ADSR Zine
015

CONTENTS

Growth

Yesterday, obtaining a competitive doctoral scholarship to do a PhD at a British university made me happy.
Today, the generous shade of a tree makes me happy.

Yesterday, a paid commission from an admired European ensemble made me smile.
Today, watching native birds drink eagerly from a font I just filled with water makes me smile.

Yesterday, having my expert opinion count in the decisions of an OzCo panel gave me satisfaction.
Today, gaining some understanding into why I feel the way I feel about the world, addressing my traumas, and dismantling my biases gives me satisfaction.

Yesterday, lecturing about aesthetics in a university classroom made me feel rewarded.
Today, being paid a just salary for an honest job makes me feel rewarded.

Yesterday, having a premiere in a reputed international New Music festival gave me a sense of achievement.
Today, being able to make sounds with a simple instrument I made with my bare hands gives me that sense.

Yesterday I treasured pieces of paper from universities solemnly stating that I have fulfilled the requirements to be conferred the degree of this or that.
Today, I treasure the memory of the distinct saline smell of the ocean mid-morning in the town where I was born.

Yesterday I was educated to believe that The Truth was to be found in books written by dead European philosophers, or in the masterpieces of European artists.
Today I'm convinced that if there is such a thing as a truth, it might well be found in a folk song from the Andes.

Who knows what tomorrow will be like.

– Pedro Alvarez

Reflecting on* Poor Effort *by Splinter Orchestra

Splinter Orchestra are a large ensemble of improvising musicians and sound makers. The group continues to evolve since its formation over 20 years ago, exploring ways to engage in a collective music-making that includes and responds to the environments in which it occurs.

Over the last eight or so years we've been meeting to play, in *places*, almost every Sunday – most commonly Tempe Jets. With the intention of keeping this up during the lockdowns of 2020 & 21, we entered into what we called **'**non-place plays**'**: meeting online to connect and attempt to music together. Strategies and processes to do this in a meaningful way began to emerge.

In 2020 we produced an audiovisual work *Gesture & Suerte* for Avant Whatever's online festival that showcased our attempt at 'simultaneous' improvisations (whatever that means, given the ambiguities and complexities of telecommunications over multiple cities, zones and continents.) From our little 'boxes' we watched each other play and experiment with visual/video elements, and recorded in our own spaces whilst listening to the fragmented audio feed from Zoom. The resulting audio, and multiple screen recordings, were mixed together to reveal a strangely homogenous work and while the process was bizarre, unfamiliar and alienating for many, the togetherness of the resulting music had a resonance across the group.

In 2021 we shifted to a strategy of making non-synchronous audio recordings where there was no attempt to play at the same time as other Splinters, nor hear each other's contributions in real time. These recordings -– effectively 'exquisite corpses' — produced interesting results that highlighted multiple diverse environments and time-spaces, becoming what could be described as 'multi-place plays'. One of the processes developed from our 'multi-place plays' became affectionately known as *Poor Effort*.

The brief for *Poor Effort* was for each Splinter member to create a 20 minute audio recording with the ambiguous instruction of putting in 1.3 - 6.5% effort: a small contribution (for example) timewise, energy wise, or density wise as an attempt to encourage space and 'easeful-ness' in our music-making. This created space for ambiences and sonic ecologies to poke through and flourish and took the playing away from the teleology one expects from music performance — players were able to simply be whilst their unique time-space unfolded.

Following this, we made a video version of *Poor Effort* to accompany the audio. Splinters were invited to contribute short or long videos — again made with 'not too much effort' — which were casually arranged on a timeline, with no reference to the audio. Again, this 'exquisite corpse' style activity resulted in some fascinating coincidences between the visual and audio elements.

The following page is a collective reflection of the experiences and processes undertaken in the unfamiliar environment of non-synchronous art-making — created and collated in the spirit of *Poor Effort*.

Poor Effort features on digital album *Efforts,* available through label Caterpillar, March 2022.

Splinters involved in *Poor Effort*:
Jim Denley, Laura Altman, Peter Farrar, Andrew Fedorovitch, Aviva Endean, Nick Ashwood, Bonnie Stewart, Dosta, Tony Osborne, MP Hopkins, Romy Caen, Elly Brickhill, Melanie Eden and Adam Gottlieb.

... **not too much effort!**

· what if

During Lockdown We would meet on Zoom Each Sunday.

it) taught me something about ritual   *overlay...*

the possibility for

we all decided to write something

about the importance of connecting with others but also to something within...   the first thing left

most of what we knew   *syncronicity...*

from our hearts   how to find my own centre of gravity?

I enjoyed the cat cameos *Happens*

We'd create a space for me to feel *talk about different recording ideas*

meaning?   comfort?   connectedness?

and spontaneously arranged it on a page

to create meaning twice. for me, and for the group.

it took a lot of faith.

experimentation. frustration.   emotion.

Members of the group would Record something during the week.

i would light a candle   and spread a blanket over the floor

find a comfortable seat

so that what resulted

this included meditation   (walking, attention to the breath)

And Peter walking through screens, popping up

These individual Recordings were then compiled by 1 person

now that i think of it, i would like to incorporate some of these lessons back into our   once the layers overlapped

on what level do we tune in?   (learning something about the incidental and the co-incidental)

what does it take to become attuned?

revealed something spectacularly perfect or strange

what connects us?

find a final ceiling   about what we were trying to articulate

The whole thing the experience of making 'poor effort' was some strange blessing for me that i can't put into words.

i bring these questions with me

and ponder over them

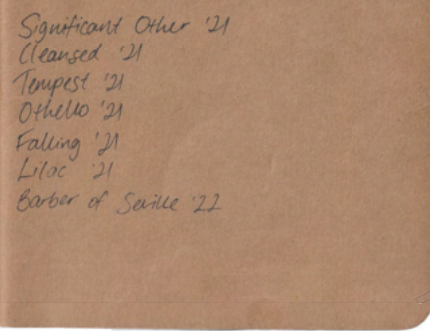over cups of lapsang souchong.

...idea!

It produced surprising results

SIGNIFICANT OTHER
BY JOSHUA HARMON

conjuring
the intangible:

**reflections on process
from a lighting designer**
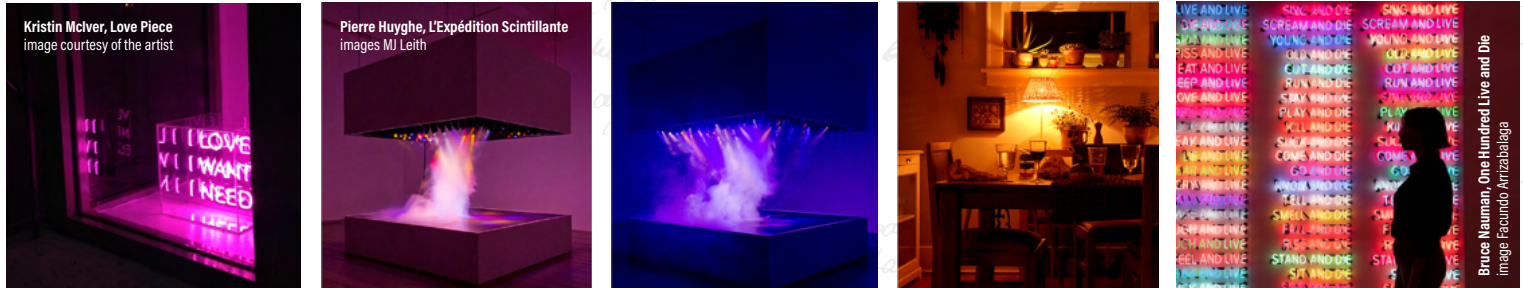
// MORGAN MORONEY

Significant Other '21
Cleansed '21
Tempest '21
Othello '21
Falling '21
Lilac '21
Barber of Seville '22

early read / breakdown

Jordan Berman is a gay man approaching his thirties with a stable job and three fabulous friends - satisfied with his life, yet craving the solace of a significant other. As his romantic endeavours consistently wither - and one by one his (heterosexual) friends pair off - he is left wondering whether he will ever find the love they brandish. It is a rumination on parting ways with people as they settle for the institution of marriage and its associated ceremonies, at odds with the queer experience of a timeline which doesn't always conform to this. Director Hayden Tonazzi and I collaborated on the Australian premiere of this play in June 2021 - here's how the design process unfolded.

