

“Can you bake me a cake?”

Part One: Artist Paul Hurley, interviewed by people in Knowle West

Between September and November 2012, Paul Hurley created a series of new live art performances in Knowle West, South Bristol. These performances, ‘Dances of Earthly Wonder’, were inspired by the theme of harvest. They were developed in connection with different groups¹ in the community, who also took responsibility for documenting the performances using the CONNECTION / TIME interface². Members of the community and of the staff team at Knowle West Media Centre were given the chance to ask Paul some questions about the project.

What did you learn about working in community, digital media, and Knowle West?

Where to begin?! It was a really amazing learning experience. Having done the *Whose Data?* project in Knowle West in 2011, *Dances of Earthly Wonder* felt like a real leap forward in my approach and in the quality of engagement. Getting to know the place and the people, both at KWMC and in the community (although of course, the Media Centre is part of the community...) gave me not only a better understanding of the context but also more confidence and openness. I learned to listen, which meant that as an artist I started more from the ground up, making work *for* the different performance contexts, rather than dropping in work that I’d normally show at an art gallery or festival. In terms of digital media, I learnt a lot about *how* people use it to relate to the world. We were working with smart phones, camera phones and Twitter, and whilst these are things that I already used, I hadn’t given them much thought before. In the past I’d sometimes found technology distracting, but CONNECTION / TIME made me realise how it also gives us a way of framing and capturing experiences and connecting them to other people. We take photographs or tweet things as a way of understanding them, of remembering them, of marking them as important.

How, in the Eagle House performance, how did you begin the thinking process of bingo calling by using objects rather than numbers?

I visited the bingo club a few times, meeting some of the ladies and getting a sense of what the club means for them. It became clear to me that I had to do something bingo related, and to tie the other themes of the project to it. I always use actions and objects in my performances, so the idea of transforming this into a charades-style game of bingo seemed to make crazy sense! I began by researching existing bingo calls – asking some of the ladies at the club and also looking them up online, thinking about which

¹ NLarge young people’s photography group, the Edible Landscape Movement food producers network and Eagle House Bingo Club.
² CONNECTION / TIME is an online interface for the live documentation of performance, developed by Dane Watkins and Paul Hurley at KWMC during 2012. It uses Twitter and Flickr feeds generated by users on smartphones, tablets and laptops, as a live streaming and auto archiving tool for performances and events. Documentation of the Earthly Wonder series are viewable at: www.whosedata.net/ct/nlarge; www.whosedata.net/ct/elm; www.whosedata.net/ct/bingo; www.whosedata.net/ct/earthlywonder.

might work, and how some might inspire my own calls. It was important that most of them stayed close to the theme of harvest and food – not only to fit in with the other performances, but so that they would (hopefully) make more sense for people to guess.

Were there some numbers you couldn't find an object for?

Absolutely! Some came from old calls that people might already know (e.g. 'two little ducks' = 22, 'half a crown' = two (shillings) and six (pence) = 26), but most of them I made up. I'd originally thought about using unique calls for each number, but that meant not only would I have to make up 90 different actions, but that the audience would have to guess that many too. So as well as some unique ones ('Danny La Rue' = 52), I used quite a few composite numbers ('four tea[s] and [a] shoe' = 42, 'four tea[s] and [a] bee.= 43, etc.). This had the brilliant (slightly unforeseen) effect that as the audience started to get to know some of the numbers, they'd guess them quicker, and make me work faster. The ensuing chaos and sweat made for an element of slapstick, which I think the audience really enjoyed!

Why, in the WildFest / ELM performance, did you strap a cabbage to your head?

I wanted to use vegetables in the performance, as a reference to growing in Knowle West and the theme of harvest, but also because I nearly always use vegetables, fruit or plants of one sort or another in my performances. Some people might say it's a hangover of being told not to play with my food as a child, but I'd say there's something else going on as well! A cabbage is a really familiar, slightly boring object – for most of us there's nothing exciting about it -, but when we think of it as an art material, or as something to wear, it makes it strange and changes the meaning of it. Whether we strap one to our head, or whether we're growing our own, we can see something miraculous and wonderful about a cabbage. As well as this, I have a habit of putting things on my head in performances – there's something about covering the face that makes the human figure strange and funny, but also means that I can't see, making me vulnerable and perhaps invokes empathy between spectators and me. On this occasion, a cabbage made sense!

Was there a biblical reference in this performance, in the moment when you stood with your arms outstretched?

