Exposition

By Rolf Hughes

The simplicity of nature is not to be measured by that of our conceptions.
Pierre-Simon Laplace, *Exposition du système du monde* (1796)

I say no world
shall hold a you
Edward Estlin Cummings, from *Four Poems* (1940)

'How splendid it would be', muses the French poet Paul Valéry, 'to think in a form one had invented for oneself' (Valéry 1962: 649). This implies that as long as we are *not* thinking in a form we have invented for ourselves, we are obliged to adapt, translate or otherwise shape our thinking to the vehicle of its expression. If we then make an additional claim for this expression – e.g. as research – we face a further separation between what may be considered *the work itself* and *the account* given concerning its significance. Here we have a preliminary definition of what distinguishes artistic research from artistic practice *per se* – the challenge of giving an account of a work or method, of 'making a claim', while still respecting a work's intentions and coherence on its own terms.[1] Such an account may be articulated from *within* a community of practitioners, yet addressed to an audience *beyond* such a community (and therefore concerned with both *strengthening* and *extending* a practice). It follows that the question of exposition becomes a vital consideration, for it is here that the work's wider significance is articulated, defended and assessed.

Changing definitions of 'exposition' hint at the rise of scientific thinking over several centuries as the term evolves from notions of displacement to those of setting forth and explaining. Hence under 'exposition' in the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) we read:

being put out of a place, expulsion (C16-C17); 'aspect' i.e. situation in regards the quarter of the heavens (C16-C19); action or process of setting forth, declaring, or describing either in speech or writing (C14-C20); action of expounding or explaining; interpretation, explanation (C14-C19); an expository article or treatise; a commentary (C15-C19).

1. On the notion of giving an account see, for example, Hughes 2007 and Butler 2001.

Over the same period, the shift in emphasis from oral to literary modes of exposition eventually produced the conventions of academic writing – arguably, the pinnacle of this process of 'technologising' exposition.[2]

In the Enlightenment shift from *scientia* as knowledge of God to *scientia* as knowledge of nature, the written account of experiments became 'an exercise in the rhetoric of truth', which could be set forth by the writer without 'the transcendental-theoretical problems of theological argument':

The scientific report would not be a set of instructions to be replicated or a set of arguments to be deconstructed, but a claim to significance by a 'modest witness', who must firmly position themselves in what Traweek calls a 'culture of no culture.' Lorraine Daston describes this culture as reliant upon a moral economy of 'gentlemanly honor, Protestant introspection, [and] bourgeois punctiliousness.' In this mode, the written report must be seen to 'guarantee' the validity and transferability of knowledge as a unit of truth. Ironically, this 'transferability' would be obtained through the suppression of both the written rhetorical skills of the creator and their tacit experimental knowledge. Science would philosophically appropriate writing as a supposedly neutral container for knowledge in general. To achieve credibility the scientist must suppress the subjective conditions of production to construct a blank neutral facticity, guarding against the dread errors of 'idolatry, seduction, and projection' that might compromise objectivity and breach decorum (Butt 2012).

2. Simon Goldhill has outlined how the development of the prose of philosophy and science was inseparable from the vigorously contested issue of 'giving an account', or *logon didonai*, in the classical city of Plato and Socrates. Each was based on an unresolved tension between authority and persuasiveness – the seemingly irreconcilable impulses of disclosure and dissimulation. At the same time as Plato is designing a formal model of philosophic argumentation – effectively setting up philosophy as *the* authoritative model for understanding the world – he is also, according to Goldhill, 'brilliantly adopting and adapting the persuasive, dramatic power of the dialogue format and its lures of narrative and characterization'. The project hinges on Plato's characterisation of Socrates as 'the authority figure who claims and disclaims (his own) authority', a strategy that allows Plato 'not to represent his own voice but always to remain concealed within and behind the conversation of the bare-footed wandering gadfly, questioning and teasing whomever he happens to meet'. With Aristotle's treatises on logic, however, argument becomes its own master. 'Argument's truth or authority does not depend on an ability to persuade an audience, but on its own rules', Goldhill writes. Debate – the clamour of competing voices – becomes silenced by the authority of philosophic argument. And with the arrival of prose, comes a new sense of humankind as a responsible and knowing agent, making prose 'the medium of the intellectual, cultural and social revolution of the Greek enlightenment' (Goldhill 2002, pp. 109-10).