Conversations commence sporadically, in discipline-specific discussions and broader creative team meetings. In a literal sense, the script calls for a myriad of locations - offices, apartments, movie theatres, pools, bars and wedding venues. However, it is immediately clear that we aren't concerned with manufacturing a literal interpretation of these spaces. Jordan is highly neurotic person, as are his recounts, which conjure much of the play's action. It is a text demanding a space offering fluidity and multiplicity in stage images. Each moment exists on a spectrum from reality to fantasy, distorted through a lens of memory and yearning. We're predominantly in New York City, but we won't be seeing a glittering skyline.

reference gathering

Kristin McIver, Love Piece
image courtesy of the artist

Pierre Huyghe, L'Expédition Scintillante
images MJ Leith

Bruce Nauman, One Hundred Live and Die
image Facundo Arrizabalaga

meeting with director

To these meetings, I bring references of saturation and life encroached by darkness through the works of Pierre Huyghe and Bruce Nauman. Our Set Designer brings iconic New York windows and a multileveled space incorporating an array of these frames to the conversation. Our Costume Designer brings a delightfully garish palette of wedding fashions and sharp contemporary clothing. Sound Design offers the final piece of the puzzle, conjuring location and mood through underscoring.

The world we are grasping for is joyous, playful, full of the melodrama of sharing stories with one's closest friends. Hayden's direction offers the fun and farce of Jordan's life, yet gradually shifts into a place of isolation. Jordan's increasing desperation demands a journey from dazzling colour to starkness and emptiness. The final image is him alone on the dance floor, abandoned by his friends and yet to find what he so desires.

We refine these concepts to a series of Mondrian walls and windows, spatial layers which can be manipulated to take us on Jordan's emotional and psychological journey. Light can create tight areas of focus as each location materialises, and the negative space between walls and windows can be activated as glimpses into memories and moments of desire. Corridors of light catch Jordan in a fleeting glance towards love interest Will, or darting away from an awkward romantic encounter to the safety of a friend.

The constant ballet in creating theatrical design is balancing dreams and parameters – particularly time, money and resources. In this instance, we are time rich. The theatre offers about a week's worth of 'bump in' and onstage rehearsal time, and we are fortunate to have access to a workshop and large venue to play in (as far as independent spaces in Sydney are concerned!) However, we are relatively limited in terms of money and resources - the labour to construct this vision is a team of dedicated volunteers.

Lighting Design is not offered a portion of the tight budget. The theatre has a stock of dusty lights which I clean and catalogue before beginning the rather technical process of codifying our concepts into a drawing known as the Lighting Plan. Each light is positioned in physical space and assigned a number for recall from the console.
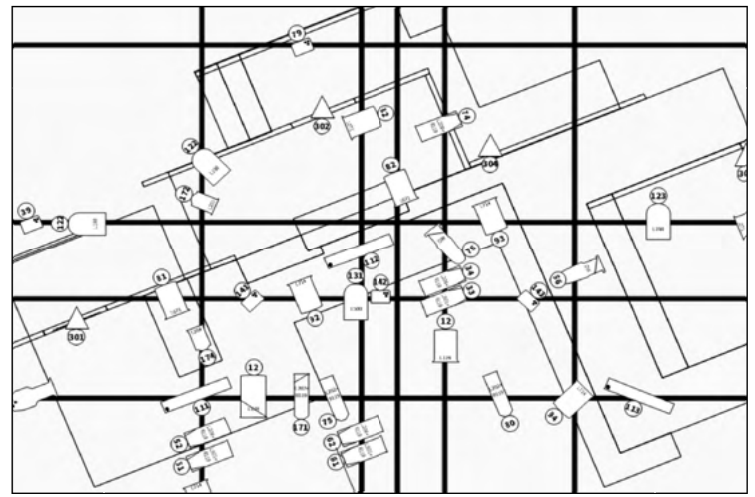
*above:* **draft lighting plan & in the midst of bump in**

Once the task of installation is complete and every light is focussed to achieve a specific purpose, the 'plot' commences - each lighting cue is crafted drawing on the carefully refined palette.

Initially, Jordan's movements and text are primary motivators for shifts in light, each new location directly conjured in front of him in real time. However, as the play progresses, this movement shifts ahead of him – unrelenting motion dragging him forward at a dizzying pace.

In Act I, the chaotic walls serve as an injection of saturated colour – Kiki's kitsch Kentucky wedding is shrouded in lurid pinks and purples, a recounted pool party is bathed in aqua blue footlights.
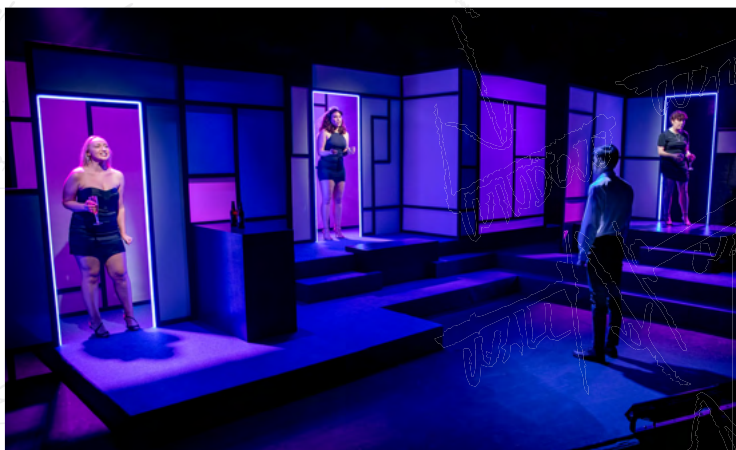
Visits to Jordan's slowly deteriorating grandmother punctuate the chaos, where well-intended if somewhat misunderstanding advice is offered. A cosy apartment is conjured via the reveal of a table lamp and lighting shift offering warmth, she assures him that life is "a long book".

Act II leaves the stage feeling hollow – negative space comes to prevalence and the colour desaturates. In the dying moments on the dance floor, Jordan is covered in shattered refractions from a stationary disco ball.

above: **kiki's wedding**
the pool party
cacophonous conclusion to act 1
right: **production week notes**
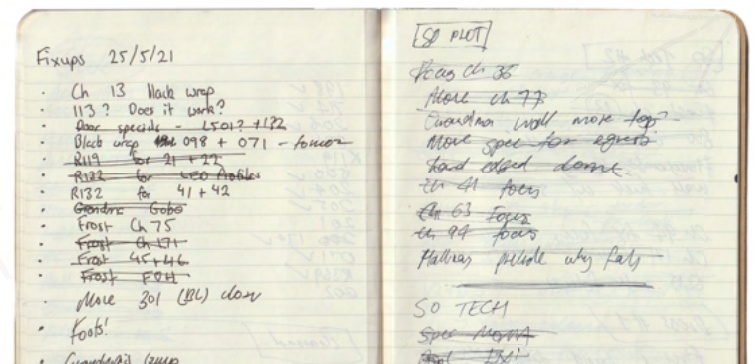
Talking about light is not easy. It can feel frustratingly intangible, yet it is an integral (and delightfully manipulative) tool in crafting theatre. There are technical qualities one can adopt to describe light to collaborators, but I often find myself talking about how a scene should *feel* rather than how it will be lit in a more practical sense. I find Lighting Design to be a fascinating blend of art, technology, management and collaboration which can culminate in ephemeral magic.

It is no secret that there is diminished space in Sydney for emerging theatre-makers to practice, and theatrical endeavours free from government subsidisation are an exercise in magnified resourcefulness. This financial model this production was staged in offers no wages to the artists involved. Instead, it is seen as a place for us to hone our craft, demonstrate our abilities and put on display the combination of our creative voices in hope of catching the attention of future collaborators.

www.morganmoroney.com

above: **grandma's apartment, final image dress rehearsal notes**

Significant Other

by Joshua Harmon

New Theatre
Sydney / Gadigal Land 2021

Director Hayden Tonazzi
Set Designer - Hamish Elliot
Lighting Designer - Morgan Moroney
Costume Designer - Kate Beere
Sound Designer - Aron Murray

Music Supervisor - Oliver Beard
Vocal Coach - Laura Farrell
Assistant Director - Sophia Bryant
Production Manager - John Short
Stage Manager - Lillian Lee
Assistant Stage Manager - Louie Walsh

with **Matthew McDonald, Laura McInnes, Dominique Purdue, Tom Rodgers, Helen Tonkin, Isabella Williams**

Production Stills (C) Bob Seary for New Theatre

Undergoing Music

by Jane Sheldon

A few months ago, I said out loud something that I had only said in my head, although I'd been saying it in this internal way for some time. I described myself when singing as "a body undergoing music in public." One might read into this all kinds of things about performing being somehow traumatic (and sure it can be) or about music being something I am in combat with onstage (and sure it can be), but that's not really what I mean. What I mean is that a particular picture of my singing body (and the sonic bodies of other performers) has settled in my mind, a picture in which the body is perhaps best understood as a porous container for a set of organic processes that music can be said to intervene on.

