SONIC RECIPES FROM
A PUBLIC KITCHEN:
PARTICIPATORY FEMINIST
PERFORMANCE ART

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Abstract

This research proposes to explore and transform the kitchen as a sonic performative work and public site for art and social practice. A Public Kitchen is formed by recreating the private and domestic space of a kitchen into a public space through a sonic performance artwork as a series of creative propositions. The kitchen table is a platform for exploring, repositioning and amplifying kitchen tools through electronic and manual manipulation. In my research practice, this platform becomes a collaborative social space, where I investigate the somatic movement and sensory, sonic power of the repositioned kitchen tools. Through engaging the participants in deep listening methods for sonic awareness and in feminist participatory practices, I form a relational, resonant and communicative site, where new sonic techniques of existence are created and experiences shared.

This thesis is built on a relational architecture of iterative sound performances that position the art historical, the sociopolitical, transforming disciplinary interpretations of the body and technology as something that is not specifically exclusively human but post-human. The thesis speaks through a creative practice that unfolds as a sharing of experiences through these propositions. I am also channeling the intra-personal; through the entanglement of my own personal cultural experience and diverse background, where language, meaning and subjectivity is relational to what it means to be human and to what is felt from the social, what has informed me from a multi-cultural nomadic existence and perspective.

Through the medium of sound, I am investigating, emphasizing entities, ethics, social class and social political intervention in the process. This subjectivity illuminates how we move through the world, react to surroundings and respond to everything. It also proposes how the normative and hierarchical relations amongst human groups based on race, sexuality, social class and ability are always intimately entangled with the broader political economies/ecologies of which we are a part. The performance work establishes a scaffold for thinking about a range of ideas of what is felt through encounters with philosophy, sonic arts, feminist thought. It highlights labored bodies entangled with posthuman contingencies of food preparation, family and social history, ritual, tradition, social geography, local politics and women’s oppression.

The human and non-human relation to machines and machine learning is enacted through intra-active entanglement; it represents an active pedagogy practice for organising and responding collectively to,
the local. A noisy kitchen is felt as a musical sounding in the everyday rhythm of lived intensities. Agency is conjured through the doing-cooking of the kitchen to create a sonic recipe as the becoming of the human-machine relationship to uncover the paradigms that shape-shift performance, cross-fertilizing with technology and futurities of social robotics by finding ways forward in untangling the discourse surrounding robotic machines, humanoids and AI.

This thesis focuses on an unpacking of a creative practice where resonating with agency and amplifying where the experiential is intensely experienced. A Public Kitchen is embedded in socio-cultural research where the artwork allows for human slippages, failures that form part of the work. A sonic recipe is a creative act that actively works as a strategy to cut across pre-established dichotomies and transverse hierarchies of power relations that organize diverse forms of life. In particular, it considers how feminist new materialism can be “put to work”, creating daring dissonant narratives that feed posthuman ethical practices and feminist genealogies. This research reveals what matters—a feminist struggle invaluable in highlighting and responding collectively to the local with a systemic understanding material phenomena in an immersive sonic performative installation. This research practice proposes to ignite and transform our social imagination and deactivate pervasive and dominating patriarchal ethico-politics.
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Juliana España Keller

July 1st, 2019
Preface

As a socially-engaged sound and performance artist, I have made this work with input from, or in collaboration with, project participants, audiences, fellow artists, community groups, non-profit organisations, art galleries, museums and universities. This input is a crucial part of my creative work; however, as the instigating and coordinating artist on all the iterations of Public Kitchens, I maintain artistic authorship of the artworks contained in this thesis.

This research project was funded by the International Fee Remission Scholarship of the University of Melbourne. I have also been a recipient of the Graduate Research Faculty Small Grants Scheme (2017 and 2018). I also received commissioned work from Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne (2017) and from MONA (The Museum of Old and New Art) through the 24 Carrot Gardens Project under the curatorship of Kirscha Kaechele in Hobart, Tasmania. I could not have undertaken this project without this support and the support of the international residency program, SÍM (Samband íslenskra myndlistarmanna), in Reykjavík, Iceland, and Centro Negra AADK in Blanca, Murcia, Spain, and the University of Tasmania, Hobart. I was a presenter of a Public Kitchen at the 22nd International Symposium on Electronic Art ISEA2016 Hong Kong Cultural R>evolution with ISEA (The International Symposium on Electronic Arts) at City University, Hong Kong, China (2016). I was also awarded a visiting scholar fellowship at Concordia University, Montréal, Québec, Canada (2018) through the SenseLab/3 Ecologies Institute under the direction of Dr. Erin Manning and Dr. Brian Massumi.

Please note that some material in this written thesis has been repurposed for publication in academic journal articles on a Public Kitchen. The two articles are slated to be published in 2019. They are to appear in special issue, "Feminist new materialisms: Activating ethico-politics through genealogies in social sciences," Social Sciences (MDPI) and in special issue, "New Infrastructures, Performative Infrastructures in the Art Field" from the series “Kunst Design Medienkultur” (Art Design Media Cultures), University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Lucerne, Switzerland, hosted by the editor of Diaphanes publishing house.
Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which I completed this PhD research, the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin nation, and pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. I also pay my humble tribute to First Nations people in Canada and Native Americans in the USA from where I originate, and to all Aboriginal cultures globally.

The industrious undertaking of conducting PhD research is at times a solitary occupation, but in this particular case, it has always been one that is embedded in a network of people whose readiness to embark on bold new ventures took me on such a profound journey. Now that this research has ended...
(although it feels like it is still going in some ways), I look back at it with many good memories and a deep appreciation for all those who have made this possible.

First of all, this research would not have been possible without the scholarship I received from the Victorian College of the Arts as an international student. It has been a blessing to enjoy a fee remission of financial support, of which this dissertation is a result, and I would like to thank Dr. Roger Alsop for bringing me into the PhD Arts program from Montréal, Québec, Canada, and making moving to Melbourne, Australia, possible. Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisors, Professor Su Baker and Dr. Katve-Kaisa Kontturi for guiding and supporting me during this thesis project. You have set an example of excellence as mentors and role models. Without your guidance, I would not feel confident to go out in the world and share this knowledge. Kaisa, you have been a continuous critical, enthusiastic supporter and guide over the past four years. Thank you for the positive, invigorating conversations and for keeping a watchful eye on my thesis writing with so many inspiring suggestions and associations. Kaisa’s critical eye on the methodological framework and critical potential of this PhD had a profound influence on my perspective on the arts, politics, feminist new materialism and being in the world. Thank you, Professor Barbara Bolt for introducing me to the feminist philosophy and posthumanities work of distinguished academic scholar, Rosi Braidotti. That day was a turning point in my research and still is a constant craving.

To my former thesis panel members, including fellow Canadian, Dr. Marnie Badham, who, with Kaisa, guided me gracefully through the confirmation process. Thank you, Dr. Matt Delbridge for being my previous Chair, and to my present, Chair, Dr. Simone Slee, for guiding me over the finish line. Our discussions and your critical feedback have been absolutely invaluable.

I cannot forget my fellow graduate students for their emotional support and kindness, the technical collaborators in Montréal, Jesse Morrison and Thomas Archambault, and special thanks also to Laura Skerlj in Berlin. Thank you to Dr. Mike Hornblow and the team of MONA (Museum of Old and New Art), especially Maria Lurighi, under the curatorship of Kirscha Kaechele for bringing me to Hobart, Tasmania, to create a Public Kitchen. Also, the international artist residency Centro Negra AADK in Blanca, Murcia, Spain, under the direction of Abraham Hurtado who helped me find my Spanish roots again. “Un millón de gracias” to Las Atrevidas (translated as “The Risk Takers”) from the little village of Blanca for their constant enthusiasm, youth, encouragement and love of life, food and family; I will never grow tired of their company and will always return to the Ricote Valley.
To SÍM (Samband íslenskra myndlistarmanna) international artist residency in Reykjavik, Iceland, whose continual support has injected so much energy, light and magic into my art work over the years.

To my alma mater, Concordia University in Montréal, Québec, and Dr. Erin Manning for supporting my visiting scholar fellowship at the SenseLab/3 Ecologies Institute last year, inclusive of the multitude of members from the SenseLab and the Australian SenseLab Reading Group. And here in Melbourne, to Fiona Hillary who leads the Posthumanist New Materialist Reading Group at RMIT. All of these beautiful people contributed to thinking through this research in more ways than one. I am very grateful to all of you.

Most especially, I would like to thank my amazing family for their love and encouragement and the constant support I have gotten over the years from my husband, Rudy, the best ‘Testing and Tagging Technician’ ever. You are the salt of the earth, and I undoubtedly could not have done this without you. I would also like to thank my two feline companions, Fluxus and Dada, who sat beside me every day, sleeping and purring happily when I was writing this thesis, and the wonderful e-messages and Skype calls from close friends from all over the world who believed in me. Elena Azzedin; Ingrid Bachmann; Ramona Benveniste; Bonnie Baxter; Nadine Petit-Clerc (my punk rock sister); The Fantastic Nobodies (you know who you are); Frida Björk Einarsdóttir (my Icelandic sister and family in Reykjavik); Elín Anna Þórisdóttir, Melanie Glorieux and Bridget Low (who created the most amazing crocheted masks for Sonic Electric); Abraham Hurtado of Centro Negra AADK; costume designer Sase Kazuya; Shelley Reeves (my Canadian Saskatchewan sister and mentor); sound artist extraordinaire Tod Van Dyk; Eila Vinwynn; Nancy Wiseman; and The Cooking Girlz of Westmount. Your love, laughter, cooking and music have kept me smiling and inspired. You are, and always will be, family to me.

Thank you to lighting designer, Katie Sfetkidis, and videographer, Fabrizio Evans, for their help in the production of my final PhD exhibition, and to CEO of the Abbotsford Convent, Collette Brennan, and the Convent team for all of their incredible support during this presentation. Also, to Andy Dinan of MARS gallery, who took a chance with Sonic Electric as we played on the rooftop of her gallery on a perfect summer day in Melbourne.

Finally, I would like to thank and dedicate this thesis to W.W.K.A (Women with Kitchen Appliances) and the many participants of a Public Kitchen, most especially the members of Sonic Electric, Melbourne. It was W.W.K.A who originally inspired this thesis project, with an art and social performance model that went on to become Sonic Electric.
I could not have completed this thesis without the undying support of the members of Sonic Electric. Their belief in me spurred a beautiful collaboration and chemistry full of love and laughter and making noisy sonic recipes together. Juana Beltran, Myfwany Hunter, Jen Moore, Max Noe, Anna Rees, Chloe Sobejko, Indira Shanahan, Sorcha Wilcox—you are all special artists in your own right and amazing human beings.

Thank you also to Dr. Sara Jane Bailes, Kieran Boland, Dianne Dickson, Dr. Kim Donaldson, Dr. Jaye Early, Dr. Rick Evertsz, Dr. Tal Fitzpatrick, Dr. Maite Galarza, Matt Gingold, Vanessa Godden, Yvette Grant, J. J. Hastings, Danica Karaicic, Klara Kelvy, Caitlyn Parry, Dr. Beatriz Revelles Benavente, Elnaz Sheshgelani, Dr. Mattie Sempert, Brie Trenery, Ren Walters, Chloe Vallance, Nick Waddell and Tony Yap. Also, to the now obsolete, Centre of Cultural Partnerships at the VCA, whose vital legacy and great faculty lives on for many students who studied at the VCA.

To my dog, Miles—although it has been years since you passed, I still take your lessons with me every day. To my family back in the USA—Elio, Alex, Melissa and Denise—I still think about you every day. Saludos y abrazos a mi familia en Torremolinos, Málaga, Andalucía, España, Primos Teresa España Peralta y José Moreno Sánchez.

I am so proud of my daughters, Fionna and Chelsea Keller, who have grown up to be strong, beautiful women, inside and out.
Excerpt from:

MANIFESTO

FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!

Proposal for an exhibition “CARE”

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother. (Random order).
I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc.
Also, (up to now separately) I “do” Art.

MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK.
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# Audio-visual Public Kitchen Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOL</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOOL 1</td>
<td>Las Atrevidas: The Risk Takers</td>
<td>Centro Negra AADK, Blanca, Murcia, Spain</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5:39 mins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 3</td>
<td>Sonic Electric, MAP Festival</td>
<td>Rainbow, Victoria, 2018</td>
<td>Duration: 6:12 mins.</td>
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<td>TOOL 6</td>
<td>The Sound of an Oven Rack</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 7</td>
<td>Pulse Impulsion: The Disassembly of a Blender</td>
<td>Abbotsford Convent, Industrial School Building, The Sacred Heart Complex, April 2019</td>
<td>Final PhD Exhibition</td>
<td>Password: BlenderSpark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL 8</td>
<td>Pulse Impulsion – STILL IMAGES</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 9</td>
<td>The Sound of a Set of Measuring Spoons</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 10</td>
<td>The Wire Scouring Pad</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 11</td>
<td>Hand Gestures: Meshes of the Afternoon</td>
<td>Centro Negra AADK Residency, August 2017</td>
<td>Performative hand gestures filmed in Blanca, Murcia, Spain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL 12</td>
<td>The Design Aesthetics and History of the Mortar and Pestle through Pilar</td>
<td>Blanca, Murcia, Spain, August 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 13</td>
<td>The Doing-Cooking of a Spanish Mortar and Pestle</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 14</td>
<td>The Egg Slicer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hand Whisk (Acoustic vs Electric)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOOL 16</td>
<td>The Meat Slicer</td>
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This written thesis forms part of the artwork and research, A Public Kitchen, which is foremost a collective performance work and immersive sound installation. When reading this text, there is a desire and need (by the artist) for the reader to experience the collective sensory and sonic attributes of a Public Kitchen; however, the live and immersive experience of performance art, or live art, is at once irreplaceable or not easily substituted. In this textual analysis, the live experience has been audio-visually captured or sonically recorded in singular sonic video bites. The artwork is thus always to be set-up each time for an indeterminate and distinct outcome with room for failure and noisy slippages.

The sound bites have been provided to the reader in the accompanying text, with the artist’s translation of that particular sound as contributing only to a singular interpretation; in turn, the artist understands that the reader is aware of how our society is being shaped (or constructed) through language and textual analysis. A Public Kitchen is a culturally constructed representation of reality and positions what is possible and what it is not possible in its activation. As there have been many iterations of this work to date—spanning geographies and social groups (2015 - 2019)—much vital material has been generated over time in the form of audio-visual documentation. It is my understanding that all of this material would still greatly assist readers to gain a fuller understanding of a Public Kitchen experience.

Speaking from the perspective of an educator from Montréal, Canada, performing artists usually belong to the theatre, contemporary dance and music world—a cosmos of conservatoires and traditional performance spaces that includes the margins of fringe theatre. This scene is profusive in Australia. Performance art or live art is on the rise, moving towards academic institutions here in Melbourne, from where its roots are formed in underground experimental art spaces. Most performance art is linked here to contemporary hybrid art practices, social engagement and transdisciplinary practices. These forms of experimentation within art schools, as an extension of the fine arts, often take place in experimental galleries, found spaces and site-specific locations in North America and Europe. In Canada, (from where the artist originates) there is a rich history of performative art practice spanning many decades that is already integrated into most academic institution’s interdisciplinary and cross/transdisciplinary approaches (1960s onwards).\(^1\)

\(^1\) Monoskop, “Performance Art,” accessed May 1, 2019, https://monoskop.org/Performance_Art
The final PhD performance work that is embedded into this thesis is an audio-visual document extracted from this exhibition as a creative work that is part of the examination process, in agreement with the Supervisory Panel upon completion. This video document has been recorded and edited by a professional videographer for the intention of presenting a Public Kitchen artwork to international examiners in the reviewing process who could not attend the live performance in person. In this audio-visual document, the artwork is about the performers, space and agency of the work, and although there are face masks and costumes in use, the performers are not to be perceived as fictional entities, despite being tied to a situated perspective or chosen location to perform a Public Kitchen iteration.

Therefore, this thesis needed to expand out from the page. Firstly, and most obviously, it offers a written analysis of the work and historical, social and academic research behind this PhD project. Secondly, visual images of various iterations provide useful illustration. But finally, this text offers a series of audio-visual ‘Public Kitchen tools’ that can be accessed online (audio, video and sound files). Links to these can be found at the beginning of chapters in the form of hyperlinks. They are also referred to specifically within the body of the text. By using these tools, the reader is connected to documentation of particular events in varied locations, as well as highly specific, nuanced recordings of certain kitchen tools and sonic happenings. These adjuncts help elucidate a fuller understanding of a Public Kitchen. An index of audio-visual kitchen tools can be found at the beginning of this thesis.

The final audio-visual documentation of the creative art work and exhibition titled The Kitchen Shift can be found here:

https://vimeo.com/332604174
THE PASSWORD: THEKITCHENSHIFT
OR on my website:

---

2 The final PhD exhibition, The Kitchen Shift, took place at the Industrial School Building, Sacred Heart Complex, Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne, Australia, 2nd to 9th of April, 2019.
Instructions (a Fluxus act)
For a Public Kitchen Manifesto

Taking a pair of scissors, cut these lines into pieces.³
Read out loud.

A PUBLIC KITCHEN PERFORMS WITH KITCHEN TOOLS AND APPLIANCES.
EVERYTHING IS IN MOVEMENT, EVERYTHING FLOWS.
INTENSITIES ARE RED HOT!
WE ARE FUMING!
A DROP-A GUITAR RIFF DRONES FROM THE SPEAKERS
AT STAGGERED HEAVY INTERVALS.
THE POTATO MASHER CLANGS WITH THE VITAMIX.
MASH IT UP WITH THE AMBIENT TONE OF WINE GLASSES.
A COFFEE GRINDER ON LOW.
NOTHING IS STATIC AND EVERYTHING IS RELATIONAL.
PLUCK AN EGGSLICER LIKE A HARP.
WEAVE IN A GRUMBLY GRATER.
CLAP THE METAL TONGS.
WHILE WHIPPING A WHISK WITH AN OPPRESSIVE TWANG.
EVERYTHING IS BUZZING ON A WILD MOLECULAR LEVEL.
IN AN INTRA-ACTIVE FLOW.
THE IMPULSION MOTOR KEEPS A MONOTONE FLOW.
SPATULAS HAVE IT OUT WITH A TART PANS.
OOPS! SOMETHING DROPPED!
A METALLIC CRASH ON THE FLOOR!
AMPLIFY IT!
WE ARE A FLUXUS PUNK SHOW!
REPRESENTATION AND SYMBOLISM ARE DEFUNCT.
WE ARE A POLITICAL PROTEST CANVAS.

³ In the writing of this manifesto, I am not only using a Fluxus method of “cutting” into something, but also following Karen Barad’s approach, using a diffractive way of reading a manifesto, by cutting together-apart, over and over again, paying attention to a distinct part, quality, or effect. From every distinct point there is a sensing of what new intra-actions emerge from this (re)iterative process. It is a deliberate diffractive way of expressing an artwork differently so the ideas for the reader, the artist, and the participants are distinct and combined. Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart,” Parallax 20, no. 1 (2014): 168-187, https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623.
VITAL MATTER, BRING IT ON!
THICK AND SLOW.
SATURATED LOW-END ROARS.
HEAVY METAL AS """"AMBIENT NOISE
WHERE DRONE-DOOM RESTS.
SLOWNESS, REPETITION.
VOLUME, RELENTLESS BURNT TOAST.
HYBRIDITY IS EVERYTHING.
WE WEAR SYNTHETIC WIGS.
WE WEAR CROCHETED BALACLAVA MASKS.
WE SHOW OFF OUR HAIRY LEGS IN BLACK SHOES.
GENDER FLUIDITY ABOUNDS.
WE WEAR DEAD PAN FACES IN PINK LIPSTICK.
WE WEAR METALLIC INSULATION APRON DRESSES.
BLACK BOILER SUITS.
BLACK WAITRESS DRESS SHIRTS.
NEVER THE SAME WAY TWICE.
WE ARE FOUR, FIVE, EIGHT. IDENTICAL. INTERCHANGEABLE.
DISPOSABLE.
DEAD SERIOUS.
WE HARNESS THE POWER OF THE KITCHEN.
RELENTLESS INTRA-ACTION!
WE ARE A PUNK ROCK BAND, A SOCIAL SOUND PROJECT.
A SYNCHRONIZED RUBBER GLOVE ROUTINE.
RUMBLING THROUGH YOUR KITCHEN.
WE ARE CHANGING TIME VERTICALLY IN SPACE TIME MATTERING.
SPIN IT OUT INTO SOMETHING INCANDESCENT.
VOCAL OUTBURSTS OF FEMINOID THINKING.
ULTRA-HEAVY.
ULTRA-SLOW.
WITH A HEAVY DOSE OF KITCHEN RITUAL.
A PROTEST MOTOR RUNS FOR EVERYONE.
AND EVERYTHING RUNS INTO THE FUTURE.
SOUND PASSING THROUGH YOUR MIND BODY AND RATTLING YOUR RIBCA
GE.
MASSIVELY PLEASURABLE AND MASSIVELY PAINFUL.
ENDURING.
ALL ART IS POLITICAL.

WE ARE SONIC AND WE ARE ELECTRIC!
INTRODUCTION: (RE)IMAGINING THE SOCIAL THROUGH A PUBLIC KITCHEN

“dare take the risk of affirmative politics and the collective construction of social horizons of hope.”

Rosi Braidotti

AUDIO-VISUAL KITCHEN TOOLS


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Starting from the Middle

Eight individuals in identical dresses file robotically in through a portal door. They walk, one after the next, into a space that is embedded with history, bringing their ways of moving materiality into the present. Heavy, heavier, heaviest. They walk in formation, masks on, heads high, hands up, carried above their chest, ready to work in thick, yellow, rubber utilitarian gloves. Each individual picks a spot in the room and stares out at the audience with a dead-pan face. One of the members picks up her guitar and begins to play doom-drone riffs. The sound does not rock, as much as crush in inexorably, until the rest of the group move out collectively into the performative space with their bodies and making their way over to the kitchen table—the motherboard—to join her. Their self/bodies move through the space, shifting into various somatic positions on the floor, against the wall, with each other. The figure/ground choreographic relation between the human and this historical place dissolves as the outline of the human is traversed by substantial material intra-changes; the prelude of oneself as transcendent, generated through and entangled with other systems, processes and events. Their shiny bodies cannot resist the allure of shiny objects waiting on the motherboard, considering the effects they have, from manufacture to disposability, while reckoning with the strange agencies that intra-connect substance, flesh and place on a deep molecular level. Vibrating, vibrating...the sound distils and subtracts, and then the vocals begin resonating, looping in and generating live outbursts from the artist who is writing these words now, plunging the sound into a human-non-human realm of culinary noise abstraction. Rubber gloves smack back at you. The sonic recipe is in effect.

Here, I begin by writing to you from the middle of a Public Kitchen, as the above words are moving across and through the whole final creative artwork. The middle, is for me, a happening of thesis writing and research that emerges from my own personal experience combined with an art practice that requires a sensitivity, or attunement⁷, to what moves thought and thinking as a performance

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⁵ The word “crush” describes noise as “coming on,” or putting sonic pressure on something.
⁶ This thinking has been influenced immensely by Canadian cultural theorist and philosopher of relational art, Erin Manning, who conceptualises “middling” as her way of thinking through the way the minor (a minor gesture that moves across the work) calls us to attend to something, and moves us through thresholds of socialities and techniques in philosophy, art and activism. Erin Manning, “Toward a Politics of Immediation,” Frontiers in Sociology 3, (2019). https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00042.
⁷ The word “attunement” refers to the way that American sound and media artist, Norie Neumark describes sound works that are intersubjective, relational, affective, and emotional. Neumark describes this as transmitting and moving through us and between us and others. Neumark, Norie. Voice Tracks. Attuning to Voice in Media and the Arts (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: The MIT Press, 2017), 8.
artist—a maker of live art. I am creating a relation to the person who is reading this thesis, by moving into a thinking process that (re)constructs our interdependence with the human and nonhuman, beginning with thinking and acting diffractively⁸ and intra-actively⁹ without discrditing the consideration for collectivity and the other¹⁰ and all the challenges of foregrounding this artwork. A Public Kitchen creates an opening, unfolding as a performative choreography; it is a creative event that communicates, acts and behaves in a social space, all the way down to a molecular level, not too rigidly conformist, but a writing canvas for the one, or the few, who speak to many. She rises.¹¹

In the performance act, I am using affective political affirmative tactics as an agental relation that is brought to the kitchen table as we struggle for coherence and continuity in this world. Thus, resonance in performance can be seen as a bridge to the posthuman—to be attentive to the mutual accommodation or responsiveness of human and non-human agents. It is not mitigated from the outside to the inside of the body; it is already in the body and in the mind through active resonant forces. In turn, my position always returns to the sound that is produced in intra-activity.¹² Within each iteration, each participant is triggered by the vibrational sensation of sound that rises to the surface through the mind/body. Affect can be felt as sound that behaves as active matter—to listen

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⁸ My understanding of “diffraction” builds on the thoughts of quantum physicist and feminist theorist Karen Barad, where she poses that diffraction means “to break apart in different directions” (Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart,” Parallax 20, no. 1 (2014): 168-187, https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623, 168.) This reading is understood further through Niels Bohr’s explanations of quantum physics. Herein lies a strategy for research because it moves beyond the western metaphysical subject/object dichotomy to explain the difference between diffraction (as a classical physics phenomenon) and the way Barad uses it (quantum-mechanically); this is further explained in an interview with Dolphijn and van der Tuin (Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, New Materialism: Interview and Cartographies (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012, 12). Diffraction is, therefore, seen by Barad as an alternative to reflection, which is a metaphor depicting sameness or mirroring (Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Half-Way: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁹ Through the intra-actions of participants in a Public Kitchen—both in the lead up to the performance and the performance itself—kitchen objects (such as tools, utensils and appliances) do things by or through humans, with human desire and expectation as driving forces that are always in motion.

¹⁰ The “other” can be seen in the stereotyping and generalising of marginalised cultures, groups and individuals that are perceived as inferior, alien, and abnormal. The dominance of “whiteness” in western culture has allowed this to permeate art history, with prominent views and ideas accepted as universal, common, and foundational; this negates the perspectives and experiences of those outside the dominant group in society. This thesis is inclusive of anyone who wishes to become a part of this research and seeks at all times to include and promote gender difference and fluidity, race, age, and colour. It therefore asserts, what I refer to as, a “politics of consent” in a Public Kitchen, which can (re)model and protest the prevalent systems of white privilege and attempt to (re)define ritual space of industrial societies, which is paradigmatic. I would also like to return here to Barad’s concept of diffraction and difference, where new possibilities are opening up as “other”; according to Barad, these potentials are being reconfigured and reconfiguring as themselves (Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Half-Way: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). In a performative assemblage of a Public Kitchen, bodies learn to do things together by developing common capacities to affect and be affected. “Assemblage” is a material affective dynamic in which bodies become “other” to themselves (Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Brian Massumi, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1987). However, my understanding moves further in the direction of posthumanist feminist epistemology and quantum physics, as outlined in the works of Donna Haraway and Karen Barad. In turn, difference is relational to the concept of “becoming” explained by Barad and Braidotti. In this thesis, I am articulating that participating with other bodies in a Public Kitchen is thus a learning process and can be used as a pedagogical tool to understand others.

¹¹ I am referring here to American philosopher and feminist scholar, Bell Hooks, and the intersectionality of race, capitalism, and gender, and what she describes as the ability to counter-act systems of women’s oppression and class domination. Bell Hooks, Where We Stand: Class Matters (New York and London: Routledge, 2000).

¹² Intra-activity, according to American quantum physicist and feminist scholar Karen Barad (Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” Signs 28, no. 3 (2003): 801-833, https://doi.org/10.1086/345321). That is, it is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter as discussed and further explained in “Chapter One: Intra-actions of the Laboured Body.”
and absorb sound material activated through the playing of kitchen objects, deeply. This triggers physical movement felt in the transmission within and between bodies and objects.

