

REMEMBERING REPERTOIRES

Exploring Performance as a Social
Innovation technology

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Mistress of Arts in Drama
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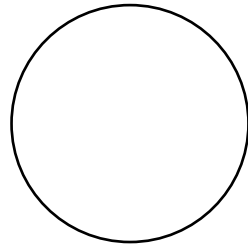
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ABSTRACT

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Exploring Performance as a Social Innovation technology

By Tasneem Rossouw

This thesis explores some of the functions that performance rituals play in social space. It proposes that these curated performance interventions may bring people together, and assist them in negotiating the past and their place in the present, in relation to that past. The possibility that through undergoing this process, these newly formed and/or strengthened communities are enabled to collectively build towards better futures, is also explored. Specifically, this work considers whether the ways in which this happens may qualify this applied form of performance intervention as a technology for Social Innovation. The study explores how the dynamic tensions between the document Archive (cf. Derrida, 1998)¹ and the performance Repertoire (cf. Taylor, 2003)² may contribute to this process. It further considers the roles of curatorial framing within this exchange. Elements of Case Study, Practice as Research, and Grounded Theory are combined to provide a methodological locus. The thesis counterpoints observations drawn from a case study, the Clanwilliam Arts Project, with two examples of the authoress' own practice.

Key Words

performance / social innovation / practice as research / archive / repertoire / night-time economy

1 Derrida, J. 1998. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

2 Taylor, D. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. USA: Duke University Press

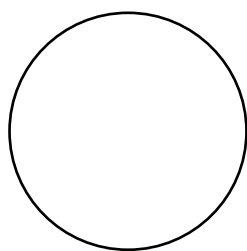
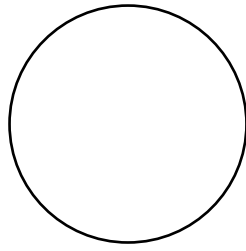


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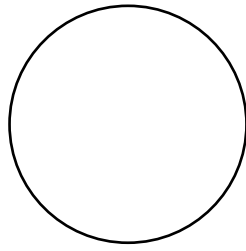


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3 With thanks to the following photographers and designers: Mapodile Mkhabela, Jean-Pierre Whitfield, Mariusz Szczawinski, Jono Kyriakou, Zach Hendrix, Meghan Daniels, Anel Wessels, Irshaad Samaai, Eugen Johannes Lehner, PUPIL Visuals, The Lost Playground, Talia Simons, Mark Wessels, Andrew Ingram, and the anonymous and unacknowledged contributors to the photographic archives of ATOM and the Clanwilliam Arts Project. Wherever possible, permission has been obtained from the artists before including their work in this thesis. All work is included on the understanding that this research is not for profit, and for educational purposes only.

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CHAPTER ONE



CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Context

This thesis explores some of the functions that performance rituals play in social space. It proposes that these curated performance interventions may bring people together, and assist them in negotiating the past and their place in the present, in relation to that past. The possibility that through undergoing this process, these newly formed and/or strengthened communities are better enabled to collectively build towards better futures, is also explored. Specifically, this work considers whether the ways in which this happens may qualify this applied form of performance intervention as a technology for Social Innovation.

These forms of performance intervention are the “remembering repertoires” of the document’s title. The term “remembering” is used in the way developed by Mark Fleishman, in that it is less about preventing forgetting, than it is concerned with the “putting back together of the fractured body [of memory]” (Fleishman, 2012a:8). “Repertoires” refers to the concept first put forward by Diana Taylor (2003). It counterpoints the Archive⁴ as a mnemonic record (cf. Derrida, 1998) and constitutes the choreographies of memory we carry in our bodies. These choreographies are enacted in social space, as individuals and collectives, through performance rituals (Taylor, 2003:16, 19–20; Taylor, 2006:68–70).

In a culturally and linguistically diverse South African society, characterised by systematic erasures and deliberate exclusions of narratives from the historical record (Seekings, 2008:5–6), these ritual and performance spaces carry potential for building common social ground. This thesis documents two projects that establish and leverage Repertoire within their communities

4 A note on the use of capitalisation: where concepts, technical terms or domains of practice are indicated, capital letters are used. For example, the term “archive” refers to the common noun, whereas “Archive” refers to the concept which semantically includes the common archive but also its implications. Similarly, “social innovation” refers to the common noun, whereas “Social Innovation” refers to the discipline which is operationally defined. “Curatorial Praxis” refers to the discipline, whereas ‘curatorial praxis’ refers to the verb and so forth.

to (re)build social bridges in this way: the first is the Clanwilliam Arts Project (hereafter CAP)⁵ and the second is ATOM.⁶ The first I encountered as an outside observer, and the second I am still an active member of. Their functions in their respective communities are observed along three lines. These foci are: the use of performance as a disruptor of social and physical space; its role in community (re)formation; and the particular magic of the immersive experience in enfolding participants within this space of transformation.

This work essentially functions as a feasibility study. It explores ways that a curated form of performance might operate as a Social Innovation technology, thereby making a case for more detailed and continued enquiry into this domain. The forms of performance encounters explored in this study include both the live encounter with the performed moment,⁷ as well as encounters with curations of performance archives.⁸ This exploration into how efficiently the performance medium may be applied to social contexts, is enacted through a Practice as Research methodology, and intersected with Case Study and Grounded Theory methodologies.

Theoretical Framework

The thesis results from an interrogation into the Archive (cf. Derrida, 1998) and the Repertoire (cf. Taylor, 2003), and the discovery of how dissonances between the two concepts and mnemonic practices open up liminal spaces⁹ of experience for humans to negotiate through as social and individual entities (Taylor, 2003:22–22, 35–36). These spaces of dynamic tension are rich in paradox (cf. Cuonzo, 2014), stimulating people into thinking and behaving in new ways (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). The study naturally developed towards seeking ways to leverage this potential function systematically for social benefit, and mapping some existing ways in which it does.

One way these inherent paradoxical relations could be leveraged is through the systematic use of performance encounters. From this perspective, performance is a technology. “Technology”, in this sense, is operationally defined as any physical or conceptual construct that enables directed action to occur. It is a category of conceptual and/or physical objects that allow us to interact systematically with and upon our world (OED, 2017a). If the conceptual architecture of this budding technology for social change is built along specific lines, it may qualify for status within the disciplinary realm of Social Innovation. A social innovation, in these terms, is a product, service, or process that meets a social need while fostering reciprocal social relationships and collaborative networking. It creates a positive shift in society, while enabling

5 The Clanwilliam Arts project is an annual community festival, with a week long series of creative arts workshops building up to a public performance on the last day. Workshops are held at a local primary school, and at the local sports-grounds. The workshops and performance are attended by primary school pupils, and facilitated by arts practitioners and UCT students. The open-air performance is characterised by a lantern procession, followed by a high-energy delivery of a story through the media of song, dance, puppetry, and fire performance (de Bruyn, 2016: 257). For further details, see Chapter Three.

6 ATOM is a seven-person creative collective of which I am a member. Our work became inexorably enfolded into my Practice as Research cycle. Observing the product and processes of our work, and speaking back to it through theoretical and practical engagement is now a main source of my learning. We host audiovisual showcases within immersive environments. Currently, our events are hosted in nightclubs. We feature Ambient, Dub and Deep Techno and House music performances. The musicians and/or DJs perform alongside a visuals jockey (VJ) who showcases original and remixed content that speaks back in real-time to the music offered into the space. For further details, see Chapter Four.

7 See Chapter Three on the Clanwilliam Arts Project, and Chapter Four on ATOM.

8 See Chapter Three on the Clanwilliam Arts Project, and Chapter Four on *Cut | Corner*.

9 This concept and its definitions will be expanded on in later sections.

the agents within that society to sustainably maintain the shift themselves (Mulgan et. al., 2007:8; Murray, Claulier-Grice & Mulgan, 2010:3). Many arts-based interventions already perform this function, though they are not recognised in those terms.¹⁰ Working to bridge the gap between the domains of arts-based interventions and Social Innovation has definitive pay-offs for both of them. The developing practice I document and theorise in this thesis, is one attempt to bridge that gap.

Conceptual Framework

This study encompasses both a record of practical engagement with the world and the interpretation of theory in relation to that practice. The study is conceptually governed by my perspectives on the nature of reality and the emergence of meaning. These two perspectives are further articulated in practice through my ethical standpoint, grounded in the concept of Existential Freedom.¹¹ My influence upon the shape and interpretations of the work is unavoidable, because I am its authoress.

I believe that the transmission of ideas, from one human consciousness to another, is a key determinant of emergent reality. This understanding is grounded in two principles: first, that reality is emergent and not inherited; and second, that the degree to which one exercises self-reflexivity correlates with the degree to which one becomes an active creator of that reality (cf. Hofstadter, 1979; Deleuze & Guattari, 1993; Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Sangham, 2014). A key way in which these realities are created, is through the transmission of ideas. The act of transmission requires some form of articulation, and articulation requires a degree of (self-)awareness within the human consciousness of the phenomenon being articulated. This articulation can take many expressive forms, including, but not limited to, spoken language. Reality, therefore, emerges because we create it by describing it, and some of us have the opportunity to create more actively than others.

Actively engaging in this process is known as ontological design. It is a self-aware process of shaping reality from an inherited present towards a conceived future. This future is itself designed to be engaged within a series of perpetual presents. By implication, everyone possesses the ability to practise ontological design, at least for themselves. What gives individuals access to becoming architects of their own realities is the degree to which they are self-reflexive (cf. Hofstadter, 1979; Deleuze & Guattari, 1993; Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Sangham, 2014).

Descriptions of ways people derive and/or generate meaning from their lived experiences differ between schools of thought. According to one theory of mind, which is also the perspective governing this study, phenomena are composed of semantically meaningless elements. This stands for phenomena across all planes, including the physical, affective,

10 One example is the work of the Clanwilliam Arts Project (see Chapter Three).

11 I refer here to the concept of Existential Freedom as developed by philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre (e.g. *Being and Nothingness* (1969)). In these terms, a person becomes themselves through *doing in the world*. A person's freedom is especially actioned through the paradoxical notion of their acceptance of their responsibility in the world as a self-determinate being and through their willing engagement with the world located from within these sets of responsibility towards self and others, whose uptake ironically involves a voluntary curtailment of a degree of this absolute freedom. In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1979), Simone de Beauvoir operationalises Existential Freedom, proposing an Ethics of engagement (West, 2017). The Ethics, as articulated by de Beauvoir (1979), has served as my primary ethical compass while engaging with my work.

conceptual, etc. This perspective conceives of phenomena as systems of varying complexity. What invests them with meaning is a degree of self-reflexivity and the subjection of every system to formal rules. This process of self-reflection in relation to the system creates dissonance, through which meaning arises. This perspective proposes that a coherent, semantically invested mind is the result of interactions between semantically empty component parts, and the product of relating to dissonance, or the difference between these parts (Hofstadter, 1979:46–60, 158–176). In other words, people form their sense of self as meaningful within a meaningful world, from a ground which is essentially meaningless. This is done by perceiving first the shape of the (liminal) space between the process of self-reflection (themselves) and the system (phenomena).

Erika Fischer-Lichte analyses the nature of emergent reality, and the role of performance within this process, in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008). She also identifies liminal space as the generative ground from which our perceived realities arise (2008:116). She notes that this liminal space is most tangible between subject and object in the performance moment. Performance therefore appears to be a powerful mechanism to effect social change, because it places at our disposal a way to set up states of dissonance (through which meaning arises). To continue this discussion, it is first necessary to define certain key concepts.

Key Concepts

Ontological Design

In practice, ontological design is the design and implementation of the generative mechanisms from which a domain of experience is produced (Sangham, 2014:117). “Ontology” is used in this study as a blended definition between the way it is operationalised by Philosophy and Information Systems. In simplified terms, within Philosophy, “Ontology” is the study of the nature of being. Within Information Systems, ontologies are formal representations of sets of concepts within a domain, as well as the relationships between those concepts (Gruber, 1993; Zuniga, 2001:187). When considering these discipline-specific definitions in relation to one another, Information Systems ontologies become practical applications of Philosophical Ontology. Within *this* culture and context, Philosophical Ontology is simply an expression of one way of being in the world, which self-reflexively focusses on the study of the nature of being.

Enfolding the Information Systems definition allows for the freedom to consider Ontology (the Philosophical study) as one of many ontologies. This avoids becoming locked into the belief that there is only one way of being and doing. By implication, access unfolds to an understanding of reality predisposed toward the multiple, and the concept of ontological relativity comes into play. An ability to consider Ontological arguments as one of a multitude of paradigms¹² is awakened. It also allows the negotiation of ontologies — or ways of being — as domains that can be identified, manipulated, and renegotiated with ease. With a self-reflexive awareness the possibility is confronted that, ultimately, a person remains fixed in some shade of shape and form within any of the domains they are critiquing. An awareness of

12 I use Simon Blackburn’s definition as outlined in *Think* (1999). Here, a paradigm is a culturally and historically mutable lens through which one sees things, or conceptual places, of one’s own engineering (Blackburn, 1999:260). Put in these terms, the words “ontology” and “paradigm” become virtually interchangeable.

competing ontologies existing within human cultures may arise — though these are technically the meaning-making framework for the consciousness that makes sense of and performs that culture — or an analytical position may be taken. In the latter case, entire ontologies are considered mere paradigms and are understood as open to external manipulation. The latter is relevant here: when I say “ontological design” I mean the doing of work in the world that concerns itself with the study of different ways of being (in practical and philosophical terms), the engineering of alternative ways of being (a form of conceptual engineering), and the practice of implementing ways of making these alternative ways of being accessible to those who choose to explore, and then potentially adopt them.

This thesis proposes that environments saturated in curated performance moments function as a generative mechanism from which a domain of experience may be produced — i.e. as an ontological design technology. It posits that utilising the specific tools of performance and curatorial praxis allows this technology to perform its function efficiently, and that the domain of experience that can be created using these tools may be one that sustainably increases social cohesion, even in a highly heterogeneous society such as South Africa (Afolayan, 2004:xii). Both the fields of Performance and Curatorial Praxis are operationally defined during the course of this chapter.

Social Innovation

Social Innovation can be interpreted along two lines: the general and the technical. Generally speaking, an innovation is a new method, product, or process (OED, 2017b). A social innovation is therefore a new method, product, or process that operates with a direct positive effect on society. It is a mechanism that generates a new domain of experience: a specified form of ontological design.

Technically speaking, the term has been extended by Academia and Business. In this sense, to qualify as a social innovation, a product or process must demonstrably fulfil certain performance parameters. These characteristics and functions include, but are not limited to, resolving an ecosystemic breakdown in the social landscape. Further, it must be aim to generate a future world in which either the intervention inserting the innovation into the social fabric, or the innovation itself, essentially becomes redundant (Moulaert, MacCallum & Hillier, 2013:13; Sangham, 2014:10). At their most effective, social innovations are self-sustaining, Futurist constructs (Pol & Ville, 2009:28).

Key performance indicators for any construct are centred around two key themes. First, the process and/or product must solve a societal challenge in a novel way. This proposal could be the sole solution to the challenge, or it could solve it with existing solutions in a more efficient and sustainable way. Secondly, value generated by this intervention must accrue to society as a whole, rather than to private individuals. Further, the concepts of “sustainability” and “value accrual” are taken in their broadest senses: they include the financial domain, but also cultural, environmental, and social considerations (Stanford GSB, n.d.; Mulgan et. al., 2007:8; André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:111; Moulaert, MacCallum & Hillier, 2013).

Tremblay and Pilati incorporate an additional dimension in their definition of a social innovation. As well as meeting a social need, it must simultaneously improve the network of social relations formed while this need is addressed (2013:67). This last metric is especially salient, as literature identifies performance and ritual as key ingredients in generative

processes of social cohesion (Pinkola Estés, 1995:295; Taylor, 2003:xix ; Mitchell, 2016:18).

My interpretation of the term for the purposes of this study is built along these lines. Performance interventions that function as Social Innovation technologies must therefore create nett social gain along one or more of the following lines: financial, cultural, environmental, etc. Given the particular strengths of performance and ritual, this type of intervention's primary desired effect on the world is an increase in social cohesion. This value accrues to the community as a whole, rather than private individuals. Further, it must do so in an environmentally, financially, and socially sustainable way, or at least work towards this goal systematically.

Performance in relation to Ontological Design

In this study, Performance is understood to be an ontological design technology that illuminates the mechanisms of its own construction.

Reality is emergent. In it you find parallel, self-fuelling, and self-sealing hermeneutic circles operating as the mechanisms that generate particular domains of experience (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:67; Sangham, 2014:93). These mechanisms come to the fore, and are more easily observable, in performance moments. They are observable in encounters between the individual person and the phenomenon called "performance", as well as between two or more people encountering each other while on the continuum of this heightened state of being (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:38, 59, 116, 73; Mitchell, 2016:14; Zarilli 2016:123). These interrelated, parallel processes of self-fuelling and self-sealing hermeneutic circles are called "autopoietic feedback loops" (Maturana & Varela, 1981; Varela, Maturana & Uribe, 1981:7–8; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:39, 177–78). Fischer-Lichte's theories on the roles played by performance moments in making obvious the emergent, co-created nature of reality were capitalised upon when constructing the ATOM events.¹³

Performance

Performance appears, at its most fundamental, to be rooted in the body and the present (Féral et. al., 1989:91; Fleishman, 2012a:13; Bull & Mitchell, 2016a:3; Zarrilli, 2016:135–36). In the literature it is described in relation to two poles on either side of a conceptual continuum. On the one extreme, performance moments are (re)-enactments of a pre-existing score presented within strongly framed contexts and recognisable as a function of an altered state of consciousness. These contexts include, but are not limited to, both affective and physical spaces. Examples of the latter include theatre buildings, art galleries, and spaces of ritual enactments, such as sacred sites. Examples of contexts of affective space include the effects of the enactment of ritual actions, executed in preparation to enter certain physical and mental spaces (Schechner, 1988; Fischer-Lichte, 1990:13, 15; Chatzichristodoulou, 2014:44; Schechner, 2016:88; Turner, R., 2016:33; Zarrilli, 2016:123).

At the other end of the continuum, performance is understood as something more ubiquitous within the lived experience of human beings. Here it is a social function so automated that it blends seamlessly into everyday conceptions of reality and becomes mistaken for it, or is defined as reality itself (Butler, 1988:521–22; Schechner, 1988:70; Taylor,

13 These constituted the latest iteration of my applied research practice (see Chapters Four & Five).

2003:3; Thompson, 2009:8; Butler, 2010:152; Bull & Mitchell, 2016a:3; Turner, R., 2016:43).

Further, both types of performance exist reciprocally as (or alongside) mechanisms of socio-cultural production and are identified as performing an integral and defining function within the human individual and species body (Schechner, 1988:68; Taylor, 2003:35; Donald in Bull & Mitchell, 2016a: 19–20; Mendoza, 2016:151; Turner, 2016:43). In other words, performance arises, and is interpreted, as a function of social conditioning processes.

These processes are considered necessary for communities to function, and by extension, for the continuation of the human species. Various roles are performed by individuals within social contexts, and these are framed to various degrees — from the subtly performative to the highly framed and ritualistic or theatrical. This spectrum of performance forms an important part of what allows society to function. In this way, human beings are simultaneously defining and being defined by the series of networked relationships termed “society”.

For this study, the operational definition of “performance” lies somewhere in between. This broad and adaptable understanding of performance is especially helpful when it functions as (part of) a Social Innovation technology. To be most effective in these terms, performance is not placed in the position of object within the encounter. It cannot be framed as external to the perceiver, even if approached from the traditionally conceptualised position of spectator. Performance is instead conceptualised here as existing fluidly between these two extremes. Arising as a result of a relationship formed between two presented beings,¹⁴ it exists in a flux between subjected and objected states. For instance, in my practical work I do not necessarily embed performance moments within the user experience in a way that subscribes to traditional notions of theatre or drama. Often, these experiences are not even recognisable as performances, except upon reflection, or by those who repeatedly attend events in which I am embedded in role. Through repeated engagement with common spaces, participants may (if observant) begin to see patterns of ritualistic behaviours and heightened states of being that I perform and inhabit within the space. These actions are choreographed to be slightly too distinct from everyday patterns of behaviour to be a repeated natural occurrence.¹⁵

The term “performance” signifies multiple and related concepts and actions that are equally true. However, the research question determines where interpretive focus lies. Given the question — how performance, in its totality, may be operationalised through curatorial praxis to function as a Social Innovation technology — working exclusively within traditional frames of performance would have been too limiting. These frames are too highly codified. Within the term “traditional frame” I include forms of theatrical expression¹⁶ as well as acts of performance still deemed somewhat transgressive, such as Live Art events. Within these latter forms, performance moments are still so strongly framed for the audience and/or participant that it risks becoming redundant as a transformative mechanism, because the frame serves to

14 By “presented”, I refer to the state of being fully ‘in the moment’, best described by practitioners such as Zarrilli (e.g. 2012:121; 2016:127). This state of total awareness is situated within the dynamic interchanges of energy between the performer, the performed and the observer, who is also implicated as a performer within the space, though to a lesser degree. It can be described as a state in which you exist at your perceptual horizon, which is an ironic description because at exactly that time, in my own experience of those moments, a reflexive concept of self is entirely absent.

15 An example of this type of engagement is the way I am implanted as performer and host at ATOM events. The theory and practices embodied within these will be introduced in Chapter Four and discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

16 Including, but not limited to: spoken drama, musical theatre, dance theatre, mime, pantomime and puppet theatre (Sauter, 2002 in Fleishman, 2012a:12)

distance, beyond a critical threshold, the audience (from the performer) and performers (from themselves). This limits cognitive exposure to paradoxical encounters (making them almost too manageable), and it is the necessary negotiation of these encounters that gives rise to the creative cognitive states from which individual and social change may arise (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20).

Instead, a transcendent compositional principle to performance is applied for the purposes of this work. In music theory, the term indicates a way of describing a piece of music as a function of the spaces between sounds, rather than through a description of the sounds themselves (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993:266; Macarthur & Lohead, 2016:8). By implication, work with performance in this study focusses on it in terms of its interstitial nature. Considerations therefore include how it makes visible, questionable, and graspable the boundaries between reality and fiction, pasts and presents, subject and object, and so forth.

Within liminal space, creation occurs (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:175; Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20), and that liminal space is evoked through performance moments (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:163). Defining performance in this way allows for a flexibility in working with it in applied settings that may particularly highlight its liminal qualities.

Vindication for these working conclusions is found in theory. Encountering these works both confirmed my subjective observations, but also had the effect of broadening my conception of what ritual performance interventions in public spaces may include. For instance, Victor Turner identifies liminal space — as generated within performance, play and ritual — as a creative and subversive space. He describes it as providing space for the individual and social human body to restructure its concept of consensus reality (Turner, V., 1974:59; Turner, V., 1986:169). For Turner, ritual, performance, and play are transformative tools for ontological evolution. In operationalised terms: performance rituals are predisposed to function as a technology for Social Innovation.¹⁷

The efficacy of performance-based innovation technology relies on framing, because its success relies on how it's encountered. Therefore, a curatorial praxis is incorporated into my work as a systematic means of integrating performance moments into the public world. This praxis is focussed on maintaining only the minimum degree of framing necessary for these encounters to be read by participant-subjects. Curatorial strategies are thus employed as a technology with which to weave performance encounters into the conceptual architecture of the interventions staged (see Chapter Four), or my interpretations of those I observe (see Chapter Three). Within my own practice, the aim is to leverage theories and philosophies of Performance within the design process, as well as leverage individual moments of performance to optimise the intervention's efficiency (in generating social cohesion). Curatorial praxis becomes the means to explore whether, and to what extent, the creativity invoked by these ritual and/or performance spaces may be shaped toward particular aims. Such aims may include the simultaneous embodiment and engendering of social innovation processes.

17 Work by scholars such as Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) begin to articulate why this may happen. These mechanisms are considered in more detail in Chapter Five.

Curatorial Praxis

The performance interventions documented in Chapter Four are considered primarily in their aspect as “curatorial praxis”. “Praxis” is employed in the sense coined by Robin Nelson (2013) indicating an “‘imbrication of practice and theory’” (Nelson in Linden & Campbell, 2016:15). Curatorial decisions applied to the spaces and processes documented in this study are therefore understood as resulting from a dialogic engagement with and between theory and practice, while simultaneously being embodied forms of the same. This frame conceives of thinking and doing as naturally integrated and entangled states of transdisciplinary consciousness, existing simultaneously whether one is engaged, in traditional terms, in practice or (the practice of) theory (Linden & Campbell, 2016:15).

Curatorial praxis is an expanded practice. In this case, “expanded practice” refers to an ideological shift in the emphasis of practice from the spectacle of the product, towards improving visibility of the modes of production (Linden & Campbell, 2016:14). Here, curatorial praxis becomes an integral part, or expanded form, of the performance practice I explore. Key curatorial principals have been refigured into my performance practice. This has led to a mutated form of practice that intersects both fields, where curation is itself a considered a semantically generative process — ontologically independent from the phenomena it frames for creative meaning (Linden & Campbell, 2016:15). In other words, it becomes a language unto itself.

Further, throughout the text, instead of referring to curatorship, curation, or curatorial practice, I often use the term “curature”, especially in relation to my own work. “Curature” is a neologism coined by Carolyn Hamilton and Pippa Skotnes (2014a) to encompass a form of critical curatorial practice that lies adjacent to, and intersecting with, the terms “curatorship” and “curation” (Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014a:1). Broadly speaking, “curation” is concerned with the organising, preservation, and display of collected objects within museums, while “curatorship” refers to acts of curation occurring outside of museum contexts. The latter remains largely tethered to projects and spaces related to the Visual, Fine, and Performing Arts.

“Curatorship” and its related terms have also been commandeered by popular media to refer to anything subjected to a process of selection before its presentation (Morgan, 2013:21; Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014a:1). For this reason, I default to the abstract noun “curature”, because it semantically incorporates a notion of critical practice not necessarily inherent in either “curatorship” or “curation”. By extension, it also reflects on the paradox inherent in the curatorial processes of making objects and experiences accessible through the exercising of epistemic power that performing this function logically necessitates (Vogel, 2003:201; Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014a:1).

Curature is therefore a means of production and mediation. Through critically practised processes of selection and presentation, curators mediate encounters between object-phenomena and subject-perceivers (Vogel, 2003: 191). In simplified terms, meaning-making is then triangulated between what the object-phenomenon brings to the space, how it is framed by the curator, and how it is perceived by the audience (Remes & Trench, 2014:182). This is necessarily true, even if the curator aims to support the work on display in ‘speaking for itself’. Using this verb-form of “curature”, then, is coherent with the framing of my own practice as a function of the expanded field (i.e. as praxis). “Performance curature” therefore simultaneously refers to mediated encounters with performance, and performance as a mediator between self

and memory. It denotes enacted forms of critically practised custodianship over performance forms. This custodianship is concerned with integrating performance moments into the lived experience of perceiving subjects, which entails exercises in framing. These frames, set around performance moments and shaping subjects' encounters with the phenomenon, can take various forms. Some of these are obvious (such as a performance staged in a gallery, as part of an exhibition), and others subtle (such as a curated immersive environment in which performance moments are so subtle that only repeated attendance may make these patterns of performed behaviour obvious to the participant).

The Archive and the Repertoire

Regarding memory, two concepts are employed in this thesis: the "Archive" and the "Repertoire" (cf. Derrida, 1998; Taylor, 2003). Essentially, humans have developed two main ways of keeping track of their pasts. The first is through what performance theorist Diana Taylor refers to as "The Repertoire". This is a performed body of memory; an essentially oral and embodied tradition. In its simplest form, Repertoire comprises the stories and ritual choreographies passed down from one generation to the next. It serves to socialise and acculturate individuals within their community. In these terms, memory is embodied. It is transmitted through the choreographies of performance and rituals we know, and the stories we learn and share as individuals and social collectives. These are the mnemonic vocabularies we carry in our bodies (Taylor, 2003:xviii–xix).

The second way humans remember is through the Archive. The term "archive" is itself treated in two different ways: as material ("archive") and as concept ("Archive"). As material, it refers to a collected and externalised body of historical data that is emplaced in some way (Derrida, 1998:15; Taylor, 2003:19; Manoff, 2004:10; McGillivray, 2011b:12). It is by negotiating with the term conceptually that my practical work has found its form. In this regard, I am indebted to the work of Jacques Derrida (cf. 1998; 2002) and those building on his work by considering the practical implications of critically engaging with the *concept* of the Archive that he puts forward (e.g. Taylor, 2003; McGillivray (Ed.), 2011a).

In the current hegemony, the archive is the favoured way of negotiating memory. If something is written down or physicalised in the form of an artefact that exists beyond the human body, it carries a weight of legitimacy denied the spoken word (Taylor, 2003:25; Casey, 2011:33; McGillivray, 2011b:12). Pasts recorded in a document are more easily considered fact, and subjective engagement is hierarchically placed below text-based objective descriptions of past and present reality (Lewis & Krueger, 2016:20). Literature attests to this tangentially, through the existence of texts across disciplines calling for a reordering of what we consider to be "objective reality" in the first place. One thing these consider is how hegemonic notions of reality are valued in relation to other sensory modes, and the elisions to the body of knowledge that results when we silence or devalue alternative value-ascription models. For example, authors note the need to evolve into a space where scholars working in the hegemonic model begin to understand that indigenous ontologies and epistemologies — which include methods of remembering — are perhaps *always* [emphasis added] locked from those hoping to articulate them in these terms (Pinkola Estés, 1995:18–20; Taylor, 2003:233–34; Mitchell, 2016:12–3).

That these indigenous ontologies and epistemes deny articulation in hegemonic terms does not deny them the right to be articulated in their own terms, alongside the hegemonic model as equal, though different. This perspective, of ontologies and epistemologies as

multiple and equal, underpins this study's approach.

Conceptually, Repertoire and Performance are entangled, while notions of Curature and Archive are more familiar bedfellows. These relationships are not mutually exclusive. If curatorial practice is considered a cultural artefact of the hegemony, how do we negotiate curating Repertoire, a mnemonic practice stemming from a different epistemological paradigm? Furthermore, what are the implications when negotiating repertoire practices in relation to the inevitable archival encroachments that occur as a result of engaging with them from the hegemonic side of the epistemological fence? These are questions at the forefront of the developing praxis documented in this thesis.

Methodology

Methodologically, this study exploits intersections between Practice as Research, Case Study, and Grounded Theory. In counterpoint to my explorations of the Repertoire, I curated an exhibition of an archive of performance called *Cut|Corner* (see Chapter Four).¹⁸ This was a doorway into working with Derridean Archives (cf. 1998). Moreover, this was an archive rich in paradoxical encounter, fraught with the tensions inherent in dealing with the fixed traces of past performances — essentially ephemeral phenomena (Phelan in McGillivray, 2011b:12). This engagement simulated the process undertaken by CAP, a case study which is also entangled in a process of reinterpreting an archive of performance and performative practice.¹⁹ In counterpoint to the work of the Clanwilliam initiative, I purposefully employed a radically different curatorial strategy. Both events result from reinterpreting an archive of performance, but the annual interpretations of the Bleek & Lloyd archive falls along the lines of a performance event, while *Cut|Corner* more closely resembled a traditional exhibition, albeit with performative and immersive elements. In reading the differences between these two projects, I then re-engaged by affecting a practice more closely related to the repertoire forms of CAP. The outcome, my work with ATOM, leverages understandings gained from both sides of the spectrum — through observing the repertoire interventions of CAP, and the practical experience of curating the more archivally aligned *Cut|Corner*. In this way, a blended methodology emerged to govern the process of this study. Theory informed engagement with practice, which in turn informed the generation of new theory (Practice as Research). Case studies were both created and analysed from multiple perspectives to gain an understanding on a spectrum of functions of Performance (Case Study), and tentative new perspectives on Performance as curatorial praxis and its role in Social Innovation began to emerge (Grounded Theory).

Initially, Practice as Research was the primary methodological means of engagement with content. The focus was on engagement with an inciting archive, i.e. that of CAP. From this, I started using associated methodologies and developed the additional practical projects

18 *Cut|Corner* was staged in two theatre foyers. It appeared as a traditionally installed art exhibition, with a number of (optional) interactive elements. Exhibits included mounted images, video and sound exhibits and mixed media installations. Some of these required performative engagement in order to be wholly installed, but *not* interacting did not mean it could not be appreciated in some form. For more details, see Chapter Four.

19 Namely, the Bleek & Lloyd Archive. For more information on the Bleek & Lloyd archive visit <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/>. More information on the ways the Clanwilliam Arts Project draws from this archive is available in Chapter Three.

documented here. Understanding this form of research arose through my engaging with theory, studio work and undertaking a solo project not included in this thesis called *Too Much Remembering Leads to Forgetting*.²⁰ CAP, the initial case study, was observed on a field trip, and through engagement with its archives and secondary literature. To understand CAP better, in relation to its archives, research began into the formation and curation of performance archives. This research took the form of theoretical (e.g. McGillivray, 2011a) and practical engagement (e.g. the *Cut|Corner* exhibitions). Performance's role as a curation/mediation of memory primarily grew through *Too Much Remembering Leads to Forgetting*. While these understandings are not described in theoretical detail here, they inexorably influenced my approach to practice.

My work through ATOM is the first practical embodiment of what I have learned about the functions of curated performance interventions for the purposes of social innovation. This developed out of my study of CAP. By replicating aspects of CAP's methodology, ATOM made an initial proposal into the creative and social space (NOVA).²¹ A series of comparative readings of the effects of these two interventions within their separate communities was observed, and ATOM's events iterated upon.²² This process of iteration was a function of applying the CAP methodology to my own contexts, while remaining coherent with my own research methods. These iterations were interspersed with work on minor projects, which helped tailor increasingly expert responses with the larger developing prototype. For example, observations from *Cut|Corner* fed into the way I install interactive elements into the space at ATOM events.

Through replicating the results, I confirm descriptions of CAP's effect upon its world.²³ Methodological replication (with adjustments to suit my own contexts of practice), appears to have achieved similarly promising results in increasing a sense of social cohesion within fragmented communities, specifically through a performance-based intervention. Now I articulate these findings and the processes that give birth to them in new terms: as curated performance interventions that operate as Social Innovation technologies.