These processes are already happening when the music begins, they have their own temporal behaviours, and the music brings its own temporal structures into contact with these prior within-body activities. There's an obvious political argument to be made about how this picture might be said to correct Western music's rather stunning denial of the body and that this correction might be desirable and somehow morally good. There's even an argument to be made in which this intervention could be read as violence of some kind. There will be someone who has something to say about that. But I'm more interested in the aesthetic consequences of composing with these bodily processes in mind. In my own composing, I find myself wanting to ensure that these bodily temporalities have some kind of presence, whether explicit or hidden.

What are some of the relevant features of a performer's bodily condition? The body is full of pumping mechanisms and cyclical activities but what is most relevant here are the large scale processes whose temporal behaviours are easily perceived, can be observably intervened upon, and are marked by an essential periodicity: the heartbeat and the breath.

My compositional interest in these processes is in no way novel. Grisey wrote about the Skeleton of Time, the Flesh of Time, and the Skin of Time, designations intended to help us parse the distinctions between the conceptual time of a score and the time as actually perceived by the bodies that encounter that score. And his notion of *fuzzy periodicity* "involved composing periodic events which fluctuate slightly around a constant, analogous to the periodicity of our heartbeat, breathing or footstep." In 1988 Brian Ferneyhough proposed term *the tactility of time*, which is intended to identify "[musical] situations in which alterations in the flow of time through and around objects or states become sensually (consciously) palpable." These objects are discrete musical-event-objects and the states are what he calls "experience units" of the "bodily condition." Which prompts the question, "whose bodily condition?"

To me, the most salient object through which musical time flows is the body of the performer. Holliger's *Cardiophonie* (1971) foregrounds the performer's heartbeat very explicitly, topicalising the body's presence. The pulse of the performer is amplified making explicit the effects of the score's demands on the body of the player, arriving at a performance of a kind of self-destruction in which the player puts the oboe down and the body in distress is what remains.

Note, however, that there's only so much we can do to alter our heart rate, and indeed its rate is the only thing we can attempt to alter. It seems to me that the most musically consequential registration of time in the body is the breath, especially for singers and wind and brass players. The breath can be much more richly intervened upon than the heartbeat: we can hold our breath for a time, we can inhale or exhale in staggered gasps, we can constrict the flow of air in a variety of ways. It can be intervened on by conscious choice, or some external object or process can interact with it such that its behaviours are altered. In any case, all these ways of altering the breath are interventions on its essential periodicity. The lungs are subject to oscillation mechanics: if you hold the breath, when you inevitably stop holding it the body will restore regular oscillation between intake and outflow.

Georges Aperghis' Récitation 10 (1978) in some sense does with the breath what *Cardiophonie* does with the heartbeat; the singer is required to fit an increasing number of words or sounds into the same short space of musical time, becoming increasingly breathless as she does this, and arriving at the verge of disintegration. A seemingly related exercise is undertaken in Abramovic and Ulay's AAA-AAA (created the same year as the Aperghis) in which they repeat an utterance to the point of exhaustion.

Joan LaBarbara's 1975 score *Circular Song*, is another clear invitation to consider the body in this framework. In *Circular Song* a very simple mapping is initially established between a descending

CIRCULAR SONG
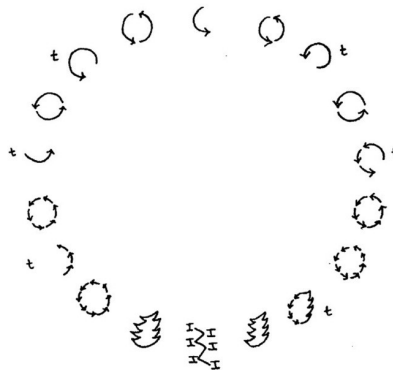
Instructions:
· beginning at top center with first exhaled descending glissando from comfortable top to bottom of range, change breath at bottom of range and ascend on inhale to top.
· repeat figure until too exhausting or no longer musically interesting.
· use transition figure ♪ᵗ to move to next repeating pattern in which breath changes occur at midpoints of vocal range. repeat as before.
· use next transition figure ♪ᵗ to move to repeating figure with 3 breath changes per range sweep, alternating inhale/exhale.
· after 3, move on to 4 changes per range sweep.
· then move to one step/half back figure in which one inhales upward then exhales halfway back down, changing at top to exhaling down and inhaling halfway back up.
· One has now arrived at the central figure, the midpoint: alternating inhaled and exhaled multiphonics, one moves from the lower to upper part of the range and then swoops down into the step/half back figure and proceeds through each repeating figure, in reverse, until arriving again at the beginning.

© 1975 Joan La Barbara

glissando and exhalation (egressive singing), and between an ascending glissando and inhalation (ingressive singing); the arc of the piece depends upon these mappings being broken down and interfered with. *Circular Song* is a simple example of what happens when ingression is elevated to the same musical status as egression: we hear continuous sound analogous to string bowing, produced by a to and fro action with a more or less audible pivot point at each end of the arc of movement.

For my part, I find myself most interested in work that springs from the dramatic implications of breath on stage. Most saliently, the oscillatory nature of breath means that intake implies outflow and vice versa. This alone has considerable dramatic richness (both Grisey and Ferneyhough talk about the role of periodic musical objects in cultivating expectation and anticipation.) *The Howling Girls* (2018), created by Damien Ricketson and Adena Jacobs for Sydney Chamber Opera, makes prolonged use of alternation between ingressive and egressive vocalisation and the interruption of this pattern. The work was created (for me to sing) in response to an account of the collective trauma of several young girls in Manhattan who presented at hospitals in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks with complaints that their throats were obstructed, disturbing the natural functioning of breath and voice. From Adena and Damien:

> "*The Howling Girls* explores the medium and metaphor of the voice. Featuring a solitary soprano and a throbbing chorus of young voices, together with an immersive orchestration of theremin, keyboards and electroacoustic music, the score itself is a kind of proto-language, an attempt to communicate in a mode beyond the rational: a sensory spectacle to bypass the brain and work directly on the body. The work unfolds in the trajectory of a single utterance. Beginning with the lungs: the engine room of the voice where the first transformation from mind to matter occurs with the squeeze of this bodily bladder of air - channelled into the throat: the fleshy organ pipe-cum-string instrument translating energy into vibration - to the crucible of the mouth and its attempt to forge this plasmic substance into an articulate mass - to its final expulsion from the lips in a rupture from the body to the outside world. For us, this experiential work functions as a ritual or purgation, in which the desire of reconstituting the voice is performed."

In my own work *poem for a dried up river* (2019), the use of breath similarly comes from a dramaturgical motivation. This composition is a setting of a poem by Alice Oswald in which she contemplates a small carved figurine of a water nymph from Roman Britain, an object wrought in a time of drought as a supernatural aid to conjure water from a dry river bed. Specifically what the poem contemplates is the imagined labour of the nymph as she attempts this seemingly impossible task, and my music draws much of its sonic vocabulary from the way effort reveals itself in the breath. The piece is for 2 sopranos, trombone, string trio, two percussionists, and electronics. One soprano sings text; the other sings almost entirely wordless vocalisations, many of which derive from sounds that are the artefacts of physical effort. The sounds from the water nymph start with the breath, the first place effort reveals itself in the body. These breath sounds are then mimicked in the instruments of the ensemble as the nymph's voice extends into phonation, her effortful breath becoming increasingly recognisable as a musical object. The instrumental rendering of breath comes from a lot of bowing on the bridge in the strings, lots of pitchless inhalation and exhalation through the trombone, and paper textures in the percussion parts. The piece's structure and its palette of timbres are intended to suggest various kinds of liminality or a confusion between contrasting states: dry and wet, weak and strong, barren and fecund.

In the piece I have tried to use the breath as much as possible in a region that sits between a completely organic response to effort, and its treatment as a musical object. The work is performed as an installation, devised in collaboration with artist and scenographer Elizabeth Gadsby, which contextualises the breath in a physical task, specifically, the task of unrolling a 300lb clay path throughout the performance. On the one hand, there are very precisely notated breaths in the score, but there's also the real panting and gasping of trying to push this heavy object, on a slippery substrate. If you watch the whole performance with the score, you can see places where there's a lot of breath present which is not notated, and the work is designed to assimilate this incidental breath. At the conclusion of the work, what the audience is left with is the suggestion of a dry river bed, marked all over with the evidence of the water nymphs' exertions.

Having mostly focused here on the body and breath of the performer, I will acknowledge in closing that there's much to be said about what effect all this has on the body of the listener. To return to Grisey:

> "To the complex time of a piece of music… we must finally relate another aspect of time, infinitely more complex: that of the person who perceives. It is in fact the listener who selects, who creates the changing angle of perception which will endlessly remodel, perfect, sometimes destroy musical form as the composer dreamed it. In turn, the listener's sense of time is in correlation with the multiple times of his native language, social group, culture and civilization. …Real musical time is only a place of exchange and coincidence between an infinite number of different times."