A further suppression concerned that of writing's own materiality. Berel Lang writes:

> The assumption [...] is that the act of writing has nothing – at least nothing *essential* – to do with the act of philosophy; that philosophy as spoken, 'oral' philosophy, would have the same character that written or 'literary' philosophy does, and that the two of them would be identical to philosophy as it might be thought but not yet expressed, or even to philosophy in its hidden truth before it had been thought at all (Lang 1990: 11).

Academic writing accordingly developed its own codes of complexity, formality, precision, objectivity, explicitness and accuracy (using tools, devices or materials 'appropriately' and involving a tuning or calibration process). It incorporates *hedging* (defined as the limits that a work accepts in order to be comprehensible within a specified genre), and *responsibility*, the notion that the author is a trustworthy authority whose arguments are made in good faith (Schwab 2012: x). Over recent decades, the proliferation of critical perspectives such as feminism, Marxism, postcolonialism and the self-reflexivity of postmodernism, alongside much emerging artistic research, has brought about a multiplicity of voices (what Milan Kundera celebrates as 'polyphony' in *The Art of the Novel*), as well as an increasing diversity of presentational forms (Schwab 2012). Such increased self-reflexivity has brought the concerns of rhetoric – here understood as 'the inventive and persuasive relation of speakers and audiences as they are brought together in speeches or other objects of communication' – sharply into focus (Buchanan 1989: 91).[3] Herbert Simons even claims:

> Broadly speaking, virtually all scholarly discourse is rhetorical in the sense that issues need to be named and framed, facts interpreted and conclusions justified; furthermore, in adapting arguments to ends, audience, and circumstances, the writer (or speaker) must adopt a persona, choose a style, and make judicious use of what Kenneth Burke has called the 'resources of ambiguity' in language. That the style of a scholarly article may be influential in a given case need not invalidate its logic and may even enhance it (Simons 1990: 9).

At the same time, a great deal of artistic research, particularly in the performance arts, is committed to the pursuit of insight via methods and processes that do not necessarily lend themselves to textual documentation:

The research field has emerged partly from a need to formulate, deepen and systematise artistic activities, and partly from an increased interest in knowledge-generating processes with greater elements of innovative thought, interpretative and critical reflection, design, representation and communication *using techniques other than verbal text* (Hughes, Dyrssen & Hellström Reimer 2011, my emphasis).

Artistic research opens the possibility of a productive interplay between differing ways of thinking, interacting, experiencing and of thereby creating new modes of discourse and argumentation, as well as research methods and artefacts. This suggests that it engages the play of multiple 'rationalities' or sensibilities, even provoking cognitive dissonance in its audience as an appropriate framing of its unresolved questions.[4] Henk Borgdorff concludes his paper 'Artistic Research within the Fields of Science', by celebrating the field's protean and transformative qualities:

> What is artistic research all about? It is about cutting-edge developments in the discipline that we may broadly refer to as 'art'. It is about the development of talent and expertise in that area. It is about articulating knowledge and understandings as embodied in artworks and creative processes. It is about searching, exploring and mobilising – sometimes drifting, sometimes driven – in the artistic domain. It is about creating new images, narratives, sound worlds, experiences. It is about broadening and shifting our perspectives, our horizons. It is about constituting and accessing uncharted territories. It is about organised curiosity, about reflexivity and engagement. It is about connecting knowledge, morality, beauty and everyday life in making and playing, creating and performing. It is about 'disposing the spirit to Ideas' through artistic practices and products. This is what we mean when we use the term 'artistic research' (Borgdorff 2008).

