Fine Art Research Network Symposium
Abstract
‘a work in process…’

PhD Candidate. Annie Morrad
Supervisor. Professor Steve Dutton

Annie Morrad's PhD is a practice based exploration and analysis of creative improvisational sound work as a form of research, but also critically in relation to this symposium, it also approaches any necessary textual element with a view to critically engaging in the relationship between text and practice in the form of a PhD more generally, and thus impacting on the practice based PhD landscape.

The relationship between ‘text’ and ‘work’ is here formulated through an appropriate method which acknowledges the complex relationships between practice and textual exegesis and aims to foreground, or at least propose improvisatory practice as a form of embodied knowledge production in itself.

The final ‘thesis’ will be a performed piece of practice consisting of a solo presentation. We maintain that the thesis is not solely the written element; it is the practice itself, and not, as in a traditional mode, a written document. To further underline the need for the PhD to be able to engage properly in non-textual approaches it should be noted that this written document consists of both an appropriate commentary on the practice; a form of contextual analysis and experimental approach to writing, which is informed by the improvisatory nature of the practice, and Morrad's condition of dyslexia.

We propose then that ‘doing’ is a critical element. Full intention, emersion and understanding are only viable through adopting a heuristic approach, learning from physical and embodied involvement, embracing experiential, sensory experimentation.

As part of the necessary form of any improvisational process, the practice/work could be said to be in a constant process of ‘becoming,’ in which there can be no final conclusions in mind, or design, nor could there or should there be answered question or pre-determined outcomes. The research then consists of a processual methodology, one that attempts to, by default, sidestep traditional teleological methods because, as we will argue, there is no argument or statement to be defended outside of the work itself.

Due to the improvisatory qualities of the work, and the impact of dyslexia on the traditional PhD format, it is paramount to establish a method of writing that enables the practice to be forefront and centered as research. We propose this develops the art of PhD as practice and practice as PhD; one that engages with dyslexia positively with a genuine impact upon a shared understanding of practice based research.

We have therefore developed a structured approach to the textual element based on both the practice as the central form and dyslexia. The writing is produced in the form of small 300-500 word fragments which then are developed into a rhizomatic structure which mirrors the practice as a central element.