

A COMMON METHOD? DISTRIBUTED CREATIVITY IN COMPOSITION AND/AS
PRACTICE RESEARCH
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Collaboration, Practice Research and Duality

This chapter examines compositional agency, practice research, and collaboration in some recent projects. It employs a socio-semiotic model, derived from Actor Network Theory (ANT) and similar to that taken by Rosalind Krauss in her exploration of *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*,¹ to demonstrate and explore the collaborative and other relationships in these projects. This reflection intends to show how the multiple roles that I, and others, enact in collaborative projects overlap, and considers which relationships and contexts have been most fruitful to my practice research. I have worked as a composer in all of these situations, although my research as a whole also comprises “traditional” (written) research and performance, which also intersect with these projects. While the labels “musicologist”, “composer”, “performer”, or “improviser” might easily be applied to individuals at various points during the projects described, this chapter contends that these describe aspects of those individuals at a particular time, but should not necessarily be used to divide the practices of individuals into discrete sets of activity. This observation has implications for the expectations of individuals when they collaborate, as I will discuss.

As a composer and practice researcher, I frequently work with institutions and organisations, and in contexts, that are external to the academic context in which I am employed. These include music festivals, concert series, artistic bodies, and in musical contexts outside the UK where, often, an idea of practice research (or “artistic research”) has not yet been or has only recently been established. Such institutions bring their own concerns and criteria to projects in which I am a collaborator. The research context of universities requires certain types of evidence, documentation, and presentation of a project and, conversely, other institutions require different evidence, documentation, and presentations of the same work or outcomes. Often this distinction can be characterised as a distinction between process (the research) and product (its outcome). This is not to say, however, that one of these approaches is better; practice research, by its nature, is critical of disciplinary norms and institutional contexts and this clash of contexts can be an impetus for the discussion of the contradictions and unfreedoms within the university research sphere. Moving between roles and identities as a researcher and practitioner provides many opportunities to reflect on this as well as on one’s collaborative work.

¹ Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’, *October*, vol. 8 (Spring, 1979), pp30-44.

One of the dualities inherent in practice research can be summed up in Barbara Bolt's statement that practice research is a "dialogical relationship between making and writing".² This statement indicates the way that practice research embraces the fact that researchers undertake different roles, from being a passive observer to an active creator. As a result of the inherent dualities present in collaborative work and practice research, this chapter contains elements of practice, theory, and of auto-ethnography: the multiplicity of these elements of addressing the work reflects the plurivocality of practice research itself.

Distributed Creativity in Composer-Performer Relationships

Composer-performer relationships are the most frequently documented collaborative musical relationships. Often the focus of their discussion has been on biographical details or correspondence, and on issues such as inspiration, creative tension, and support, which can be documented in those ways. Historical composer-performer relationships, such as those between Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, Michael Tippett and Alfred Deller, or Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian, have been explored in terms of the role of the performer as a muse or a catalyst for the creation of new work. However, such accounts assume a composer-performer hierarchy, where authorship and intellectual labour are equated. The role of the performer in each case is restricted to realising the vision of the composer, which they may have inspired. Of course, the closeness of such a situation to compositional reality could be questioned: it is entirely possible that Pears, Deller, and Berberian contributed more to the music that they performed than Britten, Tippett or Berio might have liked to admit. It is also likely that an assumed model of authorship within the conventions of Western Art Music has diminished their contributions.

Music that employs chance procedures, or graphic or indeterminate notation, has afforded a different perspective on composer-performer exchange. Such music makes clear that the interpretative labour of the performer is not only that of reproducing the piece, but also an intellectual labour that shapes the music. The example of John Cage and David Tudor may be the most famous in this respect. Rob Casey claims that, "Cage engaged Tudor to shape not only realisations of his scores but the aesthetic thinking from which those works were borne."³ His argument does not seek to contest the authorship of Cage's works within the conventions of Western Art Music, but to describe how the relationship between Cage and Tudor shaped Cage's compositional approach by considering it as a process. Casey writes that, "[a] process, such as those

² Barbara Bolt, 'The Magic is in Handling', in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I. B. Taurus, 2010), pp27-34; p.31.

³ Rob Casey, 'Cage and Tudor as Process', *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 35, no. 6 (2016), pp670-685; p.671.

undertaken by Tudor in realising Cage's often opaque scores, by contrast, emphasises extension through time.⁴ This extension is both the incubation of creative ideas and the undertaking of labour not only to interpret and enact the piece but to actively influence the aesthetics that shaped Cage's work. This contribution, then, is beyond authorship but deeply collaborative. Casey describes Tudor's "methodical, focused and creative responses"⁵ to Cage's musical challenges. Today, within the UK academic framework, this might be recognised as an instance of collaborative creative practice research.