20 Ritual enactments occurred from May 2014–July 2016 in South Africa, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Peru. The project entailed a series of cairns being built in a ritualised manner, over the course of two years. Initiated as a means to deal with personal loss, it evolved to be my first experience of a Practice as Research enquiry into negotiations of mnemonic processes and the role of the human body within this.

21 NOVA was our first public event, held on 10 March 2016 at The Waiting Room, 273 Long Street, Cape Town, South Africa. For more details, see Chapter Four.

22 To date (December 2017), we have hosted 17 events, 15 of them at The Waiting Room. Of the remaining two, one was at ERA (4th March 2017), and the other at True Music Pop-Up Club (18th November 2017). ERA was at 71 Loop Street but is now permanently closed. True Music is at 219 Long Street, until March 2018.

23 See, for example: Harrison, 2010; Fleishman, 2012a:132–80; Baxter, 2015; Hutchison, 2015; Ravengai, 2015.

Practice as Research

“Practice as Research” (hereafter PaR),²⁴ refers to a way of learning in which, through doing, knowing arises. Simultaneously, doing is understood as a way of knowing. In this study, “doing” entails self-reflection combined with reading (theory), performing and curating, relating (to memory, theory, projects, and people) and observing (the process, the projects, and the people). Encounters with theory shape practice, and vice versa. This does not discount negotiations with theory *as* practice. The result of this reciprocal feedback loop is that, through theory, new forms of practice are developed and new theory is developed through practice (Jones, 2009; Trimmingham, 2002:54–55).

According to Mark Fleishman (2016:57):

PaR is a form of creative evolution in the Bergsonian sense (Fleishman, 2012a); not a progressivist building towards a finality, nor a mechanistic unfolding of a predetermined plan in search of something it knows exists before the search begins. It begins with energy (an impulse, an idea, an intuition, a hunch), which is then durationally channelled through repetition, on both micro levels (of bodies, movements, sounds, improvisations, moments) and macro levels (of events, productions, projects, installations), in variable and indeterminable directions, in search of difference. [...] ...a set of adjustments in the reciprocal encounters between different sets of human and non-human actors.

PaR is therefore a methodology that embraces the ambiguities inherent in knowledge production processes. Acknowledging that results cannot be predetermined, PaR scholars ask a question, apply the process (of practice in relation to theory), and reflect critically on what arises. This journey is fractal. The overall research trajectory is woven from multiple smaller journeys that follow the same structure.

It also acknowledges that practice itself is a form of intellectual enquiry. This counterpoints the dominant idea that practice only stimulates thinking, or exists to be commented upon by it (Cull 2012 in Fleishman, 2016:57). This signals a radical paradigm shift in the Academy; one that moves art-making from the margins of intellectual enquiry, towards the centre (Jones, 2009).

To generate responses to the research question governing this study, I cycled between periods in which either engagements with the literature or self-reflexive engagements with practice predominated.²⁵ First, I learned how mediated forms of performance may function along Social Innovation lines by theoretically exploring Social Innovation, Performance, and Curatorial Praxis. Second, I made something practical happen in the world that could shed more light on the concepts I learned about theoretically, and experimented with how

24 In literature, “PaR” refers to both “Practice as Research” and “Performance as Research” (Fleishman, 2016:75). Because my work intersects additional disciplines to Performance (e.g. Curation), I default to “practice”. The principles behind the methodological frame, however, remains the same.

25 Predominantly in Performance, Theatre Making and Curation

they could work together in practical terms (e.g. with *Cut|Corner*). Third, reflecting on this experience sent me back to engage with theory, from which an optimised practice grew (e.g. with ATOM). These reflections are captured here.²⁶ This feedback process could continue *ad infinitum*, until it generates enough reflections on experience to constitute a theory. In other words, this is the beginning stages of what could become a Grounded Theory.

Further, what was learned is partly captured in this document, but also inexorably lies partly beyond it: present only in the moments I am experiencing these realisations through practising my crafts. It is locked into a state of perpetual, embodied 'becoming' (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1993:238). This aspect of how I understand performance to function as a Social Innovation technology can only be embodied, and its effects observed, through its repetitions over time. Beyond tangential linguistic references, contact with this understanding can only be invited through providing opportunities to experience it similarly in the first-person.²⁷

What my practical work embodies in this aspect, circumscribes a knowledge that lies beyond language. It embodies this awareness at the same time as expanding it, through being itself. This is also what I mean when I refer to my work as Practice as Research (cf. Fleishman, 2012b:28).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory methodology is a systematic way of developing theory *from* content, rather than interpreting theory *through* content. Through iterations of practice (i.e. cycles of data generation) and rigorous analysis, new theory is born (Strauss & Corbin, 1994:273). The aim of this study is to articulate new theories on the roles of Performance and its curvature in relation to Social Innovation. In as much as these theoretical beginnings originated through an analysis of a case study and through my own practice, they form the beginnings of Grounded Theory research. While this study is a long way from employing a rigorous Grounded Theory model, an operational definition is provided here, because this methodology coloured the way the research and practice was conducted and interpreted.

Characteristic of Grounded Theory, this study is interpretive, with conclusions drawn from extensive field observations and supplemented with a diverse set of secondary data (Rennie, 2000:481, Strauss & Corbin, 1994:274). The process of data collection, analysis, and theory formulation also occurred simultaneously with each other, and the emphasis remains on developing towards a theory of performance praxis as functioning for social innovation gains (Strauss & Corbin, 1994:274–75). For example, I propose that curated performance can function as a Social Innovation technology, especially in that it increases social cohesion, (re)building community and *communitas* (cf. Turner, 1979:470) in sustainable ways. These conclusions are partly based on my experience of that effect, through participant feedback and self-observation at seventeen ATOM events. In turn, these events function effectively in this way because of the constant interplay between theory and practice. At each iteration of practice (e.g. after each ATOM event) I relate my observations to my prior understandings of the topic being explored — in this case, the ways curated performance can function systematically for social benefit. As a result, my perspectives on these pre-existing theories are extended and refined. This shapes the re-encounters with theory and practice that follow, in a

26 See Chapter Four.

27 One opportunity is to attend an ATOM event.

constant cycle that eventually leads towards new conceptual relationships being articulated. These are all characteristics of Grounded Theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1994:273; Backman & Kyngäs, 1999:152).

I believe I move towards generating theory, because my study is about relating the concepts of performance, curating, and social innovation, and demonstrating through practice that plausible relationships exist between them (Strauss & Corbin, 1994:278). Further, I believe that interpersonal relationships create meaning: that the moment of exchange between self and other is at the heart of the performative generation of reality and is what provides a semantic framework from which we can navigate our experiences. This view — of reality being a network of socially constructed meaning — is coherent with the basis of the Grounded Theory approach.

Case Study

Case Study methods were employed when learning about the work of CAP and analysing my own work. This was useful for interpreting data, because the behaviour of participants in all the projects documented here was not to be artificially manipulated, as in some forms of experimental research design. Analysing CAP in this way shaped my approach to leveraging performance encounters for social innovation gains. For example, when juxtaposing the efficacy of generating community engagement in my static exhibition, *Cut|Corner*, with the effects of CAP on their social landscape, it was clear that enactments of Repertoire would be more effective than passive engagements with archival material. This comparison led to an adjustment of approach, and the study grew to focus on the building of Repertoire. My research-led engagement with ATOM was born in this way.

Characterising the approach to studying CAP, *Cut|Corner*, and ATOM through a Case Study lens, includes the interest in understanding their context of operations and the social processes involved in their making (Meyer, 2001:329; Baxter & Jack, 2008:545). Further, conclusions are derived from multiple sources of data. These sources include archival material, field observations, and scholarly articles (Tellis, 1997:1).

This approach was useful because it is designed for studying phenomena in context, in such a way that foregrounds the exploration of multiple perspectives on why and how they came to be (Tellis, 1997:1; Meyer, 2001:330; Baxter & Jack, 2008:545). This acknowledgement of subjectivity, through analysing the object of study through multiple lenses, is suited to the processes of performance and curation, both of which are highly subjective mediums.

I approach my cases, particularly CAP and ATOM, as Instrumental Case Studies. They serve as units of analysis to help refine towards theory. Analysing them is about more than just coming to terms with how they arise in their own contexts; it's about understanding the social roles of performance encounters through them (Baxter & Jack, 2008:549).

Research Question

This thesis considers the ways Performance may be inserted into public spaces for Social Innovation gains. Extending this research question, the role that curatorial praxis may play in shaping the way these performance encounters are seeded into, and received through a space, is explored. Whether a curated encounter may influence the efficacy with which Performance may function toward a specific Social Innovation aim is considered. The aim of this study is to increase social cohesion through supporting the development of a sense of individual and collective agency over self and space. This can be understood as asking the following questions:

- Can curated performance interventions bring people together and assist them in examining their past and negotiating their place in the present?
- Can engaging in curated performance interventions encourage newly formed and/or strengthened communities to collectively and actively build towards desired futures?
- What role may Curatorial Praxis play in shaping the way performance encounters are seeded into and received in public spaces for social cohesion and social good?
- How could curated performance interventions qualify as a form of applied technology for Social Innovation?

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter One introduces the thesis. It introduces the research questions in exploratory terms. This is followed by descriptions of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, key concepts, and methodology that guided the collection and use of data for this study.

Chapter Two is a literature review, situating this study in relation to key texts in fields relevant to the research question.

Chapter Three introduces the Clanwilliam Arts Project (CAP) as a primary case study. It considers its socio-economic contexts, and its nascent archive. My encounter with the project and its archives is described. I reflect on how this encounter shaped my work by initiating a PaR feedback loop that considers how mediated encounters with Performance function as positive forms of social intervention. It explores the project in its relational aspects — how it relates to itself and its community. CAP's employment of Performance as a social disruptor is especially considered. The effects of this process on community (re)formation are also discussed. Finally, CAP is framed as an immersive experience. A discussion on how this increases its efficacy at achieving its aims — to increase social cohesion through the leveraging of Performance — concludes the chapter.

Chapter Four details two examples of my own practice that speak to my research question, and result from dialogic engagement with theory and CAP. The first project, *Cut|Corner*, curated a nascent archive of performance. It is positioned as a means of exploring issues of memorialisation through static exhibition. This project was an exploration into performative exhibition-making, and arose through engaging with an archive of performance that parallels that of the CAP. It looks at honouring memory in ways coherent with hegemonic trends, and explores the role of working with the past to build futures. The latter is inspired by the structure of CAP, which works with memory as part of the means of affecting social transformation.

The second half of the chapter introduces the work of ATOM, a Cape Town-based

creative collective founded in early 2016 and specialising in audiovisual showcases. Our engagement is framed as an expansion of the explorations I began in *Cut|Corner* and as a counterpoint to that first curatorial strategy. Where *Cut|Corner* exploits principles of Archive and draws from a direct reference to the past to inspire social momentum (like CAP), ATOM leverages the strengths of Repertoire in a way that foregrounds engagement with the present moment as fuel for social change. This moment of presented awareness arising within participants is then directed towards future-oriented thinking along Social Innovation lines, especially through the application of curatorial frames.

Chapter Five contains conclusions drawn as a result of this research cycle. Intersections between Performance and Curature, as they exist in the work of CAP and ATOM, are identified. Their contribution to both projects' functioning as technologies for Social Innovation are mapped (moving towards Grounded Theory formation), and the mechanisms that give rise to this capability are discussed.



CHAPTER TWO



CHAPTER TWO

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

The research question asks whether intersections between Performance and curatorial praxis can be instrumentalised for Social Innovation gains. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the studies of authors that focus on intersections between Performance, curatorial practice, and other key concepts. I share what I have learned from my peers and mentors and draw on the concepts they employ, to frame my engagement with my own study.

Social Innovation is discussed first, especially in its relation to interventions that incorporate arts. Then Performance is explored, especially pertaining to its relationship with the two main forms of encoding human memory — Archive and Repertoire. I close this section with a review of literature interrogating the strengths of Performance as a medium, when conducting work such as mine. Finally, I review work in curatorial theory. First, two main arguments concerning what curation entails are mapped. Then the focus expands to include work concerning the particularities of the curation of the Archive, Performance and performance archives. This section includes the mapping of conceptual and applied differences between the interrelated terms of “curatorship”, “curation”, and “curatorial praxis”. In conclusion, roles are proposed in which these fields operate intersectionally in such a way that allows them to function for social benefit.

Social Innovation

Social Innovation has been operationalised in a way that leaves space for it to work in transdisciplinary terms. This characteristic — its fluidity across and beyond domains — is one of its strengths (Mulgan et al, 2007:17, 27; Moolaert, MacCallum & Hillier, 2013:13; Bitzer & Hamann, 2015:19). This makes it suitable as a space for exploring and extending creative practices such as Performance, which itself is a transdisciplinary process (Schechner, 1988:257).

A critique of the field, is that the bulk of current Social Innovation work pays inadequate attention to the scientific method when developing methodology and interpreting field observations. One proposed way to address this is through a refocussing on processes of

technological innovation and their diffusion, and more clearly drawing on this related theory (Lessem, Chidara Muchineripi & Kada, 2012:149) [own emphasis]. I understand this critique to be the product of a limiting world view. Careful logocentric forms of thinking may be a necessary part of the process.

My response to this call is extended along two axes. First, scientific reasoning is only one form of reasoning, and conceptions of “reasoning” often elide the important role that embodied and affective processes play in social processes and knowledge production (Pinkola Estés, 1995:295; Taylor, 2003:xix ; Mitchell, 2016:18). For this reason, it may be important to approach the task of social innovation from the perspective of the creative arts.²⁸ In this study, I have chosen to use an investigation into the forms and functions of two creative acts – performance and curation – and their intersections, as the basis for an investigation that extends the boundaries of Social Innovation. Social Innovation appears to be an efficient, relatively low-risk, way to address the planetary-wide series of crises we have no option but to address immediately and directly (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000:18; Steffen et al., 2011:739). It is also within my interest to explore ways in which these domains knit together, because I am embedded in a social landscape in which my disciplines are simultaneously undervalued and overly codified. If opportunities to demonstrate their central importance to the project of living are not taken up, then no change in the overriding perspective can be expected.

Second, literature on Social Innovation that addresses the African context appears comparatively thin on the ground. This is acknowledged directly by those already published (e.g. Bitzer & Hamann, 2012:4), as well as indirectly by other writing such as this literature review — by virtue of its reliance on a body of work primarily published in the Global North. This is especially salient, because what arises is a practical context rich in innovation processes (Bitzer & Hamann, 2012:4), drawing from theory generated outside of its context. For this reason, I believe theoretical work on social innovation processes for Africa, and by extension the Global South,²⁹ must be generated by those embedded within the contexts in which they practise and theorise. In this way, a narrative more responsive to the particular contexts of this region can be fed into the feedback loop currently dominated by a discourse removed from its lived circumstance. I add my efforts to the growing body of work that aims to enable marginalised voices to express self-determined futures, without having to make allowances for the quality and relevance of materials they have to draw from. In other words, my work is shaped by the desire that it can function as a set of materials to draw from when engaging in addressing social challenges at a systemic level, especially within the contexts of the Global South.

28 In my case, this most often translates to performance arts and their curation.

29 The term “Global South” refers to geopolitical regions outside of Europe and North America. These regions are most often characteristically low-income, and are politically and culturally marginalised (Dados & Connell, 2012:12). “It references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained” (Dados & Connell, 2012:13).

The Arts in Social Innovation

Central to the study is an exploration of the role of Performance, as domain and phenomenon, in the social innovation process.³⁰ A literature search around the roles of creative arts interventions in Social Innovation was conducted. While some arts-based innovations are documented in the literature, the bulk of these projects (and their literature) appear to originate from the Business and Science sectors (see e.g. Mulgan et. al. 2007, 42; Bitzer & Hamann, 2015:8, 19). In 'Social Creativity and Post-Rural Places' (2013), André, Abreu & Carmo document a longitudinal intervention in rural Portugal, and illustrate that an understanding of roles played by the creative arts in place-making is imperative in leveraging opportunities for social and economic regeneration.

The creative arts play a key role in supporting the reconstruction of collective identity. This performed function ameliorates the risk of Social Innovation processes having a divisive influence on the communities in which they operate, especially as these interventions are often introduced by outsiders (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013: 255; Tremblay and Pilati, 2013: 76). The intervention defeats its own purpose if its intended beneficiaries are disenfranchised from it. Therefore, the creative arts become a tool for Social Innovation, through their generative contribution to social cohesion.

Finally, there is a body of work discussing the effects of arts-based interventions according to more general performance matrices (see e.g. Merli, 2002; Daykin et al, 2008). These include critiques of value-ascription to these processes, particularly in economic terms (e.g. Madden, 2001; Frey, 2005). For example, Daykin *et al* (2008) reviews literature from 1994–2004 reporting on the impact of performance art interventions in non-clinical settings on adolescent health and behaviour. They report that these types of interventions have a positive outcome, especially in increasing peer interaction and social skills (2008:260).

Meanwhile, Merli's 'Evaluating the Social Impact of Participation in Arts Activities' (2002) is a critique of a 1997 report on the uses of arts participation by Francois Matarasso. Through responding to Matarasso's study, Merli concludes that a major challenge in conducting arts impact assessments is the lack of a strong theoretical grounding (Merli, 2002:115). This view is supported by Frey (2005:2). This implies, first, that the claim that arts interventions have positive social impact is unsubstantiated, and second, that these effects cannot be standardised (115). The author then calls for researchers to employ an interdisciplinary approach to their studies in this field, that makes explicit the theoretical framework governing them. It is into this space that I insert my work: adding another voice to the choir documenting the effects of arts interventions, using a transdisciplinary approach and clarifying the theoretical framework governing the intervention and related research.

Frey's 2005 report details two common kinds of assessments when considering arts interventions and their social effects, and attempts to integrate these polar positions. Critiquing both Impact Assessments (5) and Willingness to Pay studies (6), he suggests that in order to describe the value of arts interventions on social reality, both kinds of study must work together to influence cultural policy (8). The value of any arts intervention programme then, must be calculated by understanding the value of aspects that can be captured by the market (and assigned monetary value) and aspects that lie beyond it (e.g. social capital).

30 Curature becomes a secondary enquiry, because it's existence is dependent on performance-moments, to which it is applied in order to optimise the latter's operating within Social Innovation parameters.

Madden (2001) also asserts that focusing on conducting economic impact assessments on arts programmes is a counterproductive practice. He advocates for gathering support for policy formation or funding (161–162; 170). The paper concludes that, while it supports arts and culture as central to development, reducing the former to a question of economics is self-defeating, as much of its value lies beyond it (174).

Learning more about the economics of arts interventions is what steered me towards taking the Social Innovation aspect of my craft seriously. Designing the performance intervention along these lines would build financial viability as a cornerstone of its sustainability. This would negate the need for any form of practice developing through this work to be reliant on external funding and policy.

For a product, service, or process to qualify for the operationalised label of “social innovation”, it must approach an old problem in a new way (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:255). The effect of this intervention must be more efficient than existing ones across multiple planes (e.g. socio-economic, environmental). Further, any created value must accrue primarily to the community in which it is generated, rather than a private individual. “Value” here refers to both economic and social capital. It must also be a self-sufficient and sustainable construct, across domains (e.g. economically, socially, and environmentally) and cannot operate as a charity. It can function in ways that negotiates the neoliberal economy in flexible terms, using money as a tool in innovative ways. Additionally, it can largely bypass the fiat economy by setting up alternative forms of exchange.

There appears to be a small body of literature considering art-making and/or curation in terms of Social Innovation in this operationalised sense. Scholars such as Frank Moulaert have worked on establishing links between the creative sectors and Social Innovation (i.e. economics) (e.g. Moulaert 2004 in Tremblay 2013), but few appear to have looked deeply at the level of individual art-making process and product, especially as means to engender networked systems of engagement within otherwise hierarchical systems. In other words, by asking the question: how may these interventions function as titrated disruptors to agitate the dominant paradigm towards evolution?

Primary texts are two chapters within *The International Handbook of Social Innovation* (Moulaert et al (Eds), 2013). The first of these is titled, ‘Social Innovation through Arts and Creativity’, by Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay and Thomas Pilati. It synthesises work touching at the edge of these recognitions. The authors recognise that artists have long been considered the cornerstone to social regeneration initiatives by various fields (2013:67, 68). It acknowledges a scholarly unease that research into the roles of cultural and creative praxes as successful social innovations (and efficient socio-economic development tools) are not sufficiently supported by case studies to warrant a defence of their place in society within the economic centre. This places artists working in these ways in a double-bind (2013:71). For their work to be supported by funding infrastructures such as local government, they must refer to research. Yet, for the research to be generated, work must be done in the world (i.e. case studies must be generated). Therefore, spaces open for practice that favours the privileged, well-funded few. This suggests the problems of unfairly privileged narratives: who gets to speak in this void? My work contributes towards levelling the playing field: continuing the generation of viable case studies through art-making, then using these experiences to inform engagement with existing theory and my nascent contributions. It also continues the insertion into the canon of case studies, such as CAP, that have not necessarily been framed in Social Innovation terms before, and continues the movement of art-making from the margins to the centre of

the socio-economic landscape. It is my hope that this work connects with those who share my ambition to support the generation of infrastructure for the research into, and development and application of, art praxes operating as Social Innovation technologies.

In 'Social Innovation Through Arts and Creativity', Tremblay and Pilati reflect that key to a creative project's ability to function in a space as a sustainable social innovation, is the inclusion of the local populace into the process and product of the intervention (2013:75). The key is to shift from a mindset typified by the phrase 'providing *for*' to one of 'providing *with*', though one may begin with the former — initially 'providing for' in order to develop a process that allows a future of 'providing with'. Both my major case studies can be placed along this continuum between 'providing for' the local community and 'providing with' them. In both cases, the intention is to move toward a model that supports the communities engaging as full and equal stakeholders in the design and implementation process.

The second chapter in the International Handbook is 'Social Innovation Through the Arts in the Rural Areas: the case of Montemor-o-Novo', by Isabel André, Alexandre Abreu, and André Carmo (2013:242–257). It shares the case study of what the authors term an example of "arts-based social creativity": the work done by local government in its implementation of a broad-based art-focussed development plan in Montemor-o-Novo, a rural area in Southern Portugal (2013:242).

This project parallels the work done by CAP in many ways, and becomes a useful resource when situating the work of the latter within the Social Innovation landscape. Both interventions capitalise on art's function as a social disruptor by leveraging heritage as the means for creative expression (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:245, 249; Hutchison, 2015). They do this by linking the community back to the landscape in which they exist, through the use of creative arts and story (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:253; Hutchison, 2015; de Bruyn, 2016:257). Further, they both aim to perform socially regenerative functions, while remaining critical to processes of exclusion that sometimes accompany them. For this reason, both make an effort to work in inclusive ways that increase social cohesion and purposefully work against processes of exclusion (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:103–104; Ravengai, 2015:212). Both projects were also initiated by outsiders and have worked systematically to enfold the community in the process, with the aim of handing over the reins to local direction (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:257; Baxter, 2015:179; Hutchison, 2015).

These elements are a part of what classifies both interventions as Social Innovation technologies: they both address a challenge in their communities in a novel way (for that space) by countering social disparity through arts interventions. Further, they ensure that benefit accrues to the community, rather than a private individual, and focus on handing over the process to the local participants for self-management. Unlike the project in Montemor-o-Novo, CAP was not conceived of as a social innovation from the beginning, and has not previously been framed in those terms. It also doesn't achieve all of its parameters (e.g. financial self-sustainability).

The point of this comparison is to highlight its potential to function as a social innovation in technical terms, with minor adjustments to its operational model. With this work, I hope to increase awareness of the potential benefits of framing interventions in these terms and developing them with Social Innovation parameters in mind. I believe this supports growth in both fields: with arts interventions reaping the benefits of the systematic design elements inherent in Social Innovation practice, and the field of Social Innovation expanding to integrate the benefits of creative arts technologies to affect social reality.

Like the work by Tremblay and Pilati (2013), this study makes a point of situating art — and community engagement with art-making — as a crucial part of transmuted socio-economic degeneration into regeneration. This extends the function of these types of interventions beyond the project of aesthetics (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:246). In comparison, when discussing the work of CAP, Mark Fleishman makes a point of highlighting the specific role of aesthetics itself as the socially disruptive factor (and thus the agent for change). It is this “disruption of beauty” that interrupts any sense of certainty about the space and what’s possible within it, while also disrupting any assumptions about who can and may produce aesthetic objects and experiences within it. This action essentially frees up Deleuzian lines of flight³¹ within the socio-economic landscape and feeds processes of social evolution (Fleishman, 2012a:175).

The study of Montemor-o-Novo considers more broadly the role of creativity in social regeneration. Specifically, it considers the strengths and weakness of interventions that foster creativity within communities, as opposed to performing a direct study on the impact of the creative act itself. Further, it frames these creative acts as modified forms of Social Innovation practice (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:247). It provides a well-structured consideration of interventions at systemic level — e.g. as a result of a broad-based development plan spearheaded by local government — and considers arts intervention systemically, in terms of its effect on whole communities. In Montemor-o-Novo, the process focussed on professional art-making being made accessible to the local community, first by introduction of the practice through the integration of art-making outsiders into the community, and eventually the support of a local appropriation of these art forms *by* the community (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:257). The authors note that initiating the process through engagement with people from outside the target community is an important guarantee towards fresh ideas and the generation of supportive networked landscapes. Expanding socially in this way, makes this type of intervention process sustainable in the long term through encoding within it a mechanism to ensure its evolution — by preventing itself from being hermetically sealed by virtue of a process that may never include new people or experiences (2013:247).

Within the South African landscape, I know of no creative arts work other than mine that actively crafts along and toward Social Innovation principles. That does not mean the work is not happening, but rather that these synergies are perhaps either incidental and/or not being formally presented in these theoretical terms. As with any feedback loop, a framing of the process articulates an awareness that such modelling is happening in the first place. This points toward an awareness that ensures future specialisation along those lines. ATOM’s work forms the most recent part of a portfolio of work on the study of crafting a form of arts-intervention that can function in Social Innovation terms. This first cycle of explorations culminates with this thesis.

31 ‘Lines of flight’ is a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Referring to the moment in which change happens, it results when thresholds between two paradigms are crossed. It designates a liminal, generative space of potential innovation away from (rather than counter to) something (e.g. hegemony) (Fournier, 2014:121).

Performance

Three works especially influenced the working definition of “performance” used in this study: Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), Erika Fischer-Lichte’s *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008), and *Ritual, Performance and the Senses*, edited by Michael Bull and Jon P. Mitchell (2016). *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden archives of performance* (2011), edited by Glen McGillivray especially shaped my understanding on the nature of performance archives.

The Archive and the Repertoire (Taylor, 2003) works to open up spaces for counter-hegemonic forms of knowing and remembering to find equal footing within the epistemic arena. This interrogation invests value in Indigenous epistemologies, which are primarily embodied and/or performance-based and frame memory as a cultural practice. Simultaneously, it makes space within formal academic discourse for contemporary Performance practices, which are sidelined as legitimate epistemological enquiries. For instance, Taylor discusses how the work of Peruvian theatre collective Yuyachkani (2003:190–211) and Brazilian artist Denise Stoklos (2003:212–236) interrogate notions of memory and identity.

Taylor (2003) explores the performative encoding of memory into the individual and social body. Authors like Bertola (2005) also consider the roles of storytelling in human individual and social memory processes. These memory-acts are subject to multiple forms of mediation, one of which is curation within institutional contexts, and integration of performance traces into the archive (Taylor, 2003:36; Bertola, 2005:296). For example, Taylor discusses the role of framing in a ‘scenario of discovery’ played out by performance artists Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. ‘Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...’ was first staged in 1992. Travelling internationally, it involved the two artists performing as members of an apparently previously undiscovered Amerindian nation called Guatinaui (Fusco, 1994:145–148; Taylor, 2003:65). Guatinaui is an imaginary place, but the act was staged as real (Fusco, 1994:148; Kelly, 1999:114). It is interesting to note that the framing of these performances in an institutional context shaped the behaviour of the spectators. Many, for instance, assumed it was an authentic ethnographic exhibit (rather than a parody) and engaged with it as an acceptable form of interaction between themselves and the humans they assumed to be on (caged) display (Fusco, 1994:143; Taylor, 2003:70). One woman even requested gloves so that she could “touch the male specimen”, while another is pictured feeding Gómez-Peña through the bars of his cage (Fusco, 1994:151; Taylor, 2003:68). By foregrounding the roles of the frame in which Performance is embedded and how this shifted audience reception (Fusco, 1994:153–157; Kelly, 1999:114), these texts inspired me to consider more deeply the roles that curatorial praxis may play in influencing the performance encounter.

Spectator interviews were conducted during the live performance, with the results of previous interviews displayed as part of a documentary film. Taylor notes that the medium of display, whether live performance or film (i.e. Repertoire or Archive), affects the nature of audience response (2003: 69). Encountering an act of Repertoire versus an archival fragment positions the spectator at a different critical distance. Being present with an act of Repertoire implicates the spectator in the process of its creation, while encountering an archival fragment allows them more easily to remain under the illusion that they are separate from the phenomenon under scrutiny. This makes them less likely to act because of the stimulus (2003:73–75). These observations influenced my choice to explore live performance as a tool

for social transformation, rather than focussing on encounters with performance traces as the means of affecting the space.³² I therefore focussed on leveraging the power of Repertoire, over that of the Archive, to stimulate social interaction and transformation.

Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia is a collection of work that explores the dimensions of the performance archive (McGillivray, 2011a). It explores how performance moments may be captured in archival terms that perhaps can come to stand for the performance — an ephemeral phenomenon — in a way that is sufficient to provide meaningful access to it (McGillivray, 2011b:12). Here, performance archives are considered as potentially fulfilling two functions: first, to keep open a memory of events, and second, to perform as objects themselves. In other words, they hold a memory of performance while simultaneously performing memory. This book goes on to critique both archives in general, but especially the relationship of performance practices to the processes of archival formation, conservation, and representation. This source especially tempered my treatment of the performance detritus and archival fragments that I inherited and used to create the exhibition, *Cut|Corner*.

Where Taylor (2003) studies Performance in relation to memory, Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008) focusses on how it functions to generate meaningful experience. Considering how performance encounters work to create a perceived reality for the interlocutors, Fischer-Lichte highlights how performance and its incumbent rituals open liminal spaces. These are spaces in which cognitive and rhythmic dissonances are forcibly negotiated by the human brain. For instance, when becoming self-reflexive while encountering a performance, you begin to self-consciously negotiate the boundaries between reality and fiction (2008:148). Sustaining a position within this paradoxical relationship creates cognitive dissonance within the human brain. This state of dynamic tension arises when a person holds two opposing thoughts simultaneously over a period of time (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007:7; Jarcho, Berkman & Lieberman, 2011:460). In *Paradox*, Margaret Cuonzo reasons that negotiating such paradoxical and/or dissonant states are a means to open new ways of thinking and being in the world (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). Meanwhile, Fischer-Lichte states that moments of performance encounter initiate feedback loops that feed on negotiating paradoxes (such as the reality/fiction binary), and that these result in the performative generation of materiality, or perceived experiences, and potential for individual and social transformation (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:173, 176, 191, 203, 207).

Bull and Mitchell's *Ritual, Performance and the Senses* (2016) is a compilation of work considering the shape and effect of performance and ritual on the social and individual human body. Chapters by various authors span subjects such as the neurological effects of ritual (Downey, 2016; Turner, R., 2016), the characteristics of Performance and its role in the generation of materiality (Mitchell, 2016), and examinations of the lived experience of performance as it integrates with the senses of the performer (Mendoza, 2016; Zarrilli, 2016).

For instance, Mitchell (2016) considers mimesis to be central to the performing arts. He argues that performance is generative, not representational (2016:13–14). This corresponds with Fischer-Lichte's finding that performance is useful for making graspable the mechanism that generates perceptible experience (2008:207).

Meanwhile, Robert Turner (2016) explores the nature of ritual, including its form and how it functions. Along with authors such as Pinkola Estés and Fischer-Lichte, he determines

32 This body of theory was encountered after I had staged *Cut|Corner*, and the change of approach as a result of dialogic engagement between practical experience and theoretical engagement is characteristic of the PaR process.

rituals to be characterised by essential features such as their cyclical nature, reliance on symbolism, socialisation function, and essential role in community formation (Pinkola Estés, 1995:67, 197; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52, 55, 175; Turner, R., 2016:33). He agrees on the central importance of rhythm in the transformative process of ritual (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:58; Turner, R., 2016:37). ATOM especially exploits this to perform its Social Innovation functions within its community.

Further, Zarrilli argues that sustaining the states of consciousness demanded by performance and ritual practice opens the practitioner up to new logics. With practice, new ways of perceiving become possible through the development of the meditative concentration required to execute performance rituals (2016:123). His findings correspond with those of Fischer-Lichte, who outlines that one of the two forms of transformation accessible through ritual practice is as an agent for innovation, through its capacity to invoke negotiations of liminal space (2008:175).

The listed sources concentrate on mapping Performance primarily in relation to its mnemonic and epistemic functions (Bertola, 2005; Taylor, 2003). By implication, the transmission of memory is highlighted as a cultural practice. The role of (curatorial) framing in mediating the reception and perceptual influence of performance encounters is also considered (Fusco, 1994; Taylor, 2003). The functions and implications of performance in cognitive and social development and ontological design is considered (Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Downey, 2016; Mitchell, 2016; Zarilli, 2016). Further, sources discuss how this is operationalised through ritual (Pinkola Estés, 1995; Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Turner, 2016) and the effects of it on the individual lived experience (Mendoza, 2016; Zarilli, 2016). I insert my work into this stream of thought, while considering how to leverage the archetypal forms, functions, and effects of ritual in contemporary secular and local terms.

Curatorial Theory

My interrogation into curatorial theory was divided along three lines: curating of the Archive, negotiating archives of performance, and curating Performance.

Literature on the role of the curator appears plentiful. The literature speaks to the fact that it is constantly developing and contested. Two main themes of discussion inform my approach to this study and my general practice: the artist–curator debate, and the call to expand the concept of “curating” to include a focus on the process of work.