Alice Oswald gives regular recitations of her work and she's quite a theatrical reader. There was an anecdote, reported in the Guardian, about a recitation of this poem in which someone in the audience had an asthma attack because Oswald's delivery was such that they forgot to breathe.

Reflecting on self-censorship and improvisation at the
Australian Art Orchestra's Creative Music Intensive

Jaslyn Robertson

Disembarking the bus at Mt. Hotham, dizzy from the winding bus ride up the mountain, delirious at the landscape, I make awkward conversation with the young musicians who stand around me, almost none of whom I'd met before. We've travelled from different parts of Victoria and New South Wales for the Australian Art Orchestra's Creative Music Intensive, an annual 10-day workshop in improvisation. I look at their instrument cases and ask them what kind of music they play, if they're studying; small talk, but also trying to work out where I fit into this whole thing. I'm the only one with a suitcase of synthesizers and one of few with no background in jazz. Am I even an improviser? I feel like a fraud using that term sometimes, because I usually compose notated music and let other people do the performing. I played a few gigs on synths before the pandemic, mostly solo or in duos, but I don't have much experience yet in improvising with big groups like this. If someone asks me to play in a key, I won't even be able to – my SOMA and Make Noise synths aren't tuned to equal temperament.

I've chosen my instruments to give me the flexibility that I want when I play solo. They don't lock me into a tuning system or rhythmic grid. They also have a mind of their own sometimes. The SOMA Lyra-8 is advertised as 'organismic'; it's supposed to be uncontrollable and act like a living being that you can rein in but never fully train, and if you wet your fingers it becomes more responsive to subtle changes in touch. To me it's like a wild, queer, alien artefact, even though it's designed by a straight male Russian hippie who seems like he's trying to start a cult. So while I've spent 2 years in and out of lockdowns learning how to understand its range of sounds and make it feel like an extension of my body, it still moves unpredictably and might let out a grating squeal when I'm trying to play gently. I like that unpredictability, but I know that it's riskier for women to be seen as inexperienced or making mistakes in electronic music. Freida Abtan, in the article 'Where Is She? Finding the Women in Electronic Music Culture', has written about how while men have early chances to experiment and play with electronic music in groups, women (and people of other genders) are only invited in if they already have extensive knowledge.[1] I know that from personal experiences too. If I show up to a gig and I have my cables mixed up and it takes me a few minutes longer to start my sound check, I can feel the sound guy glaring at me. And when I play with noise and sudden dynamic changes, some people assume it's a mistake and not a musical choice and turn my volume down. I feel the censorship that lives in the environments I make music in. It tries to take away my chances to play with rough, risky noises and make mistakes.

So in my first group ensemble at the intensive, I keep my volume low.

I play in short, gentle tones and soft whispers, testing the waters, self-censoring before I can be censored by those outside forces.

The first morning, we take part in a Smoking Ceremony with a Gunaikurnai man. The majority of us are colonisers on this land that was brutally stolen from Indigenous people, and the luxury of escaping to this beautiful mountain to play music together is one afforded by hundreds of years of violence. I've been reading Jack Halberstam's book *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*, which has me thinking about how nature and the 'wild' can be a place for queerness, boundary-crossing, and outsider existence, but also how ideas of wildness have been conversely used as a justification for violence against Indigenous people and other People of Colour.[2] So, while we're excited to be here together after long years of lockdowns, taking up this space for our music-making is complicated. In front of us are the mountain ranges dusted with grey, behind us are the ski lodges and ski lifts and ski pubs. There's a strange feeling in the area in the 'off' season, without the throngs, I imagine, of affluent families on ski trips. We're

---

[1] Freida Abtan, "Where Is She? Finding the Women in Electronic Music Culture", *Contemporary music review* 35, no. 1 (2016): 55.
[2] Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

almost the only people on the mountain, apart from some construction workers, a few cyclists and the pub staff. It's exciting to be isolated like this, like we can make our own world to explore weird music-making together, but it feels a little bit dangerous, too. Surrounded by new faces in the isolated environment, apprehension tugs back against my excitement.

I get to know the other participants throughout the week and start to make friends and begin trying to overcome the self-censorship that creeps into my improvisation. The 10 days are emotionally and physically intense, each morning beginning with bass player Chris Hale's sessions based on the Korean concept of *Hohup* as a system for learning rhythms, practicing movement and breathing techniques. We begin by playing a tapping rhythm, a rolling movement of the hand on the floor. Chris observes that if he had written the on the whiteboard and asked us to play it, we would see a division in the room between those most comfortable with complex rhythmic notation stepping forward, and others intimidated by the dots shirking away. He's highlighting a form of self-censorship caused by a lack of confidence, being out of one's comfort zone or area of expertise, and feeling like an outsider in the genre, a feeling that particularly affects minorities within the Australian jazz scene. He proposes that focusing on movement instead of notation and copying a simple gesture takes away that kind of intimidation. The fact that everyone has the same level of ability to follow the action and we're all making the same sound in sync with one another removes some of those self-conscious, self-censoring impulses. I try to take this idea with me into my improvisations throughout the intensive – rather than relying on notation and musical terminology that can be polarising, in group improvisations we try to communicate with physical ideas and connect on a base level through breathing and movement.

Sunny Kim teaches us how memory and emotion can connect musicians and shape a performance, and how uncensoring one's vulnerability has a powerful effect in improvisation. A small group of musicians give us an early showing of her latest composition, about immigration and mothering. The intimate sharing within the improvising ensemble has a deep emotional effect on the audience. Each of the performers share extremely personal stories about their family history and their connections to ideas of mothering through audio clips of themselves and their mothers speaking, and introspective instrumental responses. Mindy Meng Wang is incredibly honest in the spoken word part of the performance, sharing her anxieties about her future relationship with her soon to be born child. Sunny explains to us how each of the performers gained the confidence to share such personal stories through a process of connection; the five of them sharing a cabin for the week to slowly open up to each other in a safe and private space before considering what they would like to share in the work. The caring process based around connecting with each other as friends before developing the performance gives the musicians confidence to share deeply personal stories. The time they've taken to build trust amongst each other comes through in their performance. Watching it, I begin to understand how much interpersonal relationships affect improvisation, especially in a performance based on an intimate, personal theme. Inviting both the performers and audience in to experience such strong emotions together is exciting, but also risky. It requires both parties to enter into a vulnerable space, but it can lead to a unique experience of unpacking emotions through music. Sunny takes care of the musicians in her work – while she wants the performance to communicate these uncensored stories and emotions, she also focuses on protecting the safety of the participants and doesn't coax them into sharing anything that they aren't comfortable with.

Cat Hope gives a lecture one morning about her own experiences as an improviser and composer. She brings up the censorship she experienced as a young musician at university, being kicked out of the orchestra for her mohawk and feeling like the music she loved had no place in the classical world. She tells us we don't need to be boxed into one genre or mode of performance, and that performing and composing and improvising can exist side by side and be defined by us. I relate to her story, since in my early days of composing I experienced censorship through people more powerful than me editing my music without permission, deleting my recordings and dissuading me from crossing genres. I am also inspired by the way she disregards the lines between composer and improviser, and it makes me feel validated as a musician who isn't trained in jazz improvisation but has come to improvising on my own path.

Hearing the story of someone who's carved her own path into improvisation and composition gives me more confidence to share my own musical perspective without feeling self-conscious about my lack of training in typical forms of improvisation.

As I form connections with the other people I'm playing with, I find it easier to bring more of myself to group improvisations. I play louder, and take more risks, not just following the sound of the ensemble but bringing in more of my own weird synth sounds. Trusting the people I'm playing with takes away some of my worries about not fitting in with the language of different kinds of music and being judged as an electronic musician in a male-dominated field.

But as much as the Australian Art Orchestra wants to let us explore music in an environment free of discrimination, we often spill out into the local pub for social events, and I have some uncomfortable interactions with men there that make me go back to my cabin early and take away some of the confidence I've gained during the music workshops. Opening up so much creatively and putting myself out there to form deep connections with new people has left my emotions at the surface, so it hits me harder when I feel taken advantage of by strangers. Thinking about self-censorship and making an effort to move past it in my performances puts me in a raw and vulnerable state, and combined with the isolation and some scary experiences, I'm tempted to sit out of some workshops afterwards. I'm reminded that the kind of risk-taking and uncensoring that can make improvisation so impactful also opens us up to vulnerability, so we need to be safe and look after ourselves and each other in intensive workshops and rehearsal periods like this.