In turn, this research seeks to address resonant frequency oscillating in sound that can be observed as vibrational bodies performing with the kitchen objects (reverberating as an extension of the self). It is important to consider that there are colonial and anti-colonial dynamics at play between masculinity and femininity, specific ethnicities, multiculturalism and imperialism, and I argue that these are evident in a Public Kitchen assemblage. I would also argue that they are seen as posthuman *indicators* from which we can interrogate, more closely, the connection (imagined or not) between food and the other. As a multicultural pedagogy that can perform and engender, this research and artwork certainly experiments with various encounters with “otherness”; this is approached via a dialogical response to feminism, social class and domestic labour. In posthuman terms, food has become relational as a testing ground for politics, policy, and reform on many levels.

In the context of transnational mobility, one should consider the sense of being at home, or belonging to somewhere, as dissociated from a geographical location and replaced by belonging through specific everyday practices. This moving or roving idea becomes ambivalent when the very nature of home “doing and making or doing and cooking” can be examined as individual as well as collective through projects of identity.

To be clear, I also maintain that—from a new materialist perspective—cultural space is not defined as around and between objects. It is considered *already embedded* in these objects (the human-non-human), spaces and things, as well as in spacetimemattering; it is diffractively working and conceptualising difference through a spectrum of sound phenomena where *home* is a middling; it is a mutual relation of things and bodies inclusive of diverse participatory powers. From an ethico-political perspective (with whom and for whom), this relational process (re)models our interdependence with human and nonhuman others, beginning with thinking and acting ‘from the middle out’ without discrediting the consideration for collectivity and the other. Living always comes to terms with forms of dissonance emerging from a complex set of social conditions, such as the auditory experience of sound that lacks musical quality; the sound that is a disagreeable auditory experience as a form of noise. In turn, these conditions are in a constant process of engagement, where thinking and acting ‘from the middle out’—drawing on what is intrinsic or embedded—creates ways of shifting into each other and attuning to these fields of difference.
The chapters of this thesis that are foregrounded below offer—amidst a julienned Fluxus act—a short outline on the indeterminate agency of the material and the discursive. Through quantum physicist Karen Barad’s theory of *agential realism*, I am thinking while I am writing about different concepts that assume binary consideration, such as causality, agency power and identity, which are concepts still at the heart of representational research methodologies.\(^{13}\) What diffraction offers is to live without bodily boundaries by including the *more-than-human*; this understanding touches on research participants expressing the ways in which this experience has been crafted, and how my art practice intersects with a research philosophy that offers a *(re)imagining of the social in the live enactment*. From the perspective of a qualitative critical inquiry, this thesis hopes to contribute to social change, and I argue that activating a feminist ethico-politic must fundamentally emerge from work done at the transformative, energetic layer of the body, activated by *doing-making* processes. Here are my propositions.\(^{14}\)

“Chapter One: Intra-actions of the Laboured Body” examines how meaningful human-non-human actions (specifically “intra-actions,” as defined by Barad) occur through the active engagement of participants in a Public Kitchen sound performance artwork. This practice-based, new materialist approach senses a connection to the intensities and flows of personal and collective transformation, paying attention to the creative act, in the making and doing, made possible through a somatic encounter of the laboured body. The artwork and social action of a Public Kitchen is therefore activated through the apparatus of intra-active entanglement, providing a systematic understanding of material phenomena in an immersive sonic performance installation.

A Public Kitchen represents an agential pedagogical strategy for organising and responding collectively to the local, operating as an independent nomadic event. In turn, the Public Kitchen becomes a *space of mattering*, where everyday activities (domestic labour, in particular food-preparation) can be harnessed to empower the participant. Through this process, there is a *(re)imagining of the social*: the artwork goes beyond the kitchen and demand of labour (domestic

\(^{13}\) According to Karen Barad, *agential realism* not only subverts the substance of matter as we know it, but also allows us to question the dichotomies between nature and culture, animal and human, female and male, and the social practice of science and the nature of ethics.

\(^{14}\) A note to the reader: the chapters in this written thesis, I would argue, are interchangeable. The content and findings do not follow a single path and shift across one another. It was, therefore, a difficult decision to pick which information would come first in this linear document, since each chapter brings forth and develops new insights which are constantly (re)configuring and being (re)configured as the reader experiences the work. “Chapter One: Intra-actions of the Laboured Body” was chosen as a starting point, because there needed to be a theoretical explanation of the many *diffractive readings* embedded within these chapters, and how specific *material-discursive* elements in my text change with each intra-active example. Following this chapter, definitions and understandings are built upon and deepened in practical, sensory, and theoretical ways. Therefore, the chapters have been listed in an order which could potentially be (re)ordered and (re)read since this thesis is meant to be *an open proposition starting from middle*. I would argue that this is actually an inbetween/indeterminate way of looking at my research practice, as a sonic performance work plays out between human and non-human bodies. My intention is to explain how human-centered activities actually look and feel in practice, not independent from the artist herself and others, thus revealing the material discursive and how it is diffractively ushered into an experiential event.
chores) to an unfolding of a transgressive experience of becoming. Overall, sound phenomena materialise when the human and non-human are fully present and exercise a guiding or piloting role, affecting and working through what is organically presented in a particular iteration of a Public Kitchen event.

Here, the idea of the participatory is critical, where the human and non-human fuse to take on a positive and affirmative character. I contend that a participatory sonic performance work precipitates a *kitchen interior intra-subjectivity*—a process evoking the specific entanglement of *doing-cooking* with *affect* by providing a complex assemblage of embedded and embodied thought where the psyche and the body work in unison. What is correlative to *intra-corporeality*—where the artwork is an aesthetic, psychological and physical experience—is how these entanglements mesh with our perceptions; where the mediation of affect as a sound performance plays out and functions as a reading of the bodies of others.

.........EVERYTHING IS BUZZING ON A WILD MOLECULAR LEVEL.

IN AN INTRA-ACTIVE FLOW.

This affirmative experience enhances the movement of the enactment, empowering the individual, bringing a community together, and collapsing the boundaries between the public and private, natureculture, and gender polarities. Vital to this conceptual process is a specific “sonic apparatus,” or framework, where the human-machine relationship is generated, embracing the critical potentiality of vital matter. In turn, the action of this performance, both leading up to the event and the event itself, generates “sonic recipes,” or dynamic arrangements of sound/noise material via this framework. This material is evidence of the process, as well as socially-heightened ways of living and being generated through the artwork itself.

“Chapter Two: All Art is Political” describes the political imperative of a Public Kitchen artwork and social model. This is examined through Martha Rosler’s artwork, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), which remains a major influence and key source in the conception of the project. Through this work, important creative and political decisions are explained and worked through, with the understanding that feminism—or, *work that matters*—still needs to be done. The emergence of the women’s liberation movement from the late 1960’s up to today (2019) is structured in its independence as

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consciousness-raising and has played a positive function in that it helps women gain confidence in themselves, educate themselves and realize that their problems are not individuated but are shared almost universally with other women. This led to revolutionary implications and is, of course related to and interconnected with other struggles such as: youth, Black liberation, anti-war sentiment, working class, etc. It has its own dynamic, its own demands and its owns organizational forms which is not directly dependent on the evolution of other struggles.¹⁶ In turn, this systematic critical enquiry (a Public Kitchen) considers “laboured bodies” (inclusive of everyone) and how they are entangled with posthuman contingencies, such as food preparation, family, social history, ritual, tradition, social geography, local politics and women’s oppression.

A PROTEST MOTOR RUNS FOR EVERYONE.

AND EVERYTHING RUNS INTO THE FUTURE.

Here, philosophical posthumanism—or, the ethical consideration of looking beyond archaic “human-nature” binaries, adapting instead to techno-scientific knowledge and open subjectivities beyond the human species—forms a method for reassessing systems of domination and labour. This is explained though the discourse of feminist new materialism, beginning with the roots of material feminism as described by Rosemary Hennessy, to Rose Braidotti’s understanding of posthuman and feminist new materialism, and emphasised by gender and performativity observed through the texts and recent knowledge of Barad.¹⁷ A Public Kitchen and can be seen to open up complex nets of intra-connectivity in which the body, space and psyche are never conclusive, the human-nature dichotomy is superseded, and patriarchal domination is rejected.

“Chapter Three: Drop Dead Live” describes the use of anarchistic and punk symbolism in a Public Kitchen. This begins by expanding on the position presented in Rosler’s key work, drawing connections to sub-cultural influences, such as the punk, hard core and feminist movements (Riot Grrrl) in New York from the 1970s to 1990s. Emerging from first-hand personal experience that was directly relevant from a young age, these movements in art, music and fashion inform my current politic, aesthetic and creative motivation, and are evident in a Public Kitchen. From this personal perspective, moving through other local communities has mirrored my own life.

WE ARE A PUNK ROCK BAND, A SOCIAL SOUND PROJECT.

¹⁷ There are many more important scholarly new materialist references scattered throughout this thesis that are supporting this critical analysis of a Public Kitchen. Please refer to my final bibliography for a complete list.
A SYNCHRONIZED RUBBER GLOVE ROUTINE.

RUMBLING THROUGH YOUR KITCHEN.

This chapter provides important contextualisation for a Public Kitchen and my art practice generally. In turn, this content examines the motivations behind these movements and how they sought to "(re)imagine the social." The punk band (as a form) can be seen as a useful model for my own sound performance collective, Sonic Electric in Melbourne, and explains how the feminist element of a Public Kitchen was developed from my previous association with the W.W.K.A. (Women with Kitchen Appliances) in Montréal, Canada. The aesthetic mash-up of punk, anarchist, Fluxus and Dadaist attributes of the costumes used in a Public Kitchen, are then broken down. Here we see how they assist in promoting the mind-body collapse, unification and individuation. This visual aesthetic adds to the spectacle of a Public Kitchen, allowing participants to fully engage in the process, while mirroring the contemporary context of political, social and the cultural "lunacy" of our present socio-political climate.

"Chapter Four: Co-composing the Sonic Interface of a Noisy Kitchen Through the Apparatus" addresses elements of sound production, hardware, tools, technologies, roles, and human processes involved in the sonic activity of a Public Kitchen as a social practice. This unpacking further assists the reader to understand the sound patterns and processes in a "sonic recipe" within a Public Kitchen experience, and how they are connected to the intensities and flows of the social and sensing experience of the participant. Key sound and technical music hardware are used in this process with an involved analysis of the contact microphone and piezoelectric pickup effect, as well as the kitchen tools that are placed in front of the participant on the "motherboard"—a functioning portable kitchen table structure with place-matted stations. These fundamental elements are then explained in their connection to various kitchen tools and appliances. As Barad explains, "apparatuses are not mere observing instruments but boundary-drawing practices—specific material (re)configurings of the world—which come to matter." This explicates a tactical partnership between musical hardware and bodily production that, in concert, produce sonic performative phenomena where "transduction" is defined as a morphology, or the process of transforming signals into spatio-temporal matter.

EVERYTHING IS IN MOVEMENT, EVERYTHING FLOWS. INTENSITIES ARE RED HOT!..............

This chapter also outlines the roles of “participant” and “facilitator,” and how these individuals collaborate and are led and choreographed. Specific connections are made to Pauline Oliveros’ concept of somatic or deep listening, and how this process cultivates receptivity in the body/participant, as well as Brian Massumi’s “incorporeal materialism,” where the body becomes aware of the intensities or affects in which bodies function as sensory surfaces. Here, the sensory experience of a sonic recipe is more fully explained through the notion of the “gestural hand”—the human element that connects the body to material objects, generating this sensory experience.

“Chapter Five: Resonance in a Public Kitchen” addresses a deeply intertwined collective moment when the human and non-human intra-act in the apparatus of a Public Kitchen. This is a mode of “transduction” produced through action or doing via a contact microphone (a metal piezo disk surface) that is activated by making contact with various kitchen tools and appliances; here we see how the contact microphone as especially vital to the greater effect of this action. The “resonance” experienced becomes a vital and transformative moment in the process, instigated by a “material turn.” A critical live awareness occurs, where sound (technological or non-technological) can be felt and seen collectively and affectively as an automated society coping with the demands of life with everyday technology.

This perspective opens up a “deep listening” capability for the participants, that makes them available and receptive to a “tuning in” of the world we live in. This is therapeutic, connecting and transgressive, as the personal experience becomes an affective political act: by fully experiencing the sonic potential of a Public Kitchen, participants are empowered. This is especially true as there is not an emphasis on perfection or technique here—ultimately, failure is part of the process. Making sound or noise that is discordant and imbalanced reflects a similarly unbalanced society, giving women the time and space to be heard through the act of work that matters. Of particular relevance to this chapter is Mierle Laderman Ukeles’ Manifesto for Maintenance Art and Iris van der Tuin’s understanding of “affect” through generational feminism.
“Chapter Six: The Importance of Somatic Movement in a Public Kitchen” connects the concepts of time and space in the Public Kitchen. As a nomadic practice, this social and artistic work moves geographically and contextually as it has involved participants from many countries and cultures across the world. In turn, this somatic movement, or bodily gesture, is reflected in the hand gestures made by the participants in a Public Kitchen. This can be witnessed in the monotone video work, *Las Atrevidas* (2015)—a video and sequential field work that monitors the mechanical gestural movements of six senior women from a small village in Spain who embrace a matriarchal tradition and participated in a Public Kitchen iteration. This work shows how this project creates a space of subjective individuation and accepted otherness.

In turn, kitchen tools are examined for their specificity and meaning; they are passed on socially, stretching entanglements with shifting measurements of performative gestural movement, sonic undulations, historical kitchen knowledge and temporalities in the domestic sphere. Here, the tools become individual, and the collective nature of a Public Kitchen is at once uniting and specific. In this way, temporality is defined by how time is kept, by whom and for whom. The Public Kitchen enables the performing body to engage in a connective experience of listening with the whole mind and body in relationship with other matter, connecting to materials and moving forward into, what Braidotti describes as, an inequitable future.

**WE ARE FOUR, FIVE, EIGHT. IDENTICAL. INTERCHANGEABLE. DISPOSABLE. DEAD SERIOUS.**

Finally, “Chapter Seven: The Kitchen Shift” reflects on the complexity of each sculptural installation built into the immersive environment of a sound and performance creative work, and how this spatial material arrangement became my final PhD exhibition. This exhibition put into practice the (re)imagining of what a live performance can do, while also illustrating the field work that influenced and attended to the material process of this thesis project that is a Public Kitchen.

*The Kitchen Shift* was held at Abbotsford Convent, April 2nd to 9th, 2019. The word “shift” was chosen to highlight this historical heritage space and to describe the enactment in which something is displaced but in movement. This focus reflects the laboured body and also the intensities moving through the work that are present and unseen, unhinging the disquieting history embedded in the walls of the space. The word “shift” switches the act of changing one thing or position for another, or the act of

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moving from one place to another as a Public Kitchen activates itself nomadically. This thesis remains ongoing, moving off the page, advocating shifting gears to forging ahead, laying aside patriarchal rules, abandoning women’s oppression, occupying space and (re)imagining the social. In line with the opening event on April 4th, 2019, this exhibition was an invitation to witness a performance intervention of Sonic Electric in a live Public Kitchen as a way of “doing and making” in the world, highlighting the ways experience is crafted for one and for many. This is especially attending to new materialist, posthuman readings relational to this thesis, and long-standing questions about gendered labour and sociality.

MASSIVELY PLEASURABLE AND MASSIVELY PAINFUL.

.......ENDURING.

ALL ART IS POLITICAL.......

WE ARE SONIC AND WE ARE ELECTRIC!
CHAPTER ONE: INTRA-ACTIONS OF THE LABOURED BODY

“The very nature of materiality is an entanglement. Matter itself is always already open to, or rather entangled with, the "Other." The intra-actively emergent "parts" of phenomena are coconstituted. Not only subjects but also objects are permeated through and through with their entangled kin; the other is not just in one's skin, but in one's bones, in one's belly, in one's heart, in one's nucleus, in one's past and future. This is as true for electrons as it is for brittlestars as it is for the differentially constituted human . . .

What is on the other side of the agential cut is not separate from us—agential separability is not individuation. Ethics is therefore not about right response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part.”

Karen Barad

AUDIO-VISUAL KITCHEN TOOLS

TOOL 6: The Sound of an Oven Rack


TOOL 8: Pulse Impulsion – STILL IMAGES

TOOL 9: The Sound of a Set of Measuring Spoons

1.1 Intra-actions Ignite a Public Kitchen

Intra-actions ignite a Public Kitchen. I build a sonic recipe about how intra-actions of the laboured body respond or react to the performative moment through the motherboard. Instead of relying on thought alone, I argue that our bodies generate affective-feedback mechanisms (in tandem with the mind) when we experience sound noise phenomena. The starting point for a Public Kitchen is that I propose is kitchen matter (moving bodies, kitchen tools and appliances) have an agential capacity to affect sound material. This capacity emerges when elements are assembled together, when they intra-act.

The term “intra-action” was introduced to the discourse of new materialism by Professor of Feminist Studies and Theoretical Physics, Karen Barad.\(^{21}\) Intra-action should not be confused with “interactions,” where elements exist first and then interact. Instead, an intra-action conceptualises that it is the action between (and not in-between) that matters; it is in the action that the elements themselves are produced interdependently. It is the action itself that (new materialism) announces itself.\(^{22}\) Intra-action produces an immanent enfolding of matter and meaning between science and the humanities, and a new understanding of how non-direct causality is brought forth.

I argue that the specificity of intra-actions speaks to the particularities of the power imbalances in the complex field of forces that are at play in a Public Kitchen. Therefore, I propose that causality is not interactional, but rather intra-actional, as defined by Barad.\(^{23}\) Resistance is a continuing process and acknowledges materiality, material forces and the agency of things as events that are emergent and dynamic; resonant. In the home kitchen, sound directly generated by human ritual activity is a fusion of the human and non-human in that it oscillates between the socially-mediated nature of noise and the non-human indifference of technology. In contrast, the production of sound in a Public Kitchen engages and induces the listener to feel, think and experience the sound. While it is important not to see this relationship as determined by technology, I propose it is valuable to get a sense of a large pattern of intra-actions that reach to the smallest areas of everyday life to include the “human-non-human” as forms of sound noise and disruption, as well as cultural, social, political and even physical excess.


\(^{23}\) Ibid, 56.
A simplified and common example of experiential sound phenomena in the sonic performance work of a Public Kitchen iteration can be expressed as follows:

The participant chooses the kitchen tool on the motherboard—for example, an oven rack—plucking each rung on the metal rack to create a variation of vibrational, deep, basal tones that form dynamic sound phenomena from which a sound pattern emerges (Figure 2).

One pays attention to the emerging sound pattern: the dark, metallic, deep undertones that echo and rumble with thunderous momentum as vibrational feedback through the amplifier with a subterranean earthquake-like force. I propose that one carefully attends to difference, realising that not all oven racks are equal.

In the book, *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science, Body, Brain and Being* (2013), Professor of Performance Nicola Shaughnessy states that “Reasoning takes place in the brain, of course, and so it is embodied as sense-perception, emotional responsiveness, imagination, memory or intuition.”

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Figure 2: A Public Kitchen iteration. MARS Gallery, Melbourne, Australia. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

dynamics of “intra-corporeality” whereby the artwork, as an experience, is aesthetic, psychological and physical, and whereby the participant experience is central to the artwork and affected by these attributes (Figures 2 and 3).

1.2 User Activity as a Diffractive Way of Being

A contemporary, everyday concern is that one is always held in the ubiquitous interactivity of being a “user” in relation to broader media culture. Being a user implicates the intra-relations between users, between computer systems and devices, and the empowerment of connectivity. User activity exists in the kitchen environment, but also everywhere, with the many smart technologies (phones, watches, computers, headphones, to name a few) following us from place to place. In socio-technological observation, participants who have never played kitchen tools before in the human-machine relationship manifest sound or experimental noise with obvious physical urgency, as evidenced in field work conducted both in Australia, Hong Kong and Spain from 2015 to 2019.

This relationship—understood as “user experience”—is important to juxtapose, to unscramble the transmission-reception of intra-activity and its potential in contemporary affective discourse. I argue that Public Kitchens that rise up from different communities in distinct areas of the world as situated perspectives create unique indeterminate sonic patterns, or sonic recipes; they emerge from intra-actions that can, at best, be described as raw, tribal, dynamic forces at work.
Figure 3: A Public Kitchen iteration. MARS Gallery, Melbourne, Australia. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
In field work during the course of this research, I have observed, time and again, how participants’ gestural manipulation of kitchen tools varies from place to place. These somatic movements produce a shifting form of dissonance that is induced by playing the kitchen tool off-key or in an unmelodious personal manner, using the somatic body in a most expressive style. By extracting the vibrant essence out of the kitchen tool in the most vivacious manner possible, the tool, or matter, is animated with agency (Figure 4).

Participants go further than demonstrate a kitchen technique, expanding on proficiency. In performance, participants present skilfulness in the command of kitchen fundamentals deriving from practice and familiarity. This is because practice greatly improves proficiency; being a kitchen expert or having knowledge of a technical subject (the methods of the doing-cooking) is therefore a way to connect one’s kitchen skills and intuition.

On the other hand, trained sound artists or participants related to other musical mediums attempt to test out, explore, look for, expand on and build on a more processual approach to the creation of harmonic intra-actions. Complexity of performative movement and sound patterns and meaning (in terms of uplifting enlightenment) adds other dimensions to the texture and polyphonic output of what an object can do or not do when sounding out.
I argue that these social patterns of sonic textures, both tonal and atonal, maintain a quality or character of becoming that can be observed as other-worldly and decorous, by cultivating the experience, or can even result in disillusionment in the active process. “Becoming” here refers to feminist theoretician in new materialism Rosi Braidotti’s idea of it as a rhizomatic political action (as in, rhizomatic learning), proposing that it is a significant undertaking of nomadic feminist ethics in which transformation is to consider a body’s potential for mapping and shaping transformation in the local. In turn, Braidotti considers that new futures need to be imagined first and re-assembled elsewhere in order to do the work, rather than being constructed into the same hierarchical frameworks. French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari also expand on this particular entanglement in their book, Nomadology: The War Machine (1986), where “the nomad war machine” pops up all over the place to weaken the foundations of the capitalist machine.

I argue that, relationally, free-form sounds are produced in the performative gesture. Their style of playing—animated cognitively, somatically—can be described or applied as not being dependent on sounding “noisy” (as invoking loud sound in a musical score) but extracting some kind of mood or spirit out of the object in a state of fervour. Therefore, I argue that participants of a particular nomadic community, such as in Spain, perform with the tools of the kitchen in their own diffractive way of being (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Las Atrevidas (The Risk Takers). Centro Negra AADK International Artist Residency, Blanca, Murcia, Spain. 2015. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

25 These concepts are developed from Braidotti’s ideas on becoming and are expanded on in her book. Rosi Braidotti, Metamorphoses: Towards a Feminist Theory of Becoming (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2002).
Here, in my understanding of diffractive reading, “diffractive” means *patterns of difference that make a difference*. Barad proposes the practice of diffraction in place of critique, as it invokes the interference patterns of quantum field theory.27 Diffraction, according to Barad, involves looking for patterns of difference that make a difference by “reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their finer details.”28

This is how a Public Kitchen thrives: through a diffractive reading, as a critical practice for making a difference in the work. Through a Public Kitchen, differences unfold in the *entanglement* by emphasising *what matters, how they matter and for whom*. A Public Kitchen is foremost a practice of engagement and is more than just a “user activity.”

1.3 Pulse Implosion (The Disassembly of a Kitchen Blender)

A Public Kitchen fuels the everyday rhythm of lived intensities in the doing-cooking of the kitchen to create a sonic recipe. The *sonic apparatus* is examined as the becoming of the human machine relationship and presents the *more-than-human* in a live enactment. The more-than-human life in the everyday is, as Canadian cultural theorist and visual artist Erin Manning describes, the body verging on the field of a virtual experience, where the body is always more than one.29 Manning often typifies the more-than-oneness of the body as always already collective, by cutting as it does “between life-welling and life-living.”30 Whereby I establish the proposition of the *doing-cooking* of a Public Kitchen through intra-actions, Manning proposes that one consider this virtual-actual juncture as a force of affect that resides, or activates, the body-becoming.31

I argue for a body politic that emerges in a Public Kitchen, as a creative fusion of sound/noise and non-traditional instrumental forms, cross borders between human and machine, performer and audience. Thus, through a feminist apparatus, a condition arises from the many intra-actions and foldings that transcend scales of time, space, materiality, cognition and logics. Often referred to as *transcorporeality* in a posthumanist field of new materialism and material feminism, the body is

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30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through, transforms, and is transformed by non-human agency. This, I argue, is indicative of the human-non-human interface that is pervasive at all levels of life, becoming the fabric of our material, computational, biotic phenomena.

In Figure 6 we observe text on the sensor pad of the interface surface component on an electric blender that reads “NINJA blender.” This was the instigating cue for the stop animation video work, *Pulse Impulsion* (2018), that emerged from field work in Montréal, Canada, at Concordia University, where I was a visiting scholar with SenseLab/3 Ecologies Institute, a research laboratory of thought in motion and relational art, led by Manning and Canadian philosopher and social theorist Brian Massumi.

Let’s now focus on the appliance itself. Notice the sensor button, “pulse impulsion,” on a Ninja 1000 blender (Figure 6). The manual states: “The Ninja® Total Crushing® technology delivers unbeatable professional power, by blasting through and crushing even the toughest ingredients....”

Figure 6: The interactive design interface panel of an electric kitchen NINJA blender. Ninja and Total Crushing are registered trademarks of SharkNinja Operating LLC. 2018. Image credit: Thomas Archambault. Technical assistance: Jesse Morrison and Thomas Archambault.

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33 The SenseLab/3 Ecologies Institute is situated at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. It is composed of artists, academics, researchers, dancers and writers, working together to explore the active passage between research and creation. This research laboratory welcomes approaches to research-creation that seek to open thought in a collaborative learning environment dedicated to participatory experimentation with the premise that concepts must be experienced/lived. [https://senselab.ca/wp2/3-ecologies-institute/](https://senselab.ca/wp2/3-ecologies-institute/)
35 Ninja and Total Crushing are a registered trademarks of SharkNinja Operating LLC.
I do not come across a definition of “pulse impulsion” in the product catalogue, but the syntax sounds fearsome. In the online Nisus Thesaurus, the word “pulsation” is defined as:

1. pulsation (as in “wave”) n. : (electronics) a sharp transient wave in the normal electrical state (or a series of such transients); “the pulsations seemed to be coming from a star”;
2. pulsation (as in “phenomenon”) n. : a periodically recurring phenomenon that alternately increases and decreases some quantity;
3. pulsation (as in “pulse”) n. : the rhythmic contraction and expansion of the arteries with each beat of the heart; »he could feel the beat of her heart”.

With these definitions clearly outlined, “pulse impulsion” is seen as a force that moves something along when pressed.

I propose that the logic of all three of these definitions are systemically possible in a sonic performance work through the vibrational bodies of participants being affected by noise. That we understand our world through a multitude of different cognitive and metacognitive pathways is, to a great degree, in a quantum relation with each other and is a significant posture in relation to a Public Kitchen.

I also propose that our dependence on language leads us to accept our understanding of systems within systems, so much so that we allow technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to understand or think for us. Systems ecologist, Pille Bunnell, writes, “Namely in our desire of dealing with complexity, and the dynamics of systems, we create simulations of systems, or in the conceptual form, simply express them as systems diagrams.” In turn, I propose that smart technologies are already an important link to how humans will understand the human-machine communion now and into the future.
Consequently, performing with kitchen appliances for over ten years, I had always wanted to delve, hack into, the inside of a kitchen blender. Just as we are curious about the inner or closed world of a computer (located inside a metallic computer case in the computer motherboard), I wanted to investigate the blender’s engineered parts and de-code these “super-power” capacities from the perspective of the user. The stop-motion video *Pulse Impulsion* (2018) does just that: by giving the viewer a fluid presentation of a step-by-step, frame-by-frame disassembly of a Ninja Blender, we are able to experience its “super powers” from the inside (Figure 7).