The first debate concerns determining the degree of authorial voice carried by the curator. Does a curator author something new through the process of curating, or is it their duty to absent themselves as much as possible from the process of interpretation to let the object speak for itself? In other words, is the exhibition an artwork that incorporates and supersedes the objects it is made up of? In the literature, it appears to be a matter of opinion. Authors who engage with this debate include Vogel (2003), Manacorda (2005), Vidokle (2012), Morgan (2013), and Filipovic (2013). There is agreement that a degree of authorship is unavoidable because the very act of curating involves selecting some material over others, placing them in relation to each other and these potentially self-consciously constructed authorial absences (Vogel, 2003:191; von Hantelmann, 2012:44; Morgan, 2013:27). What is debated is whether this role is to be acknowledged, grown, and exploited as an art-form, to achieve ends beyond those captured within the individual artworks themselves, or whether

curators are duty-bound by their title to absent themselves from the process of interpretation and semiotic artistry as much as possible, except to forward the voice of the artist or object intended for encounter. In short, are you allowed to use the objects at your disposal as tools to tell a story that lies beyond them? To an extent, this study explores whether this can be done in a way that remains true to the object, and what roles Performance plays in this. For instance, through investing arbitrary objects such as hanging tea-light candles with meaning over time, by embedding them within a process of cumulative myth-building.

These tea-lights hang in the mezzanine deck of each ATOM event. Encountered out of context, they are of little monetary value and cultural interest. However, they have hung at almost every one of our events, and a part of what signals the event's shift from an ambient lounge space to a high energy dance venue is the moment I light them. This process of lighting the 50+ candles hanging from the rafters, entails me moving around the space periodically climbing a ladder with a long reach lighter. This is naturally a very theatrical exercise and disrupts the space. Further, ATOM crew wear no uniform or distinguishing features. Up until this point I look like any other patron. One function of this is to point out that anyone has the potential to take up their agency to shape the space: by modelling such behaviour, the possibility of exercising alternative forms of agency is awakened in others. This performance is curated, in that I have made specific decisions about when and how I execute this ritualised set of actions in the space. I curate how the candles are displayed in order to increase their value as a storytelling tool — by virtue of their being embedded in this performance, they have become a part of the budding storying³³ of ATOM. They gain in meaning for participants who come to understand that they signal the shift from one part of the evening to another. In this way, I have found that practising as an artist-curator can be useful to the project of harnessing the storytelling capacity of curatorial practice.

Secondly, there is an expanding call for the understanding of what curating is. This includes a call to include a focus on the process of activities that result in the end product. Traditionally, curating is conceived as an activity in which the personality of the curator is ideally absent, and their decisions governed by the stories inherent in the objects they are selecting and presenting. The focus of any curating, in this model, is on the exhibition. People practising in this way tend to be institutionally linked and exercising mandates that transcend their individual artistic aims. This contrasts the growing understanding that curating can itself be a form of storytelling practice. In this model, the process of creating these spaces gives as much meaning to the title of 'curator' as the product that is displayed within it. Here the notion of curatorial activity adds meaning to the conceptions of this role, and the conception of curating expands to include curatorial activity that *does not necessarily result in an exhibition per se* (Brandstetter, 2012:120) [own emphasis]. Aside from Brandstetter, Raqs Media Collective (2012) also flags this shift in concept.

With exercises such as *Cut | Corner*, I explore the possibilities of product-based notions of curating. Meanwhile, my work with ATOM is an embodiment of curatorial activity — where mediating flows of information within a space, and according to a theme, does not necessarily result in a product for display. In this way, Performance becomes a tool that enables curatorial

33 Fleishman (2012a:156) describes a story as, "... a particular category or form of artistic or cultural expression defined by a set of stylistic conventions or norms. Storying, on the other hand, is the process of 'making and doing' with stories, that involves, variously but not only: composition, construction, playing, performance, listening, watching and responding."

activity. For example, through performing a set of ritual behaviours as Katara Sedai,³⁴ I practise curatorship by managing the flow of information in the space and supporting the creation of the contexts in which this information is encountered.

Regarding curating Archives, *Uncertain Curature: In and Out of the Archive* is a compilation of essays discussing the problematics of archival formation, manipulation, and dissemination (Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014a). Of particular interest is that it looks at the relationship between the Archive and things that lie beyond language, such as visuals and performance traces. Further, it acknowledges that the anatomy of archives, their elisions, inclusions, and representations, reflect the socio-political contexts in which they exist (Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014b:11; Schmahmann, 2015:98). Alongside work by McGillivray and Casey, this book acknowledges that archives are subject to multiple forms of representation through curation that affects the balance of power in societies, silencing some and giving voice and authorial power to others (Casey, 2011:36; McGillivray, 2011b:13, 18; Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014:8).

Processes of elision are by definition included in the process of exercising curatorial choice. Considerations regarding representations of the problematised archives referred to in these sources, have shaped and sensitised my approach to working with my own material. Specifically, it has grown my ability to ameliorate these elisions by, for instance, sensitising me to the critical perspective that the Archive stands as much (or possibly more) for what and who is left out of it.

Within the volume, Carine Zaayman introduces the concept of the “anarchive”. This term refers to the negative space illuminated in the moments that you encounter archives — everything that is left out (Zaayman, 2014:303). This highlights the limits of the Archive and its inability to provide holistic engagement with the past. It brings attention to the fact that the past was once present, and too multiple to be wholly captured (Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014b:17–18; Zaayman, 2014:322; Schmahmann, 2015:99).

Further, Alexander Dodds speaks of the particular strength of Performance in moving beyond the limits of the Archive. Dodds alludes to the fact that the conceptual power of the work represented lies more within the performance itself, than with its representation in performance archives. Engaging with Archival fragments of Performance is powerful, especially as they provide ways to touch performance moments themselves, because it is in the presence of these moments that psychosocial release occurs (2014:391). Here the literature again points to the transformative and generative power of Performance as it operates within the human social and individual body.

These understandings turned my attention to working repertoirically. Engaging with these absences in this way could speak to the limitations of Archive, and give voice — through presented bodies — to the total experience of memory creation, collection, and representation.

34 Katara Sedai is an avatar I’ve developed and practised with since 2014. She is a work of performance art. When in role, I exist from a heightened state of being (cf. Zarrilli, 2016). Her presence is differentiated from my own, for instance, by the wearing of ritual objects and the use of particular forms of language and behaviours which are absent when she is not embodied. She is a trace of a PaR cycle that explores some of the following themes: selfhood, popular culture (esp. in relation to parody), reality vs fiction, subject vs object, ritual transformation, semiotics, curatorial framing, storytelling. Find her social platforms through www.katarasedai.com.

Curating Performance and Participation

Performance and live art are especially popular as mediums of expression within the arts at the moment, and the literature reflects the new form of curatorial practice they demand (Husemann, 2012:270). Authors such as Brandstetter (2012) and Husemann (2012) consider the effects on curating of this shift in focus, from visual and fine arts to the exhibition of performing and live arts. For instance, Brandstetter notes that enfolding new mediums for display expands the concept and methodology of what it means to curate. In her discussion, she draws on principles of practice from both theatre and dance — modelling the role of this expanded breed of curator to choreographer and dramaturg. These she conceives as collaborators in transdisciplinary productions who ultimately have little control over the event/product in the moments of its display (2012:121, 126). Specifically, she highlights that the role of the curatorial in performing arts is less about displaying a product, but rather about fostering collaborative process. Here, curating becomes fluid. This highlights the expansion of the curatorial field into an engagement with the Repertoire and a growing sensitivity to its being embroiled within its processes. This is coherent with Beatrice von Bismarck's view that what is of essence now in curatorial practice, is curatorial activity: the foregrounding of a curator's responsibility to create contexts and mediate the flow of information between what is presented and who it is presented to (von Bismarck in Schaff, 2012:136). The focus shifts to process, not product, and onto performing, not what is performed. In an article discussing the tensions of institutionalisation on processes of curatorial practice, Husemann also concludes that in the curation of performing arts, a focus on participation and fluidity of practice is key (2012:284). While noting that work remains in defining what the role of curating Performance actually involves, she emphasises the importance of maintaining an understanding of that space as one free from practising the assigning of fixed definitions and exclusions. Rather, curating Performance must be about holding spaces that facilitate participation and invention, and pluralising the authorial voice (2012:272, 284). It is in this spirit that I have curatorially facilitated the spaces of engagement that I have — for instance, in my work with ATOM.

In *Performativity in the Gallery* (Remes, MacCulloch, & Leino, 2014), three texts speak to the subject of this study. The first, by Maria Chatzichristodolou, frames engaging with Performance as integral to the development of new concepts within the art world, and a radical way to push back against the status quo. She also notes that the institutionalisation of performing arts, through their inclusion in spaces such as galleries, affects their ability to perform this socially disruptive function (Chatzichristodolou, 2014:61).

Amy Mechowski's paper on a curatorial decision to open up the Victoria and Albert Museum³⁵ after-hours once a month, further confirms that opportunities to participate in activities stimulate interest in an exhibition more effectively than passive viewing (2014:126, 129). She describes the popularity of these evenings and how the nature of user engagement shifted from day-time patterns through the opening of the space for playful interaction. She finds that immersive elements are integral to creating the feel of authentic experience (2014:127). Like Fischer-Lichte (2008), she acknowledges that spaces soaked in Performance and performative elements are liminal spaces, where all frames are shown to be arbitrary. These transformative spaces dissolve existing social boundaries and provide ground for the constitution of new communities (2014:125).

35 Victoria and Alfred Museum, London, United Kingdom. Find out more at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/>.

In 'Histories of Interaction and Participation' (2014), Beryl Graham addresses the fact that records on exhibition installations and their audiences are lacking, especially in the fields of performing and conceptual arts exhibition. What governs participatory spaces is a focus on process, and she suggests that this may be one reason for the void (2014:69). A proposed solution is opening these spaces to informal means of documentation, such as participant photography, and a focus on the participant as the subject of official documentation (2014:77).

Remes and Trench (2014) extend the discourse around participation by looking at the effects of playful engagement in the psychosocial space of the exhibition. They observe that opening spaces in this way balances power structures inherent in any curated space (where someone has made authorial choices as to content and form). Spaces saturated in opportunities for playful engagement allow new meaning to be created and are therefore experienced as enabling and liberating (2014:182, 187). A further point speaks to the framing function of the physical space. For instance, within gallery spaces visual perception is traditionally foregrounded. This shapes spectator assumptions about behavioural conventions and either supports or hinders any participant engagement the curator is hoping to initiate (2014:184, 187).

These texts were key influencers in my decision to pursue the aesthetics that I have, over the course of this study. These decisions include conceptual ones, such as the determination to focus on developing work that occurred outside of traditional exhibition spaces, and to highlight elements of performance and participation within those spaces. They also influenced choices around documentation, such as the decision to appoint a professional photographer for each ATOM event to document audience engagement as much as the space itself.

Conclusion

The surveyed literature suggests that Social Innovation and Performance praxes are potential partners in symbiosis. Both are generative processes that profoundly affect the human social body, and each could benefit the other in such a way that they perform more efficiently in the world. For instance, the relative financial security afforded to Social Innovation within the Academy is lacking within the Creative Arts. Linking the two more closely would afford the latter protections enjoyed by the former. Similarly, the Creative Arts, and their social interventions, have demonstrated efficacy at some of Social Innovation's key aims, such as the generation of social cohesion (Pinkola Estés, 1995:67, 197; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52, 55, 175; André & Abreu, 2013:112; Tremblay and Pilati, 2013:76; Turner, 2016:33). Curatorial praxis has an important role to play in making this happen, where curating is a process-based activity that expands both fields and knits them together in synergistic ways. It is in a landscape much devoid of formal literature linking the two that I situate this research. Work done tracing links between the two domains always appears to arise from adjunct fields, never from within the Creative Arts sector itself, nor from the Global South, where much innovative work is being done. In response, this thesis begins the task of strengthening the voice of the Creative Arts in a Social Innovation discourse.



CHAPTER THREE

Editorial Preface

This case study was suggested merely as a starting point when I first began looking into purposeful engagements with archives. Because PaR was also the defining methodology on outset, it was understood that this choice was not accompanied with an expectation that engagement would happen in a particular way, in a search for particular results. It was simply material, immediately available to work with. As a result, my engagement with The Clanwilliam Arts Project and its archive is limited. And the record of my engagement is limited too — this chapter is not designed to be a definitive analysis of the project. It records how and why my experiences with its subject matter led to the work detailed in Chapters Four and Five. My assessments may therefore appear unreasonably favourable, but this is because I focussed on taking what works with me into my own practice, rather than a meaning that could potentially also be implied — that I am unaware of its limitations. In the context of this study, focussing on the former is simply more salient.

CAP also falls under my supervisor's own portfolio of practical work. This set up a potential conflict of interest, and may have resulted in a bias towards reading its effectiveness in more favourable light. While my mentorship by Professor Fleishman involves a study of his work as content, as well an apprenticeship in methods of scholarship, using the one as material for the other is possible without resorting to sycophancy. This may require an extraordinary discipline, but it is further made possible through the very nature of the methods of study employed. For example, any blind subscription to a particular reading of the project is made difficult by the constant engagement with an ever-expanding pool of theoretical and practical resources as prescribed through an integrous use of PaR. Using CAP as a starting point, despite these concerns and limitations, was therefore considered feasible.



CHAPTER THREE

Case Study: The Clanwilliam Arts Project

Introduction

This chapter describes the Clanwilliam Arts Project (CAP). The project and its archives provided the starting impulse for my study. I outline the contexts of this encounter, and how it shaped my resultant practice. My analysis focusses on how the project relates to its social landscape. The roles played by Performance in these sets of transformative exchanges is discussed. Further, the project's position as an enactment of an archive³⁶ is considered, especially because I engaged primarily with the project through the derivative collection it generates in the process of its own becoming.

CAP takes place annually over a week in September. There are two stages to the intervention cycle: a series of creative arts workshops given to schoolchildren, which builds up to a performance open to the public held at the end of the week. The workshops are executed in two sessions. The mornings are spent in a local primary school, delivering an intensive cycle of Creative Arts classes that serve as the learners' arts education for the year. The afternoons are spent at the local sports-grounds, where similar workshops are open to anyone who wishes to participate.³⁷ These workshops include dance, storytelling, drumming, shadow puppetry, and fine art classes, which generate the material used in the lantern parade and public performance at the end of the week (Harrison, 2015; de Bruyn, 2016:257; Magnet Theatre, 2017). Thematically, the week's festivities centre on the retelling of a San story drawn from the Bleek & Lloyd Collection (Baxter, 2015:179; Hutchison, 2015).

Conducted in this way, CAP necessarily negotiates tensions between the Archive and the Repertoire. It seeks to reawaken a sense of connection between a physical and social landscape, through reawakening engagement with a cycle of stories that were likely to have

36 The Bleek & Lloyd Collection

37 The project's policy is to welcome everyone, as long as they abide by the rules implemented by facilitators which maintain basic discipline within the space. The project now caters for approximately 500–700 learners in these open sessions, and the closing performance is attended by 3000–4000 people (Baxter, 2015:179; de Bruyn, 2016:257; Magnet Theatre, 2017).

been historically shared in that location (Fleishman, 2012a:133, 142).³⁸ What it does not seek to do is recreate *the way* in which these stories may have been shared originally — it deals instead pragmatically with the present circumstance and shares them in a collaboratively shaped ritual that meets the context of practice head on, foregrounding the social function over the aesthetic imperative. In this case, it juxtaposes stories and fragments of narratives from the Bleek & Lloyd Collection with the Clanwilliam landscape in a performative way (Fleishman, 2012a:142). It invokes the original expressive forms of a set of repertoirc material first fixed into Archive c.1850 (Llarec, 2017).

This study began with the intention of exploring ways to curate the CAP archive, as a means to memorialise it. My research grew into its current shape by engaging with this archive in relation to questions that considered ways of memorialising performance events. It became clear that CAP performs as a memorial that enables remembering by being a site of practice. In this way, people remember the histories of the landscape by enacting versions of it themselves (Dickerman, 2001:101). Similarly, this ritualised enactment performs similar acculturation functions to those of the circumstances it memorialises. The same work is being done in the present space that is remembering, as was in the space being remembered. Conceiving the project's function in this way, and applying this methodology to my quest of memorialising the project (initially through "doing something with" the archives) grew into my work with ATOM. Here I have set up my own site of practice that does, in a presented way, the same kind of work as the Clanwilliam project, which it inexorably remembers every time it is enacted. Technically, this may be the beginnings of a new form of curatorial Repertoire.³⁹

When the research focus shifted from looking at curations of performance archives for the purposes of memorialisation, to exploring the potential of curated performance interventions as Social Innovation technologies, my attentions to CAP also changed. This shift in focus resulted from a study of how the project itself functioned as a social-transformation technology. Further, the lens of enquiry grew to include a mapping of the potentials inherent in exploiting the tensions between the Archive and the Repertoire, and how this dialogue produces a community of a kind centred around engagements with memory in a future-oriented way. This itself was coherent with the project's purpose to serve as a memorial operating as a site-of-practice.

There are three aspects to the study of the project. First, I consider the role it plays as a social disruptor, particularly the role that performance plays in this process of disrupting social norms. Second, I consider how these processes of social disruption and other factors contribute to community (re)formation. Finally, I consider CAP in its form and function as an immersive environment.

38 According to John Parkington, the /Xam lived approximately 250km east of Clanwilliam. They were not the same group of San that left the visual record of rock paintings that inspired the CAP intervention. However, the /Xam records — alongside information provided by the Kalahari ju/'hoansi — provide keys to understanding the Clanwilliam canon due to the similarities between them. For CAP, the /Xam records are more geographically relevant (2002:10). This contradicts Fleishman's claim that the /Xam inhabited the Clanwilliam landscape itself (2012a:133).

39 Here, "Repertoire" remains understood as the memorialisation and acculturation vocabularies we carry in our bodies, transmitted through time and between bodies via enacted choreographies (Taylor, 2003:xviii-xix).

The Clanwilliam Arts Project, its mandate and its archives

CAP is an annual arts intervention in the rural South African community of Clanwilliam. It is a performative memorialisation of the bodies of knowledge held within the Bleek & Lloyd archive (Harrison, 2010; Ravengai, 2015:212; de Bruyn, 2016:257). It was established in the mid-1990s by Pippa Skotnes, and grew to include UCT's Department of Drama and Magnet Theatre in 2001 and is now jointly managed by both (Harrison, 2010; Fleishman, 2012a:132; Baxter, 2015:179; Hutchison, 2015; Ravengai, 2015:212). General accounts of its history and operational structure can be found in sources such as those referred to above.⁴⁰

My engagement with CAP was limited to a field trip undertaken in 2015, and engagement with archival material. This archive includes performance remains, as well as secondary records of, and comments upon, the performances themselves. Material includes reproductions of newspaper articles about the project, videos, photographs, and internal data, such as planning documents and fieldnotes. Technically it remains a nascent archive, without a formal accessioning process having been applied to its contents. It is distributed over multiple digital and physical locations. The archive is generated as a result of a performed interpretation of /Xam San stories and cosmology, sourced from the Bleek & Lloyd collection primarily housed at UCT (Fleishman, 2012a:14; Lewis & Krueger, 2016:6, 50; Centre for Curating the Archive, 2017). The project functions to construct and hold spaces for active, interpretive engagements between the bodies of knowledge contained within the Bleek & Lloyd archive, and the publics who come to engage with them (Fleishman in Harrison, 2010; Shepherd & Haber, 2014:126). Engaging with the CAP archive was primarily a way to come to know the project, rather than as material with which to study the nature of archives. The only mediation I performed was to assemble archival material and apply a taxonomy to them. This process performed multiple functions. Firstly, it familiarised me with the contents of the material. My field trip experience then contextualised these traces *in situ*, providing real-time opportunity to notice the gaps between the performed moment and the traces it leaves behind. Secondly, it was a means to self-observe the impacts of mediating Archival content, and provided a working example of ways to engage with Performance traces.⁴¹

The nature of this archive influences interpretations of the Repertoirc project which is its subject. Further, its nature as a collection of detritus built from series of events that are conceptual opposites to "Archive", positions it as an efficient learning tool when considering the roles of Performance in Social Innovation. This is because it points towards a set of generative near-paradoxical relationships built on the connection between essentially ephemeral performances and the document archives that they generate. CAP draws from an archive, reanimating content from it through performance. This archival material, from the Bleek & Lloyd, is itself first performed at least twice before being fixed in Archival form — first within its original context as part of an oral history culture, and then within the specific event of the retelling to Wilhelm Bleek and/or Lucy Lloyd in which this original context is itself often referred to (Skotnes, 2007:53; Fleishman, 2012a:138–139, 142; Winberg, 2014:131, 151, 152). The Bleek & Lloyd is itself an archive of Performance — constituted of traces of performed moments and simultaneously documenting a predominantly oral, and Repertoirc culture

40 These sources also sketch the socio-economic contexts of the landscape in which they operate (e.g. Fleishman, 2012a; de Bruyn, 2016). The reason I do not include a detailed history of the project here is primarily due to space constraints.

41 This found public expression in my work with the Barney Simon Archive and the *Cut/Corner* exhibitions.

whose written record is pictographic (Parkington, 2002:12; Parkington, 2007:77; Skotnes, 2007: 59, 60; Fleishman, 2012a: 140–141). By “performed moments” I refer to the embodied, storied encounters between linguist and subject. This is the first paradox — the fixing into Archival place of information previously contained almost wholly within the Repertoire, in a way that this fixing is itself an immanent performative process that generates a detritus to be accessioned. CAP then draws from these archived performance traces and reawakens them through Performance — thus reinserting the subject of the archive back into the Repertoire. This is the second paradox. Through this process of (re)enactment, traces and detritus are created, and material for a new derivative archive formed. This is the third instance of paradoxical tension inherent in the concept of archiving performance fragments. It is through this derivative archive, constituted of traces of CAP events, that my work began. This archive of Performance methodologically inspired a project (ATOM), which is in essence Repertoirc, and I am currently grappling with the task of accessioning the growing traces and detritus that this generates into Archival form.

Archives of Performance hold fragments that point towards the performance itself, but these fragments are never able to become it (McGillivray, 2011b: 19). The contents of the Performance Archive are perpetually synecdotal. This contrasts how certain archival objects, such as a painting, can constitute the thing itself and the Archival notation of the thing.⁴² The usefulness of working through Performance Archives when exploring Social Innovation technology are multiple, based on their conceptual complexity. You gain access to Performance as subject and to a comparison of the presented, internalised experience of a performance in relation to the externalised mark it leaves behind.

CAP uses Archival fragments⁴³ as a basis for re-establishing a form of Repertoirc practice in the contemporary landscape. Through doing so, it may begin to perform a contemporary acculturation function that augments the ones already in place along more sustainable lines. Through doing this work, it weaves between opposite conceptual points on the continuum of mnemonic praxes multiple times, and in doing so transcends itself. It begins with remnants of Repertoire fixed incompletely in Archival form — the transcriptions of oral folklore and histories that now form part of the Bleek & Lloyd Collection. These Archival fragments are reawakened into their Repertoirc dimensions through their mediation into Performance by CAP practices. This intervention is documented, and traces of it finds its way back into the Archive through performance remains. This process continues *ad in initum*, as the project inspires further performative interventions through engagements with its archive. One example of this continuation is discussed in Chapter Four, as ATOM.

Study One: Using Performance as Social Disruptor

The project’s self-stated mandate is to reinvest the land with a sense of its heritage. Clanwilliam, like most South African towns, remains largely divided along racial lines disguised as economic segregation. The white minority population are the most affluent, while the

42 There are obvious exceptions to this example, such as in the case of the gestural paintings of Jackson Pollock, in which the painting itself constitutes one trace of the art action (Freedberg & Gallese, 2007:203; Hatch & Yanow, 2008:27).

43 These archival fragments are traces of a performative mechanism of acculturation — oral storytelling rituals.

majority coloured and African population are poor.⁴⁴ In effect, the people with the most claim to the land are the most dispossessed. They remain disconnected from any opportunity for custodianship over the land or from serious hope of social advancement except in outlying cases (de Bruyn, 2016:257; Fleishman, 2012a:133, 135). Awakening a sense of ownership over the space therefore occurs simultaneously to reinvesting the space with a connection to its past. These two processes are interconnected. This is especially salient for the disenfranchised sectors of the communities, as the territory of Clanwilliam is historically San land. While the few remaining San clans no longer live there — being driven north through colonial processes — a portion of the present-day Clanwilliam community claim descent through their, now mostly mixed, racial heritage (Hutchison, 2015; de Bruyn, 2016:257).⁴⁵ Members of this coloured sector of the community most often find themselves locked into existence as farm labourers, if they are employed at all. CAP began with an acknowledgement that such disenfranchisement existed, and with the intention that this power-disparity must be sustainably equalised as soon as possible. Here began a formal acknowledgement that restoring lands to previously disenfranchised people means more than simply returning the physical place — it also involves the reinvestment of meanings that have been stripped under colonisation and other systems of oppression. By performing indigenous stories that may historically have been performed there, CAP aims to reclaim the area's heritage, returning a sense of ownership over it to the people currently inhabiting the space (Fleishman in E-News Prime Time, 2011: 0'38''; Hutchison, 2015).

In this case, theoretical engagement formed the impetus for an action largely undefined by anything that had gone before. Though arts-based interventions had existed previously, none had been developed in response to the contexts of the Clanwilliam socio-political and environmental landscape. This points to the issue at the heart of all social interventions. While they may arise from common intentions, the variables in each circumstance are different. For the intervention to be both effective and ethically sound, a balance must be maintained between the dynamic tensions of designing informed strategies from the top-down and outside-in, and applying them as informed by the circumstances on the ground. Each intervention in each new space may spring from the same intentions, yet appear with a different face as it responds in the appropriate way for its immediate circumstance. Further, this application of a blended model must be executed in such a way that it expands to include on equal terms the community it engages with. In other words, facilitators must leverage their privilege to enable others to grow into a degree of agency over their lives that they were not necessarily born into. This process results in the community eventually taking over the project, or alternatively, the need for the intervention falling away. This sustainability is at the base of any social innovation.

44 Race is learned (Soudien, 2012:7). In South Africa, descriptive markers such as cultural, economic, political positions and education levels are still intimately linked to the notion of race. These delineations extend into patterns of spatial organisation and mainstream interactions between groups of people. As this study is about (re)shaping new physical and psychological spaces for people to engage in, within a South African context, race has to be referenced.

In this study I follow the example of Natrass and Seeking (2006). The word "African" refers to people who were previously classified under the apartheid government as "Native", "Bantu" or "black". "White" refers to those previously classified as "European" or "white", and the terms "Indian" and "coloured" refer to those who were/would have been previously classified as such. These classifications are found and used pragmatically.

45 Citing documents from the district Development Association, de Bruyn concurs with Fleishman's assertion (2012a) that the Clanwilliam area was traditionally /Xam land (Olifantsrivierontwikkelingsvereniging, 1987:3 in de Bruyn, 2016:257).

In the case of CAP, the main way this social *status quo* is disrupted is through creative arts training, culminating in a shared performance. This performance event provides the motive for all the creative arts activity leading up to it. The intervention was established by members of the University of Cape Town — a privileged and external community. Over the course of the intervention's 18-year history, members of the Clanwilliam community have grown into positions of leadership, and possibly found greater agency within their communities. For instance, a portion of the current facilitators attended CAP as little children. Further, some of them have gone on to establish, participate in, and manage an award-winning community drama group, Community Networking Creative Arts Group (ComNet) (Hutchison, 2015; Ravengai 2015:212; Leffler, 2016:268).

In this way, we see what is needed for self-sufficiency in social innovation: increasingly less external facilitation. The social *status quo* is disrupted systematically and sustainably in this way, where historically underserved sectors of society are encouraged to step into spaces that allow for self-determination. In this case, performance facilitates increased agency and social mobility. It functions as a technology in this social innovation process.

Another way performance interrupts the *status quo* in this community, is through showcasing the results of the week-long creative arts workshop. By holding this performance (see Figure 1), the social disparities that gave rise to it become evident, and a space to grapple with it begins to open up. For example, though the invitation to participate is extended to the entire Clanwilliam community — across racial, cultural, and economic lines — it is historically only the coloured community that participates. More recently, the number of African participants has grown (Fleishman, personal communication, 2017).⁴⁶ Only one of the town's primary schools accepted the invitation to engage in schools-based workshops. The afternoon workshops are delivered to ensure access to willing children independently of their school's decision. These workshops sometimes constitute the only arts education these pupils receive during the entire school year (Fleishman, 2012a:134, 142). Originally hosted at the Living Landscapes⁴⁷ field camp base, it now takes place at the community sports grounds to accommodate the increase in participation (see Figure 2). Each year the project caters to 500–700 children (Fleishman, 2012a:134; Baxter, 2015:179; Hutchison, 2015). Most of the children at the participating school are coloured. Most of the children participating in the afternoon session of open workshops are also coloured. There is a significant African minority participating, but in the year that I observed (2015), not a single white child took part. These children become the participants in the closing performance and lantern parade. At the performance, the audience demographic remains overwhelmingly coloured, with a significant African minority and an even smaller proportion of whites. The latter predominantly engage as members of the media, and as funders (Rossouw, CAP fieldnotes 2015, September).

46 Feedback on first draft of this thesis.

47 Living Landscapes is an ongoing heritage and job-creation project that works to communicate archival knowledge of the Clanwilliam area back into its community (Fleishman, 2012a:133; Simon, 2015). For decades prior to its inception, UCT had been conducting archaeological research in and around the town. The project was established with the desire to share the result of this work with the people who lived there, in a meaningful way. For more than four decades, and with these aims in mind, Living Landscapes has run school environmental education outings and adult training programmes from their base in Park Street (UCT News, 2004; Simon, 2015).



Figure 1: Images from the multidisciplinary performance at the end of each CAP cycle



Figure 2 Workshops at the Living Landscapes field-camp

In this instance, Performance functions as a social disruptor because it holds up a mirror to the society in which it is embedded. Breaking the rhythm of everyday life, it provides a collective pause, in which the social body 'sees itself' through the individual moments of reflection that it engenders. When the community gathers at the sports grounds, racial demographics and economic disparity are foregrounded. As an audience member, it is easier to become aware that the performing children are all from underprivileged communities. Further, within those moments it is possible to reflect critically on your own position within that space, and the positions of those presented through their absence. This is more so than when the community is engaged in the flow of daily life, where demographic is subsumed by the accelerated rhythms of mundane chores and diluted through individual encounter. It is when we gather in groups that it is easier to draw comparisons.

Continued engagement with the intervention also then becomes implicated in the process of reforming the society along less disparate lines (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:55), by the concrete functions it performs: the imparting of creative arts skills to those it serves. However, every opportunity Performance provides to disrupt social space — every function it performs — is offered in the nature of an invitation. Performance never forces you to engage. But it is when this invitation is accepted that it flowers in its full transformative power as a mechanism to inspire and support social change. Considerations on ways to mediate the encounter with the performance moment then come into play, maximising the possibility that these invitations are accepted. Curating therefore finds a function in the exchange between Performance and person. It becomes a tool with which to maximise the ability of a performance encounter to function in Social Innovation terms.

This observation was drawn from my reflections on the Clanwilliam Arts process. It was further explored through my work with ATOM, and expanded this thesis to include a consideration of curated performance-based interventions as a specifically capable form of Social Innovation technology — streamlining the innate ability of Performance and ritual to (re) shape social space.

Another way that the project functions to disrupt social space is through leveraging the disruptive function of beauty⁴⁸ (Fleishman, 2012a:148). This is the principle that exposure to beautiful experiences and things can inspire hope in people and engender an awareness that things can be other than they are (Fleishman, 2012a:172–173). Having beautiful experiences, especially when embedded in adverse circumstances, lifts you out of those creatively impoverished⁴⁹ states of mind and creates space for you to take agency over your circumstance. This repatriation of agency is driven by the awareness that life extends beyond the boundaries of your difficult circumstances, by the direct insertion of the otherness of beauty into your world.

Beauty is intrinsically subjective and interrelated to trends in aesthetic taste within the individual and society. Forming an operationalised definition allows us to work with it in contemporary Social Innovation, through Performance interventions such as CAP (see footnote

48 "Beauty" is defined here as "an intense affect generated by an object or experience that is felt by [a] person but [is] simultaneously located beyond them" (Thompson, 2009, in Fleishman, 2012a:171). Further, this affective state is particularly associated with the qualities of harmony, pleasure and boundedness (Žižek, 1989, in Fleishman, 2012a:174).

49 By "creatively impoverished" I refer to the broader sense of the word "creative", as a generative process involving the bringing into being of something new, not necessarily limited to forms of artistic expression (Bilton, 2007: 3). Further, being creative involves the ability to produce in a way that the process and/or product is both novel, efficient and contextually appropriate (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999:3).

51). This is useful because encounters with the beautiful affect reality in unique ways. Beauty speaks directly with affect, in ways beyond logocentric articulation. It simultaneously affects the emotional landscape and is one extension of it (Fleishman, 2012a:171). Encounters with beauty can never be definitively described in words — at best they can be circumscribed. Experiencing beauty signals a shift in our internal landscape.

This description is based on an understanding of affect as a collective noun for states of consciousness lying beyond the domain of language (Fleishman, 2012a:168). Affect is further described as intrinsically part of the process of generating sentience. It is the amorphous body of conscious experience that is intimately involved in generating our sense of being alive, especially because it exists beyond linguistic spaces. The power of Performance to tap directly into these spaces beyond language is what makes it especially useful to transform social space. Engaging with a performance process generates a collective affective landscape that transcends the process-product giving rise to it: the performance product is delivered and disappears, but it leaves a footprint in the way you feel towards the world. The power of Performance does not lie in *what* you make, but *how* you make it.

When Performance is the means by which moments of beauty unfold into people's lives, it becomes a mechanism that inspires change, by creating spaces for hope to flourish in those whose lives are systemically subjugated and easily stripped of the pause of beautiful moments. Leveraging the disruptive effect of beauty is one way that Performance has the potential to function for social justice. In this way, it fulfils an aspect of its Social Innovation function.

How does beauty, through Performance, function as change towards social justice? The radical potential of beauty to work for social aims depends on it being framed in such a way that encounters with it encourage *participation in* processes of its making, rather than simply *observing* it. The key lies in actively and collectively generating beauty, rather than being a passive recipient of it (Thompson in Fleishman, 2012a:172). These experiences of generating beauty, especially when occurring in underprivileged spaces largely devoid of the luxury of aesthetic considerations, provide a contrast to the usual circumstance. By its arising, it casts light on the disparities that exist between the moment of the beautiful and the *status quo*. Encounters with beauty can be a mechanism to generate social critique, and thence transformation (Fleishman, 2012a:175).

