if not detached, then certainly ‘slipped’. As a consequence, doubts arise over the veracity of all that is heard and seen. Malin (Neuman 2016), who experienced *OpenCity Stockholm*, described feeling unable to trust her hearing: ‘I never fully realised before to what a large extent I rely on my hearing for navigating a space. I thought that the confusion would decrease a lot during the walk, but in the end I still caught myself looking for cars that wasn't [sic] there.’

Brandon LaBelle (2018, p. 35) writes that through ‘defamiliarizing our perception, veiling the relationship between signifier and signified, asking us to listen again, acousmatic listening becomes a base from which to build a new relation to the social and political realities that surround particular communities’. He cites French film sound theorist Michel Chion’s (1999, p. 22) characterisation of the acousmatic as ‘a “fluctuating zone” that moves in and around what we see’. LaBelle (2018, p. 36) continues, ‘in doing so, it may support the presentation of the visual [...] and at the same time, it may give challenge to these elements by suspending their logic, by explicitly haunting the experiences we have of looking’. That such a simple manoeuvre as merging the acousmatic with the acoustic can produce so profound an effect

demonstrates the human capacity to ascribe coherence in our attempts to construct a credible world around ourselves. The world of the soundwalk is, to some extent constructed, 'formed of a connective tissue of ambient and recorded sound upon which each soundwalk is built, edited to produce a convincing internal logic' (Brown, 2017).

## Temporal Shift

A key factor in the effectiveness of a temporally shifted soundwalk is that while the soundtrack remains fixed the world around it is forever changing. Temporally shifted soundwalks expose change and the fleeting nature of existence. My soundwalks utilise the deceptively simple method of re-placing a recording in its original location, thereby creating a temporal shift, and opening an area of speculation on what has taken place in the intervening period, and what may occur in the future. Each iteration of the soundtrack is simply one element within a newly created space, fresh associations formed as old ones disappear. Artist and writer Salome Voegelin (2018, p. 202) describes sound technologies' potential for displacement, causing 'anxiety as well as joy through the subsequent practice of re-placement'.

In each soundwalk participants are effectively engaging in a re-performance of the original walks that I made while mapping out the route and recording the baseline, days, weeks, months, or even years before. In her response to *Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield* Janhavi Sharma (2022) wrote that at times the work felt like it was 'so personal to the artist, an interpretation, more than a historical fact. That I was being invited to walk in the memory of someone's making'. Gerald Fiebeg (2015), audio artist, writer, and a member of DEGEM, the German Society for Electroacoustic Music, describes field recordings as bearing 'witness to a recordist's presence at a certain place and time in history'. In following the route that the revolutionaries took through the Derbyshire countryside, *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield* is itself a partial re-performance of what took place in 1817. Klara (Szafrńska, 2021), a participant in a re-staging of the soundwalk, raised its Sisyphian connotations concerning its political/historical meaning, asking 'how many times will it be re-performed, how many times bodies will play [...] with the same (?) ending'.

Doreen Massey (1994, p.4) celebrates the countering of 'attempts to fix the meaning of particular spaces, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities' and somehow stop the clock at a particular point in time-space when a social group had dominion over others (ibid., p.169). Such sites of conflict as the previously mentioned London Docklands are ubiquitous and perennial, a contemporary example being London's Nine Elms, the location for my own soundwalk in 2017. Such developments might be perceived as signifiers of dynamism and human progress, yet in their adherence to the tried and tested formula of short-term profiteering and blithe disregard for environmental and urgent socio-political concerns they rather constitute a regressive impulse.

## Synchrony

As participants and I walk the route together I am walking a metaphorical tightrope through my ongoing attempts to ensure that they experience sounds from the soundtrack in synchrony with the precise locations from which they originated. Both Janet Cardiff and I synchronistically return binaural field recordings to their source, as well as using recorded footsteps to provide rhythm, an indication of walking pace, and communicating a sense of place, from the surface underfoot to the spatial acoustics of the environment that is walked through. This effect is yet more pronounced through the sense of immersivity generated by the binaurally recorded soundtrack.

Each of my soundwalks opens with a period in which participants become accustomed to the temporal shift and sense of dislocation from their surroundings. Several have described a sensation of almost sharing the body of the recordist, or at the very least walking alongside them. Unpredictable features within the live soundscape become incorporated into the experience, leading participants to question whether I, as the artist, might have deliberately placed them. As with the aleatoric score, the use of synchrony heightens anticipation during what might otherwise feel like an everyday stroll. On one of the *OpenCity Nine Elms* soundwalks that I performed for Art Night in 2018, participants and I witnessed the sight of a modern-day electric train smoothly moving off to the soundtrack's representation of a steam locomotive. The suggestion of synchrony can also produce interesting juxtapositions of auditory and haptic sensation, such as during *OpenCity Aix*, when I paused beside a set of

flagpoles and invited participants to touch them while simultaneously listening to the recording of the same flagpoles.



Participants touching and listening to flagpoles on the Esplanade Mozart, Aix-en-Provence, during *OpenCity Aix*

## Ordeal

In my application of walking pace, distance, physical effort, sudden loud noise, a sense of uncertainty and trespass, I deliberately seek to compound participants' internalized experiences of anxiety and of alienation. My rationale for doing so is to attempt to break down the distinction between active performer and passive spectator and to offer an experience that is both physically and mentally impactful. My approach has been informed by several live artworks that have left deep impressions upon me, one such being Martin Burton's *Nausea* (1998), which I experienced at Nottingham's Expo Festival. In this piece, each audience member was issued with a lightweight disposable overall, and taken, one at a time, from a reception area, and instructed to lay down on a gurney. We were then each wheeled in pitch darkness and unceremoniously dumped onto what was later revealed to be an old-style metal hospital bed. What followed involved repeated dousing with stale milk, pyrotechnics at the foot of the bed, the light from which momentarily revealed fellow audience members in similar states of abjection before a deafening fire alarm finally prompted us to rise and fumble our way to the exit. Professor Heiner Goebbels aptly describes this experience as akin to having an unexpected encounter with oneself (Goebbels,

Collins and Gronemeyer, 2015, p. 40). The sense of being under duress within an artwork, and one that gave a convincing impression of being out of control, was indeed challenging. However, by encountering my own personal thresholds I felt I somehow embodied the existential themes behind the work.

In the discussions that follow my soundwalks and in their written feedback, participants often describe their feelings of confusion over what might have been real or 'staged'. Janhavi Sharma (2022) wrote that 'the seamless way in which the sounds would overlap with the surroundings made it difficult to distinguish what was immediately around me, and what was not.' The issue of participants' trust, that I as the artist and leader of the walk know what I am doing, and that they will not be on the receiving end of some trickery or manipulation, plays into the sense of ordeal within my soundwalks, leavened by elements of mischievous humour. To explore the role of a misguide in *Trust me, I'm an artist*,<sup>34</sup> an 80-minute art walk that I led in Toronto, as participants and I approached the endpoint I sprinted away and temporarily abandoned them. Only one gave chase.

Participants invariably slip in and out of engagement during a soundwalk, perhaps through dwelling upon their own bodily sensations such as fatigue, or even deliberating on what to do after the soundwalk. After experiencing *Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield* Janhavi Sharma (2022) wrote:

While there was so much to absorb, I found myself falling in and out of the sound, sometimes just focusing on myself and my own participation in the activity. I wonder if that was an induced feeling, if you wanted us to feel perhaps a variation of the exhaustion, hesitation, unpreparedness that the rebels from the piece might have been feeling. Perhaps you wanted to accentuate that discomfort, because it is easy to otherwise be distracted by the beauty of the hills and the possibility of leisure/pleasure they offer.

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<sup>34</sup> Brown, A (2013). *Trust me, I'm an artist*. Revisiting the Art of Walking Seminar, American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 4-7 April 2013, Toronto, Canada



Participants in *OpenCity Berlin (West)* push their way through the undergrowth.

Photo credit: Kate Brehme

For *OpenCity Berlin (West)* I chose a route that led directly through the undergrowth beside the elevated railway line where rough sleepers' belongings lay on the ground. What felt like a gross intrusion into another person's living space also raised the possibility that we might encounter them there and risk mutual embarrassment. One participant recounted how she considered whether or not to give eye contact to anyone she happened to encounter. A more gung-ho approach was taken by the curator, Kate Brehme (2016) who spoke of the thrill she experienced in taking a route *off-piste*, stepping over a log to enter the area and pushing aside vegetation, and moving differently in cutting through the undergrowth. Despite my theme of contested space being somewhat bleak, soundwalking itself is often a joyous and exploratory activity.



Participants in *A Walk through S*. Photo credit: Louis Niedojadlo

## The Distancing Effect

I incorporate contrapuntal, non-diegetic, incongruous, and manipulated elements in my soundwalks, including occasional music, and even, in the case of *A Walk through S*, a Spitfire fly-past. The sound of my footsteps, breathing or coughing, or inadvertently captured mobile phone interference, act as a reminder of the artifice behind the soundwalk and, in accordance with Brecht's *Verfremdung* or distancing effect, 'break the fourth wall'. In doing so I am attempting to undermine the coherence brought about by the synchronisation of naturalistic sounds in a location appropriate to them, to generate detachment and a critical response from participants. In addition to such interventions offering humorous or jarring interludes, participants might have cause to consider their situation within a contemporary art event located, for example, in The Potteries, somewhere that within living memory, people have lived, worked, and died in 'one of western Europe's most polluted cities [...] in one of the most vulnerable trades' (Haden, 2017).