The close connections I've formed with other participants save my efforts to find confidence as an improviser and work through the censorship I impose on myself. When I improvise with the people I've come to know both musically and personally, I hardly feel the nerves I did at the beginning of the intensive anymore. Censorship is a complex topic because it's something that exists in every aspect of communication, on a continuum from violent political censorship to harder to identify social conventions that internally stop us from saying what we want to say.[3] Beginning to address the aspects of self-censorship that are detrimental to my musical practice is a long and difficult task, but my experience at the CMI makes it clear to me that feelings of connection, understanding and safety with other musicians and in the environment can take me a long way forward in my journey of unlearning self-censorship in improvisation.

---

[3] Helen Freshwater, "Towards a Redefinition of Censorship," in *Censorship & Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, ed. Beate Müller (Boston: Brill, 2004), 235.

A reflection on *SYSTEM_ERROR* by Chamber Made

John Bailey

The close of the twentieth century must have been a terrible time to die. The air was thick with the promise that soon – just past that millennial horizon – would arrive the moment in which human immortality became possible. Whether medically decided, digitally recreated or something to do with vitamin supplements, those doomed by the frailty of their corporeal forms were about to be superseded by the first generation to enjoy the endlessly extendable cyborg life. Thank goodness that didn't happen.

The atmosphere is – in 2021 – still heady with promises of infinitely extendable lives, but the presence of death and the impermanence of the body has re-entered the ring in an undeniable fashion. The question isn't simply whether you might live forever, but whether you'd want to. Chamber Made's SYSTEM_ERROR is the first work that has inspired me to realise: no, not by a long shot. I want a long life, but if anyone offers to upload me to the cloud, give 'em a hard no.

There are moments in which SYSTEM_ERROR conjures memories of the techno-hypnogogia of much Melbourne art from the 1990s, wherein glitchy and abrasive digital scores were thrown at equally glitchy and abrasive choreography. Those works sought to explore what it meant to be a machine, or a person defined as a machine, or a person defined by machines, and there's a long and storied history of art tackling those questions.

SYSTEM_ERROR isn't really part of that tradition, I don't think. It's closer to an older tradition that resists severing the human and the machine to begin with. It never bought into the idea that the digital, technological or artificial was a place of eternal perfection at which we flawed meat puppets could only hope to arrive. It's interested in how the unavoidable decay of life overlaps with the fallibility of the machine. It's the cracked reflection that stares back as you pick up your dropped phone.

The centrepiece of SYSTEM_ERROR is the sprawling instrument devised by co-creator Alisdair Macindoe. The choreographer and dancer has designed a maze of conductive tape that stretches across an extensive playing space, reminiscent of computer circuit and mandala. It's an electrical circuit that can only be completed when human skin touches two of its points, and that closure is what activates and determines the sound it emits. Over the course of an hour, this bespoke conjunction of body and device gives SYSTEM_ERROR its shape.

Macindoe performs with co-creator Tamara Saulwick, and across the duration of the work they configure various modes of performing the machine: swiping, strumming, drumming or stepping, sometimes requiring both bodies to connect in conjunction with the strips in order to complete their circuit. Stark projections hover above their movement; Melanie Huang's data visualisations are initially evocative of Ryoki Ikeda's work, but both the direction of Huang's renderings and the impulse of this work propel it away from Ikeda's disinterest in visceral human experience.

Though often abstract and monochromatic, SYSTEM_ERROR is not coldly cerebral. It's a deeply embodied work, not simply in the focus on the two human figures who physically enable the sound but in the experience of that sound itself. From the tectonic rumblings of its opening sequence, the piece announces itself as something to be felt as much as watched, heard through the proprioceptive mechanisms by which our bodies orient themselves in space as much as by the two tiny holes in our head upon which we usually rely to apprehend sound.

Equally, the choreography that animates Macindoe and Saulwick is often accompanied by snippets of vocal recordings that arrive without context, neither complementing nor contrasting with the physical display. These meditations on memory, mortality and futurism aren't didactic in nature;

instead they seem like tactile elements of the work that different audience members will experience in different ways. The whole amounts to a sound bath, inviting contemplation rather than demanding interpretation.

In this way, SYSTEM_ERROR notes from the outset that it's not in thrall to the logic that underscores the digital discourse it explores. Its two bodies aren't binary opposites. It's not a work about 1s and 0s. This work is interested in the excluded middle those binaries deny.

After all, 2021 is a long way from the utopias we were promised. Devices refuse to speak to one another, or suddenly lose their connection, and that's if they even speak the same language. It's ironic that such a technologically accomplished work as SYSTEM_ERROR should concern itself with the inherent violability of digital systems (although – FYI – email and other communications systems really don't like passing on messages with the subject line SYSTEM_ERROR).

It's there in the name, then. So many experiences of technology today are not encounters with the seamless machines "made of sunshine" promised by Donna Haraway's pivotal 1985 Cyborg Manifesto. There are instances of that promise in SYSTEM_ERROR, as Macindoe swipes gorgeous arpeggios from his silvered machine and Saulwick carries boxes lit from within across the stage. The reverie ends as they lay their heads on the clunky lightboxes.

The artistic, academic and cultural discourses refracted throughout SYSTEM_ERROR are often dreams of a technologically-enabled afterlife that border on the religious. Saulwick and Macindoe's inflection includes the shade with the sunshine. Screens make poor pillows.

At a practical level, one of the downsides of living forever would be the fact that at some point you'd fall down a hole you couldn't climb out of, get stuck under a rock you couldn't lift, or befall some other calamity that itself was forever. Imagine an earworm occupying your mind for hundreds of years. Many traditions posit that suffering is an unavoidable component of living; life without death necessarily extends to a certain level of suffering without end.
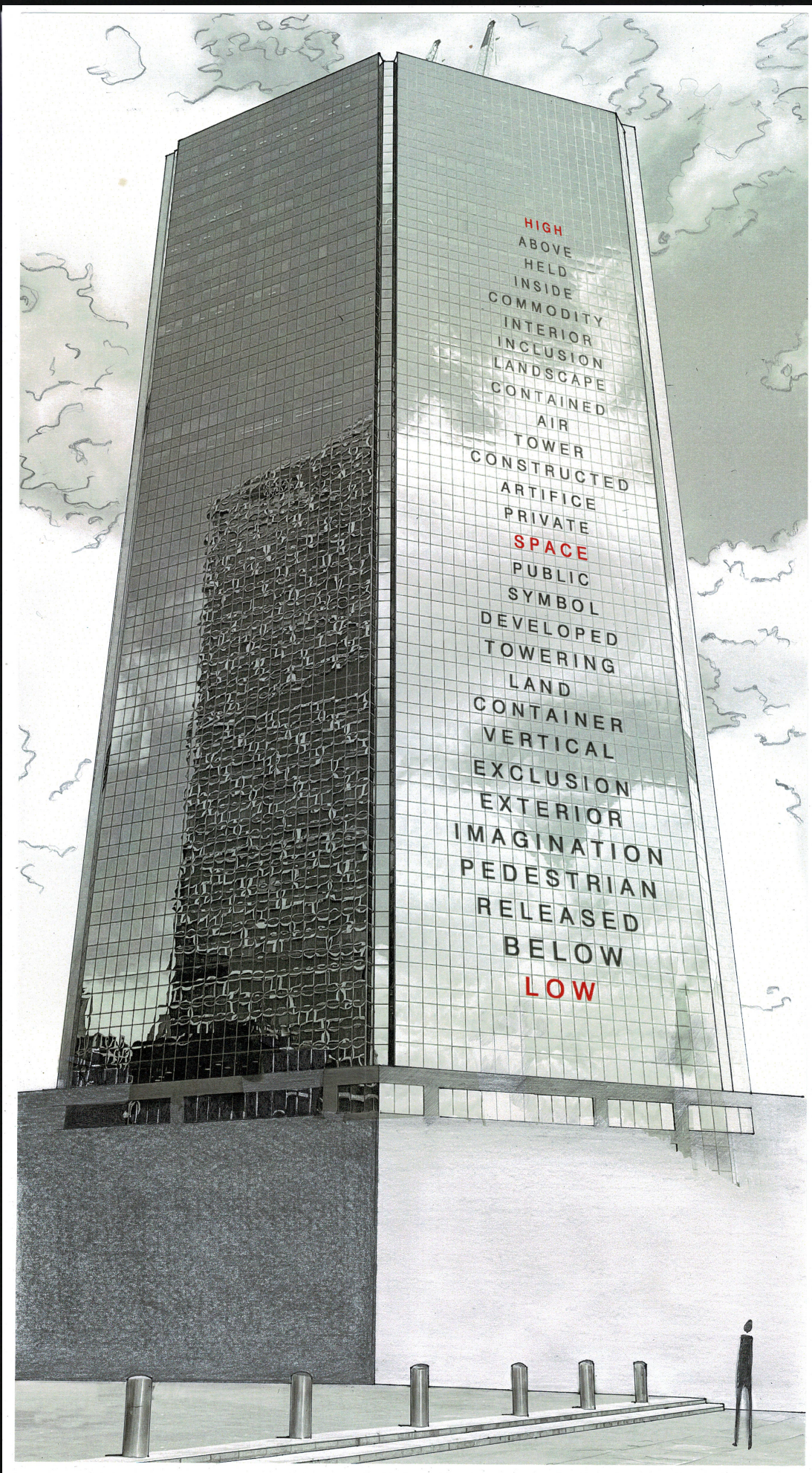
On a philosophical level, too, eluding the constraints of time might not prove so great. Throughout SYSTEM_ERROR a curious series of iterative notes-to-self regularly interrupt the work. In each, a voice records a moment of waking into an eternal present, no perception remaining fixed. It's not amnesia in the Hollywood sense – no hapless hero whose past was deleted by a donk on the head – but instead suggests the experience of floating selflessness that must occur when there is no possibility of returning to a past point of anchor.

