

EXPANDED PRACTICE AND CURATION AS CREATIVE PROCESS: AN INTRODUCTORY ASSEMBLAGE

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Abstract: In this contextualising introductory essay, the authors reflect on the ways in which the material, institutional context of UK Higher Education informed their initial thinking around the twin concepts of expanded practice and curation as creative process. These concepts are framed in relation to the wider field of curation, Linden's previous *Curating Knowledge* research project and Nelson's (2013) notion of *praxis* as an imbrication of practice and theory. Finally, the authors reflect on the other contributions comprising this Special Edition of *REPERTÓRIO: Teatro e Dança*, identifying the emerging conceptual frameworks and key praxical concerns that fellow authors are identifying in relation to curation and expanded practice in the performing arts, reflecting on how this paradigm may resonate within international contexts.

Key Words: Curation; expanded practice; Curating Knowledge; praxis; performing arts; Higher Education.

UK Institutional Context

It has been over two decades now since the British University Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) – the system then responsible for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions - responded to an up-surge of practitioner-researcher pressure by formally instituting the concept of ‘practice as research’ (PaR) in its remit, a paradigmatic methodological shift recognising the primacy of practice in the generation of knowledge in the arts, which at that point was already gaining ground in Higher Education in the Performing Arts. After consultation with the four UK higher education bodies, the RAE became the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2009 and the first assessment under the new system was completed in 2014. The 2008 RAE included a section dedicated to PaR, and whilst the panellists recognised that there was a “growing maturity” (UOA65 Drama, Dance and Performing Arts, 2008: 9) in terms of this mode of submission, they nevertheless suggested that:

[...] a proportion of PaR was considered not to have sufficiently established research credentials in terms of RAE 2008 criteria, and was accordingly unclassified. In such instances the written statements in RA2 frequently failed satisfactorily to articulate any research content or imperatives. Likewise, the research dimension of PaR remained unclear in a number of the submitted products and/or documentation of process and/or complementary writing. This indicates a residual lack of recognition by researchers in some institutions that PaR requires its own version of scholarly apparatus. (Ibid)

Countless conferences, journal articles, think-tanks, research institutes, and published books were produced between RAE 1996 and REF 2014, serving as the scholarly armoury used in the battle to fully justify this shift in approach to research within academe. Nevertheless, the REF 2014 Panel D results suggested that, whilst there were several examples of international and world leading PaR submissions in the Performing Arts, there were still many cases in which the panelists identified

carelessly presented portfolios; documented practice that did not effectively identify a research inquiry; and 300 word statements that often displayed a misunderstanding of what was required to make the case for the PaR project in question (Main Panel D Overview Report, 2014: 101).

Frequently, something essential in the process of curating the materials generated by PaR research still appears to be obfuscated or sacrificed as practitioner/researchers strive to attend to the perceived requirements of the REF exercise. In short, the translation of the principles emerging through practice into other visual or discursive formats continues to be a challenge to many, and it would appear, unfortunately, that the PaR community still “[...] seems not to know its *ars* from its *episteme*.” (Linden, 2011: 1).

Curating Knowledge

The initial impetus for our joint thinking around curation and expanded practice came out of the shared concern that the authors have regarding debates around documentation within Practice as Research and our joint work together on the MA in Contemporary Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Concerned with steering graduate students working within a PaR paradigm towards documentation that effectively communicated the richness of their critical engagement with their work, we began to foreground in our teaching the importance of integrating a curatorial methodology within the praxis as an expanded aspect of the creative process.