Participants in *OpenCity Berlin (West)* waiting to cross the Straße des 17. Juni. Photo credit: Kate Brehme

## Ephemerality

Peggy Phelan (1993, p. 148) writes that 'without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility [...] and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control'. She continues by stating that 'performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward', and that performance's independence from mass reproduction is 'its greatest strength' (ibid., p. 149). My reluctance to put new physical art objects into the world leads me to create site-specific, experiential, and ephemeral artworks. I consider my soundwalks to be live performances, sonic artworks that I compose, rehearse, and share with an audience. Each is its own unique and unrepeatably confluence of trajectories. Although I lead the soundwalk, participants play an active role as autonomous co-constructors of the experience, as well as contributing to the post-walk discussions. The sense that we are 'all in this together' extends to the non-commercial aspect of my soundwalks, which are shared without money changing hands.

In maintaining the spontaneity of a soundwalk, the capture of documentation becomes a secondary concern. Taking photographs or shooting videos during a live performance event can be intrusive and re-staging specifically to produce documentation often leads to a feeling

of fakeness. Because I lead the majority of my soundwalks from the front, I invite participants to capture documentation and to share their thoughts on what they have experienced with me afterwards. This approach engages participants in the creative act as well as offering me alternative perspectives on the soundwalk through their photographs.

## Contribution to knowledge

In this final section, I discuss how my soundwalks produce and share knowledge, as well as the various ways in which my insights have been taken up by fellow practitioners, researchers and soundwalk participants. I also offer areas of soundwalk-related research that I believe warrant further investigation.

I summarise my principal contributions to knowledge as:

- the development and articulation of an effective research methodology based upon soundwalking
- the application of methods that deepen appreciation and understanding of contested space
- the placing of my methodology in dialogue with Doreen Massey's progressive concept of space

I have established the effectiveness of soundwalking as a research methodology, offering an accessible, embodied, and discursive approach to contested space that can be readily turned towards wider socio-political concerns. Although my methods of [aleatoric composition](#), [temporal shift](#), [synchrony](#), and [and ordeal](#) are applied in the work of fellow soundwalk practitioners, the ways in which I combine them within my methodology, coupled with the thematic concerns that drive my research, constitute the uniqueness of my contribution. Doreen Massey's concept of space continues to resonate, and I have successfully brought her ideas into dialogue with my own. Beyond this, each of my soundwalks contributes to knowledge through the attention it brings to its specific context.

In his book *Practice as Research in the Arts*, Robin Nelson (2013, p. 37) offers an epistemological model of a 'multi-mode, dialogical, dynamic approach' to art praxis based

upon a triangular structure in which the haptic/tacit ('know how'), undergoes critical reflection to become the 'know what', opened out to broader contemporary debate and made explicit as 'know that', thereby leading to 'substantial new insight' or 'new knowledge' (ibid., p. 38). My contribution to knowledge is likewise based upon such a haptic, reflective, and discursive triangulation. My engagement with and contribution to these forms of knowledge are what differentiates my practice as research from what would otherwise solely be an artistic practice. Reflexivity, the stepping outside of praxis to appraise what has taken place, and the steering of research into new and potentially productive areas, is inbuilt within my methodology and enacted throughout the creative cycle. By making my practice as research explicit through dissemination at conferences and symposia, and through my publications and teaching, I encourage others to build upon my experience and insights.

### **Haptic and tacit knowledge**

Both soundwalk participants and I gain embodied haptic knowledge during the experience of a soundwalk, constituting a sensory mapping of its physical terrain and our bodies in relation to it. Citing my article *Soundwalking: Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage*, Agata Stanisz (2019), social anthropologist, field recordist, and professor at the Department of Anthropology and Ethnology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, considers that listening to field recordings that represent real or virtual soundscapes offers phenomenological experiences of physical space 'with a psychological and physiological dimension.' Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky (1917) declared that the point of art was 'to return sensation to our limbs [...] to make a stone feel stony'. I have found the most effective means of sharing such tacit knowledge invariably involves leading people on an actual soundwalk, the impulse that underpins my soundwalking practice.

In *Soundwalking: Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage*, I claimed soundwalking to be a form of mapping exercise, 'both in relation to the reiterative process of listening to, gathering and assembling sounds, but also in the form of the plethora of 'live maps' created by participants, responding to both the tangible and associative features of the environment' (Brown, 2017). Jasmina Založnik (2021) writes that soundwalks have 'given me the experience of valuing extending time, slowing down my steps and opening up myself toward the outside'. She continues (ibid.):

I learned to listen and admire what seems to be hidden as it is too small or too delicate to be acknowledged right away. I learned to take time to embrace what is there, to gently touch various textures that I rarely thought of. Such experience is never only mental, even if you cannot recall and translate the experience into words and language, you know it is embodied, especially since or when it is holistic.

Our relationship with place/space has felt the impact of rapid social and technological change, including the abstracting effect of the virtual. According to Sheller and Urry (2006) within the urban environment, and the city in particular, 'people learn to develop an attitude of reserve and insensitivity to feeling'. Sheller and Urry describe the urban personality as 'reserved, detached, and blasé' (ibid.). It can be a challenge to step away from routine behaviours and ways of thinking, and soundwalks offer a means of cultivating fresh perspectives on the (over-) familiar and opening it up for critique.

My soundwalks often feature extended periods of low intensity that provide a backdrop to occasional moments of drama. Sensory aspects are also allowed to unfold during these measured sections, returning us to the world, and encouraging a perspective of awareness and social responsibility. After my soundwalk *OpenCity Stockholm* Malin (Neuman, 2016) described how the walk 'caught invisible/untangible [sic] qualities of a place and made them more tangible through sound [and] created both fictions and a deeper truth/meaning of the place at the same time'. As well as catching often overlooked features and qualities of the present-day, soundwalks open portals that take the imagination into scenarios of previous contestation. Comparisons are invited between early 19<sup>th</sup> century rural Derbyshire and the contemporary soundscape and landscape. Jo (Wheeler, 2020), a participant in *Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield* during its re-staging in early 2020, commented:

Listening to the experience of your walks along that route 3 years ago - (already history) – helped me to reflect on the route's history 200 years ago. Comparing what sounds were common to all the walks (200 years ago, 3 years ago, and now) and what had changed? What sounds were embedded in the land (the water, the birdsong, the wind), and what was more transient (the traffic, the cattle, the train, the footsteps)?

Through soundwalking, I have adopted different perspectives on contested space and by working across a variety of locations have essentially triangulated my findings. As each soundwalk experience unfolds it combines embodied, imaginative/associative, and critical modes of engagement with its socio-political themes. The correspondence between sound and vision has been well documented in relation to cinema (Ansani, Marini, D'Errico and Poggi, 2020), and is similarly at play within a soundwalk, in the heightened level of attention devoted to objects, shapes, and textures. Brandon LaBelle (2018, p. 2) writes of a sonic sensibility potentially informing 'emancipatory practices' and suggests sound works unsettling and exceeding 'arenas of visibility by relating to the unseen, the non-represented or the not yet apparent'. Participants in my soundwalks have alluded to the 'emancipatory' in their descriptions of escaping from present-day reality into immersion into the semi-fictional and temporally ambiguous (Szafrńska, 2021). Wheeler (2020) writes of sensory confusion, Neuman (2016) of the 'creation of imaginary narratives', and Sharma (2022) describes a complexity 'that unfolds so many historical and contemporary contexts'. The latter (ibid.) also refers to adopting critical positions in relation to contemporary power structures and 'the need for dissent'.

### **Reflexive and discursive knowledge**

It is necessary to distinguish between situated and embodied forms of knowledge gained by soundwalk participants and that which I subsequently critically reflect upon, and place within wider discourse. The third pillar of Nelson's model (2013), the 'know that', is generated through research activity at the intersection between academic and experiential knowledge, 'where creative practice is co-joined with research' (ibid.).

My bricolage methodology informs the decisions that I make concerning the methods and tools that I employ, the locations in which my soundwalks are situated, and importantly the prism of 'contested space' that provides both focus, catalyst, and mode of critique. This methodology encompassing both drift (*dérive*) and design is equally at play in the creation of my soundwalks and in my academic research, each informing the other in a symbiotic synthesis. My adoption of a speculative, flexible, and iterative approach, in which I am responsive to the 'culturally inscribed and historically situated' (Kincheloe, 2005) context

informing each soundwalk, offers a breadth of material and methods, giving way at key points to the practicalities of staging public facing events and engaging in periodic reflection. By presenting papers and using performative approaches to conferences and symposia presentations I contribute transmissible knowledge. In my peer-reviewed article *Soundwalking: Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage*, I offer insights into my methodology and propose soundwalking as both a creative medium and platform for artistic research, of use and relevance to fellow practitioners and researchers alike. In post-walk dialogue with participants, my rationale, and practical aspects of the soundwalk, are themselves a subject for critique. Through my teaching practice, I share my approach with student artists, encouraging, and supporting the application of mobile sound within their practices. I have shared technical and methodological knowledge with fellow artists and delegates at conferences and symposia in Plymouth, UK;<sup>35</sup> Bergen, Norway;<sup>36</sup> Lyon, France;<sup>37</sup> Toronto, Canada;<sup>38</sup> and Norrköping, Sweden.<sup>39</sup>

The inclusion of *OpenCity Berlin (West)* in the UrbanTOPIAS symposium<sup>40</sup> offered an alternative, physically engaging means of knowledge dissemination. Sharing her enthusiasm afterwards, Friederike Landau-Donnelly (2016), Assistant Professor in Cultural Geography at Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen, called for 'opening research to more encompassing sensual experiences in learning the urban'. Another participant, Irene Leser, a researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin, subsequently wrote that my soundwalk offered the listener

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<sup>35</sup> Brown, A., Doubleday, K., and Cocker, E. (2008). *Pay attention to the footnotes: interrogating the hidden itineraries of writing and wandering*. Hidden City Symposium: Mythogeography, Writing and Site-Specific Performance, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, 4 October 2008, Plymouth.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, A. (2013). *The way back: inhabiting place and the present*. Sensuous Knowledge Conference: Ta(I)king Place in Town, Bergen, Norway, 23-25 January 2013, Bergen, Norway.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, A (2013). *Performing the spatial turn*. Art and Geography: Aesthetics and Practices of Spatial Knowledges Conference, University of Lyon, Lyon, France, 11-13 February 2013, Lyon, France.

