

Report Recreating the live act at Tempting Failure 2016

LIST OF IMAGES	3
SUMMARY	4
THE PROJECT	4
METHODS	4
FINDINGS	4
INTRODUCTION	6
METHODOLOGY	7
<i>Recruitment of participants before and during the festival</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Observation of the audience's interaction with performance pieces</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Focus discussions in between performances</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Notes, pictures and sound recordings taken by participants.....</i>	<i>7</i>
THE DATA.....	8
THE SETTING.....	8
THE PARTICIPANTS.....	8
THE PIECES.....	8
<i>Day 1</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Day 2</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Day 3</i>	<i>22</i>
ANALYSIS	28
1. ACTIONS AND REACTIONS.....	28
2. INTERPRETATIONS: MEANINGS AND INTENTIONS	30
3. WAYS OF BEING AND THINKING	31
4. MODES OF EXPRESSION	31
CONCLUSION.....	33

List of Images

Figure 1. Picture by AF.....	10
Figure 2. Picture by AF.....	12
Figure 3. Picture and notes by A.....	14
Figure 4. Notes by D.....	15
Figure 5. notes by D.....	17
Figure 6. Notes by D.....	20
Figure 7. notes by D.....	22
Figure 8. Notes by Ca.....	23

Summary

The Project

The project Recreating the Live Act is partly concerned with observing, listening and understanding the audiences that watch and engage with performance art. This report results from 3 days of research at the festival Tempting Failure 2016, which happened in London between the 21st and the 29th of July.

The research aims to critically understand the relationship of different parts of the audience with performance art focusing on how:

- inner expression, memory and imagination mediate the experiences of performance art.
- the live act elicits streams of thought, mood, emotion and how they can be accessed through people's spontaneous narratives
- diverse experiences of live performance art have potential to generate different modes of thinking and being
- the increasing popularity of live art has impacted on the different ways it is received or transformed by different audiences

Methods

A group of participants, with varied experience of performance art, are asked to record immediate responses to pieces on paper, sound and camera or any other medium. Then they discuss the pieces and their responses in focused discussions immediately after the pieces, or during, in the case of longer pieces. The discussions are facilitated, recorded and analysed by social scientist.

This is an exploratory methodological approach to researching and registering crucial aspects of performance art events and therefore, an important part of the findings concern the potential opened for the development of this methodological approach.

Findings

1. Responses to performance art are always mediated by individual experiences. But they are also co-constructed collectively as a shared experience, from the very moment of the live performance to the development and elaboration of meanings that happen after the event.

2. Experience of performing and of being part of audience plays an important part here, but also do the participant's particular interests, present concerns, memories or intellectual background. When asked about feelings, and even when registering them in stream of consciousness forms, people's backgrounds and interests come to the fore, for example in different concerns about the well-being of the performer, their intentionality, or with the risk involved in being injured by, say breaking glass or loud sound.
3. The context of reception, the previous piece, expectations, what is going on in the next room, the cues given by other members of the audience, are important factors in shaping people's responses to the different pieces. Hence the uniqueness, and specific potential of the experience of a festival dedicated exclusively to performance art.
4. The tools of recording suggested to the participants were extremely useful in order to create ways of pinning down particular individual reactions before the discussion. They also proved to be useful of tools of elicitation. Despite the variety of instruments now available for that purpose, it was the pen and paper the one most widely used. In future projects there is scope for encouraging more creative uses of writing and drawing as well as the attention to material objects. Also the use of photography can be more useful if not directed to the centre of the act as usual performance photography does.
5. The initial brief given by the researcher is important in focusing the attention of participants in particular aspects of the research. For example, when asked about immediate feelings it was interesting to find that many had already elaborated aspects in mind related for example with technical aspects of the performance. Although this is in itself an important aspect of the findings there is scope for suggesting openness to capturing other forms of emotional responses and less obvious aspects of the performance such as the impact of the rest of the audience in generating ways of being.
6. It is clear that the performance festival has the potential to generate new ways of thinking and new ways of being, even if they are always tied to the public's particular experience. The advantage of the research approach proposed by recreating the live act is that it may tap into the process of co-creation of the performance not as a mere collection of interactions between a piece and individual spectators but as a collective experience whose effects extend in time and space beyond the space of the performance and the act of watching, listening or even getting involved with the act.

Introduction

"Performance's only life is in the present.

Performances cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does it becomes something other than performance. (...)

Performance's being (...) becomes itself through disappearance". (Phelan 1993: 146)

This quote, taken from an academic article about archive, is there used to make the case that documents are always a distortion of the historical events. In this sense, recording and researching performance art poses the very challenges experienced in society at large.

Performances are by definition ephemeral pieces of art without material script or record. They can live beyond the moment of enactment only through what they do to the audience and the performers. Those effects of the performance are diffuse and prolonged in ways mediated by emotion, affects, context, materiality and temporality of the piece. The usual ways of registering performances, such as video, sound recordings, photography, and writing produce documents that privilege particular aspects of the performance as well as a particular individual's point of view, congealing those aspects and views into partial documents for posterity.

Equally, the common methods to study audiences' response to performance pieces usually take the form of short feedback questionnaires that privilege reaching high numbers of respondents and measuring pre-defined categories of reactions and preferences. There is certainly a place and many uses for such quantitative studies (for example in helping improve organizational and programming aspects of performance events) but the present research tries to get at something different.

Here we seek to embrace the diffuse, unpredictable and fleeting character of the performance piece whilst making a methodological effort to get under the skin of the encounter that takes place with the audience. We are interested in the reception of the performance as both an intimate and a collective act, and as a contextual and temporal event. Finally, we are trying to understand and record the ways in which rational and emotional meanings and discourses are constructed before, during and after the performances, both in shorter and longer pieces, which may or may not include explicit audience participation.

Although we had a list of aspects and topics that we wanted to cover we left the space open for the participants to steer the course of discussions and highlight different topics and aspects according to their interests. This spontaneous selection of topics constituted itself relevant data. Although these methodological option makes the analysis more challenging, we believe that it also makes it richer as it affords possibilities that pre-defined questionnaires limit from the outset. Furthermore, this approach is able to treat the participants as "emancipated spectators", to use the expression of Jacques Rancière, in the sense that they are not active receptors but rather co-constructors of the artistic event.

This report starts with a detailed description of the methods applied. It proceeds with a presentation of data organized by each of the different pieces covered throughout the festival and an analyses of the findings divided by a list of topics. The report will conclude with a few reflections, which we hop will be useful in future research of similar kind.

Methodology

Fieldwork took place in 3 days. It was conducted by Dr. Francisco Calafate-Faria in collaboration with Ana Matos.

The research included:

Recruitment of participants before and during the festival

The recruitment process was important to generate a mix between of participants in terms of experience of performance art. We had people who had never attended any similar event, those who were regular attendants as well as people who had been or were at the moment of research involved with performance art in various capacities.

