MAKING A SCENE
IN LONDON AND RIO DE JANEIRO:
INVISIBLE THEATRE AND URBAN PERFORMANCE
AFTER AUGUSTO BOAL (1931-2009)

PART II

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SELECTED WORKS
2010 - 2018
ABOUT

This volume offers an overview of my art practice as it has developed in the course of researching and writing Part I of Making a Scene in London and Rio de Janeiro: Invisible Theatre and Urban Performance after Augusto Boal (1931-2009). The selected works mark attempts to engage with ideas and encounters emerging from the thesis. Many of them are performative, related to particular sites and moments. The photographs and other documents that represent them offer glimpses, and where audio-visual material is available, this is included on the accompanying USB media drive.

In some cases, the relationship between practice and thesis is evident in the structure as well as the content of the work, as with the digital telecommunication between London and Rio de Janeiro for Contra Band (2014) and Contracorrente/Upstream (2010). These projects are discussed in depth in Part I, Chapter Five. Other performances and projects diverge from the main argument and concerns of the thesis, following flights of imagination that thinking about Invisible Theatre has provoked. An example is Light Transmission (2015), an installation for Wembley that used FM radio and songs about light to reflect on the material and metaphorical conditions of visibility. In these instances, the relationship to research project is indicated in the explanatory notes accompanying each set of images. Finally, several of the actions and collaborative works included here point to a broader set of social, political and spatial commitments, beyond the specific questions of the urban posed in the thesis. For instance, the Family Activist Network (F.A.N.) focuses on problems of family responsibility and climate change, though the distinctive movements of a group of families through public space provide an unexpected point of contact with the present research.

I have chosen to present the selected works in chronological order, rather than grouping them according to formal or thematic categories. This is consistent with Part I, which plots the trajectory of Invisible Theatre from the early 1970s to the present day. It also reveals certain shifts in my practice throughout the research project, most conspicuously with the various attempts to reconcile my politics with my shifting identity following the birth of my first child in 2012. My concerns at any one time become apparent across groups of works through their chronological presentation. Though it may be linear, the structure of this section embraces the temporality of spatial practice, resisting closure and remaining resolutely open to future encounters.

LIST OF WORKS

01. PINNED LANDSCAPE, 2010
02. DAY OF CELEBRATION, SITE OF PROTEST, 2010
03. ANTHONY ROWE, UNTITLED, 2010
04. CONVERSATION PIECE, 2010/2011
05. BRASILIA, 2011
06. TRIPOD, 2011
07. OPERATION GOOSE DOWN, 2012
08. THIS DRAWING (WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING), 2012
09. MURMURATION, 2013/2014
10. SUPPORT, 2014/2017
11. SOCK PUPPET STATE, 2014
12. UP, 2014
13. CONTRA BAND, 2014
14. RELATIONSCAPES, 2014
15. CHILDSPLAY A DEN BUILDING WORKSHOP, 2014
16. FAMILY ACTIVIST NETWORK (F.A.N.), 2015-
17. LIGHT TRANSMISSION, 2015
18. LONDON BRIDGE IS, 2016
19. CONSIST, 2015
20. PROJECT PLATFORM, 2016
21. CONTRACorrente / Upstream, 2016
22. RISE, 2017
23. DOING FOREST GATE DIFFERENTLY, 2017
24. GHOST NOTE, 2018

USB MEDIA DRIVE

01. CONTRA BAND (EXTRACTS), 03:29”
02. CONTRACorrente/Upstream (EXTRACTS), 02:31”

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL:
03. PINNED LANDSCAPE, 04:44”
04. ANTHONY ROWE, UNTITLED, 02:38”
05. LIGHT TRANSMISSION (EXTRACTS), 01:48”
06. PROJECT PLATFORM (EXTRACTS), 03:16”
A woman runs in and out of shot, furtively gift-giving iron rods to corporate and commercial buildings in Seoul, South Korea. This performance to camera is one outcome of my residency with Lab39, an artist-run space based in the district of Mullae, during 2010. At that time, the area was undergoing rapid urban redevelopment. My studio was in an old industrial building, surrounded by low-rise metal foundries that spilled out onto the street, and in the shadow of a massive new shopping complex.
A series of thirteen photographs shot over twelve hours document the photographer’s solitary occupation of Seoul Plaza, a space of historic political significance, on a national holiday. Beyond recording my presence within this civic space over an extended duration, the camera equipment functioned within the performance as both a prop and a tether, requiring that I stay put. The performance was an investigation into stillness as a means of spatial disruption, with the ambiguity of my role and actions further emphasised through my non-participation in the national event of Korean New Year.
A video made with images and video footage that I discovered on my mobile phone after it was stolen from my studio and subsequently recovered by the police in 2010. This work reflects on questions of unintended participation and authorship prompted by the model of Invisible Theatre.
CONVERSATION PIECE, 2010/2011
PERFORMANCE, DURATION VARIABLE