Through social media, and marketing of health and lifestyle products, it is understandable why the blender seems to have superpowers. The smoothie bowls, frosé and single-ingredient banana ice-cream flooding your Instagram feed would not be possible without an army of small appliances behind them, motors buzzing, blades whirling in our ears. Therefore, this simple pulverising appliance (a blender) is elevated to new heights. *Ninja power!*

I propose that ur bodies’ abilities define how we use tactile sensor pad devices (input). Our sensory system defines how we listen to devices (output). Yet, the way we interact with devices, by touching a two-dimensional screen with one finger only, is named “sequential tapping” in the world of human
computer interaction design, which can change how the computer reacts to us so we have to change how it sees us (Figure 8).\footnote{I consider Physical Computing (2004) a significant term given to a book by interactive designers Dan O’Sullivan and Tom Igoe.}

![Figure 8: How the computer sees us. Image credit: Tom Igoe and Dan O’Sullivan.](image)

In a Public Kitchen, I test the nuances of listening to the machine by how we sense it through our own bodies via intra-action. New interface technologies mean that, in the future, the computer will be able to understand more about our actions and behaviours by seeing full-body postures, gestures or listening to what we say; this can be compared to the way participants in a Public Kitchen listen to kitchen sounds by performing with the somatic body in a sonic performance artwork. I argue that the artwork becomes distinct in that it performs as or in a form of techno culture or culture jamming. The simplicity and bare-bone construction of a contact microphone and its piezo disk transducer (as seen in Figure 9) is able to convey all the minor intra-actions with humans and machines in a major way.\footnote{I am referring here to a minor gesture making a major meaning-making as described in Manning’s book, The Minor Gesture. Erin Manning, The Minor Gesture, (USA: Duke University Press, 2016).}
There is a concurrence here. The small contact microphone can pick up sound vibrations (cognitively, scientifically). At the same time, it has the aspect of future technology that fascinates—its apparent inherent “personality”—an attribute that, sooner or later, will be attributed to all machines. I propose that these relationships in art (human-non-human) are gaining strength and momentum in social media and AI phenomena, whether through the individual or collective experiences between participants.

1.4 The Motherboard Intra-acting with the Fast and Slow Kitchen

The *motherboard* is a sculptural installation and significant component of the kitchen rhizome and the sound performance work. Kitchen tools and kitchen motor appliances provide *sculpted source material* to create sonic intra-actions. The intra-actions transform into dense textures, rhythmic structures and deep bass tones, depending on the kitchen motor itself working in combination with the contact microphone; these combinations present a hierarchy of the senses through the vibrational body.
The accumulation of kitchen objects and utensils on the motherboard spans a cultural history dating back to the Space Age, revealing a long-standing polarity and intertwined ethical relationship between fast and slow kitchens. The fast kitchen is known as the processed, ready-in-minutes, Uber-Eats style of kitchen. It is the place where food is delivered to your home and appears on your kitchen table without even picking up a kitchen tool (the only exception being a fork and knife, chopsticks or spoon to eat it). At most, one might have to press the sensor button of the microwave. In comparison, the slow kitchen is part of a food and social movement that entangles humans to take time preparing a traditional meal from scratch, utilising every facet of kitchen know-how.

From the moment one starts prepping ingredients for a recipe, to create a meal, kitchen tools are the cook’s inseparable co-composers. Taking on a “prefab” modular approach to kitchen design, the motherboard in a Public Kitchen installation presents an assemblage of visual objects or forms when placed on a table surface that are activated to produce sound noise, either manually or electronically. The tools that are placed on the table are made to be picked up and used. Interactively, they can take precedence over each other in an indeterminate order; this leads to different sonic outcomes. Each tool chosen by the participant not only represents a realistic simulacrum of the actual sound of a given action, but the dramatic affect they imprint, as explained through intra-action. This relation also probes and challenges the social powers and limits of the “cult of speed,” which through the construction of the kitchen tool can be understood as the measurement and representation of rapid motion, in the mind/body relationship.

The evolution of the kitchen as an ethical workplace suggests different ways in which speed of movement is associated, on the one hand, with pleasure or ecstasy: the search for powerful sensations such as food consumption, overstimulation, and so on, including exhaustion, risk and injury. Representations of the body in motion include the transformation of the body itself into an object of velocity; here, such representations are emphasised by the current body cult through the highly-publicised commercial kitchen bullet juicers, super-power blenders and chopping machines (to name a few.)

I suggest that these kitchen appliances allude to natural and artificial improvements in physical culture, and the pharmaceutical avatars of speed, such as caffeine and active ingredients in energy drinks. I propose that these complex systems of cybernetics mirror the prism of speed, the poles of productivity, hyperactivity in a posthuman way that enhance our freedom to “become”, heightening

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the forces and relations that allow us to intersect with others while, at the same time, exhausting them. I pop the questions: Do we need all of these devices to survive, to live in the everyday and what are the future repercussions in a posthuman relation?

In a Public Kitchen, this perspective can exaggerate how sound also interprets action or interprets the body that is affected by this stimulus, giving it a sense of certain weight, physical force and presence, among everything else that is happening in a sonic recipe; as Braidotti states, “our profound intimacy with living systems, organic and technological, born and manufactured.” In addition, I see the motherboard as a sculptural, immersive installation that can be also compared to the mothership depicted in the film, *Alien* (1979). In the sci-fi horror classic, the mothership is reconstructed through the blending of the human, technological and non-human as materialised through the mothership, the Alien queen, and Ellen Ripley (played by actress, Sigourney Weaver). The story takes place on a space ship, Nostromo; the support system of this ship is a computer named Mothership, or simply Mother. The hybrid depiction of the Mothership is a worthy comparison to the motherboard of a Public Kitchen.

According to American cultural theorist and Professor in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies, Donna Haraway, a cyborg transgresses boundaries and reality. I relate the way in which a motherboard functions to the participant who plays on its platform. To Haraway, a cyborg or a cybernetic organism breaks down boundaries and maps, rewriting our social or bodily reality. The blurring of set boundaries or regulations that need to exist in order for such hybrid figures to emerge is also comparable to participants that stand before the motherboard; as they attach themselves to the technological and the non-human, they form intra-actions in an immersive sound installation. One cannot predict how the physics of the hand will move, which direction it will take, and how it will affect the object or the person. As we see (Figure 10), a participant plays measuring spoons in any number of gestural variables. Sometimes they jingle, clang, ring or clatter, metal on metal. As Barad insists, “the acting human subject and the known object are not separate, but entangled.”

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Finally, a Public Kitchen’s participants activate their tools as a way of breaking through boundaries to re-articulate, re-interpret and re-position matter. Agency is generated in the presence of others entangled in a Public Kitchen. The resulting sonic recipe is then fast or slow, depending on the sonic flow of others and the intra-actions within that flow.

1.5 A Brief History of Kitchen Tools

As an avid experienced home cook and baker, I ran a cooking school business from my home base in Montreal, Canada. This project was named: “Cook GlobaL, Eat Local” and operated from 2003 until 2015. From a new materialist perspective, I propose that we are embedded in the conditions of our own historicity. For the most part, from the systemically-present spatial politics of the kitchen, I propose a mostly Western perspective as an understanding of the joyful affirmation of food.
preparation and our desire to endure; to grow and nurture our sustainable future through how we eat through tools of invention.47

Food writer Elizabeth Luard describes in her book, *Sacred Food: Cooking for Spiritual Nourishment* (2001), that during the Bronze Age, some 3600 BC, wealthier households in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions of the world ditched their stone and wood implements in favour of new technologies: utensils made of copper materials were more efficient in their new materiality, form, and application.48

The Bronze Age, followed by the Iron Age, produced more sophisticated forms of metallurgy and the pivotal techniques in which we now understand as food preparation on a global anthropogenic level. Around the 8th Century BC, the Romans utilised a variety of iron kitchen utensils including meat mincers, spatulas, colanders or strainers and ladles, as well as pots and kettles made of bronze and terracotta. The Middle Ages produced slotted spoons, frying pans, pepper mills, tongs, mallets and waffle irons. The medieval kitchen also had weighing scales, roasting forks, rolling pins and even cheese graters. With the start of the early modern period, more specialised tools like apple corers, cork screws and, later, can-openers for the proliferation of canned food were introduced to the kitchen toolkit.

During the nineteenth century, particularly in the United States, there was a dramatic expansion in the number of kitchen utensils available on the market, such as labour-savers like potato peelers, jelly moulds, and salad spinners. Dissatisfaction with copper utensils, which reacted with acidic foods, emerged, and other metals gained popularity. By the turn of the twentieth century, kitchen utensils were commonly made of (tinned or enamelled) iron, steel, nickel, silver, tin and aluminium. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the proliferation of petrol-based utensils—that we now know as plastics—emerged.

Transculturally, the modern electric kitchen appliance is still debated in many communities and many kitchens. Manual labour is still aligned with a certain skill set in food preparation, where the hand and rudimentary kitchen tools perform the doing-cooking. In field work from Spain, to Australia, to Iceland, there is a consensus among most of my research participants that electric kitchen appliances do not replace the gestural hand.

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47 I am describing here a generally Western cultural genealogy of the history of kitchen tools.
From this on-going cartography, the *Slow Food Movement* emerged, where the art of food preparation is a mindful practice of love and attention to where food originates and, more significantly, how it is prepared.\(^4\) Manual labour is still recognised as effective as any modern kitchen appliance, according to most of my field data collected. The efficiency and speed of the motored kitchen appliance is key to kitchen shortcuts in food preparation, a contentious starting point to any discussion on the tools of the kitchen in relation to the doing-cooking.

The gestural hand pushes a button and the machine does the rest. It is made noisy by intra-acting through contact with a contact microphone. It heightens the *lust for speed* and *duration* through its pulsating pressure. This indeterminate process creates the sonic recipe.

### 1.6 The Body in Motion in the Doing-Cooking

In the realm of a Public Kitchen, a noisy kitchen is creating sonic awareness, allowing for intra-actions to occur as a means of generating ways to delve deeper into *natureculture* as we use technology as a tool. We see this concept developed further when, for example, we experience affective feedback mechanisms in sound-noise. Massumi elaborates on his conceptual analysis of the body in motion, proposing that “Far from regaining a concreteness, to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body. Of, but not it. Real, material but incorporeal.”\(^5\)

For Massumi, bodies experience sensation by virtue of this incorporeality. Through movement, sensations are “doubled by the feeling of having a feeling.”\(^6\) This relationship (how the body is affected by the sensory), but also the relationship between the internal and external (social and political body), is applied in the sound being created as a form of *attunement*: where differences are being created in the world, by what particular effects they have on subjects/bodies revealed in a live performance.

In a Public Kitchen, a participant takes their place at the motherboard in a non-dualistic, non-separational model of identity and difference. Differences diffractively crisscross, interfere and co-
establish each other through performativity, where differences are respected, allowed to exist and flourish in re-creating the space of the private to public space, crucial to the material feminist body. Professor of Anthropology David E. Sutton states in his book, Secrets from the Greek Kitchen (2014), that “Tools, ingredients and bodily skills and gestures are all of a piece, part of a larger potentiality of tools in the kitchen-place.”\textsuperscript{52} He goes on to say that there “is a sharp contrast to the typical specification of kitchen tools from the classic textbook” titled Household Equipment (1975) where “Every utensil should be judged in construction, efficiency and care required...It should be designed to accomplish the task for which it was made efficiently, without undue expenditure of effort.”\textsuperscript{53}

I argue that the doing-cooking certainly requires skill and creativity, but also reflects an open-ended character in how it is transferred from one person to the other, in a diffractive sense, operatively, societally and even politically. I explore how a dramatic sound performance work, such as a Public Kitchen, may demonstrate the value of bodily forms of expectation, communication by the embodied dimensions of affect. Gender, biology, psychology, technology and cultural forms are all inter-twined in the subject matter and aesthetic presentation of a sculptural, immersive sound installation. A sound performance work makes use of technology by proposing that the technological and non-technological can operate in the contemporary moment as a critical art practice. New materialist thinking inflects an exploration of the laboured body in its own productive principle in order to investigate all its conditions through them being tested by a public.

\textsuperscript{52} David E. Sutton, Secrets from the Greek Kitchen: Cooking, Skill, and Everyday Life on an Aegean Island, (USA: University of California Press, 2014), 74.
CHAPTER TWO: ALL ART IS POLITICAL

I was concerned with something like the notion of “language speaking the subject,” and with the transformation of the woman herself into a sign in a system of signs that represent a system of food production, a system of harnessed subjectivity.  

Martha Rosler

2.1 Reinventing the Notion of Public

In this chapter, I will address the socio-political oeuvre of American artist and activist, Martha Rosler, outlining her position on the artist’s role within contemporary art practice and her understanding of “private to political,” of which she still speaks fervently. Rosler’s position affects and influences my present understanding of my own role as an artist and feminist thinker. This focus of attention, from the private to political to a public space, is the very centre of my artistic practice and energises a Public Kitchen. Such a practice becomes a platform for reinventing the notion of public, socially-engaged art as a situated perspective and social action; as the becoming of a co-creative practice.

Materialities are never neutral. Thus, a Public Kitchen could be conceived as an alternative economy critical of a capitalist system. I argue that all art is political because a critical feminist perspective articulates that patriarchal culture is a system that impacts everyone as material conditions of all sorts play a vital role in sonic resistance against domination. Domination in today’s cultural politics takes various forms in varying social contexts. This can be seen as a contemporary crisis, and signals an agential strategy of local urgency, collective action and constant negotiation. I argue this public debate is important to everyone, not only feminist thinkers, and is politically and economically defined presently by private interests of corporations and cultural industries for profit. My transnational and transdisciplinary attitude as a third culture kid informs my discursive conversation on local communing practices, and my approach to all life forms and feminist new materialities. Relationally, as Rosler states in this chapter’s opening quote, a woman at work is a “system of harnessed subjectivity…into a sign in a system of signs.” Thus, my art practice demonstrates the need for inventing critical practices of a public. In turn, I argue that a Public Kitchen offers a new way of conceiving these impressions from a posthuman, feminist new materialist approach.

56 This idea points to a “Trumpian” autocrat world, such as heteropatriarchal domination, that is a socio-political system in which the male gender and heterosexuality have primacy over other genders and over other sexual orientations, neoliberal domination, racial domination, and homophobic domination, etc. Donald John Trump is the 45th and current president of the United States of America, who took office in January 2017. “Trumpian” is a slang definition found here: https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/trumpian/ (LLC 2019).
57 “Third culture kids” are people raised in a culture other than their parents’ or the culture of the country named on their passport (where they are legally considered native) for a significant part of their early developmental years. They are often exposed to a greater variety of cultural influences.
2.2 Semiotics of the Kitchen (1975)

Rosler’s seminal video and performance artwork, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), contributed to a recurring thematic during the 1970s that still serves as a critical document and historical precursor to current feminist materialist discourse and genealogies. In this work, the artist critiques women’s roles in society by acting as a “cooking show host” personality, creating an alphabet using different kitchen tools. The letters are articulated, often quite violently, in the process. Through Rosler’s objective lens, the kitchen table and its environment are made visible as a platform of domestic labour: a form of maintenance work, household chore, and food preparation. It is coded into a form of semiotics—a performative and gestural language—acted out through the aggressive, violent and monotone handling and manipulation of kitchen tools.

Rosler injected her own terms of performative engagement in front of the recording camera to articulate a feminist debate, not only of her being in the world, but of her place in the world beyond her artist’s kitchen; this split into a political, capitalistic economy of the late 1970s in the United States of America. Rosler was also accounting for the personal, bodily and psychological experience of being human. At the time, Rosler’s form of semiotics pointed to a Marxist-feminist expression of frustration as a radical mode of feminist critique in that it stirred the “global soup” of women’s oppression. Rosler’s message was not only directed to the women, through which feminism defines itself, but at forces of government in an advanced industrial society.59

*Semiotics of the Kitchen* politicised the space of the kitchen through the lens of the camera to expose the issues of consumer culture, mechanised labour, and material handling as a monotone assembly line. Through performance art, Rosler was steadfast in taking a stand on government, in which political authority exercised absolute and centralised control through consumer capitalism. Her work has influenced the embodiment of physical labour in the kitchen, and speaks specifically to a Public Kitchen model as it highlights how politics and the performative can be embedded in the very material presence of video art. At its very centre is the materiality of artistic and political action. In turn, this work shows how artists can navigate this territory, giving attention to the question of politics from the perspective of theory and the artwork itself.60

The actual power of kitchen tools and appliances to create sound material, to connect and contribute to the feminist discursive, can build on Rosler’s original ideas. This noisy platform resonates

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to enable the dictum that *all art is political*. In the last decade, there has been a series of incremental shifts toward artworks that primarily utilise forms of collaboration and participation, both on the ground and as live public art forms. From a feminist new materialist view, physical labour is highlighted to create a form of resistance or posthuman critical engagement with the world.

Critical reaction to collaborative practices of social engagement is often problematised, but Rosler made me think of the potential in developing an *ethics of engagement* in relation to feminist collaborative art practices. Sonic artwork can materialise in form and in practice, with such simple tools that connect to electronic media and to the familiar environment around us. As a method of social engagement, this model seeks to create a form of creative occupation; to move out of the kitchen and into public space, generating other types of kitchen environments or iterations with people other than myself. The term “iteration” is used to describe a single execution of the Public Kitchen, and a set of instructions that are to be repeated in a sound performance work. As a diffractive reading, performative gesture and the semiotic language have been extended beyond Rosler’s seminal work, which was conducted in her artist’s loft. In a Public Kitchen, the kitchen table shifts in time, space and location. Each kitchen tool and appliance that is placed on the table is picked up and transformed in the live performance to become a sound instrument as it engages with electronic media; this is the case for both manual kitchen tools and electrical appliances. The physical body is bound up in this process. 61

A Public Kitchen shifts and repositions kitchen tools and appliances in ways that seek to *open up* sites of resonance and resistance. Typically, noise from the kitchen is considered unwanted; it is something extra and excessive. What is considered noise or information in human terms is seemingly processed by digital technology in an equally blank way—an appearance that, problematically, can hide human accountability behind the apparent autonomy of technology. This research seeks to inquire into this posturing by making communication noisy, and by addressing all cybernetic bodies as forms of noise and disruption engaged in thinking of freedom of the mind/body dictum as a driving force with a multiplicity of becomings. 62

Braidotti calls this interaction a “transmutation,” a qualitative change, a metamorphosis “towards a materialist theory of becoming” by using the power of technology in an affirmative way. 63 And, like Rosler’s strategy, physical labour in the Public Kitchen remains an extension of the self (the participant), except now there is more than one person occupying the space at the kitchen table as

63 Ibid.
collective affirmative action is a platform for collective, cross-disciplinary inquiry for art and social commitment.

2.3 Video Art as People’s Television

In an interview in 2012, Rosler describes becoming a video artist in the early 1970s, describing the context of *Semiotics of the Kitchen* as a time of “cheap movies, lousy quality but so many possibilities.” Rosler was interested in making things that were easily transmissible, able to be dissembled, mailable, and to be shown as an open edition. These intentions are timely and relevant today in terms of activist social engagement and our access to the internet to distribute alternative media.

Her ideal intention was to emulate the audio-visual film aesthetic of Swiss film maker, Jean-Luc Godard. Rosler had access to one of the first Portapak video cameras: a video camera that worked with a solid-state battery so that it was portable. This camera produced a new generation of video activists who adopted the video camcorder as a tool, a weapon, and a witness. The challenge was to deconstruct the information and media infrastructure in America. In the 1970s, video activism was the fulfillment of a radical 1960s vision of making “people's” television instead of numbing consumer television.

As a feminist artist working during this time, there was a resurgence of interest in the artist's social responsibility; as art became increasingly politically and socially engaged, the distinctions between art and communication blurred in the medium of video art. Rosler was interested in this paradigm, as am I: both of us make a connection between social engagement and live performance art. Rosler used the Portapack as a fixed camera with very few movements which was limited, and these early models did not have the ability to produce clean cuts, fades, and cross-fade edits. Rosler’s work was, therefore, simply executed in her artist loft kitchen TV show set. It was, she says, “a strange set, a particular new style of doing things, of making you laugh.” Since Rosler had to do in-camera edits, she stuck to the most minimal of presentations built around a single zoom out at the end of a fixed camera.

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65 Ibid.
Rosler’s video and performance work is now critical to the historical framework of video art due to the simple but profound fact that the video camera was picked up by a feminist artist. As a recorded record of a feminist artwork, this was one of many live art performances at the time that was documented; video art was contributing to “living proof” of a feminist history and discourse as it gained popularity. Other seminal artworks created and documented by feminist artists at the time include those by Carolee Schneemann, Yoko Ono, and Ana Mendieta, to name a few.

Art historian and critic, Claire Bishop, critiqued Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen* by addressing the visual aesthetics of the cinematic image as “a modality of destabilizing the viewer” to activate the boundaries between the personal to the political. Bishop emphasised that “the medium of video was often deliberately contrived to frustrate the viewer and thwart visual pleasure as a direct opposition to the mainstream use of the moving image.” These methods (frustration, thwarting pleasure...) were part of a common strategy at the time in early feminist theory, to accurately pin the personal to the political. This vector of 1970s feminism was interpreted by radical feminist writer, Carol Hanisch, who originally coined the phrase in her essay titled “The Personal is Political” in *Radical feminism: A Documentary Reader*.

Today, to document a live artwork is easy and effective; it can be done on a smart phone with endless possibilities. In my own creative practice, sound effects generated in a live performance from kitchen objects can also develop into a layered, textural, noisy, mechanical, fragile, fast, slow, intermittent and indeterminate electronic sound composite that can be easily video recorded as an audio/visual document. What is critical in this research project is the live experience. The footage is only used as evidence of the work and does not supersede the live performance and the experience of sound in the performing of a Public Kitchen. The method is to seize the material sonically into a socially-engaged performance artwork.

The material elements and physical attributes of a Public Kitchen are portable and user-friendly. The kitchen table, or motherboard, is used as a platform to place electronic media. The kitchen objects that participants bring to the table from their own private kitchen inventory form an assemblage of kitchen object material that can produce a collage of various sound effects. As an iteration, its

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67 Ibid, 96.
68 Ibid.
trajectory will move in a mobile and ambulatory manner as a portable picnic table. The kitchen table can open up, be utilised anywhere and be recorded by any smartphone for that matter, enabling the video document to be easily transmissible through many channels, such as YouTube, Vimeo, hosting sites or a personal website.

2.4 Bodily Encounter/s

In Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, the performer weaves a personal, psychic, and physical encounter into the narrative. This individual encounter is critical in the handling and manipulation of kitchen tools and appliances used in food preparation, domestic labour, and maintenance work to manifest a political public artwork. In a Public Kitchen, *dialogical curation* is used to choreograph a group of willing participants in the making of a Public Kitchen. The methodology is to teach participants to *bend the instruments*—to do things with kitchen objects that they were not designed to do.

Rosler’s artwork was explicit in its black-and-white, severe characterisation, set in her loft kitchen in Brooklyn, New York. Rosler posed in front of the camera as a homemaker, picking up a kitchen tool for each letter of the alphabet and naming each tool with a violent gesture while staring, deadpan, into the video camera. At the time, the creative phenomenon of cook and TV personality, Julia Child, was appearing on a local public television channel, PBS. Rosler—starring in her own reality cooking show in the space of her own kitchen—demonstrates the object’s potential, not its culinary purpose.

![Figure 11: LEFT: Martha Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen*. Video Duration: 6 minutes. 1975. Video Data Bank, USA. 1975. RIGHT: Julia Child on WGBH. Photo: Paul Child/PBS television. New York, USA.](image)

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70 “Dialogical curation” proposes the idea of method of curating based on Grant Kester’s term “dialogical art.” This term refers to the idea of allowing conversation with source communities to influence the process and outcome of an artwork. Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

71 Julia Child revolutionised American cuisine through her PBS television cooking shows, such as The French Chef, Master Chefs, etc. Her videos are available online.
As Child so often presented, a kitchen tool is usually handled with a skilful culinary hand, but Rosler’s deliberate physical gestures were adamant, violent, and rebellious. Rosler stabbed at the air with a knife and fork, casting off ingredients behind her into the void of the kitchen and beyond. Rosler returned her gaze to the camera lens as a mad housewife, far from the elegant French chef.

Rosler’s subversive projection of a woman’s place in the world signified a desire for resistance and change; conversely, it also signified imposed failure, as she was a prisoner of her own domesticity, evidenced through her mocking of Child’s persona. Fast forward: in a Public Kitchen, the performer also adopts a persona. However, foremost, the aim is to underscore the role of the participant as a sound maker and collaborator, to create sound patterns that can resonate as a social and political marker for resistance and change. Interestingly, the failure they point to here is the failure not to do so, not to act. The sound material that is collected will be variable. Its indeterminate pathway will either fail or succeed in its outcome and potentiality. The action remains vital.

*Semiotics of the Kitchen* is testament to today’s continued addiction to entertainment in the form of cooking shows and celebrity chefs. I argue that television media has amplified the artifice by which social media and the power of television homogenises, distracting from meaningful social action. Rosler employed parody to show that cooking shows inhabit our screen and social consciousness, deconstructing gender, and tracing how feminist genealogy pays particular attention to discourses, bodies, and power. In a Public Kitchen dynamic, the participant is to be encouraged to turn toward over-the-top theatricality, or to mask psychological or emotional identification, and play out, as Rosler did, society’s pull of conformity and homogenisation.

2.5 The Built Environment

*Semiotics of the Kitchen* emerged from the working space of an artist’s kitchen loft in New York during the 1970s, and Rosler was living under precarious conditions as part of the creative class of a Lower East Side bohemian artistic milieu. It is significant to elaborate on how her later research continues to speak out about the displacement of artists, social class and their role in global capital and urban gentrification.72

To build on Rosler’s own research is to speak out about the *built kitchen environment* around us today and how this continues to shape our lives. The term “prefabrication” in construction design

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served as a modular system that archetypes the domestic workplace as far back as the Futurist Manifesto and Kurt Schwitters’ installation work, *Merzbau* (1937). Indeed, its association with the construction efficiency of the 1950s “Space Age” kitchen, and its interaction between a built environment and its users, makes a huge contribution to the present day success of IKEA (the favoured home brand for a modern life and clean design) not to mention visual representation through a stratum of signs, signals, and overlapping information that Rosler eclipsed in her own artwork.

Contrasting Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen* and the representation of a built TV set environment, Guy Ben-Ner’s video and performance work *Stealing Beauty* (2007), starring the artist’s then wife and children, borrows heavily from readymade structures. Shot entirely inside IKEA showrooms in New York, Berlin and Tel Aviv, the video work frames model rooms and goods, even appropriating the stores soundtrack into the work. Comedy unfolds as IKEA customers encounter the family lounging in pyjamas, preparing meals and bathing. The video transgresses real and imaginary borders, responding to the culture of the built environment, while trying to make these elements work for his personal life and his family. In this way, Ben-Ner echoes social transculturation and the personal to public sphere as Rosler did in her parody.

2.6 The Kitchen Table

The social space around the kitchen table (the motherboard) informs a Public Kitchen iteration through the kind of kitchen materials placed onto its platform. Many kitchen materials are provided by the facilitator (myself), while others come from the participants own kitchens. What they are and where they come from—generationally and ethnographically—emphasises both social class and family histories.

In Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, housework and art work of the 1970s were intertwined as a feminist concern to expose the underpaid and unpaid nature of domestic labour. This is still a legitimate concern today in the domestic and private sphere, and due to this the material conditions that play a vital role in social production and the social space of the kitchen open up different ways in which women can presently collaborate and participate, organise and resist together.

The kitchen table is not historically universal, central or consistently presented in every home around the world. However, the kitchen table is often relational to affects of “togetherness,” or to a material site for rituals that celebrate family and community. It also has a long social history in which social class, or the family hearth, or a large group of people, are drawn together to eat communally. Therefore, its placement in a particular social environment is materially important in order to understand its significance. A dedicated kitchen was not a given in a working class or farm-to-table home at the turn of the twentieth century; in Central Eastern Europe, for example, there was a living room and scullery but no kitchen. For others, it was the table – the only one in the house and the focal point of the living room, with many activities taking place around it besides food preparation. In this setting, the only light in the building might hover over its surface, illuminating its presence, or it might be placed close to a vital heating or cooking source. Food preparation, too, was generally done at this table, as it was the only work surface in an era before a kitchen became a separate room. A table is efficiently used as an ironing board, or for the placement of a basin to wash clothes or even oneself. People sit, sew, and read there, sometimes eating or working alone. A table also gathers people together, collectively, in work or leisure, and has heightened in popularity as part of the Eurocentric, modern kitchen composition. In terms of present social class conditions, a table may also still reflect a more social and shared living space in many countries globally.

