

Programme Artist Review Series – Saturday 20 January 2007

Immersivity, Art, Architecture, Sound and Ecology

Series events co-chaired by Dr John Levack Drever, Lauren Goode and Ian Stonehouse

14:00 Welcome

14:05-14:25 Presentation by Sebastian Lexer & Emmanuelle Waeckerle*

*(Waeckerle's presentation will be virtual).

Title: ***VINST 3 The word made flesh again***

Abstract/info: This presentation will introduce a project conceived and produced by Emmanuelle Waeckerle, programmed in Max MSP and Jitter by Sebastian Lexer. This ongoing research project aims to explore digital-human relationships and the edges of Language. VINST is a unique vocal instrument, part human part virtual, an extraordinary fusion of human body and digital technology – a body without organs – responding to touch but also to mood and sensibility. The viewer/player is encouraged to construct a non verbal dialogue with my virtual self.

This presentation will introduce the conceptual and technical background of VINST 3 the latest prototype, as well as current and future developments. It will also address some issues raised by collaborative and interdisciplinary practices. This will be followed by a short demonstration of the instrument in action. Some of you will have a chance to play VINST. [Lexer & Waeckerle]

Emmanuelle Waeckerle's Site: <http://www.ewaeckerle.com/>

Sebastian Lexer's Site: <http://incalcando.com/sl/index.htm>

14:25-14:45 Presentation by Charlotte Bernstein

Title: ***The Lab Within***

Abstract/info: Presenting the initial stages of a fusion live art movement practice that explores interconnectedness between micro/macro worlds. Research interests include the theta brainwave state, moving meditation techniques, Kathak dance, vibrational medicine. Incorporating extracts of video recorded on a recent visit to India and from UK practice sessions with Live Art Garden Initiative. [Bernstein]

Charlotte Bernstein's Site: <http://www.charlotte-bernstein.com/>

Live Art Garden Initiative - Project profile pages Link: <http://www.liveartgardeninitiative.org.uk/projectprofiles.html>

14:45-15:05 Presentation by Ajaykumar

Title: ***Dependent Origination: Philosophic speculation on bionomic and non-anthropocentric conceptions of being***

Abstract/info: The themes of this paper underpin some of Ajaykumar' approaches to art, architecture, design. Ajaykumar will present the paper, together with a film: tate modern, and other images of his and others work in relation to the theme.

The paper discusses particular symbiotic, non-anthropocentric, approaches to art, architecture, and design practice; the manifestation of these disciplines as ontological practice; and a perception of architecture existing only in a dynamic inter-relation of built edifice, humans who frequent it, and a wider landscape.

Could one not also look at it conversely of a body that comes into being through interaction with built edifice and external space? In this context does the notion of architecture become synonymous with the notion of 'mind' and of 'being'? Such a hypothesis of non-anthropocentric being emerged in South Asian art architecture, science and philosophy over two thousand years ago – primarily through the vehicle of Tantric practice and thinking.

The paper focuses on the rock cut edifices of Ellora, in Maharashtra, India, which were realised between 600 and 1000 C.E.. The construction of these edifices was influenced by Tantra as an integrated practice of science, philosophy, art, and technology. The paper discusses the importance of human kinaesthetics and performativity in the non-anthropocentric dynamics of Ellora's ontology.

Mookerjee and Khanna highlight Tantra's confluence of artistic, philosophic and scientific practice, through an essentially practical, intuitive, and phenomenological approach [1]. Rawson emphasizes the importance of 'life style' in such synergy [2]. Ellora's realisation may be considered to embody the

philosophic outlook of a civilisation that aspired to a relational entity of architecture-art-body-health-nature-ontology-science-space-time-technology.

This resonates with a central tenet of Mahayana Buddhism - the notion of 'dependent origination'. The tenet of 'dependent origination' expresses the idea that no thing or person exists in isolation and is continuously existing in relation with all other sentient and insentient beings in the universe. The presentation evokes possibilities for re-conceiving such dynamics of ecology and ontology in contemporary spaces. Ultimately such processes have at their foci an active, apperceptive spectator.
[Ajaykumar]

[1] Mookerjee, A., and Khanna, M., 1977. *The Tantric Way: Art, Science, Ritual*, London: Thames and Hudson.

[2] Rawson, P., (1972). *The Art of Tantra*, London: Thames and Hudson.

Ajaykumar's Site: <http://www.ajaykumar.com/>

Shapes-design Site: <http://www.shapes-design.com/>

15:05-15:45 Questions/feedback addressed to a panel of Sebastian Lexer, Charlotte Bernstein and Ajaykumar. (Co-chaired).

15:45-16:05 BREAK

16:05-16:25 Presentation by **Maria Llanderas**

Title: ***A Screening - Documentation from a performance event in Greenwich Park***

Abstract/info: This presentation will briefly introduce performance research undertaken in Greenwich Park with Lauren Goode and will comprise a screening (duration 20 mins) that documents one of five durational performance events in the park in June 2005.