Two unidentified actors initiate their half of a scripted conversation with unsuspecting audience members. After they have delivered their half of the dialogue, they give the audience member a card thanking them for their participation. The performance continues until the actors meet and the conversation is resolved.

Conversation Piece was performed by Sandy Grierson and Tessa Par to for the opening of Intervention Gallery, London (2010) and as part of the conference, Sexuate Subjects, UCL (2011).
The following series of photographs documents my pedestrian encounter with a hypermobile model of urbanism, and forms part of my research into the relationship between Augusto Boal’s model of Invisible Theatre and the national imaginary projected in the architecture of Brasilia, as the architectural showpiece of Brazilian modernism. The images were taken during a walk of the Monumental Axis, from the Television Tower at the intersection of the city’s main axes to the National Congress of Brazil in the East, and within the campus of the Federal University of Brasilia. The camera equipment and the act of photographing the city operated to focus my attention on the breaks between the urban imaginary projected in Costa and Niemeyer’s urban plan and its realisation, with the selected prints highlighting how the plan has been reimagined and appropriated through its performance. Key examples of this can be seen above, in the sun-bleached image of Costa’s Pilot Plan; in the foreshortened shadow of Bruno Giorgi’s monument to the workers, Os Cardarigos; and in the photograph of Niemeyer’s Cathedral, its crown-like, hyperboloid structure standing in stark contrast to the international symbol of ‘cathedral’ on the tourist attraction signposting in front of the building.
TRIPOD, 2011
WITH KATY BEINART AND HELEN SIMMS
PERFORMANCE, DURATION VARIABLE

A surveillant costume and performance that sends up strategies used by riot police against protesters during the G20 demonstrations in London (2009). TRIPOD engages connections between policing, performance and spectatorship explored in Part I, particularly within Chapter Two. It has been performed for audiences in gallery contexts and in the street.

TRIPOD was performed by Katy Beinart, Leah Lovett and Helen Simms for Surplus to Requirements? (2011, above), Cities Methodologies (2011), both Slade Research Centre, London, and in the street, as part of Wyasg Art Trail (2011, right).
OPERATION GOOSE DOWN, 2012
WITH KATY BEINART AND HELEN SIMMS
PERFORMANCE AND COMBATIVE GAME, DURATION VARIABLE

Three camouflaged agents draw salt boundaries on a gallery floor, gradually claiming as much space as possible, then sweep up and redraw their territory whenever a member of the audience crosses the boundary-line. This performance explores the creative possibilities of the militaristic technique of camouflage, as discussed in Chapter Two.

THIS DRAWING (WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING), 2012
PERFORMANCE DRAWING, PROJECTED DIMENSIONS VARIABLE,
DURATION 45’00’’ DAILY (MON-FRI)

Daily live drawing on an overhead projector made in response to the World at One, BBC Radio 4, the exhibition space and my imagination. This performance considers the relationship between the news as a model of storytelling and the events described, and connects with Invisible Theatre in attempting to change social reality through the performative imaginary.
MURMURATION (BIRMINGHAM), 2013
PERFORMANCE, APPROX. DURATION 60’00”

A choreographed walk that looped through the city, from the Grand Union gallery space, through the Bullring, and back again. The title is taken from the name given to a group of starlings in flight, as a display of social interaction and resistance to predation through seamless collectivity.

Murmuration is an articulation of my research into the creeping privatisation of public space, as an attempt to embody and so in a modest way to challenge that process. The site of the Bullring is relevant for the baiting its name implies, and as an historic site of conflict overcome by commerce.

Murmuration (Birmingham) was commissioned for A Small Hiccup, Grand Union (2013).
The second iteration of Murmuration took place in Montreal, as part of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro, MANIFEST! Choreographing Social Movements in the Americas (2014). As mentioned in Part I, Chapter Three, the starling is an invasive species to Canada, a fact that highlights power geometries and geographies of responsibility in operation throughout the project. It also suggests how the relocation of the work fundamentally changed its meaning. In Montreal, the rhythmic choreography and the movement of the performers through the city recalled the 2012 Quebec student ‘casseroles’ protests.