<sup>38</sup> Brown, A (2013). *Trust me, I'm an artist*. Revisiting the Art of Walking Seminar, American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 4-7 April 2013, Toronto, Canada.

<sup>39</sup> Brown, A. (2015). *OpenCity*. In the Flow: People, Media, Materialities, ACSIS Conference, Linköping University, Norrköping, Sweden, 15-17 June 2015, Norrköping, Sweden.

<sup>40</sup> The International Graduate Research Program Berlin-New York-Toronto (2016). *UrbanTOPIAS. Discussing the Challenges of Changing Cities*. The 5th Annual Conference of the International Graduate Research Program Berlin-New York-Toronto: "The World in the City: Metropolitanism and Globalization from the 19th Century to the Present", Berlin 27-29 October 2016.

‘the opportunity to walk acoustically through a world that is just emerging’ and the combination of the ‘heard and visually perceived’ enabling participants to relate to their environment in a new way (Leser, 2019).

My conception of soundwalking functions not only as a relational and investigative creative research practice but also offers an original and critical gaze in relation to wider themes, such as social inequality and anthropogenic climate change. In his introduction to the special issue of the journal *Humanities Spatial Bricolage: The Art of Poetically Making Do*, in which my article was published, its editor Les Roberts (2018) describes my *Pentrich Rising* soundwalks thus: ‘Against this political and historical backdrop (the Pentrich revolt), the walks constituted a collective socio-spatial activity, with Brown officiating as artist, guide, and curator of a shared embodied multi-sensory experience.’ He continues (ibid.):

[...] the interplay between the embodied experiences of the individual walkers and those that frame a collective sense of spatial engagement, give productive voice to a wider set of questions that may be applied to soundwalking as a method of socio-spatial enquiry...[and] contribute to broader critical debates around social space, affect, and the place of the imagination and creativity in the making—bricolage-style—of everyday spaces and their associated practices.

In referencing my Humanities article Alessia Milo (2019), architect and Ph.D. researcher at Queen Mary University of London, describes how soundwalking as an environmental educational practice can not only train composers and performers in listening skills but also to reflect upon how we relate to the environment. Citing the same article Chilean composer Felipe Otondo (2018, p. 133), refers to the use of the soundwalk ‘as an active tool for rapport with the surrounding sound environment’.

My research journey has ranged from Stoke-on-Trent to Aix-en-Provence, Berlin, Derbyshire, London, and beyond, gravitating towards and exposing contested locations within each. My soundwalks have generated embodied knowledge and appreciation of the socio-political context for participants and myself through the creation of a dialogic space in which such knowledge can be readily shared. Within this document I have reflected upon the common

conceptual ground that I occupy with theorists including Doreen Massey and Brandon LaBelle and situated my practice as research within the wider field of art-based practices that use walking and sound. In doing so I have identified key points of intersection and divergence.

Although the Covid 19 pandemic put a lockdown on my soundwalking practice the hiatus offered me the opportunity to reflect upon my body of work and to undertake this Ph.D. Moving into the next phase I am keen to apply the insights I have gained, and I have identified several areas in which further research might bear fruit. I feel the close relationship between soundwalking, and the cinematic experience invites deeper investigation, whether and to what extent the soundwalk medium can be argued to be an expanded form of cinema. Writer Joyce Roodnat (Rasker and Roodnat, 2009) has likened the experience of soundwalks to cinema, and implicit in her claim that ears are ‘deceivers, deforming (visual) reality’ is that one’s perception of the world can be manipulated through sound. In contrast to the frame of the cinema screen, which forces the viewer into its singular physical viewpoint, the 360-degree vision of a sound walk invites a more expansive and individuated response.

Further research might consider what appear to be contradictory positions of phenomenological engagement and critical detachment within a soundwalk. I am keen to explore the mechanisms behind these approaches, and their possible synthesis.

And finally, each of the methods that I adopt within my methodology – of aleatoric composition, temporal shift, synchrony, ordeal, the distancing effect, and ephemerality – warrant further investigation, both individually and in combination.

Readers may view documentation from my research inquiry in the form of the soundtracks, maps, and photographs on the Research Catalogue<sup>41</sup> at:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/fa42dd05cf1b66111b1dbbc23287b225>

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<sup>41</sup> Brown, A. (2021). *Soundwalking in Contested Space*. Available at: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/fa42dd05cf1b66111b1dbbc23287b225>

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## Appendices

The Appendices contain documents that offer background material relating to each of the six soundwalks.

The timeline for each soundwalk provides a breakdown of its narrative sequence, showing the approximate timings of sounds, their source, the mood they evoke, or the theme they address.

I have also included PDFs of the PAUST and Humanities publications

### Appendices

- A. A Walk through S timeline
- B. OpenCity Aix timeline
- C. OpenCity Berlin (West) timeline
- D. Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield timeline
- E. Pentrich Rising – Giltbrook timeline
- F. OpenCity Nine Elms timeline
- G. Open City PAUST article
- H. Soundwalking. Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage
- I. A Walk through S step-by-step description
- J. OpenCity Aix step-by-step description
- K. OpenCity Berlin (West) step-by-step description
- L. Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield step-by-step description
- M. Oft in the Stilly Night
- N. Pentrich Rising – Giltbrook step-by-step description
- O. OpenCity Nine Elms step-by-step description
- P. Soundwalk generic instructions
- Q. Participant feedback
- R. Andrew Brown's list of publications

S. Extract from Les Roberts introduction to Soundwalking. Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage

I compiled the step-by-step descriptions during the composition and shortly after the staging of each soundwalk and they offer a detailed account of the sounds and their associations. These descriptions have been reformatted for this document but are otherwise unedited.

The soundwalk instructions are those that I read aloud to participants at the start of each soundwalk.

Feedback received in written form from participants after several of my soundwalks.

The list of publications includes conferences and symposia at which I have delivered papers and/or soundwalks, exhibitions and festivals, and publications.

I have included the introduction written by Les Roberts in which he considers my article *Soundwalking. Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage* in *Spatial Bricolage: The Art of Poetically Making Do*.

## I - A Walk through S step-by-step description

The soundwalk opens at the far end of the China Halls with a melancholic musical refrain, looped and slowed from the VHS video found in the Spode offices. What is essentially a 'Liquidation sale' of the plant suggests the opportunistic 'vultures' poised to capitalise on the company's collapse. A reminder of the terminal decline of UK's industrial base.

Solitary footsteps evoke an image of a person walking through the abandoned building. Who might that person be? Ourselves? A security guard? A former employee imagining the industry and its soundscape once in this very space. Following in their footsteps you almost sense their reflective mood (like following and imitation exercise)

The acoustics within the China halls, both on the recording and live in the space underpin the sounds gleaned from archival sources suggest hand-driven processes, bodies performing roles that have become redundant or less physically demanding as technology has taken over the heavy lifting. Hard 'blue collar' labour alongside the 'white collar' salesman. ('control systems involved with this process. Automated system. All of this equipment can be easily dismantled'). Juxtapose the once-assumed permanence of The Potteries industry ('too big to fail') and its actual decline despite centuries of innovation, tradition, loyalty (?). The sense of insecurity & precarity, that nothing lasts, all of us are replaceable, ('plenty of others in the queue') at the mercy of the forces of change (dynamic?), globalisation, neoliberalism

Alarm = warning. 'it's not the fire alarm, don't worry' – the Denby guided factory tour, the ceramic industry now subsumed within the heritage industry (later we hear the phrase 'tourists are big buyers of catchpenny wares')

More authentic sounds from ceramic industry giving a sense of the quality and variety of the sounds

Storage tanks and blungers

Another kiln

A hand-operated jolley machine making cups

Activity around a kiln and loading area

Quiet space with voices in background

General atmosphere – heavy clay end (blunger, pump)

Noisy machine 2

General atmosphere, press room/pug mill

Entire contents of spray building

Turning ware on a lathe – provides an interesting texture, speed of revolution

We step outside to be confronted by a very loud Spitfire fly-past summoning past spirit of innovation and determination. The two planes head towards Penkhull in reference to Reginald Mitchell, British aircraft designer and its developer

From the archive Enid Seeney, the designer of celebrated Homemaker ware who walked this very site, talks of ‘all the time night class and day release’, provides names of colleagues such as Lithuanian Mr. Mickelowski, employment (and implied support structure) from cradle to grave – a social contract?