Not explicitly. I've used the position of stretching my arms out in other performances too – for me it's a visually strong, interesting and unusual position to hold objects in, but I'm aware that in our culture there's a massive biblical reference there too. I certainly wasn't aiming for this – in the way that none of the actions that I do have any one single meaning or reference -, nor was I saying anything about Christianity or Jesus, or about myself as some kind of messiah! But these symbols and references are floating around all of the time, and if that image means something to an audience then that's great.

Can you bake me a cake?

Of course, I love baking cakes almost as much as I love eating them (although I'm taking a break from Victoria sponges after the past couple of months...)! Baking's a bit like

alchemy – you put the ingredients in a bowl, mix them in a particular way, pop it in the oven and as if by magic out comes a cake. If you use the wrong sort of flour, put the eggs in before the butter, bake at the wrong temperature, the magic won't happen. It has some similarities to growing (although in my experience plants are a little less predictable...). And I often think that something home made with love will always taste better than even the most expensive brand. In terms of the project, the recurrent motif of the cake (I made one or two for each of the four performances) was a symbol of this, a gesture of generosity, a sharing of pleasure and celebration, and a way of working alchemically with special ingredients from Knowle West (the eggs from Buried Treasure's chickens, the blackberries from the Northern Slopes, etc.). You could say the same of the performances - in terms of combining local elements (ideas and images from talking to people) and transforming them into live performance.

Do you enjoying performing?

In a funny way, yes, and in another way no. Before I perform I often dread it, and when I do longer performances (up to 4 hrs), I have moments when I think 'why on earth am I doing this?' Some of my performances can be really grueling, tiring or painful, most of them tend to involve vulnerability and degradation of a kind – whether that's crawling in mud, cracking eggs on my head, or just dancing like a fool. It's something that I feel I need to do, and that after a number of years is something that I can do and that means something. There's an art and a craft to it, and I think working at any craft is enjoyable and satisfying. When people afterwards say they've enjoyed it, or it made them think differently, or that it put something unexpected and unbelievable into their day, then that makes it feel worthwhile. I enjoy the feeling of a job well done.

Part Two: "There is a veg man dancing in Knowle!"

Reflections on *Dances of Earthly Wonder*, an experiment in live art and participatory documentation in community-based settings.

By Paul Hurley

My relationship with Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) began in early 2011, during a week-long artists' workshop as part of *Whose Data?* a project exploring ideas around live data. Knowle West is a predominantly white working class housing estate in south Bristol, and our week there involved a minibus tour of the estate, visits to a variety of community projects and locations, and meetings with a number of residents. As someone who was living in a different part of the city but had not had recourse to visit Knowle West before, I was surprised and inspired by what I learnt about the area and by some of the initiatives going on there (both formal and otherwise). Most of the spaces that I'd worked in as an artist – whether in a private studio or a public gallery or institution – had been in urban centres, and used by people with common social, educational and economic privileges. Making work at Knowle West was a challenge not only to my familiarity with certain geographical spaces, but also to the strategies I was used to employing when making work for informed, knowledgeable art audiences. My

approach underwent reappraisal, and with it reconsiderations of my broader impulses and ethics as an artist. As well as being a challenge to my conventional ways of working (which include exploring obliqueness, referencing critical theory and art history, and playing with existing conventions of gallery performance), the residency was also a challenge to my relative inexperience of working creatively with digital media. I was using digital photography, video, email, etc. on a regular basis but didn't really have a grasp of what 'live data' meant or what my connection to it was - my lack of practical understanding and theoretical reference points was at first a little daunting.

Whose Data?

Working closely with Dane Watkins, lead artist on *Whose Data?*, I started to explore ideas about live data in relation to performance and the context of KWMC. One of the primary frameworks for my thinking was that of the overarching objectives of the organisation: social and digital inclusion; the promotion of sustainable living through digital media; the provision of accessible arts and education opportunities to local communities in Knowle West and South Bristol. In her provocative text *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, theorist Claire Bishop (2012, 13) writes about the 'social turn' of cultural policy under New Labour's agenda of inclusion, which she suggests:

“represents the primary division in society as one between an included majority and an excluded minority (formerly known as the 'working class').”