As with the Birmingham performance, the visibility of Murmuration (Montreal) was contingent upon the relational interactions of the performers, dressed in everyday clothing. In moments the group was clearly defined, only to disappear into the surroundings in others. The performance oscillated in this way between charged action, urban gameplay and everyday activity.

Murmuration (Montreal) was supported by Arts Council England and the British Council through the Artists’ International Development Fund (AIDF).
MURMURATION (THE GIFT), 2013
INK ON PAPER, DIMENSIONS 27 CM X 39 CM
EDITION OF 28

Installation view of the limited edition print gifted to performers in exchange for their participation in Murruration (Birmingham), and displayed as part of the exhibition, A Small Hiccup, Grand Union.

MURMURATION (THE GIFT), 2014
INK ON PAPER, DIMENSIONS 27 CM X 39 CM
EDITION OF 49

Limited edition print gifted to performers in exchange for their participation in Murruration (Montreal).
A male chorus reenacts sounds made by women in labour, as remembered by their birthing partners. They perform from a graphical score, a limited edition screenprint given as a gift to the performers (see overleaf).

Support was performed as part of SMASH LAB, London (2014) and for the opening session of Oxytocin: Birthing the World, RCA, London (2017).
A performance workshop exploring political representation and modes of speech through near ventriloquism. Participants are invited to remove their socks and transform them into simple hand puppets with googly eyes. The voting history of the local MP provides a context for practising common letter substitutions and puppet animation. This project picks up on the relationship between voice, visibility and political agency asserted through Invisible Theatre.

Created for Flaming Skirt Festival, Derbyshire (2014) with support from Arts Council England.
UP, 2014
CHINE-COLLE PRINT ON PAPER, DIMENSIONS 39 CM X 15 CM
EDITION OF 25

This print developed from a line drawing made during the occupation of Paternoster Square, London (2011). It integrates found images and text from the London Evening Standard using the print technique of chine-collé. The image reflects my theoretical interest in the playful subversiveness of trickster, particularly in Part I, Chapter Three, as a model for imagining different modes of collectivity.
A set of music censored in the UK and Brazil between 1984-1985 performed by musicians in London and Rio de Janeiro via Google Hangouts. The eight selected songs are by artists including the Beatles, Chico Buarque, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Gilberto Gil, the Sex Pistols, and Caetano Veloso. The musicians take turns to sing songs in their non-native language, accompanied by their counterpart on screen.

Contra Band was commissioned by UP Projects as part of an Extra-International Season for the Floating Cinema (London) and CASA 24 (Rio de Janeiro). It was performed by Raphael dos Santos (Brazil) and Nick Underwood (UK) on six occasions between June-August 2014.
An improvisational performance developed during a workshop led by Movement Party as part of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro, Montreal (2014). My response to the provocation to perform the city was guided by the childlike aspects of trickster and my daughter’s playful interactions with the urban setting.
A workshop for children delivered as part of the occupation of the Capenters’ Estate, Stratford, London by Focus E15 to protest the lack of suitable housing available to council tenants within the London borough of Newham.
F.A.N. was initiated by The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home (The Institute) in 2015. Over the course of a year, six families, invited by The Institute, used an exchange of letters to worry away at the tangled issues of climate change and family responsibility. This culminated in the first FAN trip to Paris to participate in the public demonstration at the COP21 inter-governmental climate talks.

During 2016 and 2017 F.A.N met four times in cities and towns across the UK, laying the foundations of a practical, family-centred approach to intractable global problems. This photograph was taken during a trip to Glasgow after reenacting the moment the combustion engine was imagined by James Watt as he walked across Glasgow Green.
LIGHT TRANSMISSION, 2015
INSTALLATION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, DURATION 76’05”

An FM radio wave broadcast from within the transitional spaces of the Wellcome Collection, accompanied by a wall text alerting visitors to the presence of the work and broadcast frequency. The broadcast was of religious, secular, folk and popular music from around the British Isles on the theme of light, and included music from the thirteenth century to the present day.

This project develops my research into invisibility as subject relation and perceptual limitation. It presents Britain’s changing relationship to visible light as metaphor, energy source and marker, expressed through music. Reflecting on the human relationship to light with a different, invisible but audible part of the electromagnetic spectrum, it highlights visible light as pertaining to human visuality. In this way, Light Transmission invites viewers/listeners to imagine the elusive beyond of our capacities to see.