Live Art Garden Initiative associate artist's profile page Link: <http://www.liveartgardeninitiative.org.uk/mariallanderas.html>

Live Art Garden Initiative - Project profile pages Link: <http://www.liveartgardeninitiative.org.uk/projectprofiles.html>

16:25-16.35 questions/feedback

16:35-17:05 Presentation by **John Levack Drever & Lawrence Upton**

Title: ***Verbal Iterations: by Lawrence Upton & John Drever and John Drever & Lawrence Upton***

[Duration: 30 minutes. Multi-channel recording + projections, with live voice. 2007.]

Abstract/info: Verbal iterations will be a live performance of a written text. It will be heard in an aural environment created by an electronically-treated recording of a studio performance of the same text. That text is itself a representative selection from a larger set of related written texts.

That set is a set only: it is not a sequence, although many orderings of the texts would *appear* to display various structural developments, because they each arise from a much smaller set of internally-structured source texts, also written for the purpose, which have now been discarded.

It has been suggested that language originated, in part, from imitation: and some words (eg, in English, moo and bang and cuckoo) are perhaps still identifiable as having been originally onomatopoeic.

In the beginning of our language, therefore, was an ear listening. It heard good and imitated; and its imitation was musical. Language proceeding from aesthetic rather than mechanically-functional principles remains musical now – our colloquial speech tends towards song, not least because we say the same things over and over again in pleasing patterns; and our ears are still listening!

The ur-text was written long after the big onomatopoeic bang that gave words like moo and cuckoo; and it was expanded by repetition, iteration, and synonym change, using electronic and paper thesauri, choice being determined by arithmetical progressions; and, where the choice of output was ambiguous, by personal aesthetic preference.

All operating data were held in the head of the writer and errors were largely accepted and absorbed, as they are with the spoken language, a smoothing not for ease of processing but for the pleasure of the resulting potential sound. (A few errors *ie* misreadings occurred during recording and they too have been absorbed.)

Later, the resulting texts were edited in their entirety on aesthetic grounds. In this editing, words were deleted or, very occasionally, changed; and the whole was scored for performance. Around 10% of the texts, where considerable changes would be needed, were discarded.

The electronic treatment in this piece is lightly applied, aimed at bringing out sonic qualities in the spoken language, heard here not so much as a semantic construct as a phonemic patterning, a series of cultivated specimen chants. [Drever & Upton]

Further and tangential reading, suggested by Drever & Upton: *Composition as explanation* by Gertrude Stein (written in 1926) - <http://grace.evergreen.edu/%7Earunc/texts/literature/stein2/stein2.pdf>; *Jem* the sf novel by Frederik Pohl (in this context, for the reference to the balloonists' language) from the 70s, we believe.

Lawrence Upton's Site: <http://pages.britishlibrary.net/lawrence.upton/>

Archive of the now Author's page with recordings: <http://www.archiveofthenow.com/>

Dr John Levack Drever, EMS Goldsmiths College faculty profile page Link: <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/departments/music/research/j-drever.php>

17:05-17.15 questions/feedback

17:15-18:00 Panel Discussion Questions/feedback addressed to all today's presenters and co-chairs as a panel and invitation to the audience to raise issues.

Meeting to close promptly at 18:00

Audience/presenter participants to adjourn, as inclined, to **the local bar *The Hobgoblin***

Keywords for each event in the series: Although keywords have been suggested for particular dates, it is expected that, as these are general terms, they will also span events and that they will only be adhered to loosely, as it is the richness of the unpredictable, oblique and uncapturable connections arising during an event process that are invited too for focussing upon during this series, and which is to touch on knowledge as a live realm, in different ways, both translatable and non-translatable.

20 Sep '06: Ecology; biophysics; immersive practices; introduction to the Live Art Garden Initiative.

21 Oct '06: Deleuzian philosophy; architectures of time.

18 Nov '06: Sound; electromagnetic fields; meditative perception and movement.

9 Dec '06: Sound; electromagnetic fields; vibration; acoustics and environmental architecture.

20 Jan '07: Durational, immersive performance and consciousness.

14 Feb '07: Ecology and interactivity; sensing; responsive systems

Selected extract for 20 Jan: *The Cares of a Family Man*, by Franz Kafka, in *The Complete Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989).

"Some say the word Odradek is of Slavonic origin, and try to account for it on that basis. Others again believe it to be of German origin, only influenced by Slavonic. The uncertainty of both interpretations allows one to assume with justice that neither is accurate, especially as neither of them provides an intelligent meaning of the word.

No one, of course, would occupy himself with such studies if there were not a creature called Odradek. At first glance it looks like a flat star-shaped spool for thread, and indeed it does seem to have thread wound upon it; to be sure, they are only old, broken-off bits of thread, knotted and tangled together, of the most varied sorts and colors. But it is not only a spool, for a small wooden crossbar sticks out of the middle of the star, and another small rod is joined to that at a right angle. By means of this latter rod on one side and one of the points of the star on the other, the whole thing can stand upright, as if on two legs.