Artistic research, then, is expected to develop autonomously, on its own terms and according to its own precepts (the artist's assumed prerogative), while yet being charged with a revitalising function since it is additionally expected to add new methods and imaginative possibilities to established scientific conventions. Freed from the restrictive rigours of mono-disciplinary logics, artistic research becomes a force field of shape-shifting potentiality. The attraction of such potentiality, in contrast to the ruins of once optimistic disciplinary desires, is obvious.

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3. Some claim a 'counter tradition to objectivism' has existed since the time of Vico and Nietzsche and trace a 'new sophistic' through the work of such figures as Freud, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Arendt, Foucault, Derrida, Hayden White and Kenneth Burke. See, for example, Nelson 1983, p. 7, cited in Simons 1990, p. 7.

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4. 'The theory of cognitive dissonance says that people reject ideas which are violently at odds with their preconceptions. The theory of selective perception says that people may simply screen out impressions which are at variance with their existing beliefs' (Hedges, Ford-Hutchinson & Steward-Hunter 1997, p. 66).

And yet the term 'artistic research', as with related terms such as 'research into art', 'research through art', 'research for art', 'arts-based research', 'practice-based research', yokes together research and art in a way that seemingly frames thought 'such that it excludes the possibility that the practices of art include practices that merit the label research, or that its products include outcomes that contribute to knowledge and understanding', as Stephen Scrivener remarks (2011: 259).

Critics such as Danny Butt bemoan works that 'groan under pointless descriptions of dull making processes, overblown and unconvincing attempts by artists to write their own work in an art historical tradition, or perhaps worst of all, interesting practices (de)formed into "research questions" that the works are then supposed to answer'. The written exegesis required by artistic research has led, in Butt's view, to 'crimes of writing'. Why? Because 'art points to the emergence and decline of stable discourses, zones where the seeable moves into or out of the realm of the sayable'. Furthermore, the art market itself favours the artist as a 'a producer of mystery rather than an explainer'. The exegesis of the artwork thus becomes 'a particularly useless form both in the university and in the art world, existing only to allow a bureaucratic calculation of the student's acceptability for an awarded degree' (Butt 2012).

At the other end of the scale, how are we to respond to an artistic work that 'prefers not' (like Melville's Bartleby) to document its own processes? In Carsten Höller's *The Baudouin/Boudewijn Experiment: A Large-Scale, Non-Fatalistic Experiment in Deviation* (2001) , Höller invited 100 people to spend twenty-four hours in the space of Brussels' landmark Atomium, stepping out of their usual 'productive' lives for one day.[5] Höller stipulated:

> *The Baudouin/Boudewijn Experiment* will not be documented by means of film or video; the only 'recordings' will be the memories of the participants, and these will be disseminated through the stories they may tell after the event. The experiment will thus be completely unscientific, since objectivity is not the aim. Rather, it will be a unique opportunity to experience together the possibilities of escape from one's daily routine, to participate in a unique event with an unclear outcome (Höller 2001).

For the critic Boris Groys, Höller's project, far from eradicating documentation, actually reinforces its central importance:

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5. The project was inspired by the example of the late H.M. Baudouin, King of Belgium, whose Catholic beliefs forbade him from signing into law a bill permitting abortion, as a result of which the king, in agreement with the Belgian government, had himself declared incapable of ruling the country for twenty-four hours on 4 April 1990, suspending his royal activities so that the legislative procedure could be enacted.