CAP invites a community to make something beautiful together. The intrinsically disruptive function of this act is not necessarily overt, but woven into how this process creates space within which the individual human may encounter these moments of harmony, while positioned as an agent in its creation. As these beautiful moments cast a comparative light onto the contexts from which they occur, they open the possibility within the collective imagination that things can be other than they are — through proving that even within impoverished contexts it is possible to generate encounters with the beautiful (Fleishman, 2012a: 146–148). For these reasons, my practice moved forward in ways that consciously spoke to generating beautiful things and moments, within the sublime landscape of Cape Town's nightlife.

When proposing an aesthetic that interweaves moments of encounter with both the beautiful and the sublime, the effects of Performance as a tool for individual and social transformation find their footing. This is because the sublime experience is considered part of the strongest emotional landscape a human being can experience. A form of negative pleasure, it complicates the notion of the beautiful experience by introducing the idea that pleasure can also be derived from an appreciation of states of disharmony. It is a shadow aspect to the beautiful experience, within which the feeling of expansion is coupled not just with joy, but

also with a delight tinged with awe and horror (Fleishman, 2012a:173–174; OED, 2017c). This interplay between the beautiful and sublime is subsequently found in both the CAP and ATOM experiences.

CAP also functions practically to shift social space and increase participant agency, through its delivery of a Creative Arts curriculum for Foundation Phase learners. The week-long workshops are the only arts education some children receive for the year (Rossouw, CAP fieldnotes 2015, September). Without this intervention, these children would not be exposed to these forms of self-expression. An increased capacity to give voice to experiences through this skills-acquisition process begins to disrupt the *status quo* when applied to the spaces beyond the project. Suddenly there begins to grow a generation of subalterns who can describe experiences in ways that lie beyond the limits of language. Thus, surreptitiously, the effects of generations-long systemic silencing begins to be undone by this annual event. Within this crucible, participants model in miniature an agency over space that can be extended into worlds beyond the project.

The preservation of intangible heritages is essential for Social Innovation. For the sustainable evolution of human society, it is important to remember the pasts that have fed into that present moment. This awareness shapes how the future is negotiated — forming who we are is related to our ability to remember where we've come from (Taylor, 2002:82, 277; Fleishman, 2012a:135). This self-knowledge, coupled with the knowledge of our historical contexts, allows us to work with the past to shape meaning with intention and create new futures. Through working with the repertoire of intangible heritage practices, we can change our perspectives on this past and the presents it reflects upon. This allows for the intentional shaping of futures, and heritage practices then become the association of communities with places that commemorate the past in such a way that clarifies and/or alters the present (Fleishman, 2012a:134–135).

For the heritage process to complete itself, it relies on people working together to create, maintain, and integrate the affective spaces produced in relation to the physical places commemorating the pasts (Deacon in Fleishman, 2012a:135). In this way, community formation is essential to Repertoire, and a healthy repertoirc practice is a part of what ensures a healthy community, understanding of their place in things. This awareness may then be used to craft new futures, some of which actively break with the *status quo*. Repertoire and intangible heritages are used almost synonymously here to mean the oral traditions, languages, performed practices, etc. that link us to the past (Taylor, 2003:xviii–xix; Deacon in Fleishman, 2012a:135).

One way of generating community and implicating it in a mnemonic process is by engaging individuals in a ritualised performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 53). This is what CAP does every year. This community is most intensely manifest during the week of the intervention, but the common experience of the ritual event remains a thread that connects its participants beyond its lifespan. Ritual is one way humans put their lives in perspective, and pass through into new states of being and knowing (Pinkola Estés, 1995:197).

Relinking the people to the land they inhabit through the gateway of story is the way CAP has demonstrated that ritual practices can function to resuscitate and preserve intangible heritage as an important ingredient in disrupting the *status quo*, making space for new futures to take hold while simultaneously enabling participants to awaken to the potential of active recreation. By building a connection to the landscape through story, CAP offers a way for participants to see the places they habitually inhabit as something different, because their

perspective of their place is now coloured by the details of the historical stories woven through it. This opens up the possibility to traverse this landscape in new ways (Fleishman, 2012a:142).

Study Two: Community Formation

Engaging in performance rituals is important for the conservation of intangible heritages and inspiring change within social systems. Collective Performance rituals are and enact Repertoire — a remembering of who we are and a remaking of that self in the present. These shared experiences, through encounters with the beautiful and sublime, illuminate experiences of utopian moments. These glimpses into utopia are inherent in such performative communities and illustrate the concept that things can be other than they are. In other words, they inspire change (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:54).

While disrupting the *status quo*, CAP simultaneously contributes to community (re) formation. The week-long workshops centre on the creation of the end-of-week performance, and the community dissolves once the performance has played out. Engaging in these social rituals creates common ground upon which individuals can interact. Performance plays important roles as a mechanism in this process: it puts to work what remains of the past and reworks it in a counter-hegemonic way to feed the creation of more functional futures. Communities are brought forth through collective actions, and disperse as soon as the action that brings them together has been performed. Further, in those moments of collective action — and by virtue of the fact that what is being actioned is performance — the peculiar opportunity to engender and engage with autopoiesis is harnessed in a way that participants have the opportunity to encounter it, become aware of it, and reflexively speak back to it. This is because performance plays on the distance between binaries, existing liminally. It exists between present and past, fact and fiction, etc. In other words, the creative act is most graspable through Performance as a model for the performative generation of materiality. Making a performance the result of a collective action foregrounding that the event results from multiple bodies beyond the traditional binaries of performer/audience, outsider/insider, etc. highlights models of collective creativity. This can lead to an increase in social agency in the individual and collective because the ability to shape reality through individual action is reflected and magnified by the mirror of the collective.

Performance plays a central role in the ways CAP supports processes of community formation and reformation after it has disrupted the social space (Fleishman, 2012a: 155). Within the project itself, it leverages the hallmarks of ritual to invite participants into a common and extra-reality. Collective, ritualised performance provides a means to touch the past. This repositioning potentially alters the relationship to the future in a counter-hegemonic way, for instance by generating alternative narratives and awakening a sense that possibilities exist that lie beyond the obvious trajectories. This is some of the power of story, storying (cf. Fleishman 2012a:156), and ritual — to model alternatives to the prevailing narratives (Pinkola Estés, 1995:387; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:55, 207; Mitchell, 2016:29; Turner, R., 2016:31).

Further, this process facilitates an acculturation based on the new parameters of possibility (V. Turner in Fischer-Lichte, 2008:175). CAP uses ritual to increase social cohesion, but only simultaneous to a process of agitating the inherited social structures to open new realms of possibility (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:40, 53; Fleishman on E-News Prime Time, 2011:0'46"; Turner, R., 2016:33). Because the ritualistic aspects of the project are a central part of what

makes it an immersive environment, this aspect of CAP will be further discussed in the next section.

Practically speaking, CAP has seen the growth of derivative communities, both within Clanwilliam and external to it. These have replicated the use of Performance as a key to effect a social shift in the world, whether intended directly or indirectly. Inspired by experiences through the project, ComNet⁵⁰ was established as a permanent drama group within Clanwilliam. One of their aims is to nurture cross-cultural relationships (Hutchison, 2015:65; Ravengai, 2015:212), which points to the perceived absence of substantial and sustainable networks of cross-cultural relationships in the first place. Outside of Clanwilliam, ATOM is one instance of an intervention inspired by CAP that follows its example, albeit within a new context. ComNet grows out of direct and sustained involvement with CAP, as many of its members fed through the CAP as primary school children (de Bruyn, 2016:258). Meanwhile, ATOM grew out of an external study of the project and its archives. In other words, ComNet was a mutation of the CAP originating from the inside out. In contrast, ATOM grew from an outward observation towards an embodied understanding — studying the CAP archives, observing CAP *in situ*, engaging with the literature generated around it, and then applying the methodology in a different context (with innovations).

ATOM exploits many of the same processes that CAP does to achieve its effect, both practically and theoretically. Where ATOM takes the work of CAP forward is within the realm of curatorial praxis: engaging with curatorship as discourse and practice to mediate the performance moment in the present literal space of the event itself. Further, while CAP engages primarily with a form of Archival curation, ATOM explores the Social Innovation potentials inherent in curating the *presented* encounter with Performance. Specifically, curatorial praxis is employed to shape towards the way these communities reform, by acknowledging and leveraging the effects of curatorial framing on how people receive information from and about a space, and subsequently act upon it.

Both projects are intimately engaged with Performance archives: CAP is concerned with reawakening the stories locked within one, and ATOM draws on CAP's derivative archive towards a practice that is focussed on generating an archive of its own. Using the study of the CAP archives as a starting point to investigate the role Performance plays in Social Innovation allowed for opportunities: first to understand some of what was happening (i.e. through engaging with the language of theory and articulating what I saw in those terms), and second to innovate upon it within new contexts and speaking back to theory.

Study Three: The Clanwilliam Arts Project as Immersive Environment

The form of CAP may also be understood as an immersive environment. Participants are actively encouraged, through particular cues, to enter into an extraordinary state of consciousness in which alternative rules of engagement apply to those governing their ordinary and daily realities. It stands for a state of being; one in which the worries of mundane existence do not apply, and attention can be directed elsewhere.

The effects of entering and operating in this way can be achieved through ritual. Ritual is both immersive and achieved through activities that stimulate senses of immersion. Ritualised

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activity and subjective experiences of immersion often co-arise inter-dynamically. One result of encountering information within an immersive environment is that information is received by the perceiver in a different way. Information that lies beyond the written and spoken word is both transmitted and received in these spaces (Turner, V., 1986:165; Pinkola Estés, 1995:205, 407; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:116–119; Bull & Mitchell, 2016:2; Zarilli, 2016:123).

One of these activities includes a generation of atmosphere through the stimulation of the senses of taste and smell, in equal consideration with the stimulation of sight and hearing. Including all the senses into the space of the experience creates a sense of unreality, typical of ritual spaces (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:116–119). Operating outside of ordinary reality, this space fosters the freedom to try different things, rehearse and grow different behaviours, and the safety of a place to exist in unexpected ways (Turner, R., 2016:40, 43). It allows for the freedom to fail without persecution, because what happens in ritual, stays in ritual: the reality of the experience is held only within the memories of those who took part. It becomes a space of potential in which transformation is possible, and the risks involved with transforming are mitigated.

Ritual is held within a facilitated space. This facilitation is either held by processes such as expected behaviours, structural tropes and motifs, and/or by the knowledge of these processes held and performed by participants who have undergone the experience before (Pinkola Estés, 1995:264; Turner, R., 2016:33). One of the key psychosocial functions of ritual is the transmission of embodied knowledges (Taylor, 2003:179). It is through our experience of communal rituals that the social body comes to know itself. Simultaneously, it is through rituals that communities articulate themselves (Turner, V., 1986:158; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:195; Turner, R., 2016:43). In the case of CAP, it binds together the stories of the inhabitants of Clanwilliam, (re)investing density into the social connection to the physical space over time, and (re)making place through senses of histories, rather than geographical location (c.f. Ingold, 2000:219). Its structure may be innovated upon iteratively and collectively over time, but the accretion of visible and lasting change is always at a rate slow enough to appear as a more stable (and easily recognisable) process over time.

Structurally, ritual events display some of the following characteristics: they are cyclical and occur in a specially prepared space (Schechner, 1988:6). They also use performative means to create states of non-ordinary consciousness, such as dancing, repetitive action, singing, and/or drumming (Turner, R., 2016:38). These actions constitute a special kind of ‘language’ that transmits knowledge lying beyond the bounds of the spoken word (Turner, V., 1986:165; Pinkola Estés, 1995:205, 407; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:116–119; Bull & Mitchell, 2016:2; Zarilli, 2016:123). Further, they are often performed outside of traditional theatre and performance spaces, signalling, amongst other things, a flexibility in social hierarchy. This stimulates role-reversals that opens up the possibility of speaking back to the performance/action (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:176). Though a ritual community may consist of members that hold particular sets of responsibilities, these responsibilities are all equal in the space and can be negotiated, altered and transmitted to some degree (Schechner, 1988:143; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:177; V. Turner in Fischer-Lichte, 2008:175).

The CAP’s ritualised main event occurs once every year, in the specially prepared space of the Clanwilliam sports grounds. The space is prepared on the day, and in the week running up to the performance. The children prepare to enter the space by engaging with the week of workshops, and some facilitators spend their time building the large feature lantern sculptures that take part in the procession leading into the performance. This procession also performs a

framing function. It leads participants into the physical and affective space of ritual, which is a signifier that habitual reality has been left behind. This is partially achieved both by the physical procession from the assemblage point (reached in daylight) and walking into the performance area (just after sunset) via the processional route. The transformation is both physically enacted and embodied internally, and the two forms of expression are interlinked. Additional ritual cues that lift the experience out of ordinary reality include the painting of all participants' faces with 'slip', a clay-based mixture that dries as a white film on the skin (see Figure 3). These techniques are a part of what lifts the activities into a liminal space, beyond the ordinary, and filled with the potential to make new ways of being, knowing, and doing. Within these spaces, participants have the opportunity to experience feelings not necessarily sustained in everyday reality, such as wonder and freedom from worry (Pinkola Estés, 1995:285).



Figure 3: CAP participants with 'slip' clay on their faces

Psychosocial effects of regular, communal ritual enactments, such as those hosted by the CAP, can be observed over time. These are expressed in unique ways, depending on the individual community members and their contexts. Common results of any ritualised, immersive intervention can be traced. These include the strengthening of social networks. In short, communities are formed through ritual. Rituals also play an important acculturation function. Ritual spaces are an anchor around which individual and collective identities are formed and reaffirmed, and around which meaning is made (Pinkola Estes, 1995:67; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52–53). By developing a new ritual into the space of a community (or fragmented social space), a new locus of meaning is set up that acculturates the collective in new ways. In this way, rituals are points of origin for ontologies. They arise from within the domain of old systems of belief and give rise to new ways of being, or new patterns of meaning-making. This is how the social culture is innovated upon in a sustainable way — by inserting new rituals.

Further, Performance rituals function as a space in which embodied memory and knowledges are transmitted and received (Taylor, 2003:279). This body of knowledges is

formed, created, and transmitted outside of the bounds of spoken and written language. Being engaged in this conversation contributes to the individual and collective acculturation as well. This reawakening of a connection to the past in the present is one of CAP's stated aims, and in this particular case the linking through space and time is achieved through the conduit of story.

Observing CAP's use of ritual formed the foundation of my engagement with and through ATOM, as collective and event. Of note are the following: how ritual is used to stimulate a sense of immersion; the use of story and storying (cf. Fleishman, 2012a:155) to link past, present, and future; and the use of performance to grow a networked social landscape along new lines (Shepherd & Haber, 2014:126). The main shift from this case study's model to my own practice was the explicit consideration of the uses of curatorial framing as a means to support lifting out and essentialising the transformative effect of performance encounters, as well as the emphasis on storying rather than story as a conduit for linking space, time, and people in an immersive and interactive way.

The curatorial perspective was added to see whether the critical threshold of performative and ritualised engagement could be honed in on. For example, how ritualistic must a space be to function effectively as a regenerator of networked landscapes? Further, curatorial thinking was a means to isolate and observe whether any aspect of acculturation⁵¹ was the development of a sense of individual and collective agency: the awareness of the ability to speak back to perceived reality and experience. This is because rituals inherently contribute to a rising sense of agency in participants, by, for instance, building into the experience multiple instances of role-reversal and role-play (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:53). This fluidity of social roles within the ritual space redefines relationships between members of the participant community (who remain connected outside of the event) and (re)negotiates and (re)models processes of democratisation (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:50). I was especially interested in this aspect when furthering my research with the development of the iterative prototype that became ATOM.

Immersion, created partially through collective and performed ritual practice, appears to be a significant contributor to Performance's ability to function in Social Innovation terms. It is through invoking an immersive experience that an extraordinary reality is lifted out of the mundane, and this opens a spaciousness that allows for the rehearsal of social and individual transformation. This ability to rehearse new ways of being and relating — to experience it — is what makes the uptake of the new behaviours more likely than if alternatives were simply presented and received, rather than co-created and collectively experienced (Card, 2011:129). An immersive, performative environment puts participants one step closer to the coalface of the performance exchange, more so than within traditional performance encounters where participants are clearly delineated along lines such as 'actor' and 'audience'. In an immersive, ritualised environment, participants and facilitators relate in a different way. Though some may have greater access to the space by virtue of previous attendance, the intention from outset is to engage everyone on equal terms.

Immersion is a staging strategy, essentially, which plays with the parameters of the autopoietic feedback loop through its use of ritual elements. It invokes autopoiesis into the space through performance, but tests its limits through role-reversal, the active creation of community, and the creation of various modes of mutual, physical contact. This makes

51 Effectively, a form of behavioural shaping.

performance — when the autopoietic nature of reality is particularly visible — even more accessible, in a way that foregrounds how we cannot remain inert to our circumstances, our perceptions of reality, and in our relationships with each other (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:40). CAP works with content within the immersive environment that it creates through ritual. These myths and fables provide “story solutions” that open up positive and alternate possibilities, stimulating reflection on how we affect, would like to affect and be affected in our worlds (Pinkola Estés, 1995:65).

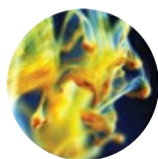
Conclusion

I first engaged with CAP through its archives, as one means of exploring the potential role of performance in Social Innovation praxis. However, archival fragments⁵² are an inexact and incomplete description of real experiences (McGillivray, 2011b:19; Zaayman, 2014:313). Any nuanced understanding of the roles played by Performance as a tool for disruption and community formation, as well as the role of immersion in that exchange, would have to be developed through an exploration in practice. This is relevant because what is under scrutiny is how an embodied practice (Performance) could shape the ways people relate to each other and their worlds. Understanding the nature of the relationships of live performance to the social life of a region, in archival and presented form, may only be understood through experience. To this end, and in addition to a field trip undertaken to experience CAP in person, I began with two streams of enquiry in a PaR model: a study of Performance archives and their curation, especially for memorialisation purposes, and a study of Repertoire. Both these projects, *Cut|Corner* and ATOM respectively, are discussed in Chapter Four.

52 I use this term in a technical sense, and differentiate between archival fragments, remnants and traces (cf. Zaayman, 2016). “Fragments” are parts of an object surviving from its original context into the present day. Fragments assist in reconstructing the past, and are synecdotal. “Remnants” are remains that *cannot* be used to reconstruct the past. Remnants are identifiable by being the objects that defy classification after an exhaustive process of identification has been applied to a group of objects. Meanwhile, “traces” invoke the spectres of the past: pulling the referred past into present awareness while still remaining unreadable (side note in Zaayman, 2016:307–319).



CHAPTER FOUR



CHAPTER FOUR

Explorations in own Practice: Cut|Corner and ATOM

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss two projects that grew out of exploring the roles of Performance for Social Innovation purposes. The first, *Cut|Corner*, is an exhibition I curated in 2015, at two venues in Cape Town. It was an introduction to, and memorialisation of, the life and work of South African theatre director Barney Simon. This was an exercise in curating from an archive composed largely of performance remains and secondary source material. It served to counterpoint my primary interrogation into the use of Repertoire practices for Social Innovation gains, partly by extending my knowledge into the possible uses of the archives generated from these practices. First, I introduce the form of this exhibition and the governing curatorial strategy, then I assess the success of each aspect and how this propelled me into my work with ATOM Collective. My experiences with the second staging of the *Cut|Corner* exhibition at the Baxter is now only evidenced by a series of personal communications and necessarily subjective observations. To protect confidentiality, care has been taken to erase names or roles that make individuals recognisable. Governed by PaR, there is space for subjectivity — the purposes of the record is not necessarily to attain an objective reading, but rather to reflect on how a subjective experience informed further theory and practice.

The second half of the chapter is devoted to my work developing Repertoire with ATOM. Our work is especially discussed in relation to how it replicates the methodology of CAP and is an iteration of the latter's community building function, practising in its own contexts and iterating towards optimised Social Innovation functions.

The *Cut/Corner* Exhibitions

SETTING	One late night at the Little Theatre, installing the exhibition...
ME	(reads from 'World in an Orange') ⁵³ "...Barney was a great one for cutting and rephrasing things. He did this with all playwrights — the tweaks and the cuts — nothing major. It was kind of an arrogance but at the same time I think he was right..." ⁵⁴ So ... he came, he cut, and he cornered the market
ASSISTANT A	... and The Market. ⁵⁵
ASSISTANT B	You guys know that was a little bit lame, right?
ME yes, but it's a little bit funny and very apt. Especially since he was working in non-ideal circumstances that demanded he cut corners all the time... much like we're having to do now.

And so, the name *Cut|Corner* was born, late at night from tired but satisfied punning brains. Barney Simon (b.1932–d.1995) was a prolific and influential South African theatremaker and activist, practising at the height of the apartheid regime. He revolutionised the creative process in his field, pioneering an acting and theatremaking technique that drew heavily on actors' personal experiences to inform the shape of the stories eventually staged (Stephanou & Henriques, 2005). The exhibitions I staged in 2015 were to serve two purposes on the 20th anniversary of his death. They were to introduce his life and work to an audience of theatre students and lay public, and to serve as a form of memorialisation.

The exhibitions began with a box. Inside it were yellowed traces of the work done by the late Yvonne Banning, a scholar and educator at the UCT Drama department. She was in the process of writing a book on Barney Simon at the time of her passing. My supervisor, the inheritor of this box, suggested I see if "anything could be done with it" (Fleishman, personal communication 2015, March 21). The proposed idea was to conceptualise and curate an exhibition in response to what I found and speak back to theories of Performance Archive formation and their exhibition (cf. Taylor, 2003; McGillivray, 2011a). It was also an opportunity to explore forms of performative memorialisation as a means to engage with memory (cf.

53 Stephanou, I. and Henriques, L. 2005. *The World in an Orange: Creating Theatre with Barney Simon*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

54 Stephanou & Henriques, 2005:99

55 cf. The Market Theatre, a South African theatre co-founded by Barney Simon in 1976. See their website at markettheatre.co.za.

Dickerman, 2001), but in a way strongly tied to hegemonic forms that are heavily externalised and favour the foregrounding of the Archive, as opposed to Repertoiric practices (Taylor, 2003: 24). This embodied response would accompany the theatre festival, *Touched by Barney Simon: A Retrospective*, which comprised the restaging of five works devised by Simon, in collaboration with his casts, in 1970s and '80s South Africa (Stephanou & Henriques, 2005). Begeerte, Cincinatti, Woza Albert!, Have you seen Zandile? and Black Dog/Inj'emnyama were to run between 14th–16th and 21st–23rd May (see Figure 4).

Curating these exhibitions in the context of this study provided an opportunity to employ PaR as a primary research methodology, and to use my observations on the process to both generate original content and function as an heuristic for the refinement of practice.



Figure 4 Flyer for the retrospective theatre festival, 'Touched by Barney Simon'

The similarities of the nascent Barney Simon Archive (hereafter 'BSA') to the CAP archive made the project useful comparative data to feed back into my PaR cycle. These similarities included the fact that they were both nascent archives, not yet officially constituted. Rather, it would be the act of my intervention and its interpretation by myself and others that would warrant its receiving of the name "archive" (Derrida, 1998; McGillivray, 2011b:12; Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014:394). Further, they both consisted of trace material and Performance detritus (cf. McGillivray, 2011a). Differences include the fact that the BSA collected works arising from an individual, while the CAP archive records the work of a collective.

Simon's work was markedly collaborative, and it is for this form of theatremaking that he is best known. Barney Simon is deceased, however, so any addition to the records can only be of iterations of his original work by others who are not the subject of the archive. In contrast, additions to the CAP archives will continue by their primary subjects for as long as the project iterates, which may extend beyond the lifetimes of its founders.

Cut/Corner was exhibited twice. It was developed specifically to accompany the retrospective theatre festival Touched by Barney Simon, and was installed in the Little Theatre from 12th–23rd May 2015 in this capacity. The Baxter Theatre Centre requested to have it staged in their foyer, to accompany the run of *Born in the RSA*, another Simon revival, from 8th July–8th August 2015. For many reasons, not all recorded here, I consider the first staging to be the more successful. These two iterations of the same exhibition serve as a case study in the solo curation of an archive of Performance, and informed my understandings on the pragmatics of travelling exhibitions and how the architecture of the space in relates to the ways participants engage with the space and with each other.

Both exhibitions were drawn from the same nascent archive and the conceptual architecture remained identical. The content in the second staging differed negligibly from that of the first, omissions and editions necessitated mainly due to the aesthetic concerns of achieving the same conceptual effect in a vastly different space over a greatly extended period of time. The installation at the Little Theatre had to hang for a fortnight, while the one at the Baxter Theatre Centre hung for over a month. This affected curatorial decisions regarding the materiality of the display objects, the most prevalent example being that of the mounted images. For the Little Theatre installation, images were printed on the departmental printer and mounted on foamcore, with Pritt™. This resulted in an object with a short acceptable period for display, as the paper starts to bubble off the mounting board after approximately a fortnight. This method is considered an unprofessional aesthetic in curatorial practice, but was employed as a way to minimise spending, while maximising on the quality of the exhibition as a whole. The paper glued to Forex board sufficed for a two-week run, but an installation that was to hang for a month required longer lasting solutions, which incidentally would more closely adhere to what I consider minimum standards of an aesthetics of practice. This meant that, overall, the Baxter exhibition was more expensive. In this specific example, the corresponding images that hung at the Baxter were vinyl stickers, mounted professionally on better quality foamcore.

Given my assessment that the Little Theatre exhibition was more effective, an obvious conclusion is that a larger budget does not guarantee a better product. What appears to be more important is an efficient and effective form of quality control. In the business of the theatre it is the director or producer who fulfils this role; in the business of exhibition-making, the responsibility falls on the curator (Eleey, 2013:114). I oversaw the Little Theatre process

from inception to conclusion. While I must make allowances for human error, and admit that much of this installation was imperfect, I am comfortable to claim it as an artistic and curatorial product, because everyone who worked on the project fulfilled their responsibilities (as overseen by me) to the best of their abilities.⁵⁶ *Cut|Corner* at the Baxter, in comparison, was completed in my absence.

What worked especially well at the Little Theatre was underscored by the fact that the exhibition grew into the space. It was conceived for display there, and was not expected to travel. This meant that installations were conceived in relation to the contents of the archive, *as well as* in conversation with the intended space available for display. For instance, considering a quote comparing Barney Simon's actor-training strategy to the boiling of eggs in relation to a serving hatch in one of the display rooms, gave birth to an installation of boiled eggs. At the time, the selection of items for display hadn't been finalised. A range of quotes relating to Barney Simon's life and work were being used to inspire creative installations designed to support participants' understanding of the text. There were two reasons for this. First, there was no budget to source original items related to Barney Simon or his work (e.g. personal items belonging to him, or Performance detritus from original stagings of his shows). Second, the BSA itself did not lend itself to display. It was a small box filled with paper and a few cassette tapes, and was of little intrinsic value to the wider audience. Contemplating the architecture of the space suggested a selection of certain quotes above others. In this case, the serving hatch in one room became a display area for a row of eggs in egg cups, displayed next to a mount of the related quote. This was initially sparked through the conceptual connection to the display area's original function as a serving hatch, through which drinks and food could pass between rooms.

Because the contents of the BSA did not lend itself to exhibition, they were more valuable when creatively interpreted, given life, and made to perform. It became clear that, as a curator of Performance archives, I was in the business of a kind of necromancy. I had spectres at my disposal, and the detritus left behind after the thing to be remembered was inexorably out of reach. What I had to do, based on my research into effective ways of curating memory, was invoke the spirit of Simon into the spaces, using the materials I had at my disposal. This interpretation was interwoven with my artistic intuitions and understanding of who Simon was, how he worked, and what he stood for.

This meant that instead of displaying a cassette tape as an object of wonder (cf. Greenblatt, 1990), I installed a PA system in one room and a series of MP3 players in the other. From these, I played a series of interviews with and about Barney Simon that had been digitally migrated from the cassettes onto CD and MP3. This made the archival object (cassettes) accessible. While the cassettes themselves had little intrinsic value, as they did not belong to Simon, the information they contained added texture to the mnemonic portrait and was more immediately engaging.

Strategically, I leaned towards curating for "resonance". I employ the term as coined by Stephen Greenblatt to describe one of two main ways of framing objects for display (1990). I selected and displayed objects in such a way that they stood as metonymy and metaphor, providing access to the world of Barney Simon through what they referred to, rather than what they intrinsically were. This counterpoints curating for "wonder", where the curator leverages

56 Special thanks go to Sofia Zway who spent long days researching and longer nights installing with me, #DoingItForBarney.

the power of the object to gain the attention of the viewer through its sense of uniqueness (Greenblatt, 1990:19–20). While both resonance and wonder are at play in exhibition-spaces, it is the predominating tool⁵⁷ in the overarching curatorial strategy that shapes the form and framing of the object.

I relied on this strategy of evoking resonance for many reasons. I was exploring the roles of Performance in affecting social space, and resonance strategies lend themselves to storying. “Storying” is the use of story to add texture to experiences and spaces (Fleishman, 2012a:156), and Performance and performative engagement are a natural outcome of this exercise. Further, I did not have access to enough objects that evoked wonder through their sense of uniqueness through their proximity to Barney Simon during his period of activity. What I did have access to were stories held within people and written records: writings and recordings of Simon himself, and memories of others’ experiences with him. And I had the ability to recreate elements from the world these stories and records described.

My task was to make an archive come alive, especially as an archive of Performance. The Little Theatre foyer, in which this first iteration of *Cut/Corner* was staged, was divided into three areas for display — the entrance passage and two rooms to either side. The room to the left of the entrance grew to focus on Simon’s life and person, while the room to the right focussed on his work. The entrance hall held a quote by the South African actor John Ledwaba, describing how Simon viewed the stage as a sacred place.⁵⁸ This quote was accompanied by images from Simon’s life and times, which became contextualised for the viewer through experiencing the exhibition.

Cut|Corner explored the concept of Performance as social disruptor in two ways. First, it shared the story of someone who was wholly engaged with using Performance as a social disruptor. For instance, Simon was instrumental in establishing one of the few mixed-race theatre spaces operating during apartheid-era South Africa, and made theatre with mixed-race casts in a collaborative, workshop format.⁵⁹ Further, the stories they shared unflinchingly highlighted the inequalities of the regime and provided a glimpse into the lived experience of the times (e.g. *Woza Albert!* (1983); *Black Dog/Inj’emnyama* (1984); *Born in the RSA* (1985)) (Rich, 1986; Stephanou & Henriques, 2005).

Secondly, the exhibition itself actively practised this concept, finding ways to engage Performance as a tool to disrupt the social space. It veered away from traditionally passive display strategies, opening up the exhibition space to explicit interaction between space, object, and viewer. In one instance, viewers were invited to perform a simple acting exercise in which they observed and interacted with an orange (see Figure 6). In another, the space was filled with the sound of Simon’s voice, an inescapable and tangible link to the past and the person, which could not be kept at a distance as in the case of mute displays. This recording also voiced some of the texts encountered around the rest of the exhibition, providing an auditory dimension that lessened the distance between the viewer and display material. The written quotes ascribed to Simon could now be read in his voice, because viewers knew what his voice *was*.

Engaging elements of performance disrupted the expected ways of interacting with a

57 i.e. the evocation of resonance or of wonder

58 “Do we take the stage to as some holy kind of place where human stories have to be told? Maybe not everybody does that. But Barney believed in that. He believed that the stage is a temple” (Ledwaba, in Stephanou & Henriques, 1995).

59 The Market Theatre, Johannesburg. See www.markettheatre.co.za.

traditional-looking exhibition, by providing access to the contents of an archive of Performance in a living way. Expected patterns of behaviour were challenged. Viewers had the opportunity to be an active part of completing the exhibit (e.g. by performing the orange exercise for themselves and others in the space) and to immerse themselves in the world being described by it, through having direct contact with tactile objects referred to in the images and quoted texts (e.g. the oranges, eggs, and a pile of books, all described as staple images of Simon's life and philosophy).

Curatorially, I drew on immersion as a tool to augment learning. Inviting people to perform the orange exercise for themselves was one way to engage them actively in the space and provide a taste of what it may have been like working as an actor with Simon. For the more introverted, copies of books referred to in the exhibition were provided, as well as a comfortable place to sit and read them. In this way, the space was made inviting for multiple forms of engagement that lifted participants out of the stream of ordinary time.

This exhibition, in its own way, functioned as a nexus for community formation. It uncovered and presented the life and work of Barney Simon by exploring the memories of the communities that surrounded him. For example, interviews were conducted with his past acquaintances and excerpts were shared visually via wall-mounted quotes and aurally with listening stations. Further, the exhibition itself documented the community that formed around him, and how his collaborative performance practices affected his social space as a white male facilitating mixed-race theatre in apartheid South Africa.

The exhibition also resulted in the reformation of a community centred on engagement with Simon's life and work. Many of the original members of the community that formed around him were reunited around engagement with the exhibition. For instance, archival photographs sparked memories and conversations between old friends, and the process of assembling the material for display awakened old connections when interview conversations sparked referrals to an increasing network. In this way, names I encountered in source texts came alive as I met the people behind them.

This exhibition documented the community that had formed around Simon, introduced Simon's life and work largely through sharing their descriptions of him, and brought them back together in the present. This newly (re)formed community was fundamentally shifted. It made space for new members, such as those that encountered Simon's legacy for the first time.

These avenues were then explored further through *Cut/Corner*, but approached from the opposite direction: foregrounding elements of the document Archive. This choice to counterpoint the Clanwilliam practice of foregrounding Repertoirc engagement from the Archive by curatorially foregrounding the materiality of archival contents (rather than the performance and performative practices they documented), was done to illuminate my research area from an almost diametrically opposite position. Each project obviously contains elements of both types of engagements with memory, as these exist on a continuum of interpretation and engagement, but they fall towards opposite sides. My decision to approach a comparative project in such a different way was also an efficient way to identify two conceptual extremes, a way to bound my field of study, in order to operationalise it.