Solitary footsteps again, the former worker surveying another abandoned space

As we mount the stairs slowed music from 1960s industrial film in which a design lecturer is emphatically stressing the balance between artistic freedom/innovation and the market-drive industry (another reminder of the precarity, of taking for granted?) ‘If you feel that industry is a tremendous limitation to your creative ability then it seems to me that you don’t understand’

Musique concrete (extracted from 7” record) to accompany cracked clay slip on the floor (Irna’s artwork), amplifying the up-close qualities of the material and redolent of the cracking of the entire structure, at risk of collapse

An historian describes the slide-on litho process, which suggests industrial innovation and prefigures Danica’s found material (see below)

Very loud old-style telephone ringing in empty room – insistent, jarring, demanding to be answered, a sound appropriate to the location. Also relates to (relates to the old stationery/tape artwork in that room) Extracted from a French 1950s sound effects LP

Sounds from a hunt, with dogs and guns in reference to Danica's stacked decal-constructed sculptural pieces, from Spode hunting-themed dinnerware. Playful. Extracted from same sound effects LP

Laughter and chatter amongst a group of workers, artists on guided tour, walking downstairs

Sweeping sound – suggestive of a past worker, employee or (in fact) Tina, fellow artist.

Tap-tap-tapping as we get outside is taken from a walk in the centre of Gent where workers were laying cobblestones. Its inclusion is based upon its suggestion of open space (contrast with being inside), fresh (optimistic?) activity on the site, old-style hand-made processes, and at root just an interesting and vaguely obscure noise.

The US salesman returns, persistently following us around in his attempts to flog the plant. 'Systems for a small operation. All of this equipment can be serviced, anywhere in the world' hints at globalised industry and potential destinations for the equipment, where labour may be cheaper, expectations not so high (although that feels like a joke in the Potteries)

A member of the Copeland family adopts a paternalistic tone in describing the workforce's, 'endearment to the family industry', as 'son followed father', an earlier form of capitalism, to be swept away by globalism. One of the family whose poor decisions could be seen to have brought about the downfall of the business. He suggests some employers are better than others.

A group of women talking during a break – artworkers

I restored the old factory bell, its clapper having been removed, and recorded it from different parts of the site. It would have the means of summoning the workforce and indicating the times when shifts began and ended. Soundmarks such as the bell are used to keep myself to time. I try to walk just ahead of the group and the recording, so that they experience it at the precise moment in the walk's design

As we enter the management/sales block and pass his office Copeland senior states 'It was the beginning of radical change, the first electric kiln for decorating on-glaze pottery and in 1936 a gas fired kiln was introduced'. He hubristically positions Spode among the innovators in the industry with gas-fired kilns and the wherewithal and capacity to install them, now the supposed 'asset' of the huge site is a challenge for the local council.

As we enter the boardroom the solitary worker's footsteps are heard again, a place they would probably never have previously been allowed to enter? Reference to Chloe Brown's video piece showing Northern Soul dancers in the boardroom – the proles are taking over!

The sound of pigeons' coo-ing and fluttering, a recording made in the central void in the North Stafford Hotel and transplanted to the deserted boardroom suggests they have occupied the centre of power on the site, perhaps getting access through a broken window. Many spaces in the factory buildings have been overtaken by pigeons and other non-human lifeforms. Nature reclaims abandoned buildings; all are destined for dereliction/demolition.

We enter the former Trade Showroom, designed as a half-timbered dining room. Artist/curator Neil Brownsword exhibited a piece of work in here, placing canteen tables in the empty room to suggest a staff canteen, inverting the power relationships of the company. I added an extract from a scene in the film 'The Angry Silence, in which Richard Attenborough's character responds to being 'sent to Coventry' and his work colleagues' incessant chatter by screaming 'Shut Up, shut up will you'. Workplaces are not necessarily as benign as we might like to believe (I have first-hand knowledge of this).

I included a line from an argument 'I think you want to get a grip and sort yourself out', mumbled backchat to the Attenborough character.

As we descend the stairs the historian talks about the decline of the local industry and the global events that brought it about.

The bell is struck again as we exit the management block, suggesting a sinking (or sunken) ship.

As we pass the flagpole there are echoing voices, ghosts of the past

We walk back to the China Halls via the internal roadways of the site and as we pass a window hear breaking glass, a reference to a live event by Richard Lauder, in which a wooden prop is removed from beneath a stack of pottery, causing it to crash to the ground.

Neil Brownsword can be heard asking 'What is that?' (An intrusion of the 'real') and we hear a trolley, a reliable method of moving things around the site

The US salesman announces our re-entry into the China halls with 'We're outside of the building and we're going into the main building' and an abrupt change in ambiance. We hear an active factory (Denby) and men's voices, evoking the characters and the relationships formed here, the jocular, the malevolent.

Now a female American salesperson is trying to get us to buy the plant, 'everything is for sale' The plangent piano refrain from the opening of the walk returns and the voices of children echo around the space, suggestive of an alternative reality (playground), past lives or future potential

#### **J - Aix-en-Provence step-by-step description**

From just inside the gate to the ESA Aix École supérieure d'art d'Aix-en-Provence Félix Ciccolini we enter the rue Emile Tavan. As we follow the rue Celony there is a feeling of proximity to heard traffic that isn't there and relatively silent traffic that is, catching you unawares. This creates a very 'live' environment, generating feelings of uncertainty regarding what may or may not be real encourages consideration of 'the real', critical to listening (not passively hearing), and not simply screening out, our habitual state

Gravel path has ASMR textural qualities, a soundmark that (when it works) provides a pleasing early moment of synchronicity

Les Jardins du Pavillon de Vendome are now an urban park, originally built as a formal garden complete with fountain, well-tended and manicured it resembles the setting for *L'annee derniere a Marienbad*, albeit on a far smaller scale

Fountain sound is exaggerated, spend a minute alongside, experiencing the difference between the sound of actual & recorded water

I used an extract from the soundtrack to *L'annee derniere a Marienbad* to create an ominous and poetic cinematic sequence. This builds to a climax as we approach the entrance to the Pavillon. The effect stresses the artificiality of the walk

This dramatic sequence cuts to silence and the return of mundane heavy traffic noise on the Boulevard Jean Jaury

'Les souvenirs du centre historique' - the first of many extracts from Pierre's interview – he provides personal and historic context, his perspective on the city and how its soundscape and character has changed

In Travers Sylvacanne, an alleyway, we catch an overheard conversation between a man and a woman

We turn right into the rue de la Liberte and by the rue des Nations pass the bizarre recreation of a Roman ruin, the sound of the padlock on the gate being rattled, directing the gaze to the source of the sound

Birds tweeting in the trees

Locally born composer Darius Milhaud's spirited *Carnevale d'Aix* comes in abruptly, located at the Avenue Pasteur, the start point of the medieval Fete Dieu procession

Pierre's soundings alongside and boyish enthusiasm convey warmth and humour, a trustworthy and engaging presence throughout the walk

Heavy motorbike and car noises build as we approach the crossing  
Pierre recreates the sound of a moped, 'une episode de mobilette'

There is a transition of zones as we enter the medieval centre when we lose the intensity of vehicular traffic but gain the hubbub of pedestrians, interspersed with occasional slow-moving cars

Pierre - 'le centre culturelle'

We cross a square with the fountain on the wrong side (shifted or magnified) – to introduce some disorientation

Narrow streets – following a woman in high heels

Alleyways – a plumber exhales with exaggerated effort after lugging a box of tools

Back on to the bustling shopping street, with the sound of birds and café culture

Enter the Place des Cardeurs and aurally descend steps into the car park beneath

Under/overground accentuated with resonator effect

Contrasting spaces above and below ground, alluding to the void beneath. Strangeness – emphasises the emptiness of the square – horror?

Reconnect with the relative normality of the city at the top of the staircase –voices, footsteps

Pass extractor fan on the Rue de la Couronne. Tolling church bells seem to be summoning one forwards, syncopated with an insistent car horn. This creates a power struggle between old and contemporary sounds

Descriptions of street traders' ('chanteurs du rue') and their refrains 'chansons populaire'

Road narrows, pavement raised above the level of traffic

'beaucoup moins moteurs'

At A busy junction there is a babble of conversation from the street cafes

Road opens into area of Couronne where the grand Fontaine de la Rotonde has been emptied of water that is replaced by electric light (would have been good if it was illuminated earlier in the day). Magnification of sounds brought up close despite being a distance away (like training a shotgun mike on it). Exaggerated in response to gaze, its significance as the city's centrepiece. Aix has been dubbed the 'city of a thousand fountains'

Crossing into pedestrian Les Allees Provencale

Buskers – Juheung sings a mournful Korean (?) song) and an accordionist further along are ghostly performers leaving their traces

Nobility and their 'bonnes faires' (good things)

Another busy crossing

Being led further away from the centre and familiarity

Since the revolution it became 'une ville memoire' – Pierre's voice drowned out by traffic  
Avenue Mozart – water feature, reprise of fountains

Spent several minutes listening to the flagpoles, touching the pole to experience the disjunction between what is felt and heard (experience the difference between real vs recorded flagpoles)

Metal walkway – smell of jasmine

Down steps

Road passes beneath rail bridge

Turn right past the derelict apartment buildings on one-way Avenue de Tubingen– echoing children's voices from Vassiviere evoking future play spaces, abandonment

Aerolienne – strange rhythmic sound, machine-like, dreamlike, overwhelming, coincides with birds flocking. Builds to intensity and crescendo with bird song

Crossing the Avenue de L'Europe into L'Encagnagne HLM

Super-U – bleep of tills and muzak, contrasting atmospheres between inside/outside spaces, private – transgressive

Bar and resto

Clientele of Arab café on rue le Corbusier

Crossing with chemist sign

Walk through ZUP, round the back of apartment buildings

Sound of La Provencale autoroute builds – combines with sound of waves crashing on a beach, its likeness with traffic sound, suggests that one day all this will be gone/submerged

Crossing autoroute – very loud and from all directions – binaural recording gives a sense of precarity

Children in encampment, clothes hung on the fence

Pierre talks of 'maisons a l'exterieur', describing the wealthy building homes outside the city (ironic placement, juxtaposing options for the wealthy and impoverished in the squatter camp)

Lise scratching through rubbish on le Chemin des Flaneurs, sifting through human detritus (how low have we fallen?)