Observation of the audience's interaction with performance pieces

This was carried out with the use of the following grid:

Name of performance – Time/date	Relationships of audiences and performances to the 'live act'	Experiences - potential for diff. modes of thinking and being	Audiences' expression of thoughts and feelings	Movement & interactions with the performance space / other audience / the performer

Focus discussions in between performances

There were 10 focus discussions involving from 3 to 6 people, and engaging 16 participants in total. They were recorded and took place mainly at the front yard of the festival's venue. The 10 recordings length ranges from 10 minutes to 45 minutes. We tried to focus on one performance a time, but as the festival advanced, connections were made between the various pieces and therefore later recordings often refer back to previous pieces. Furthermore, there were also simultaneous pieces going on which meant that longer pieces were often referred back to and some of their narrative lines complemented by different participants who attend them at different stages. This also meant that some of our discussions happened after the performances whereas others took place at various stages of longer pieces, and it was possible to discern lines of dialogue between what was happened in each of the two rooms

Notes, pictures and sound recordings taken by participants

These were tried experimentally and some of them are reproduced here as data, although with hindsight the way they were proposed to the participants made them more valuable as instruments of elicitation and memory allowing participants to have a personal record of their personal and immediate reaction before entering a dialogue with the researcher and the other participants. This is definitely a tool to develop in future projects.

The data

The setting

The fact that this was a festival exclusively dedicated to performance art posed particular questions to the research in that the context of the performance piece is a line-up of other pieces of the same genre rather than other works of art or other event. The festival brings together people who have developed a particular language and set of references, and the audience ends up being composed by many of those who performed at other times of the festival. There is an enormous potential for generating cross fertilisation of ideas and co-construction of meaning and experiential atmospheres. This also frames the audience responses in ways that are not always explicit. In that respect it was crucial for the generation of substantial data and findings that we managed to recruit participants with different levels of experience in performance art, with various levels of involvement in this particular festival. This is important for what we discuss in the next section.

The participants

	Male/Female	Performer/Non-performer
D	M	NP
DH	M	P
A	F	P
An	F	P
Ju	F	NP
J	F	NP
Jm	M	P
W	M	P
Ca	F	NP
C	F	NP
P	F	P
E	F	P
Al	M	NP
M	F	NP
AF	F	NP
F	M	Researcher
R	F	-

The pieces

In this section we present the 10 pieces covered through the words and images generated by the participants. These were divided according to whether they referred to:

- **Description**

It was difficult to find quotes that were merely descriptive. In any description there is always elaboration and presentation of a perspective. This was obviously an interesting aspect of the focus discussions: the ways in which by describing participants were conveying a view point and expressing their feelings. In this category we chose those quotes that are the most informative in relation to what happened in the performance itself. It is possible to find accounts and official pictures of the performances in this festival in other sources (e.g. the excellent blog incident: <https://incidentmag.com/2016/08/04/all-good-things-tempting-failure-day-9/>)

- **Feelings**

This was a crucial aspect of the research. Again it was often very difficult to discern what were purely emotive reactions that were not already mediated by some sort of elaboration. Often it was the case that those emotional responses led to very specific political, rational or biographical concerns that explained them.

- **Elaboration/evaluation**

Here participants express their judgements and more reflective comments on the performance relating them to their particular interests

- **Interpretation**

The meanings ascribed to the performance act, whether connected explicitly to the intention of the author or just an exercise of freedom to interpret the piece as a work of art.

- **Images/sensations/memorable moments**

Probed and spontaneous expressions of important sensorial aspects of the performance that left a mark, such as smells, temperatures, particular atmospheres or crucial moments of the narrative

- **Audience/Interaction**

Participants' expression of attention to the rest of the audience as well as evaluation of the interactive aspects of the act.

- **Space**

Different experiences and understandings of the performance space.

Day 1

- **Natalie Ramus – 16000:1 OPENING**

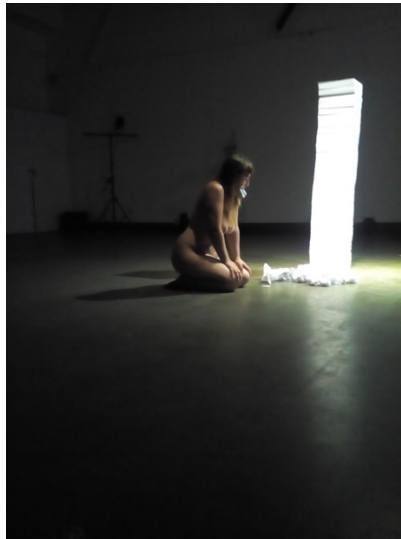


Figure 1. Picture by AF

Descriptions

Natalie is naked in the middle of the room with a stack of paper from which she takes one sheet at time, rolls it and fills her mouth with the rolls until nearly choking and vomiting. Then she takes an object from her vagina full of blood, which she uses to stick pieces of people to her body.

Then she took an object out of her vagina and it was something sharp so she actually cut herself inside

it was a men cup either she was with the period or she prepared some substance that looked like blood... and it was actually the consistency of it that disgusted me.

Feelings

well it reminded me of my ex-partner... it made me feel a lot angry actually
this whole thing about the suffering creature that suffers in front of you.

half an hour- 45 minute – didn't feel that long funny

I felt uncomfortable when she was about to vomit, because that is a contagious thing

and when she was choking I was oh my god...

my main feeling was I knew that I was going to get bored, 5 min into it
almost like... annoyed

a certain tension as to what is she doing til when is it gonna change, what is she trying to say I
could imagine a lot of things actually... and I was a bit disgusted with the blood part.

I was just trying to understand! The entire time! Trying to make sense of things.

F - was there any sexual tension with a naked female body exposed like that?

Everyone: not at all

Elaboration/Evaluation

with THAT it's almost like a Christian iconography of images of martyr saints and stuff like that that is deliberately trying to instigate a sense of guilt.

it's almost like some circus acts which do that kind of thing except they are more entertaining

yeah but it was an impact without a meaning... well for me it was kind of frustrating, because there is a lot of pain in the world without Why this self-inflicted behaviour without context, without a purpose. I was expecting something more with the blood, because the blood I thought this is something and she really you know brings her something but instead it was just some childish thing! It was random, I was trying to find a narrative for that

there is suffering and we are just watching, in silence, there is tension and presence and self-awareness because there is no sound

Interpretation

I think it's beyond criticism. the people involved with this kind of work are completely committed to it, which is absolutely fantastic but its beyond criticism. It's like if you go to an exhibition of drawings by an Auschwitz survivor, you can't really say oh I like that one but the feet in that one are very bad. It's like its beyond criticism you can't say whether it's good or bad

Images/sensations/memorable moments

yeah it was powerful in a way but whether it was powerful in a good or bad way I can't really say

F did this generate the possibility of thinking something new something different?