It could be the experience of a body that has been denied collapse while its mind has not. It could be a brain uploaded to a server without a body to give distinction to today and yesterday. It could be a computer program that has arrived at consciousness only to discover that there is very, very little for it to be conscious of.

It's not a comfortable voice we hear. It's not a voice wondering about the possible experiences just over the millennial horizon. It trembles at the instability of a present that won't end. It feels like a voice well suited to 2021.

SYSTEM_ERROR is a collision of interests, and one of the great rewards of the work is that its makers don't speak past one another the way our devices sometimes do. Macindoe's fascination with technology and the body and Saulwick's interests in mortality and connection create fascinating nodes of meaning that eschew the usual things we expect of digital/dance art.

The work wears the trappings of a fairly recent past, which itself was vested in the distinct costuming of a projected future. SYSTEM_ERROR is neither of those things. It's nailed to the moment in between, an instant from which we can't escape but can't help but hope to do otherwise. It wonders what it would mean to live forever without the purchase of memory; to be a black box without a window; to find feeling without a body to feel it. Thank goodness that didn't happen.

HIGH
ABOVE
HELD
INSIDE
COMMODITY
INTERIOR
INCLUSION
LANDSCAPE
CONTAINED
AIR
TOWER
CONSTRUCTED
ARTIFICE
PRIVATE
SPACE
PUBLIC
SYMBOL
DEVELOPED
TOWERING
LAND
CONTAINER
VERTICAL
EXCLUSION
EXTERIOR
IMAGINATION
PEDESTRIAN
RELEASED
BELOW
LOW

HIGH/LOW SPACE (TOWERS)

Installation for 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney
or a similar tower

Site selection : A modern high rise with a glass curtain facade, at least 160m in height, that is monolithic in feeling.

Ideally the building will face an open square or boulevard, so the work may have the advantage of a variety of viewpoints: the street, the distant street, at elevation. 1 Macquarie Place, also called 'Gateway', looks across Circular Quay train station, bus stops and ferry ports, the quay promenade and harbour, Cahill expressway, surrounding vehicular and pedestrian streets. It is considered to be one of Sydney CBD's most prestigious towers due to its panoramic surrounds.

Words : Spaced evenly, exactly. HIGH, LOW, SPACE are red. SPACE marks the vertical centre of the facade.

The list contains opposing forces; where one stands may force an order of reading - high to low, low to high - as necks bend up, down, or (for a few) settle on a level plane. The centre is the end - the meeting between poles, a place of balance and highest tension.
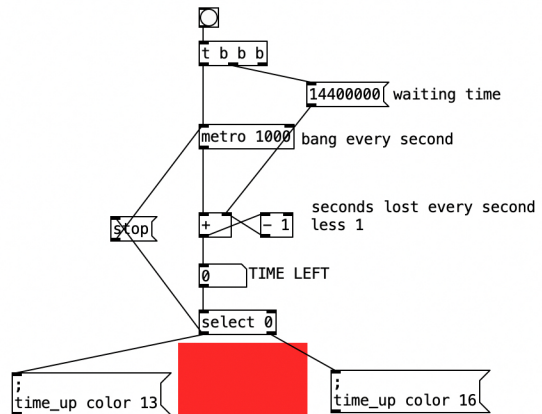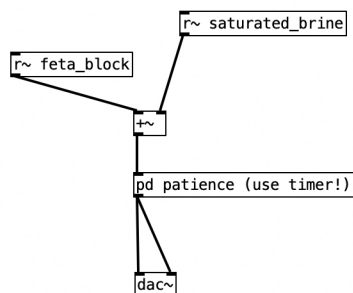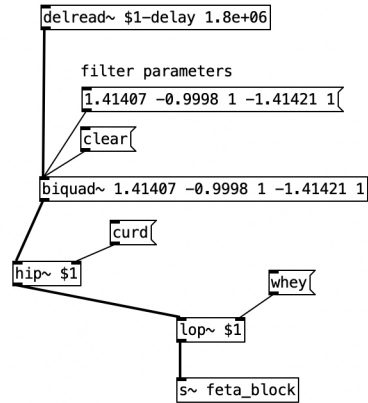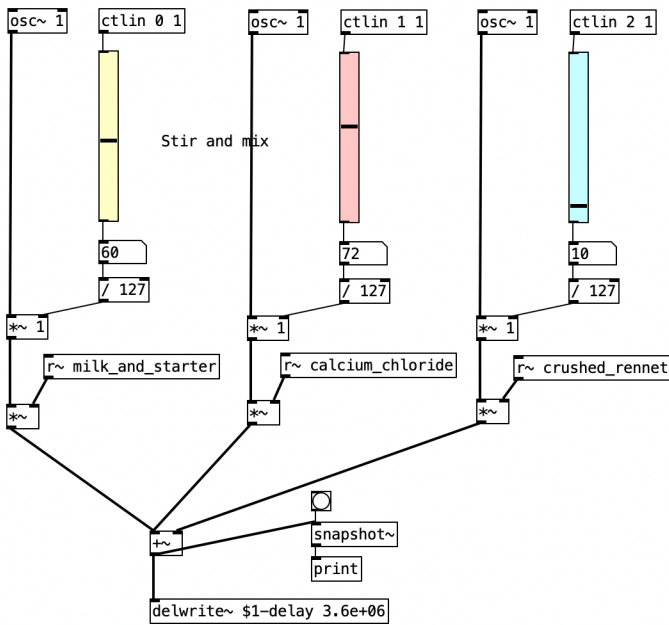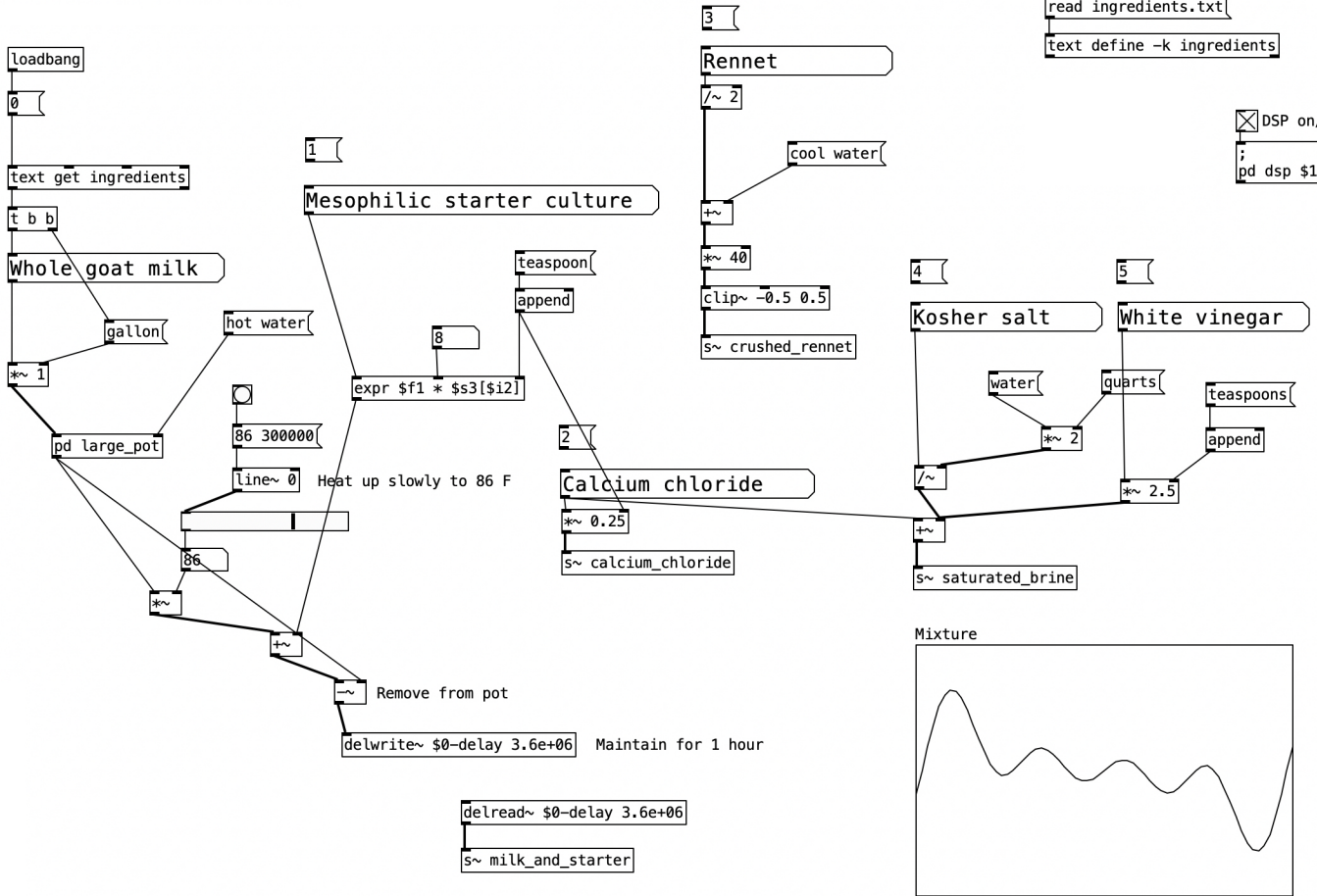
Elia Bosshard, 2022