A further, but in no way final or exhaustive example, can be found in the collaboration between Gerhard Stäbler and Kunsu Shim. Shim is well known as a key interpreter of Stäbler's works, in particular for piano. He has described the work needed to perform this music, writing:

After careful contemplations of [Stäbler's] scores, one finds that they are filled with contradictions. Has he not learned the necessary techniques of composition? Or has he already forgotten these? Has he made a lot of mistakes, or does he know about this? But obviously everything is intentional. Sounds that are in no way appropriate for the piano; sounds that seem impossible to hold for long, that seem strange, as if they were set on the piano keys by mistake.⁶

Shim's description highlights that the work needed to realise Stäbler's music is physical (performative) and intellectual (interpretative and problem-solving). His performances do not only communicate his own approach, but actively shape the aesthetic of Stäbler's work in a similar manner to Tudor's effecting Cage's work. This collaboration also extends beyond the piano: Stäbler and Shim have worked as co-composers, for example in the piece *Helios Nordwärts* (2010): a large-scale installation staged in the city of Bergen for musicians, electronics, helicopters and fire trucks. They co-curate and co-perform conceptual performance works, such as *Music Spices* (2011) and *The Drift* (2012). Stäbler's piano and electronics work *J said* (2013) is not only performed by Shim but accompanied by a projection of a series of his photographs. This particular composer-performer relationship, then, begins as an exchange of perspectives and becomes an exchange of aesthetics and skills. Again, this is beyond authorship.

My two case studies are different from any of those already cited: in each case cited above the composer-performer exchange might be regarded as a defining one for both parties. Certainly, in each case, these particular composers and performers are associated with each other in a way that they are with no-one else. In my examples, performers are not the only collaborators, other artists

⁴ *ibid.*, p.676.

⁵ *ibid.*, p.679.

⁶ Kunsu Shim, 'Exceptional Existence', in *Gerhard Stäbler: live • the opposite • daring*, ed. by Paul Attinello (Büdingen: PFAU, 2015), pp34-38; p.36.

and practitioners also collaborate, and I enact roles other than that of “composer” as part of the collaborative and creative process. However, these differences do not diminish the importance of these collaborations. There are some features in common with those examples cited above: a long-term relationship that has produced multiple works; work that has grown as a result of creative exchange; the development of shared aesthetics. This final point is a key one for understanding these collaborative relationships as a model of distributed creativity: it can be argued that, alongside scores and performances, these relationships also produce and reproduce aesthetics that are situated between the composer and other collaborators. This transcends issues of labour and authorship, since aesthetics are not “created” in the same way that scores and performances are, and nor are they owned or “written”. Yet the shared creation of aesthetics might be identified as the key outcome of co-creative activity between collaborators in creative projects. It is this shared creation, and its manifestation as a distributed collaborative relationship, that will be explored here.

Models of Collaboration and Distributed Creativity

Distributed Creativity emerged as a concept that focused on networks, in particular in cases where technology is used to connect performers in time and space. Although this is a practical application of the ideas of distributed creativity, it is, in fact, a modelling of networked relationships that already exist in music on many levels. Franziska Schroeder recognises this in her discussion of networked listening in improvising ensembles.⁷ Schroeder argues that networked listening practices have emerged from the particular performance circumstances of many works of contemporary music, and that these can be traced and enacted in circumstances other than those that have engendered them. Her approach privileges the “multi-dimensional/multi-sensual experiences”⁸ associated with performing, but that can, of course, be identified in any act of creative practice. Importantly, she writes that the network privileges those aspects of practice that are “visually absent”, “socially dynamic”, and “musically unknown”.⁹ Awareness of the network has implications for the way that one sees oneself as a creative individual and therefore how one experiences and analyses one’s own practice. Schroeder writes that the network, “reveals various subtle differences between the “here” and “there”, between the “self” and the “other”, between “listening” and “being

⁷ Franziska Schroeder, ‘Network(ed) Listening—Towards a De-centering of Beings’, *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 22, no. 2-3, Resistant Materials in Musical Creativity (May, 2013), pp215-229.

⁸ *ibid.*, p.216.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.222.

listened to” and between body and instrument”, and that through the network, “resistances” are both broken down and brought into focus.¹⁰

Although this model of networked listening is well suited to the performance situations Schroeder describes, it clearly is not limited to them. The awareness of self and other, body and practice, that arise as a direct result of contemporary musical practice in her description are present across collaborative relationships. In particular, the body is an issue that is of interest. A traditional commissioning relationship imagines that the cerebral work of the creation of music is situated in the body of the composer while the physical work of enacting the performance is situated in the body of the performer. This description is obviously over-reductive and does not credit the intellectual work that is done by performers, and particularly performers of new and contemporary music, but it does highlight the assumed traditional division of labour and of types of labour in composer-performer exchanges. It does not consider that collaborators other than the composer and performer may be involved. A networked or distributed model of creativity allows for the consideration that, even though outward divisions of labour between composers and performers may be maintained in collaborative work (the composer ultimately creates a score, and the performer ultimately delivers a performance), the mental creative labour and the embodied approach to the knowledge of the piece may be situated in and between these two parties and still others.