Light Transmission was commissioned by Wellcome Collection with UCL for Bloomsbury Festival 2015.
LONDON BRIDGE IS, 2015
PERFORMANCE, APPROX. DURATION 60'00"  
A performative tour of the London Bridge station redevelopment for my colleagues at Network Rail. The tour reimagined parts of the station that were off-limits to the general public as a theatrical set. The practice of exploiting my access to hidden urban infrastructures as an employee relates to de Certeau’s spatial concept of “perruque”, or making do.

CONSIST, 2015
INTERVENTION
  
Answering Gustave Metzger’s open call to Remember Nature, I created Consist for Network Rail’s London Bridge offices. Consist refers to the wagons that make up an engineering train, named after fish and bird, including Coalfish, Falcons, Salmons, Seacows and Trench. Consist takes the names of these wagons as a starting point for remembering nature and circadian time within the confines of the office environment.
A live set and audio recording of experimental music and sound created in response to the arrival of Crossrail in Newham. Five local artists were invited to respond to one of the five legs of the train journey from Liverpool Street - Ilford and to develop a sound work of the same duration in collaboration with the Project Platform musicians.

As lead artist, Project Platform forms part of my practical inquiry into the the social effects of urban infrastructures. Created during a period of employment by Network Rail, it also marks an approach to working through my immediate circumstances.

In journey order, the Project Platform artists were Lindsay West and James Russo, -hyfn (Sebastian Hau-Walker), Rob Des Roches and Stew Simpson, Sally Labern and Paddy Conn. The musicians were Grace Banks, Alain Man and Prithpal Singh. The first live performance by Project Platform took place at Coffee7, Forest Gate, on 22 September, 2016. The album was recorded and produced by Nick Trepka.
CONTRACORRENTE / UPSTREAM, 2016
WITH MARIA EUGENIA LOMBARDINI
PERFORMANCE AND LIVE STREAM, DURATION 60’00”

A telenovela (Brazilian soap opera) based on Herbert Read’s political sci-fi, ‘The Green Child’ (1935), played out between actors in London and Rio de Janeiro. The action was projected into a shared telematic space and set against the backdrop of London’s Olympic landscape using blue-screens and open source streaming software.

Contracorrente / Upstream was performed by Freddie King, Raphaël dos Santos, and Farelis Silva (Rio de Janeiro) Rocío Galán, Tessa Parr, and Rafael Pereira (London), in front of audiences on board the Floating Cinema (London) and at CASA 24 (Rio de Janeiro) on 30th July, 2016. The performance was live streamed via UP Projects’ website. Contracorrente / Upstream was created in partnership with UP Projects and Foundation for Future London.
A vocal interpretation of data plotting the mean rise in global sea levels since 1900. In the musical convention of the graphical score, three singers sight-read each of the three lines of the graph (far left) at a tempo of 20 years per minute, with changes in sea level (mm) corresponding to shifts in pitch. The singers vocalise rises in sea level on the in-breath, and falls on the out-breath, to create gasping waves of unbroken sound.

Rise continues an ongoing inquiry in my practice and through my thesis with the voice and voicing as a metaphor and practical means of political representation.

Rise was performed by Sindy Grierson, Leah Lovett and Naomi Siderfin at Roaming Room, London, on 22 February (2017).
Doing Forest Gate Differently is a risographic publication created in collaboration with local children during an open workshop at Forest Gate Community Garden on 10th June, 2017. Inspired by the cultural theory of bell hooks, the children drew their neighbourhood, from the lying-down tree in West Ham Park, to the dinosaurs of the Wanstead Flats. The resulting guide is an invitation and a provocation to adults to look at their surroundings from another perspective and do the urban differently. In the words of bell hooks, “progressive cultural revolution can happen only as we learn to do everything differently.”

Doing Forest Gate Differently was commissioned by OOMK for Rabbits Road Press.
The cross that marks the border between Esztergom, Hungary and Štúrovo, Slovakia can be read in the classical convention of music notation as a ghost note, that is, a percussive note, with no discernible pitch. For this project, musicians in both towns and internationally interpreted the found score, with their responses integrated into the audio loop.

Ghost Note forms part of an ongoing investigation in my practice into histories of music and migration through the lens of the Jewish diaspora, and extends my inquiry into intraurban modes of performativity. It was created and exhibited during an arts residency as the 43rd Bridge Guard between April-June 2018, supported by the Štúrovo Cultural Association.