Traffic on Avenue Marcel Pagnol

Back to 'civilisation'

Pierre introducing Vasarely as we walk up the drive to the Foundation

Ahead of its time 'trop tot'  
Finish with 'La cite joyeuse'

### **K - OpenCity Berlin (West) step by step description**

The foyer of the Technische Universität Berlin, people coming and going, through the metal doors

Out into the Hardenbergstrasse and immediately assaulted by traffic noise, which comes in waves as the lights further down control the flow. We are part of the city's flow and yet in our group wearing headphones we feel distinct, apart from it. The waves are a feature of this walk, traffic, trains, the 'pulse' of the city

As we cross the pedestrian crossing the volume is high and the threat feels real, even when there are no actual vehicles nearby

Into the long Fasanenstrasse heading in the direction of the canal, passing a few people, mainly students. Several vehicles pass

As the road turns sharp left we cross and go right down a relatively quiet Muller-Breslau Strasse.

The growing sound of what might be sandblasting of a building on our right, loud and threatening – noise is a form of assault

A skateboarder passes, and several cars

As we approach the rail bridge we hear a violin busker that I recorded on the U-Bahn in 2014.

The voices of people passing feel inappropriate to the quiet space beneath the rail bridge and the acoustics are all wrong.

Treading the dirt path into the Tiergarten a train passes to our rear

There is tapping and sweeping of leaves, both interesting sound texture

Crossing a metal bridge, ours and others' footsteps are resonant

The path goes above a weir of the Landwehr Canal, water rushing beneath

From some way away we can hear a looming machine noise, the source is a leaf blowing vehicle but without the evidence of its source before our eyes it is very loud, getting louder and increasingly threatening, before diverting away at the last moment.

We stand at the crossing with the 6-lane Strasse des 17 Juni to get over. Even though there may be a green man we do not cross until I hear the sonic cue on the recording, indicating the arrival of another wave of traffic.

As we cross the traffic noise merges and turns to waves crashing on a beach, taken from Youtube, and previously used in September for OpenCity Stuttgart. All this will one day be washed away, even so far inland

We turn left and go through the Burger King drive-in onto a rough and litter-strewn patch of ground. Emerging by another railway bridge we cross the road and follow the path round to a children's' playground

When the playground is empty, as it is at dusk when we stage the walk, the absence of children with the presence of voices generates a ghostly impression

Two trains pass noisily on the raised section of the line to our left.

On our right are apartment blocks

Another train, long. The sense of a living city, of mobility and workaday life

A car

Our footsteps

We follow a road under the line and turn right, following the foot of the arches where there is much evidence of rough sleeping. Stepping over the belongings and detritus of rough sleepers there is an uncomfortable feeling of trespass, that we might be intruding in their living space, might even encounter someone and feel embarrassed, the 'protection' of art falling away when confronted by the inequalities of 'real life'.

We reach the end of the arches, turn right under a bridge, and reach a crossing on Altonaer Strasse at which point the recording drops out.

It comes in again on the far side of the crossing, having allowed us plenty of time to regroup after getting across.

We approach the Hansaplatz U-Bahn station and a small shopping precinct and the sound, (slowed down pachinko? provokes a feeling of weirdness, potentially threatening.

We exit the arcade at dusk and emerge into a mood of calm, reminiscent of the closing scenes of Antonioni's L'Eclisse.

We are in Hansaviertel, the modernist housing complex with apartment blocks designed by several of the luminaries of post-war architecture.

After the arches this area feels like a model for living, like a Playmobil world. A refuse truck crosses our path, and we head towards the Akademie der Künste, before turning off along a path through some shrubs and a small children's play area.

The refuse truck reappears to our right, doing the rounds. Only 200 meters away there is rubbish scattered everywhere, so priorities are clear

The lines of the building are geometric, ordered and the environment is clean Again we feel a sense of trespass, not belonging, but this time in the world of the comparatively well-off.

Across the road is a modernist cafe building

As we go into the canopy of trees the sound of a short sharp heavy rain shower falling on the leaves around us. This was recorded inside a tent in Lyme Regis 2008

Wet vegetation, big leaves, lushness

We take a detour along a gravel path and emerge to a hubbub of voices on the terrace of the Teehaus im Englischen Garten, ghostly when deserted. The original recording is of graduation crowd in Norrköping Sweden 2015

Walking through the geometric English Garden to the Altonaer Strasse

We cross the road not far from the Siegestsäule Victory Column and enter the trees on the far side. A helicopter, recorded in Matlock Bath, can be heard circling overhead.

The recorded sound drops out as we emerge and again encounter the 6-lane Strasse des 17 Juni. We cross with care and pass the statue of a hunter and his dogs killing a warthog, then turn right and follow the Fasanerallee path.

The recorded sound resumes with unknown machine noise emerging from the trees to our left

We pass the Michael Jackson tree

The Spanish Embassy on the left and a café on the right, we can hear an extractor fan as we pass

On the approach to the Landwehr Canal, we pass an English family. Crows are cawing and there is a keep-fit class taking place in the park on our right, a man shouting instructions, a race taking place

Just before the bridge and the Rosa Luxembourg memorial, in reference to the place the activist was murdered, and her body dumped, we hear the voice of an actor playing her role in a film. I try to create the illusion that she is alongside us, speaking in our ear. Apart from overheard passers-by, I only use one brief extract of film-sourced voice.

There are snippets of conversation on and after the bridge and we turn right and follow the towpath.

The light is starting to go and there is a clamour of gathering dusk in the air. Animals in the zoo are braying, tweeting, and squawking, runners and cyclists pass and there is a quickening of pace, as though we have places to be, homes to go to, zoo animals are waiting to be tucked up for the night, unlike the homeless nearby.

Part-way along the path a wind turbine fades in and gathers intensity, generating a sense of unease and mounting pressure

At the end of the path waterfowl can be heard in the zoo on the left, and a commuter train passes ahead, implying movement, in contrast to the stasis and limited potential for movement of the homeless.

Further trains pass as we approach the Zoologischer Garten station and rough sleepers are bedding down alongside the railway line on our right.

At the end we go under the bridge and a busker (accordionist) seems to be attempting to lighten the mood.

We cross and head down Lebensstrasse and the rear entrance of the station.

A large group of homeless people are gathered outside the medical centre, and there is much coughing. Two worlds appear to be co-existing (the City and the City), one seen, the other deliberately ignored (un-seen).

Professor of Urbanism Phillip Misselwitz points out that the homeless and refugees are urban actors – can be provided with agency. Our actions show that we worry about us, not them.

Announcements can be heard from the station, suggesting places you could be, other's lives, potential parallel lives

At the road crossing there are children's voices, suggesting soft bodies and hard fast-moving vehicles

As we reach the far side of Hardenbergstrasse a pedal bar, originally recorded in Budapest, can be heard, a group of young English men, possibly on a stag weekend, drunkenly singing Bon Jovi's 'You give love a bad name'. I use this recording in various contexts in reference to the drunken Brits who seem to follow me around Europe.

Walking back towards the University building we hear male laughter, sawing, female voices, a suitcase on wheels.

We re-enter the foyer and the walk concludes

### **L - Pentrich Rising - South Wingfield step by step description**

The soundwalk opens with a 'shimmering' sound (composed by Leigh Toro) to accompany participants as they cross the road from the Old Yew Tree pub, negotiate alleyways and behind gardens before emerging into open fields. Whilst still on the main road the drone forms a harmony with that of a passing car captured on the baseline recording. The sound of the car provides an early sense of physical threat, and of the augmented reality of the soundwalk.

Men's voices and laughter can be heard, suggestive of collective endeavour, male bonding, and good humour. John Hardwick (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich Revolution Group), local resident and descendent of one of the marchers, describes how the revolutionaries would have cut across these fields in order to avoid drawing the attention of the local magistrate. He tells us that 'We don't know that they know', the project apparently doomed before it has barely begun.

On a narrow wooden bridge across a babbling brook, high frequencies have been progressively isolated (by Leigh Toro) to produce a vaguely hallucinatory effect suggestive of a portal (into where?)

We cross a boggy part of the field and continue uphill as the recorded sound dies away. With ambient sound to the fore the focus is upon our own breathing and keeping up with the leader (myself)

Entering a field crowded with sheep (recordings of sheep were taken from the same location, at a time the fields were indeed full of sheep and lambs in full voice). The allusion is to commodified labour, 'lambs to the slaughter', subject to ridicule in the similarity of bah-ing to laughter.

Adjacent to the ruin of Hunt's Barn the assembly point for the marchers at around 10pm on 9 June 1817, the recording features a lamb pitifully crying after being separated from its mother.

Male voices gather, and one strikes up with the Everyman song (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich Revolution Group). The lyric was written by the 'Nottingham Captain' Jeremiah Brandreth (1817), executed, and beheaded for his leading role in the revolt. The song provides historical context and suggests collective purpose and positive spirit.

'Every man his skill must try  
He must turn out and not deny  
No bloody soldiers must he dread  
He must turn out and fight for bread  
Oh the time has come you plainly see  
The government opposed must be'

Distant church bells carried by the wind suggest warning or celebration (recorded in 2008 in the French town of Saint Germain les Belles). R Murray Schafer writes of church bells demarcating the extent of an acoustic community or parish. However, it seems unlikely that the sound of bells would carry to a particular location, two hills and some distance away from South Wingfield church.