R Yeah definitely. I'm not gonna make anything like that

Everyone LOL

F but you are a performer

R I just wished people would stop doing it

for me actually there's no performative skill there's no visual impact, no audio and so on... to me is like why would an audience would want to watch it... there's something missing
yeah it had an impact

Did you smell it? I think I smelled it (THE VOMIT) twice or 3 times, like from burping....

Maybe it was just a suggestion

Audience/ Interaction

I was watching the audience and the ones with the tattoos and the piercings... they were really like REALLY looking at this thing whereas other people were more detached...

I felt the audience was really concentrating trying to figure out or just enjoying. Kind of neutral or just... really serious I missed some contact with the audience... I didn't feel connected because she didn't connect with me

SPACE

you know what was really interesting was this frontal this perfect frontal there was no real reason for people to sit in a semi-circle I mean anybody could have walked around the back and had a look around from the back or could have got Closer and nobody did. Everybody just went into this perfect theatrical... which is odd.

that was interesting you know because I think a lot that they are trying to do is to break that... she could have been in a glass box

we felt a bit trapped, like if you left it was you were going to break something

- **FK Alexander** – *NOT (I)*



Figure 2. Picture by AF

Descriptions

a durational piece is when you can walk in and out... art installation meets theatrical performance

Feelings

it is quite carefully put together. I like that! I was intrigued by it and then very... sort of taken to this mystic ritual...

I really liked the sound.

Too much of everything. Too much red, too much blood too much sound too much suffering

elaboration

I didn't I think it has to have information in the performance otherwise its flawed
not necessarily the Macbeth witches, but the witch power the ritual of going through the stones
the burning of the paper that's where I get the pain from, she's going through those stones very slowly like in a suffering path very um hard path to go through and then she burns something and she writes about that in blood

Interpretation

She has a theme or a subject matter and makes her performance. It's more about the performance and the actions, and the other one (Ramus") was more about the personal.

Images/sensations

I was taken to the witches in MACBETH

There was the video always showing the blood

Audience interaction

The audience were more detached, the circular narrative meant that it was easier to go in and out.

Space

the space arrangement - very well done I thought

this one was very clever with the preparation, the screen, the light

- Francesca Steele – *Tease*

Descriptions

she had nice shoes 'There's was circle on the floor with fruit cup-cakes, merengue there was an open fig there was dark chocolate cake with lots of colours and marshmallows and there was a camera pointed at it so there was this camera pointing at the floor and Francesca was wearing some really nice red high heels very pointy... then she's going around threatening that she's going to do something and then she doesn't and then she crushes the meringue, and then the room is quiet and that makes a sound

Feelings

Its teasing its almost boring til the moment when it has sound!

Day 2

• Zierle & Carter – *Spilling Pearls – Cycles of Nurture and Deceit*

Zierle&Carter performance, Tuesday.

This performance started some two hours late, without any explanation from the producers/project manager or the artists themselves. Not a good start.

The performance was taking place in the small space, which was indeed too small for the performance.

The performance was lit with only one spot positioned on the floor, which failed to light the performers but had several audience members (all seated on the floor) blinded. (Will email photo).

The performance itself was engaging and subtle, so lighting in this case is crucial. For the most of the time I could barely see their faces, and much of the facial expression was lost.

They used hand mirrors for some of their performance, which can be a clever device if used in the right way. In this case the mirror wasn't large enough, the angle didn't work (possibly because the audience was seated on the floor), and it was too dark, to make out what was reflected in the mirrors.

So far the best performance I've watched. Shame it was let down by spatial and technical issues.



Figure 3. Picture and notes by A

Descriptions

Were there for most of it. He seemed in pain and suffering. The bread fell a couple of times and the people helped.

When they were doing that difficult thing with the bread and the fork for an hour and they were doing it for so long because it kept falling so, can that be called acting?

Feelings

Feeling their struggle. Went in 20 minutes late and couldn't stay til they end because of pain in back. Felt like I wanted to help. Felt hesitant whether to help. Suspense, what is going to happen next

The frustration created suspense because you wanted them to succeed because you want them to do what they set out to do. And when they succeed he just started crying, that was so strong. Beautiful to watch.

Elaboration

Was wondering what was chance and what was planned

Interpretation

Thinking very technically about materials and how they used it. Trying to understand what they had at the back it looked like a rope but then I say it was a metal bendy bit but I didn't know if it was sharp.

Images/sensations/ memorable moments

I took a lot from what I read, about the relationship and tensions...

I couldn't notice that it was bread they had on their bellies until they burned the candle in the end and I smelled toast.

Audience Interaction

Most of the audience were performers. Tends to happen in these festivals.

A couple of people helped and I didn't notice whether he asked or not, but he was glad in the end. A lot of people stayed for quite a while. They seemed pretty still except when they had to help.

As long as it's not repetitive I tend to stay the whole time rather than get in and out.

SPACE

People moved only when they felt that the piece needed more space.

- **Helena Goldwater** – *embed*

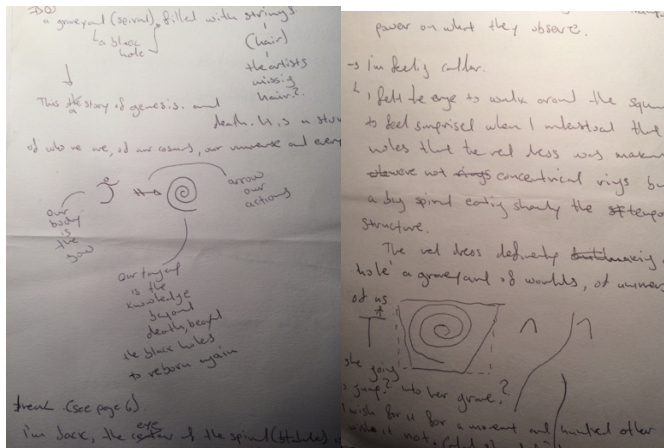


Figure 4. Notes by D

Descriptions

Helena's piece was the 'dirt' one

and then she was digging kind of a spiral in the centre with her hands and wearing a red secret dress which I've seen her wear before or I've seen photographs

at the end she was annoyed, frustration,

It was like when you have to do a boring, menial task, you put on this glazed expression.

D her expression was quite frozen.

F no I don't agree I think she was very expressive, when she stops and at some point it seems like she is almost going to start crying after all of that that she is going to crumble and then she carries on, it's this labour, this feeling of... not just like the craft of weaving, the mechanical thing, here the idea of labour is very strong, that keeping going...

D and the more she got frustrated the more people wanted to see.

Feelings

This one I think it was captivating. I stayed there for quite a long time I think I have 3-4 pages of notes. {it grew to 6}.

I think it is a strong piece.