These concerns stemmed out of Jane Linden’s earlier research project, *Curating Knowledge*. In 2011, Linden wrote the following:

Picture this: *There are chickens in the gallery – scratching in the sawdust as a video projection casts single word text across their colourful plumage – BEAUTY. UMBRELLA. TRIUMPHANT. A hamster explores the inner regions of a large scull-like form - emerges out of one hollow eye socket. An onlooker gasps in surprise. The artists sit at a desk, writing, occasionally putting diagrams or drawings on the wall, they confer – move things around, refer to a book. A Thousand Plateaus.*



And this: *There are cakes. Many of them. And cake mixture in bowls on plinths with a notice "Lick the spoon – you know you want to". Three aprons hang side by side on the gallery wall. The artist removes a tin of small sponges from the oven. The smell is overwhelming. She says "I'm just getting used to the temperature gauge". She is dressed in a bright red full-skirted frock and very high heels. Her PhD notes are covered in chocolate smudges and icing sugar.*

And this: *There is beer, and balloons, and plinths with nibbles. A video monitor on a desk runs a stand-up comedy routine, over and over. The artist has his back to us. His desk is littered with books, papers, photographs, coloured pens. Images on the walls show him holding up handwritten signs. Some visitors wear party hats fashioned from research notes. A video camera stands in the corner on 'record'.²*

(Linden, 2011: 1)

This evocative descriptive writing reflected Linden's encounters with the practice of artists participating in her *Curating Knowledge* project, which has been based at MMU since 2008. The *Curating Knowledge* project was developed as a direct response to the 2008 RAE panel results, and represented a growing recognition across the fields of Drama, Dance and Performing Arts, of the complex methodological considerations underpinning PaR, and the need for practitioner-researchers and departmental research leads to engage with the requirements of the RAE/REF in a considered and creatively responsive way.

A call for contribution to the pilot *Curating Knowledge* project in 2008 invited artist/practitioners from all arts disciplines to consider the proposal to take up residency in a gallery project space, such that they might open up for encounter their on going research activities and encourage interaction,

² '*Curating Knowledge*' Residencies cited here are: Steve Swindells (Huddersfield) and Steve Dutton (Coventry), '*The Institute of Beasts*'; Jenny Lawson (PhD candidate: Leeds); '*If I knew you were coming I'd have baked a cake*'; Broderick Chow (PhD candidate: Central School of Speech and Drama, London), '*Dangerology*'. For a fuller account of this work see section 'ENCOUNTERS WITH CURATING KNOWLEDGE'.

exchange and open debate. The response was immediate and enthusiastic and resulted in a diverse range of high calibre applications from practitioners who had significant engagement with practice as research as it was developing within the context of the academy at the time.³

Curating Knowledge offered an explorative, discursive and importantly performative environment which was seen to be conceptually and pragmatically of value as an alternative forum unheeded by the constraints of a conventional exhibiting /public performance platform. Given that the emphasis of this more supportive practitioner-centred environment was to shift the focus away from the 'resolved' public-facing product as evidence of research, a more serious consideration of the inter-connectedness of process could be taken into account. This meant that the fullness of a research inquiry would be better communicated and actively encountered. Applications were selected on their ability to demonstrate a curatorial awareness of what this opportunity could offer in the exposition of research practice, without reducing it to an exegesis of a process.

The epistemic ramifications of practice, the primacy of process and an emphasis on exposition rather than exegesis continue to be guiding principals in our thinking around the curation of the *techné* and the broader conceptual insights generated by arts research. Thus we can reimagine PaR as a nuanced process necessarily akin to curation, in which the inquiry underpinning a practice and/or the outcomes resulting from it are communicated effectively with the wider public through a range of media, utilising the dynamic principals and strategies inherent in the practice itself.

However, whilst we recognise the value of PaR as a methodological approach that champions what Reilly (2002) has termed the "natural epistemologies" of arts practices, our objective here is not to exhaustively provoke continuing

³ For further information, please consult Linden, J. (2012) *Curating Knowledge: a Critical, Curatorial Platform for Arts Practice as Research*. Ph.D. Leeds Metropolitan University.

debates around PaR, nor necessarily attend to the demands of the audit culture of the REF. Rather, our aim is to reclaim the significance of curation in our practices as artist/arts-researchers, bringing to the fore and mapping out here curatorial strategies within a broad range of different research projects carried out across the arts. In addition, we are interested in exploring models from different international contexts where PaR has yet to take hold, identifying and exploring methodological approaches for creatively transposing principles that emerge through praxical inquiries into a range of other media that transcend the Anglophone PaR model.