Bishop sees this agenda manifesting through a rise of participatory arts projects in the social field, a shift in the way in which such projects are valued, and essentially in which they are constructed:

“Instead of supplying the market with commodities, participatory art is perceived to channel art's symbolic capital towards constructive social change.” (2012, 12-13)

As artist in residence at KWMC, I found myself faced with the prospect of creating work for (and with) an audience who were neither familiar with experimental art practices nor particularly interested in them. Live data had been chosen for the theme of the residencies as something that had the potential to bring together the artists and community to develop ideas around data. KWMC's director, Carolyn Hassan wrote:

“We intend to turn these ideas into tangible benefit for the community, arising from a greater understanding of, and interaction with, live data. We are particularly keen to see if, through close collaboration with local residents here in Knowle West, we can create new ways of making data work for the benefit of a wider society.” (2011)

After exploring a number of potential project ideas, I decided to focus my research on questions concerning how we might consider live action in terms of metadata. That is to say, how we might break down and illustrate the data that describes the object / experience of performance: qualities of physical materials and apparel, emotional qualities of actions or images, interpretations of concepts and ideas, etc. During the course of my six-month residency, I developed with Watkins the project *Why? And what does it mean?* (the title taken from a common question asked to me when I tried to show or explain live art to people I met in Knowle West), which attempted to find ways of generating and capturing interpretive data from live performances. At KWMC, I had worked closely with young people's groups to facilitate their creation of performances for camera, inspired by past collaborations I had made with photographers like Manuel Vason and Kim Fielding. Such practices of performance photography have a long lineage, and were an important step to my (and participants') unpacking and understanding of the relationship between performance and documentation.

Performance, photography and documentation

In his essay 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation', Philip Auslander (2006, 1) proposes that performance documentation has been understood to encompass two categories, which he calls the *documentary* and the *theatrical*. The former he characterises as the traditional way, in which documentation is conceived of as evidence, and as a record through which performance can be reconstructed (in this category he places "most of the documentation of classic performance and body art of the 1960s and 1970s") (1). In the category of the theatrical, Auslander places "a host of art works of the kind sometimes called "performed photography," (examples range from Marcel Duchamp's self-portraits as Rose Sélavy to Cindy Sherman's photographs of herself in various guises, to Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* films") (2). Our experiments with young people attempted to bridge the gap between the two, producing photographs as constructed images for camera, but also documents of the exploratory process out of which they came. They followed some of Vason's strategies and approaches, characterised by

"a shift from the dynamic of subject / object that structures the active artist [/ photographer] and passive model scenario, towards a subject / subjects(s) dynamic in which both parties are actively, creatively engaged" (Random Love, K., 2007, 33)

The process was one of practice-led research (like my own PhD, which I had completed a year prior), of understanding certain theoretical and aesthetic approaches through practical experimentations with the form. After the young people had created their collaborative images (both photographing and being photographed), they spent another session analysing and responding to them, making both intuited and discursive readings of them. These then became Flickr 'tags', digital key words created by users to index their images in Flickr's online database. This interpretive process proved valuable and productive, not only to the understanding of the images, but to their creator's sense of

ownership of them. It was rooted in a strategy of participation, in that the young people would hopefully feel a sense of empowerment through the authorship of their own image, and through the linguistic signifiers that described it.

An interactive interface

Whilst Watkins and I regarded the act of photographing as one of active decoding and recoding - the photographer decides what is important, by the choice of subject, timing, framing, etc. -, we wanted to incorporate other modes of interpretation about the experience of performance. This was partly inspired by processes of 'tagging' digital material, not only on Flickr, but on blogs (on which the young people and I had been working, on Wordpress and Tumblr sites) and on social media (notably hashtags on Twitter). A digital interface was developed and piloted that incorporated live user-created documentation as an interactive feedback loop into the performance, initially generated by an invited writer and photographer who used laptops and smartphones during a four-hour durational performance at KWMC. This pilot was without neither its technical difficulties (one of the email accounts being automatically shut down by anti-spam robots) nor its conceptual ones - the situation created something of a closed loop, and our intention was that the tool would enable participation and engagement, from both a live audience and a remote one. Watkins further developed the web platform to include a Twitter stream, which both limited the length of text input (to 140 characters per tweet) and enabled multiple contributors (and dialogue between them) interacting live and remotely. We also added a publicly accessible email address for people to send photos live to the site's Flickr stream. The intention was that participatory engagement with the documentation (and, by extension, the interpretation) of the performance would deepen an aesthetic engagement with it too. A second four-hour durational performance was created at KWMC, with members of the audience using the online documentation interface (<http://whosedata.net/paul/>) via tablets, smartphones and computers. The interface was further developed by Watkins and I into the CONNECTION / TIME interface (very similar to the original, but with a streamlined visual design, and the prepared text column replaced by one that enabled live or post-event annotation of the images), as part of an ACE-funded Research and Development phase in April-May 2012 (collaborating with artists Phil Owen, H.Ren, Soozy Roberts, Steve Robins, Clare Thornton, Caroline Wilkins) and trialled in a number of settings. After the success of this project, and having gained a deeper understanding of KWMC and its context, a further collaboration with KWMC was proposed in the form of *Dances of Earthly Wonder*.