Elaboration/ Evaluation

I always think, Is this intention or what is chance?

as an audience I think about what the artists considered its part of what I make of it

I always over assume, there are things that I read into it that are often more chance than intention.

both of you perform I'm aware. But is it possible to watch without thinking about intention whether it is the dress or anything else, the duration of the piece...

J it's hard to disconnect from that

Interpretation

thinking about the materials so the contrast with the concrete with the earth that is very fertile and that produces something

F any meaning in the dress?

J for me it has some sort of persona... when she's in the dress she takes on some emotional space

I was thinking of a home, I was thinking the hole I was thinking the mountain but the hole is the same, and even if we think about the universe we are thinking about our home.

it's a story in my view. At the beginning it was a story of making your own hole, of going back into your little square... but then in the end it became something else. The piece was about making something out of raw materials, the pile of soil at the beginning kind of represents the rawness, the chaos no? that all of us have in a different way that the performance is a metaphorical way to show you what we are always doing, transforming raw forms and we are trying to extract to transform into a meaningful message, something that you can share with others. And slowly slowly she kind of made this pile into a square so transformed into an abstract meaning that is kind of geometrical shape and then she kind of started digging, and when she started digging the holes I said, alright, here we are, she started digging her hole! LOL. But I thought they were rings but at the end they were not rings it was something even more 'hole-y'. It was a spiral. It's really a kind of a symbol of death a symbol of black holes, so it's a hole but it's a special hole. It's a hole that is kind of killing whatever is passing around, so I thought this is kind of going down and then suddenly she went upstairs, did you see her?! She went up to this top level and she started seeing underneath. I said alright, she's going to jump! LOL, alright! that will be exciting... for a moment... then I had another hundred thoughts, 'Please don't!' LOL I don't want to see that! LOL I will have to go for dinner later. And then suddenly she just got a kind of big pile of hair of strings that were more than 10 meters long and she started pulling it down and then she started filling the spiral with this strings. And if you are a bit more familiar with string theory, how the universe works, you start seeing this kind of... I don't know if she kind of sees it in other way but... there is some... a story behind. It's the story of genesis, of strings that is how the universe is kind of connected and being dragged into kind of gravity holes and how... I would like to see what is going to happen afterwards. So for me now what we see is one point. But I think that the target is to understand what is beyond that. Beyond our own death, beyond the death of the universe, beyond what we're trying to do. so, I will have a cigarette, and my bottom is hurting as well, but if you don't mind I will go in again and see the rest.

(later) and the death as well, our own death is related to the universe as well, this is what the string is about, that everything is interconnected.

this is what a great piece of art does, it related to you in different ways, I was relating in a different way, I was thinking about territory, she was building out of something it was the representation of labour and how humans interact with nature which is like the raw, that creates this space but this space is the square, which we could also think of as the law. The raw, the labour and the law. And I felt that there was a tension with the audience, she was extending towards us, and there was this sense of border, that we cannot cross, and what would happen if I cross. What happen if step in there, would she raise a wall like D trump? And I was also thinking about the hole, the grave how from building from raw we are actually building our own grave

Images/Sensations/Memorable moments

it was cold in there, is it part for the piece. it was cold, I was smelling the earth, I was sitting on it I was listening to the traffic outside and I had to tune that out ok that is not part of

the piece, so another example of intention, but you can't avoid that because we need to focus your attention.

yeah that smell, which we all mentioned before, which I think is an important part of the piece especially when she is spreading it around, the smell is very intense, the smell is the smell of fertility. It's the smell of life

Audience/Interaction

She never looked anybody in the eye but often pushed the audience out of the circle by positioning in particular ways

She was very aware of everybody

Space

you worry that your mobile might be on

these two pieces were really silent and yesterday's piece, the silence is really important. The way you relate to a space when its silent becomes really intense

- **Nathaniel Wyrick** – *Not an Egg in the Hayloft*

Descriptions

The baskets and the egg

His expression was quite frozen when he was weaving this basket.

Feelings

I couldn't stay more than 5 minutes in the studio one. I was totally bored so I left.

Elaboration/Evaluation

Nobody could find a point in the piece, just basket weaving and egg placing with no engagement with any performative power

Images/sensations

the door opening that is such a presence and I was listening to the music of the café...

audience

door was creaky, someone next to me whispered that they were going to wd40 the door LOL

- **Selina Bonelli** – *Honey Glassed*

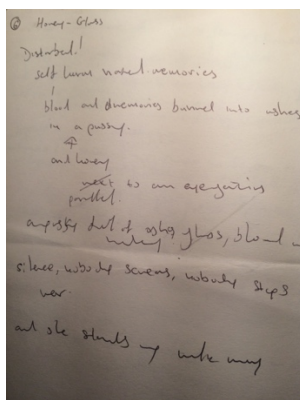


Figure 5. notes by D

Descriptions

well we missed the beginning, but when we arrived her pants were ripped open... there was a saw there and she was breaking apart the glass of the picture frames and then their hands started bleeding

And she was kind of seeing people in the eyes while she was doing it,

F so what happened in the end?

J she brought it inside.

F inside what do you mean inside,

D pipi.

F inside, really inside?

D Eh, close.

Feelings

that was very intense the eye contact was very implicating like I think that was super powerful. I mean I was never going to stop her, but I mean, I was feeling... it made me feel so sad

what the fuck are you doing, just stop!

and everything was silent and you were feeling kind of, Stop Girl! But you know you were staying there and you were feeling the guilt that you are not human enough to help her, you were just an observer just seeing it happening

I couldn't stand it and I had to leave after 3 minutes Not the hands bleeding but that tension of her about to hurt herself. I was thinking what are you doing, stop it and Dimi was saying that no one said it

obviously I think too much about the artist's intentions when I'm watching something I assume that she has thought enough about what she's doing that she knows that she wants to do it. So I'm not really in a position to stop her. I mean I would feel guilty about stopping something, to ruin her piece. the feeling is still there.

definitely tension was a big part of the piece. As soon as she broke the first piece of glass, I kind of spot the tension in my mind, how far will this go, especially when it gets to the end and she sort of starts bringing it all in... even before that when she was breaking the glass, it was coming towards us. And it came towards me, and I thought wow, I was glad I had glasses on

elaboration/evaluation

that's why you are complicit, but it is still there, the images were burnt as well because it was about burnt memories

F there was some ash as well

D Things that belong to the past

Interpretation

F there was some ash as well

D Things that belong to the past

?? I thought there was a lot of blaming I felt that she was blaming us

A because of the look

D yeah I thought too

The expression of guilt and the shame and the expression of why no one does anything, what we were talking as well. And the pictures right?