A mobile phone signal cuts through – a technological intervention of contemporary life, a breaking of the illusion, suggesting modern-day surveillance

The walk through open fields is accompanied by the inhuman sound of heavy farm traffic on the road to our left. At the hedge we turn right and hear birdsong and dogs barking, indicating threat and trespassing on private property

A distant helicopter (recorded in Matlock Bath in 2016) suggests aerial surveillance of relevance to the Pentrich project via the spy and agent provocateur William Oliver, and the suggestion of the all-seeing eye of the state. It also acts as a reminder that our skies contain numerous aircraft, something presumably unimaginable 200 years ago

Along a farm track two horses pass, a piece of continuity between then and now, although horses' function is very different. We receive a greeting from one of the riders (recorded on the lane near the magistrate's house, towards the end of the walk route)

John Hardwick (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich

Revolution Group) describes in conspiratorial terms how the original marchers would have split up to raid nearby farms for weapons and recruits

The voice of a sheep herder (recorded in the Yorkshire village of Goathland in September 2015) together with the sound of geese and cows (recorded near Pooley Bridge in the Lake District in January 2016)

After crossing the road we can hear dogs barking on nearby farms and unsettled farm animals stirring, suggesting local disturbance, as the group splits to rcollect arms. There is hammering on a wooden door.

The sound of walking fades out suggesting a period of solitary reflection. Diegetic sounds again come to the fore, place us in the environment, aware of our own body sounds/movement

We pass a working dairy farm, the sound of disturbed cattle shifting in their stalls. A cockerel crows (recorded in Pooley Bridge in the Lake District) suggesting early morning, a warning, and the need to retain the element of surprise

We ford Coalburn Brook, a threshold, crossed in the progression of the revolt

The sound of the wind getting up, a storm ahead. As further horses pass along the track we step aside and a rider says 'thankyou' indicating 'normality' (recorded in Bestwood Park, Nottingham, and previously used in the Wirksworth Summer Lane soundwalk, 2016)

Passing through a farm gate we trudge along the farm track. Leigh Toro's harmonium-like rendition of 'Oft in the Stilly Night' entitled Pentrich Opus 2 (2017) seems to offer faith, hope and redemption. Non-conformist religion was gaining popularity during this period. AE Houseman's happy highways (from A Shropshire Lad) also comes to mind

From the woods to the right of the path emerges the bucolic sound of chopping wood, in reference to the felling of trees in the nearby woods to provide pike staves

Passing along a short section of footpath the wind is getting up in the trees signifying an impending storm, together with a songbird's alarm call and crows cawing (recorded near Pooley Bridge in the Lake District in January 2016)

Walking downhill through a grassy field through the middle of a herd of lowing cattle (recorded in 2010 near Kildale in the North York Moors). Some participants might feel nervous to be near a herd of livestock

The wind buffets the microphone, a break in the 4<sup>th</sup> wall. At the start of the next field there is a heavy rain shower (recorded on a campsite near Lyme Regis, 2013). Unpropitious and inclement weather conditions were a feature of the original march.

Men discuss their work, a humdrum and everyday act

We pass a derelict house that might have been inhabited in 1817, a place of domesticity? A mobile phone signal cuts in, contemporary life, people, and their concerns much the same then as now, another break in the illusionary 4th wall.

The footpath cuts through a garden and we feel a sense of trespass. The residential building was converted from a cotton mill and the machine sound (found online) reanimates it.

Aggressive dog barking up close (recorded in Ilam, Staffs) provides a sudden jolt suggesting threat, and that we are not welcome. There are large (albeit friendly) dogs living in the adjacent house

Footsteps on the gravel drive operate as a soundmark and provide an interesting sonic texture

As we pass through the gate onto the road the recording fades out and we can recalibrate and concentrate on the present day and navigating a narrow road.

The sounds re-emerges and we hear footsteps, a car passing, rooks cawing.

In the distance we can hear a present-day train, a contemporary feature of the landscape

The sound of a large group of men in high spirits, a 'sexist' comment suggesting normality (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich Revolution Group)

Leigh Toro's composition 'Threnody for the lower orders' (2017) is a siren-like wailing drone that significantly changes the mood as we pass a cottage introduces, a presentiment of tragedy and a feeling of dread and being lured to one's doom

Voices re-emerge but are more muted as we go under the railway bridge

As we reach the far side a speeding train roars past behind us, breaking the mood and emphasising the advance of speed and technology

Standing on the bridge looking across the millpond towards the Weir Mill, we can hear the close-up sound of the mill wheel, with its distinctive broken paddle (recorded with permission of owner), a feature of the soundscape 200 years ago

We turn back and walk away from the mill bridge towards South Wingfield, accompanied by the sound of solitary footsteps on the tarmac and threatening passing cars

A fast train passes over the bridge immediately behind us

As we retrace our steps back along the road Leigh Toro's composition 'Threnody for the lower orders' (2017) is repeated in reverse

We turn down the path just before a gate and hear an approaching Coalburn Brook (again) hear a distorted sound suggestive of a portal, almost psychedelic

The sound of footsteps and laboured breathing as we continue uphill along the bridle path.

Another train can be heard, ominous and then sound fades out

The sound returns with the sound of a drone, implying surveillance ([taken from an online source of military drones over Gaza, the implication being that it could happen here](#))

'Transported', a further composition by Leigh Toro, merges with the drones, suggestive of desolation, incongruous in this green and supposedly pleasant landscape

Footsteps return. Sound of distant explosions.

The drones have faded out and we are walking through vegetation, breathing heavily

We hear distant aircraft and with Wingfield Manor on our left walk through what sounds like long grass

Another short period of silence before faster steps, heading downhill, together with birdcalls, a distant train shifting temporalities between now and 200 years ago, easier going, heading home, making progress?

At the stile we hear the sound of running water as we approach and then pass a cascade.

Men's voices ' Things can only get better...what could possibly go wrong'.

There are muddy footsteps as we round the corner and the John Hardwick points out the house of the local magistrate, whom he describes as a 'hated figure' having had four men hung for hay rick burning (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich Revolution Group)

Walking uphill on the final stretch back to South Wingfield Leigh Toro's 'Pentrich Opus 1' based upon 'Oft in the Stilly Night' ( Moore, 1817) [suggesting a return to 'civilisation'](#)

We hear rooks in the trees to our right

A woman passes with a child suggesting female company and domesticity

The sound gradually merges with that of traffic passing through the village and fades out as we return to the road

**M - Oft in the Stilly Night' written by Irish poet Thomas Moore.**

Oft, in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Fond memory brings the light  
Of other days around me;  
The smiles, the tears,  
Of boyhood's years,  
The words of love then spoken;  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimm'd and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken!  
Thus, in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,  
Sad memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

When I remember all  
The friends, so link'd together,  
I've seen around me fall,  
Like leaves in wintry weather;  
I feel like one  
Who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed!  
Thus, in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,

Sad memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

Moore, T. (1817) with the musical arrangement by Sir John Stevenson (1818). Available at:  
[http://www.james-joyce-music.com/song04\\_composer.html](http://www.james-joyce-music.com/song04_composer.html)

## **N - Pentrich Rising – Giltbrook step by step description**

In what is now the Ikea car park there is a rousing rendition of the Everyman song (recorded on one of the walks organised by the South Wingfield and Pentrich Revolution Group). This provides historical context and continuity, with it having previously been heard on the South Wingfield walk (reprise). In the context of the adjacent commercial developments, it offers a sense of futile resistance and contemporary comparative boredom in relation to politics

We hear birdsong as we enter the copse. There is greenery, life goes on oblivious to human concerns. The Dutch artist Armando's quote on guilty landscapes feels pertinent - 'the trees, the forest's edge and the trees, the same place they were at that time; do not think they've moved on, they're still standing there like indifferent eyewitnesses.'<sup>42</sup>

We hear loud, laboured, breathing suggesting life and death struggle.

The sound of a flowing stream as we pass what is now a polluted ditch.

Heavy traffic thunders past as we cross under the dual carriageway of the A610. This produces a sense of threat and a reminder of the features of contemporary life that we endure

We return to silence on the recording as we reach a muddy track that provides a sense of recalibration and relief

The sound of a distant wind turbine builds steadily as we approach it, providing a sense of ominousness reminiscent of the beach scene in Jonathan Miller's (1968) adaptation of 'Whistle and I'll come to you' (1968)<sup>43</sup>

Women passing say 'hi', a sense of normality and civility

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<sup>42</sup> Armando (1988). *De straat en het struikgewas [Street and Scrub]*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, pp. 245-247 [translation by Arwen Oosterman]. In Oosterman, A. (2012) *Constructive Guilt* Available at: <http://archis.org/volume/constructive-guilt/>

<sup>43</sup> Miller, J. (1968). *Whistle and I'll come to you*. Adaptation of M. R. James' *Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYjtxHHjZ00>

We cross a stile into meadow accompanied by the sound of bees, suggesting a summer meadow, behind which traffic on the A610 thunders past  
A tunnel, passes beneath the road and the sound becomes strange, a potential portal  
At the rear of the housing estate on the far side we hear livestock  
A heavy shower breaks out as we enter a clump of trees, in reference to the original event  
On the suburban street of semi-detached houses, we hear the incongruous sound of loud heavy breathing and irregular heartbeat. Again, reminiscent of 'Whistle and I'll come to you'  
Traffic passes, ignorant of the life and death struggle being played out, the suggestion that it can't happen here  
There follows an overly-dramatic re-enactment of a marcher being captured by a mounted dragoon  
The sound of a lawn mower - a normal suburban scene, again raising the difference between then and now, the notion of stability and civil society  
The children's playground is a signifier of contemporary stability  
As we walk through the park a drone can be heard (a reprise from South Wingfield) and a synth drone joins in. The suggestion of surveillance, of threat, that nowhere is safe, and incongruous with the nearby housing estate  
We hear gunfire, suggesting that it happen here. The mood evokes Harrison Birtwhistle's soundtrack for the Sidney Lumet (1973) film The Offence  
Sound of heavy rain as we reach main road and turn right following the path the marchers took to their fate in direct reference to the original event  
Heavy traffic of contemporary life, against flow  
A reprise of the Everyman song – potential momentum or simply false optimism  
Chatter and the loss of collective spirit  
It concludes with a slow fade as in a film, fading to white, the inevitable, the past