Höller frequently engages in transforming the 'abstract,' minimalist spaces of radical architecture into spaces for experience – another way of transforming art into life by means of documentation. In this case, he chose for his performance a space that embodies a utopian dream [...] Primarily, however, the work alludes to commercial television shows such as 'Big Brother', with its portrayal of people forced to spend a long time together in an enclosed space. The difference between a commercial television documentation and art documentation becomes particularly clear. Precisely because television shows uninterrupted images of these enclosed people, the viewer begins to suspect manipulation, constantly asking what might be happening in the space hidden behind these images in which 'real' life takes place. By contrast, Holler's performance is not shown but merely documented – specifically, by means of the participants' narratives, which articulate precisely that which could not be seen. Here, then, life is understood as something narrated and documented but unable to be shown or presented. This lends the documentation a plausibility that a direct visual presentation cannot possess (Groys 2002).

But, Groys continues, an important question remains unanswered, namely:

> if life is only documented by narrative and cannot be shown, then how can such a documentation be shown in an art space without perverting its nature? Art documentation is usually shown in the context of an installation. The installation, however, is an art form in which not only the images, texts, or other elements of which it is composed but also the space itself plays a decisive role. This space is not abstract or neutral but is itself a form of life. The siting of documentation in an installation as the act of inscription in a particular space is thus not a neutral act of showing but an act that achieves at the level of space what narrative achieves at the level of time: the inscription in life (Groys 2002).

'Artistic documentation', while problematic, would appear to be less fraught than the pairing of the terms 'artistic research', which suggests a similar sort of *neither/nor* and *both/and* paradox as can be found in the literary genre of the prose poem (being neither prose nor poetry, yet prose in appearance while using all the techniques of poetry internally).[6] A liminal space opens – the threshold between two concepts – demanding the reader/viewer's participation to activate the play of hermeneutic potentialities. This might be compared to the curious term 'unfinished thinking', which Borgdorff uses to characterise the sort of 'embodied' experiences and insights that artistic research offers, the material outcomes of which, he claims, are 'non-conceptual and non-dis-

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6. I discuss this question at greater length in Hughes 2011, pp. 109-110.

cursive', and the persuasive quality of which is located in 'the performative power through which they broaden our aesthetic experience'. Again, the value of safeguarding a provisional indeterminacy is emphasised, and the field is accordingly characterised as 'the articulation of the unreflective, non-conceptual content enclosed in aesthetic experiences, enacted in creative practices and embodied in artistic products' (Borgdorff 2011: 47). Whether one accepts such a formulation or not, it does vividly foreground the problem of the assessment and evaluation of artistic research. Many artistic researchers are keen to stress the notion that established models of assessment from the sciences and humanities are not applicable to artistic research. What, then, is applicable as a measure of assessment? How do we establish the basis of judgment? Are such values transferable or peer-specific? How can the established conventions of peer review serve the double demands of artistic research?[7]

Artistic research raises many questions about our assumed relationship to knowledge. What is 'knowing' for artists? How do they know what they know? Can they communicate this knowledge to a third party, one outside their community of practitioners? And, if so, what might be the most apt form, performance or 'structure of attention' for doing so? The problem of exposition becomes particularly acute in the performing arts, where the experiential basis of artistic process and encounter is central. Michael Biggs has written of artistic research (or 'practice-led research' as is common in the UK) as comprising an experiential component that is communicable to others. But the core of the problem, Biggs claims, is indeed the communication of experiential content. To attempt such communication is to take decisions about the meaning of an experience, its experiential content and how that might be related to our shared context. Biggs argues that the question of whether one can reflect upon experience and the extent to which either reflection (i.e. cognition) or expression (i.e. linguistic or non-linguistic representation) 'corrupts' the experiential content is a profound ontological and epistemological question. 'We can translate the problem of experiential content into one of representation', Biggs writes:

> [W]e can identify a feature that is sufficiently important as to underlie the most intractable problem of research in this area. The problem is that the experiential feelings that represent experiential content are private to the experiencing individual. Experiences must be expressed in the first person; 'I feel …'. While they remain private experiences they cannot reasonably be regarded as research because they do not meet the criterion that research should be disseminated […] But the problems of identifying and communicating first person experiences to second and third persons is notoriously difficult (Biggs 2004).