A significant curatorial gesture in the organization of this special edition journal was to encourage contributions from key artist-researchers operating within the UK, opening up a dialogue with strategic partners from Portugal and Brazil. We are also using this publication to showcase the work of emerging practitioners and scholars, some of whom have just completed MAs or are engaged in doctoral research. To this end, we have opted for a rich mixture of different texts and artistic provocations. There is no pretense of establishing a definitive framework; instead we are interested in the slippery, interdisciplinary and recalcitrant nature of different contributions, and trust in the serendipity of emerging resonances and connections.

Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process

In January 2016 we co-organised a symposium, *Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process*, which explored curation in the performing arts in light of increased attention to curatorial initiatives related to documentation and the dissemination of process. This reflects what Paul O'Neill usefully articulated in 2007 as the *curatorial turn* - concerning the ideological shift of emphasis from the spectacle of the product towards greater visibility of the modes of production. For O'Neill, curation is a "[...] nexus for discussion, critique and debate" (O'Neill, 2007: 13). We envisaged that this event would provide a platform for initial conversations, creating a focal point around which

the twin themes of expanded practice and creative curatorial strategies could be explored interstitially.

Arts practices are frequently unwieldy, and often generate a lot of diverse material as ideas assemble and begin to form. As artists, therefore, we are always already engaged in the curatorial act. Thus curation is not alien to the creative process, or a posterior critical deconstruction of practice from a questionable "objective" position; it is an integral part of any praxis.

Curation, as a term, is derived from the latin *cura*, 'to care'. A curate is a person who is invested with the care or cure of the souls of a parish. In cultural terms, as a further derivation of this idea, the curator cares for, is keeper of, maintains and looks after the artefacts, artworks, documents and assorted materials, which make up a collection. Traditionally, the curator's primary role is "[...] to function as an agent who offers exposure and potential prominence in exchange for pertaining a moment of actual practice that is about to be transformed into myth and superstructure" (Buchloh, 1989: 248). However, we are interested in moving away from the primacy of this exterior 'other', whilst focusing on the messy, complex, liminal space traversed by the practitioner between the event of practice and the craft of documentation and archiving⁴. As such, we are interested in the verb 'to curate', rather than the noun, 'curator', and also aspire to unpack the complex way in which these processes play out through the body and evade, obfuscate or otherwise illuminate more traditional, discursive fora.

⁴ There has been increased interest in the role of archiving in art and culture over the past twenty years, due in part to the proliferation of digital technology within the context of neoliberalism, and its potential to trace international flows of intellectual capital. Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1998) has become a key critical text in this respect, linking the archive back to the actualization of the law via the Greek *arkhē*, which has connotations of primacy and legislation. The phallogocentric undercurrents identified in *Archive Fever* by Derrida are thwarted here in our processual notions of curation and expanded practice, since documentation does not serve to enshrine an origin or given reading, but rather bleeds into the messy process of the creative act as yet another iteration of an on going artistic inquiry.



Since the 1960s, independent curators have been perceived, rather disapprovingly, as “super-artists who used artworks like so many brush strokes in a huge painting” (Buren in Obrist, 2008: 80). Within the professional art world the status of the artist/curator or curator-auteur (intensified, in the visual arts, through the proliferation of international art fairs and biennials), and the respect s/he has commanded for a ‘very specific’ or ‘unique’ approach to determining value, has risen exponentially. The curator in this context is more likely endowed with the role of thematising, contextualising and re-contextualising even, the material products of artistic activity. Curators assume an increasingly autonomous role, in that they are more often at liberty to take charge of what can be shown, to instigate new shows, to bring works from different collections together, and to write the catalogue essays and accompanying explanatory notes.