J I think that the fact that no one was doing nothing while it was happening to her is an integral part of the piece

It was very strong. You couldn't even see her nudity in a way, you were so disturbed from the glass and the blood... that you would see it as a whole other than the Lacanian pieces of body

that you sometime see females like that, we are seeing breasts or a pussy, or feet, or a leg, but that was just kind of blurred image of tension
self-harm is many times an expression of something left from these experiences many abused kids... it's a scream for attention

I don't think that it has to be (self-harm as a call for attention). there are other things that can be in that
there's always pain
Self-harm its always going to be a personal thing
giving a physical expression to a mental pain... but to me the honey part was the most emotional, it made me so sad. For me it was really sad, I don't know why

it made me think of what had happened to her in the past, was she abused? By a family member?
Was she raped?
F yeah because the clothes were torn right?
C yeah. it was like there was something about her innocence because it was white

and maybe she was angry because no one protected her that's...

putting the pieces together

I felt as if she was soothing, at first you feel the pain and then you try to cover up the pain by whatever means by possible... to attempt to heal yourself again, to heal the broken pieces of memory and coming to terms with it as well. I mean, with failed dreams that could be part of that.

A making the best of what happened, moving forward.

Images/sensations/ memorable moments

and I found the honey part when she was pulling everything on to her, very powerful

I went in to photograph the remains and I didn't want to switch on the lights. there was something really beautiful in the structure. It sounds terrible but the broken frames, the honey flowing down, the blood, this looks like a beautiful collage

A I noticed

Audience Interaction

I noticed there were people looking away, and I wondered why there wasn't a warning notice, because for all the others there were all these warnings about nudity and blood, but this one didn't have any.

I noticed it wasn't a natural applause, it was Thomas the director of the festival who started it. Everyone knows that someone has to do it first for it to happen

Space

A confined space, with a very hot spotlight, the proximity with the artists, her gaze, the breaking glass made the whole thing much more intense. The silence, the tension of her body, semi-naked at risk

- **Esther Neff** – *The Scraping Shape of the Socially Cyclomhythic Womb*

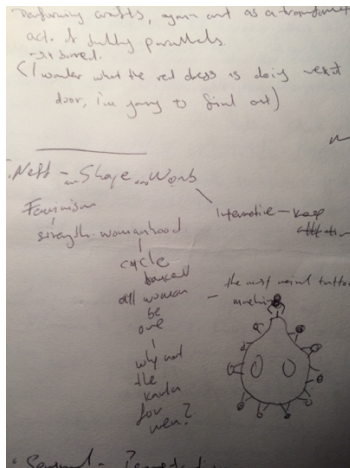


Figure 6. Notes by D

Descriptions

that's exactly what it was. It was someone making a tattoo for a live performance. but I stayed there for some time

Feelings

C I think it takes a lot of energy to keep singing, involving everybody and keep holding the pain, because I think it is very painful

I'm fine with tattooing but there's something about the ritual and there's this thing you can't control and although she was in control you sort of complicit in this unwieldy stabbing action in which the repetition and the movement was making it too hard. As soon as I stopped doing it I was ok but I thought I was going to be sick or faint when I was holding it

it was kind of a trance state. It was like a small ceremony, no?

and the holding was quite intense. And the repetition of words and the action, it was a bit overwhelming at times.

there was kind of a seasick feeling because of the rocking and the chanting

Elaboration/Evaluation

it was like participating in an act of like group penetration. when she was doing the down thing it was like we're fucking her... and this became like a sexual act and this became this phallic symbol

It made me feel that something temporary will become something very permanent, and somehow you felt that you should stay there just for the... just because the tattoo is going to stay there for sometimes

Felt bit uncomfortable not in a bad way. but she does that and she breaks it so easily that's what it's amazing about her presence. Her face, her smiley eyes keep you in that humorous space.

Images/senses, memorable moments

This woman she was so strong, very feminist, with a very feminist message, strong woman that she kind of you know she could deal with whatever you want, she could deal with pain she could deal with heavy weighting, with heavy lifting, she could deal with things, it was nice I liked it. I think it was a strong performance

I really liked the sawing moment. That was good you felt everything vibrating

Audience interaction

yeah I think it has been the most directly... with the audience
today it was the most interactive piece that you've seen in this festival

(The performer joined the discussion and we talked about the way she consciously tries to take away the weight of the tension and seriousness of the performance creating a humorous and light space where things can happen.)

Space

Esther is very skilful at playing with and getting rid of the barrier and tension with the audience

Day 3

- Robert Hesp – *Bathe*

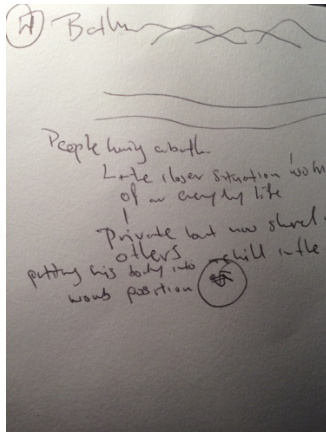


Figure 7. notes by D

Feelings

As the last participant it was like being in the bubble. Because I could hear the noise from the other room (Rudolf) you are in the silence you are only with your thoughts so the only thing that you have is the audience and the noise but in there it was no barrier. You feel the eyes of the people

I didn't feel discomfort, maybe because I watched the people who are used to doing it.
hypnotic

Coming from the very uncomfortable performance in the main space, the primordial chaos and entering that steamy, warm, calmly lighted room with a beautiful naked body having a relaxing bath was very soothing.

Elaboration/evaluation

The observer has an influence on the bath, but being the last

I liked it in the context of the programme... if you put the blue against yellow you have a stronger effect. And this piece was really good for balance

I never did performance before

I spoke with the artist who put up this piece and he was dancer and this is out of his
The first time I saw it I thought it was ludicrous. This line between the performers and the bathers was variable depending on experience.

Images/senses, memorable moments

The sounds of water and the skin against the tub,

Audience/interaction

I was performer and audience you have to struggle with having people watching and trying to perform what you normally do

In longer pieces, like 24 hour, people often sleep, lie down, we kind of start learning the rules of the game, you start by engaging the way you know but then you learn other ways of being. It's

through time playing with what you're allowed to do. taking cues from each other creates a different way of being together

SPACE

It feels like a relaxed space

People were keeping away, lying down relaxing,

- **Jin Bells – Cleansed**

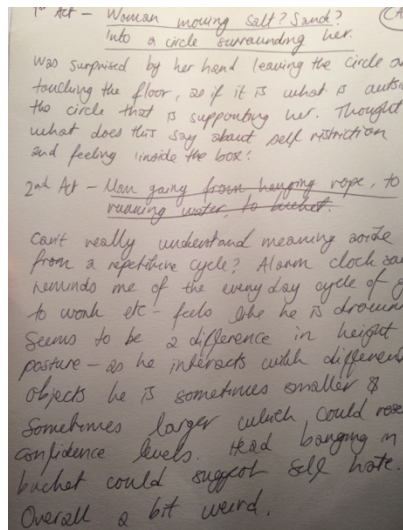


Figure 8. Notes by Ca

Descriptions

you could see the marks on his body from doing the same things. At some point it looked like he was bleeding

One thing that was

one thing that was important is the kind of amusement that suffering is

Feelings

I don't know to me it was more like de-sensitization I found myself emotionally... I felt the cold when the water came etc. but the more the cycle repeated the more it felt like a process... more as a performer in terms of the choices he was making.

felt like self-hate, getting rid of something

repetition always desensitizes.

it's like overstimulating the same parts of the visual and emotional brain it kind of decreases its strength.