Cut/Corner was intended to function as a memorial from the outset. I had not consciously curated along the axes of time before; I had not treated time as possessed of a particular materiality that had to be acknowledged in the space. A key reading that shaped my understanding around the potential forms and functions of memorials, and also broadened my thinking around the effects of memorialisation praxes, was L. Dickerman's 'Lenin in the Age of

Mechanical Reproduction' (2001). Documenting and discussing the two primary approaches to the Soviet project of fixing the memory of Lenin in time, this paper exposed me to a concept I ended up employing in the *Cut | Corner* exhibitions. This shaped the final exhibition space as a site of memorialisation.

Dickerman analyses the work of avante-garde Soviet collective *Levy Front Iskusstv* (Left Front of the Arts). He considers their concept of memorials as *sites of practice*. In this case, they commemorated Lenin⁶⁰ by creating concept workers clubs for Communist Party Members. In these clubs, Lenin's memory was evoked by enacting the freedoms and actions his legacy opened space for (see Figure 5).⁶¹ Philosophies and actions coherent with his ideology could be embodied here, and it functioned as a combination of archive and recreation area. This contrasted the official Soviet response of reproducing traditional busts of Lenin *en masse* (Dickerman, 2001:77).

Aleksandr Rodchenko was the artist primarily responsible for conceptualising these sites of memorialisation. His argument was that if you truly wished to honour the memory of Lenin, you would do better to invoke his memory through continuing his work, thus keeping it alive. By canonising him through the making, distributing, and idolising of busts and other images, you confine his memory to a place, as opposed to a process, and thus make it easily dismissible and dissociable from all he stood for and worked towards. By invoking his presence in the bodies and minds of everyone who encountered these memorialising sites of practice, Lenin's legacy was indelibly etched in people's memory and lives because it influenced their behaviours unavoidably and, hopefully, for the better. These sites of practice were performative spaces, in the sense that they required embodied engagement to activate their function. For example, a patron who visited the site of practice regularly and used the opportunities for engagement presented there (such as workspace and the use of a library), would have their life indelibly shifted. One way, would be by accessing the increased employment opportunities available to them once they'd finished a night-school course completed with the help of library resources. Such a patron would be far less likely to forget the role that this site of practice played in changing their circumstance, and also less likely to forget the reason it existed.

In contrast, if all they were required to do each day in regard to Lenin's memory was cast a cursory glance over a number of busts they passed on their way to work, the memory of the man it figures would fast be reduced to nothing.

60 Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov

61 The concept work room was presented at the Soviet pavilion, as part of the International Decorative Arts Exposition in Paris, 1925.



Figure 5 Concept for a workers club reading room by Aleksandr Rodchenko (Paris, 1925)

An example of my using the model of the memorial as a site of practice, is my treatment of what is ostensibly an exhibit: an acting exercise called *The Orange Exercise* (see Figure 6). This was a hallmark of Barney Simon's collaborative theatremaking process, designed to train the performer toward being a master of observation. It centred on the performer's guided engagement with an orange. Instructions ranged from "throw the ball [i.e. the orange] into the air", to "start with your arm outstretched, with the orange in your hand, and circle it gradually inward as if it were a planet" (Stephanou & Henriques, 2005:84). He understood that this exercise not only gave the performers an opportunity to exercise their skills in observation, but that it also allowed him an opportunity to observe them. This provided him with data to further shape his engagements with the cast as a theatremaker. My decision to include this exercise as an exhibit was then two-fold and served multiple purposes. It was a useful exercise in curating *a process* for display. It provided an opportunity to break open the boundaries between object and subject/viewer by being a point in the exhibition where an invitation was extended to patrons to participate (where their engagement completed the exhibit). And, as Simon employed it as an opportunity to observe and learn about his performers, it provided me with an opportunity to observe both my patrons and my abilities to scaffold invitational spaces. This exhibit provided a place to activate Rodchenko's concept of memorial as a site of practice, because this exhibit was only fully activated once it *became* a site of practice.

The world in an orange

1. A disc on floor.
2. A ball on floor.
3. Watch ball move on floor.
4. Watch floor with ball moving across it.
5. Throw ball in air.
6. Watch ball in room.
7. Watch room with ball in it.
8. Examine biography of orange. Joint to tree. Dye. Birds. Bruise.
9. Let orange explore your face.
10. Let it explore your face.
11. Stand. Place on collar bone. Walk in circle, clockwise.
12. Place between knees, walk in circle anti-clockwise.
13. Outstretched arm. Bring orange in like planet.
14. Move orange out, stretching arm. Circle orange. The Sun.
15. Use as rock to...?, each other.
16. Sit. Use as cushion to rest.
17. Lie on back. Hold orange in mouth. Gag.
18. Bite only skin. Bitter.
19. Sit.
20. Bite piece of skin off.
21. Look at wonderful orange.
22. Look at piece of skin. Squeeze for sweat.
23. Begin to peel. Careful of flesh.
- 23(a) Watch others peel.
24. Listen to sound.
25. Look at nude orange.
- 25(a) Look at pile of peels.
26. Remove one section intact.
27. Peel section without wounding.
28. Remove globule.
29. Taste globule.
30. Eat whole section.
31. Eat orange.
32. Feel life of orange in mouth.
33. Watch others eat orange.
34. Place peels, waste, in centre of room.
35. Look at pile.
36. Someone collect pile. Remove.
37. Look at empty centre.
38. Be aware mouth, body that has experienced orange.

From Stephanou, I. & Henriques, L. 2005. *The World in an Orange: Making Theatre with Barney Simon*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, p84.

Figure 6: *The World in an Orange*, an observation exercise

I considered this model of memorialisation appropriate for a number of reasons, all of which were guided by the nature of the archive and its contents. Barney Simon, whose memory was being celebrated, was in the business of performing arts. Relying on this base, citing it, he could inscribe over it, in order to shift its face entirely. The South African social landscape was altered because of the stories he reflected back at it. This past is now known through his stories.⁶² The South African theatre landscape is also indelibly altered. The form of art-making he developed, eventually coined 'Workshop Theatre', was based on his experiences working overseas at a time that South Africa was under sanctions. These teachings he brought back to South Africa, and they opened new dimensions to collaborative theatremaking processes that were particularly suited to the minimally resourced, highly censored landscape of the times. By using the given circumstance as his story, he changed the story of the given circumstance. By embracing his context, he transcended it, and it further also transcended itself through his embrace. A memorial as a site of practice was befitting to such a hands-on individual. What better way to remember him than by doing what he did, using the story of the given circumstance — in this case the exhibition — to become a part of the story, and by engaging with it, reflecting it and indelibly altering its nature?

The exhibition was repeated with a run at the Baxter Theatre Centre,⁶³ which further delimited the field of study by showing the limitations of static exhibition practices, especially in relation to adapting to new contexts. This was my first experience of iterative prototyping, and I became aware of the exhibition-making process as a laboratory space. I began to grow into the form of curatorial praxis, which turned the craft of curating into a way of studying Performance. The *Cut | Corner* exhibition space functioned as a place in which I could test my learnings on the nature of human behaviour, particularly the effects of playing with degrees of immersion and how people behaved when assumptions on normative behavioural patterns were challenged. In the second iteration, the ways in which people engaged with the exhibition's exhibits were quite different from interactions with displays in the Little Theatre. This observation began an enquiry into the nature of identity: how much of the exhibition was ontologically locked into the place it was created for and initially displayed in?

A key challenge of staging the exhibition for the second time was that I was professionally naïve. Upon accepting the commission, I made it clear that I had an immovable date upon which I would be leaving Cape Town. This meant the exhibition would have to be finalised in my absence, though under my direction. In retrospect, I understand that the most appropriate action would have been to delay my leaving, or to cancel it entirely.

I had assessed that, in theory, an installation over the seventeen days available to me was possible, with the proviso that I would not be adding any new exhibits, but simply reformatting the ones that were present in the Little Theatre to suit the new circumstance (Fleishman, Rossouw & Stellenboom, personal communication 2015, June 05). This would allow enough time for me to renegotiate the form of the exhibition, propose a mock-up, submit a budget estimate, and, upon approval, initiate the process of installation. I had budgeted for the turnaround times of constituent processes such as printing, but not for the slow-turning wheels of bureaucracy. Large organisations move slowly, and by the time everything was approved, and budgets were negotiated, we had run out of time for the process

62 One example is *Woza Albert!* (1981), which is currently a set-work in the FET CAPS curriculum for Dramatic Arts. Through studying this play, students have the opportunity to access a taste of the realities of living under Apartheid.

63 Baxter Theatre Centre, Cape Town, South Africa. Find their website here: <http://www.baxter.co.za/>

to be completed under my watch. Calls for the early appointment of a Baxter-based project associate were ignored, and I was advised to do what could be done and trust the Baxter to complete the installation in my absence but under my instruction. Despite a handover meeting with three Baxter representatives, which included the distribution of full written briefings, I returned to find that the team had for some reason reneged on their (witnessed and voluntary) commitments. The resulting exhibition was disappointing.

In this way I learned that a greater privilege than an infinite budget is a team you can trust, if not to be perfect, than at least to do their best.⁶⁴ It is a trustworthy team, operating within an exhibition-making system with an efficient form of quality control built into it that better guarantees the quality of the product. Because teamwork was never a strength of mine, and informed by this experience of disappointment in the value of trusting people, I committed to challenge myself. I countered my wariness and weaknesses by engaging more fully in teamwork and group art-making practices. To this end, I began working with ATOM in 2016, which provided practice in this interpersonal domain, as well as the opportunity for engagement in work/play that aligned to my research interests of shaped spaces that function as Social Innovation technologies.

I also learned how large institutions work — they take on a life of their own in a way that supersedes the lives of the individuals that constitute them. My experience of this large system was one in which rational thinking seemed at times undervalued or entirely lacking, and the primary motivation behind each administrative system seemed to be to protect oneself against accusations of theft, incompetence, or insubordination.

These observations led me to begin a more formal enquiry into the system in which I found myself operating, to understand the irrational behaviour (as I experienced it) of the people I was surrounded by. I became determined to practise in such a way that my outputs increased social cohesion by strengthening interpersonal and community networks. This grew into a key aim of ATOM: to host events that generate social cohesion.

My experiences with *Cut | Corner* shaped my thinking around the potentials of exhibitions and immersive spaces to function as memorials. Further, I considered the effect on people's internal states when actively engaging with memory, rather than passively receiving someone else's interpretation of it. What happens when you engage with memory and memory-making through the body, as opposed to just through the eyes? What are some ways the experience of interacting with the past also becomes a means to feel empowered to make a new future, by virtue of actively participating in the present?

Through *Cut | Corner*, I also gained the opportunity to observe the effects and implications (practical and theoretical) of translating a concept across spaces. Curating the exhibition in the Baxter Theatre foyer, when it was developed with the Little Theatre in mind, freed me to conceive of exhibitions and archives as functioning simultaneously as concepts and objects, operating over time as well as place. I began to approach my practice as informed by the concept of "time geography", where objects and events are understood as operable in their worlds in relation to themselves, and as being observable and affected over time, as opposed to place (cf. Hägerstrand, 1967). This I have explored further while working with

64 Special thanks must be given to the staff at the Little Theatre Workshop, Little Theatre Wardrobe, UCT Drama Administration, Devon Weston of The Lost Playground and Sofia Zway who, through their impeccable conduct and kindnesses, have helped maintain my faith in humanity.

ATOM, by hosting iterative events over the course of more than a year, where the rewards of the intervention's being active in the world become tangible by virtue of its operating over time, rather than place. In other words, ATOM has performed its function of building a community, because it has practised over time. ATOM becomes itself over multiple events — it becomes itself through successfully performing its function/s, and its existence over time is the predominant factor in its success, in this case.

In both instances of *Cut|Corner*, participant engagement with the interactive displays was minimal. Unfortunately, I do not think I made it clear enough that things could be touched, and the space lived in. Perhaps the similarity of the exhibition's design to a traditional "look-but-don't-touch" model was too prevalent for the moments of performative engagement to shine through. For this reason, few people *felt* the effect of performance to shape internal space, though everyone had the opportunity to *consider* its effect (because the exhibition was about how one man's performance praxis changed himself and the world around him). For this reason, I returned to a focus on curating spaces that held a performing body at their centre, where active engagement with spatial cues (and "breaking the fourth wall") was assumed. By doing so, I hoped to maximise the opportunities for participants to actively encounter performance moments. Enriched by the exercise of exploring curatorial praxis in a way that foregrounded the Archive, I could now return to focus on the powers of Repertoire. In real terms, I began to host dance parties.

ATOM

This section looks at the work of ATOM, a Cape Town-based creative collective I am a member of. Particularly, it looks at the intentions behind what we produce, the processes of this production cycle, and how this work is informed by and informs my research. My practice is framed here as an operationalised intersection between Performance and Curature. My work with ATOM represents my first cycle of PaR that has taken commercial and iterative prototypic form. It is also a Case Study, informing the developing Grounded Theory on the functions that Performance may perform as Social Innovation technology.

This section speaks about my engagement with participants as a part of ATOM, and how ATOM has grown into a social innovation and Research and Development space that draws directly on (and then informs) my research into forms of sustainable social intervention and cultural regeneration. ATOM is currently in its third year of operation.

We explore the construction of immersive dance experiences to support participant interaction. We intentionally shape spaces to provide ground upon which constructive forms of networked social landscapes may form. ATOM was born as a conversation between young creative friends on a dancefloor in 2014. We noted collectively that the social landscape we inherited as Capetonians was socio-culturally and economically stratified, to the point that finding racially, economically, and culturally integrated spaces was almost impossible.⁶⁵ Also noted, was that little was being done to change this in the spaces we loved and naturally inhabited: music venues. Over the course of 2015, this conversation deepened into a call to

65 These observations are vindicated by a body of social research into segregation in post-apartheid South Africa. See, for instance, Parnell (1997); Christopher (2001, 2005); Huschka & Mau (2006); Seekings (2008) and Tredoux & Dixon (2009); Finchilescu & Tredoux (2010). The paper by Tredoux and Dixon (2009) deals specifically with the night-time economy of Long Street, in which ATOM's work is currently principally located.

action within that specific domain. We hosted our first event in March 2016, called *NOVA*. Curatorial choices were made with the specific intention of making the event as accessible as possible across socio-cultural and economic borders, guided by the intention that as far as possible, no one who wished to attend would be denied access or feel unwelcome.

One of our key aims is to operate in such a way that our activities generate social cohesion. This would be one function of our existing in the world. Pragmatically, we were determined to leverage doing what we loved in order to dissolve observed socio-cultural boundaries, and to provide space for newly defined, mixed social networks to form. Our chosen strategy to affect this positive shift was music and the associated experience of dance. We were determined to use performance to disrupt social space, and to exploit its function as a technology that increases social cohesion. Further, we restricted ourselves to working within the night-time economy of one area of Cape Town.

Difference is not problematic in and of itself; it is key to the way humans make meaning for themselves. What is more important is how it is negotiated by the subject perceiving it. Another key aim of our work is to create spaces that model towards negotiations of difference in more sustainable, functional ways, that support the social and individual human body becoming comfortable with negotiating differences as *other than but equal to* the things they are being compared with. ATOM supports this shift primarily through curating the ways performance moments appear, and by using the power of the Repertoire.

At its core, ATOM has seven members. Collectively we hold skills and experience in DJing and music production, sound engineering, visuals production and VJing, town planning, hospitality and administration, theatre-making, curatorship and exhibition-making, teaching, philosophy, and software engineering. Our outer circle extends to a community of helpers, patrons, and third-party service providers.

In appearance, an ATOM event simulates a clubbing experience. It is actively hosted by creatives determined to shape spaces that allow for meaningful encounters with music as the main productive mechanism for community building (see Figure 7). Our interventions have debuted as clubbing events, but the concept that inspires us transcends this front-end interface. Our events were conceived of as iterative prototypes from the outset, and we are constantly engaged in a feedback-loop, process-based model in which we work toward fulfilling our collectively agreed mandate. We may extend our portfolio to include events that may look different and cater to different tastes, but the root intentions remain the same: to function sustainably for social benefit while our skills and interests serve this work in a way that it is efficient and enjoyable. For now, we host events that specialise in presenting Deep, Dub, and Ambient Techno in accessible ways to a community that averages from 18–40 years old, within the context of Cape Town's clubbing and electronic music scene. This doubles as iterative presentations of our cumulative learning within our own spheres of expertise, simultaneous to providing new data to feed back into a process of further refinement. In other words, our process embodies a form of PaR cycle.

We operate with the following intentions: to work together to showcase our skills in a way that supports the sustainable development of our individual and collective careers; to host events in ways that actively work against inherited processes of exclusion, such as economic, linguistic, and class exclusions; and to foster the generation of a networked social landscape from the centre outward, by prototyping affirmative models of community building and team management first within the core collective, and then in systematic degrees outward.





Figure 7 ATOM events currently simulate typical nightclub experiences, with a twist

Within ATOM, each of the seven nucleus members operates at two levels. There are activities to ensure the long-term maintenance of the collective, and the tasks we perform during the event itself. Each of us has an equal say in strategic decisions, and our executive roles are divided according to our skills, interests, and available time. We all can embrace roles and responsibilities that we have no previous experience in, and to draw on the support of the collective while innovating within our domains. It has grown into a supportive platform for its members, as well as for the people they are working for. Further, the way in which we operate, incrementally innovating in the realm of human relations, means that the people we are working for (i.e. our market) eventually grow into the people we are working *with*. This is evidenced, for instance, in the fact that a community of regular volunteers have grown around the core, who regularly assist us to set up events. Further, over the course of two years of operating, I have observed more of our patrons become comfortable with taking agency in the space. If there is something that needs to be done, they feel comfortable to do it even though the event is not “theirs”. This was not the case when we first began, and does not appear common in other similar types of events in Cape Town. One example of this incremental build in participant agency is reflected in the maintenance of the Liquid Light Show (hereafter LLS), an interactive installation at all our Waiting Room events (see Figure 8).

We installed the Liquid Light show in the mezzanine lounge of our regular venue, the Waiting Room,⁶⁶ as a counterpoint to the digital visuals accompanying the music on the dancefloor below (see Figure 10). Contemporary visuals production and jockeying grew out of this analogue activity of dropping inks into a liquid substrate, while projecting the result onto a screen via an overhead projector. We included the opportunity to engage with the history of visuals, through installing this LLS, as a way of extending an invitation to patrons to actively participate by learning about the history of visuals production, and through playfulness, contributing to the event in a way that offers creative agency.⁶⁷ At first, I was solely responsible for activating the installation, by playing with it myself, so that people could model my behaviour and learn that they too had the freedom to engage. I was also solely responsible for maintaining it, by, for instance, regularly changing the water. Over time, patrons have understood that they are free to engage with the LLS (and do so with enthusiasm), and I no longer have to perform this task; people have begun to change the water themselves. This small example is one visible and practical way that our aims are incrementally being achieved. It demonstrates the successful transfer of a behaviour across time and fluid groups. This is one of the many ways ATOM shapes participants as co-creators of the reality of the event, by framing them self-consciously as active participants and allowing opportunities for many incremental and non-threatening moments of agency to flower.

66 273 Long Street, Cape Town (see Figure 9).

67 The LLS visuals are projected onto a screen mounted on a facing wall. Between the wall and the OHP is a thoroughfare. The light cast by the projector additionally serves to provide ambient light and people crossing the space are tacitly engaged in the installation by their temporarily becoming (moving) screens.





Figure 8: *The Liquid Light Show installation at ATOM events*

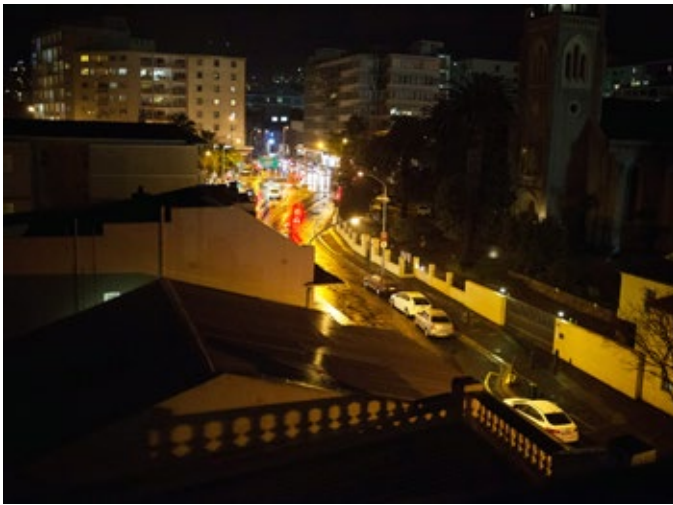


Figure 9: Views of Long Street (Cape Town, South Africa), from the balcony of no. 273

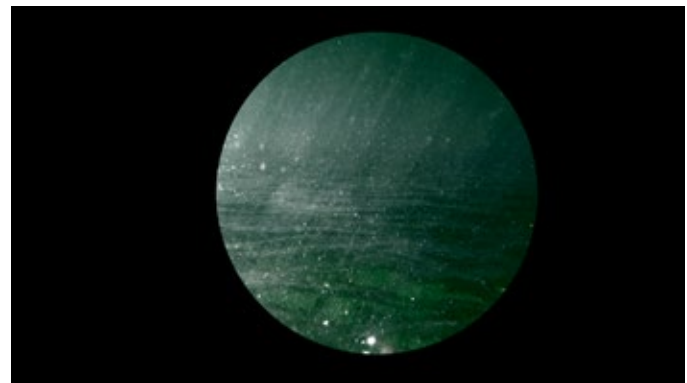
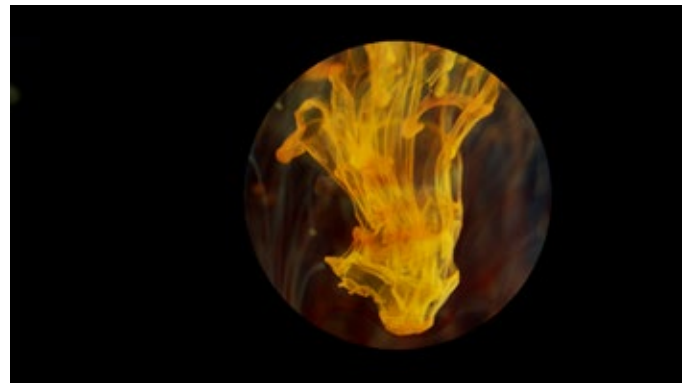
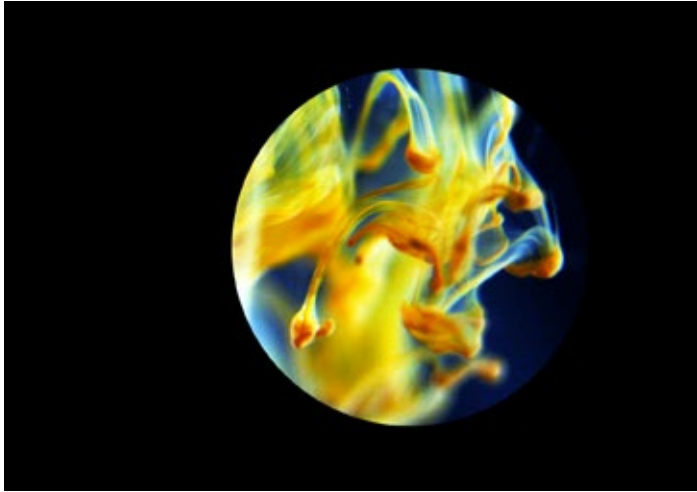


Figure 10: *Digital visuals presented at ATOM, mixed live from an archive of footage*

Intellectual and scientific attempts to ensure the space is reliably shaped in such a way would be futile. We are dealing with the total, messy, human experience. While a certain amount of planning is required, the shape of things can only be judged through their doing. My readings in ontological design are a part of what governs solution-making around particular sets of challenges, such as how to operationalise our intention of weaving a common ground for a subset of the disparate communities of Cape Town's nightlife, as well as the formulation of long-term goals regarding modes of sustainable operation. Whether our proposed *modus operandi* would work in its specific contexts can only be seen once the event (both the individual event and the event cycle) is live. This tension around the uncertainty of theoretical planning meeting the present, physical, and populated moment, was most keenly felt in the instance of our first event, NOVA⁶⁸ (see Figure 11). Similarly, the processes of refining the mechanism of delivery of this service occurs iteratively, with each event embodying a responsiveness to observations, feedback, and criticisms received from the last one.



Figure 11: *Poster artwork for ATOM's inaugural event*

68 10th March 2016, 20h00–02h00, The Waiting Room, Cape Town.

Acknowledging and working with the slippery dimensions of the total human experience, may enable a more successful shaping towards desired outcomes. This field of potential deviation — i.e. human behaviour — would naturally be accounted for when planning the intervention and factoring in potential variables. As a practitioner reliant on public participation, one can only plan for and shape *so much*. This is especially true of those working in arts specifically framed as social-interventions. These practices are more effective when measured on performance matrices with socially and affectively oriented aims. The very act of imposing processes that verify these outcomes negate their effect. The transformative power of performance or performative space cannot be successfully measured in standardised terms (Taylor, 2003:20; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:120, 156). Instead, tangential evidence serves as proof of its efficacy. Why else would so many human communities, across so long a span of time and spaces, constantly have engaged (and still be engaging) in such rituals (Pinkola Estés, 1995:19)? It must be because they perform some function that the human social and individual body finds indispensably beneficial, or at least, not deleteriously negative (Taylor, 2003:26; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:195; Turner in Bull & Mitchell, 2016:5; Turner, R., 2016:33).

Our work is curtailed by several limitations, which affect our ability to practise optimally. Our efficacy is bounded both by the limitations of theory, and (more definitively) by limitations on physical resources. We are constantly engaged in working towards a utopian ideal⁶⁹ within non-ideal circumstances. Despite acknowledging the impossibility of manifesting this reality (especially within our lifetimes), we have found reward in working towards it. These limitations were most acutely felt at ATOM during our first year of operations, and reflect most severely within the body of work referred to in this thesis as a case study. For this reason, they are marked here.

These limitations include, but are not limited to: financial and asset limitations, and our capacity as human resources. For example, all seven collective members work or study full-time. This is necessary because ATOM cannot yet financially support its members, but the process of becoming financially sustainable is simultaneously arrested by the inability for at least three of the crew to devote themselves full-time to the processes of formally starting the business. This delays our growth, while increasing the challenge of maintaining a high standard of operations. For example, regular maintenance needs to be performed on our equipment, and we do not have adequate time nor funds to perform this maintenance sufficiently. As a result, we are currently running at a loss, as we cannot keep up with the natural degradation of equipment that occurs through its use. This cycle, which is currently unsustainable, makes garnering support for a sustainable, longer-term system of operations increasingly difficult.

We are constantly engaged in a systematic process of arresting these processes of decay, and dissolving limitations. While we are prototyping for responses to our core investigation — into how and why music performance can serve as a socio-cultural unifying factor when encountered in particular environments — we are simultaneously iterating towards a sustainable operational model as an organisation.⁷⁰ For instance, we started with zero capital, and now have enough floating capital to underwrite the cost of our guest artists for each event, before doors have opened. This was achieved with no business experience, simply a commitment to create and capitalise upon a supportive learning and experimental

69 A just society in which access to spaces and creative expression is not shaped by socio-economic, linguistic and cultural barriers.

70 None of us have formal experience in the business sector.

environment in which decisions are made through a process of group consultation. Furthermore, we are in the process of systematically acquiring equipment. This progressively eliminates the need for third-party hire and borrowing from friends (a prevalent necessity when we started). The first is a cost-cutting measure, and the second a matter of principle, because we are determined to function as a self-sustainable construct (in line with social innovation aims). While not eschewing assistance, we see it as an opportunity to grow from, not to perpetually rely on. The commitment to self-sustainability has also stimulated skills acquisition. Figure 12 documents one example where a regularly borrowed set of soft props (pictured left) were eventually replaced by an analogue created by a member of the collective who had never sewn before (pictured right).

There are also plans to hire out our newly acquired assets. This illustrates how we are constantly engaged in a fast-paced prototyping of a sustainable business model that is suited to our circumstances, built in accordance with our moral standpoint, and that acknowledges the reality of the socio-economic landscape we operate within.



Figure 12: *'The Roots', a signature set of soft props used at ATOM events*

This is a small reflection on the iterative operational model that characterises the ATOM process. It is constantly up for review, and constantly evolving as we learn our craft, while simultaneously learning how to ensure the project's sustainability and growth within a neoliberal market economy. Our success is also a testament to the important role affirmative social spaces play in the success of any venture. Despite a lack of experience in some areas, the collaborative atmosphere we have fostered has meant that we work cohesively as a team, leveraging existing skill-sets to acquire and apply new ones, for collaborative gain. In this way, we are seeing that the change begins from within.

My executive role within ATOM has been important to effect strategy in such a way that the space is created and held for performative interventions. In other words, my vote always favours decisions that enable our events to shape and hold opportunities for performative and creative engagement. Further, as a curator, I shape the space in such a way that encourages and supports patrons to engage playfully. And as a performer, I extend this practice in an embodied way, modelling behaviours and engaging with the space and people in ways that support the replication of desired behaviours. For example, when the idea for

a Liquid Light Show⁷¹ was tabled, I voted for it. Then, I curated the environment in which it was installed — the mezzanine — in such a way that made engaging with it in both group and individual capacities as inviting as possible (see Figures 12 & 13). During the event, I engage ritualistically with the space and its people, drawing on research on the powers of ritual and story to acculturate and transform the internal states of those who encounter it (e.g. Pinkola Estés, 1995; Taylor, 2003; Fleishman, 2012a; Bull & Mitchell, 2016). In the case of the LLS, this includes surprising patrons by surreptitiously including olive oil in the substrate. Patrons are restricted to a palette of water-based inks for practical purposes. I dispense this magical golden substance in secret, or alternatively, in an especially surreptitious way by extracting it from its hiding place (sometimes with the assistance of an unsuspecting patron who may be blocking the way), and dropping it in from a bottle marked ‘Equilibrium’. What makes my engagement a performance is the way it is done. For the duration of the event I am under a pseudonym⁷² and in a heightened state of awareness that I call “being online”. This is a state of being that is focussed on being grounded from within the present moment, and is articulated by Philip Zarrilli as a state in which “the self has fallen away” and “the body is all eyes”. This is characteristic of performance states developed in Eastern expressive arts and is indicative of a state of consciousness in which performers respond intuitively and/or instinctually to environmental stimuli (Zarilli, 2016:125). Over time, I have developed this into a series of ritualistic behaviours that govern my engagement with the space and feed back to sustain this heightened performance state. This routine means that the manner and location of my being is fairly predictable, given no particular emergencies. This is a part of what lends the space an air of enchantment: the presence of characters whose cameos you can rely on.



Figure 13: *The LLS in context*

My colleagues are implicated into this process of myth-building. They are creators of their own ritual engagements, but also engaged through a mutual enchantment into my own performative engagement. For instance, before the event, and after set-up is complete, I

71 A Liquid Light Show is a form of light art, developed in the 1960s as accompaniment to electronic music (Pavlovsky, 2017). Contemporary digital visual projections, such as the kind practised by PUPIL Visuals, stem from this analogue activity. ATOM’s simple variation of this art form consists of an overhead projector projecting onto a circular screen, a clear pyrex dish filled with water, and inks, dropped into the dish with pipettes (see Figure 9).

72 Katara Sedai

prepare myself with a ritual washing and change of clothes.⁷³ This represents my having crossed into a new relationship with the self (Pinkola Estés, 1995:413). I then proceed to scent the entire space with *Palo Santo* (*Bursera graveolens*), a South American wood ritually used as an incense to clear the energetic field and prepare a place in which sacred rites will occur.⁷⁴ This and other ritual engagements are closed to the public, essentially taking place backstage. However, they are now an expected part of the night's routine. A part of the function of ritual is to generate a substrate for consensus reality within communities of people, providing a sense of identity and common symbolic language (Pinkola Estés, 1995:67, 197; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:175; Turner, R., 2016:32–33, 43). My engagements, apparently insignificant in the individual moment, have grown into a rhythmic anchor over the course of the year. This supports the development of a sense of community from within ATOM first, which then reflects outwards to include our circle of volunteers, guest artists, third-party service providers, and patrons. The point is not so much the content of these actions, but the quality with which they are performed. Especially important is their repetition, because it is rhythm, especially, which the human brain recognises as a part of its habit of pattern recognition, and whose interruptions engender dissonant states that initiate generative autopoietic feedback loops contributing to the performative generation of reality and the shifting of the interpretive frame (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:136; Downey, 2016:58). The ritualistic actions of my personal routine contribute to the sense of community growing within the ATOM crew. It is a part of what makes us so uniquely ATOM. This is true for each member's contribution.

My involvement is particularly self-conscious, because it is in dialogue with a research cycle that observes naturally occurring behaviours of community formation, while speaking back to it with my own behaviours. These behaviours are partially shaped by Performance theory, and practised with the intention of strengthening and streamlining this natural process.

During the event I cycle through the three-story space in a holding pattern from when the doors open, until just before they close. During this time, I traverse from the box office through to the top balcony, and engage in maintenance on the décor (such as replacing candles, or tidying the LLS set-up) and other behaviours of the active host. This includes answering patrons' queries, striking up conversations with the lonely and facilitating their introduction into existing circles. Once the doors close, I take my position at the front of the dancefloor and remain there until the end of the event. This performs two functions. First, I act functionally as a gatekeeper, in the event of patrons becoming over excited and becoming a nuisance to the VJ and DJs (or a hazard to the equipment). Second, I observe (and partake in) the community formation that our events have facilitated amongst a group of (now) regulars

73 My routine included taking a shower before Cape Town's drought conditions prevented it. Bathing in water is an archetypal symbol of transformation and often a part of initiations and rituals (Pinkola-Estés, 1995: 95, 413). Currently, I restrict myself to washing my face and hands.

74 *Impepho* (*Helichrysum cymosum*) is more commonly used in Southern African ritual. I use *Palo Santo* instead of *Impepho*, despite our Southern African context, for two reasons. Firstly, I have not been initiated into the rites of using *Impepho* in ritual contexts in public spaces, while I have been for the use of *Palo Santo*. Secondly, *Palo Santo* has been gaining popularity as an incense in Berlin, and many of the nightclubs and DJs employ it as an olfactory anchor into the space. I self-consciously link ATOM's practice to the Berlin trend, and exploit existing associations between the smell and an immersive clubbing experience. This is especially because many of our artists and patrons have performed in, or frequented Berliner clubs. Foregrounding commonalities of practice (such as the use of *Pala Santo*) may open up conversation points based on mutual recognition. This may strengthen the budding corridors of cultural exchange between Berlin and Cape Town, at a grassroots level. Mutual points of recognition between people support non-threatening inevitable encounters of their differences, and thus networked social landscapes may be (re)generated in healthy ways, with intersections of difference (cf. Bhabha, 2009) being positively encountered.

that habitually inhabit this physical space.