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7. These questions have been addressed in detail by the editors of and contributors to *JAR* since its inception.

Each artistic research project, then, is obliged to find or design the most appropriate form to express (or stage, exhibit, unfold etc.) its findings resonantly.[8] What are the implications of this for an academic culture built on the standardisation of formats and the duplication and wide dissemination of results?

For some, the return of writing, now operating under an expanded, shape-shifting 'creative and critical' brief, conscious of its own logocentric biases – and thus fully capable of snuggling up to the very forces that were supposed to resist its overbearing charms – might undermine the special characteristics of artistic research as an extra-linguistic mode of research. What happens to Michael Polanyi's notion of 'tacit knowledge' – the idea that 'we can know more than we can tell' – if we can write crisp, peer-reviewed essays defining it and extolling its central importance?[9] What happens to the sensory encounter with the material qualities of a specific artefact if this aura-rich experience may be satisfactorily invoked via an *ekphrastic* catalogue essay or research article? Can one describe in words the tactile qualities of a craft object such that it enters our thinking and emotions through our fingertips? Artistic research acknowledges the full range of conceptual and sensory information that can be brought to bear in an attempt to make sense of something. But this brings the risk that under cover of the supposed 'ineffability' of the artist's or designer's material practice, the onus of interpretation is shifted (some would say unduly) to the work's intended audience, reader – or examiner. How 'translatable' is aesthetic pleasure or sensory experience generally?[10]

While it is important, of course, to acknowledge that there is in artistic research a widespread description problem, it may be equally important to note that questions of research relevance, impact and evaluation are not infrequently deferred in favour of investigations into 'the creative process', or mappings of form, influences or other varieties of introspective inquiry subsumed under the sometimes solipsistic concept of 'reflective practice'.[11] Reflective practice in the arts often assumes an individual agent toiling away to 'author' creative work

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8. Schwab lists the modes of writing typically associated with artistic research exposition as: exposure, staging, performance, translation, exhibiting, reflection, curating, unfolding. These, he claims, are furthermore being extended through the RC project (Schwab 2012, p. 342).

9. Polanyi 1967, p. 4. Tacit knowledge is described by the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn as 'knowledge that is acquired through practice and that cannot be articulated explicitly'. See *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

10. Ludwig Wittgenstein asks the following: 'Describe the aroma of coffee. Why can't it be done? Do we lack the words? And for what are words lacking? But how do we get the idea that such a description must after all be possible? Have you ever felt the lack of such a description? Have you tried to describe the aroma and not succeeded?' (Wittgenstein 1986, p. 159, § 610).

11. I discuss this description problem in Hughes 2009, pp. 247-259. See also Jones 2009.

– a modern self, in short, and with it a theory of cultural production. Since this conceptualisation of authorship underpins much of the debate around exposition, it is worth pausing to consider what it means to assign a certain body of work to a specific individual. How do categories of *author* and *work* inform each other when documenting artistic research that is typically a complex weave of collaborations? What interdisciplinary perspectives might we bring to investigate the cultural, technological and economic aspects of cultural production – not least the institutions of *ownership* and *reward* that historically legitimise and reinforce the bond between author and intellectual property? Michel Foucault's observation that 'it would be worth examining how the author became individualized in a culture like ours, what status he [*sic*] has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorization the author was involved, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of "the-man-and-his-work criticism" began' (Foucault 1977), should be borne in mind lest exposition becomes simply another device for claiming ownership of overlapping processes and diverse inputs.