Elaboration/Evaluation

15 min it's probably the maximum time you could watch before disinterest.

Interpretation

my first thought was torture like CIA torture

for me the way that I was seeing it was it was expressing what's happening to our youth, this kind of waterboarding

but not far away from what we are living in different ways

Images/senses, memorable moments

I liked how the image continued as the shutter came down

the shutter came down

F and the sound continued that was great! In a sense it was like it is something that goes on you cannot really shut out of

Space

so funny when that random guy came out of his house in the background and was surprised.

- **Kylie Minoise – ORETU NI**

Feelings

Very comfortable. I'm really careful about sound, is my livelihood, but this was dissipated because of the space. It wasn't in the body. Pleasurable, dreamy.

It was not powerful enough.

I feel very oppressive feelings, I just remove myself out, it's really strange. It's usually scary.

So there is light, strobe lights and all other effects that are designed to produce an effect and as a performer I am always trying to think what are they trying to provoke

It was fucking amazing, I fucking loved it. Loud noise can be soothing.

It didn't feel like anything new. it wasn't strong enough. I didn't wear ear plugs; it didn't make me move.

I am looking for a release, to move about

Elaboration/evaluation

This is 20 years old, but its brilliant, not threatening at all. It could have been like 3 minutes really intense or then go on for 2 hours. I was kind of expecting more, it finished when we were warming up

The question is what do you have to compare with

The way I receive this is a very internalised emotional way. I can hear was happening, there's more then statics

Its nirvana, there's some nostalgia about it like a tribute act in a way

I spoke with a friend of the performance and I was expecting that it wouldn't be the whole length of the album so I was expecting to be like at a grime show.

Many people related to previous experiences of sound.

Interpretations

Comparisons with other physical experiences of with powerful sound. There's nothing you can do against the physics of it, so you just submit. And it is glorious, when it's like that. Then you open up to what noise can be. But this was far from it. It's like playing white noise to babies

It still felt subtle, like the album, it's easy to manipulate feelings with popular music, the sound is designed to manipulate you. There's something in the complexity of noise that gives you more space to feel what you want. You are not told how to feel and think so it allows me to respond in a more immediate way.

Audience Interaction

I was moving around

There was not a sense of a crowd all involved in the same way, it was like detached and variable levels of engagement with the sound and the movement.

When the light strobes start is almost like a cue for my brain to start looking for cues from other people about when it's alright to start fucking around like moving around like pushing people around and stuff. As soon as I see the strobe I log around and I saw FK and I'm like ok I'm on that mood, but where are the cues.

SPACE

The space was too big for the sound volume, it could haem been louder
The space was spread up

It feels like a relaxed space

The lights and the anonymity and the switch off of the visual self-awareness allows you to fell more and move in a freer way.

Why put a sign loud sign if it's not damaging?
People were keeping away, lying down relaxing,

- **Louis Fleischauer** – *Primordial Kaos Invocation (return to Gaia's womb)*

Descriptions

the sound was made with the strings hooked to the skin

Feelings

I wrote lots of really horrible words

I wrote bullshit, then I wrote hypocritical cliché of the masculine white irrelevant bullshit, again, and misogynistic, and then I left!

I'd quite like to stay and it is only half an hour but I was getting so angry, it was just this overwhelming feeling.

Playing with the chords that were hooked to the skin made me feel

Like an animal, I felt like I am part of it again, I felt like I was going into the dark side.

I'm beyond good and bad, so I was it was good to have an opportunity to manifest in a legal way, and this was a protective way of doing it, I can express my bad self in a safe environment. So I can be bad, but what is bad? I'm he, who's he? Lol

I have to be really pissed off to leave, but I didn't like it even though I stayed.

Elaboration/evaluation

Too much representation of masculinity

The weakness is that it is dated it is easily consumed, it has no depth, it is populist. The cultural interpretation apart, it was a good show.

It was a collective overtly political, very interactive performance.

There was a very heated and interesting discussion about the value of a performance that gives space to the performance of patriarchal masculinity

Interpretation

I don't really like the aesthetics, anyway but because of the prologue of neoliberalism and we need to return to chaos, if this is your version of a post capitalism society I'm not into it.

Ideology of death metal, we are going to go back into this world where we rape women. It reminded me of the really dodgy white supremacist Scandinavian shit. The Caucasian white tribe.

I think that there is a point in this kind of making a point through these kind of bodily manifestations but be honest about it don't wrap it up in some sort, not show horning

The whole political speech seemed like just an excuse to pierce their bodies and hang themselves from hooks, which is what makes me connect to terrorism, terrorists' political programmes are often just some bullshit for them, they just want to blow themselves up and they need something to connect to.

Different people saw different things

Images/senses, memorable moments

If I took a photograph of that image that felt really uncomfortable really gendered, and for me even from the introduction the text was really ridiculous and cliché, and I found it really strange this idea that we are against the mining of the earth but then we are going to use all of this technology that uses all this stuff.

Because he was he, Who's he? I'm he! Who's he? LOL

test at the beginning that scrolled up?

D I got a very nice quote "the destruction of the collective environment is our signature of our collective death" very well written

The sound was very strong

Audience/interaction

the people war getting involved, entertained by seeing and actually producing suffering there were people from the audience playing with a human instrument that was made by chords hooked to their backs, and I was one of them and...

It was a very successful performance, the room was full and there was a lot of engagement with the audience and people were interacting with it in a lively way.

SPACE

Maybe because I was standing next to the door, and the only girl that I could see was on the floor and then there was another guy hurting her and then it was just like all this kind of like game of thrones exploitative like. From where I was standing I could only see a woman and she was being tortured.

- **Rudolf Eb.er** – *Untitled*

Descriptions

He was kind of a yogi, meditation, you could see his beelling going up and down and he kept supper controlled whilst the woman was pouring all this muddy stuff, uncomfortable stuff over his head

Feelings

There were this sounds very strong boom and you felt them in you, and the three were others that were very hypnotic the drones and the buzzing, it was quite ethereal. The presence is like listening to a charismatic speaker, there's nothing at all that could distract him.

It felt transformative, electrifying.