There is no way to capture the breadth of my engagement and its cumulative impact. These descriptions serve only as crude examples of some of the interventions I perform as an individual and as a member of the collective, and my observations on their effects. I am engaged in research from a first-person perspective and concerned how affective space is shaped, especially through the application of performance. The shape of these interventions, and the observation process feeding each iteration, is informed by theoretical engagement with the literature and subsidiary PaR projects.⁷⁵ As a collective, we are always questioning how we achieve our aims, and remain open to enquiry from others. As the crew develops a theoretical understanding of what is happening, we increase our collective ability to tailor our responses to the way we shape the space (including facilitating engagement within it) moving forward. The more we engage our extended social circles in this conversation, the more refined the technology becomes, because it responds to observations gleaned from a larger sample set, and draws from an increased set of practical and intellectual skills.

ATOM's community-building functions may be interpreted on multiple levels. We aim to provide manageable moments for reflection upon the nature of co-creation (and the roles of performance within this process). We do so by extending multiple opportunities to participate in the creation of the event, and by foregrounding the performative aspects of these opportunities. This also provides means for participants to speak back to both the event and the process of its creation. To this end, we accept volunteer assistance in exchange for a free ticket to the event. Further, using metaphorical language, we encourage states of (role-)play within the crew and create an experience in which ATOM operates in a space slightly divorced from everyday reality. One example of this is through our linking the properties of atoms to metaphorically describe our own relationships and functions. We all "find our orbit" and on some portfolios we function as "electrons" and in others as part of the "nucleus". This resultant surrealism is freeing, and generative. Not only does it increase the number of encounters between the individual crew member and a moment of performance in which the boundary between reality and fiction is foregrounded and questioned, but the space becomes innovative because these adults feel free to play and try new things as part of their contribution (Turner, V., 1986:169–170). This is, for instance, how our ambient lighting has taken shape over the past two years. A regular volunteer took ownership over installing some unused fairy-lights in and around the space, another then innovated upon this proposal and weaved more lights in and amongst our plant installations to provide additional back-illumination, and so forth (see Figure 14). All that was required from ATOM's core members was the assurance that volunteers were welcome to engage in this enabled way, and that they could innovate as equals (as opposed to only accepting top-down direction from the executive). This is one practical way that the co-creative nature of reality-building is made obvious to people engaged with the ATOM experience. Further, when the crew reflect on the nature of these experiences, it stimulates the feedback loop typical of PaR cycles. The ways in which encounters with performance initiate feedback loops, and how they are useful for social innovation purposes, is discussed in Chapter Five, in relation to ATOM's work.

Another example of how nested communities are formed at ATOM events, is in the case of the interactive LLS installation. This is an example of an invitation for a performative

75 For example, the experience gained as a researcher in the capacities of curator for *Cut|Corner* (2015) and performer of *Too Much Remembering Leads to Forgetting* (2014-2016).

way to shape the space, open to all participants. Operating the LLS positively correlates with the experience of performing an action on a stage, which is observed by an audience (see Figures 8 & 13). Here the operator has a clear degree of agency over the space. This authority is exercised through their choice of ink colours, the nature of their engagement with the equipment, and the way auxiliary conversations sparked by their activity are facilitated.

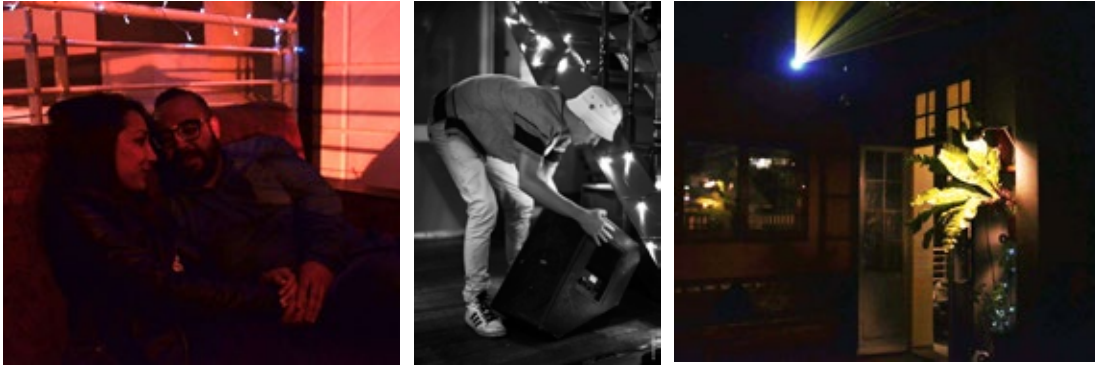


Figure 14: *Ambient LX, as developed and installed by ATOM volunteers*

In both these examples, it is the experiences adjunct to the primary audio-visual showcase that contextualise ATOM's practice in terms of social innovation theory. It is through these intermittent and cumulative conversations between the space and its people — who practise their agency upon the spaces we host — that the potential of this enabled way of relating upon extended society is demonstrated. For this reason, ATOM applies a curatorial strategy that aims to provide the physical, emotional, and psychological space in which these conversations can happen. Leveraging ritual structure and non-sectarian symbolism as a recognisable frame of reference is a key tool for this work. It is not necessarily the primary activity of dancing, with visuals and sound, that is the key space in which encounters with autopoiesis (through performance) occur. Rather, it is a combination of the dance as an anchor, in relation to the experiences and spaces around it, that sets the process of gaining an increased sense of individual and collective agency in motion.

ATOM's primary intention is to explore the social innovation possibilities of immersive environments centred on engagements with music (and, by extension, rhythm). We seek to stimulate the regeneration of sustainable, equitable social networks within our sphere of influence. We exploit the power of ritual in generating and cementing social bonds by forming and delivering our events in highly ritualistic ways (Taylor, 2003:2–3, 233–234; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:51– 53, 175; Turner, R. 2016:33). Simultaneously, we've identified that an efficient way of sparking communities predisposed to equitable relationships, is when all parties involved in the exchange recognise their abilities as agents of change within their own spheres of influence. ATOM works to form communities, as well as to foreground what each person's individual role may be in determining the quality of that community. One way to do this is to facilitate someone's recognising the ways in which reality is co-created, and making it as easy as possible for them to avoid causing anyone (including themselves) unnecessary suffering. One way of achieving this, is by sensitising them to autopoiesis as it exists in performative social landscapes, and holding space for them to grapple with this threshold concept at the level of their individual capability. Chapter Five outlines the form and functions of autopoiesis in the ATOM event space, and looks at the role of immersion and ritual in supporting this process.

ATOM also stands as a memorial that is a site of practice. In this case, it pays its respects to CAP as the inciting study that influenced so much of its form. In particular, ATOM holds a site of practice that emulates the latter's ideals and methodology in ways appropriate to its own context. ATOM is a vehicle through which all its members have creative freedom to practise their craft. It is designed for that purpose. It was natural that my explorations in curatorial praxis and performance interventions would find a home there. The fact that ATOM worked so well as an R&D engine meant that my work with CAP and its archives would naturally find itself influencing it, and ATOM eventually became the main arena for the practical work of this PaR cycle. This reading of the similarities between CAP and ATOM, including ATOM's function as a site of memory for CAP, are almost exclusively visible to me, except where I explicitly share this knowledge with someone. Up to this point, no one other than myself has been interested in this aspect of the project, other than to provide consent and support for *my* engaging with this aspect of our venture (ATOM, personal communication, 2016). This support of the collective may find form as someone taking an active part in effecting theory-based interventions in the space, like engaging in role-play (and "playing along" with my proposals). However, no one else within the collective has engaged yet in the literature (or significant theoretical discussion) to understand why it is that I make the creative proposals I sometimes do.

CAP and ATOM work towards utopian ideals with no hope of achieving them perfectly. Nevertheless, both persist in working towards them to engender shifts in the intended direction (Fleishman, 2012a:142). Both initiatives engage in regenerating an enabled community in a response formed in dialogue with their contexts of place, time, and stakeholders. Their interventions centre on enabling "small acts of repair" upon the landscape in which they work (Bottoms & Goulish, 2007 in Fleishman, 2012a:143). Both do this through storying, though ATOM's is a subtler interweaving of performative elements, and the external story is generated in the present moment. We foreground through auxiliary narratives that everyone is an active creator (with)in the story of ATOM.

The mechanism of action — the parts of the experience that inspire towards an uptake of individual and social agency in the space — is affected not only through the overt, primary performance moments, but also through these covert and/or auxiliary performance encounters.

'Auxiliary moments' include unexpected performances, and the performance of the brand through social media platforms such as Instagram.⁷⁶ 'Curating auxiliary space' includes any shaping of areas and experiences not directly related to the delivery of the audio-visual showcase happening on the main dancefloor. "Auxiliary narratives" are moments not billed as performances on the night, but which constitute performances delivered into the space unexpectedly (from a guest's perspective). Some of these moments are read as performances, while others may not be unless the nature of the actions are asked about (in which case the information is freely given). One example of an auxiliary moment read as performance is a series of tango take-overs, which took place over four months at ATOM events. During the first two hours of the event, a dance partner of mine would arrive and we would dance Argentine tango for at least twenty minutes in the space. The whole intervention was highly theatrical. We met, danced, and disbanded in silence, after which the spell was purposefully broken by my proceeding immediately into mundane activities executed outside of the heightened state of

76 See www.instagram.com/atom_collective.

the dance. Being the only tango dancers in the space, and the only dancers *at all* at that time of the night, we drew attention to the potentials of the space to be used in unexpected ways. Another example of an auxiliary performance not immediately recognisable as a performance intervention is the lighting and dousing of the candles of the mezzanine area at the beginning and end of each night (pictured in Figure 13).

What designates these examples as performances, and as extraordinary, is that these actions are designed to arrest attention and to be watched. They are rooted in the body and the present, and purposefully inserted into the space in a way that acknowledges they set up a relationship between two or more presented beings (e.g. the spectator/s and performer) (Féral et. al., 1989:91; Fleishman, 2012a:13; Bull & Mitchell, 2016:3; Zarrilli, 2016:135–136). Further, they constitute enactments of a pre-existing score — tango is a form of contact improvisation around a set vocabulary, and the ritual of the candles is also choreographed and enacted at a particular time of the evening. They are also executed in a heightened state of awareness and are the products of heightened actions (Fischer-Lichte, 1990:13, 15; Turner, R., 2016:33, Zarrilli, 2016:123).

ATOM self-consciously inserts moments of performance into the event space. This was directly inspired through studying the Clanwilliam intervention. Examples of such performance moments during an ATOM event include the overt, expected performances of the DJs (in duet with the VJ), and covert ones, such as the intentionally late (and observed), lighting of the candles in the mezzanine. The latter is one attempt at breaking the fourth wall and modelling agency in the space in a way that normalises it as an everyday thing for everyday people. In comparison, the DJs and VJ are *expected* to perform. Their performance is an accepted part of the social trope and they are surrounded by an aura of otherness that sets them apart from the ordinary participant. For this reason, the fourth wall is not as easily broken here. In the moments where performances are inserted in unexpected ways, such as the lighting and dousing of the candles, there are two ways the act of agency over space is being modelled and normalised. First, a traditionally back-stage process is being observed, and attention is drawn to the fact that the event is the result of people performing work on the space. Second, there is a significantly diminished ‘aura of otherness’ surrounding those of the ATOM crew who are not performing as VJs or DJs. We are more approachable, and recognisably like the average patron. This highlights that ATOM is the result of seven ordinary people coming together and exercising agency over a particular space. The crew then share what results from this with others, alongside the invitation for these guests to take up multiple invitations to grow into a similar sense of agency. This does not necessarily assume that people entering the event are unaware of individual and collective agency, or disenfranchised from it. It acknowledges that *if that were the case*, then an opportunity arises for that reality to shift through our own modelling of attempts at embracing the limits of our own individual and collective agency, and simultaneously questioning its limits.

The Look and Feel of ATOM Events

The Waiting Room remains our primary venue up to the moment of writing, and the evening's trajectory is described specifically in relation to this place. A mark of our work is that we design our experiences in direct relation to the spaces in which we host.⁷⁷ We maintain brand recognition around a few trademarks, such as the use of plants as décor, circular screens for visuals projections, and Himalayan crystal salt lamps as part of the lighting design (see Figures 7, 8 & 15). Our space is characterised by a blend of natural textures and curves — such as plants, woods, crystals, and fabrics — and industrial textures and angles. This industrial feel is evoked through some of the music, as well as the architecture of the space. The venue's architecture is acknowledged and embraced as an influence on ATOM's aesthetic development, as well as the ability of each particular event to function towards our intended creative and Social Innovation aims. These aims include: providing a space for the collective members to practise their respective crafts synergistically; to function as a Social Innovation technology as far as possible, that supports attendants growing in their sense of individual and collective agency over the space, as we have grown through the experience ourselves; to showcase a synergistic relationship between music (including its live performance) and visuals; and to explore how the ingestion of this information can be supported by curation of the spaces around it.



The Waiting Room is a three-storey space accessed through an unmarked door protected by two bouncers. Walking up a set of black metal stairs, participants first encounter a fragrance, after which they reach the box office at the first landing on their left. At the box-office, the following happens: they are welcomed into the space personally; entrance fees are collected, and their arm is marked with the ATOM stamp. This mark allows them to leave and return to

77 Additional to The Waiting Room, we have hosted at ERA (71 Loop Street, Cape Town and no longer operational) and at True Music Pop-Up Club (219 Long Street, Cape Town).

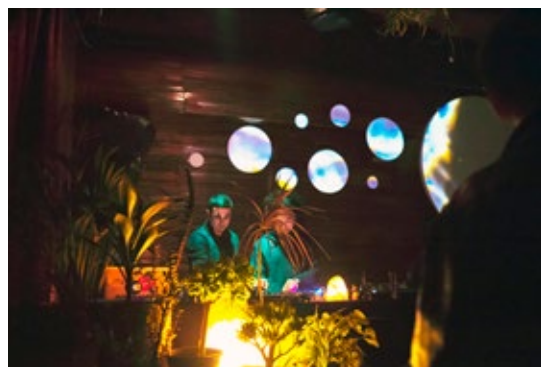


Figure 15: *ATOM aesthetic signatures include circular projection screens, plants, crystal lamps*

the space freely.⁷⁸ Finally, participants are invited to select a gemstone as a gift (see Figure 16). With this, the first cycle of exchange is complete and they proceed up the second flight of stairs into the main dance floor and bar area.



Figure 16: *The gemstones gifted at the door have made their way into PUPIL's visuals archive*

The space is augmented by the inclusion of a scent from a blend of essential oils. Multiple factors are considered when blending the olfactory palette. Which oil is being offered depends on the nature of the music line-up, in combination with the time of year, the weather, and so forth. The smell palette is blended as a unity. There are three stations for oils — at the box office, on the main dance floor, and in the mezzanine lounge — and I blend them in consideration with each other.

Immersion into the ATOM event starts with the introduction of a smell not usually encountered in daily reality, or in traditional clubbing experience. The physical encounter with ATOM's representative at the door initiates interpersonal connection. Kinaesthetic awareness is engaged through the ritualised gifting of the gemstone. In this way, participants are enfolded into the space incrementally. Further, the threshold nature of this first encounter with the event is augmented by the fact that it takes place on the first landing of a staircase, traditionally a symbol of liminal space, and signalling literal and symbolic passage from one place to another (Kaplan, 2003:303; Monaghan, 2006:2; ARAS, 2010:566). This is one way ATOM events are enacted in ritualistic and enfolding ways.

The main area is designated as the primary space due to its size and that it hosts the primary function of the evening — engaging with the audio-visual showcase (e.g. through dancing). Here, the collective dance acts as a social binding agent. This space is curated to support engagement with the sound and visuals. There is a large carpeted space in which to dance, and there are multiple places to sit at the periphery of the space, while clearly being able to take in the full spectrum of sound and visuals (see Figure 17). The space is filled with pot plants, crystals, and a number of knick-knacks such as wooden figurines that have grown to be a recognisable part of the ATOM family (see Figures 15 & 18). There is an emphasis on textures, reflected for instance by the choice to carpet the dancefloor and to curtain the

78 The stamp performs a similar function to the slip used to mark the faces of the participants of a CAP event (see Figure 3). It marks participants from non-participants (especially when out of the event space itself) and connects them to each other. It identifies them as part of a community of initiates of a ritual transformation that they've visibly experienced from the inside. Further, it signals the crossing of a threshold, from ordinary reality to extraordinary experience lifted out of the mundane — a space outside of ordinary time (Pinkola Estés, 1995:67; Turner, R., 2016:38–39).

windows in burgundy velvet.⁷⁹ Further, we use a fog machine intermittently throughout the night to add to the sense of unreality within the space. The DJ-decks and visuals screens are at the front of the dancefloor. This main space is extended by a balcony, which provides space for conversation, smoking, drinking, and breathing fresh air while remaining connected with the dancefloor — the music can be heard through the windows. A second open-air balcony, accessed through the mezzanine lounge, is available for those wanting space from the main stimuli of music, visuals, and fragrance (see Figures 9 & 19). The aesthetic of the main space is extended into these secondary spaces, to create the sense of a whole across the architecture of place.

The mezzanine lounge is accessible from the main dancefloor through one of two staircases. To arrive in the space, you must ascend for a second time (where the first was the ascension from the street). In this way, we link the concept of transformation to physical translocation, and rely on the basic symbolism of moving upwards as positive, associated subconsciously with growth and ascension (Monaghan, 2006:4; ARAS, 2010:3). In the mezzanine, there is space to relax on couches, create your own visuals through the Liquid Light Show (LLS), and to comfortably connect with other patrons in an indoor space removed from the main stimuli (see Figures 8, 12 & 13). This is the space most geared towards inviting participants to exercise their agency in their environment in a way that demonstrates it back to them. Further, this is the main arena for my performance interventions. This space is characterised by the yellows of candlelight, rich tones of greens, reds, and navy blues. The aim of this design is to evoke a feeling of comfort, safety, and warmth. The space is curated with a nod towards colour theory, understanding that the colour palette of the space influences the affective landscape of those in it. Controlling for individual contexts is impossible, because everyone has different personal associations with visual triggers. However, the curatorial strategy remains to eliminate the unnecessary information of prints and patterns in the colours, electrical light, music, etc. to capitalise on the potential effects the space may have on the individual and collective consciousness. We rely on large blocks of strong colours, analogue visuals (LLS) and candlelight as a response to the potentially overstimulating experience of the main floor. This is a space for breathing and connecting with self through connecting with others, while the dancefloor is geared for connecting with others through self.

In this way, the experience of an ATOM event, in terms of the design of the physical space, is predisposed on notions of ascension, and rhythmic shifts between spaces of large amounts of information which stimulate internal reflection/external silence, and spaces with less external information that suggest a participant connect beyond themselves with others and the environment.

79 These aesthetic choices simultaneously perform the function of improving the sound quality.



Figure 17: View of the carpeted dancefloor, from a sofa



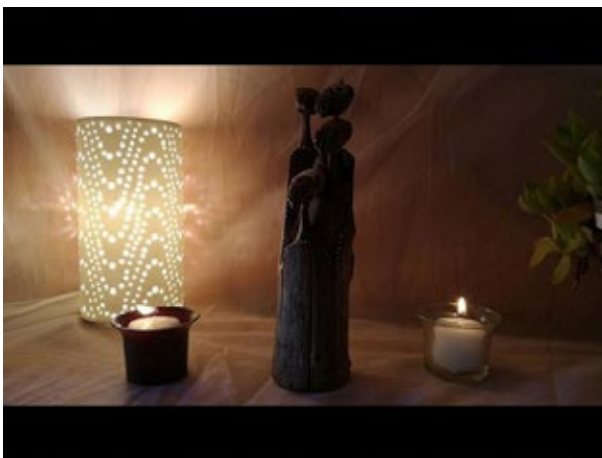
 katara_sedai

katara_sedai [prepping for the next @atom_collective event and I find my looks as beautiful as this 🌸] ... [@waitingroom.ct. tomorrow from 20: the finest in underground deeptech a ... #capetown #creative #atom_collective #backstage

Gefällt 11 Mal

14. JUNI 2017



 katara_sedai [Folgen](#)

katara_sedai [thank you for a rich understanding of myth, ritual and symbolism, and the opportunity to create spaces woven through with it 🌿] [detail of an installation, @atom_collective ft. @thorriion, now @waitingroom.ct | Day 6. #100happydays]

katara_sedai #gratitudejournal #day6 #atom_collective #installation #symbolism #curation

katara_sedai #loveliveshere

Gefällt 11 Mal

18. DEZEMBER 2017

Melde dich an, um mit „Gefällt mir“ zu markieren oder zu kommentieren.

Figure 18: ATOM figurines



Figure 19: A view of the upstairs balcony at the Waiting Room during an ATOM event

The artistic elements of ATOM events are also designed with rhythmic flow in mind. These creative elements woven together to overlay and interlay with the design of the physical environment include the sound, visuals (including lighting), and the fragrance.⁸⁰ These are the dematerialised aspects of the event that synergistically shape participant experience.

A minimum of three distinct and complementary scents are encountered during the evening — one emanating from the box office, one from the dancefloor, and one from the mezzanine. These blend perceptually as participants move through the space. Further, additional fragrance (e.g. Palo Santo) may be carried and emitted by participants and crew intermittently throughout the event. The weaving of scent over the entirety of the space was added as a distinct creative element due to its immersive influence on perception and mood (Fox, 2006:5; Fisher-Lichte, 2008:117–119). This may account for its typical inclusion in ritual practice (Pinkola Estés, 1995:448; Fox, 2006:31–32). Fragrances are selected in conjunction with the intended music and visual palette. Before each event, we conceptualise a mood board that fixes on an overall look and feel for that particular event. This is influenced by the ATOM style, in conjunction with the style of the headlining music and visuals artists.

The sound ATOM delivers is, on average, more sophisticated in terms of arrangement and delivery than most offerings on Cape Town's clubbing circuit. We are not crowd-pleasers in that sense. We find that centring our offering on a core delivery of technically brilliant sound and visuals, rather than on what is necessarily most popular. While a more dangerous business choice, it provides a space for fringe connoisseurs in public spaces, which also begins to shape a community that was previously more decentralised.

Self-sufficiency, including financial independence, is one requirement of any construct aiming to operate in ideal social innovation terms (Stanford GSB, n.d.; Mulgan *et. al.*, 2007:8; Murray *et. al.*, 2010:3; André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:111). ATOM is a not-for-profit collective that has managed to balance the demands of the neoliberal market thus far and remains increasingly financially independent while holding the most extended space possible for its creatives to operate without consideration for market demand. What we do consider are the desires, demands, and requirements of the people in the space on an interpersonal level. In this way, we can foreground the innovation of our technology, and the needs of the space and its participants in the senses that lie beyond money.

80 The curation of fragrance in the space is addressed here as artistry because it shares commonalities with the visuals and sound practice. It is the product of directed action, to shape perception and the affective landscape that lies within and beyond the bounds of language.

Definitive statements regarding the affective experience of the audial journey (and the ATOM event in general) for participants are impossible — this research is exploratory and was never conducted under experimental conditions. It is simply the product of doing something creative in the world with intention. Conclusions drawn from observed outcomes are informed by research that simultaneously shaped ATOM's creation. What can be said, is that the six hours of sound and visuals performance are curated, and prepared for with intention to deliver audio-visual progression. The intention behind the audio-visual journey is to provide an initial space to settle into the environment. Musically, we progress as a collective from slow Dub Tech through to the higher-energy style of Deep Tech and/or Tech House. These styles are characterised by different BPMs,⁸¹ different treatments of basslines, etc. and by their being produced and mixed on electronic equipment. Visually, the narrative progresses from a soft organic aesthetic (e.g. representation of flames, wood and light) to compliment the softer Dub Techno sounds, with an industrial aesthetic falling into place to compliment the cleaner sounds of Deep Tech and Tech House (see Figures 10 & 20).



Figure 20: *Visual aesthetics shift from an organic to industrial feel as the evening progresses*

81 Dub Tech is the slowest genre with a maximum tempo of 120 BPM.

ATOM events begin at 20h00, and run officially until 02h00. Most often, a significant number of crew and attendants spend some time together at someone's house afterwards to "key-down". This is an opportunity to release from the high-energy state of the party, communally reflect on the experience, and prepare physically, psychologically, and affectively each for our respective beds. For guests, this is the point at which the event closes. The crew's experience is extended into the following day, on which we meet to strike the event. The meal we share after this is completed signals the closing of the event.

ATOM in Relation to EDMC: What Makes Us Different?

ATOM shares certain things in common with other clubbing experiences. These commonalities are partially responsible for what makes EDM⁸² events effective as ritual transformers (St John, 2008:4–6). They are also what initially pointed me towards the potential for this type of space to function in intentionally socially generative ways, because I began to understand my two streams of work (research into performance and its social transformation potential, and hosting with ATOM) as not necessarily distant or unrelated.

ATOM attempts to generate a new symbolic world, specific to itself, as a means to provide a freedom from traditional hierarchical organisation of social space (St. John, 2008:150; Garcia, 2013:5). This freedom then allows for new forms of connection to be prototyped and, potentially, extended outside of the space. Unusual to the average EDM experience, ATOM's work is fed by interaction with theories of ontological design (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari, 1993; Jarcho, Berkman & Lieberman, 2011; Cuonzo, 2014), social innovation (e.g. Pol & Ville, 2009; Moolaert, MacCallum, Mehmood & Hamdouch (Eds), 2013; Sangham, 2014), ritual transformation (e.g. Turner, V., 1979; Pinkola Estés, 1995; Fischer-Lichte, 1998; Bull & Mitchell, (Eds.), 2016), and curatorial theory (e.g. Misiano & Zabel (Eds.), 2005; Hamilton & Skotnes (Eds.), 2014; Remes, MacCulloch & Leino (Eds.), 2014; Linden & Campbell, 2016). Further, when we began, we were the first within our genre to bring a conscious process of immersion as a stylistic element and social innovation tool into Cape Town's EDM space. The concept of immersion as a tool is now being exploited by groups such as AETHER CPT⁸³ and Bazique.⁸⁴ These are two local examples of EDM offerings that specifically mention the immersive experience as a drawcard. Because our conceptual and creative decisions are the products of a combination of research and creative practice, our front-end interface is less related to market demand than purely commercial efforts. This also means that we retain a freedom to innovate in terms of aesthetic, and the type of experiences we may offer is not restricted to EDM.⁸⁵

At the centre of our practice is a commitment to a Social Innovation aim: the desire to

82 Electronic Dance Music (EDMC: EDM Culture). EDM is an umbrella term that accommodates a vast range of musical genres. These include Rave, Trance, House, Techno and their associated subgenres (St John, 2008:165, note 2). EDM events are especially characterised by the fact that the music is created on and/or modified through electronic equipment. Further, within EDMC the dancefloor is the locus of a participant's creative expression (Rill, 2010:139).

83 FB: @AetherCPT

84 Bazique Festival of Music and Performing Arts: <http://bazique.co.za>

85 The nature of these shifts in the types of events we may expand into will only become visible over time, as our creative process evolves naturally, in relation to continued research into social innovation and ritual transformation processes, and market demand.

practise synergistically as a team to create experiences that work to dissolve existing social hierarchies, and provide a space in which they can be examined, deconstructed, and reformed along egalitarian lines. Specifically, we enact this aim through working to create spaces that increase the sense of individual and collective agency, relying on ritual aesthetics and encounters with performance moments to inspire this. This means that EDM events are simply how we appear in the world/market right now. Being intimately related with a process of research and being driven by our social transformation intention means that we are not limited to appearing in this way. This is the fundamental difference between us and other collectives practising within our domain. It is a difference in approach, more than a difference in product.

What expresses ATOM's Social Innovation aims?

The events are the technology through which ATOM affects the world. In turn, it appears that curatorial practice intersecting with performance moment within each event plays a role in shaping how it does so.

Firstly, ATOM works within the domain of a particular generation, in a particular socio-economic and physical landscape, to (re)construct a collective identity. This lays the ground for change, while working to ameliorate the usual risks of social fragmentation that may occur with creative intervention in any community, especially when initiated by collectives perceived as coming from outside of that community (see André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:242). While ATOM is not entirely initiated by external agents, the fact that there is one collective member engaged with the intervention from the perspective of conducting research affiliated with a University, can set it apart from being an entirely non-threatening presence. It becomes tagged through its institutional affiliation with narratives of imposition and epistemic violence that carry the risk of social fragmentation if this aspect is not managed in a mindful way, and if the theory and practice informing the shape of its operations are not executed with sensitivity and humility.

Within ATOM itself, we have generated a collective identity as ATOM that surpasses our own individual identities as creatives in the field. For example, Intrinsic Audio Sessions⁸⁶ is often conflated with ATOM, despite being a separate and founding entity with an independent aesthetic and portfolio.

Amongst our colleagues, we have contributed to a growing movement towards collaboration and support across collectives that leverage our skills for mutual benefit while avoiding competition. Though accepting the challenge of being business-minded, we have consistently refused to be profit-driven. Choosing our alliances carefully, we have finally begun planning for our first outdoor festival with another Cape Town collective that's happy to work in the principled ways we do to craft our work in immersive experiences on a larger canvas. Rather than being a cause for division, we have thus far managed to work in such a way that our work is seen as unifying the creative underground.

Within the community, we have supported and actively grown the idea that ATOM is a platform to engage with as an active participant in *co-creating* social and recreational space. We hold no secrets, and while we maintain executive control, we keep space open for self-directed action from non-affiliated members. This results in a public event in which the participants feel presented in the space as agents of change, responsible for aspects of its

86 www.soundcloud.com/intrinsic-audio-sessions / intrinsicaudio.info@gmail.com

execution. For instance, we are known for our easy atmosphere of volunteering and ad hoc creative collaboration. The interior decoration of many of our events has been the result of a rotating group of volunteers who feel like taking part in the energetic lead-up to the event, often in exchange for free entrance. This has led to more formal alliances — one such volunteer has grown into the (paid) role of supplying our core collection of potted plants.

In summary, through our operational strategy, we have managed to avoid setting ourselves apart as top-down producers. Rather, we work to generate spaces as a part of the community these spaces are generated for. This is not an artificial front — we literally are the party “created by friends, for friends.” This stands testament to the efficacy of the applied research influencing the ways in which we balance the demands of running an increasingly successful collective and the levels of formalisation that accompany it, with the risks of this distancing us from the people we work with and for.

Secondly, ATOM potentially addresses a social challenge with a constant commitment to refine the efficiency of its intervention. What particularly motivates us, is the challenge of social fragmentation along cultural, racial, and linguistic lines that similarly inspired address by collectives such as that behind CAP. This fragmentation is one that we observed and experienced as individuals active in our society and within the landscape of Cape Town’s nightlife. Collective discussion identified that our experiences and perceptions of this landscape and desires towards it were mutual. We also touched on anecdotal observations shared by our peers. While our work began in response to anecdotal evidence, engagement with the literature proves that our observations are reflective of the general circumstance — that Cape Town remains polarised along socio-economic and racial lines (Turok, 2001: 2371; Lemanski, 2007:459).

For instance, in 2009, Tredoux and Dixon published a study on the demography of Long Street nightclubs. Within this, they note that the popular representation of this social landscape is not necessarily reflective of its reality: that while Long Street’s night-time economy has a reputation for being heterogeneous, racial and economic integration remains an inconsistent ideal (Tredoux & Dixon, 2009:766, 774). They further acknowledge that little research exists that considers issues of socio-spatial polarisation at this scale (2009:762, 775), but that research at this ‘micro-ecological’ level may be useful to understand causes and conditions leading to the perpetuation of social segregation (2009:775). ATOM’s work may be viewed as practice-based research at a similar scale, acknowledging subjective experiences that speak of the segregation of contemporary social space, and formulating and executing a practice that addresses it. Work such as this thesis attempts to contribute to the body of literature that attests to interventions such as this, sharing their methodology and results in such a way that builds constructively from the reality as noted by scholars such as Lemanski (2007) and Tredoux and Dixon (2009).

While there are interventions, arts-based ones particularly (such as CAP), that are effective in generating sustainable social change, ATOM additionally and purposefully prototypes towards fulfilling Social Innovation criteria. It aims to perform the function of lightening the weight of one area of suffering, but without transferring the weight of itself onto others. We are systematically working towards self-sufficiency across multiple domains that will ensure the technology we enact in the space can function in a way that does not rely upon the presence of individual and/or founding members. In this way, the death knell of ATOM in this form is only sounded when the landscape it is working to shift has changed so much as to be unrecognisable, making ATOM irrelevant. If ATOM is truly effective in achieving its current

aims, it will eventually work itself out of existence because the landscape of inequality and fragmentation that its form is addressing will no longer exist by virtue of its operating in that space. This is one marker of its ability to function in Social Innovation terms.

ATOM is working towards total self-sufficiency, both financially and operationally. This is the first domain in which it demonstrates itself as a technology that builds upon the models of the interventions and creative movements that inform it.⁸⁷ Secondly, value generated by ATOM operating in its landscape accrues to the community, rather than to the private individuals that make up the collective.

ATOM is structured loosely as an open-source collaborative platform. While the seven executive members exercise a degree of creative direction not shared by all collaborators, we also carry all the financial and reputational risk. Values that are generated include social, financial, and cultural values. We are effectively a creative incubator that bankrolls itself and supports the growth of self-sufficiency in other individual and social initiatives by sharing skills and space as far as possible. Our executive decisions are not made for maximising profit, but for maximising ATOM's function as an equaliser in the socio-economic and socio-political spaces of Cape Town's underground music scene. For example, one of our missions is to consistently provide high quality experiences that bring high value, high-cost artists into low-cost spaces. We have hosted top international artists⁸⁸ while charging a cover that undercuts most parties of this kind, even when hosting local artists. This itself is an act of cultural agitation and resistance against the current trend of gentrification that excludes the majority of Cape Town's social sector from international-calibre experiences, by hosting them in imposing spaces and charging prices well above the reach of the average person.