Dances of Earthly Wonder

Dances of Earthly Wonder was conceived in response to the particular context of Knowle West, specifically its situation as an suburban area with relatively high levels of social deprivation and also of small-scale food production. These include: a number of council-owned allotments; Bramble Farm (a small farm with livestock on reclaimed wasteland, run by eight families on the estate); Buried Treasure (a growing project in reclaimed school grounds, with two poly tunnels, chickens, bees, ducks and a goat); Re:Work (a social enterprise recycling building materials and reclaiming spaces for

training and work experience for unemployed adults); Knowle West Health Association (an organisation running a community allotment and a community kitchen); domestic orchards, chicken-keeping, bee-keeping, fruit and vegetable growing; the hunting of wild rabbits on common ground with dogs. In my time working with KWMC, I had learnt about the Edible Landscape Movement (ELM), a grassroots gardening network bringing together volunteers, residents, local groups and charities involved in food production in Knowle West. ELM producers grow fruit and vegetables in urban spaces and unused local gardens and sell the produce back to the community and local cafés through a vegetable bag scheme. The ELM network is partly facilitated by the coordinated use of mobile phones (in a separate project led by KWMC) to share recipes, experiences and information about what members are planting, growing and harvesting. Through the coordination and sharing of members' activities, knowledge and experience, ELM addresses issues of environmental and economic sustainability, food inequality and healthy lifestyles. To an urban outsider, food production in places like Knowle West presents interesting challenges and contradictions to preconceptions of suburbs, to distinctions between the urban and rural, to ideas of the local, and to romanticised images of organic growing. Most of the growing projects on the estate exist in what Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts have called 'edgelands' (2012). These include a disused school, reclaimed common land, and allotments, which Farley and Symmons Roberts describe as

“thriv[ing] on the fringes, the in-between spaces; on land left over (or behind) by the tides of building and industrial development, in pockets behind houses or factories, and in ribbons along the trackbeds of railways.” (106-7)

Through *Dances of Earthly Wonder*, I aimed to animate these spaces and connect wider audiences to the work that was taking place on them, work that sometimes existed out of necessity, but that was often on the “borderline between recreation and utility” (Farley and Symmons Roberts, 108).

Real and imagined folk traditions

This borderline between recreation and utility is where we might also locate one of the other inspirations for the project. As well as exploring and connecting with local food production, I wanted to research English folk traditions, with a view to create novel ones for performances in Knowle West. Archival research at the English Folk Dance and Song Society, as well as from film and literary sources, led me to numerous curious and spectacular folk and dance traditions, past and present. I was particularly drawn to Morris dancing (having already subconsciously employed bells and blueface in one of the *Whose Data?* performances), and struck by the story of William Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder*. Kemp was a Shakespearean actor who in 1600 published a pamphlet *Nine Days' Wonder*, documenting a nine-day, 100-mile journey Morris dancing from Whitechapel, London, to Norwich, Norfolk. Part spectacle, part endurance event, part whimsical folly, one could equally imagine an action like Kempe's being conceived by a contemporary live or performance artist. Morris dancing represented an opportunity to

express within *Dances of Earthly Wonder* a recognisable otherness, an assumed position of eccentricity rooted in the pastoral but somehow also commensurate with the “critical performative mode” (Kubiak, A., 2008, 83) of the artist-as-shaman. This mode proposed by Kubiak he also terms the *pharmakeic*, the “visionary impulse of mind embodies the best hope of curative, redemptive political life” (*Ibid.*). I have written elsewhere (2010) of the *pharmakeic* in relation to a tendency towards the appropriation of shamanism and ritual within performance art, in my own as in others’ gallery-based work (in that of Joseph Beuys, Marina Abramovic and André Stitt, for instance). The convergence of this symbolic shamanic impulse in gallery based performance with that of participatory arts’ addressing of “the complex symptoms of a more and more unequal society” (Matarasso, F., 2013, 11) is not, I think, coincidental.