Today, in western, neo-capitalist kitchens, the cooking and dining environment may have changed: our sped-up lives have, at times, altered urban kitchen architecture, providing a bar-top counter eating experience instead of a more formal traditional table. Whatever the case, we need a platform in the kitchen where we can pick up kitchen implements to eat with, serve, and measure up quantities of food, and to help prepare (dice and slice, whirl and whisk, chop and grate) a meal, together or alone, besides a chopping board. As in Rosler’s work, all the tools of the kitchen are instruments waiting to be activated. In the fast kitchen, kitchen tools increase leisure time by forcing one to eat quickly on disposable plates. In the slow kitchen, more rudimentary tools and methods might be favoured, increasing social and “being” time by cooking and eating slowly, enjoying your meals from entrée to dessert. Tempo, rhythm, flow, texture, counterflow – keywords in sound—are indicative of the ways kitchen tools and appliances are played and emphasise our relationship to the everyday. The microwave oven, a household necessity for many, has made it easier to defrost and reheat prepared foods. Fast-forward, the word “cooking” itself is an art form for many home-grown chefs, while for others it is still a household chore. In “The American Time Use Survey”78 the activity of cooking is categorised in broader, more generic terms as “food preparation and clean-up” (Figure 12).

In this survey, only 46.7 percent of men compared to 68.9 percent of women ages 15 and over engaged in that activity (“food preparation and clean-up”) a day. On average, men spent 0.79 hours on food preparation and clean-up while women spent 1.20 hours on it. Women outpace men considerably in housework and laundry duties, such as grocery shopping, caring for animals, helping with children’s homework, caring for other senior family members, and gardening. In other words, women still do far more at home than men, but it consumes a relatively small portion of their total work day. For a woman, historically and culturally, the space of the kitchen has usually been seen as the “heart of the home,” even when going back to work after having children. Therefore, from a feminist perspective, the space of the kitchen has commonly been a woman’s domain and so, informally, the kitchen table is positioned in a space where family life is centred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Average hours per day, civilian population</th>
<th>Average percent engaged in the activity per day</th>
<th>Average hours per day for persons who engaged in the activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, all activities</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
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<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.90</td>
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<td>Groc. shopping</td>
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<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal care activities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel related to personal care</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating and drinking</td>
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<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating and drinking</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel related to eating and drinking</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household activities</td>
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<td>1.41</td>
<td>2.19</td>
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<td>Housework</td>
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<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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<td>0.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storing household items, including food</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<td>Walking, exercising, and playing with animals</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances, tools, and toys</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
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<td>Travel related to household activities</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchasing goods and services</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
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<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and personal care services</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and care services</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See footnote at end of table.

Figure 12: American Time Use Survey, Bureau of Labor, U.S. Government. 2017

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Today, a kitchen can isolate a woman further from the rest of the household, as other forms of social and technological entertainment may make it less central than in the past. However, from whatever economic status a person or family belongs, the kitchen table, as a structure and a space, should not be taken lightly. Whereas the kitchen table was once intended primarily for dining, it is now frequently designed to be part of a large, open space intended for the many social activities of the household. It facilitates the new living-dining experience that reflects major changes to food preparation practices that have taken place over time. Technological advances in up-to-date kitchen electrical appliances are now often integrated into the dining experience: these objects are there to be used and re-purposed. Also, long community tables are making a comeback (in homes, cafes, designed public spaces…) as open surfaces to entertain large groups of guests at social gatherings. Modelled on this type of design, the motherboard is the perfect platform for participants to gather around and connect to kitchen tools.

In the past, the kitchen separated people as a place of oppression: it has always been an important site of the world’s labour, of which women perform most.82 Professor of English Rosemary Hennessy states, “Feminist practice cannot eclipse the material realities that bind race, gender, sexuality and nationality to labor.”83 One of my objectives is to unlock the capacity for the medium of sound to allow the self to express rather than “feel oppressed.”84 Today, gendered social space can emerge from the spatial idea of the kitchen, with all the agency characterised by our present and the hybrid nature of performativity. In many respects, things have not changed since the feminist art of the 1970s: there is not one individual woman isolated by her own repressive environment, but many, in various forms of social class, locally and internationally. The social problem has not changed but been magnified and this disparity is a global issue for many women.

Domestic labour always returns to the relationship between public and private, which was a critical issue explored in feminist art of the 1970s. In her video, Rosler engaged the problem of being a housewife: smiling, middle-class, and white. She was informed by Marxist and feminist critique that considers the everyday household labours of women working in parallel to global politics. Her position of the woman working at home is intimately connected to the public sphere in that “unpaid and underpaid maintenance labour needs to be thought of as equivalent to other forms of oppression.”85

84 Ibid.
Every Public Kitchen will seek to underscore these realities through the making of an electronic sound and performance artwork. From one kitchen to the next, and through the agency of the tools, this research seeks to create an alternative economy through the power of the kitchen and the sound that engages these power relations. Through the participatory group dynamic, the possibilities of creating different iterations is endless. As Professor of English Stacy Alaimo states, the tools of the kitchen are picked up and played “rather than contemplating distinct objects as separate from the self.” 86

Rosler’s contribution catalysed feminist art making in North America in the 1970s, especially in critiquing the institutions within which art is encountered, an issue felt by many to have been neglected by art historians at the time. These artworks were misinterpreted because the methods and methodologies employed emerged from the domestic field of work. In the 1970s, there was little attention paid to this type of artwork, its meaning and value, since it occupied and was concerned with the domestic sphere. For this reason, many feminist artists were overlooked and underheard. The institution was not interested in feminist art that critiqued the conditions of everyday life. 87 From the viewpoint of an artist deeply concerned with social engagement, making space for women and their work has become my objective focus, and—from the standpoint of Rosler, who was a key contributor to feminist ethico-politics—there is still much work to be done.

CHAPTER THREE: DROP DEAD LIVE

“The commandments of I, Saffiyah Khan,
Thou shall not listen to Prince Buster
Or any other man offering kindly advice
In matters of my own conduct
You may call me a feminazi or a femoid
And then see if I give a stinking shit…”

Saffiyah Khan

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88 This chapter title references the first live album of the American, Brooklyn-based, New York punk rock band, The Lunachicks. It was released by Go-Kart Records, Brooklyn, New York, on August 18th, 1998. I knew this band firsthand, and the bassist, Squid, tattooed my wrist. They were all part of the hardcore punk scene in which I circulated; I am a very heavily tattooed woman and this connected me to the scene. Most of the bands in this scene were connected to the tattoo community in New York City. It was illegal to tattoo in New York at the time, but in the mid 1990s my brother, Elio España, opened the first legal tattoo shop, one year prior to the legalisation of tattooing. The shop, FlyRite Tattoo Studios, is still located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and is now run by tattoo legend, Steven Huie. Squid, the bassist of The Lunachicks, trained at the tattoo shop under Elio’s mentorship. My brother eventually retired to the Adirondack Mountains and sold his shop with its notorious name. At its height, FlyRite Tattoo had six tattoo artists working there besides Elio, and many famous musicians and local punk hardcore bands were tattooed there by my brother.

89 On the 8th of April, 2017, Saffiyah Khan’s calm smile, inches from the face of an English Defence League activist, made global headlines in a photograph published around the world. These lyrics are taken from the ska-reggae music album, Encore, by The Specials. Saffiiyan Khan wrote a personal repost based on a track by one of the forefathers of ska, Prince Buster. Despite clearly pointing out how blatantly sexist Buster’s original lyrics were, Khan is quick to state her version is not a "man-hating track": "It’s [also] not saying to women, ‘Throw away your make-up and become a militant feminist’...What it’s about is common sense with how we treat each other.” David Schaffer, “Saffiyah Khan: From EDL viral photo to The Specials,” BBC News (8 February 2019). https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-47147069
3.1 From the Kitchen to the Street

As a visual artist and researcher, I have moved from being a house wife, mother, to a graduate student in Sculpture, Sound and Performance Artist, to a Professor in Intermedia and CyberArts at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and now to a doctorate. I have encountered along the way, a huge lack of representation of women or silencing of women’s work in historical accounts of electronic music and sound which has positioned women as outside the scope of this study in academia.90 This cumulative effect gives the impression that women are rarely present in electronic music and sound art culture which I argue, can profoundly underestimate the presence and diversity of expressions by women working with sound as a creative medium over the last century. From a Western perspective and through a patriarchal sense of understanding of how many women in other cultures are making sound, women are lacking exposure in all fronts.91 It is important for me alongside other women of my generation to make a point of how much I have been inspired by the traditions of women’s music and political activism. On one hand, there are questions of who has access to tools and opportunities for creative expression as women artists and secondly, or moreover, how women artists in sound or audio technologies have been left out and are bleakly represented in mainstream media.

Rosler’s socio-political oeuvre showed her position on the artist’s role within contemporary art practice—her understanding of “private to political.” This standpoint affects and mentors my understanding of my role as an artist and as a feminist thinker in contributing to this discourse and to be concerned with how histories are contained and contested in movements of sound to the present. This strategy mirrors my practice, energising the creative move from the private to political to public space in a Public Kitchen and inform sound and performance histories by highlighting what matters as invention, production and making noise.

More specifically, Rosler’s performance video artwork, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, was an influential political feminist motivator by a singular feminist artist and a historical precedent to Sonic Electric: a local sound performance collective model that is nomadic in nature. It is important to note here that Sonic Electric are a specific and consistent group of participants, currently from Melbourne, who have experience with the art and social model; however, a Public Kitchen can draw participants from anywhere and these participants require no experience with the process. In other words, there are

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many Public Kitchen iterations where the participants are without any experience, practice, or knowledge of its workings.

Sonic Electric are a group of women, or those who identify with women\textsuperscript{92}, with a Fluxus-punk presence, who don costumes and masks, and come together to give their energy to the process of a Public Kitchen (as outlined in Chapter Four).\textsuperscript{93} In this way, they have the characteristics of a band, and each member develops their own experience and personas participating in many iterations of this event. As the facilitator, I also develop a relationship with these participants. This performance model was informed by my participation in W.W.K.A (Women with Kitchen Appliances): a feminist performance collective that I was a member of from 2008 until 2013. W.W.K.A. emerged in Montréal, dressed in unflattering domestic grey dresses fitted with messy wigs, and used dead-pan, mad-housewife humour as a feminist ploy. The original founding members provided me with the insight and sense of feminist collectivity that carried over into Sonic Electric and my art practice generally.

3.2 The Hardcore Punks of New York City

Akin to Rosler, I grew up in New York City during the 1970s. This exposed me to performance art, punk and, later, hard-core music, all of which became important influences for my own practice and many other artists’ practices, too. This time was a defining moment in acknowledging women’s space in the social world of music and fashion. Performance artists and bands, such as The Lunachicks, Bikini Kill, Babes in Toyland and L7 (to name just a few), adopted a Fluxus-Punk attitude—this could be described as fierce, feminist, revolutionary, and a way of injecting life into art.

A much as it was radical, it was also “anti-art” as the artworld in New York was seen as elitist. Betsey Johnson, New York fashionista and clothing designer, flirted with an abundance of loud visual aesthetics in the 1980s and 1990s that emerged from this music scene and the local tattoo community; this was comparative to what Vivien Westwood, the British punk fashion designer, created in London with punk group, the Sex Pistols in the 1970s. All in all, it was the steamy, stinky Lower East Side of New York that brought this culture to a mainstream public.

\textsuperscript{92} Feminism includes everyone. Participants who become part of a Public Kitchen can also be men, trans- or gender fluid. Gender fluidity is also important to understanding difference.

\textsuperscript{93} These costumes change or vary according to the thematic of each Public Kitchen.
The energy and vastness of New York makes it alluring, but also a place where it’s easy to feel disposable. Emerging from a working-class family, and subsequently joining the workforce at sixteen years of age to put a roof over my head, helped define the word “disposable” to me as a young person. Family dysfunction combined with a survivor instinct of “living on the edge” was a normal way of life for me back then. Armed with that attitude, I moved to New York, believing that if you could make it there, you could make it anywhere. New York was truly THAT place for many; it brought young people from all walks of life, which is why social class has influenced much of this research on a personal level. As an exhibiting artist, my practice instils and is informed by the music, performance, art, and people I found in New York during this very formative time.

Of particular relevance was the Riot Grrrl subculture, which emerged in the early 1990s from the punk rock scene during feminism’s third-wave. This movement united women and girls against capitalist and patriarchal cultural ideologies and, as a woman growing up with a multi-cultural background and working-class attitude, girl power or “GRRL power” was important, acknowledging a women’s space in the world of music and the performing arts. Countering the dominant ideological narrative in the United States, the Riot Grrrl movement continues to evolve and expand to avoid commodification. Moving between high and low art, the relevance of sound as social with feminist and political concerns and polarities is activated in a Public Kitchen through a bricolage of incongruent cultural elements which become ripe for exploitation.

This attitude was rampant in New York City from as far back as the birth of Happenings on the Lower East Side in the 1980s, and the subsequent significant and pugnacious punk and hardcore scenes. Rosler may have taken note of this local scene, as many of these bands had humorous elements to them. The performers dressed in ludicrous outfits, engaged in slapstick routines and experimented with different styles of experimental noise-making. The desire to create music with different tools demonstrates John Cage’s acceptance of noise and accident; it is also informative to note that he was teaching at the New School in New York during this time. His methodology refers to putting sounds together in a random, indeterminate manner; mixing and matching unrelated sounds, noises and breakages in performance.

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94 "GRRL" is a slogan that encourages and celebrates women’s empowerment, independence, and confidence. The slogan’s invention is credited to American punk band, Bikini Kill, who published a zine called Girl Power in 1991.
95 The Swiss artist, Christian Marclay, has acknowledged that, during the Fluxus years, he was also influenced by the ridicule of, and play on, the formal presentation of music in the concert setting and the live act. Caleb Kelly, Cracked Media: The Sound of Malfunction, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009) 151.
It was this very combination of moving between musical styles and art practices that led to a productive cross-fertilisation between music and art, not only in New York and London, but subsequently in Berlin in the 1980s and beyond. By using a non-musical interface, new expressions were generated. A Fluxus attitude of the 1960s reflected performers dressed in these beforementioned ludicrous outfits, engaging in slapstick routines and experimenting with different styles of noise-making to attract attention to what was happening on the streets and in social life (Figure 13).

A feminist politic in a Public Kitchen can expand on Fluxus precedents through the use of props, costumes and makeup to create different personae with participants. I argue that a Fluxus attitude insists that everything that is material matter— in mind and body—is embraced from absurd to the commonplace, from violent to tedious, to ignite the kitchen space as a site that shifts and repositions its domestic status to a site of materialist agency.

Sonic Electric performs with dead-pan humour, echoing some of the aesthetic attributes from the punk movement that started in London in the 1970s and carried over to New York City a few years later. Historically, the punk movement grew out of a bleak environment in poor, run-down areas of London where disillusioned rebels from art school, musicians, and unemployed, young, black

Jamaicans were ready to challenge the status quo and show their agitation and emotional disgust for government and society using a cultural critique and strategy for revolutionary action. As I was born in South London near Brixton, this counter-culture thinking influenced me immensely, as did emigrating to the United States, where social conditions deteriorated on a personal level and muddled the years further while living and working in Jersey City, New Jersey, and then New York City.

In art school in Montréal during the 1990s, the W.W.K.A. model was a precedent for feminist performance art collectives making sound art in Canada. With the creation of Sonic Electric, I argue for a more political cultural affective reading of today’s feminist socio-political discourse conditioned by our current socio-political climate. A Public Kitchen has now emerged as a speculative and somatic proposition, combined with the ongoing iterations of Sonic Electric (now that I am situated in Melbourne) and ongoing community Public Kitchen iterations locally and internationally.

3.3 Social Coding Through Workwear

There is a dangerous seduction in picking up kitchen tools dressed as hybrid personas. This experience, aided by costumes, helps participants develop an understanding of the many facets of themselves, enabling personal transformation, social dissonance, and sonic resonance. I propose that there is a quality of being near to or a collective kinship to playing in political unity. What with fake news and an explosion of social media use, it is perhaps a hope of fathoming today’s fractured society dressed in uniform, expanding on all that matters. This form of dystopic dressing-up enables a sense of freedom and relief to those who participate in a Sonic Electric iteration; when participants dress up in a Fluxus-punk style they become disposable and interchangeable. This is a common rule to all members who join the collective, whereas the volunteer participants of a Public Kitchen emerge from a locality or community in a more situated perspective. In this model, participants dress as themselves but are requested to wear a favourite apron of choice, in addition to supplying kitchen tools and appliances from their own domestic domain.
Figure 14: Rehearsal practice for the Victorian College of the Arts Graduate Confirmation Seminar, 2015. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
Figure 15: Sonic Alchemy performance/exhibition, Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne, Australia. 2017. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

Figure 16: Sonic Electric patch. 2015. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
Figure 17: Testing Grounds, Southbank Arts District, Melbourne, Australia. 2018. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
Sonic Electric’s eclectic collection of costumes stem from a line of industrial work wear most commonly sourced from a restaurant or industrial work-wear supply store (as in Figures 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18). Kitchen staff uniforms are instantly recognisable in a commercial restaurant where a dress code is mandatory (often white or black, structured, heavy fabrics that cover the body); this is evident for high-end restaurant staff or hotel cleaning ladies. Other costumes are homemade, such as the
custom-cut, Teflon™ apron dress (Figure 18). This line also comes to represent a collective workforce, as each garment is made of silver insulation material to match a custom-crocheted head mask.

Other workers’ attire, such as black waitress dresses, are paired with silver wigs to symbolise longevity and solidarity, whereas black workers overalls represent the colour coding system of an electrician’s uniform in Europe. The overall choice of uniform is dependent on the location and thematic, but they always mock the visual aesthetic of labour with a subversive, dead-pan humour of “a woman at work.” It is also to be noted that some of these visual attributes originally emerged from my experience performing with W.W.K.A., as, on reflection, this was when I began building this dystopian and rebellious dress code.

Figure 19: A custom crocheted mask used by a member of Sonic Electric. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

The custom-made, crocheted masks100 that are sometimes used in Sonic Electric performances are designed as a protective head armour, fashioned around the conceptual idea of a modern tea cosy which is used to keep your teapot warm. The mask activates a visually emboldened aesthetic that is

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98 Teflon™ is a registered trademark and brand name owned by Chemours that is used in a wide variety of industrial and consumer applications, especially kitchen ware.

99 Solidarity unionism is a model of labour organisation in which the workers themselves formulate strategy and take action against the company directly without mediation from government or paid union representatives.

100 The custom-designed crocheted mask/s used by Sonic Electric were made by textile artist, Bridget Low, and craftivist, Melanie Glorieux, in 2018.
super-charged and disconcerting: the wearer’s head might be “cosy” but there are a fierce pair of eyes looking out of open knitted gaps right at you.

Through this mask the female gaze is projected, cartoonish and alien-like. A custom patch that I designed is also sewn onto each mask, emblazoned with a set of black and pink ¼ inch audio cable jacks that plug into an amplifier placed in the inner circle to emphasise noise, race, and gender solidarity against patriarchal culture (Figure 20).

![Figure 20: Noise Against Patriarchy patch. 2018. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.](image)

Relationally, this cosy headgear also resembles other historical head coverings. The balaclava\textsuperscript{101} was first used during the Crimean War in 1854. These cloth helmets were handmade (most probably by women) and sent over to British troops to help protect them from the bitter cold weather. Today, the modern balaclava has made an impact socially because it not only covers one’s face in the cold (as in

\textsuperscript{101} A balaclava, also known as a balaclava helmet, is a form of headgear designed to expose only part of the face, usually the eyes and nose. Depending on style and how it is worn, only the eyes, mouth, and nose, or just the front of the face, are unprotected.
the ski mask a snowboarder would use), it is also used as headgear by firefighters, racing car drivers, electrical workers, police, and the military.

In contemporary art, pop culture, music, and fashion, balaclavas are being redefined. They are worn famously by the Russian feminist punk music collective, Pussy Riot, who use these masks as a way to conceal their identity. When the women in this group don this headgear, they politically blot out most of their facial features. Pussy Riot use their bodies in the face of intimidation by the Russian state government and the Orthodox Church. They fuelled a feminist ideology through their music. In Russia, it is not uncommon for Russian police to conduct raids and searches of citizen’s premises while wearing balaclavas. Such raids have therefore come to be known in Russia as "maski shows," an allusion to a popular comic TV show of the 1990s.102 It is also worthy to note how the French fashion house, Gucci, has resurrected the balaclava as a fashion statement for all seasons. This might be seen as encouraging the notion of what girls are really made of as a relational sensory contradiction or anti-selfie to the digital consumer age, in the way we are exposed in quick proximity to social media images of women in seductive selfie poses.

In the book, Girl on Girl: Art and Photography in the Age of the Female Gaze (2017), author Charlotte Jansen writes about the connections women experience today between the photographic image and reality, compounded by both the artificial and the natural.103 She writes that “For some women, an unapologetic force for resisting wearing make-up or to questioning the conceptual idea of a mask is as much as a projection of a woman’s individual identity as the real face underneath all that makeup.”104 Makeup, or applying cosmetics to look prettier, may be a part of a self-care ritual that helps maintain a sense of femininity and normality, but I would consider that its implications can play a role in producing above-average beauty standards for women. This incriminating involvement is not new to women or men for that matter. I would argue that this is why the fashion industry contributes to a fixed visual definition of beauty that is used in mass media and advertising.

Conversely, to use a mask in a Sonic Electric performance is to resist and resonate. Each mask is hand-crocheted by different women artists and craftspeople, and carefully chosen by each Sonic Electric member to reflect their own persona. The mask is personally decorated with hand-sewn motifs. The mask does not fit a social ideal, it is simply replacing one with an alternative. It can also cause a political

104 Ibid, 42.
conflict and contradiction in our social understanding of how these masks can change and diversify by diffraction. The mask is used to be and feel like ourselves, letting other people know that the position of women in different societies is variable. I seek to play with these affectations to empower the performer, and to perform, myself, with an uneasy absurdist humour. In fact, this performative openness, coupled with the wearing of a mask, prompts the viewer to focus on the performer’s body language, generating an ambiguous viewing experience of the body itself.

This subversion extends to the use of kitchen-like props. The use of everyday kitchen tools or household items such as colourful feather dusters or a natural broom made from the branch of fruits (a dried date palm tree, for example) are one of many materials used as props to make performative gestures. For example, a member of Sonic Electric repositions a metal flour sifter to perform like a periscope; by bringing the flour sifter up to her face, perhaps she can see a view to an otherwise obstructed field? She manipulates the public to return the gaze to the feminist body but from a skewed perspective. In an ordinary kitchen, a flour sifter typically aerates and sorts flour, giving it more volume, ensuring a standard measure and uniform texture in baked goods. But minus the flour material, the sweeping sound of the agitator—a metal wheel usually propelled by a trigger in the sifter’s handle that forces the flour through the screen—creates a sweeping sound that shapes and projects out to the public when the performer activates it.

To focus on this experience, sonic convolutions of metal on metal are produced as the sifter moves into a more diffractive position, similar to a camera aperture focusing in on a subject through the picture frame. A convolution could therefore be seen as a diffracting cut in movement and timespacemattering, thinking with and in differential relations. The performer points the flour sifter out in the direction of the public, playing one convolution at a time, in an improvised manner. Through this process, a Public Kitchen generates an instability of threads between the object and subject: there is a distance created between the past image of a woman in (perhaps constructed) domestic bliss, to the image of an incongruous project of desire, urge and fear that exists in our subconscious, mirroring the essence of our identity and retracting the male gaze with each turn of the hand. This relationality becomes a medium for those who are working with sarcastic feminist humour, a political attitude and turning the table on the work ethic of the labouring feminist body.

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105 A periscope is an optical instrument that provides a view of an otherwise obstructed field.
3.4 Lunacy: An Affect

_Lunacy_ is an interesting word in contemporary ethico-political discourse. It takes special skills to perform and participate in performative politics today in a “Trumpian” world of conspiracy theory, gaslighting and fake news.¹⁰⁷ Lunacy is the new norm, responding to the political climate, serving up more dead-pan humour. For example, a performative pandemonium recently played out at the White House, in the Capitol Building in the United States of America on September 5th, 2018. A much-anticipated hearing of Judge Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court confirmation before the Senate Judiciary Committee was stalled by mostly feminist activists: in particular, they were protesting Kavanaugh’s nomination due to his conservative stance on abortion. Outside the hearing room, female activists dressed as characters from _The Handmaid’s Tale_ (2017)—an American dystopian drama web television series created by Bruce Miller, based on the 1985 novel of the same name by Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood.¹⁰⁸ Inside, more than 70 protestors were arrested for yelling and disrupting the proceedings. It was probably the most confrontational Supreme Court (SCOTUS) nomination hearing in recent memory. I would arguably call it a _performance art act_ using affective political affirmative tactics. I would also posit it as, what Braidoti distinguishes, “a break with the _doxa_”: the acquiescent application of established norms and values by de-territorialising them and introducing an alternative ethic flows.¹⁰⁹

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¹⁰⁷ “Lunacy” (as in “folly”) n.: foolish or senseless behavior. Princeton University, Nisus Thesaurus, (U.S.A: Princeton University, 2018). Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation that seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, making them question their own memory, perception, and sanity.

¹⁰⁸ Bruce Miller, _The Handmaid’s Tale_, (United States: Hulu, 2017).

There is a feeling of verity to playing in unity, expanding on *all that matters*. There is political power in the participants participatory position within a feminist group collective that is played out through the Public Kitchen. Many artist participants would agree to meddling with conceptual standards against which political performative art playfully pushes. As each participant dons a synthetic wig or a crocheted facial mask, *the body is the mind* in this assumed persona. A dissociation from Cartesian mind-body thinking is heightened because it breaks down gender barriers as much as it reinforces an idea that you put on a gender, like a change of clothing, immune to utopic thinking. As the punk movement grew out of a drab and dark environment—with participants ready to challenge the status quo and show their contempt for government, society, and tradition—it is amusing that the counterculture term “punk” is now part of mainstream clothing design. Originally intended as a destruction of fashion—both at the literal level through the defacement and damaging of garments, and at the symbolic level via its anarchistic attitude and often blasphemous message—this form of *dystopic dressing up* enables a sense of freedom and relief to those who participate in a Public Kitchen iteration.

This performative approach can be looked upon as a quantum thinking response *not only to what we want in the live performance but who we are being*, shattering boundaries between mind and body.
The earliest iterations of performance art, tinged in nihilism (the Dada movement, for example), flirted with the anarchic meaninglessness of language in the early twentieth century.110 The Futurists developed a rowdy theatrical tradition of declamation and noisy musical accompaniment.111 A feminist political rancour is a communal heartache demonstrating the noisy politics of everyone’s oppression. The inventory of kitchen tools and appliances of a participant’s choice, some from their own kitchen, are placed in front of them. It is as if a cacophonic supper of a specific recipe from a TV cooking show is about to be prepared, but this time it assumes a dystopic fervour, similar to the one witnessed in *The Handmaid’s Tale* (2017). It becomes a noisy spectacle of human locomotion, of bodies made into objects extended by a sonic apparatus.

Figure 22: A participant of Sonic Electric re-positioning a flour sifter in a Public Kitchen. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

111 Ibid.
“It’s about the human/machine relationship or interface—the power of technology to expand the mind. You find solutions to creative problems and those solutions lead you into new territory where new solutions have to be found.”

Pauline Oliveros

“Slave to the rhythm.”

Grace Jones

“1) apparatuses are specific material-discursive practices (they are not merely laboratory setups that embody human concepts and take measurements);

2) apparatuses produce differences that matter—they are boundary-making practices that are formative of matter and meaning, productive of, and part of, the phenomena produced;

3) apparatuses are material configurations/dynamic reconfigurings of the world;

4) apparatuses are themselves phenomena (constituted and dynamically reconstituted as part of the ongoing intra-activity of the world);

5) apparatuses have no intrinsic boundaries but are open-ended practices; and

6) apparatuses are not located in the world but are material configurations and reconfigurings of the world that re(con)figure spatiality and temporality as well as (the traditional notion of) dynamics (i.e. they do not exist as static structures, nor do they merely unfold or evolve in space and time).”