This is one way in which we actively work to distribute value accrued across our community in an equitable way. We run events at cost, and keep them accessible by keeping prices as low as possible. Further, subtler ways of distributing value occur in the ways we ensure that the space of ATOM that the executive enjoys is open to others. We work together because we love to; the first functional and sustainable community network that ATOM generated was itself. We are also open to sharing that space with others. First, this social value is distributed beyond ourselves when we open our doors for the public "official" part of the event, but it is also shared out beyond ourselves by opening the backstage processes to willing collaborators.

Set-up and take-down of ATOM events are intensely social affairs, involving communal meals, horseplay, and the bonding experience of any ritual initiation-through-exhaustion of this kind. As a volunteer, when you engage in this 48-hour process of event-making with us you are enfolded in a community of creators that rejoices in its togetherness, supported to take ownership of your contribution to the space, and treated as an equal. In this simple way, we fulfil a Social Innovation criterion by our willingness and ability to share the social and affective benefits of holding the space for ourselves to collaborate in the world, with others.

Further, our aim of contributing to (re)generating Cape Town's night-time landscape towards something equitable and less exclusionary, is accomplished both in our conduct

87 While CAP is the case study focussed on here, ATOM draws inspiration from other movements and projects as well. Collaborative, synaesthetic and immersive and sustainable entertainment spaces such as Johnny Knüppel and Kater Holzig, Spektrum Berlin, and Fusion and Garbisch Festivals are notable examples.

88 Ida Daugaard (Wide Awake) and Powel (All Day I Dream) were presented on 26 January 2017 (Ida Daugaard), 6 May 2017 and 11 May 2016 (Powel) and entrance was ZAR50 before 22h00 and ZAR70 (2017) / ZAR80 (2018) thereafter.

towards the public who attend our events, but also in the ways in which we foster our working relationships with our suppliers, service providers, and colleagues. Archival footage and photographs⁸⁹ consistently show a pattern of racially heterogeneous attendance in a scene that still struggles with meaningful integration (Tredoux & Dixon, 2009:766, 774). Setting up and maintaining a network of reciprocal relationships between ATOM and other creative collectives, and service providers that are not profit-driven but governed by reciprocity, has resulted in the formation of a community around us that is functional in this way. This allows all of us to leverage the power of community to take greater creative risks. For instance, ATOM's investment into the space of The Waiting Room has resulted in the generation of a trust-based relationship that has led them to underwrite 50% of our sound equipment costs and allow us liberties to curate the space in ways not necessarily available to other collectives hosting there (see Figure 21). This may seem small, but it signals a fundamental shift in the way the community working together to create these experiences for publics are willing and able to operate together. This shift is as a direct result of the ways ATOM has chosen to appear.



Figure 21: *The Waiting Room and ATOM share an especially trusting relationship*

Further, ATOM specifically leverages diversity as a source of creativity and as a mechanism driving its ability to achieve our social innovation aims (see Hospar & Dolm, 2005 and Jacobs, 1961 in Tremblay and Pilati, 2013:67–68). The team is diverse both culturally and in terms of skills-set. Further, we make an active commitment to curate spaces in such a way that they invite diverse forms of engagement and are culturally inclusive – within the limits of providing an experience of encountering a particular genre of music. The kind of experience you may have on the dancefloor on the lower level of the Waiting Room space is very different to what

89 Find links to our photographic records through our FB page @theatomcollective.

is invited in the mezzanine lounge and the upper level, open-air deck. Further, the space is aesthetically designed to be of no particular culture and to dislocate language from its typical position at the centre of all communication. At our events music is the lynchpin, and the music we present is stripped of reliance on lyric.⁹⁰ Further, the invitation to participate and co-create is extended to include the ability to engage in the collaborative atmosphere of the set-up and take-down of each event. It is the *community* you are invited to become a part of, rather than just the event you are asked to attend. It is our hope that working in this way invites participants to bring their whole selves to the table, and minimises processes of exclusion along cultural and linguistic lines. We also hope that this invitation is understood to extend into the ways participants may apply this totality of their being to shape the space in an observable way. This invitation stands both for the ATOM executive members, as well as the *ad hoc* community surrounding us that is created on an event-by-event basis.

Another aspect of our design that qualifies ATOM's work as a Social Innovation technology, is that we work to improve the network of social relations we form while addressing the need we have identified. This is part of our commitment to operating within the parameters for evaluation that govern what a Social Innovation is, and how it operates in the world. We do this to derive support from the existing base of research and practice into other successful and efficient social ventures.

Partly, we address the need for improved social relationships within our local community. We have seen shifts in the nature of working relationships within the past 24 months of our operation, and received numerous accounts of positive social feedback regarding the contribution of our events to generating an electronic music scene that is inclusive and welcoming. We also receive feedback from patrons and colleagues that numerous productive creative and social relationships have formed and strengthened in the space, despite ATOM having no direct influence over this other than shaping the nature of the *space in which this engagement happens*. People come to our events specifically because they have gained a reputation for being a welcoming space, regardless of your colour, creed, or feelings of vulnerability (e.g. Sole, personal communication 2017, 16 December). It is this evidence of being a safe place that also indicates that our spaces are ones in which sustainable social networks form, and improved social relationships take shape. As a regular events producer on Long Street, we reliably encounter fewer incidents of harassment, violence and drunk and disorderly behaviour than comparable events.

Our arising in the world and operating in the way that we do demonstrably improves social relationships within our domain. This occurs both directly, by ourselves being impeccable professional partners, and indirectly by hosting spaces that actively support engaging with others in equal and open-hearted ways. Importantly, the one thing that sets us apart from other similar initiatives in the Cape Town underground music scene, is the fact that we specifically leverage performance arts (such as music and performance art, within a curated environment) to obtain our effect.

90 For a sample of the kinds of music we play at these events, visit [@soundcloud.com/atom_collective](https://soundcloud.com/atom_collective)

ATOM in Relation to The Clanwilliam Arts Project: Archives and Practice

The ATOM experience contrasts in appearance with the CAP experience. For instance, there is no week-long participatory build up for participants and crew; the event is set-up and struck within 48 hours.⁹¹ Further, ATOM is executed in a space that is familiar to all its crew. In the case of the CAP, facilitators travel to Clanwilliam from Cape Town. ATOM is executed in Cape Town, with people who are local to the space. Its execution does not require a translocation of space, and ATOM events must rely on other means to stimulate a sense of immersion, especially for its crew who are familiar with the space.⁹² This leads to additional aesthetic differences, such as ATOM's use of fragrance as a means of enfoldment.

There is also no obvious emphasis on walking as an external reflection of an internal transformation. CAP's lantern parade serves to create a physical link to the space (see Figure 22). This emphasis is absent in the work of ATOM. At most, when working from The Waiting Room, that you need to ascend a staircase to access each space can stand as a metaphor for the stages of transformation – a nod to the traditional ritual function of forms of ascension and the archetypal association of staircases with transformation through translocation (Kaplan, 2003:303; Monaghan, 2006:2; ARAS, 2010:566).

ATOM is of a smaller scale. The percentage of the population that it touches is less than that of CAP, even within the limit-domain of Cape Town's night-time economy. But, like CAP, it identified a social challenge and set out to address it to the best of its ability, using ritual performance as its lynchpin. This question of scale includes the ways different ritual elements are enfolded in the space. For instance, a common ritual trope is the inclusion of the 4 elements — Earth, Air, Fire, and Water — within the space. CAP includes fire through extroverted fire performances (see Figure 23), while ATOM suspends candles from the ceiling within the mezzanine and draws limited attention to them (see Figure 13).

91 This does not include the necessary planning and debriefing that happens off-location, amongst the executive.

92 The exception to this, is in the case of guest artists that have been flown in and have not played for us or attended our events before.



Figure 22: A lantern parade begins CAP's closing event



Figure 23: The night includes a showcase of fire performances

While aesthetic and conceptual parallels can be drawn between them, ATOM and CAP are intrinsically different. This is because they respond to an inherited social circumstance in two different locations, under the pressures of different contexts. In this way, while being conceptually similar, they respond from a position of immanence to their domain and address aesthetically with reference to the specificity of their own space (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994).

External to the event itself, CAP and ATOM share an emphasis in collective social rituals that bind the facilitators of the space together. The simplest example of this is the communal meal. During my field-trip with CAP, we gathered daily around a shared meal and at least one additional session for collective reflection. ATOM follows a similar pattern. We share a meal before almost every meeting or creative jam session. I have observed that gathering in this way creates a core community that feels connected and up-to-date with each other. Operating together as facilitators in the public realm of the workshops and/or events from this position, is a form of modelling the society we work towards creating.

Both ATOM and CAP are purposefully immersive and stimulate a sense of unreality. This provides safe innovation grounds for participants to prototype new relational ways of being. This is also partially made possible through modelling the desired relational model in the space as a team of facilitators. For example, CAP directly influenced the establishing of a Clanwilliam community arts initiative called 'ComNet', whose members now take a leadership role in the festival (De Bruyn, 2016:258). Both ATOM and CAP are immersed within the lived circumstance of their communities, responding directly and through arts-based interventions to local and inherited circumstance.

Further, CAP is a memorial constituted as a site of practice, reinvesting the landscape with stories from the past in a way that is relevant to the present. This pulls an awareness of the past into the present, to reinvent the future. ATOM inherits a present social trope and orientates it towards evolving into a future reality, which pulls the future into the present. The memorialisation that ATOM performs is also incidental — an acknowledgement through tangential traces (such as this thesis) of the major influences on its design and forms of execution. Meanwhile, CAP purposefully works to reawaken the memory locked into physical archival traces in a way that directly points towards them.

ATOM's existence, form, and functions are intimately related to my engagement with the CAP archives and the process of the PAR cycle that eventually brought these streams of learning and practice together and in an increasingly direct relationship. While both projects draw influence from an archive of performance, the nature of this relationship differs. The way ATOM relates to the CAP archives differs from the way CAP relates to the Bleek & Lloyd Collection. For instance, CAP draws material from the Bleek & Lloyd, while ATOM draws on the CAP archives to learn about the concepts informing its practice. The latter is accessed as a tool for learning, lessons from which are then applied practically within the space of the ATOM event, whilst the former is accessed as a source of material (e.g. stories) that is then inserted into the space of the CAP event-cycle and directly referenced. Both projects become themselves through their engagement with their source archives. Both function as repertoirc curation of the archive, even though they draw from them in different ways and engage at different levels of materiality of interpretation. In technical terms, CAP is a curation of the Bleek & Lloyd Collection, while ATOM is a response to the CAP archive.

Both the CAP archive and the Bleek & Lloyd are archives constituted of Performance traces and detritus. Detritus comprises the remaining physical traces that were directly generated by the performance event (McGillivray, 2016:12). Traces are signifiers that point to

a performance happening, and are not necessarily directly generated through contact with the performance moment (Zaayman, 2014:317; Arrighi & Watt, 2011:67). Similarly, the repertoirc projects that have grown through engagement with them give rise to archives themselves.

CAP's operation has made way for ATOM's repertoirc interpretation and translation across space, context, and time. In the same way, ATOM's growing archive is open for potential future reawakening into the embodied language of repertoire. This potential is partially what makes interpretative archival traces so important as an additional accession alongside performance detritus. These traces are what point us to the conceptual architecture behind social interventions that potentially appear outwardly quite mundane. It is here, in the manifestos, notes, and articles that describe what is happening, that links to theoretical discourse can be generatively made and the intentions behind interventions be clarified. This serves to open space for fair critique on the dissonances between the conceptual intentions and the realities of practice.

ATOM and its events appear different from CAP and its events, because they respond to different socio-economic contexts and work with different communities. This necessitates an adaption of approach. Whenever ATOM is enacted, it enlivens the memory of CAP, because it continues the work of the latter in the world, in a way that simultaneously extends it. It also embodies the spirit of the Clanwilliam initiative in this way, because the latter is a contextually appropriate response to a present circumstance generated by a past inequality. CAP works to reinvest the disenfranchised communities of Clanwilliam with a sense of ownership (and enablement) over their lands by reawakening within them an awareness of its historical texture. However, it doesn't attempt to do so by re-enacting historical actions. There are two reasons for this. First, there is no way to definitively know which rituals, actions, and stories were enacted there, and second, because recreating them in a historically accurate way would serve no purpose other than to point people's attentions to the past. Of greater social importance is using the inheritance of the past to direct people's attentions to engaging with the present moment in such a way that creates functional and sustainable futures. With this intention, CAP makes no attempt to make their intervention appear historically accurate. It rather expends energy to create something new, using resources and forms of cultural expression freely available in the present contexts (Fleishman, 2012a:142). ATOM does the same. We respond directly to a local and present circumstance, and regenerate a social network by using contemporary and inherited social tropes. CAP re-established a form of cultural expression (communal storytelling) that was lost to that landscape through colonial influence. ATOM has inherited an existing youth culture which finds release in nightclubs. We are expanding from that existing basis to maximise the potential benefits of that group activity by, for instance, enhancing its ritual aspects.

Further, through tailoring the experience to support the regeneration of equitable participant networks, we are challenged to simultaneously dissolve the many negatives that often find expression within EDMC. While these incidences — such as sexual harassment and petty theft — are symptomatic of larger social breakdowns, hosting spaces that are affectively transformative does the work of enabling the individual to reflect on what they bring into the communal space. Experiencing this in a curated immersive environment tailored for the purpose, appears to support continued growth towards positive forms of social expression. This is partially achieved by ensuring that integrated interpersonal behaviours are present within the environment for participants to observe and model. Like CAP in Clanwilliam, we work to regenerate a sense of community in a disenfranchised population, by modelling forms of

interpersonal engagement that are functional. This modelling is scaffolded on an engagement with performance as a social disruptor and a ritualised form of practice.

CAP and ATOM are both grassroots community interventions, informed by theory as a part of a PaR cycle. Each collective is constituted of a combination of artists, educators, and researchers, who leverage their skills to collectively inspire social change. They do so by hosting spaces in which they model integrated social behaviours as a team, and so inspire these behaviours in others. Further, the performative and communal nature of these spaces provides safe opportunities for those behaviours to be enacted by participants themselves. These may then be replicated in the world outside of the ritual space. In Clanwilliam, these spaces constitute the annual week of facilitated arts-workshops and the community festival held at its end. In Cape Town, that space is the ATOM event, and the auxiliary spaces that arise around enabling that central space.⁹³

Like CAP, ATOM is engaged in supporting a growing sense of agency in those who engage with it. They both drive at the root of a South African social problem — healing traumas of systematised processes of dispossession — and they do so by working to eliminate the underlying approach to negotiating difference that causes such oppressive systems to arise in the first place. In this way, ATOM can be said to extend the work of CAP. It remembers it by embodying the same structures, for example by acknowledging that its efficacy is only observable, and only arises if carried out over multiple instances over time. ATOM functions as a site of practice in which our principles are embodied and outcomes achieved within a new community. This is memorialisation through process, not through product. Here the process is the product. This is also a celebration of the powers of Repertoire to strengthen a sense of community in otherwise fractured social landscapes.

Conclusion

In summary, the Clanwilliam Arts Project and its archives were the seed from which this research project grew. An enquiry into the nature of the material archive led to the curation of the exhibition *Cut | Corner*. Analysing this experience in relation to a simultaneous exploration of theory into performance archives, curation, and social innovation, grew into a focus on the roles of performance within these environments as a mechanism for individual and social transformation. This was especially informed by the fact that using performance in this way is at the core of both CAP and Barney Simon's work, though they practise(d) their craft in different ways. Specifically, it considered performance in its transformational role through its appearances as embodied event, traces, and detritus. Performance, in this sense, becomes a curatorial strategy to effect change within the individual and social environment through archival (re)interpretation and the processes of memorialisation that are enacted through it.

This lens, which considers performance a mechanism for transformation (with curatorial praxis as its effector), was increasingly applied to the work of ATOM. ATOM was a naturally co-arising thread of my extramural professional practice. As my academic research progressed, the threads of my theoretical and practical curricula merged with my extracurricular creative practice. Theoretical engagement expanded to include the aspect of social innovation as a

93 For example, we often hold "creative jam sessions" as a crew and with guest artists and potential collaborators. These are spaces of free play in which we share our creative skills, and workshop new content.

potentially generative lens through which to engage with the work.

Through this imbrication of my formal curriculum and extracurricular practice, an understanding of the potential of the ATOM space to function in social innovation terms was formed. Iterative prototyping came into play. This entailed running cycles of events fairly regularly, under similar circumstances, but changing elements within them as and when understanding of theory grew, or a particular observation was made that certain areas could improve. In this way, ATOM's functioning as prototype for a social innovation construct that utilises performance encounters as its key technology is considered in its context of a continuous process of *becoming*. It is not what it aims to be (an effector of a social innovation technology) at its most efficient, yet it continuously moves towards being one through a constant determination to practise.

With the identification of curated encounters with performance moments potentially playing a significant role as a mechanism of transformation within the public social space, the distance between my academic and extracurricular activities began to close. With the mixing of these two spaces, the final research question came into focus. Simultaneously, a process of interrogating the observations made in both spaces (academic, extracurricular, and the third, merged, space) has led to tentative understandings of how some ways performance may work in these contexts as a transformative mechanism. Weaving between these spaces of observation, practice, and reflection in relation to theory has spotlighted the role of autopoiesis in the space. The relationships between ritual and curated performance encounter, autopoiesis, liminal space, and social (re)generation will be discussed in Chapter Five.



CHAPTER FIVE



CHAPTER FIVE

Some Conclusions and Touchstones for New Beginnings

Introduction

The following chapter details observations and conclusions drawn from this research cycle. These observations specifically relate to the ways in which performance can serve as an effective Social Innovation technology. It appears to achieve this through its ability to support the development of individual agency and the growth of senses of community.

The chapter also considers the role curatorial practice can play in this exchange. It discusses how performance encounters may be mediated with the intention of augmenting these experiences' ability to work in this way. This application of curatorial shaping suggests itself because performance appears to work through its initiation and negotiation of autopoietic feedback loops (hereafter AFL) (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:199). Setting these loops in motion compels an individual to make sense of liminal space.

Liminality is a product of the dissonance created. The necessary negotiation of paradoxical stimuli present in performance encounters generates this effect. One example of paradox arising through the performance encounter, is the question of where the boundaries between reality and fiction lie. When skilfully navigated, these dissonant states have been shown to be valuable opportunities for the rewiring of new behaviours (Luisi, 2003:51; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:205; Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20).

This is partly where curatorial scaffolding comes in. These states create a space of potential from which new ways of being and seeing can grow. For this reason, performance marks itself as a sharp tool in the social innovation toolbox, as a bringer of possibility. Coupled with the strength of curatorial strategy to shape reception of material encounters (Vogel, 2003:201; Draxler, 2012:57; Raqs Media Collective, 2012:107) and its established ritual functions of social acculturation (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52, 195; Turner, R., 2016:33), performance may function to increase senses of individual and social agency. This entails creating spaces in which inherited social and world views can be revised, and new ones developed. These reflections are primarily discussed in relation to the forms and functions of ATOM.

This thesis project was refined through engaging in an increasingly systematic PaR cycle. My research has developed my understanding of the functions of memorialisation processes

and the uses of performative rituals within them. My interest has especially been extended in the latter's use in channelling these processes towards operationalised aims.⁹⁴ Through reading, I have come to consider that public memorialisation and commemoration praxes operate in much the same way as performance rituals when negotiating traumas of loss (Dickerman, 2001; Taylor, 2003; Fleishman, 2012a). This was essentially what began search for what it was *about* performance and embodied ritual processes that meant they were experienced by the human individual and social body as transformative in ways that make them archetypal, future-oriented forms of memorialisation. The fact that performances are embodied makes them transient, and effective, because these processes of remembering and forgetting through action do not allow for stasis. Rather, they insist upon evolution towards states of freedom beyond trauma, which acknowledges the trauma honourably while not being arrested by it.

These observations were only clarified in relation to a study of the Archive and the relationships that exist between it and its human interlocutors. Learning through doing, and reflecting on that doing (with observations refracted through the lens of theory), I moved through engaging with a case study, to working with an archive, to working with Repertoire.⁹⁵ Governed by social innovation purpose, the question then became: what is missing from this type of engagement with memory that can only be touched by performance? Are both forms of engagement with the past⁹⁶ required in order to approach a form of knowing that could be grasped as material for building potential futures? How could this quest be served through curatorial praxis and the use of particular frameworks (such as Social Innovation)?

Observations

Operationalising Performance for Social Innovation Purposes

Social Innovation is concerned with “the engagement with a transpersonal domain of experience that aims at resolving systemic (and ecosystemic) breakdowns; or alternatively [is] orientated towards a future world” (Sangham, 2014:10). How, then, could any arts-based intervention make use of this conceptual framework?

The drive to qualify any such thing in Social Innovation terms places certain constraints upon it. These constraints are not shared by its similarly socially minded predecessors (such as CAP). Choosing to respond to them is what sets ATOM apart from previous forms of Applied Theatre and Drama. In many cases, the imposed conceptual constraints necessarily alter the shape of the public interface that the intervention can take. For instance, to qualify as a social innovation, an intervention has to be financially self-sufficient, or function towards that goal in a way that makes it conceivably attainable within a given and reasonable time-frame. This excludes the possibilities of perpetually relying on donations and other philanthropically derived income. Such reliance would relegate the intervention (technically speaking), from the status of ‘social innovation’ to ‘charity’. The two types of intervention are not mutually exclusive, but the former is designed more specifically as an efficient mechanism of systemic social change. It consciously courts market demands and takes its place as a self-sufficient

94 In this case, towards social innovation aims.

95 CAP, *Cut|Corner* and ATOM respectively

96 i.e. through Archive and Repertoire

entity in the given (i.e. Capitalist) domain. This is one way of protecting its conceptual independence, which leads me to believe that interventions built along Social Innovation lines may be more robust constructs for social change.

Social Innovation is a generative process that openly distributes any accrued value to involved communities. An effective social innovation generates or improves a sustainable network of social relations (André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013:103–104; Tremblay & Pilati, 2013:75). This function is also identified in performance theory as something that creative arts and ritual processes are especially good at (Pinkola Estés, 1995:67, 197; Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52, 55, 175; André & Abreu, 2013:112; Tremblay and Pilati, 2013:76; Turner, R., 2016:33). It follows that Performance could function as a tool to achieve this social innovation aim. The realities of how this may occur were explored through my work with ATOM.

As a concept and practice, social innovation operates within capitalism, but is not of it. Further, it operates within capitalism far more successfully than performance practice does. For example, financially, the Social Innovation sector does not appear to suffer from the same trope of impoverishment as the Arts sector. This is evidenced by the radical growth of private companies such as IDEO, the ready acceptance of schools of Design Thinking at prestigious universities such as Stanford, Potsdam, and UCT, and the growing number of innovation awards now available (e.g. SAB Innovation Awards) (HPI, 2018; SAB Foundation, 2018; UCT, 2018; UCT GSB, 2018). Again, an alliance between the two suggests itself, especially considering what the Creative Arts sector can learn from Social Innovation in terms of economic sustainability, and what the Social Innovation sector may learn from Performance about the processes of creation.

Further, both Social Innovation and Performance praxes favour trans-disciplinarity. Both inherently propose themselves as potential partners in any work towards equitable and sustainable social realities.

Critiques of the efficacy of using performance as a social intervention exist, and these centre on the critique that these creative arts interventions methods and results cannot be measured and standardised (Merli, 2002:115; Frey, 2005:2). This concern fails to acknowledge the critical role the affective realm plays in human social processes, as well as the fact that its situational response *is* the standardised response, and its adaptability is what makes it so effective in reshaping individual and social affective space. To approach a Social Innovation task from the centre of the creative act makes sense, because it allows the freedom of the unpredictable to come into play. Further, it does so while making use of the frameworks built into social innovation development⁹⁷ in such a way that provides a form of standardisation to the design of performance/creative arts interventions. This also shapes their outcomes towards greater reliability.

There is minimal literature on Social Innovation praxis originating from the Global South, especially from Africa. This is despite the fact that the Global South is where innovations are particularly needed and, through necessity, are so ubiquitously seeded throughout our

97 One example of this are the five key descriptors for any Social Innovation. As outlined in Chapter One (Key Concepts), these five descriptors are that: the intervention must aim at resolving an ecosystemic breakdown in the social landscape; it must either resolve a breakdown not previously addressed, or resolve it in a novel way that is more efficient than previous interventions; it must be orientated towards generating a future world in which the innovation itself or its carrier mechanism becomes redundant; the social, financial, environmental and/or cultural value generated by this intervention must accrue to society as a whole, rather than to private individuals; it must constructively address this social need while simultaneously improving the social network(s) (re)formed while this need is addressed (Stanford GSB, n.d ; Mulgan et. al., 2007; André, Abreu & Carmo, 2013; Moulaert, MacCallum & Hillier, 2013:13; Tremblay and Pilati, 2013:67; Sangham, 2015:10).

society. Therefore, considering my work in Social Innovation terms was shaped by the desire to contribute to the growing body of literature generated by operators in the Global South. It is important that people from the Global South speak to, from, and about their experiences and address the particular challenges of Global South society in a context-appropriate way. I have, as a citizen of the Global South, a personal interest in effecting systemic social change. By documenting performance-based arts interventions originating from the Global South that operate along Social Innovation lines in a type of proto-technology, such as CAP, and through engaging in an iterative prototyping cycle that consciously works to refine towards operating formally as one, I hope to break open this field to anyone interested in leveraging these two domains in a synergistic way for social benefit.

One of the key aims of any social innovation is to improve the quality of the social network (Tremblay & Pilati, 2013:67). In this PaR cycle, I explored in practical terms whether performance and/or ritual encounters and Social Innovation were compatible with, and translatable to, a South African context. Catalysed by a study of CAP through the lens of innovation praxis, this quest led to ATOM's establishment. Threaded into this was an enquiry into the roles curatorship could play in mediating the body in the space and the performance encounter, to shape towards particular behavioural outcomes in the individual and social body.

Cut|Corner provided an opportunity to focus on performance as it is presented in the space through remnants of itself. Here I could explore how curatorial practice mediated between the past performance moment and the present in which it was invoked, and observe the effects of this in the social space, especially in terms of its influence on how people engage with the archive. By foregrounding the role that memory plays in community formation, I could study how it interplays with performative space. My work with ATOM extended this exploration to include mediation between the presented performance and the body. Where *Cut|Corner* considered ways curated encounters with performance shaped engagement with the past, the work with ATOM looks at ways these encounters with performance may shape engagement with the present. Further, the study explored whether curatorial decision-making can shape the effects of the performance encounter towards particular outcomes. Ideally, it would shape towards the most efficient form of performance that works to develop individual and collective social agency.

A serious consideration included how the effects of these interventions could be measured. What are the indications that curated performance encounters increase social cohesion and self-directed action, through increasing a sense of individual and collective agency? Further research may benefit from an experimental design that includes standardised forms of measurement, however difficult this may be. In this first iteration of this project, I rely on observations by myself and others regarding the affective experience of exposure to the environments created, as well as demonstrated behavioural outcomes.⁹⁸ These observations are then read against theory and common sense. These data points feed a growing pool of material that can now be subjected to further analysis. My own observations are influenced by my engagement with theory, and by an unavoidable degree of observation bias. To

98 This includes both solicited and unsolicited feedback received at the event itself or incidentally in other forums such as private social functions. Examples of solicited feedback include moments in which I approach someone and ask for their thoughts directly on a particular aspect of their experience at ATOM. Examples of unsolicited feedback include moments feedback is offered without me asking, either directly addressed to me as a member of the collective or indirectly to a group (e.g. at a non-ATOM social event) or on a social sharing platform. Another example of unsolicited feedback is media coverage.

counterbalance this tendency, I take others' assessment of the work into account. This involves reading their impressions of the project and experience, often tendered — through written or oral communication — without any/full knowledge of the aims informing its design and implementation.

Using ATOM as an example, Figure 24 documents some of the views expressed around the intervention's impact in the world. This direct feedback counterpoints instances where its effect is demonstrated through tangential readings of the environment. For instance, incidence of drunk and disorderly behaviour at our events is significantly less than at other comparable events, even though our venue regularly posts record bar takings on the nights that we host (Lester & ATOM, personal communication 2017, December 11). This indicates favourably that processes that contribute to the (re)generation of sustainable, equitable social networks may be happening in — and partially because of — the ATOM environment. While these behavioural shifts cannot necessarily, directly, or solely be attributed to the addition of curated performance encounters and performative experiences in the space, it can be identified as an influencing factor. This is because, up until recently, no one in our landscape was executing events in the way we have done. There was no other comparative event (i.e. club experience) that focussed on crossing synaesthetic borders, creating a sense of ritualistic immersion — including interactive creative installations and a performance artist whose sole purpose is to engage in the space and with its people in a way that generates positive feeling and increases the sense of agency over the space (and beyond) within the individual in that encounter.



Instagram Post 1: Thulani Ntuli, 31 mins · 📍
Past Saturday at ATOM
Sheraan Bergsteed and 10 others · 1 comment
Like Comment Share

Instagram Post 2: thorixon
Liked by mikeyias and 5 others
thorixon The ATOM family do it so right. They are all so welcoming and nurturing. They take great lengths to achieve a level of detail that is unmatched in this little part of the world. This past Saturday I had the honour of performing at ATOM. It was one of the funnest sets I think I've ever played.
Photo: Meghan Daniels

Instagram Post 3: hervaanbergsteed and 7 others
Over a month ago I was invited to @atom_collective landscape. I was an honor experiencing the most greatest ospality and playground! Iope to return soon!

Facebook Post 1: Alro Less
12 May 2018 · Cape Town · 📍
Inevitable right? so much love put into this, you could feel the minute you walk in! thank you x
ATOM and 13 others
Thornelme Berg I couldn't agree more! Well done Thor Rixon and everyone else that was involved. Such a special night.
New Year '18! To everyone involved in making this evening happen, please do many many more! x
Stefan Raubenbach
12 May 2018 · Cape Town · 📍
Yoh guys that was too good. Powel 🙌
Matthew Fraser
13 May 2018 · 📍
Top of the notch. Bless up!

Facebook Post 2: Thor Rixon shared ATOM's event.
15 mins · 📍
Been wanting to play this party for quite some time now. The attention to detail and curation of this event is always at the forefront in my opinion.
I've been writing quite a bit of new music specifically for this show and am very excited to finally showcase it at this event.
This is what ATOM had to say: 'Grass-fed live sets' I laughed, because it's true.
SAT, 16 DECEMBER AT 20:00
ATOM presents Thor Rixon (live)
The Waiting Room
Ya and 14 friends
Xmy Lester and 3 others

Facebook Post 3: Dean Ansdas
13 May 2018 · 📍
The vibe was out of this world! Well done Atom, Intrinsic Audio Designs and Pugh Visuals in another stellar event. P.S - awesome combat Mikey Weinberg
Nick Bultender
12 May 2018 · 📍
I don't think I have ever seen so many smiles on a dancefloor! That was truly an absolutely amazing party. Can't wait for the next one!
Emily Gannon and 13 others
Mishe Blesher 11
Like Reply · 13 May 2018 at 09:40

Facebook Post 4: Aziz Matthews
12 May 2018 · 📍
Too good! 🙌🙌🙌
Like Comment Share

Facebook Post 5: 2lanithewarrior
106 views
2lanithewarrior On a serious note, I can't stop thinking about that @atom_collective party! #2lanithewarrior #techno_lani
dwsonejules They always pushing boundaries, one of CPTs dopest movements!
2lanithewarrior @dwsonejules I totally agree with you!
2 HOURS AGO

Facebook Post 6: Vicmari shared ATOM's post.
4 September at 15:00 · 📍
Back in Durban, thinking back on this AMAZING experience 🙌 thank you ATOM crew for hosting such a great event and to everyone that came to support, the energy was truly unbelievable and unforgettable!
ATOM → ATOM presents Vicmari (Live)
4 September at 14:31 · 📍
Wow, what an experience! From the ATOM crew we would like to express our joy to everyone who made Saturday possible. Vicmari for blessings us with his talents, to Luis x Junaid for sharing their music, and to all of you for supporting us with your positive energy and good vibes!
Don't forget to sign up to the Atom mailing list to keep up with future events, especially the not so public ones.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hrTF3-mF23VD1X4XLhePY54BFm3ELShVZWsCh4/edit>
Till next time 🙌

Facebook Post 7: Cody Losper
31 August at 01:04 · Facebook for Android · 📍
Independent release colab with Vicmari x ATOM. The production on this joint is so crisp. Support future local legends 🙌
Glitches, by Vicmari
track by Vicmari
vicmari.bandcamp.com

Figure 24: A selection of feedback from participants at ATOM's events

Stories, ritual, and Repertoire are a part of what keeps human society functioning in healthy ways. Without socially validated spaces for these processes to occur, the human social body breaks down. This is the space that ATOM is in the business of providing. Authors such as Pinkola Estés (1995), Taylor (2003), and Bull & Mitchell (2016), call for the value of these ritualistic processes to be re-inscribed into the fabric of society, before they are so disabled by their current state of marginalisation that their ability to perform their function is lost. Losing socially validated ritual spaces would leave the human species in need of new forms of psychosocial ‘medicine’, for what is essentially a self-inflicted wound. My work⁹⁹ builds on this, capitalising on this body of observations into the nature, functions, and effects of rituals. It takes up where the works of these theorists appear to leave off, exploring ways in which these powers of story, ritual, and initiation can be leveraged with a contemporary aesthetic. This bypasses some potential pitfalls inherent in any project operating in a Capitalist society with beyond-Capitalist ideals, while using non-hegemonic methods. In other words, you could leverage the power of story, ritual, and initiation by creating one of two types of front-end user interfaces. The first follows the archetypal modes of what people expect these types of events to be (perhaps a circle of people sharing stories around a bonfire, as a crude example). The second, in the case of ATOM events, appears to be an EDM event.