Since the late 1980s, there has been increased critical attention regarding the problematic role of the curator as manipulator of the art works, canonizing artists’ production as raw material with which to weave discourses, and thus establish hierarchical power structures of knowledge. By acknowledging the curatorial process implicit in the practices of the artists themselves, however, this disciplinary intervention is thus resisted, and there is an important shift away from the predominance of imposed critical frameworks, towards a more playful, creative manifestation of documentation as element of an expanded practice.⁵

⁵ It must be said that most large galleries have archives dedicated to instructions and documents, often prepared by the artists themselves that determine how a work might be put together and the specific contexts in which it should be shown. An analogous process in the Performing Arts might be Beckett’s rigorous stage directions, for example, or the scores of physical actions developed by Third Theatre practitioners such as Odin Teatret. But it is also true that in some circumstances artists feel a loss of control in the more traditional, hierarchical curatorial process, and are not always comfortable with being ‘lumped together’ under a particular theme that might altogether misrepresent their creative practice.

Importantly, the model of curation that began to emerge out of the *Curating Knowledge* project and which we are further considering in this latest phase of the research, is fundamentally practitioner-centred, and posits the act of curation as an integral part of the creative process. So, rather than a posterior critical framing of practice elaborated by an other, curation is acknowledged as a central aspect of an artist’s practice, and is envisaged as an on going process of both meaning-making and the tracing and reiteration of the ‘lines of flight’ constituting a praxical inquiry. It encompasses the acts that shape artistic production as much as it does a posterior identification of key creative principles. Thus it is at one and the same time genetic and expositional, process-orientated and communicative. A creative act in and of itself, imbricated within a wider praxical project or inquiry.

In this sense, curation is intimately linked to a notion of *expanded practice*. Practice here (like curation) is seen as a verb – a doing – rather than a noun, and emphasises the act of production rather than the end product. In conceiving practice, we also appreciate Robin Nelson’s conceptualisation of *praxis* as an imbrication of practice and theory (Nelson, 2013), and understand thinking and doing as naturally integrated modes of being in the world. An expanded practice therefore, in the context of artistic production or praxical investigation, relates to the ways in which key principals integral to a given artistic process may deterritorialise and re-emerge in other formations, leading to an interlinked constellation of (interdisciplinary) outputs connected together by the ‘red thread’⁶ of an on going artistic inquiry, inspiration or obsession. An expanded practice is hence a fluid, material reconfiguring of mutating ideas, an extended imaginative consideration of emergent forms and strategies.

⁶ A common metaphor for an organizing principle or recurrent theme. Possibly derived from naval metaphor: in order to access the red thread running through the rigging ropes all ropes would need to be unravelled. In Greek Myth, Theseus follows the red thread to find his way out of the labyrinth.

Emerging Frameworks and Concerns

As Robert Morris suggested over forty years ago:

Much attention had been focused on the analysis of the content of art making – its end images – but there has been little attention focused on the significance of the means [...] I believe there are ‘forms’ to be found within the activity of making as much as within the end products. These are forms of behavior aimed at testing the limits and possibilities involved in that particular interaction between one’s actions and the materials of the environment. This amounts to the submerged side of the art iceberg.

(Morris, 1970)

Conceptualising this process, and plunging back into the icy depths surrounding the art iceberg is always a daunting task. However, the rich range of scholarly contributions that we received for this Special Edition of *Revista Repertório* is providing a diverse array of models and frameworks with which to rethink curation and expanded practice and their potential roles in praxis. In the opening article, *Expanded Practice and Curation: Four Positions*, the artist-poet Allen Fisher offers the assemblage as conceptual model for an artist-centred curation. According to Deleuze and Guattari:

On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 103)

The emphasis in assemblage theory on heterogeneous components that can be deterritorialized and re-appropriated in differing

‘machinic assemblages’ resonates with the ways in which curation and expanded practice in the arts is characterised by the eternal return of key principles or ideas, which are constantly being transposed and reconsidered in a mutating creative process. Importantly, Deleuze and Guattari’s concept allows us to plot out the ways in which praxis fuses bodies and enunciations, territorializations, reterritorializations and lines of flight. In short, the political valence of an artistic production or inquiry is seen to be intertwined with its aesthetic qualities; its relationship to innovation can be traced but so can its links to tradition and a discipline-specific *techné*. The emergent, complex, unsettling relationships provoked by a continuing praxis can be identified and plotted using this conceptual model, which foregrounds how an artistic process functions rather than what an artistic product means.