Karen Barad

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4.1 The Apparatus

This chapter approaches my artistic practice from the sonic framework of an immersive kitchen installation explained as an apparatus.\(^{115}\) Aforementioned in the introduction, the Public Kitchen apparatus integrates a socio-political understanding of technology; at the same time, it is a working structure in which the Public Kitchen is constructed and operates. From a new materialist view, all objects and systems in relation with living beings can attribute to the formation of a subject. The apparatus in posthuman relations allows us to think of technology in a non-technological way, meaning it allows my practice-led research to take a more critical look at society through the artwork. New patterns are created in a performative and diffractive way by embracing awkward moments between the human/non-human, nature/culture, mind/body, marking where a Public Kitchen is mediated and measured by technological devices producing a sonic recipe.

Thus, I use the apparatus as a central concept for what I argue is a new materialist approach, by working with a cluster of participants who collaborate through sound improvisation in performative intra-action/s via the motherboard to channels of audio-electronic processing.\(^{116}\) I interpret the apparatus as a middling point for how sound performance reflects the current posthuman condition and further feminist concerns. A Public Kitchen does not necessarily look high-tech when performing with kitchen tools and appliances relational to the everyday through the ‘doing and cooking’; it is more about creating a condition in the installation that is a Public Kitchen—to generate a state of being for the non-human and performers in a particular temporality in relation to the spacetimemattering.

In addition, the apparatus is set up to generate new modes of intra-action in the co-composition of a sonic recipe, where the amplification of kitchen objects by users is extremely localised or immersive. In a sonic recipe produced from the intra-action of one participant to another, this performative engagement requires participants to pay extreme attention to acoustic electronic sources once connected to a live wire—the contact microphone—as well as listening to the other participants.\(^{117}\)

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\(^{115}\) The term “apparatus” was first introduced to me at the COST Action IS1307 New Materialism Conference, “How Matter Comes to Matter,” in Barcelona, Spain, 2016. In turn, apparatuses, which produce phenomena, are not assemblages of humans and nonhumans (as in participant/public kitchen concept). Rather, they are the condition of possibility of “humans” and “non-humans” in their materiality. Apparatuses are “material-discursive” in that they produce determinate meanings and material beings while simultaneously excluding the production of others. What it means to matter is therefore always material-discursive.

\(^{116}\) In a Public Kitchen, audio electronic processing is the implementation of devices to perform conversions of sound/pressure wave signals to electrical signals, or vice versa. Digital signals are able to be manipulated by audio electronic devices, such as a guitar effects pedal would do, due to its compatible digital nature. A loop station or vocal performer is a compact and mobile personal effects processor and looper for vocalists. I utilise these devices in my own personal table set-up (separate to the motherboard) during a sound performance to manipulate my voice in the live act.

\(^{117}\) A contact microphone picks up vibrations directly from a solid surface or object, as opposed to sound vibrations carried through air. One use for this is to detect sounds of a very low level, such as kitchen objects. The contact plate is placed directly on the vibrating part of a musical instrument or other surface and transfers vibrations.
In my practice-led research generally, I argue that this social arrangement in the apparatus is based or formed on a perceivable mode of organisation of an interpretative community. That is, the subject is open to constant negotiation by using varied techniques in deep listening through *transduction*.\(^{118}\)

On the simplest technical level, Simondon defined a transducer as a continuous electric relay that operates as a modulable resistance between a potential energy and its concrete place of actualisation.\(^{119}\) Transduction is also presented as a *discharge* of energy from a field of potentialities toward a particular emergence of an event.\(^{120}\) This moment, or state of play, elicited by the connection between the participant’s actions and the contact microphone enkindles an open system of play and indeterminacy in a live co-composition. More specifically, in a Public Kitchen iteration, I instruct a participant to share a musical sounding or be responsive to what they are listening to with a contact microphone in hand. I argue that *sonic meditation*, as coined by American composer and musician Pauline Oliveros in her book *Sonic Meditations* in 1974, is the practice of meditation as group participation. These techniques are meant to be used as a methodology for making sounds, imagining sounds, listening to, and remembering sounds. Sonic meditations can be used in a practical workshop with instructions just as much as in a book that contains a series of text pieces for one reader.\(^{121}\) *Deep listening* to the everyday rhythm of lived sonic intensities in the kitchen is conducive to receiving bodily feedback necessary for the participant to create resonance and dissonant noise. Intra-actions are created through the complexity of the spatio-temporal relations of listening to the laboured body.

Through this process, I argue that *transduction* is relational to feminist sound performance; a contact microphone is a vital device of transducing, listening, and transferring this embodied immersion. In the enactment of sound improvisation, the participating collective respond to each other with shifting levels of performative agency; they process sound patterns until the dynamic, pitch and density of sound patterns produced through intra-action are communicating the noise from all the objects in unison into public space. It is a deeply intertwined experience, as both the human and non-human react and guide each other.

On the motherboard, the piezo electric transducer (part of the contact microphone) produces noise-diffractive interference patterns. This is achieved through a *piezoelectric effect*, which measures sonic

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\(^{118}\) Gilbert Simondon writes that “transduction” refers to a dynamic operation by which energy is actualised, moving from one state to the next, in a process that individuates new materialities.

\(^{119}\) Gilbert Simondon, *L’individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d’information* (Grenoble: Jérome Millon, 2013), 82.

\(^{120}\) Ibid, 143.

vibration, pressure and acceleration, and is the force by which sound is converted into an electrical signal. In turn, the contact microphone that contains this transducer is a most sensitive device, activated instantly by the touch of the gestural hand. Each contact microphone connects to a lead cable, tracking its way down to jack into a minimum 50W guitar amplifier placed under the kitchen table. Each participant performs sound which is channelled out through their own personal guitar amplifier, magnifying the noise produced by each microphone device in contact with a kitchen tool or appliance. A diagrammatic representation of the set-up of the electronic components of the motherboard for a Public Kitchen iteration is shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: The basic set-up of the contact microphones and guitar amplifiers in a Public Kitchen. 2018. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

I argue that the possibilities for social (re)imagining have the potential of organising community that emerges through ritual behaviours, actions and the material discursive. Similarly, I use the employment of the piezoelectric transducer, paraphrasing Barad, “as a tool to examine the question
between the material and the discursive more generally.” Through this, the apparatus can explain the becoming of the human-machine relationship, by channelling and signalling the more-than-human in a live enactment. This sonic interface emerges as a creative fusion of sound-noise that is itself more-than-human as it crosses the communicative borders between human and machine, performer and audience.

4.2 The Sonic Interface of a Noisy Kitchen Workshop

A Public Kitchen experience is not contained to a single performance event. Let us now explore—through specific examples of iterations and projects—the key processes, elements, and considerations involved for the apparatus as it is gradually entangled into the creation of a sonic recipe. Here we see that a Public Kitchen is a conscious unfolding of parts, stepwise, a pathway of negotiation and co-operation in a sonic performance work answering to the call of social practice, collaboration and participation.

4.2.1 A Call for Social Participation in Sounding Out!

A Public Kitchen requires the permission of the participant through social engagement, not only in formal recruitment from the host institution (if there is one), but from the very community itself. This is an ethical imperative and a form of collaboration, social practice and participation. The call to participate creates the conditions for an electronic conduit, forming connections, interferences, contradictions, and slippages in participation in combination with the dialogical. This process is not to be taken lightly. Participation is risky business.

Each approach to a specific community is to be met cautiously in order to gain a sense of trust before a deep listening session can be activated. A workshop leading up to a Public Kitchen can be described as a model for decoding metaphorical power structures through empathy and cooperation. All of this is relational to the artwork and to the immersion of the participant in a sound performance work. This form of active pedagogy creates the platform for sounds of alterity, sharing our more-than-

humanness, of social class, of the laboured body, of difference. In a Public Kitchen, participants are called to a deep listening workshop, something they have never experienced before.

The workshop call asks how we might create conditions for listening, for the self or with others. The workshop manifests an artistic proposition for collectivity in a Public Kitchen. It is a call that seeks to listen to the collective that inhabits us; a diffractive way of making visible the sonic forces that are in the world; the intra-actions of causality that feed our everyday. It is a proposition that focuses on listening to the differences that vibrate in our bodies through participation in a Public Kitchen.

How participation is defined depends largely on the spatial politics in which the project is developed. I believe that participation is a multi-directional process and the input comes from both artist and participant. For example, I was recently commissioned to create a Public Kitchen with the support of MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) in Hobart, Australia, in March 2018. This socially-engaged project, also titled Public Kitchen, occurred in a small town named Gagebrook on the north-western fringe of Hobart, sixteen kilometres from the city centre.

123 MONA is the Museum of Old and New Art situated in Berriedale, Tasmania. The museum is owned and operated by Tasmanian businessman, David Walsh. Kirscha Kaechele is an American international curator (and David Walsh’s wife) and leads many of the external public art projects associated in and around MONA.
Gagebrook is a public housing project with a reputation of being a low socio-economic area. There are a disproportionate number of teenage mothers. There are many societal problems of vandalism, arson, drug dealing, and abuse. These became motivating factors for curator Kirscha Kaechele to invest in a socially-engaged project to support this local community. Kaechele’s *24 Carrot Garden* project helps schools establish kitchen gardens, where children learn how to grow, harvest, and cook their own food. Through this, a vacant lot in one of Tasmania’s most disadvantaged suburbs was transformed into a centre for art, cooking, and hope. I was a part of the team enlisted to create a sonic performance work (a Public Kitchen) in the public space of two open housing lots.

When I use the term *participant* to identify how participatory practice can be described in a sonic performance work, I refer to the *user*, the *audience*, the *performers*. These participants come from different walks of life. I refer to myself as the *maker*, the *facilitator*, the *artist as curator*. I believe that participation leads to social progress and that society improves when more people participate in an artwork as a cultural critique. African American scholar and feminist philosopher Bell Hooks reminds us
that the language we speak at home differs from “art speak.” I relate this to my MFA research project (in sculptural spatial practice), which explored issues of social class head on—through self-portraiture, I examined what it meant to be human by turning the camera onto myself and my working class background.

Hooks states, “If I do not speak in a language that can be understood there is little chance for a dialogue.” In my experience of growing up in a tough, low-socioeconomic neighbourhood as a teenager in Jersey City, New Jersey, and then New York City, I was reconnected to my own past in Gagebrook. Gagebrook youth, retired men, and grandmothers—all (from my perspective) clearly intimidated by the presence of MONA “on their turf.” In my observations, community members kept their distance for the first few days leading up to the event; their body language uneasy, indifferent in their incongruous movement to understand the context of this event, the tension evident. I could feel their disparity in the presentation of such a visual and sensory aesthetic experience.

I conclude that occupying a plot of land in such a situated perspective causes a contentious imbalance, raising questions about whose turf this is, and who can do what, where. The negotiation process leading towards mediation is part of the challenge. Gagebrook showed what it constitutes for a human to be intimidated, oppressed, and a survivor of the everyday. It is not only a co-composing process but a further social and psychological attribute of listening in mind and body.

4.2.2 Listening in to the Body, Mind and Motor

In this research, Oliveros is highly influential, as she has written much about the body, mind, and machine in sound experience; in particular, she examines how technology is integrated into the physical experience of human listening to create a transformative consciousness of self and the world around us. I am articulating the potential of the sound-body by exploring the very core of what Oliveros was practicing—integration. In the apparatus, I investigate the on-going Spinozian question, “what can a body do?,” through the doing-cooking process in a Public Kitchen.

Deep listening is also termed somatic listening by Oliveros, who observed that the practice of deep listening is a commitment to cultivating receptivity through the body with an emphasis on

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124 This concept comes from the book written by Bell Hooks on social class. Bell Hooks, Where We Stand: Class Matters (New York and London: Routledge, 2000).
inclusiveness of performing music.\textsuperscript{127} I engage everyone (women, men, non-binary, trans, gender fluid etc.) as participants in this practice before even touching a contact microphone. For the participant, inclusion promotes a veritable, personal movement of a thought and listening practice that helps the body unwind while at the same time stimulating awareness of energy flows of the body, quite similar to a Tai-Chi or Qigong class that incorporates Chinese medicine and the flow of \textit{chi} (energy) points throughout the body. In the company of others, this approach prepares a participant foremost to listening in synchronicity with each other in performance, relational to the whole apparatus of \textit{doing-cooking} as an unfolding immanent process.\textsuperscript{128} Music theorist Susan Stewart writes that “These are gut reactions of the body where the body listens while performing real-time improvisations in electronic sound-processing environments.”\textsuperscript{129}

\begin{quote}
I could love my listening  
I could listen to me listening  
I could perform my listening  
I could be my listening\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

As Oliveros notes in the above affirmation, sound is a form of energy transmitted through a medium that engages the sensing body in time, causality, relation, and becoming as part of a lived experience. In my practice, I believe that the body is capable of experiencing energy as \textit{agential matter} that traverses through the body-mind as a whole in monist thought.\textsuperscript{131} What is exciting is this intrinsic relation between the body and technology as part of the apparatus through intra-actions. To extrapolate on the words of Oliveros, I find this proposition relational and interchangeable as I focus my attention on my own art practice with the following words:

\begin{quote}
I could love my doing-cooking  
I could listen to the doing-cooking  
I could perform doing-cooking  
I could be my doing-cooking
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{127} Pauline Oliveros, \textit{On Sonic Meditation}, Vol. 27 (San Diego: Center for Music Experiment and Related Research, University of California, 1973).


\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, 1.

A sonic immersive installation enables the act of deep listening as an expanded consciousness through which participants are also the audience. To reiterate, the participants are performers are composers are the audience. In a quantum relationship, they can exist in a simultaneous and symbiotic state in time and space. Academic scholar in Women’s Studies and Queer Cinema JoAnne C. Juett writes that Oliveros’s work:

enters into the quantum universe through an intersection of mystical experience, strongly influenced by Buddhism, and quantum mechanics. The undivided wholeness interpretation of quantum theory reveals that although measurable, the universe exists of an implicate order or a total structure that enfolds upon itself with an infinite fluidity of multiple possibilities, each possibility existing as an abstraction of the totality of reality.132

A sonic recipe is a way to amplify how this quantum process plays out. In its becoming, the process is a vehicle to understanding how sound crosses borders. In this emergence, each Public Kitchen will lead into new ways of social engagement with communities whose essential nature is complexity and whose purpose is diversity. Oliveros taught deep listening as a practice that brought up the ethical dimensions of what it means to be human; in my practice, deep listening has the potential to trigger human intelligence, compassion, and understanding. The Public Kitchen art work enables the performer to cross borders of self-examination into the possibilities of challenging the serious ethical issues within the world today. I have witnessed this transformation many times in various sites of intra-cultural collaboration: each approach is unique, with differing results and interpretations. I will elaborate more on this field work in “Chapter Five: Resonance in a Public Kitchen.”

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In field work enacted in Iceland, I led two deep listening workshops. The public beach workshop (Figure 25) took place in Reykjavik with mostly local Icelanders. The second one took place inside a private gallery space in the SÍM residency in Reykjavik, Iceland, in August 2018, and consisted of mostly international participants and a few local Icelanders. Principally, the workshop is recorded as a vocal recording played through a BOSE Bluetooth speaker device placed close to the participants. The speaker plays a set of recorded instructions as a meditational guide that teaches sonic awareness, paying attention to the medium of sound in the environment in which the participant is sitting or lying.

I find the solid-state speaker a helpful device since it leaves me “hands-free” to observe, attend to, annotate, and document participants while they are immersed in the experience. The workshop is a bridge between kitchen practices and the pursuit of the transformative, preparing the participants for what’s ahead as an interior, biological activity of sound waves entering the body and vibrating internally.

I support Massumi’s view on *incorporeal materialism*. In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi has described this concept as taking place through *resonation*. Massumi takes into consideration a process

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that “can be seen as converting distance, or extension, into intensity.”¹³⁴ Bodies function for him as sensory surfaces that convert distance into intensity, in which bodies become aware of affects. Sound artist Raymond Murray Schafer has also called this “touching at a distance.”¹³⁵ Therefore, like hearing (which is corporeal, biological) the aural imaginary is located in the ear. Massumi points out that although it is a body imaginary, the distance between “surfaces” and the ear (be they cultural, geographic, linguistic, social etc) can be converted to feelings of intensity and affect and are not separate. From a new materialist point of view, I see how this concept traverses the fluxes of matter and mind, body and soul. This is how deep listening is affective, holistic as well as resonant, (re)imagining the social.

The following text is a short example from a sonic meditation, deep-listening workshop where participants lay comfortably on the floor of an open gallery space for about thirty minutes listening to guided instruction through a BOSE speaker (Figure 26). I use the material discursive as a means of co-activation, guiding, feeling patterns of inflection, sonic attunement to the event, a shift in perception. Here is a segment of the workshop that is played to the participants.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 14
What is just under the skin?
What charges those feelings?
Listen to the sounds around you?
Do you feel sonically aware?
Are you distressed by the sounds around you?
Listen to them. Absorb them. Do they speak to you?
Or do you shun them away?
How vibrational are they?
Do they run through your body?
Or do they hit the surface of your skin and rebound?
Touch the floor with the gesture of your hands.
Feel the floor as matter.
Feel grounded. Feel connected to nature.
To the earth, to matter.
What matters?
Touch your head with your hands.
Massage your head.
Massage your face.
Massage your ears.
Put your fingers in your ears.
Can you hear your body?
Can you feel your body?
What minor gesture works for you?
Are you connected?
Are you listening with your body and mind?
Is it in relation with others?
Is your body waiting for matter to be interpreted?
Are you listening now?
Equilibrium. Disequilibrium.
Are you listening or are you hearing??

Juliana España Keller. A Deep Listening Workshop.
This sonic meditation is designed to manifest vibrantly responsive feedback, reactive through a performatively immersive sound experience. It is in this spatial moment, in this deep listening body experience, that participants feel themselves diverging, responding to the sounds they hear as they engage with them. The deep listening techniques motivate, inspire, and carry over to a Public Kitchen if they wish to participate further. Some participants have told me that they see colour when they listen this way, others drift to a calming place.

In my practice, a deep listening workshop engagement is a critical encounter—a reclaiming of the sounds which convert the material enactment into a responsive public. A deep listening workshop brings attention to the performing of live art as relational to renewal and repair, change, progress, and advancement in its material agency.

4.2.3 The Participant

For those participants who wish to continue in the conceptual process, I guide them to co-composing a sonic recipe. I am the facilitator. With simple instructions on how to use a contact microphone, one focuses on the cross-fertilisation between creative skills within the domain of doing-cooking with the idea to create a myriad of sonic possibilities through the motherboard. Each participant is free to contribute and that what they share will be appropriately valued, whether skilled or not. This instructional approach is comparable to the experimental work of Cage, who allowed musicians to modify and co-create his pieces to a substantial extent when he began playing ready-made objects.136 Cage made reference to the cross fertilisation of subject matter—intermedia, indeterminacy—with chance as an essential decision making process in the artwork.

The legacy of the Dada movement is influential to me as the origin of conceptualism. I also believe that Fluxus is the total redefinition of what art and music can be, spawning the idea that sound and experimental music emerge as pure coincidence, or happening; this challenged the role of performer and composer. In a Public Kitchen, this idea as form is a happening in the making, offering insight into the uncertain experimental sound scores and immanent thought. Each workshop that I facilitate brings the listener closer to the sounds that are produced by each kitchen tool.

Many people think of cooking as stressful, but when turning inwards the mechanical repetition of kitchen sounds have the ability to transport the participant in time and space to other preoccupations in daily life. I argue that this produces virtualities, or multiplicities within the body-mind relationship, that offers new emergences and potentialities through intra-actions. In a Public Kitchen, the apparatus of the sensing body is at work: visualising, hearing, touching, caring for the ingredients that are being sliced and diced, whipped and stirred, beaten and chopped. The *gestural hand* of the participants is omni-present, bringing methods, customs, and rituals to the motherboard as a vehicle for creativity, opening participants up to a new modality of performing and sounding out.

Cage said:

> There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot. Sounds occur whether intended or not.” Or, more succinctly, "The music never stops. It is we who turn away.”

As the artist and choreographer, the goal to create a sonic recipe depends on the participant’s motivation to share their skill set in the kitchen, to influence the artwork in some way. This demands their time—user time—and a strong participatory outcome. Through the immersion or unfolding of the performance, in contact with technology, participants move from the kitchen world to a real-life enactment of social relations, to an artistic sonic language which emerges as the sound recipe.

### 4.2.4 The Sonic Recipe

For some, cooking is spiritual nourishment, and a sonic performance work enlightens the spirit of doing-cooking because the doing-cooking is sometimes overlooked. Cooking is understood as an art form because it is a diligent daily practice. Both Cage and Oliveros were Buddhists, influenced by the understanding that *daily practice* is instructional practice for the self as well as for others.

In a Public Kitchen, participants work together to create a *sonic recipe*: a constellation of sound patterns invented in a co-composition, played in an indeterminate score line. A sonic recipe is a *working modality* emphasising food preparation with spiritual significance while extrapolating

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diffractive readings of rituals from one community to another, from one tradition to another, from one social body to the next in its relational complexity. This transversal practice explores the shifting senses where kitchen skills become the sonic recipe. Sometimes, these sonic recipes become voices of resistance with social-political attributes. These qualities resonate through a noisy kitchen, strengthening relations of resonance through resistance, futuring, and social justice. I believe that sound patterns produced by the participant are imbued with forces placed on the objects through haptics. I would go even further to say that these affinities qualify as an extension of their constitutional type—a sonic overture—by thinking through kitchen tools as the very matter of the world and feeding back the quantum order of things through the process.

4.2.5 Understanding the Transducer

In a Public Kitchen workshop, a participant picks up a contact microphone. Sonic fields of kitchen tools, flows of motored noise, immerse the participant into sonic meditation, prompted by lived experiences and deep listening. I see this quantum field thinking moment as a reconfiguring of the sensing body to understand how bodies work together creatively, self-creatively, qualitatively changing the space-time they inhabit in their intra-actions.\(^{138}\)

In sound performance, the ear is constantly gathering and transmitting information, as it always does. What is normally blocked out is now repositioned in a Public Kitchen. The participant is more aware of how we listen, giving attention to the playfulness of laboured gestures in the kitchen. Within this sonic immersion, the laboured body and the contact microphone become one, extending the amplified sound—a process of transcending bodily form, content, pattern, substance, body, and mind. As sound material moves through and between media, sound is transduced. According to Professor of Anthropology Stefan Helmreich, transduction explicates changes in sound.

Transduction names how sound changes as it traverses media, as it undergoes transformations in its energetic substrate (from electrical to mechanical, for example), as it goes through

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\(^{138}\) To be clear, quantum field thinking in this research is derived from Karen Barad’s courage to challenge the interpretation of the human subject in the field of quantum physics. Barad used her knowledge as a quantum physicist to create a diffractive reading of physics and feminist queer theory. Through these concepts, Barad explains how she created her philosophy of agential realism, moving beyond the western metaphysics subject/object dichotomy. Barad explains the difference between diffraction as a classical physics phenomenon and the way she uses it quantum-mechanically, in locating knowledge. Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Half-Way: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
transubstantiations that modulate both its matter and meaning. In other words a signal can be apprehended and interpreted.\textsuperscript{139}

Therefore, Helmreich deduces that a transducer is “any device by which variations in one physical quantity (e.g. Pressure, rightness) are quantitatively converted into variations in another (e.g. voltage, position).”\textsuperscript{140} As a verb, to transduce means “to alter the physical nature of medium of (a signal); to convert variations in (a medium) into corresponding variations in another medium.”\textsuperscript{141} What is recognised by the performer as noisy versus tonal, rough versus smooth, is the electronic processing method of the apparatus in full auditory effect. It becomes a morphology of humans intra-acting with objects that transforms into the realm of a shared signal processing of spatio-temporal matter. For me, this human and more-than-human process is extremely localised, creating a transformation of material (sound) phenomena to a sonic recipe. Manning propositions that through dance choreography this human more-than-human process:

must attend to its tendency toward habit in order to evolve toward openness-to-invention: from technique to technicity. It must learn to respond not only to actual landings but to the virtual forces of cues that don’t land.\textsuperscript{142}

Manning speaks to technicity, be it a choreography, a performance installation, a musical composition, as conditions that never completely become stable in the movement. She writes that “No movement can be cued, aligned to or performed in exactly the same way twice. Conditions are pragmatic and based, always, on the now of event-time as it makes itself felt.”\textsuperscript{143}

I argue that the meaning of transduction works relationally by the many distinct variations in sound patterns that are generated by the sensitivity of the contact microphone and the human participant guiding it in the intra-action. The timing is non-linear, in that transduction opens up to transformation, the micro-political, the social relation, without privileging the human over the more-than human, modulating the force of form of the relation itself.

4.2.6 Sounding Out a Sonic Recipe!

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\textsuperscript{139} Stefan Helmreich, “Transduction,” In Keywords in Sound, (USA: Duke University Press, 2015), 222.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} The Oxford English Dictionary reports an early appearance of the verb form in 1949.
\textsuperscript{142} Brian Massumi and Erin Manning, ”Title,” Book Series Proposal, Montreal, Canada, 2006, 1.
\end{flushright}
To recap, participants meet through a call out from a local host institution. Participants are led through a deep listening sonic meditation a few days before a final performance, helping them understand how sound engagement is observed as a daily practice of attuning one’s self to the world. A sonic meditation is, therefore, a testing ground to the spatial relations of immersion where a special sonic awareness is manifested.

The sonic performative emerges from the motherboard where the transductive experience is processed. Performative movement-sound improvisation commences with the contact microphone, recognising the gestural hand, moving in tandem, in continuous movement, multiplying physical lines, generating a field of forces and repetitive body tendencies. Each participant enacts their own techniques of doing-cooking and injecting performative agency.

The live contact microphone waits to be activated, preparing for any impending signals. The device recognises the performer’s presence, listening in anticipation for the next action, whether that be a gradual movement or a sudden, forceful one.

Intersubjective engagement is critical to the acoustic and electronic sources in the intra-action. The embodied interface is a mechanism that is made navigable on my insistence to be attentive to sound, then used to navigate the connection from the participant to the audience. I maintain that this materialisation is a tactile, haptic mechanism, place-matting the participant-performer-kitchen-tool-apparatus-perceiver-union, and within this mapping, informing the apparatus.

4.3 A Public Kitchen as a Portable Sound Environment

Sound is a flexible, malleable medium. In a Public Kitchen at Testing Grounds, Melbourne, Australia, February 2018, myself and one guitarist member of Sonic Electric played electric guitar with a variety of guitar pedals. The sonic recipe played as an introduction of distorted, doom metal sound/noise before participants connected from the motherboard. Guitar pedals are small, electronic push button devices that alter the sound in a specific way. Traditionally, guitar pedals are used to produce special effects, such as delay, distortion, and fuzz. They are typically placed beside a guitar and played by stepping one’s foot onto the push button to activate the effect, creating resonance.

On the motherboard, the other participants activate the pedal between performative movement. The pedal works in unison with the contact microphone set up (as in Figure 27). Oliveros used delay effects
as a *time machine*, collapsing past, present, and future in her storage, generation and anticipation of sounds improvisation. I am channelling the guitar pedal with the same expectations by producing special effects from kitchen objects.

![Figure 27: Drawing of a motherboard setup with a guitar pedal. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.](image)

Oliveros saw this as a way to use all electronic delays and, in using Max, a software program, to process the sound. This is seen in the following excerpt from Tara Rodgers’ book, *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound*, where she writes, “When she plays something in the present, then it’s delayed and comes back in the future. But when it comes back in the future, it’s dealing with the past, also playing again in the present, anticipating the future. That is also expanding time. It’s not about just one delay, it’s about a whole lot of them.”