This nightclub experience is a ubiquitous phenomenon in mainstream hegemonic contemporary youth culture. A curated transformative space (i.e. a Social Innovation technology) appears able to integrate more smoothly into the landscape, without drawing attention to itself by adopting this face. This also plugs into the EDMC’s role as a player in everyday and identity politics, and consequently its potential function as a mobilising space in the social justice landscape (Riley *et al.*, 2010:358–359). Critical practice by the organisers of such intentionally structured events can lead to these ubiquitous social occurrences integrating all the touchstones of rituals, without participants being consciously aware of it (St John, 2006:5). In this way, the participants harvest the benefits of participating in ritual without any of the potential social stigmas associated with participating in something that overtly carries that aesthetic trope. For instance, regular patrons of ATOM events *know* they are encountering something highly ritualistic, more so than the average night out, and have reported that they have come to see this as an important part of their enjoyment of the experience. Yet, they may be able to take part in this regular event without exposure to processes of social stigma, or potential accusations of cultural appropriation, that may otherwise arise from overtly ritual engagements that are, at least in the popular imagination, confined to the world of indigenous cultures. In fact, by positioning ourselves so squarely, and so successfully in the underground of mainstream culture, participants are more likely to gather social affirmation through attending.

In “Ritual Action Shapes Our Brains: An Essay in Neuroanthropology”, Robert Turner states that “in order to be convincing, a performance must entrain the emotions of its audience” (2016:44). Through the support of a ritualised space especially curated to invoke this purpose, ATOM brings about this entrainment between performers (e.g. the DJ) and the audience (event-goers). Here I consider ritual itself as a form of performance, and the space is seeded with performance encounters. Therefore, any ATOM event is made up of multiple spheres/levels of performance encounter, depending on where you place your observational frame. This multi-layered braid is a part of what ensures that each person enfolded in the

99 With ATOM especially, but also as a solo performance artist embedded within the ATOM-space.

ATOM experience is placed in an encounter with performance moments that are at the very heart of the mechanism for transformation towards equitable social systems. This is because these types of encounters make graspable the performative generation of materiality. In this way, we ensure the best possible chance for the greatest number of participants to have the kind of encounter that awakens within them a level of self-reflection, in which they realise that they are simultaneously watching a series of performances while also being embedded within them. Opportunities for this are presented from the gross (e.g. observing the performance of the DJ, as a member of the audience) to the subtle (e.g. as an enfolded collaborator engaging with Katara Sedai at the Liquid Light Show to draw others into the experience). Attention is drawn to these frames through an application of curatorial practice.

By curating the space and encounters with performance moments in very specific ways, we draw attention to the levels of performance and the roles of participants within the exchange. Once attention has been drawn there and the self-reflection process has begun, the most important part of the work has been done. The rest of the curation of the experience then focusses on holding this self-reflexive awakening in a mindful way, supporting it to grow towards social relationships that improve upon the fragmented and divisive inherited circumstances of our terrain. To a large extent, the intrinsic properties of EDMC to function in ritualistic terms and generate a sense of *communitas* (cf. V. Turner (1969), in St John, 2008:155) has been marked in the literature, though with varying attempts at describing the structures and mechanisms underlying why it arises ritualistically (St John, 2006:4). This research aims to contribute to the body of work that refers both explicitly to the mechanisms of ritual that give it its shape, while also marking what possible *systematic* social effects this performance practice may have when intersected with social innovation and curatorial praxes.

Through repeating these events over the course of a season, we further leverage the motifs of ritual performance in an attempt to achieve our community-building aims. Repeated calendrical events continue to induce emotional involvement and consolidate the neural networks and associated assumptions and values emplaced by previous participation (Turner, R., 2016:44). With additional curation of this environment, it is then further possible to shape the kinds of values you wish to emplace and to seed for particular kinds of behaviours. This is similar to how CAP achieves its own variation of the same aims by repeating annually, except in our case it repeats approximately bi-monthly (Baxter, 2015:179; Magnet Theatre, 2017).

Further, we design and execute (i.e. curate) the ATOM experience to provide a space for participants to shape their own rituals within the holding frame of the event. Our events differ with each iteration to a degree that speaks to the immanent state of innovation upon our technology, but they are still recognisable and reliable. For instance, while no two events are the same, you can rely on the fact that there will be a dancefloor, a chill-zone with a form of creative outlet, immersive elements to enfold you in the adventure of the experience, and that the space will be hosted by people who are functional, professional, and open-hearted, willing to give of their time and energy to create a welcoming, transformative encounter. We also set up opportunities for participants to engage in self-directed ritual ways, to scaffold encounters with ritual (performance) as a transformative mechanism in a way that positions them at the centre of the action, as doer, not receiver. In other words, the ATOM experience is one that can be relied upon to exist, and to exist in a particular, generative, way. Further, while the space exists beyond you, it can also be relied on to be open for you to be enfolded into it and to shape the course of it for yourself.

ATOM is also engaged with in ritualistic ways by its own executive members. We are our

own beneficiaries. For any innovation to be for the people, it must also be by the people. Being divorced from the effects of our work in the space would set us up at cross-purposes to Social Innovation aims, i.e. as top-down operators alien to the environment we hope to affect from the outside. ATOM aims to affect the environment we are intrinsically and voluntarily a part of. We are embedded within a dysfunctional socio-economic and cultural circumstance, and frame ourselves as agents of change willing to work towards shifting our inherited landscape, sharing the benefits of doing so with others, while inviting them to accept similar agency over their own destiny and spheres of influence. We use the same supportive mechanisms to hold and shape our own engagement, as those we use to hold and shape the engagement of the public.

Over the time we have operated, we have also grown into our own portfolios. We each have our own sets of activities that we enact. These have come to ritually inhabit the space, though it may be a regular part of the mundane experience of any event's set-up. That each of us handle our portfolios in our own way and on a regular basis helps hold the frame for the rest of the team. In this way we find ourselves within the landscape of the event cycle. While we can cover for each other if one of us is away, the absence of team-members is felt. We know, for instance, when Thom is not there to pack the van, and when Taz is not there to light the incense. It is not so much a knowing, as a feeling of an absence. The van is packed, the incense still lit, but there is a quality in the way these things are done that is specific to each team member, which becomes embedded in the greater community of the team in a particular way. Through our quest to host spaces that generate sustainable and equitable community, we have unwittingly ingested our own medicine, leveraging ritual and performance to support the growth of this community. We have found ourselves at the centre of our own web, finding a sense of collective and individual identity as an executive, through growing into our own ritual practices as the people at the heart of ATOM.

Ritual is a socially constituted technology, essentially a form of neurological self-manipulation, and it is especially useful in times of stress, existential fear, or moral conflict (Downey, 2016:47). Like CAP, ATOM focusses on 'small acts of repair' (cf. Bottoms & Goulish, 2013 in Fleishman, 2012a:143) that influence, from the inside, a systemic shift towards sustainable ways of relating. These small acts of repair are the result of social energy released within the framework of performance rituals. These provide a safe way for these energies to find release, expression, and transmutation. This holding frame, set up by applying a curatorial mindset to the space, exploits the relationship between performance events and their socio-political effects to comment on and shift this landscape in positive ways.

How is this achieved? The work of ATOM provides an outline of one way that an arts-based intervention can find form in the world that allows it to perform its transformative work in a sustainable way, while maintaining independence. It is a Social Innovation technology made up of a curated space, focussed on supporting encounters with performance in a way that maximises the latter's inherent ability to inspire individual and social transformation. It creates what can be usefully termed a 'curated immersive environment' in order to do this work.

A further effect of applying a curatorial mindset to this exchange, is that the experience may be designed to facilitate people's negotiating ontological differences between themselves and their worlds in non-hierarchical ways. The primary considerations of this curatorial process is then to optimise the environment's functioning in this particular way, while considering the exhibition of the seed material simultaneously on its own merit and as a core mechanism to initiate transformation. In ATOM's case, this seed material is the music and visuals that are

ostensibly “on display”. Here, the product is to function both as a well-engineered event of immanently unfolding ontological design technology, while simultaneously standing as an excellent articulation of curation.

These two axes appear intertwined. To perform one function well, the other must be of a high standard. Once manifest — even if only within the realms of thought — these axes of operation are set to function reciprocally in an Autopoietic Feedback Loop, applying the understanding gained through engagements with practice and theory. It is within this feedback loop that “the magic happens”, and it is foregrounded within the performance exchange, and found plentifully within performance arts events. These concepts — of exhibition as exhibition and technology — appear to reinforce themselves through performing themselves and each other through the moments of their enactment. They function as an example of the benefits of rhizomatic, reciprocal relationships between two constructs that could easily be recognised as a potential parallel to functional relationships between sets of individuals.

But, why centre the design of a Social Innovation technology on Performance as a lynchpin material for its success? Because, the performance process allows for things to be described that lie beyond words. It generates meanings (and possibilities and experiences) that are largely not identical or reducible to linguistic meanings (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:147). It is the performance moment that also foregrounds the phenomenon called the Autopoietic Feedback Loop. Autopoiesis occurs when meaning is generated between two subjects or a subject and an object, and it occurs even outside of performance (only more subtly). Performance simultaneously embodies and foregrounds this performative generation of materiality. Even without our conscious awareness, and without the words to describe what is happening to ourselves or each other, encountering this mechanism (of the AFL) encourages two things. First, it engenders cognitive dissonance by forcing the subject to negotiate degrees of paradox to make sense of the presented reality. This opens the possibility of engendering new ways of thinking and being (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). Second, because of this, subjects gain an increasing awareness of themselves as architects over their own (perception of) reality (Turner, V., 1974:166, 168; Turner, R., 2016:31). Changes in neurophysiology and biochemistry are implicated in this process, especially in relation to the ways memory is laid down (Bull & Mitchell, 2016:2; Turner, 2016:32).

Paradox and autopoiesis in immersive environments functioning as Social Innovation technologies

A ‘strange loop’ occurs when a pattern, such as an iterative PaR cycle, is “fundamentally self-referential, but also different at each recursion” (Sangham, 2014:73). Through mapping relationships between the illustrations of artist M.C. Escher and the music of J.S. Bach, Daniel Hofstadter (1979) elucidates a mathematical theorem known as *Gödel’s Theorem*. This theorem proves that it is “impossible to design a formal system which does not have fundamentally recursive, paradoxical, and infinite features” (Hofstadter, 1980:98; Sangham, 2014:73). These seemingly paradoxical relationships between beginnings and endings in formal systems is what Hofstadter coined ‘strange loops’ (Hofstadter, 1979:18). Yet, through the works of M.C. Escher, he shows how an infinite series can nevertheless be *displayed* in a finite way.

The curatorial praxis developing here is one in which events are curated in such a way that they simultaneously and self-consciously function as Social Innovation technologies. This

praxis is embodied and refined through an iterative prototyping process — the PaR cycle. This iterative process is perpetual and the phenomenon (the praxis) only exists in the world as a function of its constant *becoming* (c.f. Deleuze & Guattari, 1993). When capitalising on the particular strength of Performance, their effect on the world is that of (re)generating social networks in sustainable ways and supporting the growth of tangible agency within the individual and social human body. This praxis is, in effect, a type of formal system.

Understanding the relationships between strange loops, paradoxes, creativity, and innovation appears key to understanding ways performance may function in social innovation terms. Margaret Cuonzo summarises the mechanism and function of paradoxes: “[They] force us to question whether our intuitive understanding of the world is really accurate ... by questioning our most basic intuitions, we are often led to new ways of thinking about our basic notions” (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). Performance encounters and performative space, are instances in which paradoxes are both prevalent and accessible. These are places that human meaning-ascription processes have been foregrounded. For instance, exhibition-spaces that are curations of archives of performance are the product of having negotiated a minefield of paradoxical relationships. One of these is the question of how to treat the tangential, tangible remains (i.e. the archive) of an intangible phenomenon (i.e. the performance moment). These spaces are also where one could, with minimal curatorial framing, direct an individual’s attention to the paradoxes prevalent in their experience. This creates experiences in which brains grow and new behaviours can take shape.

Further, performance artists and curators of performance art are strongly placed to drive the development of Social Innovation technologies of this kind. This is because they, by necessity, attain mastery in sustainably negotiating paradoxes through their work. This skill in negotiating paradoxical relationships in a generative way is important to ensure the experience of the performance encounter/exhibition functions as a technology for Social Innovation.

Placing the human at the centre of the social sciences and arts enquiry forecloses a level of analytical precision to the articulation of any concept (as possible, for instance, in Mathematics). By using the tool of theoretical simulation, we may extend our practice beyond its immediately conceivable boundaries. Modulating between the two modes of thinking (i.e. applied and theoretical) in terms of the challenge (i.e. sustainably solving the Anthropocene crisis), allows for the eventual presentation of a robust proposal of one solution. This solution being the development and application of an algorithm of curatorial praxis that functions as Social Innovation technology, solving towards a sustainable future by regenerating equitable social networks and engendering awareness of independent and collective agency. The applied form of this solution is, in essence, the curated immersive environment that results when leveraging the performance encounter as a transformative tool within the space that negotiates self-reflexively a number of ‘altered’, ritualistic states.

I understand my professional practice now as operating in two contexts: at the level of the individual, and at the level of the larger social system within which the individual-level of practice is embedded. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1993), the first instance of my practice-as-embedded-in-context can be considered a ‘molar level’ formation. Here the forms and qualities of the direct relationships between myself, my product, and other individuals as they engage with both is significant. At this level of enquiry, concern is with the event as discrete object: how it arises and how it functions in relation to itself (i.e. to its molecular constituents) (Fleishman, 2015). Multiple molar-level formations form ‘molar constructs’. In this case, the molar level formation of the exhibition can be related to the molar

construct of an individual's curatorial practice. The latter is defined as recognisable pattern formations observable across multiple events, as curated by the same individual or collective (Fleishman, 2015).

The second level of practice and enquiry is at the 'level of the corpus', which itself comprises many molar level formations (Fleishman, 2015). At this scale, what becomes relevant is not the individual event, but the thread of curatorial practice and how that thread operates as a construct embedded within its context. This necessitates a level of awareness while constructing the event that understands it in relation beyond its immediate context and can place it in a larger frame of reference. In terms of an enquiry focussing on developing a curatorial praxis that optimises performance to function synergistically with it as a Social Innovation technology, the question becomes one of ontological design. It becomes about "the design of generative mechanisms from which a domain of [particular types of] experience is produced" (Sangham, 2014:38). To this end, I have generated multiple case studies and a PaR model, partially documented here. This model aims to maintain a dually practical and theoretical engagement with the relevant knowledge domains, and to begin shaping a body of work that functions towards being a mechanism of ontological design.

This research enquiry is therefore twofold: at the level of the individual event and at the level of a collective curatorial practice. The first thread of enquiry studies how an event functions in and of itself as an object embedded within a socio-environmental context. The second explores how multiple instances of exhibition-making and experience curating can be designed to embed within its socio-environmental context *in a particular way*. The first (molar) level of the practice-enquiry loop directly influences the contours of the practice-enquiry loop at the level of the corpus. This meta-structure is recognisable as a strange-loop or AFL. It is the same phenomenon that occurs in performance, and performance is one of the few places that this phenomenon is most easily observable (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:116). This ability to both generate and foreground the AFL processes resulting in observable reality is why performance suggests itself as a key tool when shaping experiences, through curatorial practice, to function towards Social Innovation aims.

Generating a common substrate that connects these two levels of (molar and corpus) enquiry across the same content domain was challenging. How, for instance, could I weave these two naturally occurring, yet different, scales of enquiry in a relevant way into my research? How could I harness the power of the strange loop proliferating in my field and direct it towards the research aims in a constructive way? One reasonable proposal lay within harnessing the field of Social Innovation. Social Innovation is concerned with "the engagement with a transpersonal domain of experience that aims at resolving systemic (and ecosystemic) breakdowns; or alternatively [is] orientated towards a future world" (Sangham, 2015:10). By thinking through my practice in Social Innovation terms, I found reasonable means to instrumentalise it.

In other words, is there reasonable grounds for me to frame a form of curatorial practice as a social innovation? Could a form of practice, centred on mediating Performance encounters, be designed to function as a "novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than present solutions" (Stanford University Graduate School of Business:2009)? The PaR cycle engaged with during these past three years has supported the deductions made through encounters with literature in Performance Aesthetics, Curature of the Archive, Ontological Design, and Social Innovation. The trick appears to lie within capitalising the AFL.

Using ATOM as an example: the visible frame is the performance of (and performances within) the ATOM event. The ritualistic structure serves as a mental safety net, setting the human mind at ease while it expends the energy necessary to negotiate dissonances (such as new and performative experiences) in an integrated way. The newer the experience, the more recognisable its holding frame needs to be, to support participants being receptive to the new information. The AFL is set in motion through the differences within, or alternation between, rhythms that are encountered (and encounter each other) within the performance space. These rhythmic dissonances are primarily created through the insertion of moments for performative engagement between crew members, between crew and participants, and between participants and the environment. Attention is then drawn to the process of creation being made visible here, through curation of the auxiliary environment. This is to foreground the participatory nature of the process. Further, these performance moments often encourage the crossing of synaesthetic borders. These liminal experiences encourage a sense of immersion and particularly receptive states of being, especially through their similarity to ritual practice (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:176–177; Bull & Mitchell, 2016:5; Zarrilli, 2016:123).

The ATOM event is itself a performance woven from constituent parts, each with performative, collaborative, ritualistic elements. As any performance moment is a form of AFL made visible (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:74–76), it follows that ATOM events are full of encounters with AFLs. They are curated in such a way that highlights these moments, and supports critical reflection upon them. This is attempted by creating rhythmic dissonances within the environment by encouraging the crossing of synaesthetic borders. This is done by proposing novel associations between the senses, by embodying those same processes as a collective. For example, it is made clear that the visuals display directly relates to the music performed, responding to the question: “What may this sound look like?”.

Encounters with AFLs in enabled ways (i.e. with the ability to speak back to them) are important to ATOM’s ability to function as a Social Innovation technology because they shape participant thinking around how experiences of reality are co-created. This reflective state is encouraged by providing one interpretation on the origin of the phenomenon called ‘reality’, which highlights the extremely subjective nature of that experience. Further, generating *communitas* through ritual enactment underscores the communal nature of this experience.

Through this journey with interlinked engagement with practice and theory, a key to ontological design presented itself. It appears that human beings, when encountering liminal states, can tolerate new ideas by having these encounters with new possibilities titrated (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:175, 177–179, 196). This is especially true when being assisted to negotiate these experiences in an integrated way. In other words, they become more flexibly minded, tolerating new ideas before reaching the point of being overwhelmed (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20).

Performance and ritual are powerful tools through which to engender and encounter liminal states (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:174, 198). Further, curation provides means to critically select stimuli that shape outcomes towards a predetermined aim (albeit only as vaguely as one can when engaging with the ambiguity that is the unique, independent and affective human being). With this research cycle, I aimed to create spaces that stimulated individuals to acknowledge and embrace their own agency. Preferably, these spaces would also support their taking up this acknowledged freedom in ethical ways, for the benefit of the greater good. I aimed to use curation and performance tools to create these spaces which scaffold towards — but do not prescribe — and engender this understanding. Later and adjunct research suggests

that the latter is achieved when tolerating and embracing difference (between ontologies, people, systems, etc.) is normalised in society.

Meanwhile, curature appears a useful tool to assist with the scaffolding of encounters with sets of information (such as a performance) that engender paradox and other liminalities, because it is a means to titrate the flow of information in the space. This is the understanding I apply in my expanded practice with ATOM. These observations began formulating through my case study of CAP and its archives, and the curature of the Barney Simon proto-archive that led to *Cut|Corner*.

Curature effectively functions as an applied subset of ontological design. It has the ability to function as an ontological design technology, especially when practised with that intention. This holds true in the sense that both ontological design and curature generate domains of experience, and that the latter may function as a technology to affect the former in social reality. This definition is simplistic, but sufficient for now. For instance, this relationship between the two concepts (ontological design and curature) only holds true if this action is performed in a particular way. By definition, curature is vested with the potential to function efficiently in these terms. My work is concerned with prototyping towards a model that reliably harnesses this potential, and applies itself in expanded form by functioning in socially innovative ways.

On ATOM: A (Partial) Methodology of Practice

Synaesthetic Relationships, Rhythmic Dissonance, and Autopoiesis: Foregrounding the collective Performative Generation of Materiality through the curature of Performance

Foundationally, ATOM is the product of an alliance between Intrinsic Audio Sessions (hereafter IAS) and PUPIL Visuals (hereafter PUPIL). It is an alliance between a sound-generating body and a visuals-generating body. The encounter with music, and its interpretations through PUPIL's visual projections, are at the centre of any ATOM experience. KLOTHO, my curatorial interface, operates synergistically around this core to shape the experience auxiliary to this encounter and to highlight the intersectional point at which these sound and visuals coincide.

ATOM events are centred on the encounter with music, curated by IAS, and their interpretation through visuals, produced and curated by PUPIL. This is the first and most obvious point at which ATOM explores synaesthetic relationships to its advantage in supporting the development of generative participant networks. Exploiting synaesthetic relationships is one way to engender states of cognitive dissonance within human subjects. This state of mind is particularly receptive to behavioural shaping, especially when encountered within ritual contexts (Pinkola Estés, 1995:197; Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20; Downey, 2016:60–61; Mitchell, 2016:29; Turner, R., 2016:31).

ATOM seeds its auxiliary event environments (extra to the dancefloor) with triggers that model or engender desired ways of being. This capitalises on the receptive state generated by our primary synaesthetic relationship (made visible between visuals and sound, and encountered on the dancefloor). These shaped auxiliary environments and experiences aim to harness the receptivity generated primarily on the dancefloor and support the neurobehavioural shaping towards the desired outcome. This stated outcome is to engender fearless and functional social relations based on the principle of mutual recognition. For

example, any ATOM event has at least four crewmembers freely available to engage with patrons, address their needs, and host the event. Throughout each event, these crewmembers engage in modelling behaviours that are desired in any functional society: removing empty bottles to the trash, returning empty glasses to the bar, tidying the seating, changing the water for the Liquid Light Show, engaging with guests in open-hearted ways, and so forth. Based on research in neuropsychology and the principle of the mirror-neuron network and its effects (e.g. Gallese, 2009; Turner, R., 2016), we intend that through embodying desired models of behaviour amongst ourselves, we engender similar relational ways of being in those that observe us. This is a powerful form of behavioural modelling because these operators are not identifiable as crew. At most, they are identifiable as event regulars (and only by regulars). It is a form of Invisible Theatre (cf. Boal & Epstein, 1990), enacted for particular social purpose: curated performance intervention as a Social Innovation technology. This is one of the many cumulative ways we support the positive shaping of the natural sense of community that flowers through the ritualised encounter with music and communal dance (Fritz, 1999 in St John, 2008:154; St John, 2008:155; Turner, R., 2016:38).

In *The Transformative Power of Performance*, Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008:136) notes the role of rhythm in performance and ritual encounters:

The human body is indeed rhythmically tuned... We have a particular capacity for perceiving rhythms and tuning our bodies to them. When the temporality of a performance is organised and structured through rhythm, different “rhythmic systems” clash. The rhythms of the performance collides with the various rhythms of each individual spectator.

Rhythm plays an important role as a ritual anchor, generator of *communitas*, and activator of the crossing of synaesthetic borders at ATOM events. These functions are affected within the moments expected rhythms are disrupted. Rhythm is a pattern of appearances and disappearances of a phenomenon existent on the ground of Time (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:134). Everything has a rhythm. While sounds are the simplest to consider, anything possessed of movement is possessed of rhythm. And everything moves through Time. Because sound is the grossest level at which rhythm is perceptible, ATOM exploits the unifying function of this rhythmic presence the most.

Narrative is a rhythmic sequence framed at two points along the space–time continuum, in order to be interpreted as meaningful to the human consciousness. For something to be possessed of a narrative structure implies that it is possessed of ontological progression, interlinked series of shifts in form and function that feed back on each other to recursively inform the evolutionary process. After reaching a critical mass, these cumulative changes can be perceived as having shifted the basic nature of the root object. Our lives possess narrative structure; we are born into one circumstance, and through constant self-reflexive shifts in our forms and functions in the world, we progress and become new beings entirely. The ATOM events, both as individual occurrences and in cycle sets, function in the same way. They capitalise on their rhythmic nature to effect change on their social landscape.

The contrived states of dissonance that rhythmic clashes between the environment and human consciousness engender, provide fertile ground for self-reflexive AFLs to be set

in motion (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:137). They proliferate as part of the process of cognitively negotiating the conceptual boundaries between reality and fiction. Questions then arise around possible functions this may perform. Why, for instance, is ATOM using it, through applied curatorial and performance praxes, to (re)build community? ATOM is a living system, it is embedded within processes of autopoiesis, rather than allopoiesis (Luisi, 2003:51). This has ramifications for its ability to affect the world in its intended ways.

The rhythmic organisation of the ATOM event counterpoints the rhythmic construction of the human body. These cumulative rhythmic dissonances — within the event itself, as well as between participants and between the event and the participant — constitute a rhythmic structure around which AFLs are organised (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:136). The AFL is, in other words, a product of liminal space. It arises out of the friction of systems of rhythmic dissonance. Autopoiesis is the process by which a system maintains and reproduces itself (Luisi, 2003:51). By implication, an AFL in operation between two humans results in consensus reality being co-created and maintained. Fulfilment of an AFL results in perceptible reality, or a phenomenon that is interpreted as meaningful by a perceiver (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:137).

This is, at least, a truth according to theory. ATOM is exploring this practically in our work, and we periodically review how our practical experience speaks back to the theory. Within our eighteen months of practice, our results have been favourable and warrant further investigation. For instance, press and participant feedback has been favourable when reporting on how events make them feel (see Figure 24). At some point, we may formalise our findings in a qualitative study. For now, this PaR cycle is sufficient to refine our practice and understanding on parallel-generated theory, which is now, through research such as this thesis, being spoken back to in its own terms.

ATOM exploits opportunities for participants to reflect on autopoiesis as a means to spotlight how individual agency can construct social reality. We do this by seeding our event environment with opportunities to invoke and engage with performance moments. Performance is a doubly useful phenomenon to encounter and reflect upon, because it invokes reflections on the paradoxical relationship between reality and fiction. These paradoxes “force us to question whether our intuitive understanding of the world is really accurate...” and “... by questioning our most basic intuitions, we are often led to new ways of thinking about our basic notions” (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). Performance and self-consciously performative spaces are instances in which paradoxes are both prevalent and accessible. What constitutes a ‘performance moment’, in this case, includes the length and breadth of what may be read as ‘performance’. These may range from the formal theatre experience, to the myriad and cumulative moments woven into the ATOM events.

Through understanding what an AFL is and how it functions, it becomes a gateway into understanding the performative generation of materiality (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:181). Performance’s peculiar ability to engender encounters with AFLs in self-reflexive ways means that, by experiencing spaces in which performances happen and by reflecting on these experiences, one begins to understand how reality is co-created in the relationships between oneself and others. By mastering this mechanism, one becomes an architect of one’s own reality. Therefore, by engendering spaces in the world that allow for critical performance encounters, one supports the development of an agency within the participating individual that is usually lacking (and, at times, systematically undermined) within the current structures of society.

Curating these spaces, by exercising decisions based on thorough research into multiple

and intersecting fields, may then further shape that agency towards being applied for particular outcomes. ATOM's work aims to awaken participants to this agency, and then to model ways they may grasp and use it collectively for collaborative gain. What we do centres on the exploitation of visible AFLs to highlight individual agency in shaping perceived reality. We practise this in such a way that shapes the outcomes of this engagement towards sustainable and ethically sound socio-cultural aims which include dissolving perceived socio-cultural, economic, ontological, and linguistic barriers.

In theoretical terms, ATOM is engaged in a PaR cycle that explores the potential of critically engaging with performative, scaffolded engagements with physical space as a mechanism to develop a sense of transferable enablement within individuals participating in the process. We shape affective space through curating interactive and immersive physical spaces that are fertile grounds to generate and observe AFLs in motion, and we do so by capitalising on the community-building function of performance-based ritual practice (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:52; Turner, R., 2016:40). Further, we exploit the opportunities that performance moments and performative spaces tender for encountering paradoxes (such as negotiating the conceptually slippery boundaries between 'reality' and 'fiction', 'consumption' and 'participation'), because the latter is shown to increase receptivity towards new ways of thinking (Cuonzo, 2014:18, 20). This facilitates an easy flow between an individual's practical engagement and embracing spontaneous opportunities to speak through them. This allows for non-threatening ways to engage with a slippery mechanism of transformation in a way that ensures the innovation of any process that has built-in cycles of critical reflection.

These observations lie at the core of my multiple forms of professional intervention in the world — i.e. leveraging paradox through performance is a feasible way to engender the possibility of growing towards new ways of being in the world. Doing so extends the possibilities of social, cultural, economic, and environmental regeneration. In turn, designing and implementing this technology while drawing from Social Innovation theory inoculates the construct against the major pitfalls awaiting arts-based interventions in a global Capitalist system, which persistently undermine the latter's intrinsic and potential value. The performance-based intervention thus becomes more robust, while ceding little ground to the systematised innovation traditionally represented by Social Innovation and its adjunct fields.

A series of secondary tools, in turn, assist in the design and application of the proposed form of practice I constellate in this thesis. These include curation of the archive and curation of performance. Exploiting the dissonances inherent in concepts such as 'Performance Archives' is one example of such a secondary tool. In this case, the two paradoxical notions of performance and an archive are put in close relationship to each other in such a way that exploiting the results of paradox on the human individual and social body becomes manageable. Applying the theories and practices of curating may, in turn, enable critical engagement with archives of performance, with tangible effects in the directed manner intended (i.e. toward Social Innovation aims).

Conclusion

This thesis functions primarily as a touchstone. It acts as a point of reference, unpacking each of the contributing concepts and assessing their relative merits. Further, it articulates how weaving these threads together appears to make possible a way in which performance can be sustainably leveraged for the benefit of all beings, in a way that respects their freedoms (which include the right to refuse participation) and eases some of the common challenges faced by arts-based interventions in the world.

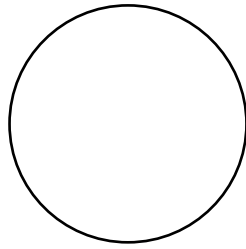
I hold that the transmission of ideas, from one human consciousness to another, is a key determinant of reality. This understanding is grounded on two principles: first, that reality is *emergent* and not inherited, and second, that by virtue of exercising self-reflexivity one may become an active creator of that reality. This contrasts with remaining a passive consumer of reality, as one is in childhood. These realities are created through the transmission of ideas. The act of transmission requires some form of articulation, and articulation requires a degree of (self-)awareness within the human consciousness of the phenomenon articulated. Reality emerges because we create it, some of us more actively than others. We create our realities by articulating them to ourselves and others, even if our articulations are so passive that we mistake ourselves as inheriting our circumstance. Obviously, we are not in a consensus reality in which we can simply *will* physical objects to materialise or shift, like mystics or superheroes. Relative reality holds challenges that take more than an immediate mind-shift to come to terms with.

My proposal is that it is a shift in mindset within individuals that will govern how communities engage with these real-time challenges (and their constituent members). When these mindsets are governed by the principles of flexibility, and a determination to be of benefit to all beings, then sustainable change may occur. 'Sustainable' is meant in the sense of addressing systemic incongruities in ways that prevent their reoccurrence in any form, at any time. For this, a high degree of social cohesion is required. I am interested in seeking, designing, and implementing sustainable ways we may shift the lived experience of every being on this planet (human, and non-human) from being one in a discordant system governed by suffering and exploitation, to one that exists in harmony.

Communal, ritual performance experiences are perfectly placed to engender high degrees of social cohesion and suggests itself as a means to achieve these aims. Curatorial practice is a means of sensitising this tool towards this purpose. Its design and execution within the frame of Social Innovation ensures that the process is efficient in the wider context of late-stage Capitalism.

The switch from consumer to creator first arises through an awakening that *it is possible* to be a creator. This may be followed by accepting the freedoms and responsibilities of that role, by embodying those practices in space and across time.

We all possess the ability to practise ontological design, at least for ourselves. We are architects of our own realities to the degree that we are self-reflexive. Encounters with performance, especially those mediated to focus and augment self-reflection, are able to function as Social Innovation technologies that work to awaken individuals and collectives to their agency.



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APPENDICES

List of ATOM events, March 2016 - December 2017¹⁰⁰

#	Date	Name	Featured Artist/s	Venue
2016				
1	10/03	NOVA	Intrinsic Audio Sessions x Deeto Sessions	The Waiting Room
2	11/05	OPIA	Powel [All Day I Dream] (Ber)	The Waiting Room
3	15/06	LUMA	Kat la Kat (Pta)	The Waiting Room
4	28/07	DEJA	Intrinsic Audio Sessions x Deeto Sessions	The Waiting Room
5	29/09	SERA	Mvelo (Jhb)	The Waiting Room
6	10/11	META	Okayshades	The Waiting Room
7	15/12	ENZA	Leeu	The Waiting Room
2017				
8	26/01	KODA	Ida Daugaard [Wide.Awake] (Ber)	The Waiting Room
9	04/03	Killer Robot + ATOM present Claudio PRC	Claudio PRC [The Gods Planet] (ITA)	ERA
10	01/04	ATOM presents...	Tonijah (EP Launch)	The Waiting Room
11	04/05	ATOM presents...	Powel [All Day I Dream] (Ber)	The Waiting Room
12	15/06	ATOM presents...	Kat la Kat b2b Ady Fleming	The Waiting Room
13	02/09	ATOM presents...	Vicmari (Live)	The Waiting Room
14	04/11	ATOM presents...	Shervaan Bergsteedt [Just Move Records]	True Music Pop-Up
15	18/11	ATOM x True Music	Shift Mawelele	The Waiting Room
16	02/12	ATOM presents...	Zlani the Warrior	The Waiting Room
17	16/12	ATOM presents...	Thor Rixon (Live)	The Waiting Room

¹⁰⁰ By convention, artist names are followed by their record label (in square brackets) and location (in parentheses). The exceptions to this are entries #10, #13 and #17, where the parentheses denote the nature of the event. These denotations are optional and their inclusion/exclusion here duplicates how the event was publicised. Further, "b2b" ("back-to-back") is a style of performance in which two or more DJs select music ("tracks") alternately, and sometimes without prior consultation. The skill in this form of performance lies especially in segueing ("mixing") tracks into each other.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Crewmembers of Spaceship Earth,
for the benefit of all beings.



*For as long as space endures, and as long as living beings remain,
Until then may Eye abide among them to dispel all their suffering.*

Shantideva, 687-763CE.