Fisher’s article elucidates this complex mapping through an analysis of his own work and that of Beuys, Hatoum and Parker, emphasising the ways in which the layered decision-making processes informing the facture of artistic assemblages resonates with a curatorial practice, both within and beyond the white-box space of the gallery. His emphasis on the aesthetic function of art highlights the intricate cultural patterns of connectedness that inform the ways in which an artist assembles his/her work.

Interestingly, unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s model, assemblage theory, as developed by Manuel DeLanda, has been fiercely criticised by Marxist scholars due to DeLanda’s recent refutation of some of the key tenets of Marxism⁷. It would seem as if, in the wake of the impasse of Marxist theorization in the 1970s and the demise of Communism at the end of the 1980s, we are, as Derrida suggests in *Spectres of Marx* (1993), still haunted, not only by Marx, but also by the spectral nature of a radical leftist political project.

This haunting appears in a number of the articles submitted by our contributors, most notably in Joanne ‘Bob’ Whalley & Lee Miller’s *Ghostings: The Hauntologies of Practice*. The Marxist-

⁷ See DeLanda, Manuel (1997) *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* New York: Swerve Editions.



inflected, Derridean notion of a hauntology, which reinforces the fundamental lack pervading any ontology, is appropriated by Whalley and Miller to address the vexing traces of artistic praxes. Praxical bodies refuse to give up their secrets easily through discursive frameworks, and similar to the bodies of the whale and tuna evoked in the article, are like ‘fish out of water’, strangely ‘out of joint’ beyond the black box of the performance space or the material context of artistic practice. Hauntology then offers a playful but complex framework for ‘echolocating’ the ways in which praxes can both inform and evade discourse.

Whalley and Miller’s use of hauntology comes out of Powell and Stephen-Shaffer’s reimagining of the concept in the light of Performance Studies. One could argue that this borrowing from Derrida is in fact a misappropriation of a deconstructive reading of Marx, and an example of a neoliberal arrogation of a radical ideological critique. However, Whalley and Miller astutely avoid this by honing in on the incommensurate distribution of capital and the means of production underpinning the so-called *democratic turn* that Carola Boehm identifies in the Culture 3.0 model in her article *Academia Culture 3.0: A Crime Story of Death and Rebirth (but also of Curation, Innovation and Sector Mash-Ups)*.

According to Boehm, Culture 3.0 refers to “[...] digital content production and digital connectivity. With its ubiquitously available tools of production, mass distribution of content happens without mediators.” (Boehm, 2017). The world of Culture 3.0 is founded upon open platforms, social media, and apparent co-production occurring at all levels. For Boehm, it offers welcome relief from the stratified, hierarchical patronage of Culture 1.0, and the protectionism of Culture 2.0 (linked to mass production and phenomena such as the record industry). However, Brigid McCleer, in particular, delves into the underbelly of the mass production of Cultures 2.0 and 3.0 in her poignant and incisive article, *N scale (Caring to begin)*.

Drawing on the trope of the industrial container as instigator of a recent artwork and ubiquitous, invisible presence within the urban landscape of late global capitalism, McCleer charts the inequitable working conditions underpinning the

production of Bachmann ‘N scale’ model railway accessories. Her exhaustive, meticulous account of the fire at the Kader Industrial⁸ factory in Thailand that killed 188 workers in 1993 is a performative writing, an expanded discursive practice stemming from her politically engaged, critically informed arts practice, and thus elegantly reflects the concerns of the Special Edition whilst pointing back to the unequal economic conditions of global capitalism always already surreptitiously haunting the artist’s mode of production.