Research in collaboration in music has sought to label the different types of exchanges between the parties involved. As is the case in any situation involving complex social interactions, these designations often seem inadequate when applied to actual examples of practice: whilst they may serve to group examples of work together, they do not necessarily help practitioners to interrogate their work. For example, Windsor and Hayden suggest three working relationships that emerge from consideration of collaborations at the end of the twentieth century music: directive, interactive and collaborative.¹¹ The first is characterised by instructions from the composer to the performer(s), the second by the retention of the composer’s authorship despite exchange and negotiation, and the third by shared decision making.¹² These designations seem clear, and could be applied to the examples given in this chapter, but equally my examples have aspects of all three categorisations. Sometimes these arise from the working methods employed, and sometimes from the conventions of the presentation of the work itself. Therefore, any application of one of these labels could ultimately lead to a misinterpretation of the nature of the collaborative relationship.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.217.

¹¹ Sam Hayden and Luke Windsor, ‘Collaboration and the Composer: Case Studies from the End of the 20th Century’, *Tempo*, vol. 61, no. 240 (2007), pp28-39; p33.

¹² *ibid.*

Alan Taylor has sought to extend the Hayden/Windsor model, suggesting four modes of working: hierarchical, consultative, co-operative and collaborative.¹³ Taylor's categories are applied based on the degree to which decision making *and* labour is shared in the production of a work. Such a definition of collaboration acknowledges that creative production involves both conceptual and reproductive labour (that, in the reductive example above, are often individually assigned to the composer and performer respectively, however unhelpfully). However, Taylor's model is also ultimately restrictive in that these categories do not always describe creative exchange in real-world contemporary music situations. As above, aspects of each type of exchange may characterise different aspects of a project at different times. More problematically, Taylor's model relies on the abilities of the creative partners to do the same sets of things in order to work together. He writes that, unless this happens, "the creative artist does not have to interact with the sets of influences and ideas brought into the process by another person".¹⁴ In a sense, this is true, but evidence of lack of interaction is more often seen in cases of outright rejection: tracing subtle, tacit, and frequently unacknowledged influences between creative individuals is more complex and cannot be guaranteed through an enquiry into the artist's own account of their process.

Interaction between creative individuals, of which composer-performer interaction is one example, is often not a matter of conscious choice but a gradual process of the creation of shared understanding. Its outcomes are complex and do not necessarily divulge their themes and modes of production at face-value. Robin Nelson recognises this, writing that a disjunct occurs between material creative arts practices which are "complex, resonant and multi-layered" and the articulations of research enquiries which "[need] to be as clear as possible."¹⁵ Further, he describes the practices of practice research as, "multi-modal and dynamic" processes.¹⁶ These complexities cannot be accounted for in models that reduce collaborative work to labour and decision-making. In addition, Taylor's insistence that labour is to be shared for work to be described as collaborative denies the meeting of individual sets of skills that inform many deeply collaborative relationships. The undertaking of individual, but related, work within a model of distributed creativity intends the production of collaborative parts of a creative whole that can be experienced as more than the sum of its parts.

¹³ Alan Taylor, "Collaboration" in Contemporary Music: A Theoretical View', *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 35, no. 6 (2016), pp562-578; p.570 (table 1).

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.565.

¹⁵ Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p.10.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.46.

Finally, Georgina Born has outlined three types of interdisciplinary collaborative relationships that, rather than by the division of labour or decision-making, are evidenced by their effects on the disciplines and individuals who collaborate.¹⁷ These are: integrative-synthesis, subordination-service, and agonistic-antagonistic relationships. Born's final category, agonistic-antagonistic, is characterised by "a self-conscious dialogue with, criticism of, or opposition to, the intellectual, aesthetic, ethical or political limits of established disciplines".¹⁸ In the cases described here, the collaboration is both disciplinary (belonging to contemporary music), and interdisciplinary (bringing together music and other creative or academic disciplines). As such, these works allow for the exchange of knowledge, processes and experiences between the creative individuals and the transmission of these in the musical artefacts that are created, and ultimately dialogues between and resistance to them. Such exchanges are a valuable part of collaborative musical and research narratives but cannot always be easily categorised by existing models of collaboration. Indeed, this chapter is perhaps in a self-conscious dialogue with the norms of research in collaboration which assumes relationships that are defined in advance, time-bounded, and simultaneously enacted and documented. In my case, longer-term influences and exchanges are examined retrospectively and when they have been given time to come into view.