My four *Dances of Earthly Wonder* in Knowle West consisted of variations on a set of actions, combining elements of morris dancing with those of shamanistic ritual and classic performance art. All involved morris dancing kit (white trousers and shirt, bell pads on my shins, ribbons across my torso and tied to my elbows, and a straw hat) and Victoria sponge cakes. A number also involved a green fishing jacket (a nod to Joseph Beuys) adorned with flower pots, a garden spade, tea cups and saucers, and eggs. They each lasted between 15 and 30 minutes, and were performed in four different locations with different audiences: 1) In the studio and garden of Knowle West Media Centre, for a young people’s photography group (www.whosedata.net/ct/nlarge); 2) On an area of local common ground, the Northern Slopes, as part of a community wildlife festival with members of ELM (www.whosedata.net/ct/elm); 3) At Eagle House Community Centre with an older women’s bingo group (www.whosedata.net/ct/bingo); 4) Around a table in the studio of Knowle West Media Centre, as part of a public discussion event, with members of the local community as well as art audience bussed in from central Bristol (www.whosedata.net/ct/earthlywonder). The performances were characterised by a ritualised air, an embarrassed humour (which comes with the territory of morris dancing, especially when performed badly) and a strong degree of physical exertion or endurance. They also all involved a level of traditional spectator participation, e.g. sharing the cake that I’d made and danced around, helping me tie cabbage leaves to my head (prompting the tweet “There is a veg man dancing in Knowle” from one of the ELM growers), playing visual bingo (where I mimed the numbers rather than called them), and being invited to sit at a table that I’d laid (and lain on). More importantly - in the current discussion -, spectators were invited to participate through the use of smartphones (or in some instances digital tablets, digital SLR cameras or handwritten responses on paper which were photographed by members of the project team) and the CONNECTION / TIME interface, to assume the role of documenters and interpreters to the performance.

Digital documentation as interpretation

As in the earlier project *Why? And What Does it Mean?*, *Dances of Earthly Wonder* attempted to present experimental live art performance to new audiences, and to employ new technologies as tools of engagement and interpretation to this end. We

were interested in the way in which the experience of performance alters through both the mediation of technology, and through the taking on of a particular role (“live documenter”) in relation to a performance. Knowle West Media Centre has long played an active role in providing equipment, skills and opportunities for digital inclusion, in an area of the city that has experienced economic and social exclusion over a number of decades. The individuals that we engaged with on *Dances of Earthly Wonder* were largely digitally literate, but unfamiliar with live art. As such, they reflected a wider reality about access and knowledge to both digital media and experimental art forms. Most of us use mobile phones, smartphones and laptops every day, and the ease of digital photography (on mobile phones or digital cameras) has meant that image-making is an instant and now customary process. The convergence of cameraphone technology with social media applications (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, etc.) has meant that our relationship to images and the way they are made has changed considerably: a 2012 Guardian newspaper article (Gray, 2012) claimed that over 250 million photographs are uploaded to the internet every day, many of these on social media. The act of photographing has become a social one, and by extension performative. We are all familiar with the ubiquity of the camera phone not only at special personal events such as weddings, parties and holidays, but at music concerts, demonstrations and often performance art events. Social media photography has provided us with a new way of creating and streaming personalised ‘news feeds’ (a term used by Facebook, for example) of what we are doing and what we are seeing. Text, in the form of Twitter tweets or other social network feeds (e.g. Facebook, Flickr tagging) has become a way of not only recording and reporting what is happening around us, but of interpreting and commenting in a way that is inherently performative. That is to say, in a Butlerian sense, a way that constructs identity iteratively through complex citational processes (Parker and Sedgwick, 1995).

Performativity, authorship and power

In the context of *Dances of Earthly Wonder*, the spectator’s performative act of photographing or tweeting about the performance put them in a specific relation to it. This position was two-fold: firstly, as active documenter in the physical proximity of the performance itself; secondly as broadcaster of the performance to a remote (physically and / or temporally) audience that would view the documentation via CONNECTION / TIME. This struck us as a particularly fruitful effect of the digital tool. In my experience of creating experimental performances for audiences in a range of contexts (galleries, theatres and public realm), I have found a range of audience responses. Live art and performance art audiences are usually quite accepting of forms that other audiences would find unfamiliar, and have an aesthetic literacy that gives them tools to interpret critically. Audiences less familiar with live art and performance art are, in my experience, sometimes confused by the form, partly because of the obtuse references that performance art can be guilty of employing, but also because of the common expectations of the spectator toward linear narrative, conceptual unity, and clear authorial intent. Howard Barker writes eloquently and persuasively about this in his *Arguments for a Theatre* (1997, 46):

“A new theatre will put its faith in the will to knowledge, not knowledge give by the knowing, but the individual will to knowledge which is elicited by the experience of contradiction in theatre. [...] A theatre which honours its audience will not therefore make an icon of clarity. If a scene might mean two things it should not be reduced to one.”