The interface of playing a manual kitchen tool is much like playing analogue music but using a mechanical coding. A musical form and textual narrative unfold and transform through physical motions. Deconstructed further, live improvisation with the aid of a looped guitar pedal can reveal how sonic effects can be repeated: distortion, reverb, delay, and feedback repetitions take on new meanings as they enable human ears to examine the repeated sound more closely in a looped continuum. In turn, Oliveros explains the way in which the body reacts and knows when live improvisation is triggered by sound:

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the body responds and the brain takes a half-second delay in order to do something. The brain knows before you know consciously so there are potentials already a half-second before you do things, but the brain remembers it as the present which is a very interesting phenomenon. What it tells you is that the body knows what to do.\textsuperscript{145}

This intrinsic investment speaks very deeply to the development of deep listening techniques in understanding and trusting what you do. The participant is a controller of the embodied sonic interface, creating a mechanical system that the body adapts to in the rhythm of the apparatus. For example, in an industrial factory, workers listen to mechanical noises that are known to the ear and a vibrational body rhythmic feel is felt within the factory walls. Historically, these sound patterns promoted effective performance in the workplace. Today, many factory managers embrace radio music on shop floors, feeding the rhythm of work with the blaring sound from the radio.\textsuperscript{146} This is much like the song written by the musician and performer Grace Jones where she sings, \textit{we are all slaves to the rhythm}. In a Public Kitchen, it is possible for a sonic recipe to follow a rooted symbolism of sound that relationally associates chaos and rhythm with order in certain situations within a site-specific thematic.

Historically, the cultural association of loud industrial noise in patriarchal structures is looked upon with admiration in contributing to strength, progress and prosperity.\textsuperscript{147} Listening to machines is not a practice confined to factory life since kitchen noise has an interactive design aesthetic that values listening in order to understand the machine. An efficient kitchen appliance increases embodied interaction because we know that, when the motor purrs, it is likely to be running well. In a compact, modernised kitchen, a redesigned kitchen space reflects and expands fast-paced life, multi-tasking, and the tempo of contemporary life; in turn, I argue that mechanical sound in the kitchen workplace manifests a sensory relation with the hardware.

Now that many kitchen appliances are on the fast road to becoming digital, it is interesting to note that although we rely on the machine to manage and measure our time in the kitchen, we still \textit{listen to the machine}, welcoming its efficiency with a lending ear.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
To summarise, in a Public Kitchen, co-composing requires that participants listen and process sound patterns until the dynamic, pitch, and density is deeply entangled within the apparatus through intra-actions. It is a deeply-intertwined, noisy, collective moment that reflects Haraway’s description of the bodily apparatus:

What constitutes an apparatus of bodily production cannot be known in advance of engaging in the always messy projects of description, narration, intervention, inhabiting, conversing, exchanging and building. The point is to get to how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the process, in order to foster some forms of life and not others.\textsuperscript{148}

This dependency rests itself on many possible sonic interpretations and speaks to the indeterminate degree of posthuman agency, in which an individual participant immerses themselves in the performance work by asserting their own persona within this ritualistic context. The gestural hand elevates our collective human relationship to machines as the electronic interface transforms the sound from gestural movement to a shared articulation, articulated through transduction in collective sonic improvisation. The dynamics of improvisational creativity is entangled with this interface through electronic signals that are amplified through transduction. Helmreich states:

sound is a form of energy transmitted through a medium. Often that energy moves across or between media—from an antenna to a receiver, from an amplifier to an ear, from the light of air to the thickness of water. With such crossings, sound is transduced. A contact microphone is a transducer. And the human ear itself is best described as a transducer.\textsuperscript{149}

In this context, the gestural hand mediates the direction of sonic attention and performative response. Intra-actions unfold over time, propagating through shared signals in the moment of performance in which human engagement with the technological produces modes of human-machine agency, or getting lost in one another’s sound signals as modulations of \textit{diffraction} appear. This collective improvisation is an engendered approach to participatory listening in the sense that participants must closely attune themselves to the larger sound field in order to find their own intentional sonic gestures, as well as identify or coalesce the intention of the group sound. Therefore, listening is enacted by mapping both movement, sonic gestures, and mutual influence in the co-construction of a \textit{shared sound world}.

\textsuperscript{149}Stefan Helmreich, "Transduction," In \textit{Keywords in Sound}, (USA: Duke University Press, 2015), 222.
The contact microphone, as a device, listens for and responds with the gestural hand, as the participant presents many different instrumental sonic capacities that influence the transduction of sound. A sound recipe is shaped through the apparatus—time, dynamics, and the macro-qualities of a given performance group that is a free and open process. The participants move through the world as human performers who listen for and react to the consideration of musical meaning, designing a situation that shifts between intra-active material agency and resonant performative gesture in a Public Kitchen.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESONANCE IN A PUBLIC KITCHEN

“Drama is very important in life:
You have to come on with a bang. You never want to go out with a whimper.”

Julia Child to Jacques Pepin during Cooking in Concert TV series

AUDIOVISUAL KITCHEN TOOLS

TOOL 10: The Wire Scouring Pad

150 Julia Child and Jacques Pepin, Cooking in Concert, In PBS Food, ed. by PBS, (Boston University’s Tsai Performance Hall: PBS, 1996).
5.1 Resistance Through Noisy Resonance

In this chapter, I will expand on my creative process by reflecting on flows of noisy resonance in a Public Kitchen. Noisy resonance is emitted by a kitchen blender motor at high speed. Noisy resonance is tempered by a contact microphone that is played by its user, the participant. Noisy resonance oscillates at a vibration of larger amplitude produced by all participants playing a kitchen appliance in a sonic recipe. This causes reverberation, a noisy crescendo that fills the space of a Public Kitchen. Materially, it becomes a resonating system of vibrational bodies inclusive of a kitchen object’s interference patterns.

To be clear, resonance is one of the fundamental phenomena, not just of acoustics or science in general. Resonance is a factor entangled with intra-activity and diffraction in a Public Kitchen. I argue that it must always be understood relationally, as vibration that is already materialising between humans and non-humans in intra-action. This also raises an awareness of the complexities involved with diffractive paradoxes of difference revealed in sonic relations and my own affective politic. In turn, sound works its way to the forefront of contemporary sensory behaviour in user experience, by sculpting, shifting, and changing our perception of the kitchen environment in which the body labours to listen creatively. I argue that a Public Kitchen becomes an echo chamber of kitchen intensities that resonate amongst others, pushing thought towards its material forces of intra-actions to describe, as Manning states, “pure experience in the in-folding of potential that keeps actual experience open to its more-than.”

It is also important, to define resonance, scientifically, acoustically, as it occurs when a system preferentially vibrates at a certain frequency. This frequency is called resonant frequency, and the system will respond very strongly to any periodic force at that frequency. In turn, the exact frequencies at which objects resonate is largely determined by the object’s physical properties: its size, shape, and the materials that it is made out of. Many objects have resonant frequencies, and they are the source of many of the sounds we hear. When you tap on something, much of the sound

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you hear is the ringing of that object’s resonances and human bodies also respond through resonant frequency.¹⁵³

In posthuman discourse, to (arguably) most feminists, and in my practice, labour relations and ecological issues become more crucial to our survival every day: a form of resistance to these issues is the enabling of noisy resonance. A Public Kitchen takes affirmative action out into the streets as a form of noisy resonance. The kitchen object is relational in that it has the capacity to make felt how an object is already in a field of relation and tuning in through intra-action, intensities, and symbolic forces of resonance. In this research, I see sonic connections of shared affective and productive movement to understand new material physicalities, new emotional transformations, and new sonic relations with others and the world.

5.2 Resonance and Affect

Affect mingles with matter and resonance materially in the kitchen. Keeping in mind the artwork of Rosler, and the social-political linkage to the materialisation of the laboured body, I am always attuned to the modulation of the flow of affect with the human-non-human and its entanglement with resonance; it is especially emotive to power relations and affective politics. This also enhances my position on feminist genealogies in the apparatus.

Working on transnational participatory collaboration is a demanding process and commitment (as outlined in “Chapter Three: Drop Dead Live”). Feminist scholar and Professor in Theory of Cultural Enquiry Iris van der Tuin spoke in dialogue, saying that “Affect is always evolving from a new materialist perspective as language does not provide the answers but necessitates that things are always changing and unfolding as Quantum leaps are happening around us.”¹⁵⁴

In turn, teaching how to listen to sound through deep listening is a practice of unfolding possibilities. Creating a performative visual aesthetic within this immersive assemblage is also significant because I direct the participants to think of the social and political possibilities of connecting and being held together, not only with local consequences but also global empowerment.

The entanglement of bodies and the sound that is transmitted are foregrounded in a resonant system. In the immanent process, it becomes clear that, through this apparatus, sound phenomena materialises the immersion of human bodies and the non-human in a temporal flow of affecting and working through what is presented and who is present.\(^{155}\) It is through this sonic project that the material realises and holds political intent and invites participation in its possibility. I wish to show the political and emotive value in this way, in the sense of where the participant can make themselves count by being not reduced to just a laboured body. Human bodies and kitchen objects are to be heard in this resonant flow and are invited to contribute to the co-composition where socio-political agency becomes apparent.

Coming back once more to the role of resonance and affect, I argue that bodily gesture of an embodied or embedded kind is relational to a physical transfiguration, where resonance as an affect, or the “intensities” of movement and disposition, are vibrant matter.\(^{156}\) These intensities require a personal-prepersonal and conscious sense of investment and attachment that is affectively relational to both the human and nonhuman.\(^{157}\) My involvement in relational thought through investigations at the SenseLab at Concordia University in Montréal, coupled with the discourse of process philosophy that discusses the physics of being and the physics of becoming, is apparent throughout this thesis. For Massumi, according to Deleuze, affects are inhuman, pre-subjective, visceral forces and intensities that influence our thinking and judgments but are separate from them.\(^{158}\) What is important is to consider that affects must be noncognitive, corporeal processes or states. In short, I will not examine the entire scope of affect theory; rather I am analysing topics that influence my thinking around affect in my own practice, especially then and where they are relational to resonance. I follow the material turn in feminism to be an embodied and material event, an assemblage to talk about how sound can overlap and pair bodies with the gestural hand, reaching for other material phenomena.

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\(^{155}\) Being “present” to me is not about majority rule, nor is it a practice that indicates authority. It is an aesthetic and material project of connecting and inter-being that emerges from a situated perspective and temporality in community with the local, illuminating what we can do together rather than how to remain apart. It is not a utopian ideal but to practice and to live in the “live act,” intra-act, and agitate within the world. It also stems or emerges from my own personal politics.

\(^{156}\) Jane Bennett describes “vital materiality” as running through and across bodies, both human and nonhuman. Bennett explores how political analyses of public events might change were we to acknowledge that agency always emerges as the effect of ad hoc configurations of human and nonhuman forces. Jane Bennett, Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things, (Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 2009).


5.3 My Own Resonant Voice, My Own Resonant Politic

It is important to clarify that resonance is always also an exploration of my own sonic footprint, which unveils my personal habits, biases, preconceptions, power and/or marginality. I expose my performative self and therefore I am reframing myself through my own interbeing as a participant. Through this process, my own fragility is also unmasked and revealed. As a nomadic subject amongst others, it is not about recognition but rather about expression and the live actualisation of creating a *temporal slit* into feminist historicity made by resonance. This idea analyses the ways in which we create an historical present of otherness and sameness that intersects temporality as an asymmetrical set of power relations within feminist genealogies.\(^{159}\)

In my practice, this relation is not separate from the other but a common terrain that is complex and understandably uneven in a non-linear sense, making us apparent of the quantum asymmetry of our relationship with others. I am part of the work and my private experiences and life are inextricably imbedded within a Public Kitchen. My affective politic plays a particular role in finding my own resonant voice. As Norie Neumark states “What is also interesting for voice in these discussions and debates is the way—if we focus on the body when it is both personal and social—that ‘personal’ feelings and ‘social’ emotions are entangled and difficult to separate”\(^{160}\). In my practice, I use my live voice materially in a sonic recipe, belting out words in a political diatribe, not only speaking on behalf of the other but making my own claim in the world with the concrete sound of my own voice. It is through this affective politic that we stand together and negotiate what creates individual agency; it is also where we respond to the communal experience of being *all too human*, where we can be accountable for what makes a sound “noisy” as a shared rationality in a shared macrocosm.

And so, the idea of the participatory here is critical, where the human and non-human fuse to take on a positive and affirmative character as Braidotti would suggest.\(^{161}\) I contend that a participatory sonic performance work precipitates a complex assemblage of embedded and embodied thought where the psyche and body work in unison. Moreover, it is not mitigated from the outside to the inside of the body – it is already *in* the body and *in* the mind, released through active resonant forces.\(^{162}\) With each iteration, each participant is triggered by the vibrational sensation of sound that


rises to the surface through the mind-body. Affect, therefore, can be felt as sound that behaves as active matter—to listen and absorb sound material deeply, as activated through the playing of kitchen objects, as it triggers movement felt in the transmission within and between bodies. It is an affective politic to enact the potential of sound as a possibility and purpose that includes emotions making social-political agency apparent.

5.4 The Noisy Resonant Scouring Pad

Contact microphones and electronic media move in the mind, through the body and through things as resonance is heightened. As Manning often characterises, to develop into something more than movement “It is out of time, untimely, rhythmically inventing its own pulse.” Thus, a Public Kitchen makes the sound material that is emitted from kitchen objects a new materialist way of listening and behaving, not in the world but of the resonant world. Feminist artist and curator Lucy Lippard maintains that conceptualists indicated that the most exciting “art” might still be buried in social energies not yet recognised as art. In my practice, a field of resonance is important to me in the material discursive and the transversal. Resonance strikes a chord in a Public Kitchen in the act of reclaiming thought or sound which is important for feminism and new materialism, as it challenges concepts of art, everyday life, work, and value for individuals, women, and communities in the global environment.

This is the sound of a scouring pad (Hyperlink ELEVEN). A heavy-duty scouring pad made with fibres of stainless steel that is used in the kitchen as an abrasive scrubbing implement. In a Public Kitchen, a scouring pad has the capacity to create noisy resonance through sonic interference patterns caused by the friction that is created by the contact microphone being agitated, moved in a rubbing motion. Hands cup the scouring pad and the contact microphone together. The scouring pad intra-acts with the human-non-human as the contact microphone is embedded into the fibrous mesh of the steely pad which is now encased into the cavernous hands of the user. By listening carefully to the sound, the fibrous steel mesh sounds similar to radio frequency interference patterns that are produced by the conduction of radio frequency energy. This energy is caused by an electronic or electrical device that typically interferes with the function of an adjacent device causing feedback or distortion. The

scouring pad has disrupted and disturbed the contact microphone, creating a noisy resonant frequency in its intra-action.

I argue my art and social work forms a rupture, a collapse in the everyday, making semiotic codes permissible in the performing (the doing-cooking with kitchen tools) in the kitchen. The sound patterns that are produced cause a deliberate tension in the work as live art. Tension moves into the sound making, not as a climate of normalcy, but to explore more of what is missing: to re-arrange gaps in a sonic reworking of power relations. I am examining the potentialities that revolve around the modality of performing or re-performing with active, agential, and affective-affected matter, such as kitchen objects, brought to life with a contact microphone as a transversal connective experience expressing something that is more than itself—the minor gesture. Manning proposes that a minor key works to create a field of resonance for the minor. It does so through the concept of the minor gesture in choreographic movement.

In new materialist thinking, resonance can replace the binaries of structuralist thought through shedding new light on contemporary debates between sound, aurality, cognition, subjectivity, and embodiment. I argue that resonance can dissolve the binary of the materiality of things (human-non-human) and compels us to call into question that something material, such as resonance, must therefore situate itself as a form of resounding together in the discourse of feminist new materialism, post-humanism, and other immersive participatory practices important to this research.

5.5 Put on Your Rubber Gloves, It’s Time to Take Out the Rubbish!

In a Public Kitchen, collective performative action and the laboured body of the homemaker are directly linked to the posthuman interconnection with this planet and feminist elbow grease—an idiom for working hard via manual labour. Vital matter, such utilitarian yellow rubber gloves, take into account affirmative action, causing resonance, reverberating in their materiality. This mirrors a situated perspective of fixed meals, steadfast food preparation, anchored cleaning and sorting, taking out the garbage, and recycling as a continual development and re-working in one’s domestic life. To me, this mechanised body language releases a psychological extension of the needs of the interior self to equate a sense of order, and these attributes are realised in a Public Kitchen iteration.

166 Ibid, 127.
167 Aurality means related to ears or the sense of hearing. It’s important to distinguish aurality from auditory. Auditory refers to sound or the sense of hearing, but not the ears themselves.
Rubber kitchen gloves are utilitarian phenomenon. They are a key material in activating resonance in a Public Kitchen. In Figure 2, participants are asked to follow directions on how to use these gloves in a collective choreography. This particular snapshot took place in Hobart, Australia, as part of a Public Kitchen project that I choreographed as “a pots and pans procession” along the harbour front. Participants are asked to pull/stretch the four rubber fingers that protect the hand (excluding the thumb), and snap the fingers of each finger sleeve in repetition, throwing the gloves out into public space in solidarity.

Figure 2: A “pots and pans” procession along the harbour front in Hobart, Tasmania, as part of a Public Kitchen. Sponsored by MONA and the University of Tasmania. 2016. Photo credit: Sze Yun

Rubber gloves are put on to take care of the smell of dirty diapers, rotting garbage, dirty water, rotting food—all form and flow from home—and in this way they are deeply connected to the materials in the kitchen and how kitchen tools are utilised to manage materials. We put rubber kitchen gloves on to take care of our daily maintenance tasks and they can be re-used, re-purposed, and re-worked. Kitchen rubber gloves are durable in a sonic performance art work in that the gestural hand is protected; however, when repositioned, they can violently snap back at you. They make sound when animated. Since they are made

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368 This project was sponsored by MONA and the University of Tasmania, April 2016.
of rubber material, they can be exaggerated visually and sonically by stretching and blowing them up to resemble bulging cow udders. Ultimately, they can be activated in a myriad of ways as matter that can be exploited, reused, and repurposed in a Public Kitchen artwork.

French artist Marcel Duchamp’s conceptual idea of the *readymade* ushered in the understanding that the artwork was not only materially inextricable from its support (here, realised as the social conditions that designated an object as an object of art) but further articulated its existence, and, by extension, the existence of all aesthetics as a form of social contract.  

In Figure 29, Sonic Electric begin a sonic recipe with a kitchen glove routine. This routine is carried over from a technique that W.W.K.A. used in Montréal, Canada.

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From this research, I see a multi-sensorial and agential approach to understanding matter that is abject—the unneeded, the refuse, the unwanted surplus and economics of human and posthuman life—that has the potential to be resourcefully recycled, reconstituted, or transformed; where spaces and identities are colliding with environmental global spheres of human action and sustainability. These rubber gloves transcend those ideas in their visual aesthetic and potentiality. Through a feminist new materialist lens, what matters about matter in the world maps a system operation that sustains life. This approach to material matters brings urgency and philosophical proximity through the resonance of matter and, in creating resonance, is relational to the activities of the laboured body and beyond.170

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My artistic practice resembles the choreography of the laboured body moving out of the domestic sphere to permeate active alternatives on issues of maintenance, freedom, and political subjectivity challenging urban environmental ecology. To put on rubber gloves stresses the complex materiality of a feminist body immersed in social relations of power. It is a powerful performative and sonic activation.

To some, rubbish is warranted as worthless material that is to be disposed of. Rubbish or garbage is *undesirable material clutter*, remainders and remnants of modern life that rests in the abject. Rubbish is the material reality of our everyday and those who choose to work with it. How do we account for all the *stuff of life* that gets thrown out? A feminist materialist approach to this question lies in the laboured body that is connected to this material, conveying agential matter even on a molecular level to the human-post-human condition in as much as direct physical participation with it. In Karin Bijsterveld’s engaging account of modern noise, *Mechanical Sound* (2008), Bijsterveld reveals the degree to which the home features as a dramatic stage for auditory conflicts.171

Artist and writer Brandon Labelle suggests a sense of auditory clarity, where *order* is equated with quiet, and the maintenance of domestic life with audible regulation.172 In a Public Kitchen, the home is also where the tensions between comfort and disruption are put into play: the balance of domestic life and domestic turbulence, for example, when the sound of the VitaMix kitchen blender changes the tranquillity of a peaceful home. The ebbs and flow of everything that is resonant is hidden just under the skin—an inflection or variation is where a sonic recipe is triggered.

The kitchen is then an extremely sensitive construct where the self and sound create new sonorities and forms of connectivity. The medium of sound brings out many of the conditions of the modern kitchen through the practice of listening. One senses the complexity and dynamics of kitchen noise reveal itself in different ways. Listening closely allows us to feel or experience topologies of sonic material which brighten tones, harmonies, and dissonances that vibrate at the same time. In the process, a pulsating cultural material fabric is *resounded, rebounded, reverberated*— resonating through the participant. These sonic patterns can emerge with abandoned, suppressed, or almost erased stories. Some narratives are filled with new meaning or concepts that become a dynamic part of the sonic flow of translation, transduction, and transformation through kitchen habits.

To do work is an activity directed toward making or doing something that is conventionally thought of as a productive activity, whereas labour is actualising a form of power relations that accomplishes it. Doing work as a performative action, a daily process, reveals one’s implication in it. From the private and domestic sphere, it creates a two-fold connection of a woman’s economic and social hardship as well as personal accomplishment. In my practice, a Public Kitchen is performed in a histrionic theatrical style with a noisy political and feminist overture.

5.6 Manifesto for Maintenance Art (1969) Proposal for an Exhibition “CARE” to now!

In art school, I learned that rules are made to be twisted, mocked and overturned, and that manifestos are vehicles of change, especially for feminists in a patriarchal system. In March 2018, I performed/read, in a form of spoken word, the hand-written manifesto exhibition proposal to a New York gallerist by American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles titled Manifesto for Maintenance Art (1969)! Proposal for an Exhibition “CARE”.¹⁷³

As I read this seminal text to a listening public, my performative stance required that I put on a face that was fearless, daring, with no room for moderation in its delivery. One has to think in slogans and catchphrases, in a way similar to how sonic patterns in a sonic recipe are expressed in a Public Kitchen. In a public view, the spectacle is meant to be disturbing, engrossing. A literary manifesto conveys meaning that is rather aggressive, pushy, humourless, imposing its will on the reader by rhetorical force. In a feminist gathering of other like-minded artists, it delivers a punch that is anti-authoritarian and free-spirited. It questions everything, except itself. It resonates. It was the poet-dandy and Futurist Filippo Marinetti who called himself the “caffeine of Europe,” who would “set fire to the library shelves” and “flood the museums,” or to hold Futurist banquets where guests dressed in “tactile pyjamas” made of cork, sandpaper, velvet, and other materials while eating “polyrhythmic salad” and “magic food.”¹⁷⁴ Reading Ukeles’ manifesto, I was empowered as a feminist because I felt the words on the page to re-configure matter and what matters.

In my understanding of this manifesto, the real message is not the rules Ukeles tried to impose. It is the idea that we should challenge and create new rules providing an idea of freedom and autonomy that enables a dialectical material relation to reality as a form of material resistance and resonance.

¹⁷³ Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition Care, ed. by Inc. Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, (New York, 1969). This event was held in the courtyard of ACCA (Australian Centre for Contemporary Art) in Melbourne for the “Feminist Colour-In” event organised by Dr Katve Kaisa Konturi and Dr Kim Donaldson of the University of Melbourne as part of the exhibition, Unfinished Business: Perspectives on Art and Feminism.

Ukeles’s personal frustration with enacting “Maintenance Art” could be thought to be obsessive, claustraphobic, a symptom of mad-housewife syndrome, and controlling in a dark display of what is disturbing in life. I argue that in this entanglement, where we materialise the world, reminds us of an ongoing, indeterminate relationship with material human-non-human conditions that are never finished or resolved; its resonant substance vibrating on a very molecular level as it finds its way into the world. This very text is now integrated into a Public Kitchen and was performed as a spoken word piece in the final exhibition in April 2019.

Most participants of a Public Kitchen affirm that the experience is empowering, and that their immersion is moving, affirmative, and gratifying. I propose, as Child proclaimed on live TV in the cooking class series, *Cooking in Concert*, that performing cooking is akin to a *manifesto*. It should “come on with a bang,” as the bang of a hammer/meat-tenderiser; it should be visionary, dramatic, sensational or thrilling in effect. A Public Kitchen should be a space where you share your intention, opinion or stance about what you wish to create. I argue that a manifesto is an extension of the self, channelling resonant forces.

This brings my attention to the way in which commercial kitchens are managed by head chefs, who give out instructions to kitchen staff in order to follow food orders that come in from restaurant guests. As reality television personality Gordon Ramsay is a celebrity chef known for his fiery temper, strict demeaner, and use of de-basing misogynistic expletives, he often makes blunt and controversial comments, including insults and wisecracks about contestants and their cooking abilities. His failure is in his mocking of contestants, in a downright misogynist manner, using dominant behaviour of patriarchal culture, devoid of empathy. Failure is something that usually breeds success by the very fact that it is relevant to how we evolve and progress. It is not gendered; it is not ruthless. It is part of life and part of a sonic recipe in a Public Kitchen. This begs the question, what does it mean to "fail" in performance? In the book *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure* by Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies, Sara Jane Bailes, failure in performance is considered a hopeful strategy. Bailes addresses accepted narratives about artistic and cultural value in contemporary performance art and draws on the accidental and the intentionally amateur that challenge our perception of skill and virtuosity in such diverse modes of performance as slapstick and punk. All of these attributes move from failure to the moment of empowerment in a Public Kitchen.

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175 This idea mirrors the “Public Kitchen Manifesto” that is prefaced at the start of this thesis.
5.7 From Failure to Empowerment

Ukeles writes in her exhibition proposal, *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition “CARE,”* that “Maintenance is a drag.” Here she confirms that maintenance is unglamorous, tedious, hard work and economically underestimated. In a not-so perfect world, something is always breaking, wearing down, getting dirty or falling apart. In performance, this lopsidedness and inequality is transmitted as an embedded and entangled process of coming into, working through, being formed by, and forming something into a sound recipe—a set of sound patterns created by participants. The unevenness of this process in sound and noise art is relevant to how the participants are almost failing at getting the object to make a sound or trying to change how the object is rendered mute/useless in its repositioning. Then suddenly, in performance, this lopsidedness and inequality is transmitted as an embedded and entangled process of coming into, working through, being formed by, and forming something into a sound recipe—a set of sound patterns created by participants. The unevenness of this process in sound and noise art is relevant to how the participants are almost failing at getting the object to make a sound or trying to change how the object can be rendered mute/useless in its repositioning. The sound, as physical phenomenon, is transduced into an excited state, becoming dynamic as it is electrified, as contact is made with an electronic contact microphone. When the contact microphone is removed or disconnected, the object returns to its static self again.

This is a complex relationship where human, non-human, and so many natural, social, political, and cultural factors are forces that resonate in the entangled processes of materialisation. Surely “failure” is recognised as agential forces that activate an acknowledgement of nature, the body, and materiality in matters of uncertainty? Indeterminacy within the intra-action? This failure slippage plays simultaneously into the timeline where indeterminacy of position and momentum in the sonic compositional arrangement manifests a communication breakdown. It appears within each diffractive reading as a disconnect, or simply the object responding in an auditory relation as if it is being agitated in the failure to produce a resonance or keep going or fade away.

I would shape this disruptive mode of engagement in consciousness and thought as creating resonant agitation with kitchen objects in the radical potential of the political. Agitation is defined by a discomposure or disturbance that is transmitted through resonance, such as through the delivery of a feminist manifesto. To me, agitating space with sound and noise art demands a new way

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of understanding participatory practice, audience perception, and difference in manners of expression and modes of experience. In a Public Kitchen, intra-actions speak to the particularities of a field of forces that we become entangled in—a field of resonance that overturns patriarchal culture, not through misogynistic expletives, but as complex reverberation of agential entanglements of intra-acting humans and non-human practices, inclusive of everyone. It gives a voice to the invisible women caught up in the domestic space. It plays out as a social awakening of intensities that strike a resonant chord in women’s lives.
CHAPTER SIX: THE IMPORTANCE OF SOMATIC MOVEMENT IN A PUBLIC KITCHEN

AUDIOVISUAL KITCHEN TOOLS

TOOL 11: Hand Gestures: Meshes of the Afternoon, performative hand gestures, filmed in Blanca, Murcia, Spain. Centro Negra AADK Residency, August 2017

Tool 12: The Design Aesthetics and History of the Mortar and Pestle through Pilar, Blanca, Murcia, Spain.