Rather than apply a model of collaboration, then, this chapter employs semiotic approaches to describe the networks of distributed creativity in particular collaborative situations. These are drawn from Rosalind Krauss's "expanded field" and from Actor Network Theory (ANT). Krauss's approach employed a semiotic square as a way to describe and understand the different aspects of work in sculpture as different sets of relationships.¹⁹ ANT offers the observation that non-creative aspects of a project or situation, such as technology and institutions, can also be considered "actors" within a network of relationships. John Law writes that ANT describes the way that relations assemble, and is best described as "material semiotics".²⁰ Essentially, ANT accepts the messiness and complexity of real-world situations as a fact and contends that these are better understood through description rather than reduction. Law also notes that texts themselves are relational and can reveal how relations assemble and have been assembled.²¹ In an ANT enquiry, "[t]wo realities are counterposed, and those realities are heterogeneous, combining and enacting the natural, the

¹⁷ Georgina Born, 'For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinary Beyond the Practice Turn: The 2007 Dent Medal Address', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 135, no. 2 (2010), pp205-243; p.211.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ cf. Krauss (1979), pp37-38.

²⁰ John Law, 'Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics,' (25th April 2007), p.2. <<http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf>> [accessed 30 March 2017].

²¹ *ibid.*, pp2-3.

social, and the political.”²² Here, the two counterposed realities are those of the composer and the other collaborators. Aside from my auto-ethnographic accounts, consideration of the “texts” of these collaborations (scores and performances) is employed as evidence of the assembly of shared creative relationship over time.

The rest of this chapter deals with two examples of collaborative projects involving many individuals. The first is an example of an extrinsic collaboration, where the exchange took place both outside of my research context and outside of the musical parameters of the resultant work. The second is an example of intrinsic collaboration across multiple projects, where the exchange informed my research and practice. My focus is the nature of the impact of the collaboration not only on the sounding outcome of the music but on my perception of the research undertaken within each project. As a result, this involves some aspect of duality or self-exchange between my roles as composer and researcher which remains unexplored in literature on collaboration, and that arises as a result of practice research.

a common method: Extrinsic Collaboration

What I have termed an extrinsic collaboration involves work with an ensemble and with individuals from non-musical disciplines in order to create a work for a specific occasion. In 2013 I was commissioned by the Clothworkers Consort of Leeds, to write a piece for unaccompanied choir. The commission was offered jointly by the choir in partnership with the Astbury Centre at the chemistry department at the University of Leeds, and Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. It was intended to commemorate the anniversary of the discovery of X-ray crystallography by William and Henry Bragg, and the anniversary of their Nobel prizes for the same discovery; the Astbury centre is named after one of their famous pupils.²³

In this project, the primary collaboration in the working process took place between myself, Dr Arwen Pearson—an x-ray crystallographer—and Dr Kersten Hall—a researcher in the field of the history and philosophy of science. Both Dr Pearson and Dr Hall belonged to the Astbury centre at that time. This working process involved visits to the chemistry labs at the University of Leeds, during which I learned about the process of x-ray crystallography and observed the working

²² *ibid.*, p.15.

²³ An historical account can be found at: Imogen Clarke, ‘The History of X-ray Crystallography’, *Museum of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (Leeds, 2017) <<https://arts.leeds.ac.uk/museum-of-hstm/research/william-thomas-astbury/the-history-of-x-ray-crystallography/>> [accessed 28 September 2017].

conditions of contemporary x-ray crystallographers.²⁴ I also visited their archives to look at both the original equipment designed by the Braggs and the notebooks of their original experiments. During this time I engaged in discussions with Dr Pearson and Dr Hall about the relationship of their current research with the history of x-ray crystallography, and the issues of heritage that they examine and come across in their work. Although the commission was linked to the anniversary of x-ray crystallography, there was no desire for the music to be ‘pedagogical’ in the sense that it would demonstrate x-ray crystallography or in some way sonify data from experiments. In these discussions we sought to come to a joint understanding of what x-ray crystallography, the history of science, and compositional practice might have to say to each other, and considered that my role would be to produce music that demonstrated this understanding.

The resultant musical work in this project did express a metaphorical relationship to x-ray crystallography in some of its musical aspects. These included the use of a metric cipher in the first section of the piece,²⁵ the employment of a patterned approach to the placement of silence in the same section, and a rotational approach to the placement, distribution, and changes of sound within the choir. Despite their metaphorical link with the subject matter, however, I don’t believe that these links are audible without some prior explanation, and I do not consider this particular aspect of the piece to be a part of my practice research. It only reflects the exchanges described above in that it reflects links between what I learned during the discussions and my own previous musical experiences. In this respect these aspects of the music are a reflection of my compositional work in the project, but not of my roles as a collaborator or a researcher.