Whilst *Dances of Earthly Wonder* was not a piece of theatre in Barker’s sense, it existed as a work of art that aspired not to narrative or symbolic clarity, but towards a sense of honouring the audience in an engaged and non-unitary experience. The spectator’s ‘will to knowledge’ is engaged through the process of creative meaning-making in the acts of both photographing and tweeting about the performance they are seeing. No longer a passive audience member attempting to read a performance in a visual language with which they are unfamiliar (that of live art or performance art), the individuals working with CONNECTION / TIME were aware that they were engaged in a process, one that was fluid, polyvocal and didn’t rest on clear meanings and fixed ideas of representation.

The potential of such a process in empowering individuals otherwise excluded from the practices and places of experimental performance are interesting. I am wary, of course, of suggesting that experimental performance art (or even just art) are inherently good. That would be another discussion. But I think that the demystification of forms like performance art, which despite its often progressive intentions is still sometimes considered elitist and exclusive, can be productive to dialogue. In my experience, most performance artists (and their audiences) are educated to degree level, if not higher, and the overlap of the field with the often theory-heavy discipline of contemporary visual art has fostered conventions of conceptual and linguistic complexity in the way in which artists’ work is talked about. This was something I certainly became acutely aware of when first visiting Knowle West – that the dominant discourses around my practice were alien and often incomprehensible to the audiences I was trying to reach. I also became aware that the intentions behind my work and experiences of it, whilst commonly articulated (by myself and my peers) in theoretical terms, were of a much more common, simple nature. Impulses like empathy, humour, connection and play are constant threads through my work, impulses whose intent is to communicate directly with spectators.

I noticed at Knowle West (as in many other non-art contexts and audiences with which I’ve worked) a sense of exclusion, felt by individuals, from the discourses and practices of contemporary art, which present a barrier to their enjoyment of it. There is a common perception that contemporary art (and performance art) contains some inherent message that is to be understood, which often results either in misreadings or a sense of ‘not getting it’. Those of us in the know have learnt from postmodernism that there’s nothing to get, there’s no superior authorial intent, and there’s no authentic meaning attached to images or words, and this undoubtedly informs our creation and viewing of experimental art works. CONNECTION / TIME was designed as a tool to help overcome the barrier of assumed individual meaning, by actively building the

heteroglossic interpretations of spectators into the performance itself. Complicating conceptions of place and space – of the live performance space and of the wider connected network of global cyberspace – it put spectators in the clear subject position of commentators, interpreters, spokespeople, archivists, *outside* of the performance, rather than that of democratic participants (as Bishop has critiqued) or simply as passive observers.

As an act of mediation and filtering, the authorial process of documentation is one that operates dually by estrangement and by engagement, by bringing focus to particular details or moments within a performance, but doing so in a way that affirms the documenter's subject position in relation to the object of documentation. This dynamic is an important one, as it recognises the difference between artist and audience, but opens up a clear relationship of communication that is reflective and empathic. The authorial responsibility conferred on the spectator-documenter suggests a giving of trust by the artist, an entering into an informal collaboration. This is powerful, and the fulfilment of roles on both parts makes for an engaged and memorable experience. For the photographs and tweets didn't just get to the *CONNECTION / TIME* online archive, but were automatically stored on people's own personal smartphones and broadcast via their Twitter and Facebook feeds. For me, this was a very new and exciting approach to engagement, a way of engaging in not only the public spaces of Knowle West, but in the social but also semi-private spaces of social media. Such personalised spaces (hosting conversations between friends and relatives), would otherwise have been impossible to access, or would have involved a more active intervention on my part into spaces in which I was a strange stranger. My presence as a strange stranger in the *Dances of Earthly Wonder* performances, in stories and images created by spectators, subtly played with acts of representation, by asking individuals not to represent themselves but to represent the other. Their creation of images, in the form of documentation, is as much an authorial element of the work as my own devising of actions – the performances existed as online feeds and archives of an overall process, as well as one-off live events. By unfolding and refolding a non-narrative live art performance into the realm of collective framing, capture and archiving, it goes some way to flattening hierarchies of artistic meaning and authorial control. As a process of representation, it foregrounds audience response and the process of live interpretation and dialogue. As such, it could be seen as an articulation of community, both the temporary community of the performance space, but also of the wider community of which the audience is a part.

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