Anna Macdonald literally tackles hauntology in her moving account of her artwork *Falling for everything* in the article *Holding and Curation*. Drawing on psychoanalytical conceptualisations of holding, Macdonald reflects upon the intersubjective dynamics informing the curatorial strategies she developed as she worked on a filmic project in close collaboration with a woman dying from cancer. Her sensitive, self-reflexive exploration of her creative and personal experiences as artist-curator reveal insights into the ways in which film can potentially hold traces of presence, remnants of lived intersubjectivity in the abject face of death.

Thus, on the one hand, the contributions in this edition collide with a hauntology of Marxism; digging deep into the heart of praxis is at one and the same time a longing for a utopia of arts and knowledge generation, in which the artist is considered a creative, affirmative agent who is not alienated from his/her labour, and the generative aesthetic potential of artistic production is valued above the artwork-as-commodity. Thus there is a desire here for deterritorialization, and curation and expanded practice can potentially be positioned as subversive acts that can be embedded in the heart of academia.

At the same time, it would be naïve to attempt to justify our project from this angle alone. Our considerations of curation and expanded practice are also informed by the institutional realities of PaR, with its attendant audit culture and reterritorialization of the arts within a knowledge economy fuelled by academic capitalism. There is

⁸ The multinational that would eventually own and operate American brand Bachmann, formerly British toy manufacturers Graham Farish.

the distinct air of New Institutionalism here, and a compromise between the requirements of academe and the free-flow of the artist is a given. The practice of the artist must demonstrate its value within a wider capitalist economy, and an expanded practice can be seen to offer a range of putative products, including insights into the creative process itself. Thus the project can also be seen to respond to where we find ourselves within the institution, at a historic crossroads where neoliberalism seems to be entering into a critical state of entropy and a general fatigue and malaise fills the air.

Perhaps we can draw on art historian Griselda Pollock's 2011 article 'What if Art Desires to be Interpreted? Remodelling Interpretation after the 'Encounter-Event'', which offers us a more defiant, politically-fused re-envisioning of the role of curation and expanded practice in this context, focusing on an exhibitionary encounter that nevertheless has resonance with our practitioner-centred models:

I have been working, extramurally, with the concept of the exhibitionary encounter, a concept dense with accumulated and contradictory genealogies. These allocate space for several elements: the artworks as material objects (but also as images and texts), the space of their arrangement and the phenomenological encounter with them, the participating visitor, viewer or agent of the encounter, the invitation to the encounter generated by one who has taken responsibility for the assemblage and the institutionalised occasion without imagining that his or her initiating proposition or criteria for choice and arrangements holds any authority. The invitation initiates the occasion for several lines of potential engagement and conversation between what is there, who is there, what is not there but could be, what will be done there and what the event will do. Performative and argumentative, invitational yet propositional, interventionist yet located within an institutional framing, the project is paradoxical and beyond reason as it must necessarily be if we are to function as critical, engaged, yet contemporary intellectuals negotiating cultural memory through things as the occasions of encounter as well as the memory of our own position as intellectuals. The key is to not be afraid: of

unfashionable political integrities, commitments and habits of criticism. Why would we be afraid? Because, increasingly, consumption and pleasure determine what is good. The quality of entertainment rather than transformation is the only auditable outcome. Pedagogy, such as it is, is tailored to that mollifying end.

(Pollock, 2011).

The phenomenological encounter with the artistic assemblage - both an invitation and a proposition - can thus still be a prospective locus for critical engagement, transformation and revolt. As such, curation and expanded practices can have an interventionist potential, tempered by, but not restricted to, the institutional contexts in which they are embedded.