However, the collaboration also provided me the opportunity to explore issues of identity which did link with my previous work and research interests. Prior to this project I had recently written a choral work—*imagined community* (2012)—that explored issues of individual and group identities. My exploration of the Bragg's notebooks with Kersten Hall highlighted issues of an individual working within a community that are similar for composers and scientists, and his explanation of the link between x-ray crystallography and the local history of Leeds highlighted issues of identity formation between peripheral scientific issues and the very real experience of the architecture and civic presentation of the city. These experiences provided me with a both

²⁴ In my understanding, x-ray crystallography is the method by which the structure of atoms were discovered in the twentieth century. x-rays are fired at an extremely tiny amount of the substance explored: the diffraction pattern of these x-rays is what reveals this structure as they hit the substance and then a photo-absorbant substance behind it. Today this process is more sophisticated, especially as modern-day scientists explore the structures of more complicated molecules such as complex proteins. I was able to find parallels between this aspect of the process and, for example, spectrographs of sound which operate in a similar way. This metaphorical level is the way in which I was first able to interact with the concepts. For a scientifically detailed account of the technique today, cf. M. S. Smyth and J. H. J. Martin, ‘x-Ray Crystallography’, *Molecular Pathology*, vol. 53, no. 1 (February, 2000), pp8-14.

²⁵ This was a reflection on the nature of one of the first observations of the results of the initial X-ray crystallography experiments that the component parts of atomic structures were not clustered but were evenly distributed

metaphorical and philosophical basis for the music, involving differences between individual and collective actions in the construction of the work. The discussions between myself, Dr Pearson and Dr Hall compared these issues in science and music, ultimately providing the title for the piece: Dr Pearson described x-ray crystallographers as a community who, unlike other scientists, are “united by a common method”.

The collaborative relationships between practice and research in this project can thus be understood by way of the following semiotic square (figure 1):

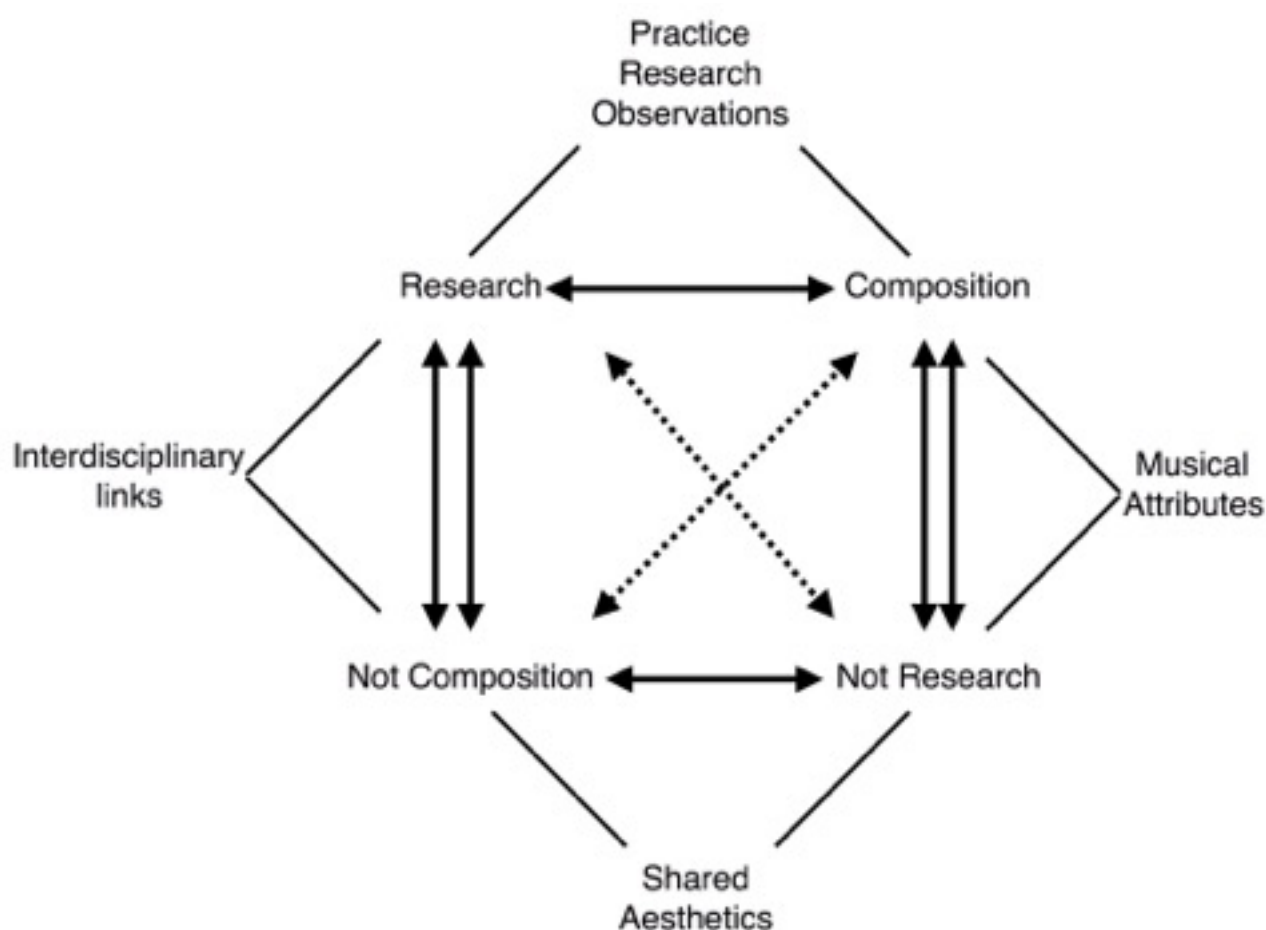


Figure 1: The “expanded field” of a *common method*, showing the links between my roles in the project and the different aspects of the work that they engendered.²⁶