PURE FETA
by Monica Lim
www.monicalim.online

Define text object and load recipe

`read ingredients.txt`

`text define -k ingredients`

`3`

`Rennet`

`/~ 2`

`cool water`

`+~`

`*~ 40`

`clip~ -0.5 0.5`

`s~ crushed_rennet`

☒ DSP on/off

`;`
`pd dsp $1`

`loadbang`

`0`

`text get ingredients`

`t b b`

`Whole goat milk`

`1`

`Mesophilic starter culture`

`gallon`

`hot water`

`teaspoon`

`append`

`8`

`*~ 1`

`expr $f1 * $s3[$i2]`

`pd large_pot`

`86 300000`

`line~ 0`   Heat up slowly to 86 F

`2`

`Calcium chloride`

`*~ 0.25`

`s~ calcium_chloride`

`4`

`Kosher salt`

`5`

`White vinegar`

`water`

`quarts`

`teaspoons`

`*~ 2`

`append`

`/~`

`*~ 2.5`

`+~`

`s~ saturated_brine`

`86`

`*~`

`+~`

`-~`   Remove from pot

`delwrite~ $0-delay 3.6e+06`   Maintain for 1 hour

`delread~ $0-delay 3.6e+06`

`s~ milk_and_starter`

Mixture

`osc~ 1`   `ctlin 0 1`

`osc~ 1`   `ctlin 1 1`

`osc~ 1`   `ctlin 2 1`

Stir and mix

`60`

`72`

`10`

`/ 127`

`/ 127`

`/ 127`

`*~ 1`

`*~ 1`

`*~ 1`

`r~ milk_and_starter`

`r~ calcium_chloride`

`r~ crushed_rennet`

`*~`

`*~`

`*~`

`+~`

`snapshot~`

`print`

`delwrite~ $1-delay 3.6e+06`

`delread~ $1-delay 1.8e+06`

filter parameters

`1.41407 -0.9998 1 -1.41421 1`

`clear`

`biquad~ 1.41407 -0.9998 1 -1.41421 1`

`curd`

`hip~ $1`

`whey`

`lop~ $1`

`s~ feta_block`

`r~ saturated_brine`

`r~ feta_block`

`+~`

`pd patience (use timer!)`

`dac~`

`t b b b`

`14400000`   waiting time

`metro 1000`   bang every second

`stop`

`+`   `- 1`   seconds lost every second
less 1

`0`   TIME LEFT

`select 0`

`;`
`time_up color 13`

`;`
`time_up color 16`

based on 'Homemade Feta Cheese' recipe by Leda Meredith,
date of publication 23 July 2021,
https://www.thespruceeats.com/homemade-feta-cheese-1327498.

Detail | Charlie Sdraulig
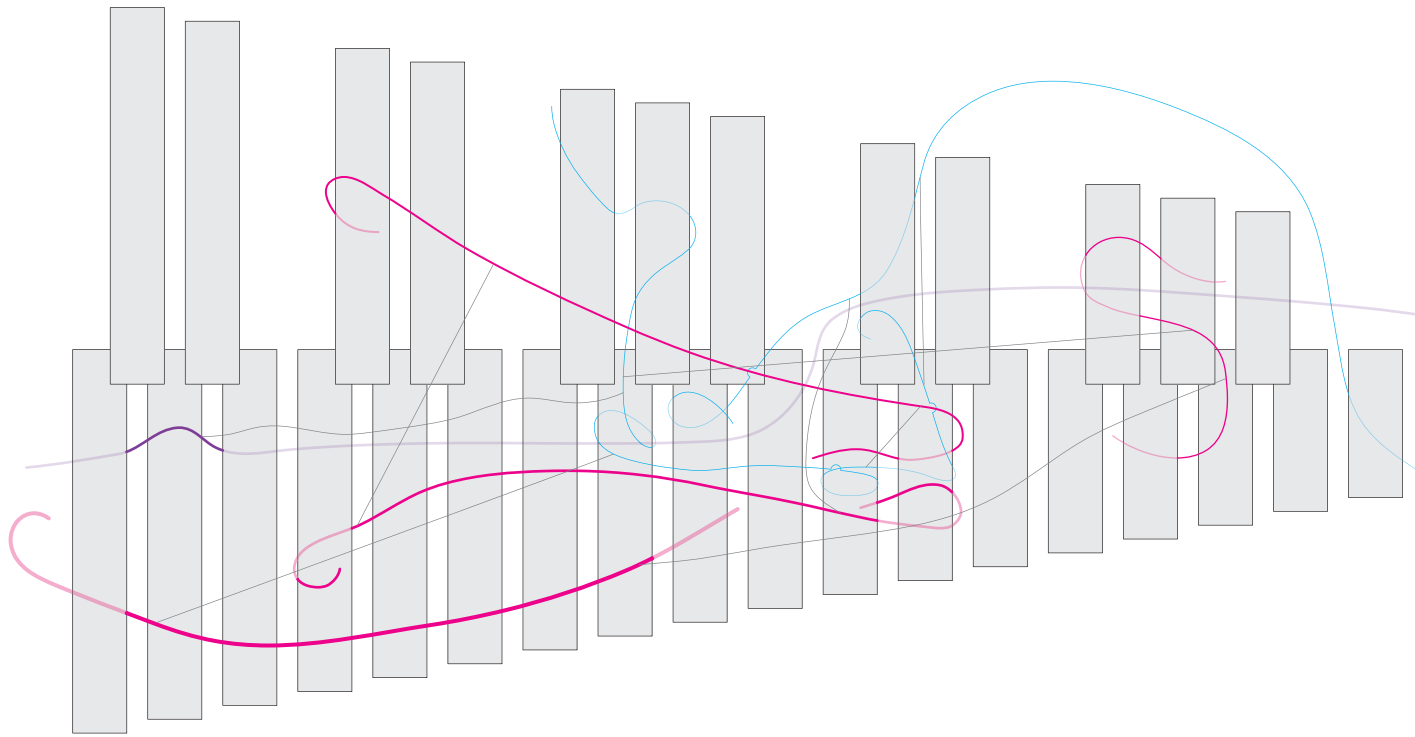
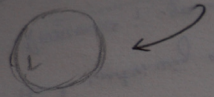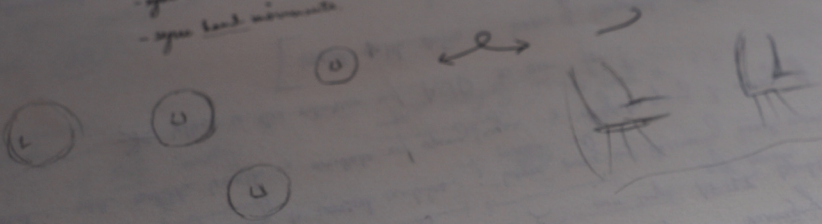prepared glockenspiel from *Tether studies* (2020-21) | Leah Scholes draws strings against the bars
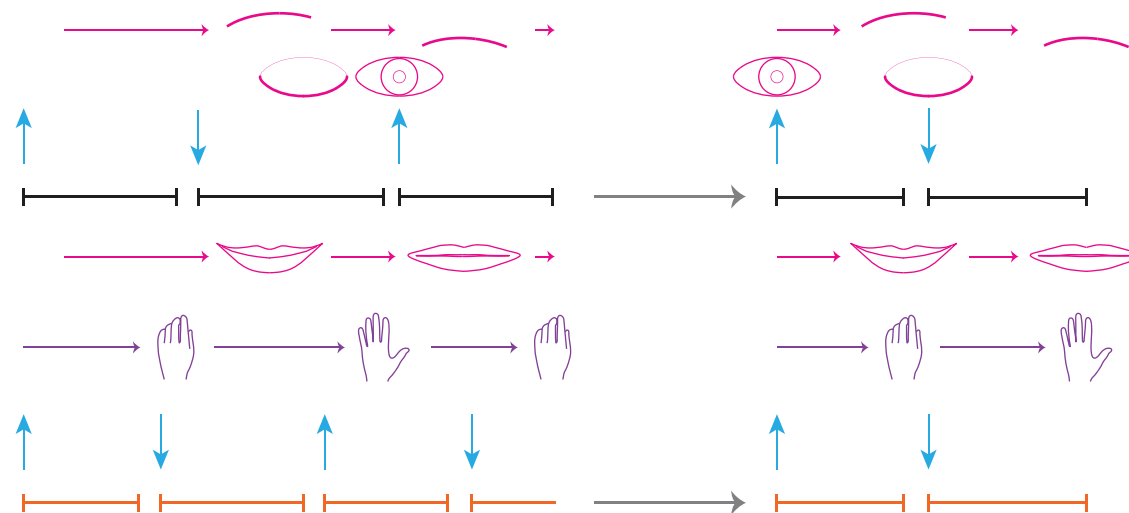
routine excerpt from *tend* (2019) | gestural performance artist Winnie Huang nonverbally interacts with an audience member
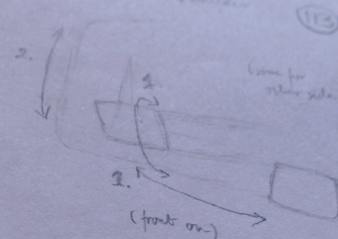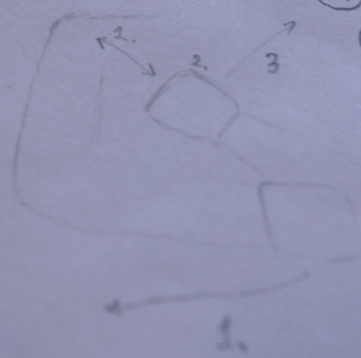
Aim to heighten quietude, engrossment, positive involvement, and rhythmic rapport