Elaboration/evaluation

It was one of the strongest performance along with the primordial chaos, I think it was a great end to the festival

I don't know if it was really a good performance I have to think about it, realise what I've just saw and heard and

I loved it, I was critical about every performance, but it's that moment when every detail sits properly, perfectly thought through and it looked amazing. For me the visual and the sound it worked together so well

Images/senses, memorable moments

I took off the ear plugs not too strong

The scenery was great the colours, the five white amazing roses, they were great

The movement of his lungs caught my attention

It was like looking at a painting, by the end it was like an image that you could see on a wall at a gallery,

There was something in that backdrop of chaotic and electric noises overactive and his presence made me feel really calm and relaxed

the image when she came behind the silhouette and the shadow on the wall if you stepped back it was like ghostly image behind.

Analysis

The publics of this festival mobilised reason, emotion, memory, experience, intellectual background and social standpoints in order to explain, interpret, respond to, attune with, represent, and recall what was being presented to them. If they were performers themselves they tended to focus on technique, production skills, and use of space, whether if they were lay spectators, they were more interested in the narrative devices, the themes suggested, the interpretation, the points being made. There was also a divide between those who were more interested in the performer's intention, and those who focused on the message, or the piece as an independent entity that they were free to explore in different ways. This divide was transversal to the two groups but there was a tendency for performers to focus on their peers' intentions, which was also motivated by previous acquaintance with their work and/or conversations with the authors of the pieces during the festival.

1. Actions and Reactions

Performance pieces are organised by a sequence of actions in conjunction with materials, sounds and other devices. Those actions are meant to cause some kind of effect in the audience. The acts covered by this research generated various reactions.

Actions

The pieces in the festival were perceived by the audience volunteers in this research according to their actions. These actions are sometimes perceived in relation to the intentions of the performers (in the case of participants with performance experience) or simply as parts of an artistic object which is open for different kinds of reactions and interpretations. These actions included

Forms of provocation –very rarely this provocation was directed at the audience members but was more embedded in the themes and elements of the performance. Two exceptions are: *Honey Glass* – in which the artist looked the audience in the eye provoking discomfort and *Bathe*, in which one of the volunteers also provoked the audience by looking them in the eye whilst bathing.

Nudity

Nudity is a common feature of many performance acts, but their effects are varied. In only one case was it associated with some form of eroticism and mainly because of the action that the public was involved in – The collective tattooing movement in Esther Neff's piece was by one participant (P) associated with penetration. In another case – Selina Bonelli's piece – one participant (D) described his perception of the artist's nakedness thus:

You couldn't even see her nudity in a way, you were so disturbed from the glass and the blood... that you would see it as a whole other rather than the Lacanian pieces of body that you sometime see females like that, we are seeing breasts or a pussy, or feet, or a leg, but that was just kind of blurred image of tension.

Self-injury

o Another common feature of the pieces was mostly evaluated in relation to its purpose. In pieces like *Primordial Kaos*, its use generated heated discussions and contrary emotions, whereas in pieces like *Honey Glass*, it was generally accepted its relevance even by those who couldn't bared to watch.

Humour

That was a less present feature, with exceptions, for example Neff's piece- in which the humour was understood as an important element to diffuse tension both sexual and performative.

Craft

In various pieces actions take the form of routine labour, almost craft work. *Embed* and *Not and egg...* are the clearest examples.

Sensorial impact

Expectedly the sound pieces in the last day were the ones with the most sensorial impact, albeit very variable in function of the participant's experience in noise acts. These were the pieces *Untitled*, *Primordial Kaos* and *Oretu Ni*. Furthermore, In the pieces *Untitled* and *(Not) I* the use of the light was associated with sound to produces extremely effective and lasting audio-visual impact in the audience

Reactions

Discomfort

Participants talked about discomfort both as something that caused them to leave the room or detach from the performance but also, and predominantly as something productive that is an intrinsic part of the performance experience. This was particularly clear in the reactions to the pieces *16000:1 OPENING*, *Honey Glass* and *Primordial Kaos*. On the other hand, pieces like *Bathe* and *The Scraping Shape of the Socially Cyclomythic Womb* elicited feelings of comfort and relaxation.

Aesthetic emotion

The pleasure with the enjoyment of beauty is something that was expressed often by the participants in various ways. Interesting was the fact that this reaction was often associated with less obviously enjoyable feelings. The piece *Honey Glass* was a great example of one that provoked both discomfort and even sickness, whilst at the same time generating a sense of beauty and depth in the messages. *Spilling Pearls* also played with frustration and relief in ways in which the beauty of the set and the artists' expressions felt very engaging to the audience. In *Primordial Kaos* on the other hand, there were opposite responses to the aesthetic proposal, from a positive association with "Hell Raiser" to strong rejections of its dated or even negative associations. Both pieces involved live self-harm and both caused strong reactions, but the first one, more feminine, had a much more positive aesthetic reaction. The piece *NOT (I)* was also praised by the beauty of its composition.

Sickness

The participants expressed this in various moments, for example in response to the piece by Esther Neff in which there was repetitive chanting and undulating movements. The first piece by Natalie Ramus, in which the performer pushes herself to nearly throw up, generated empathetic reactions. One participant even reported smelling sick without being sure if it had been only by suggestion.

Disgust

The presence of blood, which is a habit for frequent performance audience members, disgusted some of the first-timers, especially in the first pieces. It seemed to have become a feature.

Annoyance/ Boredom

Some of the participants who were also performance artists critical to some performances, and boredom was the most used term when that happened. There is an expectation to be provoked, entertained, engaged that made theses participants react negatively to the absence of performative elements. In the case of less experienced participants they tended to leave the room, when that happened. There were also instances in which annoyance came from the elicitation of unwelcomed memories, that a performance evaluated negatively caused.

Sadness

This was the most strongly expressed affective response, registered to the piece *Honey Glass*. Other feelings elicited by pieces were frustration and crying of joy - in *Spilling Pearls* - and joy and togetherness in *The Scraping Shape of the Socially Cyclomythic Womb*.

De-sensitization

There were various emotional or affective reactions, most of them at the point tension between empathy and conformity with suffering. One participant expressed his rejection of pieces that presented a sort of spectacle of human suffering – “like a human zoo”(R), which seemed to use personal suffering as a tool to prevent the possibility of criticism (ibid). The focused discussions revealed that this process of de-sensitization was a predominant part of some of the pieces. One clear and intense example is *Cleansed* in which the artist manages to do it in 15 minutes, through the repetition of a cycle of painful actions. After the 2nd cycle, various participants agreed, you start to detach. Another example that generated a more nuanced response was *Honey Glass*. The discussion revealed that it was the very process of provoking the audience’s passivity before the risky behaviour of the performer that suggested a connection with traumatic memories from childhood and complicity of adults. In this case, the feeling process of de-sensitisation through repetition caused an identification process that made the piece’s message richer.

Grip and suspense

This was a common response to pieces that presented narrative structures that progressed throughout the duration of the act. Whereas in pieces such as *Diastole*, (NOT) I, Not an egg..., ORETU NI, participants didn’t discern narrative structures and therefore their engagement with them was loser or related to other emotions and reactions, pieces such as *16000:1 OPENING*, *Spilling Pearls – Cycles of Nurture and Deceit* and *Embed* relied heavily on the progression of narrative and moments of suspense to grip the audience.