Figure 1 shows that this project combined work that was collaborative and not collaborative. In my role as a composer, I enacted a traditional commissioning relationship, eventually presenting the choir with a score that was rehearsed by their conductor—sometimes when I was in attendance

²⁶ In the semiotic square, single arrows denote contrary relationships, dotted arrows contradictory relationships and double arrows implied relationships. The bottom “row” shows the neutral contrary relationship, while the top “row” the complex contrary relationships. The labelling on each side describes these relationships in terms of their manifestation in the project: this is the “expanded field” of the work.

—and premiered at the celebration concert. To look at this aspect of the project only would confirm that the cerebral, decision-making labour was undertaken by the composer, and that the reproductive, performative, labour was undertaken by the choir. In order to examine the collaborative exchange in this project, one must look at those parts of the work that do not belong to “composition”: in these aspects of the project interdisciplinary links were established and shared aesthetics were created.

/(h)weTH and exchange.practice and This There Now: successful (intrinsic) collaboration

In contrast are three works created with US artist R. Armstrong—*/(h)weTH* (2012), *exchange.practice* (2014) and **This There Now** (2015)—that represent intrinsic collaborations. The piece */(h)weTH* was developed as part of collaborative residency between musicians and visual artists facilitated by the BL!NDMAN ensemble (Belgium) and HISK (the Higher Institute for Fine Art in Ghent). This work, for four channel tape, two video projections, solo ‘cello, and installation with sound, draws out our shared exploration of issues of voice, breath and body which both delineate all of the visual and sonic materials of the piece.²⁷ The creation of the work involved shared creative labour, shared research and research exchange, despite sometimes involving distinct practical labour in the creation of scores, audio, video or objects that reflected our respective artistic training and skills. It is an example of practice research on behalf of both artists, despite Armstrong’s distance from the UK academic context, because—as in Barrett and Bolt’s conception—her work in the project can be considered to have a, “philosophical and knowledge-producing role”.²⁸ We thus explored this particular collaborative work in a jointly authored text publication. For the purposes of this chapter, I will consider how the collaborative relationship established in this first project was extended in two further projects, and how much of the collaborative work in these projects resulted in the creation of shared aesthetics, especially when the artistic labour was distributed internationally.

exchange.practice was the first piece that extended the collaboration. I developed the idea in response to an impetus to create something for the *YardWork* installation space built by Armstrong in Danville, Pennsylvania.²⁹ This, to some extent, normalised our relationship: she became the commissioning body and I the responding composer. However, this was undermined by the

²⁷ cf. R. Armstrong and Lauren Redhead, ‘/(H)WETH: VOICE – BREATH – BODY – FORM/S’, *New Sound*, vol. 46 (2015), pp155-167 for our joint exploration of the specific artistic issues and research questions explored in this piece.

²⁸ Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, ‘Introduction’, in *Practice as Research* (2010), pp1-14; p.2.

²⁹ *YardWork* was an installation created by Armstrong, in which she invited other artists to intervene. Some details can be found at: R. Armstrong, *rarmstrongworks.com* (2017), <<http://rarmstrongworks.com/category/yardwork>> [accessed 28 September 2017].

inclusion of Armstrong in the work as a co-performer and co-composer. The music involves an over-recording exchange in which she and I both made environmental recordings which took place whilst the previous recording was played into the space: in her case, the space of the installation and in mine, various outdoor spaces in Canterbury, UK, that I chose to become part of the installation. I intervened in this process by choosing times and spaces to record, and—once—by speaking, and she did the same, timing her recordings to take into account a train (an infrequent visitor to the location of the installation), the preparation for a reception of the installation, the rain, and observers of the music. I also created a series of scores as transcriptions of, and in relationship to, the recordings she made. As a result, the music exists as an ephemeral but fixed series of performances, a possible four-hour looping installation, and a set of seven open notation scores.³⁰

I reciprocated this invitation by asking Armstrong to make a score for me as an organist. As before, what could be thought a traditional commissioning relationship was opened up when she sent to me—as well as a graphic score—further images which support her score, a bibliography and listening list, and a in-depth discussion of her research process. She invited me as a performer to interpret all of these materials in conjunction with her score. As we discussed what the approach to performing the piece should be, our shared aesthetics were once again concretised into a musical performance. Our discussions began with questions such as “could this marking be represented by a certain type of chord?” but quickly moved on to a more open questions: for example, “what does it sound like to be a deer?”³¹ This discussion developed into a conception of musical and aesthetic territory that could potentially be “heard” by the composer, performer, and listeners, but which is not represented in the notation specifically. As a result, it was possible to create multiple performances that expressed these aesthetics that were co-created. However, each performance of **This There Now** listed R. Armstrong as the sole composer.