Perform routines and monitor the audient's nonverbal behaviours (face/gaze; vocal; kinesics; proxemics)

Form a sense of the audient's behavioural baseline: patterns and rhythms (periodic behaviours) within and between nonverbal behaviours

Reciprocate behaviours that align with your goals, by adapting routines to accommodate audient movements and entraining rhythms of similar periodic behaviours

Otherwise, compensate with dissimilar behaviours
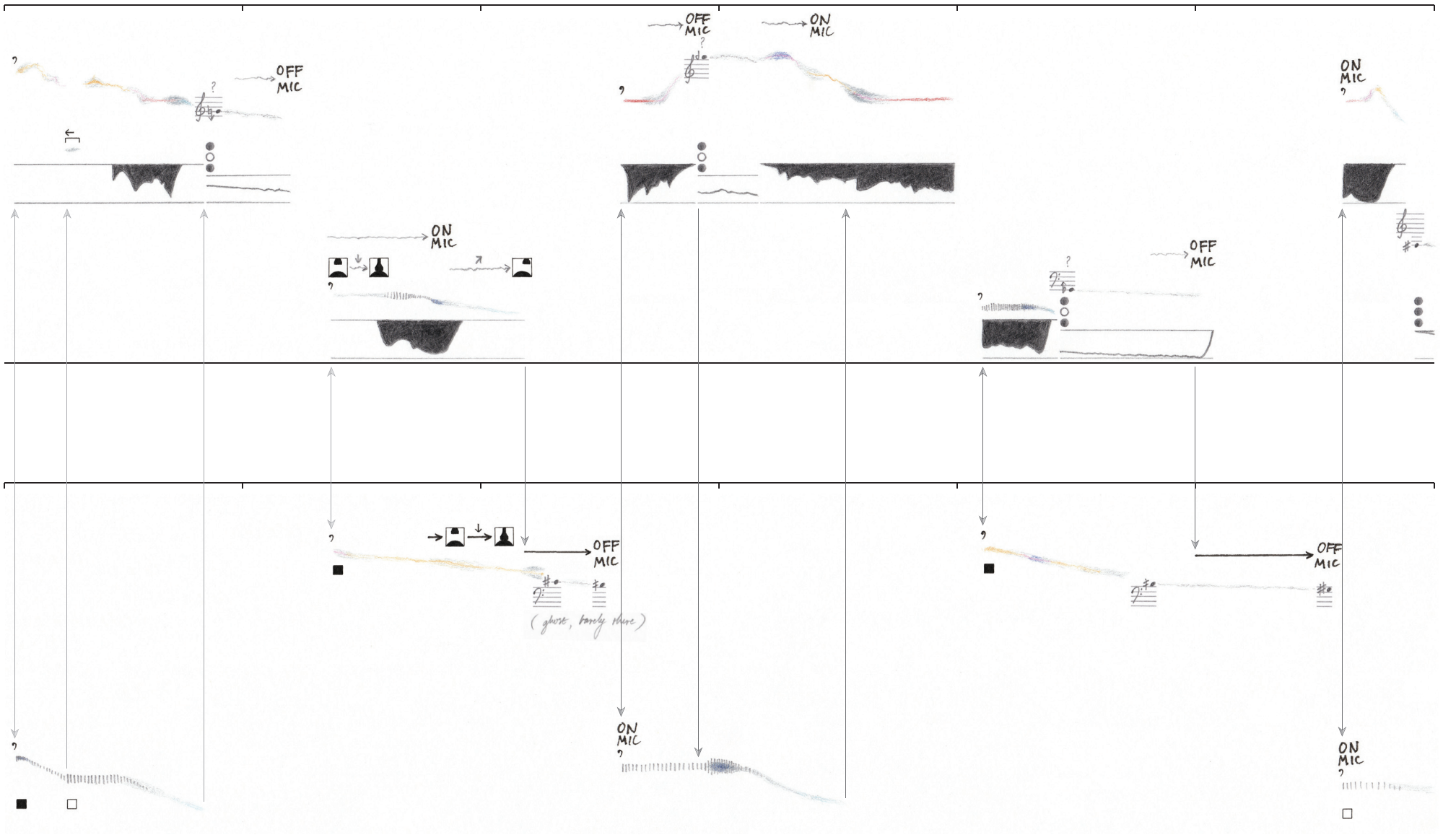
excerpt from *Ground* (2018-19) for ELISION | Tristram Williams (trumpet) and Ben Marks (trombone)
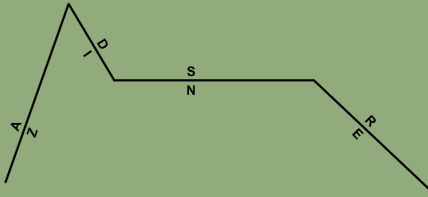
ADSR Zine
[attack, decay, sustain, release]

ADSR Zine is an online platform established in November 2018 by Elia Bosshard, James Hazel and Sonya Holowell. It is a quarterly publication that features writing from contributors who are, or who work with contemporary practising artists. We value the process of reflection, translation, interpretation, critical response and active engagement with Australian art and performance.

We believe that the artist is not only an expert in their field, but offers an important voice beyond the scope of their primary discipline. Artists are welcomed to move beyond this scope to embrace naivety, presenting the sweep, the details, or a combination of both.

As a magazine with a strong interdisciplinary focus, the online format allows for the delivery of written, sonic and visual resources to present, support and facilitate discourse between practising artists.

WHAT WE DO

ADSR Zine offers a 3-part conceptual scaffold that is designed to evoke experimental and non-formalist approaches to responsive writing and media within a contemporary arts and performance context.

OUR POINT OF DEPARTURE

ADSR Zine is a platform for discourse that encourages experimental approaches to discussing visual, performative and sound art. Functioning from an 'art begets art' premise, we offer contributors significant creative license.
We are influenced by the wave of 70's and 80's experimental music and art publications (NMA, Sounds Australia) which were platforms for creative and innovative solutions to writing and conceptualising experimental work.

TEAM

Zine Editors = James Hazel and Elia Bosshard
Website Design = Elia Bosshard
Cover Art = Eliza Savage