### **O - OpenCity Nine Elms step by step description**

Evoke deep time, the constant presence of the river as we survey it for five minutes, the present moment at the centre

River recording was a disappointment – the water flows too fast against the hydrophones, so I used recordings transplanted from the Venice lagoon instead and the nearby Battersea park pond

The sounds from below the water's surface are strange, insect-like chattering, from the boat engines, getting closer and moving away

Coincidences occur with the traffic on the river

A businessman standing to our right, in his overheard phone conversation he seems slagging off a colleague, bringing us back to reality

We start to walk along the embankment

Aircraft on their flight path into Heathrow provide a regular punctuation, a pulse of the city and integral aspect of the soundscape, waves, geological time. I always associate it with summer afternoons in the city.

A woman with a suitcase on wheels, a sound that I find menacing

A helicopter ambiguously suggests surveillance, or leisure trips

Skateboarders remind us of the diversity of fellow users of this social space – 'are there byelaws against this kind of thing?' Threat to the 'tranquility' and ongoing gentrification

We pass a gathering of men speaking a foreign language. As with the skateboarders they suggest democratic space that might offend 'little Englanders'

A stab of feedback breaks the 4<sup>th</sup> wall, suggests the liveness and authenticity of the recording, an actual technical issue (alarming) or simply not edited out (lazy, or deliberate?)

Another aircraft

The sound of building works ahead grows in intensity until we are right upon it, and it is oppressive

It cuts out to tap tapping of contractors laying cobblestones, a sense of relief. A reminder of the noise levels that we endure and tolerate every day living in the city

We cross the road and stand looking over the moat of the new US Embassy, originally recorded outside the Grosvenor Square building. A protest is taking place, surely one of many future protests against US foreign policy. Although loud the sound is a short-lived tactical event

Heavy traffic dominates as we walk along the main road. This reflects relative power, of who/what control the streets, commerce, dirty oil-based technology

We pass the large and empty Waitrose supermarket and a fake Santa (!) is trying to generate some seasonal cheer (this walk originally took place shortly before Christmas), totally incongruous in July for the Art Night event. Alternatively, the man is drunk

As we walk through the deserted arcade, we hear a multitude of voices (recorded at Covent Garden) and the 'real world' phone signal cutting in again. Will these empty units one day become as lively as the sound recording suggests, akin to the billboards that show cut-and-pasted people enjoying the spaces on the construction sites behind the fences?

Round the back of the arcade all is silent, apart from a man dumping something in an industrial wheelie bin. The reality behind the façade

A security guard is observing our odd behaviour

Back onto the main road, the risk of injury as we cross to the riverside walk.

An interesting sense of shifting sands, the road crossing point that was there when I created and tested the walk is no more, only a day later we are forced to collectively pause and backtrack

A man is singing a repetitive song declaring his love for Jesus. Incongruous but feasible, one of many potential responses to contemporary urban living

We pass a soundmark of a water feature, mini fountains, a reprise of the watery theme

We pass a metal dock that has been occupied by squatters and as we approach the high wall behind which the Battersea Power Station complex is being built loud hammering can be heard

Back to the main road passing a couple of guys smoking a joint behind the planters

The swelling noise of the main road the drops away and we are left with the ambient noise of actual traffic

We reach an entrance to the building site and a man in a hi-vis jacket is talking on a 2-way radio

As we cross an exceptionally loud aircraft is heard on its descent into Heathrow, drawing our attention to the sound we have become habituated to, and suggesting a low flying plane

On the left hand side of the road the sound of football fans chanting carried by the wind across the city

A woman asks for direction to a local church, reality breaking through, authenticity alongside artifice in the walk

We turn left into the housing estate and alongside the railway line to our right, a modern-day electric train starts up and glides away. A steam train does likewise, but far less quietly. The difference in sound textures and eras of transport is evident. When a contemporary train coincides with the steam train sound the effect is even more impactful

We turn a corner and pass a housing block and behind the bushes the sound of children playing can be heard.

We approach the end of the street and a car being driven aggressively passes.

We reach a high metal gate on the other side of which are industrial units. This is the site of the old mill pond, now buried beneath concrete. A fox appeared on one of the Art Night walks.

At the start of the walk, I invite people to close their eyes at this point.

The wind rises in the trees that were once here and birds reclaim the soundscape, albeit struggling to compete with the contemporary trains and aircraft. A power struggle is taking place, bucolic associations fighting with urban reality that is perpetually interrupting

Beneath the surface of the millpond aquatic life goes on

Constable's painting of Flatford Mill was in my mind's eye as I worked

Rooks

Throw stones into pond

Ask people to close their eyes and imagine a pastoral scene

## **P - Soundwalk generic instructions**

- Welcome to the soundwalk, an exercise in listening and noticing, which will last for around an hour.
- I will be acting as pacemaker, to ensure that you encounter sounds on the soundtrack synchronised with locations. I will countdown '3 – 2 - 1 - Play'.
- Stay close to me but not too close!
- We will be walking at a steady pace - pay close attention to your surroundings - the experience can be disorienting, and we will be crossing roads. We will be crossing rough ground so watch where you are putting your feet
- I am a qualified first aider and have a first aid kit in my bag

- Whilst on the soundwalk please remain silent and switch off mobile phones
- Check right and left Bone conducting headphones need to fit just right or you don't hear the soundtrack correctly. Don't unplug them from the device or it will return to the beginning. There are silences on the soundtrack so don't assume it has gone wrong. When it starts you should hear a drone? If you don't then raise your hand and we can all re-synchronise
- Turn on the device and press the central button to start.
- Repeatedly press + to take the volume up to maximum. Turn it down if it gets too much but try to keep it as loud as you can bear it.
- Please turn off the device at the end and put it back in the bag
- You can move the earphones to get them comfortable and to get a balance between what is on the soundtrack and ambient sound
- Is everyone happy with documentation being captured during the soundwalk? If you do take photographs, please share them with me so I can put them on my website. I might try to take a few, but it is difficult while I am leading the soundwalk
- Immediately afterwards there will be an opportunity for a discussion

## Q - Participant feedback

Pentrich Rising – South Wingfield

Janhavi Sharma (April 2022)

Firstly, I found it extremely refreshing experiencing art outside of the usual structure of gallery spaces. I realised how bereft I had been from the smells of grass, bleating of sheep and bird songs, living in the city. So thank you for making us pause from the urban for a bit.

My very first feelings about the work was the strange and unique experience of being so present about a past. The history you reference with the work was very apparent throughout the piece, but it seemed somehow closer in proximity, highlighting a non-linear sense of

time. Perhaps it was also the way the sound would instigate a sense of space, and direction, that it seemed physically so close to me. Also the seamless way in which the sounds would overlap with the surroundings made it difficult to distinguish what was immediately around me, and what was not. Thinking that you deliberately layered the sounds that way, made me wonder about your intention as an artist, to invite me to be aware, to actively listen, and to listen intently.

I think the theme of contested spaces was very apparent throughout the work, prompted by of course the drone sounds, the sounds of hooves, and wood being cut hinting a sense of urgency, of something incipient. This feeling of organised Dissent came through, made me feel like I was a participant in it. Thinking about the structures of power today, the need for dissent in the socio-political dynamics of contemporary times, made me wonder if anything has even changed, if time has actually even passed. I would look at trees, stones, ruins around me and wonder which of them would have been spectators of these historical events. The work makes you think of landscape in general, and how it passively witnesses the world and its wars.

The walk itself had a brisk pace, and I felt very aware of my body and fatigue at times. Muddying my feet, made me feel colder than it was, and I was also hungry since I skipped breakfast that morning and had had nothing but a cup of coffee before. While there was so much to absorb, I found myself falling in and out of the sound, sometimes just focusing on myself and my own participation in the activity. I wonder if that was an induced feeling, if you wanted us to feel perhaps a variation of the exhaustion, hesitation, unpreparedness that the rebels from the piece might have been feeling. Perhaps you wanted to accentuate that discomfort, because it is easy to otherwise be distracted by the beauty of the hills and the possibility of leisure/ pleasure they offer.

I noticed contradicting sounds and visuals too, the horses and the cars, the roosters and traffic, the railway and old church hymns. Perhaps there was a rural/urban parallel there, making us participants wonder about the infrastructural changes and gentrification happening around. Offering a scaffolding to imagine the future, and replacements that are yet to come.

The work made me think about your process of making it a lot. You must've had to familiarise yourself over and over again with the history, and the landscape to create something that offers such intimacy. It's like remembering. You have to visit the site of memory repeatedly to observe and extract bits of forgotten memories and reconstruct them, imagine them. Sometimes the work felt like it was so personal to the artist, an interpretation, more than a historical fact. That I was being invited to walk in the memory of someone's making.