At no point in this process did I consider the authorship of the piece to be in question. Rather, I believed Armstrong and myself both to be what the composer Caroline Lucas has termed, “material forces in the facilitation of [the] piece”.³² In Lucas’s conception, the “composer” (in this case, Armstrong), is “someone that contributes towards the creation of the conditions for a particular experience, without having the power to define what that experience actually is.”³³ Their role is not diminished by this situation, rather, the collaborative process itself takes on the role of

³⁰ The resultant recordings, and links to documentation of the scores that were created can be found at Lauren Redhead, *exchange.practice* (2017), <<https://laurenredhead.bandcamp.com/album/exchange-practice>> [accessed 28 September 2017].

³¹ One page of the score bears the image of deer.

³² Caroline Lucas, ‘The Masked Composer’, in *Written Commentary* (PhD Thesis: University of Leeds, 2012), p.24.

³³ *ibid.*

defining the experience of the work. In contrast, the first of Armstrong’s and my collaborative pieces was described as having two co-creators each time it was performed or presented, and the installation work was presented as my intervention. In each of these projects, the spirit of collaborative exchange was not different. Each piece is a different, but equally valuable, expression of shared aesthetics that have come about through collaboration. As such, the “expanded field” of these relationships might be represented as in figure 2:

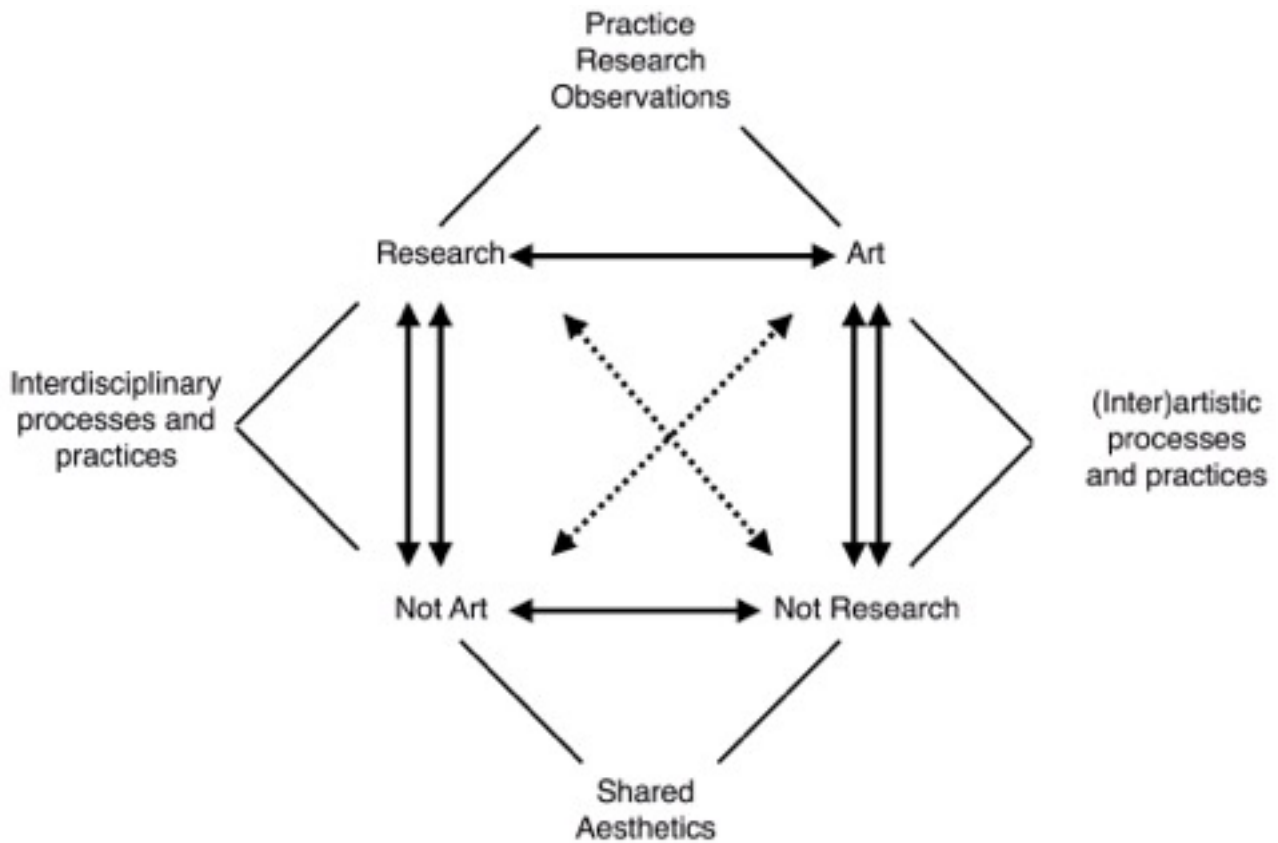


Figure 2: The “expanded field” of the collaboration between R. Armstrong and Lauren Redhead, showing the links between the dual roles of practitioner and researcher