One is tempted to believe that the creature once had some sort of intelligible shape and is now only a broken-down remnant. Yet this does not seem to be the case; at least there is no sign of it; nowhere is there an unfinished or unbroken surface to suggest anything of the kind; the whole thing looks senseless enough, but in its own way perfectly finished. In any case, closer scrutiny is impossible, since Odradek is extraordinarily nimble and can never be laid hold of.

He lurks by turns in the garret, the stairway, the lobbies, the entrance hall. Often for months on end he is not to be seen; then he has presumably moved into other houses; but he always comes faithfully back to our house again. Many a time when you go out of the door and he happens just to be leaning directly beneath you against the banisters you feel inclined to speak to him. Of course, you put no difficult questions to him, you treat him -- he is so diminutive that you cannot help it -- rather like a child. "Well, what's your name?" you ask him. "Odradek," he says. "And where do you live?" "No fixed abode," he says and laughs; but it is only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it. It sounds rather like the rustling of fallen leaves. And that is usually the end of the conversation. Even these answers are not always forthcoming; often he stays mute for a long time, as wooden as his appearance.

I ask myself, to no purpose, what is likely to happen to him? Can he possibly die? Anything that dies has had some kind of aim in life, some kind of activity, which has worn out; but that does not apply to Odradek. Am I to suppose, then, that he will always be rolling down the stairs, with ends of thread trailing after him, right before the feet of my children, and my children's children? He does no harm to anyone that one can see; but the idea that he is likely to survive me I find almost painful. "

About the series

Transdisciplinary presentations facilitating critical exchange, discussion and review through an informal and supportive atmosphere; and guided by specific research interests. The general focus areas are: live art and mixed media performance; landscape & interactive architecture and sustainability; critical studies and philosophy; biophysics, acoustics, ecology and sound art. The guest review presenters invited are drawn from these backgrounds and disciplines. The aims of the artist review meetings are both to support the development of researchers or practitioners, through the sharing and review of recent practice including work-in-progress, and the Live Art Garden Initiative, an art, architecture, sound and ecology project.

The series program; and all further info visit: <http://www.liveartgardeninitiative.org.uk/events.html>

The Series yahoo group – to join email: TheSeriesGroup-subscribe@yahoogroups.co.uk

More ...

The series is also an opportunity for realising an experimental research process, as a live knowledge process. This is a transinterdisciplinary series which realises a conditioning process of potential interest itself. It's relevant to consider what one might be 'doing' by engaging in this process, for instance:-

- not taking for granted that these meetings are for example, in part, about 'discussion' as opposed to 'digression';
- or considering that, the way in which we share knowledge, is potentially, intensively operative, just like the ways in which one reads a book produces an implosion of affects
- or thinking about terms, as infinitely multifaceted and capable of operating the conveyance of different sets of tangible (and intangible) ideas and concepts, within different registers or disciplines
- and perhaps realising that struggling to align, via a translation, terms across disciplines (to reach consensus) can be a way of producing an impoverished reduction from knowledge processes, whereas there are alternative approaches...

I'm drawing from Deleuze and Guattari in *What is philosophy* – the following extract seems relevant to quote

'Concepts are centers of vibrations, each in itself and every one in relation to all the others. This is why they all resonate rather than cohere or correspond with each other. There is no reason why concepts should cohere. As fragmentary totalities, concepts are not even pieces of a puzzle, for their irregular contours do not correspond to each other. They do form a wall, but it is a dry-stone wall, and everything holds together only along diverging lines. Even bridges from one concept to another are still junctions, or detours, which do not define any discursive whole. They are movable bridges. From this point of view, philosophy can be seen as being in a perpetual state of digression or digressiveness.' (Page 23, Chpt. 'What Is a Concept?').

Acknowledgments

Many thanks and much appreciation goes to all participating presenters on these occasions whose additional in-kind support is making possible a far more exciting and rewarding series programme, and one that will have wider significant impacts.

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Co-organised by: **Live Art Garden Initiative** and **Electronic Music Studios, Goldsmiths College**



About the Electronic Music Studios, Goldsmiths College

The Stanley Glasser Electronic Music Studios (established in 1967) comprises a suite of working areas for undergraduate & postgraduate students wishing to explore the creative potential of studio equipment & audio software in relation to composition, live electronics, interactive performance, sound-art, acoustic ecology and research. <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/departments/music/ems/>

About the Live Art Garden Initiative

The Initiative is to conceive of, set-up and develop an art, architecture and ecology project. The project will involve the creation of new garden environments in which site-specific live arts will be created and receive an audience. The research and practice directions of the Initiative are guided by transinterdisciplinary research. <http://www.liveartgardeninitiative.org.uk>