Tool 2017

TOOL 13: The Doing-Cooking of a Spanish Mortar and Pestle

TOOL 14: The Egg Slicer

TOOL 15: The Hand Whisk (Acoustic vs Electric)

TOOL 16: The Meat Slicer

TOOL 17: The Electric Blender
6.1 The Gestural Hand

In this chapter, the affective gestural hand (of the participant) takes centre stage, moving in a multitude of extended somatic variations while creating sound patterns with a kitchen tool or appliance in a Public Kitchen. The gestural hand encompasses the active kinetic motion of food preparation skills in the kitchen, always emerging in relation to the laboured body in performance, and constantly keeping a firm hold on the kitchen tool by thinking, feeling, observing, listening, and bringing attention to the event that is a Public Kitchen.

Schizo-somatics is a speculative-pragmatic study and series of workshops led by the SenseLab/3 Ecologies Institute in Montréal, Canada, investigating modes of experience through the schiz: a cut or interval within movement. If somatics is considered a kinetic plane of affective swarming of experience that includes the body, then I would argue that the movement of the gestural hand in a Public Kitchen is acutely related to the interdependent relation of body techniques that emerges out of intra-actions in our social world. To be clear, a Public Kitchen emerges from the intra-actions within a group of participants, or between individuals, in response to the local environment. I am making relational the implication that sociality and social structure are naturally responsive and affective in a Public Kitchen through somatic movement patterns and with purpose (as in Figure 30).

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178 The video work Hand Gestures: Meshes of the Afternoon was shot while on an international residency at Centro Negra AADK, Blanca, Murcia, Spain, in 2017 while conducting field work. It is a musing on somatic movement and the "doing-cooking" projected over a Paella pan that is installed on the wall as an exhibition work.

179 In this chapter, please refer to the hyperlinks listed on the title page. A page on my personal web site has been created to listen to kitchen sounds from various kitchen tools and appliances with the following link: http://cargocollective.com/julianaespanakeller/SOUND-BYTES-THESIS-CHAPTERS

180 I became involved with somatic practices after taking part in a collaborative workshop series as a visiting scholar at the SenseLab in Montreal, Canada (June – September 2018). This workshop examined where the schizoaanalytic and somatic practices intersect. Inspired by Erin Manning’s pragmatic approach to research creation and Brian Massumi’s book, What Animals Teach us About Politics (2014).

181 The concept of “swarming” is predominantly a biological concept and its roots are to be found in the study of ethology (animal behaviour). It can be traced back to 19th century in the study of natural science: For example, the behaviour of insects or birds, the non-human. Eugene Thacker, “Networks, Swarms, Multitudes (Part Two),” C Theory (2004): 5-18.
Somatic practices use your internal awareness through *proprioception* (the perception or awareness of the position and movement of the body), *interoception* (a sense of the internal state of the body), *kinesthetic awareness* (muscle memory) etc., to bring unknown parts of yourself and your experience into the known. Somatic learning makes the unconscious conscious and, in the process, leaves you with more options for moving, acting, thinking, and living. It maximises not just your physical body but your full human potential.182 This is not to be confused with, but is intra-related to, *deep listening* (as discussed through the work of Oliveros in “Chapter Four: Co-composing the Sonic Interface of a Noisy Kitchen Through the Apparatus ”).

I argue that active participants of a Public Kitchen form a material part of a collaboratively embodied part of kitchen culture. The conceptual idea that I propose can be re-purposed, as Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Art, Nathaniel Stern specifies, when “we collaboratively make the societies we interact in, as we are acting in them.”183 Stern states that “in that they are reliant on one’s another’s formation: per-formed.”184

6.2 Natureculture in the Space of the Kitchen

As an artist, a Public Kitchen is embedded in a reworking of cultural materials and vital knowledge of the kitchen by moving through the world as a *private citizen* of the everyday. The fieldwork for this thesis project has moved me towards re-examining the laboured body in the kitchen, historically and physically. This is especially apparent in the human manual assembly line of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th and 19th centuries, which was brought about by the introduction of machinery, steam power, the growth of factories, and the mass production of manufactured goods.185 These monumental changes have influenced society broadly by how laboured movement is interpreted today in commercial kitchens, fast food counters, and food processing. Metaphorically, the way that participants of a Public Kitchen are lined up along trestle tables facing the audience creates this sense of the factory assembly line and the quest for efficiency, speed, and tempo in the live enactment.

It is important to note here that, in a Public Kitchen, food preparation is also relational to *natureculture*: a synthesis of nature and culture that recognises their inseparability in ecological, posthuman relationships that are both biophysically and socially formed.

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183 Ibid. p. 150.
In a Public Kitchen, food material is not directly prepared but indirectly heightens the discourse of natureculture and the hierarchy of humans over nature, sometimes to the point of exempting humans from basic physical properties and laws of nature. Haraway has argued that the biocultural nature of human beings is where sociocultural context and experience interact with biology to shape one another, as well as recognise the importance of social and ecological construction for humans and other organisms.\(^{186}\)

I have referred to this aspect of materiality in my discussion around the use of yellow utilitarian rubber gloves in a Public Kitchen performance. Another example of this particular scrutiny would be that laboured food production, which leads to food preparation, is valued as part of a supply and demand system. I would argue that food preparation/production can be best observed as a swarming experience of laboured movement. It begins locally in a small farmers’ market where workers who originate from the field tend to the actual crops. Food preparation in a commercial high-end restaurant kitchen operates in a similar way. This movement of labour involves from the ground-up knowledge on how the food is tended to. The selling and handling of food in local communities is also directly linked to the consumer in a public space, forcing the consumer to be more attuned to nature and how food is ultimately handled when sourced from a small market like the one mentioned. However, on the other side of the spectrum, the food industry handles and prepares food for mass consumption, exposing the process of change from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by economics, machine manufacturing, and a food packaging system. Home economics is largely lost in the modern kitchen due to modernity. The food we ultimately prepare at home comes, for the most part, from the supermarket where it is placed behind plastic film, perhaps sitting in a sterile Styrofoam container for a number of days, already cut up for us. Pre-diced, pre-sliced, and re-arranged in a stacking order—the abstracted representation of workers hands is reflected in this modern packaging but is tempered down to a standardised corporate sticker identification in the supermarket.

One recognises those little stickers that mark every fruit and vegetable identifying where it comes from. It stamps the mind with a vision of the invisible laboured body from Karl Marx’s Das Kapital (1867) and Marinetti’s Futurist Art Manifesto-Manifesto del Futurismo (1909), as well as recalling the relation to the visual aesthetics of speed, precision and power of human modernity.\(^{187}\) Literary texts and workers’ manifestos emphasise the laboured body engaged with technological advancement and the fulfillment of a job “well done,” but this is too far removed from our actual relationship in this


complex interface and interplay between biophysical and social elements. In a Public Kitchen, I think through the multilayered, socio-ecological relationships that form systems.

This is particularly important as we continue to construct more complex, globalised, ecological relationships with natureculture in the space of the kitchen— all considerations in a Public Kitchen framework.

6.3 New Bodies in Motion

In my practice, the gestural hand of the *implicit body* brings to the forefront the personal space in the posthuman world around us. It is induced through somatic movement. And through this paradigm, in the future, the posthuman will create new bodies in motion, capable of constructing new forms of community building, food sustainability, experimenting with new modes of being, using robotics and AI instead of the steady assembly line of workers’ own hands. Relationally, the kitchen object will ultimately become an extension of the human body, as I referred to it in “Chapter One: Intra-actions of the Laboured Body.” Conceptually, a Public Kitchen, is, I argue, viewed as an extension of the kinds of posthuman we are already in the process of becoming. Braidotti states:

> The body or the embodiment of the subject is to be understood as neither a biological nor a sociological category, but rather as a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic and the sociological.... It can transcend variables such as class, race, sex, gender age, disability which structure us. It rests on a post-identitarian view of what constitutes a subject.\(^\text{189}\)

In my view, a focus on subjectivity is necessary because this notion enables us to reveal the complexity of issues with *norms and values* that are forms of community bonding and social belonging that both assume and require a notion of the subject—the participants—in this research project. In a Public Kitchen, it is vital to understand how the gestural hand activates the way in which human experience comes into expression with the non-human, to articulate what can bodies do. What is critical is the nomadic vision of the body as multi-functional in its complexity, performing in a work of cultural construction. Participants are entangled within a performance site, and understand the performative immersive experience, encompassing the research. Their hands do the work. Their hands move

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somatically. Their hands move in unison. In a Public Kitchen, the interplay of highly constructed social symbolic forces can be described as layered into a postmodern-postindustrial-postcolonial mix-up, depending on one’s location in relation to the subject. For example, a Thai rice steamer is a tall, rounded tin vessel in the shape of a large-necked vase that is used, traditionally, to cook sticky rice in Asian cooking, and it can be adapted to sound like a speaker because of its bulbous vacuous shape. The steamer is filled with a cup of large pink coarse salt and a participant picks up a Chinese bamboo brush, which is an implement usually used to clean a Chinese wok under hot water. Participants stir the coarse salt inside the steamer vessel to create the same vigorous, circular movements as if using a French whisk. The sound emerges, relationally, as a textural, grinding overture, amplified acoustically by the shape of the steamer, producing a divide in material agency. The focus here is always on developing, on making, doing, becoming, and moving through the world in the entanglement. The salt that is used in the performance comes from the Himalayas, the steamer from Thailand—a bridging of two geographical locations materially, diffused into the atmosphere, alchemically dispersed through sonic improvisation of the human-non-human bond in time-space-mattering.

From a new materialist perspective, change comes from within as an embodied act. This research project includes a diffractive study of the structures, forms, or patterns of humans intra-acting with kitchen objects and how that is articulated. I argue that atonal sonic material produced in a noisy composition makes emotionally explicit what is implicit in people’s beliefs, action, and somatic gestures. Thus, each sonic recipe is unique in its unfolding and affective capability, in the entanglement of subject-object in all its complexity. The old orange squeezer appliance found in the op-shop has entangled itself with many humans, lifestyles, spaces, and experiences. These forces simmering under the flow of causality in spacetimemattering, waiting to be re-performed with each new user/participant. Australian lecturer, writer and artist Andrew Goodman states that “With each step – and within each step (while walking) – perceptual, sensorial and social possibilities are opened up, assemblages of forces gathered, altered and reconnected, complexities multiplied, memories activated. The moment is saturated with affectual relations and intensities.”190 This is effectively, I would argue, what takes place in a Public Kitchen. Thus, each sonic recipe is unique in its unfolding and affective capability in the somatic entanglement of subject and object.

6.4 How Sonic Recipes are Made Noisy

During fieldwork in Spain, the gestural hand was rooted in culinary rituals of family and social tradition seen from the perspective of the Spanish matriarch. A Spanish woman, Pilar, from Blanca, Spain, demonstrates the timeless act of crushing garlic in a clay mortero. In the video work, The Mortar and Pestle (click on Hyperlink FIVE), Pilar, who owns a florist and local ceramics shop, explains that, in her opinion, the proper way to crush garlic should be used in a very plain deeper ceramic vessel. A ceramic mortero is traditionally hand-formed with a separate flat base, rather than the yellow ceramic wider model sold in every market. This design originates from a commercial mould. The deeper or flatter the ceramic vessel base is (versus a rounded form), the easier it is for the pestle to get the job done accurately. A circular base design causes the garlic to fly out of the mortar when pounding it, rendering it useless. The commercial yellow ceramic mortar is available widely on display in every tourist shop. Here we are invited to insert ourselves into a situated knowledge that is crucial, creating a relationship between the personal and the collective, validating authentic traditional kitchen tool knowledge around doing-cooking and the design aesthetic. Pilar is resolute in her demonstration. In the book Learning to Love You More—a project initiated in 2002 by artists Harrell Fletcher and Miranda July—it is maintained that “our most joyful and even profound experiences often come when we are following other people’s instructions.” This idea mirrors a Fluxus tradition, where subjective expressions of art and life within the everyday come to the forefront, rejecting the confrontation of neo-capitalist production and consumption as a material reality. The force and intensities of things—like the process of baking bread—is sensuous and nurtures both the mind and body. This doing and making requires a thoughtful and spiritual approach where intra-acting is about connection, using hands, touch, smell, taste, sight are the focus on making, baking, where cooking is felt and is a combination of passion, patience, dedication, and craftmanship. In making bread, some of these elements have been largely lost in the drive to make bread commercially. The best bakers do not just blindly follow a recipe. They use their senses. But before you can do this, you need to become familiar with the process to the point where it becomes instinctive and second nature.

A hand-fashioned wooden mallet is handled with precision to crush garlic with a pinch of salt (a crushing agent) until it reaches the desired consistency. The repeated gestural technique of the arm

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191 A “mortero” translated into English is a “vessel” or a “mortar and pestle”.
192 This video footage was captured and recorded in field work in Blanca, Murcia, Spain while residing at Centro Negra AADK in August 2017. Centro Negra is an International Artist Residency.
holding a wooden mallet in one hand, bracing the ceramic or wooden vessel to the work surface in the other, requires hand-eye coordination, timing, and precision.

The pounding sound that oscillates between agency and tradition creates deliberate poly-rhythms amongst other kitchen tools, pulsing with sonic force, demonstrating how matter makes itself felt in a sonic flow of desire. In the repetitive doing-cooking of the everyday, the pestle is used to break down bulbous garlic cloves with the affective desire of releasing a sensorial odour through its application. In the Public Kitchen, the pestle intra-acts to produce sound as the participant applies a gestural hand in a public kitchen to create noisy urgency and exert physical presence with each pounding sonic beat (click on Hyperlink SIX). The pungency of smashed garlic is non-representational because the participant replaces food material with sonic material intra-actively. It is constantly shapeshifting in a quantum way. In the Public Kitchen, the gestural hand of the participants repositions the traditional kitchen object, making it anew with sonic material, transformed as it emerges in the entanglement with dense textures, rhythmic structures, and hollow grinding tones. Part of the logic of a Public Kitchen is that the kitchen instrument, in the transformation, has to be listened to carefully. This listening occupies the counterpoint for a moment, travelling between the fluxes of natureculture, mattermind, and the somatic in-between of that interval.

*Figure 31: Las Atrevidas, Blanca, Murcia, Spain. A wooden mortar and pestle with a flat base brought in by Leanor from her own kitchen. 2018. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.*
In Figure 31, a participant of Las Atrevidas from Blanca, Spain, shows off her prize possession: the wooden mortar and pestle with a flat base. Las Atrevidas are a group of senior women that meet once a week in the small village of Blanca at the local multi-cultural centre. They have known each other since childhood. Their name, “Las Atrevidas,” translates to “The Risk-Takers,” and they weave their personal histories into theatre, dance, voice, and performance art, embracing the power, vibrancy, and enchantment of becoming. Through observations of Las Atrevidas, their gestural hands encompass a vast range of dexterous and ambidextrous hand gestures moving through culinary space. Kitchen tools necessitate an acquired ability—a controlled measurement of effort in mind and body. Leonor’s gestural hand is meditative, delicate, controlled, light, physically stimulating, momentous, graceful, timid, endless, indeterminate. Gestural hands can also be unruly, heavy, fickle, clumsy, fearless, nervous when observed in their attunement to a kitchen environment in pivotal moments, amplifying the sounds that they create in unison with others.

In a sonic performance iteration in 2015 and 2017, a Spanish woman who is the kitchen matriarch of her domain in Blanca, Spain, takes pride in every recipe, culinary technique and domestic ritual in the kitchen for most of their lives. In the act of doing-cooking there are failures in the kitchen because of a lack of kitchen skills. For some people, cooking skills are more of a burden than an artform even where cooking is significant to most family and community life—this skill can be directly connected to undesired labour. I therefore characterise failure in the kitchen as mirroring the unspectacular boredom of the reality of working conditions for the ordinary citizen. Vision, technical skills, and manual dexterity are all embedded in the laws of physics for the participant. In sonic performance, a good dose of indeterminacy, dead pan humour, and sloppy forms of kitchen technique actually lead to uncovering who is the expert and who is the amateur. Boredom, anxiety, and the terror of robots replacing human error in future economies is only a slice of the phenomena unleashed in a sonic recipe. The live performance questions what is expected of participation. This implies a tendency toward the idea of disorder, whereby the work as performance shows how all technical skills warp, unpredictably, under the force of play.

In field work with a group of Spanish women in 2015 and 2017, there was clearly an awareness of the agency between humans and objects, demonstrated by the differences in their neighbours’ ways of doing things in the kitchen. Good household management restates an evolving sense of self identity and family power relations which captures the complicated human realities of living as a form of personal/professional experience. In fact, I had presumed that Spanish women from Blanca would prefer hand tools to machine technology in the doing-cooking, but that was not always the
case. It appears that some of the small electric blenders, spice mills, or hand mixers with whisk attachments help them more efficiently now that they are older and not as dexterous as they used to be. Micro-decisions by Spanish women on whether to grate with a metal hand grater, or cut Spanish tomatoes with a serrated knife for a typical Spanish breakfast of “pan tostado con tomate” (translated as “toast with tomato”), provides sensory information that can emphasise one’s personal reputation; this mirrors the larger community by accentuating the myriad ways of ritual transmission of knowledge. Observations from various field work indicate that gestural hand techniques in a Public Kitchen are shaped from kinetic movement that stems from a home-grown-handed-down technique rather than from the click, turn, touch push button or sensor pad of a speedy electric kitchen appliance, which is by far easier to activate. Las Atrevidas are so familiar with their tools that their gestural reach is a controlled expression of mechanic precision. With years of everyday practice, food is life and life is food in synchronicity.

In a Public Kitchen, the experience of watching women perform in such trite conditions of daily existence makes critical how performers and audience are not ultimately seduced by visual representation only, but by the way that the sound is redirected as part of the nomadic event expressed by agency. This is where women are taking over the repressed visual representations made of themselves and re-directing their urgency to the audience in the form of controlled aggression with a distinct kitchen inventory.

6.5 The Somatic Concept at Play

In my experience of creating Public Kitchens, I consider the somatic movement or expanded position of the hands, arms, torso, and head as more than just the doing-cooking as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. A somatic concept addresses how expressive physical reactions such as the movement to the motherboard at the start of the performance, to the impulse of contact with a kitchen object, and the impression or sentiment, is activated in transfiguration. For example, a participant holding a metal meat tenderiser/hammer above one’s head in order to come down with such physical force (to tenderise meat that is actually not there) can indicate, for an instance, a virtual

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194 I am recalling here the first paragraph on how the performers arrive at the motherboard with an uncanny dance movement in the Introduction. This critical narrative is described conceptually and deconstructed on page 3: Starting from the Middle. Their self/bodies move through the space, shifting into various somatic positions on the floor, against the wall, with each other. The figure/ground choreographic relation between the human and this historical place dissolves as the outline of the human is traversed by substantial material intra-changes; the prelude of oneself as transcendent, generated through and entangled with other systems, processes and events. Their shiny bodies cannot resist the allure of shiny objects waiting on the motherboard, considering the effects they have, from manufacture to disposability, while reckoning with the strange agencies that intra-connect substance, flesh and place on a deep molecular level.
flash of a street protestor with a clenched fist in the air. A performative pull and twist of utilitarian rubber gloves being wrenched from gestural hands working affectively, socially, as a job well done.

As expressed through the understanding of feminicity, most participants of a Public Kitchen are lively social beings and, in formation, their gestures are performed in a limitless cartography of techniques that are sometimes recognisable or can change their modality and effectiveness with unusual dexterity when re-positioned in the moment. In the visual-spatial constellation of the kitchen unfolds the dynamics of everyday life as a form of human-non-human bonding. Our relationship with these objects communicates that which is a constant state of unfolding and becoming. In the performances, the gestural hand uses hand kitchen tools and electronic appliances to amplify loud, industrial noise in a sonic recipe. This is often different from how they are meant to be used: commercial designs aim at enabling the user to achieve their objective(s) in the best way possible.

The collective choreography of a Public Kitchen, however, generates a multivalent overlay of sound-noise into a sonic recipe of deep listening and physical entanglement. Participants of Sonic Electric in Melbourne, and other Public Kitchens, are paired together behind tables forming an assembly line, re-doing and re-working the material through configurings of indeterminacy and spacetimemattering. Indeterminacy is a composing approach in which some aspects of a musical work are left open to chance or to the interpreter's free choice. Cage, a pioneer of indeterminacy, defined it as the ability of a piece of music to be performed in substantially different ways. Spacetimemattering can be seen as embellishing the past, present, and future, re-working temporality found in non-discursive forms, in material that matters (referring to Barad). It is also important here to name feminicity in feminist posthumanities as a mode that gives you—the artist or performer/participant—the versatility, enthusiasm, and agility in unconventional methods by mapping the active relational points of material activism.

For example, the sound of an egg slicer (click on Hyperlink SEVEN) in a Public Kitchen brings physics to sound performance and sound performance to physics. An egg slicer traditionally performs the function of slicing eggs. As a kitchen tool, it is designed to cut eggs into perfect slices, consisting of a

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195 “Feminicity” is the term for a predicate register that enables feminist work be accounted for as relational ‘active-points’ (as an alternative formulation to standpoints) that collectively can be seen through what they have achieved. But going further, it marks where those active-points contribute to the dynamic field of feminist epistemologies and where change occurs.” Felicity Colman, “Digital Feminicity: Predication and Measurement, Materialist Informatics and Images,” Artnodes no. 14 (2014), 1.


slotted dish for holding the egg and a hinged plate of wires or blades that can be closed to slice. In a Public Kitchen, the egg slicer is repositioned to articulate a different kind of causality. Playing the egg slicer is a form of sonic alchemy in the entanglement. This entanglement can be described as gentle, metallic, resonant, short, hard, drifting, rushing, clear, cascading. Wired strings as noisy matter are characterised by delicate, brilliant, glittering, flowing, dull, mellow, twanging, reverberating chords of metal wire being plucked in stroked variations. An egg slicer produces indeterminate sound unlike a traditional harp, where the strings are plucked with the fingers to achieve a balanced note.

In Figure 32, the participant of Sonic Electric plucks the strings of an egg slicer, extending the range and chromaticism with the pressure of the fingers on the strings unlike the pedals of a traditional harp which modifies the pitch. Indira uses her gestural hand relying on user and finger pressure to create noisy dissonance, listening carefully to other members of the collective, joining forces. The focus shifts to the intra-actions the work causes, the rites and rhythms of their negotiated creation, and the emotions and other effects they produce in a sonic recipe.

Each participant of a Public Kitchen is armed with a contact microphone connected to a lead audio cable dangling under the table that assists in the emission of repetitious electronic sound patterns
emitted through a guitar amplifier. These translate resonant frequencies into audio signals which are then amplified into the space.

In “Chapter Four: Co-composing the Sonic Interface of a Noisy Kitchen Through the Apparatus,” I expanded on the technical transductive aspects of the contact microphone. Imagine for a moment the old-fashioned cranking hand whisk equipped with one or more beaters played through the guitar amplifier. Listen to it without a contact microphone and then with the contact microphone device (click on Hyperlink EIGHT). An awkward mechanical hand whisk beats or injects air into a large metal mixing bowl with vigorous, mechanical movement, causing rapid acoustic sonic metal patterns. In a more modernistic approach, consider the French whisk as a sculptural balloon, ball, spiral, cage, coil. These sculptural forms are just a few of the many design types that live in kitchens waiting to be discovered, creating motions in a Public Kitchen that are even more dynamic with sweeping circular arm techniques, heightening contemporary embodied kitchen habits and aﬀects in the somatic engagement. The balloon whisk is made from a series of flexible wires (usually eight or more) that join at an end which is attached to a handle. Balloon whisks come in a number of sizes, from teeny tiny to almost cartoonishly large. Sonic Electric possess a number of these whisks in their kitchen inventory.

In Figure 33, a participant of Sonic Electric is performing with an undeniably large industrial whisk with over-reaching bodily gestures, emitting deep twangs of noise ensnaring the flexible vibrational wired noise through her contact microphone. In the doing-cooking, uses for a balloon whisk are many, and include (but are not limited to): mixing eggs; vigorously whisking air into egg whites or cream to create meringues or whipped cream; and lightly mixing together dry ingredients in lieu of sifting. Indira performs with this object indifferently, not by foregoing traditional cooking techniques completely, but by thinking with the body, through the body, moving in thought and performative somatic gesture to find the right sound-body gesture that manifests the creative moment.

This is the sound of a meat slicer (click on Hyperlink NINE). Listen to how the noise composition is formed to describe the aleatoric—a musical way that involves chance or unpredictability in composition, waiting to be discovered in a sonic recipe by the listening body. Cage was a strong proponent of aleatoric techniques. In a more performative gesture, participants can choose to make no sound at all with a kitchen tool, listening, relying only on the vibrational body to respond.

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198 John Cage was a fierce follower of aleatoric techniques, depending on the throw of a dice or on chance during a composition, production, or performance. This conceptual framework runs through all of Cage’s compositional work and writings. John Cage, *Musicage*, ed. by Joan Retallack (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).
For example, with a soup ladle, only performing the action of the doing-cooking in a Cage-ian silent way to entangle the sculptural body with the kitchen tool in the immersive mixture of a sound and sculptural installation space.

![Figure 33: A participant of Sonic Electric playing a large French whisk at Testing Grounds, Southbank, Melbourne, Australia. February 2018. Image credit: Jonathan Sinatra.](image)

Although designs vary, the soup ladle is crafted with a long handle terminating in a deep bowl-like form at the end of the stem. The stem is oriented at an angle to the handle to facilitate lifting liquid out of a pot or other vessel and transporting it into a bowl. In this instance, a participant chooses to provide the action, creating a sensory affective atmosphere. What is ladled out over the shoulder is actually air: a material. This type of gestural hand movement is generated as a more-than-representational artefact. We are aware of the shared cultural and social embeddedness of the intra-actions in a mutual flow, however brief, where the extended mind-body is in flux with other matter. Technical skill and hand dexterity is applied gesturally or re-invented through the gestural hand. Simply turning the button of an electronic kitchen appliance, such as a kitchen blender or coffee grinder, manifests loud, motored industrial sound/noise at different speed modalities (click on Hyperlink ELEVEN). The gestural hand exerts different pressure points on contact with every kitchen
object in the spacetimemattering. Each participant chooses to react to said sound-noise that envelops the immersive space with each reverberation, amplifying, stretching, texturizing the noise.

In this process, the senses of deep listening and touch are profoundly intra-connected. Each tool creates a set of sound patterns that participants value and repeat, merging into a sound recipe. The sensorial experience is also heightened by the use of the contact microphone because the device not only amplifies noise as, upon contact, the participant feels the tactile vibration of the contact microphone working throughout the whole body. This device accentuates sonic meaning—the *more-than surface feeling* in a sound performance paradigm.

6.6 The Nomadic Subject – The Ritual Transmission of Knowledge Through a Public Kitchen

The field work projects conducted take into account how a nomadic practice forms different variations in the re-construction of sonic meaning through intra-action. The nomadic subject, as I have already pinpointed, is about expression and actualisation of practical alternatives, where otherness and sameness are interrogated as an asymmetrical set of power relations. Organising and enabling Public Kitchens in Melbourne, Australia, and Murcia, Spain, and deep listening workshops in Reykjavik, Iceland, allowed me to observe this agency in practice in multiple iterations. As Public Kitchens evolve, they are re-defining and re-claiming public space. I see the enactment as a way for participants to feel empowered, taking ownership of their bodies and themselves without fear as the transient experience is made noisy. From a feminist perspective, the more the artwork emerges, engages in, and revolves around relations of power, these power relations enforce points of contact with material forces that assemble together, intra-acting by expanding into sonic phenomena as processes of economic and socio-political negotiations at work, and resisting as a continuing process. Braidotti asserts that a philosophy of the body is long overdue in the humanities to address women, gender, critical race, science, media, culture, and animal despite all the clichés we have in mind about femininity or feminism. In a sonic performance work, they are a vision of matriarchy, past and present, overlooked, forgotten. The artwork also possesses the exotic and the unknown about youth, gender and becoming in an unbalanced world.