In Figure 2 “composition” has been replaced with “art” since the diagram applies to both of the collaborators. “Research” is retained, even though the explicit identification of research applies only to one of their contexts. The difference between “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” collaboration is made clear here: in the case of the “extrinsic” collaboration, only the non-artistic outcomes were collaborative. In this case, all of them have been or can be. Shared aesthetics, in this case, lead to shared insights across disciplines, shared artistic practices, and to shared research observations. Neither the declared authorship of works, nor the division of tasks as part of the distribution of

artistic labour, signals these collaborative relationships: they stem from the creation of shared aesthetics.

Tacit Knowledge, Practice Research and Distributed Creativity

In *Reassembling the Social*, Bruno Latour describes how “the social” has been considered as a single agency, or as multiple, single agencies, by sociologists.³⁴ Some aspects of a situation may be represented, but not others, and this does not acknowledge that the way that an individual experiences social hierarchy changes from situation to situation, depending upon their relative power and agency, and the fact that “cultural capital” actually denotes a constantly shifting set of values that cannot necessarily be transposed with that individual. In Latour’s conception, each node in the network has three properties:

- a) a point-to-point connection is being established which is physically traceable and thus can be recorded empirically;
- b) such a connection leaves empty most of what is not connected [...],
- c) this connection is not made for free, it requires effort [...].³⁵

In each of my examples, the collaborative connection is traceable as a result of tacit knowledge that is created through shared aesthetics, and can be investigated through practice research. These shared aesthetics are not the result of active creation but are distributed and created within the network. The question of their empirical recording is a central one for practice research: many of the situations described in this chapter are ephemeral. Moments of shared creativity can be understood between collaborators but not necessarily documented in the moment of their happening (and sometimes are identifiable only in retrospect). Music and performances can be documented, but nevertheless what is communicated in the moment of performance also passes. As such, it is unsurprising that discussions of collaboration have mostly focused on the ascription of authorship and the documentation of shared labour.

The particular instances of tacit knowledge described here came about through experiences of the practices of my collaborators, be they the “practice” of x-ray crystallography, or practices involving artistic materials usually beyond those I work with as a composer. Robin Nelson

³⁴ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). He writes that in many accounts of social phenomena, “social forces play the complicated role of being simultaneously what has to be postulated to explain everything and what, for many reasons, has to remain invisible”, p. 102.

³⁵ Latour (2005), p.132.

describes this type of knowledge as “know-how”.³⁶ He writes that “knowledge is not fixed and absolute”,³⁷ and that instances of ‘doing-knowing’ such as these are “largely beyond verbal explanation”.³⁸ Rather, knowledge can be considered a “dynamic process” of “emergence”.³⁹ Nevertheless, this does not mean that such knowledge is inaccessible outside of practitioners and their projects. The reflective and retrospective nature of my accounts is necessary to unpick the complex networks of signification within such projects, but also allows me to identify where a specific aspect might be considered more than the sum of its parts. Paul Carter recognises the latter as an identifiable instance of “newness” within the work writing that, “[i]nvention begins when what signifies exceeds its signification”.⁴⁰

In my exploration of collaboration between creative individuals within my practice research projects, more points of contact are visible through retrospective reflection than might have been immediately apparent on their completion. This was also the case in Casey’s analysis of Cage and Tudor. In these collaborations, tacit and disciplinary knowledge is embodied, shared and enacted by individuals more easily than it is described in language at the time of its enactment. Similarly, in each project, aesthetics emerged from joint and shared investment in the creative process rather than through pre-determined collaborative situations, divisions of labour, or the creation of individual artistic outputs. These collaborative situations are therefore better understood as networks of relations and distributed creativity; the lens through which this perspective is possible is that of my dual role as a practitioner and researcher in each of these situations. These observations suggest, therefore, that the categorisation of “the collaborative” might be as uneven as categorisation of “the social” in Latour’s assessment. Shared working and authorship may delineate *some* collaborative relationships and outcomes, but yet more can be found in the complex network of creative relationships between artists and individuals as, when, and after they work together.

³⁶ Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p.37.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.39.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.40.

³⁹ *ibid.*, pp46-47.

⁴⁰ Paul Carter, ‘Interest: The Ethics of Invention’, in *Practice as Research* (2010), pp15-26; p.15.