2. Interpretations: Meanings and intentions

Through the focused discussions the group of participants split up between those who had a connection to the side of performance, either as photographers or performers, and those who didn’t. Amongst the latter, there were those who had experience of attending performance art shows and festivals, and those who didn’t. There were also, among the participants, those who were previously recruited by the researchers and those who were already attending the festival and agreed to participate in the research in loco.

This split became clearer when it came down to elaborate on immediate reactions or interpret the pieces. The group of performers tended to focus on technical issues and refer to conversations with the authors, constantly being concerned with understanding the intention of the author. Questions such as “was it premeditated or was it chance?”, “was it planned or improvised?” kept coming from this group. The group of the lay audience always felt more free to interpret, judge and feel without much concern with technicality or intentionality.

These focused discussions allowed a glimpsed into the productive character of extending the encounter between performers and audiences beyond the limits of the performance act. Some of the pieces promoted particularly interesting encounters of that kind. The piece *Bathe*, which had volunteers from the audience perform a bath in front of the audience had that character of bringing a very intimate event to be performed in public by those who are not the authors of the performance. The atmosphere generated was predominantly relaxed, although some unease could be perceived by the least experienced performers.

Another crucial aspect found in interpretation of the pieces is that it has a strong collective character. This is particularly relevant in the context of the festival in which the conversations outside become an important part of the performance’s after-life. The construction of the meaning of the pieces *Embed* and *Honey Glass* was particularly interesting as can be seen in the transcriptions quoted above.

Finally, there is an important aspect of the construction of meanings from the performance

pieces which is its conflictual and positional aspect. One telling example is the discussion around gender after the performance *Primordial Kaos* in which a female participant expressed very negative feelings about the piece based on a judgement of its defence of a return to a patriarchal violent male dominated mythical world. Likewise, the strong reactions to the piece *Opening* also motivated criticism about the idea of suffering as a spectacle, for example.

3. Ways of being and thinking

The performance act generates the possibilities of new ways of being. The reactions and discussions of participants revealed interesting processes through which this may be possible and also the ways in which it also reproduces the very norms of other social worlds or the ways in which it imposes new sets of rules about how to behave and what to think.

These contrary forces, which may also be the force that allows for the possibility of something new, are very eloquently expressed in the following excerpt from the discussion about noise art pieces:

P - it's easy to manipulate feelings with popular music, the sound is designed to manipulate you. There's something in the complexity of noise that gives you more space to feel what you want. You are not told how to feel and think so it allows me to respond in a more immediate way.

DH – but there also seems to be a sense of manipulation in the way the strobe lights and other devices are used in these shows

Imitation and learning

Still on the same piece by Kilye Minoise:

JM - When the light strobes start is almost like a cue for my brain to start looking for cues from other people about when it's alright to start fucking around like moving around like pushing people around and stuff. As soon as I see the strobe I look around and I saw FK and I'm like ok I'm on that mood, but where are the cues?

This interaction between the members of the audience in which people learn with each other how to act and behave was very clear in several moments throughout the festival and were registered by the researcher in the observation grids. I was also noted by participants in rare and most obvious occasions. For example, on *Honey Glass*:

JM - I noticed it wasn't a natural applause, it was Thomas the director of the festival who started it. Everyone knows that someone has to do it first for it to happen

In these examples it is not only that people look at each other for cues on how to act but also that particular figures such as other performers or the director of the festival have a role in leading or simply opening up the possibility for ways of being.

The performance itself can also be restrictive or facilitator of these ways of being as the examples of *Opening* and *Bathe* make clear

4. Modes of expression

Finally, this report will close with some reflections on the media through which participants expressed their reactions.

Pen and Paper

This was the most used medium and there is scope to invest more on it. It was interesting to see that there were several people amongst the audience taking written notes so this became a more normalised mode of registering reactions. People used it to register strong immediate reactions and to draw. It seemed that there was scope for doing more to suggest the various possible uses of the paper in the briefs to participants.

Photography

The camera is another common object throughout the festival. This give people in the audience permission to photograph (except when in the cases in which it was explicitly forbidden to do so). However, it is more difficult to convey a point through photography, especially in the

conditions of the performance act in which lighting is challenging and tend to be directed rather than allow the photographer to capture more personal aspects. Having said this there is also scope to instruct participants of future research projects to perhaps use their phone cameras more creatively, for example, photographing the space after the piece, or certain details of the audience or space that may have caught their attention.

Sound

This is a difficult method to use, especially because it may increase the amount of data to go through in real time. It may be useful to help participants themselves articulate their feelings in more immediate terms. There were several glitches with the voice recorders that made a few recordings be lost. In any case, self-recordings can be useful in as much as one doesn't rely on them to provide direct data.

Dialogue

This was one of the most interesting aspects of the research – the ways in which reactions, elaborations, sensations and meanings were articulated and constructed through the space of dialogue opened up by the focused discussions. This was particularly productive in relation to less experienced members of the audience, who may not have as many opportunities to articulate and reflect on their reactions. But it also seemed useful to more experienced participants who managed to receive fresh views of the process of making sense of the live act.

Conclusion

“The experience of beauty, according to Kant, arises from the attunement of the two representational powers, understanding and imagination. Attunement is a kind of playful mediation between different faculties: the freedom of the imagination and the lawfulness of understanding... thus attunement is like a preconscious affect, feeling or atmosphere.”

The immediate reactions are never completely immediate. The data presented and analysed above reveals that. Any reaction is always mediated by memory, experience and interest. The differences between those backgrounds and life experiences manifested in very interesting ways throughout the festival in function of the variety in the group of research participants.

This was addressed through the dialogue of and confrontation between people's immediate reactions and the ways in which they recorded and elaborated on those reactions. They reveal the borderlands, interactions and intersections between two worlds: the world of performers and the world of the audience. In performance art, those boundaries are systematically transgressed and the ascribed positions of *persona* and *actor*, *spectator* and *actant*, *stage* and *audience*, *fiction* and *reality*, are permanently challenged.

In *Tempting Failure*, audiences were composed in high numbers by people who are also performers, or are involved with performing arts in one way or another. Therefore, it was important to understand the potential generated by the encounter between such different experiences in the audience of a big festival like this. The research revealed several differences, which point to a rich array of ways through which people attune with the pieces being presented to them. We managed to access different perspectives on the experience of engaging with performance art by creating spaces of conversation between spectators with different backgrounds, and with the artists themselves.

It became clear that performance art's potential to generate new ways of being and thinking is realised through the event of the act itself but it also extends to the spaces in between which can be particularly fruitful in festivals like *Tempting Failure*. This exploratory research proves that there is potential to develop similar methodologies for understanding and improving the rich processes of interface between the performance and the audience.