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I maintain that Braidotti is clear in her view that we should move feminism towards the notion of the nomad, always in relation to a new environment, moving, changing, evaluating what is at stake for feminists, or post-feminist thought, in this discourse. My passion for cooking and amassing a wealth of cooking tools (that are utilised in many performance iterations) reflects the ways kitchen tools are mass distributed, always in relation to an anthropology of material culture/cultural geography and the female experience. What makes this construct so exciting is that sound phenomena are shaped and sculpted through the somatics and handling of the most common kitchen tool found in any kitchen drawer. A universal metal tong—a kitchen implement used to turn food over a fire in any kitchen across the globe—reaches or grabs high into the sky, sounding out a snap of its extendable tweezer-like arms as they come together in sonic metal concurrence. This could be seen as a moment of Zoe, as Braidotti states, that “stands for the mindless vitality of Life carrying on independently and regardless of rational control.”

For me, a Public Kitchen can trigger moments of obscurity and ambiguity. At times, the work is driven by an undefined sense of feminist frustration and subversive humour underscoring the affective politic as equally important. This may be the best communicator in the vocabulary of creating artworks that challenge all gender stereotypes as being weak, imperfect, and fallible. At times, the participants are emotionally vulnerable, moving beyond homogenised and generic ideals of the view of art in a public sphere into something else that is still waiting to be defined. The artwork offers something more in the arena of public debate and makes ordinary participants capable of creating and transforming their own world in a freedom that is distributed individually or by the collective interpretation and practice of a sonic performance.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE KITCHEN SHIFT

The embodied and embedded, relational nature of this technologically mediated, globally interlined and yet socially fractured subject expresses trust in our shared intimacy with and knowledge of the world and our lived experience of it. 202

Rosi Braidotti

FINAL EXHIBITION VISUAL DOCUMENTATION. PASSWORD: THEKITCHENSHIFT

The Industrial School Building, The Sacred Heart Complex, Abbotsford Convent, April 2nd – 6th, 2019. Opening vernissage with a Performance Intervention with Sonic Electric (Melbourne) on April 4th, 2019 at 7:15 p.m. 203

203 This final exhibition visual documentation not the final audio-visual creative work which is hyperlinked to the page…… of this thesis project. This extra photographic documentation gives the viewer a sense of the exhibition space, the small installation components that make up the field work and still documentation from the live performance intervention. Photo documentation by Cameron McMaster. April 4th, 2019.
7.1 The Relational Flow of Moving with the Kitchen Shift

The final exhibition for this PhD research project, *The Kitchen Shift*, took place at the Industrial School Building at Abbotsford Convent from April 2nd to April 6th 2019. The word *shift* was chosen to highlight *the space of the kitchen* for this exhibition because it has so many layers of meaning in my material practice. I found this title most appropriate to describe the enactment in which something is displaced but in movement. The word *shift* is a qualitative change, because it reflects the laboured body in the time period during which one is at work. This reflects on the intensities moving through the work. The word *shift* switches the act of changing one thing or position for another, or the act of moving from one place to another as a Public Kitchen activates itself nomadically. The word *shift* refers to a crew of workers who labour for a specific period of time, such as the participants of a Public Kitchen, or the women and children who worked in this specific industrial space in the past. The word *shift* can be a woman’s sleeveless undergarment or it can be a loose-fitting dress hanging straight from the shoulders without a waist, reflecting the custom design of the shiny metallic insulation protective apron dress material that I sewed together for each member of Sonic Electric to perform in on the opening night. The neon pink, duct tape cut-outs created a *retro-futuristic-punk throwback* semiotic that shifted from one dress to the next (as in Figure 34).²⁰⁴

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²⁰⁴ “Retrofuturism” is a movement in the creative arts showing the influence of depictions of the future produced in an earlier era. If futurism is sometimes called a science bent on anticipating what will come, retrofuturism is the remembering of that anticipation.
Figure 34: Sonic Electric, A Public Kitchen. MARS Gallery, Melbourne, Australia. 1255 X 855mm. 2019.
Digital colour print on back-lit film paper. Kitchen tools on display: spiral noodle maker, a meat tenderizer, an Italian pasta maker, and a Mexican empanada maker.

The Kitchen Shift is a Public Kitchen shifting from one setting or context to another, embodied in processual movement. The noise amplification in the exhibition refers to the shifting tonal quality of noise resonating in the space, in an unsteady way, recalling the industrial noise of machines operated by the women and children who once worked in this space. The word *shift* refers to shifting change as part of a systematic historical change, a feminist change of shifting gears and forging ahead, laying aside patriarchal rules, abandoning women’s oppression, occupying space, and (re)imagining the social. In line with the opening presentation on April 4th 2019, the exhibition was an invitation to witness a performance intervention of Sonic Electric engaged in a Public Kitchen as a way of doing and making in the world.
The flyer and floor plan (Figure 35 and 36) situates the field work conducted during the thesis; this can be seen in the photographic light box installations, a video work, and a sound installation platform and immersive performance space. The two tables set up on a portable stage were installed to emphasise the motherboard as a sound installation to the visitors, encouraging one to come in and play kitchen objects with a contact microphone connected to a live guitar amplifier during the course of the exhibition.

Figure 35: The Kitchen Shift flyer (front page). 2019. Designed by Anna Rees.
Figure 36: The Kitchen Shift flyer (back page), floor plan for visitors to the Industrial School Building, Sacred Heart Complex, Abbotsford Convent. Design by Juliana España Keller. 2019.
The site of the Industrial School located in the historical Sacred Heart annex of the Convent’s building bears a significant relation to the aesthetical, socio-political, historical, social, and cultural dimensions of this thesis project in which it is entangled. The outcome of The Kitchen Shift envisages the production of something new in the world—as affirmative action in locating the historical present. Critical to the fieldwork is the intricate relational and performative active encounter with place in relation to multiple materialities. The process of creating the exhibition involved a consistent mediation with the senses, implicated with a comprehensive effort to understand a community—a collaboration that operates materially as an iteration in space and a situated perspective. The consistent relations of negotiation that are undertaken through a Public Kitchen—the recruitment of participants, the deep listening workshop, rehearsal for the sonic recipe, and final sound performance work—coalesce as a (re)imagining of the space between difference and becoming, between matter and its sonic amplification of life, between matter and futurity with every geographical variation (as in Figure 37).

Figure 37: A Deep Listening Workshop on a Public Beach in Reykjavik, Iceland. Digital colour print on back-lit film paper, 950 x 645 mm. 2018. Kitchen tools on display: an Indian paratha rolling pin; an ice-cream scooper; a cocktail strainer; and a set of measuring spoons; a Thai mortar and pestle. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

These relational aspects of materiality are also a synergy within the action of *a becoming of things* between the artist and the artwork, audience and community space.  

Therefore, the fieldwork leading up to this final exhibition is reflected in a number of ways, not only as a concrete and material activity which has a deep and significant impact in the practical physical encounters in the field but choosing a space for an exhibition that lives outside of the white-cube space, co-existing with women’s lives and histories, with matter that matters (Figure 38).

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**Figure 38: Juana: Sonic Notations.** 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

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7.2 Mapping and Leading up to the Audiovisual Encounter

When I moved to Melbourne, Australia, in October 2015, I was introduced to the Abbotsford Convent which covers over 11 acres in the urban centre of Melbourne. The Collingwood farm is the only farm left within the city borders with Abbotsford Convent containing 11 historic buildings and gardens; it is Australia’s largest multi-arts precinct. The former Convent of the Good Shepherd, this ex-monastic site, is now owned by the Abbotsford Convent Foundation (ACF) – a not-for-profit organisation that operates the Abbotsford Convent on behalf of the public. By 1900, the Convent was the largest charitable institution operating in southern Australia, and at its peak over 1,000 women and children lived behind its enclosed walls. There were vegetable and fruit gardens, dairy and poultry farms, and a piggery. There were three kitchens and three pantries. The commercial laundry services area was designated as a place for the women and children, who worked for their keep. The Convent’s website states:

Over the period of a century, thousands of girls and women were placed in care at the Convent, with many residing in the Convent’s Sacred Heart building, and labouring in the onsite, Magdalen Laundries. While providing shelter, food and education, the Convent was also a place of hardship and ordeal for some of the women, as was often the experience of those in institutionalised care.207

The architectural space of the convent was in disrepair for many years and has now been renovated, thanks to the convent’s administration and community who raised the money to do so. Sonic Electric performed as the headliner for this milestone event.208 The complex narrative entanglement of women and children who lived at the Convent is embedded within these walls, influencing this thesis research further as vital matter through the embodied politics of historical colonial space. The Industrial School Building in which The Kitchen Shift was staged was built in 1868 and is the oldest known privately-built school in Victoria. Schools of industry took in neglected, orphaned, or abandoned children and taught them a trade in order “to keep them from adversity.”209 In this Industrial School, girls learnt literacy and trade skills, such as sewing, mattress (paillasse) making, and shoe making. Immediately, these historical narratives are locked in with racial, cultural, and social

208 This sound performance work was titled The Future is Female and the image of a Sonic Electric member playing a routine can is referenced on the front of the invitation and e-flyer. This image was also integrated into the lightbox series with the title Klara (2017). Klara is wearing a black boiler suit and red polka dot bandana to identify with “Rosie the Riveter,” a female worker and icon from WWII who had passed away that week.
209 This information was obtained from the plaque signage that is placed at the front of the Abbotsford Convent heritage building and can be found on the Abbotsford Convent website. https://abbotsfordconvent.com.au/
class particularities, which plunges me into the myriad flows and connections of real spaces and what immanent connections lie within things and places and how they work in formation and in spacetimemattering. As Finnish feminist new materialist scholar, Katve-Kaisa Konturi states, “It is difficult to know what a flow can do, where it can take you, without entering into it. To write the felt materiality without mastering its flow, whether of water, the world, or art for that matter, following is your chance. Following aims at being confluent with the present always on the verge of opening into the future.”

The final exhibition in the Industrial School Building took into consideration that the Abbotsford Convent are particularly sensitive to its past history; thereby, my final exhibition project acknowledges its architectural and historic significance, but also addresses that this site was a place of suffering for the women who were forced to work there. Konturi states, on the singularities of matter and place by emphasising the position of French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, that one “engages in continuous variation of variables, instead of extracting constants of them” by following what is still unfolding. This methodology was critically important in regard to maintaining a specific ethico-political approach: my process moved along with the new knowledge that this thesis project was generating.

The final exhibition materialised a feminist, sonic, materialist performance to be heard and viewed through difference and diffraction to an immersive public in this specific space. The broader infrastructural issues such as testing and tagging all the kitchen appliances in order to pass OHS safety standards is always a tedious and difficult process; collaboration with the production team of an institutional space is an integral part of risk and liability that becomes part of the installation process. However, this activity requires patience and negotiation when you are dialogically curating with persons who are not artists. This relational movement, to work with the Abbotsford Production team, points out the ethical equation that processes, such as these, are messy, and disjunctions in communication are more complex than one thinks in institutional spaces. *Holding the ground beneath*

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212 Here in Australia, all electronic kitchen appliances must first pass a “testing and tagging” process where a certified technician must put a “pass” tag on each extension cable, guitar amplifier, and kitchen appliance that was plugged into an electrical socket. Each item must undergo a strict test with a testing and tagging machine that involves two parts: first visually inspecting the appliance for any damage, followed by electrically testing it with the Portable Appliance Tester. Once tested, the item is placed with a tag to confirm that it has in fact been tested, along with showing who tested it, the test date, and when the next test is due. The primary reason behind doing testing and tagging is to ensure the safety of the people in the workplace coming into contact with the appliance, while also minimising the risk of an electrical hazard. The AS/NZS 3760 is the Australian Standard that provides guidelines and regulations for the test and tag industry with regards to electrical safety of appliances. It sets out recommendations for issues such as test and tag intervals, defines who can test and tag, and stipulates general guidelines. My husband, Rudy Keller, took this task on and became a Testing and Tagging Technician so that he was able to keep a notebook log of all the electrical appliances and hardware that were used in each Public Kitchen for presentation to the OHS and Facility Managers of each space in which a Public Kitchen was performed.
me was foremost relational to the materialities of this space through a multi-dimensional system of differences and dominance that recalled the exclusion of Others who are not with us anymore, and who toiled in this space and to give voice and presence to these vital materialities. There are many socio-economic factors that shape this feminist field work practice. The female bodies that occupied this performative space through the sonic performance work and the images of women floating in digital lightbox portraits juxtaposed next to kitchen objects, created an empathetic identification with the Other, not by the singularity of the artworks, but how together they affected the whole experience in the more-than-human collaboration. The two large photographic lightboxes containing back-lit portrait images came from moments that have been witnessed through the processes of a Public Kitchen, depicting two Sonic Electric members in a raw portrayal: a frozen moment in the middle of an enactment. However, as they were without their crocheted masks, they appeared to be entering back into the space and imagery of the everyday while being contained in the virtual space of the lightbox. Coloured abstract forms as sonic notations hover over each figuration. I conclude that the Industrial School space was occupied through plurality to develop a language, or a performativity, as a mode of engaging, defined by a material practice of being in the world (as in Figure 39).

7.3 Opening Reception – A Sonic Performative Intervention

The sonic performance intervention took centre stage on opening night. The aim of the production process and ultimately the performance intervention was to manifest a sonic immersive space that might make us hear, innovate, and imagine different political possibilities in a socio-material consciousness of reciprocity and care for everyone. My role, alongside the members of Sonic Electric at the motherboard and the guitarist across from me, was that of an activist voice over the live microphone: through our actions we empowered people to act and change societal values and norms, a spoken manifesto overlaying the sound performance as it plays out through its own indeterminate Fluxus process.

Recalling my writing in previous chapters, a Public Kitchen enables one to think of sonic visibility as collective vibrations, connections, patterns, and differences that that are not only resonant but produce the experience of material reality and the intra-connections between things.

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213 These images were created in Adobe Photoshop and visualised the activity of representing sound by a special system of marks or symbols layered and moving over the digital imagery.

The Kitchen Shift performance intervention heightened the senses and participated in inter-being as an embodied and creative materialisation of the world.215


215 In hiring a professional videographer to capture the sonic performance creative work for this thesis project, I realised (in consultation with the videographer) that there would not be enough daylight for the Sonic Electric members to perform under. This left me with no choice but to hire a professional lighting designer to create the “minimal” light required for the performers and viewers to witness the staging of the performance intervention on the evening of the opening, where the sound installation took centre stage, and the field work “hovered” in the dark corners of the rest of the space.
The Industrial School space at the Abbotsford Convent redefines the boundaries of oppression to spirited bodies that matter or have been lost and are now invisible (as in Figure 40). Their spirit may be retained within the walls at the School; due to this, phenomena as matter, subject, and object provided a transdisciplinary framework for this final exhibition. These narrative entanglements cut into the *historical present* for a generational feminist. It is for this very reason that I approached the Convent to host a final sonic performance work in this space. The art work that took place activated an embodied configuration of material phenomena—the causal relationship between the historical narrative and the immersive installation of women participants performing live in a Public Kitchen (as in Figure 41).

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Figure 41: Las Atrevidas (The Risk Takers). The Butcher’s Wife. Blanca, Murcia, Spain. Digital Colour Print on back-lit film paper. 950 X 950 mm. 2019. Kitchen tools on display: a Spanish mortar and pestle used by Pilar in the video hyperlink provided. A flour sifter, a tin lemon squeezer and a plastic egg slicer and an Italian mezzaluna knife. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

7.4 An Assemblage of Kitchen Objects

Because the Industrial School building is marked as a heritage site, I was not able to hang anything on the walls or from the ceiling of the space. The small wooden structure installations were built especially so that they acted as supports for the lightboxes so that they leaned against the wall, rather
than damaging the wall itself.\textsuperscript{217} The small cubby holes of each modular structure materialised as kitchen shelves that held all kinds of kitchen tools originally from my own kitchen.\textsuperscript{218} The placement of these tools invited the visitor to pick them up in a haptic sense to recognise their function.\textsuperscript{219}

Matter, such as kitchen tools, does things and shape things from a feminist materialist approach. This makes these tools relational to the present as a vertical incision into a historical timeline where the ability to create using this vital matter generates visceral sonic cuts. From my perspective, this makes the entire sonic performance intervention a significant model for thinking and experiencing the contemporary condition. The simple sound bites of these tools from ordinary timeless food preparation techniques are intra-twined with relational differences and sonic particularities that make up each small installation. These kitchen techniques remind one of continual turning and shifting, reworking parts of history that have been repressed, excluded, or overlooked. In turn, this sonic performance work created auditory phenomena from simple kitchen tools and motors, whose connection was equally a spatial formation and whose temporary appearance required occupation, as a continual project, emphasising our place and emphasising our local community. This affirmative politic reminds us of our "potential," paraphrasing Braidotti.\textsuperscript{220} From my own political feminist subjectivity, it is a relentless aim of mine to admonish the neo-capitalistic thought of putting all the economic blame on the social worker, that is to oppress inequality and qualify the lesser human. In posthuman thought, we are all involved in our future. Because of this, we cannot recognise patriarchal culture as the way forward. It must be undercut and rescinded because power and greed will get us nowhere.

Art must play more of an activist role, with Ukeles asking us to “squeeze meaningfulness out of everyday work, materiality in extremis.”\textsuperscript{221} The final exhibition at Abbotsford Convent reinforced this discourse with noisy resonance: the stainless steel lightbox table positioned in the centre of the secondary space contained a back-lit image titled a “A Riot Girl Toolbox” (Figures 42 and 43).

\textsuperscript{217} OHS Standards implemented by the Abbotsford Convent.

\textsuperscript{218} The inventory of kitchen tools that were placed under each light box were mostly an assortment of personal kitchen hand tools that have been collected from small markets and kitchen stores all over the world. Many of them are unusual in their design aesthetic and are hard to find in some cases, since they are used in a particular food preparation technique, and form part of an inventory of kitchen tools over the years of my moving from one country to the next and subsequently me learning new recipes and global cuisines.

\textsuperscript{219} The word “haptic” is related to the sense of touch and, according to Austrian art historian Alois Riegl, is connected to “close-range” vision. According to Deleuze and Guattari when writing about Riegl, it “invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfil….the non-optical function.” Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Brian Massumi, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia} (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1987) 493. Hapticity is, therefore, the specific function of touch unique to sight itself.


Figure 42: Detail of A Riot Girl Toolbox, a stainless-steel lightbox table. Digital Colour Print on back-lit film paper. Dimensions: 1200 X 790 mm. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
Figure 43: A Riot Girl Toolbox, a stainless-steel lightbox table. Digital Colour Print on back-lit film paper. 1200 X 790 mm. 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.
A mask, a contact microphone, a large kitchen whisk, two effects pedals, a lead audio cable, a wire scouring pad, a meat tenderizer, measuring spoons, an egg slicer, a grater, neon pink rubber gloves, a Sonic Electric crocheted mask, and a custom-made noise against the patriarchy patch were placed on a red brick surface. I propose that these tools of a Riot Girl were carefully place-matted into this coffee table sculpture to destabilise, alter, shape, and re-configure meaning akin to the function of the motherboard explained in the previous chapters. The subjectivity of these objects examines the social-human-nonhuman interface as beyond representation and relational to use and experience.

The video work Pulse Impulsion was positioned on a high, bar table taken from my patio furniture set at home and placed on a TV monitor stand. The video unfolds, illustrating the disassembling or hacking into of an electric blender. The noisy affects of the blender bleeding out into the space from the looped video work on the monitor (every ten minutes) filled the space with industrial sounds, recalling the historical present as described earlier.

7.5 An Unfolding Conclusion of Multiple Possibilities

Figure 44: Sonic Electric Melbourne performance intervention. The Industrial School Building, The Sacred Heart Complex, Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne, Australia. April 4th, 2019. Image credit: Juliana España Keller.

222 This video work is described in “Chapter One: Intra-actions of the Laboured Body.”
Sound performance art needs to be heard to be experienced because there will always be a surplus of sonic meanings and affects which defy containment in any medium other than the sound itself (Figure 44). Installation art is a hybrid and unlimited workspace, interchangeable, and participatory, creating and articulating a living responsive environment (Figure 45). It was challenging and rewarding to move from one person to another person, and from one culture to another culture, as this research opens a wide range of possibilities adding to a range of philosophical thought, which I hope I have touched upon in this document. My entanglement with new materialism and engagement in posthumanist thought raises the stakes in this research’s ethical consideration of the paths we should consider taking, as a species, through feminist participatory practices.

A noisy Public Kitchen seeds the simple desire to share a musical sounding in the everyday rhythm of lived intensities in the doing-cooking of the kitchen to create a sonic recipe. The sonic apparatus is examined as the becoming of the humanmachine relationship, which presents the more-than-human
in a live enactment. This interface emerges as a creative fusion of sound/noise and non-traditional instrumental forms where sound technologies cross borders between humanmachine, performer, and audience through a feminist apparatus. Agency can be understood and (re)imagined as a processual performance enactment; an open configuration inseparable from apparatuses of laboured bodies in production. In turn, this is set up as an alternative ecology against rigid social structures. Through this, a Public Kitchen establishes a situated performative practice that is transnational and transdisciplinary.

The social history of the Abbotsford Convent has stirred me over the four years of this PhD project and speaks profoundly to my research in more ways than one. I am so happy to have found such an amazing site that encouraged a qualitative interaction between different social spheres, as they directly relate to the continuous presence of the artist community. I speak through my artwork to the very patriarchal conditions in which women are located in a system created by and for men where they are mandated to work.

The Abbotsford Convent gifted me a social space in which to express my research authentically. It also allowed me to pay tribute to the women and children that worked there. The future is indeed female and I believe that. A Public Kitchen creates a space for the experiences of women, men, anyone. Feminism is for everyone. It is, at once, certain, uncertain, competing, ever-expanding, and contracting. It reflects on the recent past and builds hope for future scenarios.

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223 Referencing Bell Hooks and the title of a Public Kitchen performance that took place at Abbotsford Convent in April 2018 for the inauguration of the Sacred Heart Complex renovation. Sonic Electric were the headliner. Please see the image of Klara on the invitation e-flyer (Figure 1). Bell Hooks, Where We Stand: Class Matters (New York and London: Routledge, 2000).

Conclusion

I maintain that a Public Kitchen is a live interpretation of the social experience of a sound performance artwork. In this interpretation: automation, representation, and uncanny choreographies oscillate between humans, diffractively, with the complexity of mechanical gestures of the somatic body. I use speculative processes, partnered with material phenomena, chemical and physical forces and intensities, to magnify time-based acts such as sound performance in both research and practice.

I am interested in objective comparisons that can be made between kitchen tasks and live performance and what that can offer or contribute as a proposition that is actual through feeling and experience in the live act with all of its potential. I create an experiential event with that it is the action between (and not in-between) that matters with indeterminate human and nonhuman bodies and put this into practice; thereby, this thesis is to be read as theory with practice as much as practice-led research. In this thesis research, or in a Public Kitchen, I track movement between the human and non-human through intra-actions of the laboured body: this is done by emphasising dramatic transformation as a new materialist politics of connection in a posthuman world, as a platform for collective, transdisciplinary inquiry for art and social action, and a way of understanding the world from within and as a part of it.

Thus, the artwork offers something more in the arena of public debate and makes ordinary participants capable of creating and transforming their own world through a freedom that is distributed individually or by the collective interpretation and practice of a sonic performance. This situated knowledge is crucial, creating a relationship between the personal and the collective, validating authentic traditional kitchen tool knowledge around doing-cooking and the design aesthetic. Deep listening occupies the counterpoint for a moment, travelling between the fluxes of natureculture, mattermind, and the somatic in-between of that interval. Somatic learning makes the unconscious conscious and, in the process, leaves one with more options for moving, acting, thinking, and living. It maximizes not just the physical body but one’s full human potential.

To reiterate, Braidotti asserts that a philosophy of the body is long overdue in the humanities to address women, gender, critical race, science, media, culture, and animal despite all the clichés we have in mind about femininity or feminism. A sonic performative live art experience is never fully translatable and might articulate many perspectives on and about feminist thought in these thesis chapters.
Firstly, I conclude that the nature of sound performance art and immersive installation art can be articulated as both metaphysical and material. I propose that I attend to difference, diffraction, and affect in knowledge production and feminist thought through intensities, emotions, and somatic gestures, always being open to the more-than-human. I argue my art and social work forms a rupture, a collapse in the everyday making of semiotic codes permissible in the performing (the doing-cooking with kitchen tools) in the kitchen in a ritualistic context.

Secondly, to reiterate once more, sound performance art needs to be heard to be experienced because there will always be a surplus of sonic meanings and affects which defy containment in any medium other than the sound itself and by its participants. With this in mind, agency can be understood and (re)imagined as a processual performance enactment and open configuration inseparable from apparatuses of laboured bodies in production; in turn, this sets up an alternative ecology against rigid social structures. Failure is something that usually breeds success by the very fact that it is relevant to how we evolve and progress. It is not gendered; it is not ruthless. It is part of life and part of a sonic recipe in a Public Kitchen.

I argue that diffraction is understood to be not just a matter of sonic interference and resonant frequency but of entanglement in direct material engagement as a cutting together-apart, reworking the agential conditions of possibility in the enactment and the entanglement of subject and object. Thereby, a Public Kitchen establishes a situated performative practice that is transnational, transdisciplinary, entangled with new materialist discourse and feminist participatory, posthuman thought working its way quantum-mechanically. This research offers a social mirror image of the world and to live without bodily boundaries. I hope a Public Kitchen might activate the potential for a diffractive way of looking at the world of which we are a part, starting from the middle.

From this research, I see a multi-sensorial and agential approach to understanding matter that is abject—the unneeded, the refuse, the unwanted surplus and economics of human and post-human life—that has the potential to be resourcefully recycled, reconstituted or transformed; where spaces and identities are colliding with environmental global spheres of human action and sustainability.

I also characterise failure in the kitchen as mirroring the unspectacular boredom of the reality of working conditions for the ordinary citizen. To summarize, in a Public Kitchen, co-composing requires that participants listen and process sound patterns, along with others, until the dynamic, pitch, and density is deeply entangled within the apparatus through intra-actions. It is a deeply intertwined, noisy collective moment.
A sonic recipe does not fix the posthuman world but creates a noisy culture of social (re)imagining as a feminist activist. It is a becoming of being more entangled in things and technologies. Our bodies depend on food from, in, and through the world of a kitchen environment, and our societies are built on and through things such as kitchen tools and appliances. This is how a Public Kitchen thrives.

With years of everyday practice, food is life and life is food. Everyone is welcome to the table.


O'Sullivan, Dan and Tom Igoe 2004. Physical computing: sensing and controlling the physical world with computers. Boston, USA: Course Technology Press


Appendix
CENTRO NEGRA’S LEMON CAKE RECIPE

A creative gesture shared and conceived by the artist. This cake was prepared, baked, and then sliced into portions and shared with Las Atrevidas, the group of senior ladies who performed in a Public Kitchen. These ladies visited the residency, Centro Negra AADK, on the top of the mountain in Centro Negra in Blanca, Murcia, Spain in the summer of 2017 to watch the video work, drink tea, and eat lemon cake.
Ingredients

Cake:

- 2 cups of sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup of plain yoghurt
- ¾ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- Zest grated from 3 “Blanca” Lemons
- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder

Lemon Syrup:

- ¼ cup of sugar
- ½ cup of lemon juice

Method

1. Preheat oven to 190 centigrade.
2. Whisk together the sugar and the eggs.
3. Mix in the yoghurt.
4. Add the olive oil and lemon zest.
5. Fold in the flour.
6. Pour the mixture into a cake tin.
7. Bake for 45 – 55 mins. or when a knife comes out clean when testing it’s consistency in the middle of the cake during the baking process.
8. While the cake is baking, mix together the sugar and the lemon juice.
9. When the cake is baked, let it cool down and bit but while it is warm, make some slits into the cake with the side of the knife going quite deeply into the moist cake.
10. Pour the syrup over the cake. Wait about 10 mins. For the cake to absorb the syrup.

Serve with all the residents at Centro Negra and enjoy over conversations about art and life.

July 2017, Centro Negra AADK, Blanca, Murcia, Spain.