It's such a layered, complex piece of work that unfolds so many historical and contemporary contexts. I wonder how it would be to experience it at a different time, perhaps after midnight, when the sounds around would be quieter and my own participation (footsteps, breathing) would be exaggerated. Perhaps I would feel more cautious of the electrical fences, the warning signs around me. Perhaps I would listen to the work while selectively just seeing the parts of the landscape that my torch would highlight, and not everything else and that would offer something new?

Klara Szafrńska (June 2021)

Aware of the environment (the imagined environment?) immersed in what probably is a fictional world (woven by senses true and manipulated) allowed to be seen 'outside', imagined through the senses

Trance, manipulated mediation with a hidden agenda to be discovered

Is it real? Is it recorded? What is now?

Merging of the interior and exterior sounds

Is there sheep around? Is it a recording? Does it matter which one is which?

The more intense, the more performed, manipulated, suggested the participating body is the more interesting it gets. The experience plays with different factual and imagined traces making the performance yet another trace, another possibility, a semi-fictional space in between

Immersed, wanting to experience the limbo between past, present, future

Different experience walking/stopping – performing the body of participants, I enjoyed brief stops if proceeded and succeeded by faster walking – reminds the participants of the choreographed body movements and allows to dig deeper, the juxtaposition between the different dynamics of the body à the meaning behind it.

simultaneous attachment and detachment from the place, looking for a third ground (walking down the hill just past the woods where the pikes were cut down) – there's something about walking down hills, reflecting on the performed traces of memories drawing new meanings, animated places, possibilities of places, possibilities of pasts, presents, futures

noticing physical traces like horseshoes imprints layered with the suggested traces à disorientating, tangible vs intangible imprints

Political/historical meaning of the walk à the act of performing reminds me of Sisyphus -> how many times will it be re-performed, how many times bodies will play the same play with the same (?) ending.

Developing a 7<sup>th</sup> sense

Jo Wheeler (March 2020)

I was expecting more of a literal history - surprised and interested in its abstract nature. enjoyed layers of sound. not being able to trust my senses, was I hearing the recordings or the landscape as I walked through it? most heightened when the sounds were moving past us, such as the cars or the train – which invoked a playful, sensory confusion – a thrill and mild panic about the sound of a car fast approaching.

Listening to the experience of your walks along that route 3 years ago - (already history) – helped me to reflect on the routes' history 200 years ago. Comparing what sounds were common to all the walks (200 years ago, 3 years ago and now) and what had changed? What sounds were embedded in the land (the water, the birdsong, the wind) and what was more transient (the traffic, the cattle, the train, the footsteps)?

I thoroughly enjoyed the sheep section – I began putting personalities to the sheep and was aware that I began to recognise particular bleats and baas.

I felt there was a connection here to the men's voices (heard just before) which had been treated to evoke a similar chorus – not quite being able to identify words but enjoying the deep tones and rhythms of their voices – again my brain seeking to pick out meaning and different characters.

The pace was quite brisk! Although there were pauses in the sound - the light was so beautiful that day I would have liked more physical moments to pause, to observe and absorb the landscape and reflect on this history – and let my imagination wander about who's footsteps we were walking in - and be more aware when I was passing places of significance to the history – but I'm not quite sure how because I wouldn't want an obvious, literal marker to break the flow of the experience – perhaps a simple, visual map?

Ryan Boulton (March 2020)

I really enjoyed the route and the unique way of experiencing history. Well researched and the supplementary historical information added context to the experience.

After engaging for 3 hours, I would have happily done another additional walk. Very easy to get lost in.

I preferred the first walk to the second. I found excitement in the feeling of 'trespassing' and not really belonging (physically and historically) when we returned to the roads and houses. Especially, after being immersed in nature.

I didn't feel as detached from reality during the second walk. The timelessness of nature really helped you to suspend reality in the first walk's route.

Suggestions:

Inserting a pure tone at the start of all your recordings. In the right range, it's a sound that everyone could hear over background noise and would signify the start and end of a recording. It could be used to identify any playback issues and remove fuff.

Features of the iPod could be exploited. Old kits great! Interest was generated in the group when the listeners thought they were hearing different things. Would love to see the 'shuffle' feature explored in future works.

Admittedly, during the last 10 minutes of the final walk I accidentally hit the skip button. However, I found remixing the recording created some curious effects and isolated me from the group (supporting the above suggestion).

Would consider looking at a way of indicating the difficulty of your walks to potential participants (ramblers walk grading?).

Last bits personal preference: No idea what you had in your kit. For a similar adventure and party size, I wouldn't feel comfortable without; a first-aid kit, emergency high-sugar-snack, water, and emergency-bivy.

Participant feedback - OpenCity Stockholm

Malin Neuman (December 2016)

My first impression: confusion stemming from the inability to trust my hearing. I never fully realised before to what a large extent I rely on my hearing for navigating a space. I thought that the confusion would decrease a lot during the walk, but in the end I still caught myself looking for cars that wasn't there.

There was a really paradoxical thing happening during the walk. First, the creation of imaginary narratives in the mind of the listener. I couldn't fully know what went on before, what the different sounds represented, but still images popped up in my head. I guess my mind maybe tried to make sense of the soundwalk by organising the sounds into different images. At the same time, what you did with the soundwalk was uncovering different layers of the particular places (spatial/temporal/institutional layers). That is, you actually caught invisible/untangible qualities of a place and made them more tangible through sound. So the soundwalk created both fictions and a deeper truth/meaning of the place at the same time.

This last point is perhaps a bit more theoretical than the others. I imagined that the sounds during the walk acted to reshape the contours of the space/place. I almost had a visual image in my head of how new lines were drawn in different directions (kind of like how I imagine sound might look to someone who's synesthetic), making spaces smaller/bigger, putting up walls etc. The sound also acted as a virtual transporter of

the listeners position. I imagined how my (subjective) position shifted during the encounters with the different sounds.

I think the last point is where I get a bit “out there”. I’m not fully sure what I mean (or what the consequences of my reasoning entail), it’s more trying to explain a vague feeling I got during the walk.

Other participants (December 2016)

Concrete experience of sound and of silence

Plays with expectations of reality, feeling of being in between, a space which is not here and not in the past - an abstract space not subjected to physical laws

Feeling of loss, of fragmentation and disconnection, feeling of doubt - questioning of reality, of the real, of tangible experiences

At times overlapping with images and sounds

Pace was interesting and sounds increased the feeling of pattern, of repetition

Sea and water movement and visuality mimicked sounds (ECG - graphic element of sound)

Object as presences - people on the same level as natural elements of spaces

Democracy of sound - giving time and importance of invisible/quiet/unheard some its

Categories of sounds

revealing of a hidden experiential possibility

Allowing space for exploration of the environment from another perspective/outside and yet still present within oneself

## **R - Andrew Brown list of publications**

### **Conferences and symposia**

Brown, A., Doubleday, K., and Cocker, E. (2008). Pay attention to the footnotes: interrogating the hidden itineraries of writing and wandering. In: Hidden City Symposium:

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## **S - Dr. Les Roberts (2018) introduction to Soundwalking. Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage in Spatial Bricolage: The Art of Poetically Making Do**

The use of recording devices as part of a walking methodology is the main focus of Andrew Brown's article 'Soundwalking: Deep Listening and Spatio-Temporal Montage'. Responding to Doreen Massey's suggestion that space should be thought of as 'a simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey 2005, p. 9), Brown's method—soundwalking—layers recordings made of walks through contemporary landscapes over field recordings made in the same location but at a different time: 'Soundwalks map the present,' Brown explains, 'but also juxtapose the recent and distant past, enabling us to navigate temporalities and to imaginatively and sonically travel through time' (this volume, p. 6). Walks were conducted in several locations in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands region of England. These aimed to follow in the footsteps of those who took part in a more historically eventful walk some two centuries earlier. In 1817 a group of men set out from South Wingfield with the intention of marching on Nottingham to incite revolution and overthrow the government of the day. The uprising was quickly suppressed and the would-be revolutionaries variously imprisoned, executed and transported. The soundwalks were designed to coincide with the bicentennial commemorations of Pentrich uprising and were developed in collaboration with members of the organising committee. Against this political and historical backdrop, the walks constituted a collective socio-spatial activity, with Brown officiating as artist, guide, and curator of a shared embodied multi-sensory experience: 'in sharing the walk', he writes, 'I experience a sense of taking over the bodies of participants, hijacking them in order to offer what may or may not prove to be fruitful experiences' (p. 8). For Brown, the sites he works with as a sound artist become co-authors in the sense that they provide the content and context of his practice. As, indeed, do those he shares the walks with, the shared experience generating what Victor Turner refers to as *communitas*, but at the same time the experience can engender feelings of isolation and alienation as each walker is to a certain extent cut off from the others through the wearing of headphones. 'Participation involves the sharing of an experience, but also of encountering personal resistances, as power and decision-making are relinquished in engagement with the spirit of the artwork and the typical response of trust in the artist' (pp. 9–10). These contradictions, and the interplay between the embodied experiences of the individual walkers and those that frame a collective sense of spatial

engagement, give productive voice to a wider set of questions that may be applied to soundwalking as a method of socio-spatial enquiry: [Can a] soundwalk be utilised as a means of engendering understanding between contemporary communities through the creation of dialogic space? Can a soundwalk provide agency for people, in particular those who are currently marginalised, through which to explore their relationship with place and self-/shared identity?... [M]ight the soundwalk be applied in a deeper appreciation of our shared environment, and adoption of a more responsible position towards it? (p. 10) Considered alongside the other walking methods showcased in this special issue, these are questions that contribute to broader critical debates around social space, affect, and the place of the imagination and creativity in the making—bricolage-style—of everyday spaces and their associated practices.