Authorial identity historically derives from a paradox: mastery of the materials of authorship in their passage from idea, inspiration or commission to audience involves a surrendering of self-mastery (to influences 'beyond one's control' such as divine afflatus or Romantic inspiration) combined with a highly disciplined command of materials (and therefore self). The patriarchal notion of an author 'fathering' his text, rather as God purportedly 'fathered' the world, has been all-pervasive in Western literary civilisation, so much so that the metaphor is built into the very word *author*, with which writer, deity and *pater familias* are identified.[12] In England, the modern representation of the author as the originator and proprietor of a special commodity – the oeuvre – derives from blending Lockean discourses of property and selfhood with the eighteenth-century discourse of original genius. By the early nineteenth century, the figure of the Romantic author brought the notion of the author as a creative individual who, by virtue of stamping the imprint of a unique personality on original works, takes them into ownership and thereby provides the paradigm and reference point for intellectual property law. At the same time, copyright discourse has always struggled with the paradoxical notion of 'incorporeal property', with its analogous relations between corporeal and incorporeal, material and immaterial, body and consciousness.[13]

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12. See Márton Dornbach's review of Timothy Clark (Dornbach 2003). Dornbach comments 'Inspiration … places the author in a precarious constellation with two forms of otherness: the dictating authority and the audience. The resultant "crisis of subjectivity" explains the often ambivalent role played by inspiration in many writers' self-understanding.'
13. See Biagioli & Galison 2003. On authorship in the humanities see, for example, Minnis 1984 and Burke 1992.

Furthermore, as in the multi-authorship of a typical scientific-research project, an artistic-research project might involve an artefact (or series of artefacts), a collection or archive (library or database), a series of collaborations (both acknowledged and unacknowledged), resulting in a final exhibition, performance (or series of performances), and/or publication. The outcome, in other words, is a distillation of a longer process of interpreting, adapting and applying information derived from various collection systems (historical, methodological, educational or technical), made available to an audience via an experience in (or across) time.

The time-based arts have the potential to explore and express 'embodied knowledge', to place the body centre stage in artistic research, while calling into question the appropriateness of language for communicating research processes and results. This poses further challenges when it comes to exposition. Caroline Rye writes:

> Issues of documentation are of critical concern to the question of practice as research in performance and are particularly charged for two paradoxical reasons. First, because the research may be concerned with exactly those qualities of the live encounter and the production of embodied knowledges which cannot, by definition, be embedded, reproduced or demonstrated in any recorded document. Second, more pragmatically, if one wishes one's research to have a life beyond its original live manifestation, and thus be available to a broader research community, the practitioner/researcher has to engage with the creation of appropriate performance documents (Rye).

As in other forms of artistic documentation – the exhibition catalogue is a prominent example – the risk is that the record eclipses the event it supposedly re-presents, diminishing (or even eradicating) the distinctive, living qualities of embodiment and encounter in a time and space framed as singular, transient, site-specific and non-repeatable. We again confront the challenge of designing an appropriate encounter and conversation around a work that, at a minimum, satisfies the sometimes diverging priorities of researcher and creative practitioner.

It is not difficult to agree with Valéry that it would be best to think in a form that one had invented. We can look forward to artistic research rising to this challenge. Yet each way of encountering the world also contains elisions and exclusions. When we privilege a particular way of seeing or speaking or moving, we are also closing off other courses of action. A vantage point is partial; materials, languages, conventions, genres, institutions – all contain their own constraints. Lawrence Weiner famously designates 'language + the materials referred to' as the medium for his work, allowing him to situate his textual-sculptural practice in a wide range of geographical locations and cultural systems (or 'points of reception', in Weiner's words). Expositional

writing seeks closer contact with artistic, craft and design practices. Multiplying areas of interest increasingly crowd the curriculum: art writing; materiality and genre; the aesthetics of the dematerialised artefact; language as sculpture; sound art; the role of language in Conceptual art, not to mention the work of Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Fiona Banner and Gillian Wearing.[14] How do the characteristics of literary, critical and philosophical genres of inquiry shape relationships to spatial, (im)material and experiential practices through materialised descriptions, installations, performances, philosophical dialogues and critical poetics? How might artistic-research practitioners rethink the relationship between critical and creative practice through a close engagement with genre, style and related questions of voice, subjectivity, point-of-view, spatiality, perspective, embodiment and materiality?

At Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, I run an elective Masters course titled *Language + Materials: Word, Image, Sound, Performance*.[15] The course explores the age-old conflict between meaning and persuasion (or philosophy and rhetoric). Through works associated with different media and forms of presentation (books, posters, videos, films, records, sound art, drawings, multiples, installations, and more) students are invited to explore such themes as conceptual writing, epistemological conceptualism, the boundaries of genre, hybrid text/material hybridity, transdisciplinary textual strategies, topographic writing, site-specific art involving words, fictocriticism, haunted writing, architectural writing/writing architecture, interactive text, the fragment, the collage, the labyrinth, hypertext, performance writing (writing in/as/through performance) and sound art involving language, language as sculpture, ineffable experience, the limits of expressivity, *ekphrasis*, giving voice to a mute object (*prosopopeia*), bringing an object vividly into the reader's imagination (*enargia*), rhetoric, form, content and ethics, robotic poetics, generative art, random poetry, comics and the graphic novel, typography and authorship, the 'art of authenticity', conventions of reading, 'iconic writing' – writing captions and/or catalogues for exhibited artefacts, the tension between artefact (or device) and response, performance and review, experience and articulation.

If artistic research is conceived (as I do here) as disruptive, dialogic, polyphonic, animal, monstrous even, we might justly ask what forms of research exposition are likely to emerge when such dichotomies as image/word, artefact/language, origin/caption, event/narrative, artwork/exposition are supplanted by the logic of the 'device'? Does our focus shift to *the quality of the encounter*, and the *conversation* by which we configure and hopefully *understand each other's experience*? Might this ultimately become an instance of a *difference that makes a difference?*

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14. For an excellent overview of such work, see Morley 2003.

15. A professional education version of the course is also scheduled, starting Spring 2014.

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Aesthetic Sensibility and Artistic Sonification

By Marcel Cobussen

It is not that art is the expression of the unconscious, but rather that it is concerned with the relation between the levels of mental process [...] Artistic skill is the combining of many levels of mind – unconscious, conscious, and external – to make a statement of their combination. It is not a matter of expressing a single level. Similarly, Isadora Duncan, when she said, 'If I could say it, I would not have to dance it,' was talking nonsense, because her dance was about combinations of saying and moving.
Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972)

Artistic Research I – Three Examples

Example 1. During a research seminar in Ghent (Belgium), guitar player Laura Young, investigating the (im)possibilities of transcribing, arranging and playing Max Reger's solo cello and viola suites on guitar, explains her project through the performance of certain parts of the scores she is studying. After her presentation, a philosopher-musicologist asks her whether she can legitimate some of her musical and technical decisions on the basis of a clear (discursive) rationale. After a brief silence Young has to admit that her choices cannot easily be supported by logical and verbal argumentation. A prolonged debate ensues from this: is she just relying on certain aesthetic and performance conventions, or are her choices inspired by some implicit knowledge? Was her performance mainly directed by an embodied routine, which Merleau-Ponty would describe as 'habitude', or was a certain 'reflection-in-action', as coined by Donald Schön, prevailing?

Example 2. The second chapter of Henrik Frisk's PhD dissertation *Improvisation, Computers and Interaction* discusses his musical piece *etherSound*. Put simply, *etherSound*, an improvisation for sax, drums and electronics, includes an invitation for listeners to send SMS messages to a specific phone number. These messages – the conditions are that they should have a reasonable word length (not too long and not too short) and enough vowels (as a means to increase the chance that it is indeed a meaningful word); preferably, they should make sense – are digitally translated into sonic material, directly audible for both players and audience. This audience-generated electronic input thus immediately affects the course of the improvised music.

Most pages in the dissertation are dedicated to a description of the tech-