Other contributions resonate with Pollock's sense of the transformative potential of relational arts. Michael Pinchbeck's article *No rehearsal is necessary: The man who flew into space from his apartment*, reflects on the ways in which the intersubjective encounter with the other informs his dramaturgical practice in his recent installation piece of the same name. The exploration of alterity underpinning the piece - from Pinchbeck's appropriation of the work of the Russian artist Kabakov which initially inspired the show, to the interventions of the guest performers serving as scenic conduit - resonates also with the destabilizing notion of a hauntological experience of art and Fisher's notion, mentioned earlier, of the assemblage as a complex citational praxis involving and affecting the bodies of the *polis*.

Alterity, difference and convergence are essential relational aspects of the curatorial practice described by Lise Aagaard Knudsen in her article *Curating Memory Exchange as Artistic Practice*. In this text, Aagaard Knudsen reflects on the curation of memories in her on going arts practice, and develops a conceptual framework based around the *body-archive* - the phenomenological traces of memories and experiences - which is locked in an interstitial embrace with the *archive-body* - the political, performative space which can be articulated within the ever-emerging present of a performance practice. Aagaard Knudsen suggests that in this dynamic space of active creative



curatorial, memories can be recalled, re-assembled and re-signified.

Victoria Gray's article *Boll (2014): Curating Affective Knowledge in/as Performance*, explores the ways in which Gray's more recent practice expands upon and curates lived experience. In the artwork *Boll (2014)*, the artist attempts to find a way to translate the affective event of internal body trauma from surgery through a poetic performative assemblage, which engages potential spectators through a relational encounter in everyday spaces. Thus the private and personal, the deeply felt wound, is expressed within a public space. Its affects effect others, and thus resonate.

The complex ways in which the curation of performance can radically intervene in community settings is explored by Felipe de Assis and Rita de Aquino in the articles *O curador em artes cênicas: um colaborador da cena atual (The Curator in the Performing Arts: a Collaborator on the Contemporary Scene)* and *Arte participativa, mediação cultural e práticas colaborativas: perspectivas para uma curadoria expandida (Participative Art, Cultural Mediation and Collaborative Practices: Perspectives for an Expanded Curation)*. In the first text, Assis reflects upon curatorial strategies for working with performing artists on the festival circuit. The role of the curator is seen as a creative, relational practice of mediation between artists and local communities to ensure that meaningful encounters emerge. Aquino usefully provides a critical and historical framework of participatory arts as a means of articulating an *expanded curation*. This notion of an expanded curatorial practice importantly breaks out of the exhibition space, and allows festival organisers and cultural mediators to strategically set up relational, ideologically-charged situations involving performing artists and local communities.

In the interview *Jogo de Matrioskas – a ação autoimplicada do artista-curador (The Play of Russian Dolls – the Self-Implicated Action of the Artist-Curator)*, Jorge Alencar talks to Joceval Santana about his curation of the IC Arts Encounter Festival. Alencar very usefully reflects on his curatorial strategies in light of the concerns of his own well-established artistic practice, tracing out the interconnected relationship between creation and curation. Drawing on the trope of the 'Russian

doll', he explores the layered decision-making processes of the artist-curator, foregrounding the dynamic impulses that inspire this very particular example of an expanded practice.

And finally, we come something of a full circle with Francesca Rayner and Tiago Porteiro's contribution, *Investigação artística em contexto universitário em Portugal (Artistic Investigation in the University-Context of Portugal)*. Just as our initial reflections on curation and expanded practice emerged out of UK HE and PaR, Rayner and Porteiro reflect on the ways in which curatorial strategies and the notion of an expanded praxical inquiry are serving as useful tropes in identifying the particularities of the emerging PaR paradigm in Portuguese Higher Education in the field of the performing arts.

Thus, this Special Edition is something of a complex assemblage, an expanded critical curatorial practice of ours, as we encounter the hauntological traces of other practitioners' struggle with similar issues, and attempt to draw meaningful connections between their words and images. What follows is a disparate, synchronistic and sometimes confrontational encounter of different voices, as our contributors frame their concerns from an array of different theoretical and ideological positions, yet all remain united by a sense of the importance and relevance of curation and expanded practice to their own praxical inquiries.

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